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## ANNUAL CELEBRATION KICKS OFF THE HOLIDAY SEASON

On Sunday, December 7th, residents were invited to the North Avenue Train Station for the return of Fanwood's annual Holiday Celebration and Tree Lighting Ceremony. Santa was available for visits and photos and there were free refreshments, a petting zoo, and more.



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We begin by sharing a meal together and getting to know each other. We watch a video together then break into small groups for uninhibited discussion about what is on our minds.

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.

The live in person sessions will be held at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, 1571 S. Martine Ave., Scotch Plains, NJ.

To register go onto [IHMParish.net/Alpha](http://IHMParish.net/Alpha).  
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## THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

### College Club of Fanwood-Scotch Plains

Please join us on January 19th for "The Great Backyard Bird Count" presented by Mr. Zachary Rittner. You will learn how to help collect data for ornithologists (scientists who study birds) right in your own corner of town.

The event is free and open to the public. It will be held on January 19th at 7:30 p.m., at Mira Vie, located at 295 South Avenue Fanwood. Come and bring guests to this informative event.

Refreshments will be served.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day community project that will run from February 13-16th 2026. Anyone can assist with this project by using apps like eBird and Merlin during these dates to collect information about local birds that is useful to scientists studying bird populations and trends. Mr. Rittner will present a helpful slide show presentation explaining this important community event.

*(left) Zachary Rittner received his B.S. in Biology from Union College in Schenectady, NY, his M.A. in teaching at Montclair State University, and an M.S. in Land Resources and Environmental Science from Montana State University. He is a National Geographic Certified Educator, a Chris Morgan Wildlife Ambassador, a Gideon Hawley Teacher of the Year in 2020 and 2023, a New Jersey Exemplary Educator, a Seasonal Naturalist Certified Educator, and was recently featured for his bird walks at Trailside Museum. In 2023 TV host Chris Morgan invited Mr. Rittner to join him in an Arctic polar bear expedition to Svalbard, Norway. He is also the head of the Environmental Sciences Department at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School.*

Courtesy Photo

## LIONS CLUB CELEBRATING 76TH ANNIVERSARY SERVING THE COMMUNITY

The Scotch Plains Lions Club was chartered in 1949 and is celebrating their 76th anniversary.

The Lions Clubs in NJ continue to serve the area with eyeglass collection boxes, Eye Screening, Lions Club International Foundation assists concerns for Hunger, Disaster Relief, Youth, Pediatric Cancer, Mental Health, Environment and Diabetes. Also we serve Camp Marcella for the Blind and Disabled in Rockaway, New Jersey. Currently, the Lions are seeking like minded individuals who are aware of the needs of the community and have the

advantage to effectively make a difference. Being a Lion empowers you to help others in a way that no one person could alone. Currently our Scotch Plains membership is low. We need to grow our Club again. You can make a difference. Scotch Plains Lions are respected citizens of the community. We give willingly of body, time and energy and extraordinary generosity to assist the community and the needy. We need servant leaders to step forward! Please contact us at 908-565-1694 and let us know you are ready to serve with the largest organization in the world!

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## TIPS ON E-BIKE SAFETY FROM RESCUE SQUAD

### Scotch Plains Rescue Squad

On an otherwise beautiful and sunny fall afternoon, a young boy in our town lost his life while riding an electronic bike. Now, many parents and children are wondering what they can do to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Growing up, many of us had bicycles that could only go as fast as our legs could move us. And while we've known about the importance of wearing bike helmets for quite a long time, that isn't always enough. Some of these bikes can reach speeds of over 60 mph, making them more challenging to stop and control in emergency situations.

According to Columbia University researchers, e-bike injuries rose by 293% nationally from 2019 to 2022. That's a startling number. State Senate President Nicholas Scutari recently announced that he will introduce a bill to make

electric bike riding safer for users in New Jersey. However, even if this bill passes, it may take some time to implement. In the meantime, it's imperative that parents ensure that their children are aware of bicycle road safety and how to handle these types of bikes.

### HERE ARE SOME GREAT TIPS FROM AAA:

Determine the right electronic bike for your child. There are three classes, with different speed capabilities and controls, and various sizes, so ensure the fit is right for your child and the weight of the bike is manageable. Wider tires provide more stability, and some e-bikes even come with parent-adjustable speed settings and speed limiters, as well as app-based monitoring.

