

CRANFORD MONTHLY_{NJ}

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FIRST AID SQUAD REPORTS 2ND BUSIEST YEAR ON RECORD

Cranford First Aid Squad

2025 was another busy year for the Cranford First Aid Squad. Volunteers worked tirelessly responding to 1,404 emergency calls, the second busiest year on record. EMTs stay overnight in the building in order to provide the fastest response time possible, resulting in an average response of one minute and 45 seconds for the ambulance to leave the building after receiving a call.

Over 600 patients were transported to 14 different hospitals, with Overlook Summit receiving the highest number. There were 4 CPR saves and numerous strokes taken directly to CT scan upon arrival.

On Friday, January 8th, 2026, members of the Cranford First Aid Squad gathered to celebrate a successful year.

CFAS continues to need volunteers, with older members who can drive being in particular need. No previous experience or training is necessary, just a desire to contribute.

Without the support and generous donations from our community, we would not be able to serve the town in the capacity we do. As a 100% volunteer organization, we solely rely on donations to keep the lights on and trucks in

The 2025 officers certainly left their mark and set high standards for the new year. We are excited to install the following operational and administrative officers for 2026.

- | | |
|--|--|
| Captain - Allen Davies | Vice President - Kent Lucas |
| 1st Lieutenant of Operations - Augustus Torres | Treasurer - Jack Cartnick |
| 2nd Lieutenant of Training - Jaden Medina | Recording Secretary - Andrea Crespo |
| 2nd Lieutenant of Rigs - Reid Abrams | Corresponding Secretary - Chloe Martin |
| 2nd Lieutenant of Medical - Raquel Atwan | Senior Cadet Captain - Chloe Martin |
| 2nd Lieutenant of Buildings - Olivia Stopiolo | Junior Cadet Captain - Natalia Ruegera |
| President - Makayla Cartnick | |

service. Thank you, Cranford, for your kindness and generosity, allowing us to do our job. We are excited for another year of serving our community.

For more info visit: cranfordfirstaid.org

Many members stood out this year for their dedication to service, leadership, and quality patient care. The members listed below received awards recognizing their impact on the Squad.

- Life Membership - Allen Davies
Life Membership - Diego Torres
Dr. Letizia Sponsored Awards:
Shining Light Award: Jaden Medina
Compass Award: Kristen Ledford
Emerging Leader Award: Jack Cartnick
Emerging Leader Award: Darren Chen
Guardian Award: Arianna Valte
Pillar of Service Award: Reid Abrams
North Star Award: Ian Spurr,
Thomas Jaskula, Joseph Polito
President's Award: Chloe Martin
Joan Nathan Award: Kent Lucas
Cadet of the Year: Natalia Reguera
Ridealong of the Year: Emmalie Viton
EMTs of the Year: Jaden Medina
and Raquel Atwan



(above) Cranford First Aid Squad 2026 officers were installed in their positions for the year at the annual installation dinner on Friday, January 9th, 2026.

Courtesy Photo

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SHARP-SHINNED HAWK RELEASED BACK TO WILD

This feisty Sharp-shinned Hawk was admitted on 12/22 after being found in a yard in Warren following a window strike. On intake, the hawk had bloody nares and mouth, consistent with head trauma often seen after collisions. The nares are a bird’s nostrils, located near the base of the beak, and bleeding there often points to head or facial trauma from collisions.

With supportive care and time to heal, this "Sharpie" as we call them, made great progress and was moved to an outside flight cage on 12/28/25. After proving strong, steady flight and good awareness, the hawk was successfully released back to the wild on 1/2/2026.

Sharp-shinned Hawks are incredibly fast and agile forest hunters, built to weave through dense trees while chasing small birds. That same speed and focus, however, can make them especially vulnerable to window strikes when reflective glass looks like open sky or habitat.

Remember, small changes matter.
ABOUT THE RAPTOR TRUST
The Raptor Trust is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization located at 1390 White Bridge Rd., Millington, NJ. They provide free care and assistance to injured, sick, or orphaned wild birds. They offer educational programs to the public about wild birds, especially birds of prey. They strive to provide a human example for others. For more information, or to make a donation visit info@theraptortrust.org. To report an injured bird call 908-647-2353.



RAPTOR TRUST SUMMER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Each year from mid-May through August, The Raptor Trust receive hundreds of injured, orphaned, or displaced nestling and fledgling songbirds found by citizens. We see this time as a perfect opportunity to provide experience and education to students who wish to learn about wildlife care and rehabilitation.

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY FEB 6TH, 2026.
To apply, please submit an application, resume, and cover letter through our website at theraptortrust.org/summer-scholars-program. A selection of 2-3 references whom we may contact is optional.
If you have any questions, please contact Amanda Cannizzo at acannizzo@theraptortrust.org
If you are interested, Visit theraptortrust.org or email volunteers@theraptortrust.org

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MOBILE MEALS OF WESTFIELD ANNUAL APPEAL

Mobile Meals of Westfield’s new President, Solange Bueno, continues the non-profit organization’s annual appeal solicitation to raise capital from supporters and organization volunteers to help fund the food program for

those individuals unable to prepare or shop for food for themselves. Mobile Meals has served the communities of Clark, Cranford, Fanwood, Garwood, Mountainside, Scotch Plains and Westfield in providing hot, affordable, prepared meals delivered to client residences since 1968. The non-profit receives no government funding and relies on contributions from donors and grants to sustain the cost of food and operations.

Mobile Meals of Westfield continues to seek donations from the community now. A \$55 donation will provide lunch and dinner for one person for one week. A \$220 donation provides lunch and dinner for 20 people. Donations in any amount are most sincerely appreciated.

