

TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY CELEBRATES HOLIDAY SEASON

Santa came to town for the 39th annual Borough of Mountainside Tree Lighting celebration which took place on Saturday, December 6, 2025. Afterwards the Recreation Department invited all Mountainside residents to a free night of ice skating at the Westfield Rink.



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**MOUNTAINSIDE STUDENT NICHOLAS CARUVANA
ACCEPTED TO ACADEMY AT WEST POINT**

Submitted by Rosina Caruvana

The family of Nicholas Caruvana proudly announces Nicholas’ acceptance to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Nicholas, a resident of Mountainside, New Jersey, earned this prestigious honor through his dedication, academic excellence, leadership, and unwavering character.

“Success is not final; failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts,” wrote Winston Churchill — a guiding quote that reflects Nicholas’s journey. Throughout his years in school and the community, he has demonstrated discipline, integrity, compassion, and a commitment to serving something greater than himself.

At West Point, Nicholas will begin the next chapter of his life guided by the Academy’s timeless creed: “Duty, Honor, Country.” This motto reflects the values he already carries and the leader he is becoming.

Nicholas’s acceptance to West Point represents a remarkable achievement and the beginning of a distinguished path built on hard work, strong values, and service. His family celebrates this milestone with immense pride and looks forward to the future he will shape through honor and commitment.



(above) Nicholas Caruvana

Courtesy Photo

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CAFE FOR THOSE WITH MEMORY LOSS

Christ Church, Summit, NJ

Too often, those living with memory loss can suffer from social stigma and isolation. A Memory Cafe is a social gathering for those living with cognitive loss, together with their care-partners. It's a welcoming community where all feel safe, accepted, and understood.

"The Gathering Place" is a monthly Memory Cafe hosted by volunteers at Christ Church in Summit. They meet the first Wednesday of every month, from 12 - 2 p.m.

Guests socialize over a light, nutritious lunch and share friendship, information, and often a few laughs. It is non-sectarian and all are welcome. From guests: "It was enjoyable, uplifting, and worthwhile," and "I wish my mother had something like this to participate in while she was able."

A suggested donation is \$5 per person. RSVP is requested for menu-planning. Contact Brenda Dodds 908 273-5549 or brenda@ccsnj.org. Christ Church is located at 561 Springfield Avenue, Summit, NJ.

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FRIENDS LIBRARY GOLF FUNDRAISER

The Friends of the Mountainside Library invite the community to a one-of-a-kind fundraising event that transforms the library into an 18-hole indoor mini golf course. The two-day event, held Friday, January 30, and Saturday, January 31, offers fun for all ages.

Adults-Only Night Friday, January 30

An evening of mini golf, light bites, and mocktails
6-10 pm' -\$20/person (advance purchase)
\$25 at the door (Cash, check or Venmo)

Family Mini Golf Day Saturday, January 31

A full day of family-friendly mini golf
10-am-4 pm-\$5 per person for one round of golf
(Kids under 3 free; maximum \$25 per family)
Tickets available at the door
(Cash, check or Venmo)

Each hole will be sponsored and creatively decorated by local businesses and community groups, making for a one-of-a-kind course. All mini golf equipment including clubs, balls, and scorecards will be provided.

"This is such a fun and creative way to bring the community together while supporting the library" said Dayle Treece, President of the Friends. "Funds raised will help us expand library programs and activities that serve residents of all ages."

Whether you're a golf enthusiast or looking for a fun family event, mark your calendars for this fun community event!

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SANDWICH-MAKING FUNDRAISER FOR MARKET STREET MISSION

Berkeley Heights Public Schools

The Governor Livingston High School Interact Club held its annual sandwich-making fundraiser to benefit the Market Street Mission in Morristown. Just in time for the Thanksgiving holiday, approximately 75 students participated and made 1,800 peanut butter and jelly, and cold cut, sandwiches for the Market Street Mission.

The Market Street Mission, which is located in Morristown, is an organization that collects a variety of donations, including clothes and food, in order to provide resources and help those in need.

