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**Issue 145 • January 2026**

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# CREATING CHRISTMAS MEMORIES WITH THE JAYCEES

Cranford loves to celebrate the Christmas season, and many of the town's best holiday traditions involve the Cranford Jaycees.

For many years, the group has provided the lights and decorations for the Eastman Plaza clock tower downtown, including the new sleigh donated in 2023, providing a festive holiday centerpiece for the community.

The Jaycees have also hosted a free Kids Christmas Party each year for several decades, which includes free photos with Santa Claus. More than 5,000 photos have been captured since the switch to digital in 2011. This year's party was highlighted by a surprise visit from "The Grinch," whose attempt to "steal Christmas" was quickly thwarted by the Cranford Police.

The group is best known for their Santa Deliveries and Toy Drive. Over the course of two nights, the Jaycees and Santa stopped at more than 1,050 homes to deliver more than 2,500 presents, both records, escorted by flashing lights from a Cranford Police or Fire Department vehicle and a team of elves.

The program invites parents to donate a present for families in need and to then have a wrapped present delivered by Santa to their home on a weekend night. The drive netted more than 3,000 toys, filling two U-Haul trucks, which were distributed to Cranford residents and several local organizations: Cranford

to Cranford residents and several local organizations. Cranford Family Care, the New Jersey Community Development Corporation in Paterson, and Union County Social Services

More than 60 Jaycee members volunteer to support the event, from organizing presents and loading delivery cars to planning



traffic routes and suiting up as Santa. Eight teams, each with a Santa and elf helpers, delivered the presents each night.

“Every year it’s a massive undertaking, but it’s also our favorite event to see the joy when Santa pulls up to the houses,” said Cameron Andre, who has co-chaired the event with Mike Bond since 2016 and is passing the torch to new Jaycees. “We thank everyone who donated toys so we can spread that joy across our community and give more families a happy holiday.”

Courtesy Photo



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## CHAMBER HOSTS ANNUAL SANTA TROLLY RIDE



(above) The annual free Trolley Rides & Sing Along with Santa, organized by the Cranford Area Chamber of Commerce, returned on Saturday, December 13th.

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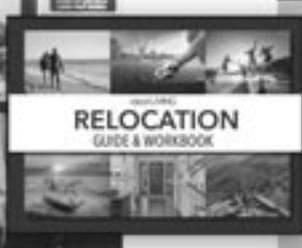
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The award-winning Hickory Tree Chorus is calling singers in the soprano, alto, and contralto ranges to join their harmonious sisterhood!

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Fresh off their top-scoring performance at the 2025 Sweet Adelines Region 15 competition, the

chorus has earned a coveted spot in the Harmony Classic at the 78th Annual Sweet Adelines International Competition in Columbus, Ohio, October 2026. Now, they're building their sound for the world stage.

Open auditions will be held in Stirling between 6:30-7:00 p.m. on Wednesday evenings in January 2026 and take less than 10 minutes (flexible scheduling is available). Singers are

asked to perform a brief acappella song of their choice. No experience required, just a love of singing and a desire to grow.

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For details and to schedule your audition, email us at [info@hickorytreechorus.org](mailto:info@hickorytreechorus.org) or call 908-377-1399.



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## ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH PARISHIONERS' CLOTHES DONATIONS DELIVERED TO NEWARK

**Cranford Knights of Columbus - # 6226**

The Cranford Knights of Columbus Council # 6226 recently supported the 2025 Franciscan Charities Fall Coat Drive in Newark led by Brother Keith Santulli. Over several weeks, Brother Knight volunteers collected, sorted and delivered hundreds of articles of clothing donated by St. Michael's Church parishioners with over 15 contractor sized bags of donations in total.

Brother Knights delivered all that was collected and helped distribute more than 1,500 coats, hats, gloves and scarves to over 650 needy families in Newark's Central Ward along with serving 350 hot lunches. The Franciscan Charities is a charitable organization that operates Franciscan Kitchens providing meals and a variety of social services to their needy neighbors

in the Central and West wards of Newark, NJ. Special thanks to our Pastor Father Marc Vicari, the St. Michael's Parish Community and Parish Staff and Brother Santulli who spearheads this worthy Council charitable initiative every year.