For anyone interested in donating to Mobile Meals of Westfield, please call 908-233-6146, or visit mobilemealsofwestfield.org/donate, or scan this QR code.



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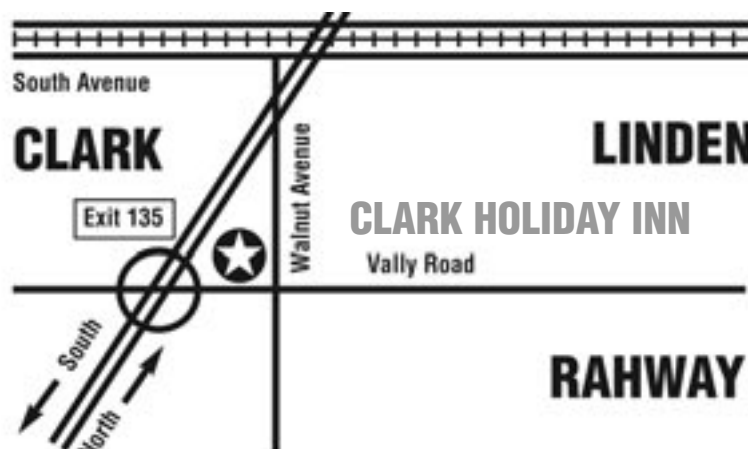
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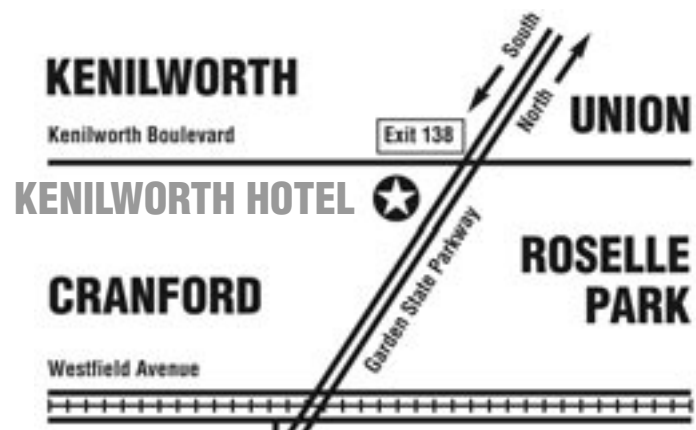
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KERRY WISCHUSEN RELEASES BOOK ON MENTAL HEALTH & MINDFULNESS



(above) Cranford High School alum, Kerry Wischusen, draws on clinical training and mindfulness practice to explore a more sustainable approach to emotional well-being in her book *Silence is Skillful*.

Courtesy Photo

Kerry Wischusen, a graduate of Cranford High School, has released a new book, *Silence is Skillful*, which explores the role of silence and presence in emotional health and modern life.

After graduating from Cranford High School, Wischusen earned her undergraduate degree from the College of Charleston and later completed her Master’s degree in Clinical Counseling at The Citadel. She now works as a licensed professional counselor in a psychiatry practice based in Charleston, South Carolina.

Wischusen’s clinical work focuses on supporting individuals experiencing anxiety, emotional overwhelm, and challenges related to sense of self. *Silence is Skillful* draws from her professional training and mindfulness background to present silence as a practical skill that supports emotional regulation and thoughtful engagement with daily life.

The book challenges common assumptions that silence implies withdrawal or disengagement, instead framing it as an active internal practice that allows for more deliberate and responsive living.

Silence is Skillful is available in paperback and digital formats as of January 1, 2026, and can be purchased through Amazon. Visit the website SilenceisSkillful.com for more information.



YOU ARE INVITED TO A WEDDING AT CDC THEATRE

A modern musical farce with heart, *It Shoulda Been You*, at CDC Theatre, 78 Winans Ave in Cranford, NJ, invites you to a wedding day where nothing goes as planned. Chaos, secrets, and laughs abound as two families, one Jewish, one Catholic, collide in a whirlwind of love, identity, and unexpected twists. Her mother is a force of nature. His mother is a tempest in a cocktail shaker. And, when the bride’s ex-boyfriend crashes the party, the perfect wedding starts to unravel. It’s up to the bride’s sister to turn a tangled mess into happily ever after in this musical comedy for anyone who has ever had parents.

This fast-paced ensemble comedy celebrates acceptance, forgiveness, and the true meaning of family. At the Steinberg wedding, nothing is what

it seems; religions collide, Machiavellian plots are revealed, promises are broken, secrets are exposed and hope springs from the most unlikely of places. The charming, funny musical, *It Shoulda Been You*, invites you to a wedding day that you’ll never forget, with blushing brides, nervous grooms, overbearing moms, unexpected guests and plenty of crazy twists and turns. Anything that can go wrong does, and love pops up in mysterious places.

Performances are Fridays and Saturdays from February 13th- 28th at 8pm, and Sundays February 22 and March 1 at 2pm.

CDC Theatre is happy to announce that as part of a new pilot program, the February 22nd matinee performance will be ASL interpreted. For tickets and more details, visit cdctheatre.org.



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MEET 2LT BRUCE E. NOSTRAND, WWII A-20 HAVOC BOMBER PILOT

Written and researched by Don Sweeney and Janet Cymbaluk Ashnault

The Cranford 86 Project is now into its tenth year of memorializing our town's fallen heroes, ensuring that the names engraved on the tablets that stand at our Memorial Park on Springfield Avenue have both a face and a story. We are proud to introduce World War II pilot 2nd Lt. Bruce E. Nostrand as our 50th fallen hero profile.