For this project, the Interact Club received community support from local businesses, who donated ham, cheese, peanut butter, jelly, and bread to make the event possible. These

businesses include Goodman's Deli, Dimaio's, Mountainside Deli, Trader Joe's, Mazzella's Gourmet Market, SubZone, Clemente's, Grazi's Kitchen, Delicious Heights, and Wegmans.

Interact, a Rotary Club affiliated service club, welcomed many freshmen and new club members, who were eager to help in this community service event in the spirit of the Thanksgiving holiday.



Courtesy Photo

OPEN HOUSE



COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN NURSERY SCHOOL

Invites You To Join Us For An Open House!

Date: Saturday, January 24th

Time: 9:00am to 11:00am

Place: 1459 Deer Path, Mountainside

For: All families interested in registering for the 2026-2027 school year!

OPEN HOUSE SPECIAL FOR NEW FAMILIES:

Register your child at our open house and take \$25 off the registration fee!

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Bathrooms

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



Kitchens

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

Decks & Porches



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

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.

Basement Waterproofing & Finishing



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



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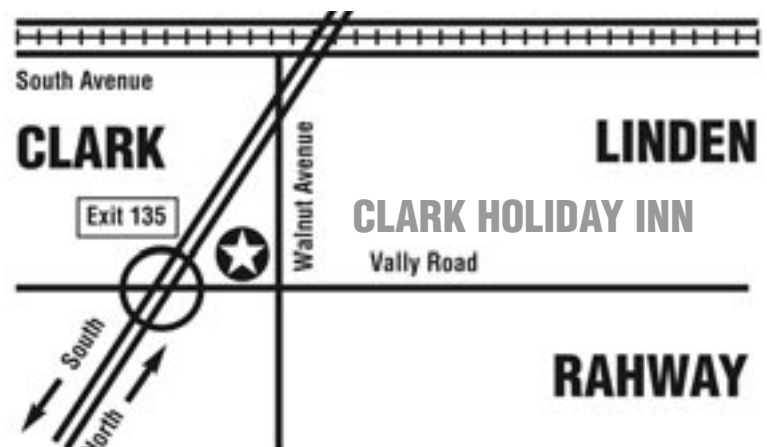
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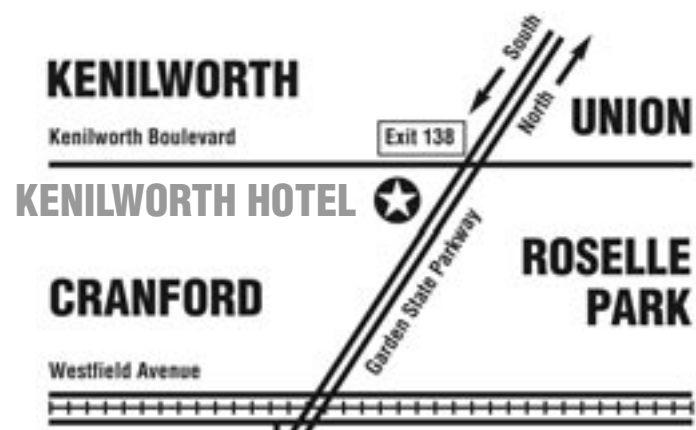
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ROTARY CLUB WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Submitted by Rose Marie Sinisi

The Rotary Club of Mountainside proudly welcomed two new members during our December meeting. New members Christopher Kinney, Superintendent of Mountainside Public Schools, and Avia Johnson, Owner of Cooking The Blues Away, were sworn in by Ray Freaney, Past District Governor, District 7475.

“We are delighted to welcome Christopher and Avia as the newest members of our Rotary family,” said Club President, Rose Marie Sinisi. “Each brings unique experience and service-centered values that reflect the Rotary mission of service above self. We look forward to the contributions they will bring to our programs and community efforts.”

The Rotary Club of Mountainside continues to welcome new members who are committed to service, fellowship and making a difference locally and globally.

We meet Thursdays at noon at Mosaico, with the exception of the third Thursday of each month, when the club gathers at 5:30 p.m. at alternative locations announced prior to meetings.

Contact Rose Marie Sinisi for info about Rotary and to confirm our meeting schedule, rotaryrose@yahoo.com, 908-625-7097.