Since the Council's founding in 1970, the Cranford Knights of Columbus is a Catholic Men's Fraternal Organization dedicated to our four core principles, Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. The Cranford Council supports many worthy charities and civic causes and is committed to being a viable part of our community nationally, statewide and locally. For information about joining the Cranford Council, please contact our Grand Knight Tom Turner at 908-884-4083, or visit our website: cranfordknights.org



(above, l-r) Brother Joseph Patella, Past Grand Knight Jerry Conheeney, and Brother Knights Keith Santulli, Tom Molfetto, and Jim Dino.

Courtesy Photo

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- Heather H.



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- Anne B.



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- Dawn S



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### Basement Waterproofing & Finishing

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- Steven C



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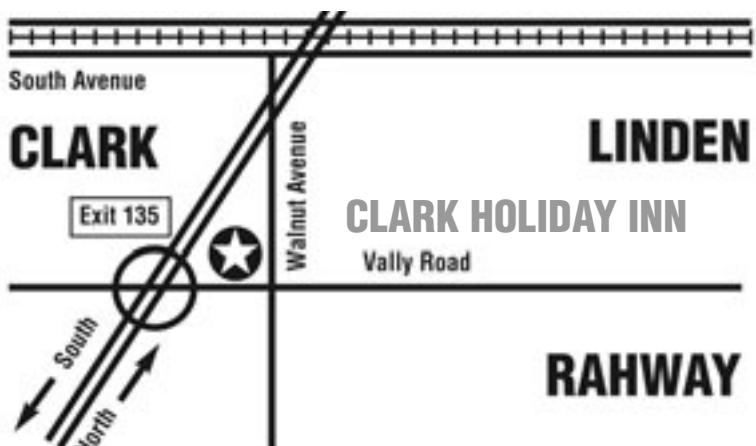
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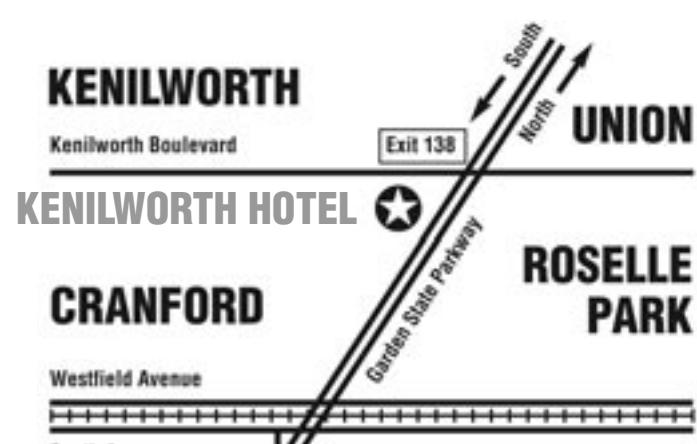
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The series runs for 12 weeks on Monday nights beginning at 7:30 p.m. and ending at 9:00 p.m. It will begin February 2nd, 2026, and end May 4th, 2026. Five of the sessions are live in person and the remainder are on Zoom. There is no cost to participate. You will need a desire for frank discussion, a willingness to participate and a commitment to attend. You will also need a computer or smartphone capable of Zoom sessions.

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## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

On Saturday, December 6th, the Knights of Columbus proudly supported Saint Michael School with their annual Breakfast with Santa. The Knights generously donated the entire breakfast and provided two shifts of 45 members who helped cook, clean, and distribute coloring books and crayons to the children. The event was a resounding success, serving breakfast to 300 attendees.

A highlight of the morning was Santa's arrival. He walked through the cafeteria, taking the time to sit with each child and listen to their Christmas

wishes, creating memorable moments for everyone involved.