Like 56 of our Cranford fallen heroes, Bruce Nostrand was a member of our "Greatest Generation". In the Great Depression, Americans were raised during a period that taught them to do more with less. They did not let the lack of abundance be an excuse to be used for failure of completing a difficult task that lay before them. We all have heard people say that if it weren't for the men and women of the Greatest Generation, we could have never won WWII. Our team agrees wholeheartedly with this thought as we dive into the 1940's to tell yet another one of these incredible stories. Continuing down the honor roll left for us by Cranford's forefathers, we note that once again, our current honoree was a member of one of the highest levels of military service. Bruce Nostrand is among at least 27 other Cranford men, who defied the odds to qualify as one of the elite airmen who occupied the cockpits of the engineering marvels that dominated the skies in WWII. We are privileged to tell his story.

BRUCE ELLWOOD NOSTRAND - EARLY HISTORY

As a young boy Bruce experienced even more adversity than the ordinary child of the Great Depression. He was born to Clarence Bradbury Nostrand and Minnie Erdle Nostrand on March 4, 1919 in Rahway, New Jersey. But, sadly, when Bruce was just four years old, his father Clarence died from unknown causes and his mother, Minnie, deemed herself unable to raise Bruce alone. Custody was given to Bruce's grandparents John B. and Harriet in nearby Kenilworth. John B. was a poultry worker and we've seen his newspaper ads in the classified section, selling chickens, back in the day, from his home on 23rd Street. Note that we are using middle initials for clarification purposes, as the Nostrand family pays great homage to their ancestors, and many namesakes exist. Bruce graduated from elementary school in Kenilworth and then from Roselle Park High School in 1935. He lost his grandparents in the mid 1930's and was taken in by his uncle John V. Nostrand, who was just 10 years Bruce's senior. In the 1940 census, we see that Bruce, age 20, was living with his Uncle John V. his Aunt Elizabeth, and his cousin Diane, age eight, at 4 Indian Spring Road in Cranford. Later records show the Nostrands living at 15 Hamilton Avenue.

It seems that after his high school graduation, no grass grew under Bruce Nostrand's feet. He immediately secured employment in New York City at Manhattan Bank, where he worked for just six months before joining Western Electric in Kearny as a shipping clerk. The sports pages told us that Bruce played in his company's tennis club. During this time, Bruce was also studying at Rutgers University in Newark after enrolling in September of 1938. In March of 1940, for reasons unknown, Bruce withdrew from Rutgers with two thirds of his studies completed. Seemingly, with

a plan in mind, Bruce resigned from Western Electric in December of 1940.

BRUCE JOINS THE CAVALRY

The 102nd Cavalry - The Essex Troop of the New Jersey National Guard has a history that dates back to 1890, originating from Newark, New Jersey. In November of 1940 the 102nd was reorganized into a mechanized regiment, but still retained mounted units. On January 6th, 1941, for the third time in its history, the regiment was federalized and called to active duty. It was on this exact day, that Bruce E. Nostrand, walked into the National Guard Armory in Westfield, N.J. and enlisted into the United States Army. He was 21 years old, stood five feet, ten inches tall and weighed 160 pounds. Bruce's training was based in Fort Jackson, South Carolina and the troops were warned at the outset that they were training for war, a fact which wasn't to be taken lightly. Shortly after their arrival, new mechanized equipment rolled in, including cars, motorcycles and trucks, as well as additional horses to supplement the mounts that had been brought from New Jersey. In addition to standard military training, the troopers were also schooled in all phases of horsemanship, including mounted combat. The Pearl Harbor attack occurred towards the end of the 102nd's 14 month training program and the needs of the U.S. military were changing rapidly. At some point, a specific potential was recognized in Bruce, and he, along with 56 others, received an appointment as a

flight cadet in the Army Air Force. The 102nd ended up serving in North Africa and Europe and although Bruce's photo can be found in the 102nd United States Cavalry yearbook from 1942, the path he chose took him to a very different theater of battle.

BRUCE CHOOSES ANOTHER PATH

Bruce began the arduous path through flight training in early 1943 when he transferred to the Army Air Force. Through nine weeks each of Preflight, Primary, Basic and Advanced training,

(continued on page 10)



(above) "A family album photo simply labeled "Teenage Bruce at the Jersey shore"



(above) Bruce Nostrand while in elementary school in Roselle Park.



(left) In the Roselle Park High School yearbook under his senior portrait, we found the only description of our hero's demeanor. Modest around the ladies and we assume that "noisy" means quiet.



(above) Roselle Park High School yearbook photo of Bruce, who was on the track team.



(above) Sporting a Cranford sweater, Bruce Nostrand shows some spirit for his new town. Starting out in Kenilworth with elementary school, then Roselle Park for High School, He lived in Cranford with his younger cousins, possibly his Cougar attire is in support of his young cousin's sporting involvement. We all know how that works.

(right) Bruce Nostrand and Dorothy Hodges enjoy each other's company. After a short engagement they would marry and be separated by his deployment after just 4 months.



2LT BRUCE E. NOSTRAND (continued from page 9)

the cadets were tested and retested, and were in constant fear of exhibiting any sign of physical or mental shortcomings which would result in elimination from the program. Details on the challenging path to becoming a member of a flight crew have been described in the previously told stories of WWII airmen Tuttle, Prescott and McGarry. Like these other Cranford heroes, Bruce completed his Advanced Training in the desert at Yuma, Arizona, where he was at last awarded his silver wings. Our researchers were able to locate his 1943 graduation yearbook with an amazing photo of his training squadron, which we always consider a lucky find. As is customary, upon graduating from Advanced training, a new airman would be granted a 15-day leave which 2nd Lt. Bruce Nostrand spent at home, in Cranford.