Ensure your child is responsible and skilled enough to handle an e-bike. Have them become comfortable and proficient on a regular bike first. If possible, ride with them, and make sure they are not easily distracted, have a superior sense of

balance and motor skills, and can effectively steer and control the bike. Enrolling your child in an e-bike safety course is also a great option.

Have them wear a properly fitting helmet. Visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and follow its steps to ensure the helmet fits correctly.

Make sure they're visible to others on the road. They should be wearing bright clothing during the day and light-colored or reflective clothing in the evenings. E-bikes should be equipped with headlights, taillights, and a red rear reflector.

Obey the rules of the road & e-bike laws, which are often the same as those for other motorists. These include obeying traffic lights and signs, as well as knowing and observing right-of-way laws. Stopping at crosswalks for pedestrians, going with the flow of traffic, riding as close to the right edge of the road as possible, and not blocking traffic on bike trails, paths, and lanes are also critical. Explain the importance of always signaling when making turns, making eye contact with motorists, and avoiding weaving in and out of traffic.

Talk to your kids about responsible riding. Emphasize the dangers of higher speeds, including reduced reaction times and an increased risk of loss of control and serious injury.

Ensure the bike is in top condition & keep up with maintenance. Inspect tires, brakes, controls, and displays on a regular basis.

*Contributing Author: Susan Baldani, a life member of the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad.*



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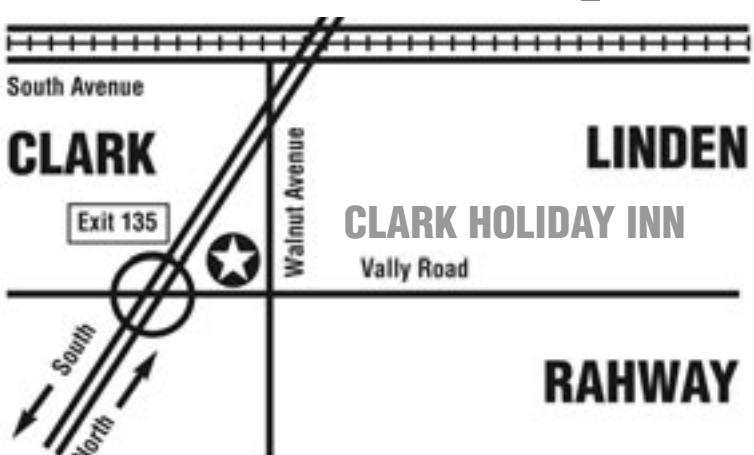
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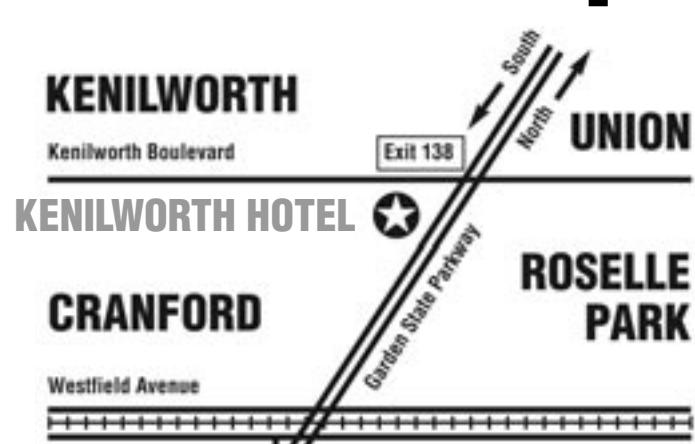
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## JANUARY SPEAKERS PROGRAM FOR THE SUMMIT AREA OLD GUARD

The Summit Area Old Guard is a social, educational, and recreational organization that serves men of retirement age. We meet Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m., at the New Providence Presbyterian Church located at 1307 Springfield Ave – we encourage visitation, and all are welcome. Our motto is “Come for the Programs. Stay for the Friends.” The organization was founded in 1930. Our website address is [summitoldguard.org](http://summitoldguard.org).

In January, we will have four speakers:

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 6TH: RICHARD LANDER

Shares a deep, personal connection to the Civil War as the great-grandson of John R. Lander, a Union soldier. John emigrated from Germany and enlisted with an Illinois regiment at the remarkably early age of fourteen, serving for the entire duration of the war. This military service instilled a generational interest: members of the Lander family have continuously studied the Civil War and maintained membership in the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW). In his presentation, Richard will detail the complex tapestry of events that led to the conflict, covering the cultural, political, economic, and military factors at play. Attendees are encouraged to note the striking parallels between these historical forces and current events.