The Cranford Knights of Columbus is a Catholic fraternal organization dedicated to our four Core Principles: Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. Our Cranford Council actively supports various charitable and civic causes at local, state, and national levels, and we are committed to being a positive and engaged part of our community. For more info about joining, please contact our Grand Knight, Tom Turner, at 908-884-4083 or visit our website.



Courtesy Photo

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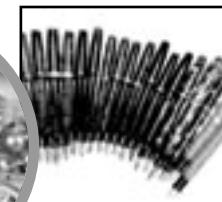
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## CRANFORD KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL

**Submitted by John Doolan**

The Cranford Knights of Columbus Council #6226 recently made a ceremonial check presentation to the Madd Ox Foundation at the November General Meeting held at the Garwood Columbian Club Hall. The Madd Ox Foundation is a non-profit organization driven by a deep commitment to raising awareness, supporting families and advancing research to prevent stillbirth and ease its impact. The Council donated

\$5,000 from the proceeds of our Annual Golf held in September at the Galloping Hill Golf Course in Kenilworth, NJ.

We would like to thank all of the local businesses and organizations for their help and support that continues to make this worthy event a success each and every year. Since its inception in 2004, the Council's Annual Golf Outing has raised over \$400,000, which has been used to help worthy charities and organizations that the

Council supports on an annual basis.

Since the Council's founding in 1970, the Cranford Knights of Columbus is a Catholic Men's Fraternal Organization dedicated to our four core principles, Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. The Cranford Council supports many worthy charities and civic causes and is committed to being a viable part of our community nationally, statewide and locally. For information about joining the Cranford Council, please contact our Grand Knight Tom Turner at 908-884-4083 or visit our web site, cranfordknights.org.



(above, l-r) Pictured in the check presentation photo fare Grand Knight Tom Turner, Brother Knight Rich Leahey, Past Grand Knight John Doolan, Jennifer Gomes-Lemon, Malcolm Lemon, Past Grand Knight Jerry Conheeney, David Lemon, Past Grand Knight John McKeary, Brother Knight Paul Zissler and Worthy Chaplain Monsignor Tim Shugrue.

Courtesy Photo

## GRATITUDE GRANT FROM ELKS FOUNDATION

Cranford Elks recently presented a check in the amount of \$2,500 to Madd Ox Foundation as part of the Gratitude Grant from Elks National Foundation.

Madd Ox Foundation is a non-profit

organization dedicated to raising awareness, supporting families, and advancing research to prevent stillbirth and alleviate its impact.

Learn more about them at [maddoxfoundation.org](http://maddoxfoundation.org).

Courtesy Photo



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## TRY DRY JANUARY

The CDC defines drinking in moderation by limiting intake to 2 drinks or less in a day for men or 1 drink or less in a day for women. Heavier drinking and long-term drinking can increase physical and mental problems. The concept of Dry January, wishing to cut down on your alcohol intake, or simply wanting to begin the new year with a clean slate by choosing not to drink beer, wine, or spirits for one month, appeals to someone who may have noticed a pattern that they're drinking a little bit more than they should, especially during the holidays.

### THERE ARE BENEFITS TO DRY JANUARY:

- You'll get a mood boost.
- You'll sleep more soundly.
- You might feel less bloated or even drop a few pounds.
- You'll save money.
- Your skin might look brighter.
- You'll have a stronger immune system.
- You'll feel better in the morning.
- You'll have a new relationship with alcohol.

A month may seem like a long time, but most people can be successful. Here are some tips for a successful Dry January:

Find a substitute non-alcoholic drink. For social situations, or when you crave a cocktail after a long day, reach for alcohol-free beverages like sparkling water, soda, or virgin beverages (non-alcoholic versions of alcoholic drinks.)

Non-alcoholic beer or wine also is an option, but some brands still contain up to 0.5% alcohol by volume, so check the label.

Avoid temptations. Keep alcohol out of your house. When you are invited to someone's home, bring your non-alcoholic drinks with you.

Create a support group. Let friends and family know about your intentions and encourage them to keep you accountable. Better yet, enlist someone to do the challenge with you.