A clue to Bruce Nostrand's personality came from his high school yearbook, where he is described with "a bright smile and a winning way", but quiet and modest, especially with the ladies. Well, flight training must do wonders for confidence, because in January of 1944, blond-haired, blue-eyed Bruce became engaged to Miss Dorothy Hodges of Dunellen, NJ. On April 15, he and Dorothy were married in Charlotte, North Carolina, where Bruce was serving as a flight instructor. The couple had just four months together before Bruce received his orders and was sent overseas to New Guinea.

He was assigned to the 312th Bombardment Group, 387th Squadron, under the 5th Air Force. The 312th was nicknamed the "Roaring 20's" after the type of aircraft that it flew. The Douglas A-20 Havoc was an unusual, medium weight bomber attack aircraft known for its speed and maneuverability. "Havoc" referred to the chaos it created while on its high-powered, low altitude bombing and strafing runs, which had made it famous in earlier campaigns in North Africa. Unlike most big bombers of WWII, the A-20 did not use a Norden bombsite to drop bombs from a high altitude. Instead, its bombing missions were flown at much lower altitudes. Surviving eyewitnesses to A-20 attacks report being able to actually see the pilot's faces and nose art designs as the planes came in fast and low. In order to be able to drop bombs at close range, "parafrags" were used. Parafrags were unique 24-pound explosive charges with parachutes attached. The parachutes slowed the delivery of the bombs, which allowed the aircraft enough time to leave the area before the powerful detonations occurred. The parafrag was especially useful when attacking enemy airfields. Designed to break into tiny fragments upon impact, it would shred the thin metal skins of parked aircraft, leaving behind a burning junkyard. During low altitude strafing runs in the A-20, targets would be attacked by 50 caliber machine guns and 20mm cannons. With only two occupants in the plane, the pilot would have tremendous responsibilities, acting as co-pilot, navigator, flight engineer, front gunner and bombardier. He was supported by a gunner who occupied a turret and protected the skies above and to the sides of the aircraft. The large bomb bay was between



(above) 1941 photo of twenty-one-year-old Bruce Nostrand posing in front of a tent at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, as a member of the 102nd Cavalry.



(above) Twenty-four-year-old 2nd LT Bruce Ellwood Nostrand in July of 1943 proudly wearing his officer's uniform and silver wings after completing his advanced flight training in Yuma, Arizona.



(above) As an Air Cadet, Bruce Nostrand in 1943.

them and the only contact between the two was by intercom. It was a unique set up compared to every other bomber in our previously told stories.

LIFE IN THE PACIFIC THEATER OF BATTLE

Upon arrival in Hollandia, New Guinea, new pilots of the 312th had to quickly learn the ropes of day-to-day military life in this primitive, foreign land. The men were responsible for constructing their own quarters, usually a wooden platform with a canvas top and plenty of mosquito netting. Bartering was a common practice and coming up with a bottle of spirits would provide you with materials needed to raise your accommodations to a 5-star level, comparably speaking. For pilots like Bruce, arriving in the summer of 1944, the number of missions that they flew started out slowly, with roughly 10 flights per month. Missions in Bruce's squadron consisted of four to six A-20's with a goal of either supporting ground troops or destroying enemy infrastructure. In December of 1944 the bomb group had little to no missions, as they were moving their airfield to the island of Leyte as Allied forces regained territory in the Philippines. The ground echelon had departed in November and sailed in a convoy to Leyte. Construction of a new airstrip in Leyte began in mid December and finally, in early January, 1945, the pilots made the trip from New Guinea to Leyte. Pilots were warned to treat the flight to Leyte as a combat mission and to prepare to be jumped by Japanese fighters originating from the southernmost Philippine island of Mindanao. As more and more islands were conquered by the Allies, Bruce moved with the 312th two more times within the Philippines.

In January and February, the number of flights per month almost doubled with a fierce campaign to continue reclaiming islands which had been previously lost to the enemy. Missions began with a briefing on the target by an intelligence officer followed by a rough and dusty jeep ride to the airstrip. The gunner was responsible for checking the rear compartment and turret and the crew



(above) In a great find by our researchers, we see Air Cadet Bruce Nostrand, third from left, posing on the wing of a training aircraft at flight school in Yuma, Arizona. Class 43-G, Squadron 14

chief would confer with the pilot describing any anomalies on the plane. Typical combat mission duration was between two and five hours and had to meet certain criteria to qualify as a combat mission.

The number of missions required to complete a pilot's combat tour in WWII varied throughout the war. Originally, 35 missions was the quota, but the goalpost was moved frequently, depending on theater of battle, pilot shortages, etc. We believe that, in early 1945, Bruce would have needed 50 missions before he could go home.

HISTORY OF LT. NOSTRAND'S BATTLE THEATER

Some historical background is necessary to better understand the situation into which our Cranford hero had been dropped, as a trained Army Air Force pilot in the South Pacific in 1944. The attack on Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7th, dealt a lethal blow to America's Naval fleet, leaving it vulnerable to the waves of relentless attacks which immediately followed. On December 8th, the Imperial Japanese Navy

(continued on page 11)

2LT BRUCE E. NOSTRAND (continued from page 10)

began a rampage against American possessions throughout the South Pacific. Starting with air attacks on Wake Island, the Philippines and Guam, the carnage continued for a solid six months, mostly unanswered by the crippled Allied forces. The criticality of what was happening here cannot be understated, gaining complete control of the Pacific Theater could allow Japan the means to attack the mainland U.S.