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 13TH: DR. DEAN EPPLER

Though the Apollo Program was a revolutionary 20th-century achievement, many of its difficulties and successes have faded into

historical obscurity. Dr. Dean Eppler, a retired NASA scientist with over 35 years in human spaceflight, possesses the breadth of experience to bring the mission into focus. His background includes Apollo Program history, advanced space suit engineering, ISS facility development, and training/selecting astronauts (1990, 1996, and 1998 selections). Dr. Eppler will identify the key areas of the mission's success and discuss Apollo's enduring contributions to human spaceflight.

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 20TH: HOWARD MEYER

A long-time leader in New Jersey volunteer EMS. He is the past president of the EMS Council of New Jersey, the country's largest volunteer squad association, and served as its volunteer legislative director for over 20 years. Since 1971, he has served in leadership roles, including president and chief, across all types of New Jersey environments—rural, suburban, and urban. Howard will detail the history and

evolution of the volunteer EMS system, highlighting its critical importance to the state. His talk will cover key events and the major challenges volunteer squads face moving forward.

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 27TH: BOB GULA

The Forgotten Victory Trail explores one of America's most overlooked Revolutionary chapters in the brutal campaigns of 1780 in NJ, when burning towns, secret networks, and fierce local resistance helped turn the tide of the war. The Battles of Springfield and Connecticut Farms in June 1780 were critical in the defense of New Jersey (and Washington's forces in Morristown) and in the weakening of the British Forces ahead of the Battle of Yorktown. Our speaker will be Bob Gula, Education Officer –West Fields Chapter of Sons of the American Revolution Patriotic Instructor, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Member and General Society of Mayflower Descendants.



(above, l-r) Richard Lander, Dr. Eppler, Howard Meyer, Robert Gula

## HICKORY TREE CHORUS INVITES ACAPPELLA SINGERS TO OPEN AUDITIONS

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

Performing in communities throughout northern and central New Jersey, the chorus enjoys singing recognizable popular songs – arranged in rich four-part harmony.

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.

This is more than a chorus—it's a sisterhood, a mission, and a moment. Will your voice be part of it?

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



(above) The award-winning Hickory Tree Chorus invites you to join the sisterhood. For details and to schedule your audition, email us at [info@hickorytreechorus.org](mailto:info@hickorytreechorus.org) or call 908-377-1399.

Courtesy Photo

## 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.



## DONATIONS NEEDED FOR GIFT BASKETS

### Scotch Plains Volunteer Rescue Squad Auxiliary

The Scotch Plains Volunteer Rescue Squad Auxiliary is gearing up to host another amazing Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, February 22, 2026. To help make this annual get-together even more fun and exciting, donations are being collected for gift baskets that will be auctioned off during the event.

Only new items will be accepted, and no shoes, clothing, or stuffed animals are needed. Please consider donating items for inclusion in the following themed basket prizes:

- Baking - Wellness - Gardening - Sports - Pets
- Health - Children - Scrapbooking - Coffee/Tea
- Comic Books - Arts and Crafts - Italian Dinner
- Games - Vacation - Holiday Items and Crazy Socks. Baskets and ribbon would also be very much appreciated.

We also encourage donors to create their own gift baskets using the themes above. This would be a great project for a family, a scout troop, or other groups looking to contribute to this worthy fundraiser.

The Auxiliary will be collecting donations on the following dates at the Rescue Squad building at 1916 Bartle Avenue, starting January 27, 2026, through February 14, 2026, on Tuesdays and Fridays from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The Scotch Plains Volunteer Rescue Squad Auxiliary meets once a month, and its grassroots function is to assist the Squad in many capacities – from attending town functions such as street fairs, concerts, and holiday events to connect with the community and promote Squad interests to holding fundraisers and performing outreach to squad and fellow auxiliary members.

If interested in becoming a member of the Auxiliary, come by the Squad building one evening to pick up an application, or email [SPRSAuxiliary@scotchplainsrescuesquad.com](mailto:SPRSAuxiliary@scotchplainsrescuesquad.com).

Thank you for your support!