Use the Try Dry app. This free app helps you track your drinking, set personal goals, and offers motivational information like calories and money saved from not drinking. It's aimed at cutting back on or cutting out alcohol, depending on your choices.

Don't give up. If you slip up, don't feel guilty. Just begin again the next day.

If you found Dry January to be a positive experience, why not consider extending it a little longer or gradually decreasing your alcohol consumption? Embracing these small changes could lead to lasting improvements in overall health and well-being.

Written by Amy Lewis, MPH, MCHES, Health Educator, Westfield Regional Health Department, on behalf of the Mayors Wellness Campaign.

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## BROOK ARTS CENTER ANNOUNCES IT 2ND SPEAKEASY SOIREE AND SILENT AUCTION.

The historic Brook Arts Center is proud to announce its Second Annual Speakeasy Soirée & Silent Auction, Friday, January 23, 2026, at 7:00 PM. This Roaring '20s-themed evening promises an unforgettable night of glitz, glamour, entertainment, and support for one of Somerset County New Jersey's historic landmarks.

Guests will be transported back to the golden age as they enjoy live music, period-inspired entertainment, and a lavish buffet.

The evening's highlight is a silent auction featuring more than 100 exclusive items, including a cruise getaway, a Bradford Portraits gift certificate with a private photo session, a 20-inch framed wall portrait and luxury hotel stay, four VIP tickets to Meadowlands Racing with dinner and winner's circle photos, designer handbags, sports memorabilia, dining and spa packages and so much more.

Tickets are \$50 per person or \$80 per couple and include buffet dining, live music, live

entertainment, and a cash bar.

Attendees are encouraged to dress in their finest 1920s-inspired attire to fully embrace the spirit of the evening.

The Speakeasy Soirée is the Brook Arts Center's largest fundraiser of the year.

As a fully volunteer-run 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the Brook Arts Center relies on community support to continue with the preservation and restoration of the facility and its mission of providing high-quality entertainment, inspiring creativity, fostering community partnerships, and nurturing education and growth through the arts.

Tickets are on sale now through January 16, 2026.

To purchase tickets or learn more, visit [www.brookarts.org](http://www.brookarts.org).

Reserve your tickets today and be part of a glamorous night that helps keep the arts alive in our community.



# LIBRARY JANUARY PROGRAMS

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## CHILDREN

### Boogie on down to Baby Prom!

**Tuesday, January 27 from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.**

Children ages 0-2 and their caregivers are invited to join us for a morning of music and dancing. This program meets in room 201 of the Cranford Community Center. Fancy dress is highly encouraged but not required, photo ops will be available. No registration required.

### Exploration Stations

**Thursday, January 8.**

**We are offering two sessions of this program, one at 10:00 a.m. and the other at 11:00 a.m.**

Exploration Stations' sensory play programs are designed to engage toddlers in imaginative and educational activities. Each session is a journey through themed stations that stimulate children's senses and curiosity while promoting early literacy, cognitive development and improving social skills. For children ages 1-3.

### Cozy Storytime

**January 8 at 4:00 p.m.**

Come listen to a bedtime story and decorate your own pillowcase and ping pong ball night light. Registration is required and begins two weeks before the event, please don't register if you've attended this event in the past:

### Owl Moon Storytime and Hike

**December 9 at 6:00 p.m. - Hanson House**

We'll read an owl story, learn owl facts, do an owl craft, and go on a short hike around the park to look for owls! This program is for children ages 6+ with a caregiver. Registration is required and can be done online.

### Magic of Make-Believe

**Wednesday, January 14 at 10:00 a.m.**

for children ages 3-6 that blends theater games, music, movement, and imaginative play designed to spark creativity, build confidence, and nurture social-emotional growth in early childhood. This program meets on Registration is required and can be done online

### Egg Carton New Jersey Forest

**Friday, January 16 at 4:00 p.m.**

Children ages 5 and up. Create a mini forest using egg cartons! Paint an egg carton, color in some wildlife and plants, glue it all together, and learn some fun facts about nature in our state. This program is for children ages 5+. Space is limited and registration is required, call or stop by the Children's Department to reserve a spot up to two weeks in advance.