General Douglas MacArthur commanded American military operations in this part of the world from the largest collection of islands in the South Pacific, the Philippines Archipelago. The Japanese, in a methodical attack from north to south, nearly destroyed the land-based American Air Force in the region. The entire American military was forced to retreat south and was cornered into the southernmost peninsula at Bataan. On March 11, 1942, MacArthur, under orders from Washington, escaped to Australia. He left the Philippines with the famous quote "I came through and I shall return".

On May 6, 1942, General Jonathan Wainwright, the American commanding officer in the Philippines, contacted General MacArthur by Morse code, before he waved a white flag on a mop handle in surrender of the entire territory of the Philippine Islands. What was to follow was the humiliating and cruel Bataan Death March, where the 75,000 remaining American and Filipino soldiers were taken prisoner and forced to march for 65 miles. It was the largest surrender by an American military unit since the American Civil War at Harper's Ferry. Where the attack at Pearl Harbor was the most famous American defeat, many feel that the surrender of the Philippines was the low point of WWII in the Pacific Theater.

On May 4th, 1942, as America was hurrying to repair and rebuild its naval fleet, the Japanese Imperial Navy rushed to deliver what could have been a killing blow, at the Battle of the Coral Sea, off the coast of Australia. If defeated here, an American surrender in the Pacific may have become reality. Although the American fleet lost one aircraft carrier in this battle, the USS Lexington, and nearly a second, the Japanese fleet was forced to retreat. While considered at the time as a stalemate, looking back in history's eye, it was a turning point for the American war in the South Pacific. In what is described as the most incredible comeback in world history with a tremendous feat of industrial production, the formerly dominant Japanese fleet was rapidly dwarfed by the re-creation of America's navy in the Pacific.

Although each an Allied victory, the battles with names such as Midway (June 1942), Guadalcanal (November 1942), Bismarck Sea (March 1943), and Philippines Sea (June 1944), left unthinkable amounts of destruction at the bottom of the Pacific. Tens of thousands of men and massive tonnages of advanced naval fighting ships were lost.

General Douglas MacArthur would return to the Philippines on October 20, 1944. A famous



(above) Still practicing mounted battle tactics in the 102nd Cavalry, Bruce Nostrand approaches his equine partner, preparing to start a training exercise.



(above) Bruce Nostrand's final mission from Luzon to Formosa is an approximate round trip of 3 hours. He performed a perfect "ditch" just off the coast of Cape Bojeador. His aircraft was struck by ground fire while over Formosa, causing a loss in oil pressure. He and his gunner were never recovered.



(above) The Douglas A-20 was controlled by one pilot with armaments and aviation control at the pilot's fingertips. A turret gunner flew in the A-20 as well.

staged photo shows him wading in knee deep water in front of a Marine landing craft, delivering on his promise from 1942.

It was during the summer of 1944 that 2nd Lt. Nostrand joined the 312th Bomb Group, stationed on New Guinea. The group served as air support for the amphibious ground assault and reoccupation of the Philippines, first in the battle of Leyte from October to December and then moving north to Luzon, the largest island, in the Battle of Luzon in January, 1945. As a pilot in his A-20 Havoc he performed 30 strafing and bombing missions for which he received the Air Medal for heroic acts and meritorious achievement during aerial flight.

As the Allies were steadily regaining control of the Philippines, the strategic planners began to focus on a plan to attack the main islands of Japan. The majority of troops and firepower would head north toward Okinawa, Iwo Jima and the Mariana Islands of Tinian, Saipan and Guam, where airstrips that could accommodate the B-29 Superfortresses could be secured. The 312th Bombardment Group, having moved its base to central Luzon, would be assigned to neutralize the Japanese controlled island of Formosa, approximately 275 miles to the north. Formosa, (present day Taiwan), equal in size to the state of Maryland, was no little island. The sugar cane processing plants on Formosa had been converted to create butanol, which was used to make aviation fuel. The aircraft manufacturing facilities on the island converted old planes into deadly Kamikaze flying bombs. With Formosa's prime location off the Indo-China coast, it boasted many "aerodromes" or air strips to support Japanese war efforts. This island was just loaded with prime targets for the 312th, and with the A-20's cruising speed of 300 MPH, a round trip mission could be accomplished in under three hours.

2ND LT. NOSTRAND'S LAST MISSION

In February of 1945, a letter home was received from Bruce. It stated that "his missions were half over and he hoped to be heading home soon". But tragically, these words written by



(above) The Air Medal awarded to 2nd LT Bruce Nostrand for meritorious achievement for his heroic actions during nineteen missions during the Battles of Leyte and Luzon in the Philippines in 1944. He would successfully complete 30 missions in total, losing his life on mission 31.

Bruce never came to be. On March 2, 1945, returning back to base from the 312th's first mission over Formosa, 2nd Lt. Bruce Nostrand's plane went down into the China Sea. Neither the lieutenant nor his gunner was ever recovered.

A valuable account regarding the loss of 2nd Lt. Nostrand, his gunner S. Sgt Lyle Thompson and their plane, was provided by Joseph W. Rutter, the author of the book *Wreaking Havoc - A Year in an A-20*. Joseph was an A-20 pilot, also in the 312th Bomb Group, who was on the same mission with Bruce on that fateful day. He was an eyewitness to the plane's ditching.

