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Happy 4th of July!

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Issue 116 • July 2025

SERVICE LEAGUE DONATES \$55K IN GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS

volunteerism.

The Fanwood-Scotch Plains Service League (FSPSL) awarded a total of \$55,000 in student scholarships and grants lead altar server at Immaculate Heart of Mary church, where to 18 Union County community organizations, including our she received an Archdiocesan Award for her youth ministry local Scotch Plains and Fanwood libraries and rescue squads, the Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCA and Resolve Community Attached for your consideration is a press release announcing \$6,000 Evelyn Whitehorne Memorial Scholarship. This award new officers for the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Service League, was administered by the FSPSL thanks to the generosity of the operators of the Thrift Shop.

combination of their academic records and service to the recipient of a 2024 Archdiocesan Discipleship Award; Captain community. Sharing in a total of \$14,000 scholarship awards of the SPFHS Cheerleading team; and President of the were the following recipients:

Sam Valera, an accomplished soccer player and track the Dominican Republic. Sam plans to study business.

She intends to study business and political science.

helping to care for an elderly relative. She expects to pursue and much more. a career in fashion.

Olivia plans to study Biology.



Whitehorne family. The award was presented by Jackie Included in the 2025 awards was \$20,000 in student Madsen in honor of her mother Evelyn, a long-time FSPSL scholarships presented to six deserving high school seniors at member. Alexandra is a dedicated Girl Scout who volunteered the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Scholarship Awards to work on a service trip to Costa Rica; is a member of the Night on May 29. Students were selected based on a Immaculate Heart of Mary BOLD youth ministry program and

Students Concerned for the Needy. Congratulations to all of the scholarship winners and to athlete who used his athletic skills to work with disabled everyone in the community who helps the FSPSL fulfill its young athletes and to organize a summer wellness camp in mission to "Help Us Help Others." All proceeds for grants and scholarships come from the generous giving of new and/or Carolina Conklin, Captain of the Field Hockey team and a gently used items donated for sale to the FSPSL Thrift Shop dedicated volunteer to youth field hockey camps and clinics. at 1741 East Second Street. The store has been a staple in downtown Scotch Plains for decades, offering good quality, Isabella Cocca, a black belt in karate who volunteers to reasonably priced merchandise to customers in need of teach and mentor younger kids in these skills, all the while household goods, toys, clothing for all ages and in all sizes,

Shannon McGuinness, a Girl Scout since kindergarten and

In addition, Alexandra Compierchio received the one-time

To learn more about types of donations accepted and Olivia LaPorta, an aspiring physician's assistant who volunteer opportunities, please call the store at 908-322-5420. volunteers as a religious education instructor and has been an You can also visit the Scotch Plains Thrift Shop web site active member of the Girl Scouts throughout high school. scotchplainsthriftshop.weebly.com, or search and follow the "Fanwood-Scotch Plains Service League" on Facebook.





(above) Alexandra Compierchio (center), recipient of the Evelyn Whitehorne Memorial Scholarship, stands with Evelyn's daughters (l-r) Colleen Brescia, Michele Rawson, Jackie Madsen and Dawn VanDoren. Courtesy Photo



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GIRL SCOUT AWARD PROJECT PRESENTATION

Borough of Fanwood

During a Fanwood Borough Council meeting held On May 5th, Cassidy Fitzgerald, a junior at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, presented her Girl Scout Award Project for an augmentative and alternative communication board at LaGrande Park. She said the board is for kids to communicate with each other on the playground. It is aimed for children with special needs such as Autism. She plans to start a GoFundMe to raise donations to offset the costs, which she estimated at between \$1,000-\$2,000. She said boards can be hung with pillars or can be vinyl signs placed on fences. Cassidy said she would like to have her project completed by the fall.

Mayor Colleen Mahr greeted everyone. Councilwomen Patricia Walsh and Erin McElroy also participated.

Green Team member Laura Lang noted the efforts of the Team including the denim recycling collection they are currently involved with three drop off locations in town for donations of jeans, jackets, shirts and skirts. The Green Team has also initiated recycling projects for crayons, shoes and Legos. Mayor Mahr noted that the borough's Friday E-newsletter has a weekly Green Tip provided by the Green Team.

Public Works Director Clint Dicksen invited volunteers to break off into groups to begin the cleanup. Volunteers were divided into groups, led by a DPW staff member, to remove trash in a

dozen or so areas of the borough including the Southside and Northside Train Station, Carriage House Park and around Borough Hall, LaGrande Park, Forest Road Park, North Martine and Midway Avenues, and the municipal parking areas. Clean up of Nature Center was led by members of the Fanwood Environmental Commission and the Green Team, where volunteers helped clean up the brook at the center.



(above) Cassidy Fitzgerald Photo by Paul Peyton

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GREEN TEAM COLLECTS 149 POUNDS OF DENIM

The Fanwood Green Team has concluded another successful recycling initiative. As part of our "Fanwood Cares Collection" we were able to keep 149 lbs of denim out of landfills and have it recycled instead as part of a partnership with Blue Jeans Go Green. The Fanwood Green Team is a group of local citizens that work with local government to advocate for the principles of sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Please contact Laura Lang:

lauralang61@gmail.com to learn more.



(above) Laura and Luke Lang

Courtesy Photo

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18TH CENTURY GRAFFITI FOUND

Historical Society of Scotch Plains / Fanwood

While removing a damaged ceiling of a room at the Osborn Cannonball House Museum at 1840 Front Street in Scotch Plains, an unexpected 18th century surprise was revealed: 18th century graffiti!