### Finger Paint Friday

**Friday, January 19 at 10:15 a.m.**

Toddlers are invited to make some toddler-friendly art! This program is best suited to children ages 2+ with a caregiver and meets in the Community Center. No registration required, dress for a mess.

### Graphic Novel Book Club

**Monday, January 26 at 6:00 p.m.**

Fans of graphic novels and comics in grades 3-5 are invited to join us. This month, we'll be reading The Firelight Apprentice by Bree Paulsen. Registration is required and can be done online.

## ADULTS

### Romance Readers Book Club

**Monday, January 5, at 7pm**

Join us for our Romance Readers Book Club. Today's book is "Voices in the Snow" by Darcy Coates. If you don't want to read that book, or for some reason can't find a copy, feel free to come anyway to discuss whichever romance you've recently read.

### Movie Night

**Wednesday, January 7, at 7pm**

Join us the first Wednesday of the month for a screening of a recently released DVD! Visit our website or contact the library for film titles.

### Junk Journaling

**Thursday, January 8, at 6:30pm**

Join us at our new monthly program to create and add to your very own junk journal! Please visit our website for more information.

### Lit Cafe

**Saturday, January 10, at 10:15am**

Literary Café is a book chat program. The format is simple: Bring a few of your recent favorite books and tell the other members of the group what you like about them. There is no required reading, and you will have the opportunity to learn about books recommended by other group members. Admission is free and all are welcome. Light refreshments provided by the Friends of the Cranford Public Library. Attend in person or on Zoom (contact library for link). Lit Cafe will meet Fridays in the Summer and return to Saturdays in the Fall.

### International Film

**Monday, January 12, at 12:30pm and 7pm**

Join us for an International film screening. The same film will be shown at 12:30pm and 7pm. Please contact the library for the film title.

### Adults Create

**Tuesday, January 13, at 7pm**

Join us the second Tuesday of the month for crafts! All supplies will be provided! Space is limited; please visit our website to register and for more information about this month's craft.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Cranford

Public Library.

### Theater Project

**Saturday, January 17, at 2pm**

The Friends of the Cranford Public Library invite everyone to attend a live theatrical performance! New Jersey's own Theater Project will present a reading of an original short play. The reading will be followed by a question and answer session with the audience, director, playwright and cast. This program has been made possible by funds from the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Funds also provided by the Friends of the Cranford Library. No registration needed.

### Wednesday Morning Adult Craft

**January 21, at 10am**

Join us for crafts! Visit our website to register and for more information about this month's craft. Sponsored by the Friends of the Cranford Public Library.

## Trivia Night

**Wednesday, January 21, at 7pm**

Join us for another fun evening of trivia! This free event is hosted by the Friends of the Cranford Public Library! Join us in the Community Room on the first floor of the Community Center! Feel free to bring your own snacks and (non-alcoholic) drinks. Prizes awarded to the winning team. Please visit our website or contact the library to register.

### Books and (Coffee Brew)

**Monday, January 26, at 2pm and 7pm**

Join us for our monthly book discussion at The Morning Roast! Visit our website for book titles and more information. Coffee and non-alcoholic beverages will be available for purchase.

### Readers' Forum Book Club

**Monday, January 26, at 7pm**

All are welcome to join this book club! Additional copies are available at the Circulation Desk. This month's book is Remarkably Bright Creatures.