Returning from the 312th's first mission to Formosa, 2nd Lt. Rutter heard a radio call on which Bruce was indicating that he was low on fuel, one engine was running rough, and he was planning to ditch near the shore off of Cape Boreador. Rutter said that the sky was clear and he watched Nostrand's plane settle into the water

(continued on page 12)

2LT BRUCE E. NOSTRAND (continued from page 11)

in a cloud of spray. Bruce had jettisoned the cockpit hatch earlier and the ditching appeared perfect. Rutter was very surprised when he learned that neither Bruce nor his gunner were ever recovered and he offered the following suppositions: "Did Nostrand forget to lock his shoulder harness and hit his head? Did he get hit in the face by the armor glass panel (Rutter was speaking from experience on this option). Had he gotten entangled somehow and thus unable to get out of the cockpit? Did sharks attack them? We would never know". Two PT boats were at the crash site 30 minutes after the plane went down but only miscellaneous debris was recovered. Natives who had witnessed the crash reported no survivors. Although not stated in the US Missing Air Crew Report (MACR) we have read in two other sources (the book, The Roaring '20's, by Lawrence J. Hickey and Michael H. Levy, and in Bruce's folder at the Cranford Historical Society) that Bruce's plane was damaged by ground fire and forced to ditch.

After being notified of Bruce's MIA status, Bruce's wife Dorothy waited in Dunellen. His mom Minnie, who had remarried, waited in New Brunswick with her husband, Leon Rowland, and Bruce's half-brother John, age 17. In Cranford, Bruce's extended family also waited. For eight long months the family waited for news of their lieutenant, perhaps holding a small spark of hope. But, in November of 1945, Dorothy Hodges Nostrand was notified by telegram that Bruce had been officially declared killed in action. In the newspaper, his obituary bore the title "50th Gold Star" indicating that 2nd Lt. Bruce Nostrand was Cranford's 50th serviceman lost in WWII. In addition to losing her son, Minnie Erdle Nostrand Rowland had also lost her brother, merchant marine Alfred Erdle, who was killed when his ship was attacked by a Nazi submarine in early 1943. 2nd Lt. Nostrand's name can be found on the Tablets of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery.

2nd Lt. Bruce E. Nostrand elevated himself to a respected position in the United States military.



(above) Bruce Nostrand as he was pictured in a New Jersey newspaper, reporting the ditching of his A-20 Havoc off Luzon in the Philippines in March of 1945



(above) The Nostrand family provided us with a picture of the "Blood Chit" that belonged to Bruce and was returned to them by the U.S. Army. A blood chit is silk cloth that was carried by American airmen promising a reward to locals who helped rescue them if shot down behind enemy lines. The multi-language message identifies the airman as friendly and requested aid for food, shelter and safe return.



(above) We used this memoir, written by A-20 pilot Joseph Rutter of Bruce Nostrand's bombardment group, as a guide in writing Bruce's story.

He conducted combat missions in a treacherous theater of battle where he flew his A-20 quickly in and out of hostile territory. These bombing and strafing runs were either in support of ground troops or, they left enemy railroads, airfields, barges, roadways and supply depots destroyed, smoldering and bullet-ridden. He and his fellow A-20 pilots did indeed "wreak havoc" throughout the Philippine Islands, and were a key component to victory over Japan.

To tell this narrative, we had the pleasure of working with Bruce's family members. First cousin Bruce D. Nostrand, and 2nd Lt. Bruce E. Nostrand's first cousins once removed, Chantal and Tighe Nostrand, provided us with significant historical facts and fondly related personal information to us about their fallen

hero. From what we have observed, 2nd Lt. Bruce Nostrand was, and is, loved and remembered through multiple generations and branches of his family. At least three family members were named in his honor and in order to avoid confusion, the family, when referring to their WWII hero, calls him simply "Lieutenant". We were pleased to be able to add some additional facts to what the family already knew. Additionally, we were very lucky to locate and speak with Bruce Rowland, who is a half-nephew to 2nd Lt. Bruce Nostrand and also a namesake. We invite all Nostrand/Rowland family and friends to join us in Cranford on Memorial Day 2026 when we honor "Lieutenant", Cranford's 86 and all of our country's fallen military.

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DAR LAUNCHES AMERICA 250 CELEBRATION

Submitted by Holly Dunbar

America’s semiquincentennial year has arrived and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) kicked off the celebration by honoring their patriot ancestors at the Somerset County Park Commission’s Festival of Trees.

“Celebrating America 250 by Honoring Our Patriot Ancestors” was the theme of the tree hosted by Elizabeth Snyder-Continental Chapter DAR at the Environmental Education Center in Basking Ridge during December. The 8-ft. tall tree was decorated with red, white and blue lights and the profiles of the Revolutionary War ancestors of DAR chapter members.

“We hope that our tree helped to raise awareness of the individuals who established our nation,” said Regent Nancy Stoll. “Our members are descended from patriots in nine states who served in a variety of ways. We need to remember the sacrifices that they all made for our freedom.”

Featured on the tree were mini profiles of 50 patriot ancestors and their service. They included a captain of the Lexington Alarm in

Massachusetts, a river boat pilot, people who donated money or supplies, a brigadier general of the light dragoons, a spy, a president of the provincial Congress, and farmers who joined their local militia.

To join the DAR, women need to document their descent from a man or woman who aided the cause of American independence. Some prospective members have mapped out their family tree, but others know only that they have an ancestor who served in the Revolution. In that case, the DAR will assist them with research and the application process.

The DAR is a non-profit, non-political women's service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and securing America's future through better education. There are currently 190,000 members in 3,000 chapters in the U.S. and several nations abroad.

If you are a descended from a patriot of the Revolution and would like to join the DAR, contact the chapter at ESCchapterDAR@gmail.com.



(above) The DAR tree was decorated with early American flags and profiles of 50 Revolutionary War ancestors of chapter members.