(above, left) Christopher Kinney, Superintendent of Mountainside Schools, (right, l-r) Avia Johnson, Ray Freaney (Past District Governor 7576), and Rose Marie Sinisi (President 2025-26)

Courtesy Photo

MS. MEG BERRY TO TAKE HELM OF GLHS

Berkeley Heights Public Schools

BHPS is pleased to announce the appointment of Ms. Meg Berry as the new Principal at Governor Livingston High School. Ms. Berry will join the BHPS at the end of January 2026.



(above) GL Principal Ms. Meg Berry

Courtesy Photo

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Sat, Jan 31: Bergen Town Center
Route 4 East & Forest Ave

Sun, Feb 1: Montclair Art Museum, Montclair
3 S Mountain Ave, Montclair

Sat, Feb 7: Livingston YMCA
321 S Livingston Ave, Livingston

Sat, Feb 21: Morris Museum, Morristown
6 Normandy Heights Rd, Morristown

Sun, Feb 22: Village of Ridgewood
131 N Maple Ave, Ridgewood (next to Library)

Sat, Feb 28: Menlo Park Mall, Edison
55 Parsonage Rd, Edison

Ages 3 - 17

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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.

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

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Alpha is for everybody that wants to discuss seeking answers to life's big questions. Why are we here? Is this all there is to life? Where are we going? How do I attain peace of mind, heart, and soul? Whether you are young or old, have faith or are atheist or agnostic, Alpha provides a safe environment for exploring our big questions about life.

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.

If you have any questions,
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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.

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 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 or call 908-377-1399.

BECOME A LITERACY NJ VOLUNTEER TUTOR

Literacy New Jersey

Literacy New Jersey announces its winter Tutor Information Session on Wednesday, January 7, 2026 at 6 p.m. The Tutor Information Session is a prerequisite to registering for Literacy NJ's Tutor Training Program. The Tutor Training Program consists of 5 sessions starting on Wednesday, January 21 and will provide tutor trainees with the tools and strategies necessary for working with adult students in one of three categories: English As A Second Language (ESL), High School Equivalency (GED), or Basic Skills.

All training sessions will be conducted online via Zoom. The five required training sessions will take place on Mondays and Wednesdays. The dates are: January 21, 26, 28 and February 2 & 4 from 6 to 8 p.m. After completing the training sessions, tutors are matched with a small group of adult students from the growing waiting list of students who need to improve their literacy skills. Tutors meet with their students either online or in person in libraries throughout Union or Middlesex County for 2 hours each week. After training, tutor trainees may be matched with a tutor mentor to guide them through their first lesson plans. New tutor volunteers are asked to make a commitment of at least 50 hours of instruction with students.

Neil Esposito, a Literacy New Jersey volunteer ESL tutor said: "I'm passionate about sharing my time and ability with my students. It gives me great pleasure to witness the progress of my students over the semesters. Several of my students have reached important, personal goals directly linked to their English language progress.

One student has taken on an important telephone-based role in her husband's construction business, talking daily with English speaking clients. Another has passed her certification exam as a bi-lingual teacher's aide in a middle school. These achievements, among numerous others, are the rewards and blessings that make being a literacy volunteer a highlight

of my life."

Literacy New Jersey provides ongoing supervision and support to tutors in the form of free Professional Development workshops on specific topics such as Computer Skills for ESL students, ESL Conversation, Citizenship and Job Readiness.

To volunteer, you must be at least 18 years old, able to speak English and willing to tutor in Union or Middlesex County. You do not need to have any teaching experience and you do not need to speak a foreign language. The training will provide volunteers with techniques and strategies for working with adult learners, as well as sample instructional materials and activities. There is a \$25 registration fee to cover the cost of books and materials. Literacy New Jersey is a non-profit organization.

For more information or to register for the Tutor Information Session on Wednesday January 7, 2026, please call Literacy New Jersey at 908-486-1777 x400 or email Barbara Bagger, Program Director, at bbagger@literacynj.org.



(above) Make a difference, become a Literacy NJ volunteer tutor. For more information, or to register for the Tutor Information Session on Wednesday, January 7, 2026, please call Literacy New Jersey at 908-486-1777 x400 or email Barbara Bagger, Program Director, at bbagger@literacynj.org.