*Contributing Author: Susan Baldani, a life member of the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad.*



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**360**

**FRONT PAGE BOX**  
1.5"x4.5"

**320**

**Units (wide x High)**

**Size**

**1 Unit (Business card)**

**3.25"x2"0**

**2 Units**

**6.5"x2" or 3.25"x4"**

**4 Units**

**3.25"x8" or 6.5"x4"**

**6 Units**

**6.5"x6.25" or 10"x4"**

**9 HALF PAGE**

**6.5"x9" or 10"x7"**

**12 Units**

**6.5"x14"**

**18 FULL PAGE**

**10"x14"**

**FRONT PAGE BANNER**

**8.25"x2"**

**FRONT PAGE BOX**

**1.5"x4.5"**

**100**

**260**

**360**

**460**

**560**

**1200**

**1400**

**2200**

**2100**

**2500**

**2400**

**2800**

**2700**

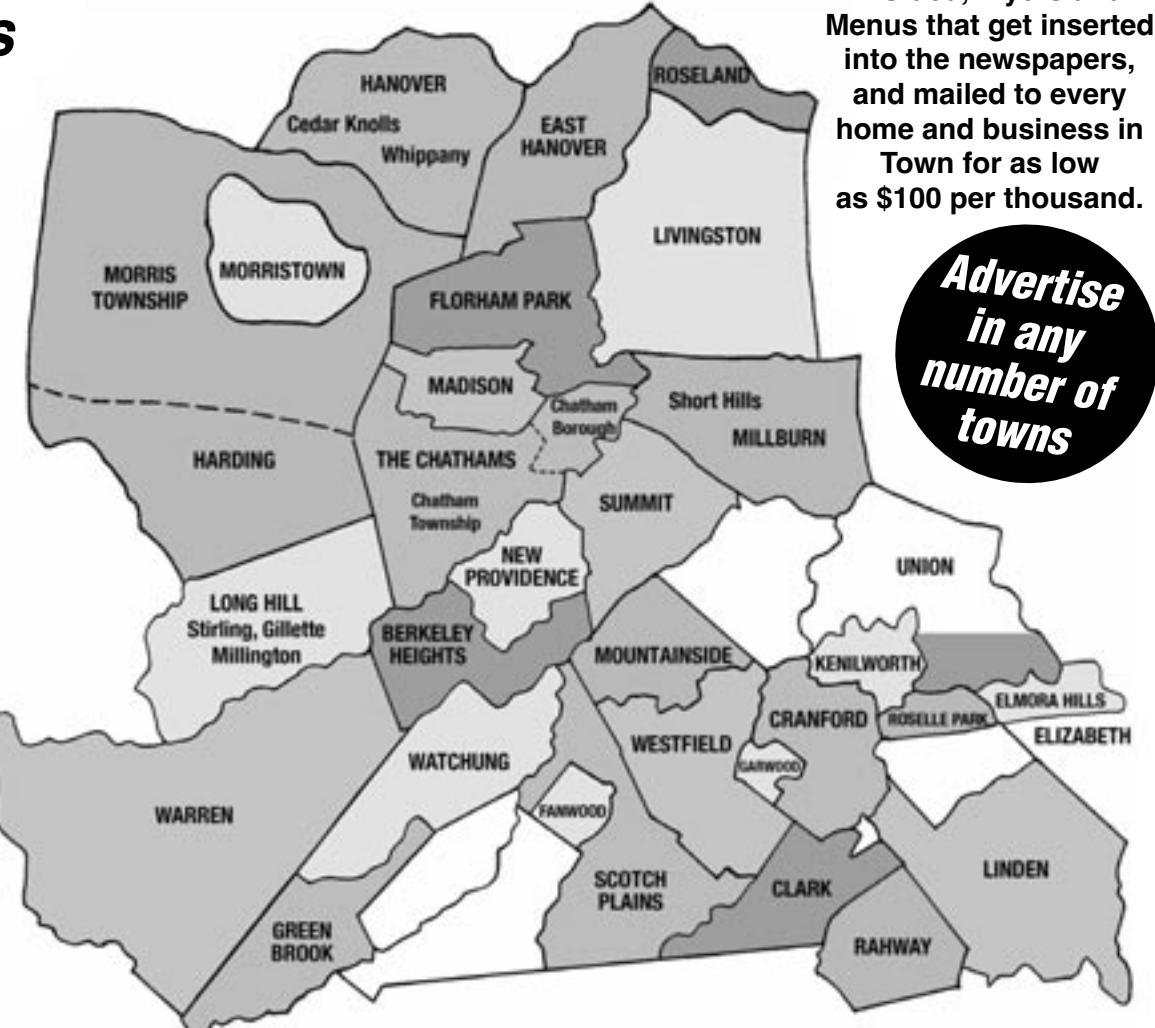
**3000**

**3300**

**3600**

**3900**

**4300**



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in any  
number of  
towns**