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LES MISERABLES TO BE PERFORMED BY CHS - FEB 27, 28, MAR 1

Performing Arts Department
Cranford High School Performing Arts Department proudly presents Les Miserables on February 27 at 7:30 p.m., February 28 at 7:30 p.m., and March 1 at 2:00 p.m. Set in early 19th century France, the musical focuses on redemption, love, and being “On My Own”. Based on the 1862 novel of the same name by Victor Hugo and with music by Claude-Michel

Schonberg, lyrics by Alain Boublil and Jean-Marc Natel, and a book by Boublil and Schonberg. Please join the cast, crew, and production team in finding out “Who Am I?” in our CHS auditorium! You can easily find ticket information by visiting chs.booktix.com or emailing Mrs Elizabeth Adams (adams@cranfordschools.org) starting January 30. We hope you’ll meet us in the “Castle on a

Cloud” and see our show!
About: Les Miserables School Edition, Performed entirely by Cranford High School students. A musical by Alan Boublil and Claude-Michel Schonberg School edition especially adapted and licensed by Musical Theater International and Cameron Mackintosh (Overseas) LTD. All authorized performance materials supplied by MTI.mtishows.com



(above) The Cast of Cranford High School performance of Les Miserables.

Courtesy Photo

2026 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE CRANFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Cranford Historical Society is a non-profit educational organization whose mission since 1927 has been to preserve and perpetuate the history of Cranford. We maintain the Crane-Phillips House Museum, open to the public every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month, and its beautiful gardens.

We host free programs and events, including speakers, antique appraisals, family, craft and holiday events. In 2025 we had a Garden Tour, a Master Gardener event, our 3rd Annual Fall Festival, Four Centuries in a Weekend, a Children’s Story time and Craft, and a Movie at the Museum showing “Little Women.”

We participated in the RevolutionNJ Awareness Walk and other County sponsored events and presented to local teachers on

Cranford history. To encourage a love of history in our young people, we host students and Scouts at our museum to learn about Cranford history and what life was like in the late 1800s.

We maintain the Hanson House, where our office is located, and we assist a steady stream of people and organizations conducting research.

We also publish five newsletters each year for our members. “The Mill Wheel” contains society news and interesting articles on local history.

Membership supports the continuation of our

archives, costume department, building maintenance, our programming, and our History Scholarship which is awarded to a Cranford High School graduate every year. Please join us!

A Membership Form can be found on the Society’s website at cranfordhistoricalsociety.org. Or complete the following form and return with your check to: Cranford Historical Society, 38 Springfield Ave. Cranford, NJ 07016. For more info, please contact us at 908-276-0082 or cranfordhistoricalsociety@verizon.net.

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☐ Please contact me about volunteer opportunities with the historical society

BLESSING BAGS FOR CRANFORD FAMILY CARE

As part of our holiday party, the Cranford High School Girls Ice Hockey team came together to put over 60 Blessing Bags together for Cranford Family Care. Families and coaches were kind enough to donate items from our Sign-Up Genius form.

Every Blessing Bag was filled with each of these items: toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant,

body wash, gum, socks, gloves, a chap-stick, a hot chocolate packet, hand warmers, a chip bag, and a candy cane. Blessing Bags were dropped off at CFC who are always very appreciative.

Team representative states “This is our third year organizing the event and the players love it. It was a wonderful time to celebrate the holiday with our team families and coaches, while giving

back to the community during the holiday season. A special shout out to the VFW Post 335 for donating the hall, and to The Gourmet Deli for donating food to make sure our hockey family had enough food to enjoy.”

The Cranford Girls Ice Hockey team was founded in 2022 and has a current roster of 33 players.



Courtesy Photo

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USED BOOK SALE AT LIBRARY'S CELLAR

The Friends of the Cranford Public Library are thrilled to welcome the community back to the Friendly Book Cellar for this special event. Browse thousands of books at low prices, with an especially large selection this year. Most adult books are \$1-\$2, CDs/DVDs are \$1. Most children's books range from 25-50 cents! Special sale items will also be available at a different cost. Bag Days will take place on Saturday and Sunday, and bags will be provided (\$8). Payments will be accepted in the form of CASH or CHECKS only. Because there has not been a Book Cellar sale in the past year, shelves will be restocked daily to ensure fresh finds throughout the weekend. The sale is open to all; however, REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED via the "February 2026 Book Sale" button at cranfordlibrary.org or via QR below. Please register for only one session per day. We look forward to seeing you there!

SALE DAYS AND HOURS:

Thur, 2/19: 1:00 PM – 8:00 PM
 Fri, 2/20: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
 Sat, 2/21: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM (Bag Day)
 Sun, 2/22: 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM (Bag Day)



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.



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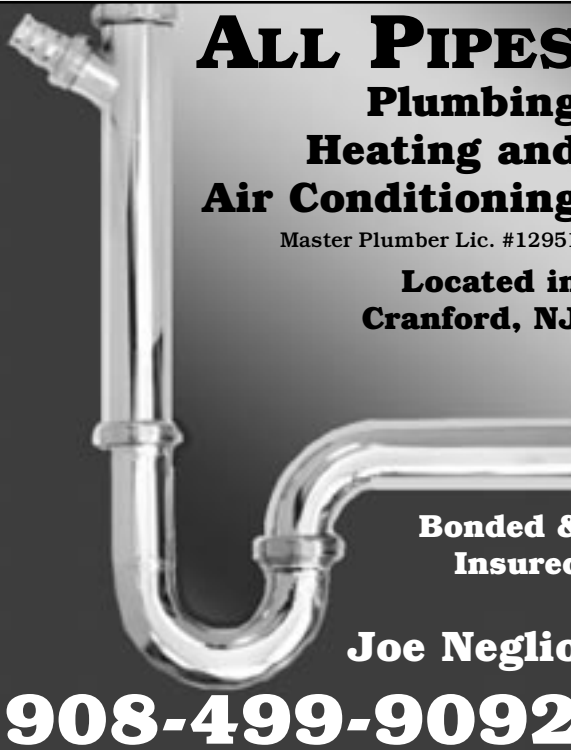