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MONTHLY NJ**

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**Elmora Hills  
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**Qty: 9,900**

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**Qty: 4,700**

Zip: 07936

**Qty: 5,400**

Zip: 07208

Section of Elizabeth, NJ

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**Florham Park Press NJ**

**Garwood Times NJ**

**Green Brook Gazette NJ**

**HANOVER TOWNSHIP PRESS NJ**  
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KENILWORTH NJ**

**NJ LIFE in LINDEN**

**Livingston Monthly NJ**

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**Qty: 6,000**

Zip: 07932

**Qty: 2,500**

Zip: 07027

**Qty: 3,300**

Zip: 08812

**Qty: 6,100**

Zips: 07927, 07981

**Qty: 3,500**

Zip: 07035

**Qty: 18,000**

Zip: 07036

**Qty: 12,100**

Zip: 07039

**Long Hill Leader NJ**

**MADISON MONTHLY NJ**

**Short Hills MILLBURN MONTHLY NJ**

**MORRIS TOWNSHIP TIMES NJ**

**MORRISTOWN MONTHLY NJ**

**MOUNTAINSIDE VIEW NJ**

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**OUR TOWN Rahway, NJ**

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07946, 07980

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**Qty: 8,200**

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07078

**Qty: 13,500**

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**Qty: 7,000**

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**Qty: 9,600**

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**Qty: 7,800**

Zip: 07083 (partial)

**Qty: 6,500**

Zip: 07059

**Qty: 2,700**

Zip: 07069

**Qty: 12,000**

Zip: 07090

## NEWSPAPER AD RATES

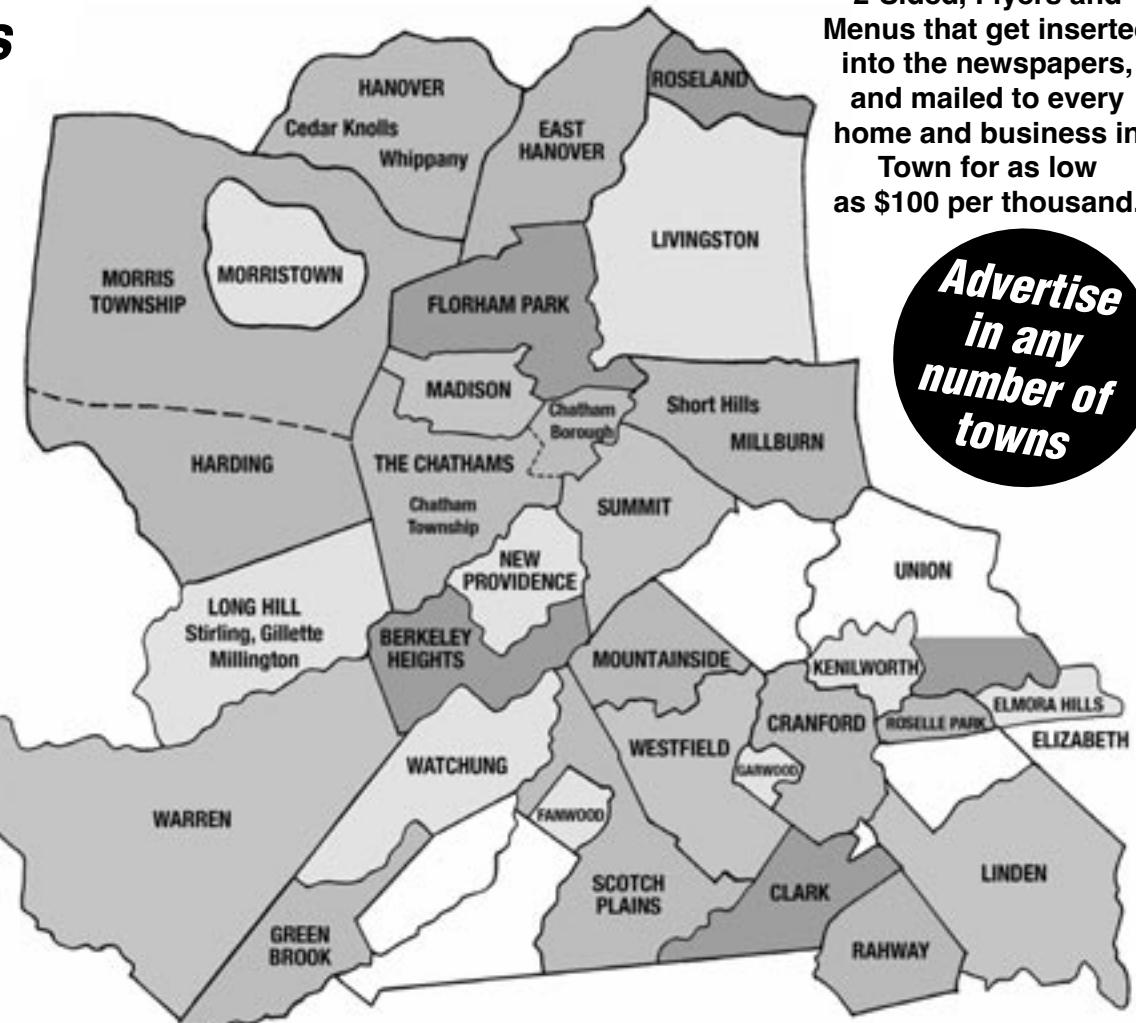
Units (wide x High)	Size	1 TOWN	3 TOWNS	6 TOWNS	9 TOWNS	12 TOWNS	15 TOWNS	18 TOWNS	21 TOWNS	24 TOWNS	27 TOWNS	30 TOWNS
<b>1 Unit (Business card)</b>	3.25"x2"0	<b>100</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1000</b>
<b>2 Units</b>	6.5"x2" or 3.25"x4"	<b>150</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>1100</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1300</b>
<b>4 Units</b>	3.25"x8" or 6.5"x4"	<b>240</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>1300</b>	<b>1600</b>	<b>1700</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2100</b>
<b>6 Units</b>	6.5"x6.25" or 10"x4"	<b>320</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>1600</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2200</b>	<b>2400</b>	<b>2600</b>	<b>2800</b>