We print Full Color  
2-Sided, Flyers and  
Menus that get inserted  
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home and business in  
Town for as low  
as \$100 per thousand.

Rates are per month. Artwork included in price. Newspapers are black on white.

Rates effective November 1, 2024. Subject to change. See RennaMedia.com for most up to date pricing.

Make Checks payable to Renna Media • Venmo • Zelle •



Back cover, Front Page Banner and Front Box reserved on first-come, first-served basis.

Current advertiser has right of first refusal.

**PREPAY 6 MONTHS AND GET 1 MORE FREE  
PREPAY 12 MONTHS AND GET 3 MORE FREE**

## 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.

### FULL COLOR FLYERS / BROCHURES / MENUS

**PRINTING & MAILING TO  
EVERY HOME & BUSINESS \$100  
per thousand**

Minimum of 10,000 Inserted in Renna Media Newspapers.  
PDF artwork supplied. Call for details and custom orders.



#### PRINTING

**8 1/2" x 11" \$45 per thousand**

Minimum cost is \$450. Tri-folding add \$15 per thousand.  
8.5" x 11" / full color / 2 sided / 60lb gloss coated stock

**11" x 17" \$85 per thousand**

Minimum cost is \$850. **INCLUDES FOLDING**  
Quarter-fold or Tri-fold, with coupon tab option.  
11" x 17" / full color / 2 sided / 60lb gloss coated stock

**INSERTING \$55 per thousand**

Minimum cost is \$350.

**POST CARD \$120 per thousand**

8.5" x 5" / full color / 2 sided / 9 pt. coated stock

#### STAND-ALONE EDDM

Artwork / Printing / Mail Prep / Shipping / Postage

**All inclusive price: \$400 per thousand**

**ARTWORK \$300**

Custom illustration, photography available.

Rates effective November 1, 2024. Subject to change. See RennaMedia.com for most up to date pricing.

**RENNAMEDIA.COM**

**JOE RENNA 908-447-1295**

**email: JoeRenna@RennaMedia.com**

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**\*DONE FOR YOU - NJLOCALINFO.COM\***

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**BOOST YOUR ONLINE VISIBILITY  
VISIT NJLOCALINFO.COM**

NJLocalInfo.com has developed a two-fold visibility solution that will allow your business to quickly and sustainably build organic traffic in your local market. This is done by establishing high-quality backlinks to build site authority, and by promoting your business directly to customers through their own directory.

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- Stair Rails Installed & Repaired
- Sheetrock Installed & Repaired
- Fences Installed & Repaired
- Minor Electric & Plumbing



### Bathrooms

My new Bathroom took less than 2 weeks from start to finish. Love my new heated towel rail.  
- Heather H.



### Decks & Porches

Big new Composite Deck about 43Ft. x 28Ft., built in fall 2024. Looks Spectacular.  
- Anne B.



### Kitchens

"Ryki & his guys did a great job on my mummy's kitchen remodel. He also brought me cookies every day."  
- Trinity the Pitbull

### Windows, Siding & Capping

New Siding and Custom Windows installed and Capped. Good Work and Great Price.  
- Dawn S



### Indoor & Outdoor Painting

Ryki and his guys painted the outside shakes of the house and capped all exposed wood with PVC coated aluminum. Good for another 20 years. House looks like new. - Tim & Anne R.



Had French drain and 2 sump pumps installed by Ryki's company in a very wet basement 3 years ago. Bone dry ever since. After a month when we were sure basement was dry, the Basement was finished.  
- Steven C

View our Google Reviews.



### FREE ESTIMATES!

**Duke says "Adopt, Don't Shop."  
Pet friendly - We support animal rescues**



**Licensed, Insured & Bonded  
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**MY HANDYMAN & PAINTER LLC. 100 WALNUT AVE, SUITE 210. CLARK NJ 07066**