The discovery was made by one of the Historical Society of Scotch Plains and Fanwood's Board members, Jess Mongold, who has been a Historical Society member since 2017. Jess had the good sense to look up at the now exposed 18th century hand-hewn beams, which had been hidden possibly for hundreds of years, and notice a slightly-faded signature. On closer inspection, she realized the signature said "David Osborn" and the date '78 (1778) was written in the style of 18th century penmanship. The signature appears to have been made in a chalk-like material.

David Osborn, who would have been 17 in 1778, and his 12 siblings grew up in the house which was built by their father Jonathan Osborn. At one point in the house's history, David was the owner of the house as well.

But this is more than the graffiti of a random 18th century teenager in an arbitrary 18th century house. David's family was well-respected and very active with the planning of the early Scotch Plains town, and many community meetings were held at the home. David Osborn, too, was a significant figure in the history of Scotch Plains. He was the first Town Clerk of Westfield (of which Scotch Plains was a part in the 18th century) and the first postmaster of Scotch Plains. He was also instrumental in the founding of the first library in the area.

In order to authenticate the signature, Jess got in touch with The Westfield Historical Society Archives department, who were very helpful in the process. They happened to have in their archives close to 20 documents with the signature of David Osborn. It turns out David had to sign an Oath of Office each year as Town Clerk so there were many examples of his handwriting.

The Historical Society then had to find a handwriting expert to verify that the signature on the beam was genuine and matched the documents signed by David. When they found a firm with the name of "Osborn Associates" they felt it was more than a coincidence. (Not a known relative of the 18th century Osborns, but who knows?) That's how they found Kelsey L. Osborn, a 5th generation associate of Osborn Associates, her uncle's firm in Middlesex, NJ. Since 1910, Osborn Associates has been in the field of forensic document examination, and they are handwriting and signature identification experts.

Although Kelsey acknowledged that comparing the signature on paper to one on an old wooden beam is not the ideal situation for comparison, after much painstaking study, she concluded that the signature has "indications, with evidence, to suggest that it is genuine."

When it came time to close up the ceiling, the signature was hidden, again, for who knows how long this time; however, thanks to photographer Michael Berry of Berry Photo in Atlantic Highlands, NJ, who took many professional photos of the beam, the museum will have proof that the signature exists. The museum will also have another interesting anecdote to share with visitors about a 17-year-old who, like many teenagers today, was a little mischievous some 247 years ago.

The Osborn Cannonball House at 1840 Front Street in Scotch Plains, which is operated by The Historical Society of Scotch Plains and Fanwood, is always looking for volunteers and is open for tours the first Sunday of each month (except Jan. & Feb) and by appointment at (908) 322-6700, Ext. 230 or Info@HistoricalSocietySPFNJ.org.



(above) Written in the style of 18th century penmanship "David Osborn" and the date '78 (1778). Courtesy photo



GERRY COONEY DELIGHTS AT FANWOOD MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Borough of Fanwood

Over 65 people came out recently to hear one of Fanwood's own favorite sons, ex-heavyweight boxer Gerry Cooney. He delighted the crowd with a highlight reel of his fights and stories of his childhood, boxing career, and his more recent endeavors like hosting a boxing talk show on Sirius XM Radio.

Cooney talked about his childhood, and how both he and his brother were encouraged by their father to go into boxing. His brother, Tommy, reached the finals of the New York Golden Gloves Sub-Novice Heavyweight division, but went no further in the sport.

Cooney followed his brother into boxing and got his own start with the Golden gloves at age 16. He had his first professional fight in 1977, and in 1981 he defeated former world heavyweight champion Ken Norton by a knockout just 54 seconds into the first round with a blisteringly powerful attack.

In 1982, he fought heavyweight champion Larry Holmes, and Cooney talked to the crowd about how fight promoter Don King was responsible for the promotion that took on racial overtones that Cooney was not comfortable with.

He talked about one of his few regrets, not trying out for the Olympics when he was young, despite an invitation to do so. He also shared stories about his post-boxing career, creating an organization that helps retired boxers find jobs, his many friends and acquaintances in the boxing world, his work as an inspirational speaker and, since 2010, his work as co-host of "Friday Night at the Fights" Sirius XM Radio.

There was time for plenty of questions from the crowd who were eager to hear more, and Cooney obliged, finally speaking to the crowd about his faith, and leaving them with his thoughts that, "life is good – we have to count our blessings."





Gerry Cooney delighted the crowd with a highlight reel of his fights and stories of his childhood, boxing career, and his more recent endeavors.





POLICE CARRY THE TORCH FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Police Departments joined police officers from **RUN FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEW JERSEY:** across the state in the 42nd Annual Law Enforcement Torch Run to benefit Special way to raise funds and awareness for Special Olympics New Jersey. Over 3,000 police officers Olympics New Jersey. The run is a day-long took to their local streets to raise funds and event, split into 26 legs (or starting points) with awareness for this incredible organization.

Members of the Fanwood & Scotch Plains ABOUT THE ANNUAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH

Torch Run began in New Jersey in 1984 as a

some legs beginning as early as 4:45 a.m. The run travels through more than 300 towns, covering 750 miles on-foot. About 3,000 runners participated in 2025. Representing over 450 police departments.

To learn more, visit NJTorchRun.org.



(above) Members of the Fanwood & Scotch Plains Police Departments participated in the 42nd Annual Law Enforcement Torch Run. Courtesy Photo

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