<b>9 HALF PAGE</b>	6.5"x9" or 10"x7"	<b>360</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>1300</b>	<b>1600</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>2200</b>	<b>2400</b>	<b>2600</b>	<b>2800</b>	<b>3000</b>	<b>3200</b>
<b>12 Units</b>	6.5"x14"	<b>400</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>2100</b>	<b>2400</b>	<b>2700</b>	<b>3000</b>	<b>3300</b>	<b>3600</b>	<b>3900</b>
<b>18 FULL PAGE</b>	10"x14"	<b>500</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>2200</b>	<b>2500</b>	<b>2800</b>	<b>3000</b>	<b>3300</b>	<b>3600</b>	<b>3900</b>	<b>4300</b>
<b>2-PAGE SPREAD</b>	(2) 10"x14"	<b>800</b>										
<b>BACK PAGE</b>	10"x14"	<b>600</b>										
<b>FRONT PAGE BANNER</b>	8.25"x2"	<b>360</b>										
<b>FRONT PAGE BOX</b>	1.5"x4.5"	<b>320</b>										

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## STATE CANCELS LEGAL NOTICE MANDATE

We rarely ever hear about the government reducing taxes but it happened this year when New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy eliminated the mandate that legal notices must be printed in a newspaper.

The antiquated mandate is decades old and the cost for the advertising was paid for by public funds from municipalities, counties, school districts, and independent authorities. It was a lucrative business for the publications and more recently the majority of their revenue. Without the mandate the fear in the newspaper industry was that the publications relying on the legal advertising income will not survive.

In some cases the majority of content in the newspaper had been the legal ads. In question was the criteria for the mandate, i.e., were the publications meeting the required numbers of

paid subscriptions, and circulation.

The idea of doing away with the mandate, though practical, was considered political poison. No lawmaker wanted to be deemed responsible as the cause for newspapers' closures and people losing their jobs. During the Governor Christi administration the Star Ledger warned that doing away with the mandates would cause 250 weekly newspapers to close.

What brought about the change is a successful lawsuit filed by the County of Warren which named the Star Ledger and Daily Record as defendants. The suit may have been the last straw in the Ledger's decision to stop printing the newspaper in January of 2025.

Local governments will now be required to publish their legal notices on their websites.

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