Courtesy Photo



(above) Recent graduates

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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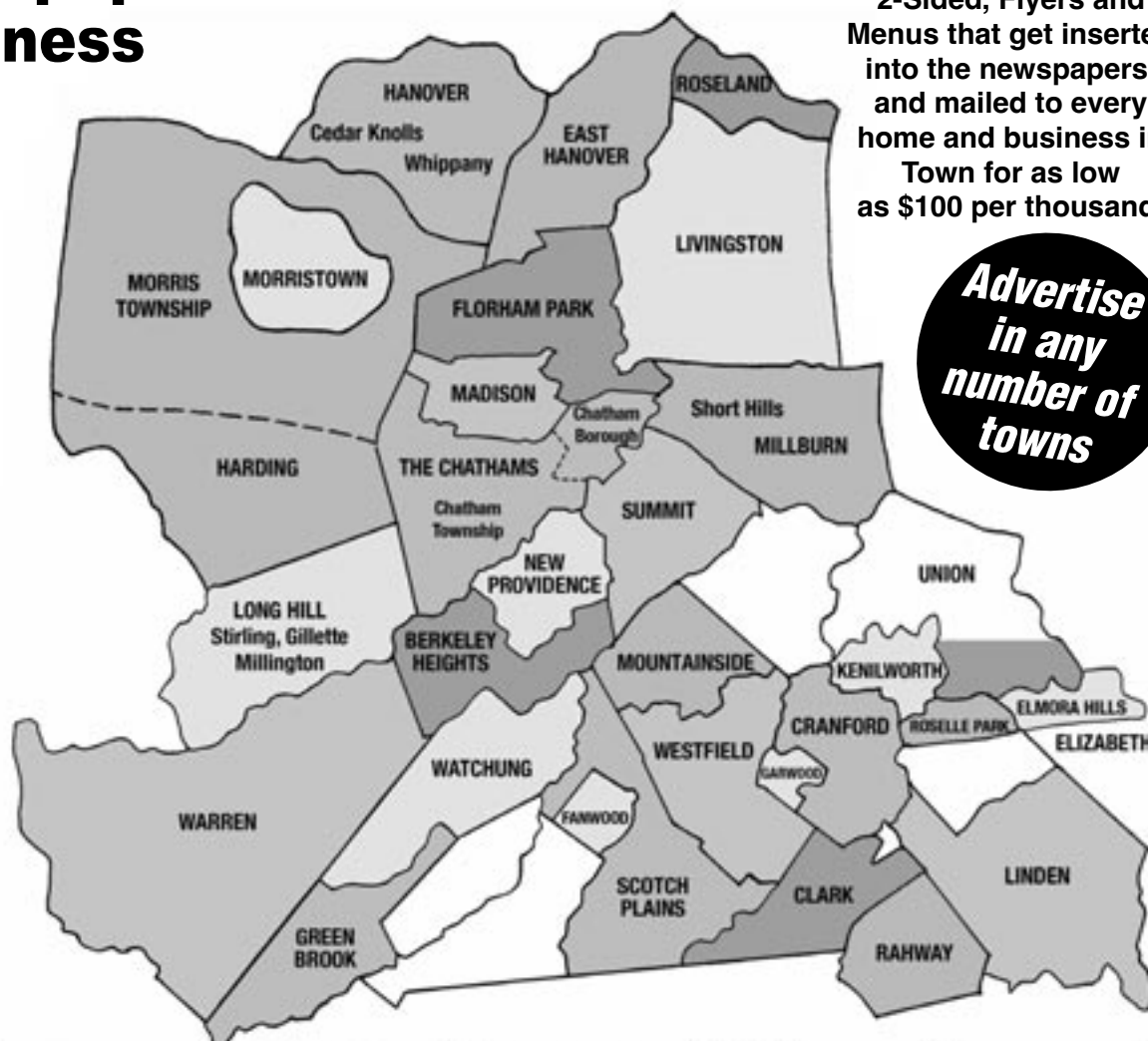
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STATE CANCELS LEGAL NOTICE MANDATE

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 advertng 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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