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SCOUT TROOP TAKE NY ARCHITECTURE HIKE

Submitted by Mark DelRe

On December 18, 2025, Boy Scout Troop 80 embarked on a historical architecture hike in New York. The scouts viewed various buildings such as, The Oculus, Woolworth's Building, New York City Hall, Washington Square Arch, Jefferson Market Library, Pier 57, The Little Island, The Highline, The Empire State Building, Moynihan Station, and a Zaha Hadid building.

But the favorite by far was the One World Observatory, where scouts could view all of New York from above. The tour was led by Thomas

Connolly, AIA of Connolly & Hickey Historical Architects in Cranford. Scouts from grades 6-11 attended.

Troop 80 is chartered by the First Presbyterian Church of Cranford, which is located at 11 Springfield Ave.

The troop meets on Mondays from 7:30-8:30 p.m. and organizes monthly camping and hiking trips for the weekends.

If you have an interest in learning more about Scouting, please come by, or email us at troop80registrar@gmail.com.



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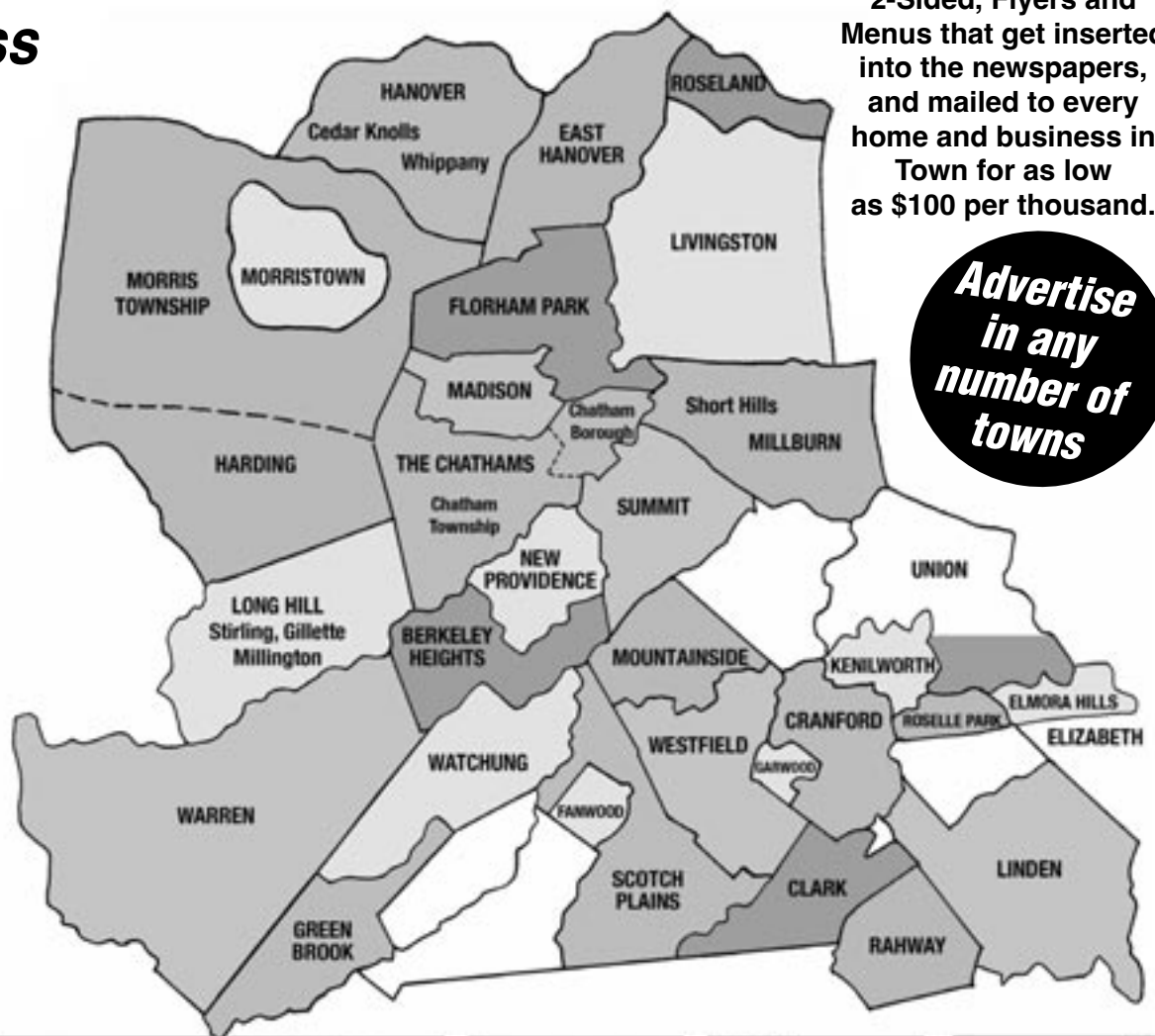
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1 Unit (Business card)	3.25"x2"0	100	260	360	460	560	600	660	700	800	900	1000
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4 Units	3.25"x8" or 6.5"x4"	240	560	900	1000	1300	1600	1700	1800	1900	2000	2100
6 Units	6.5"x6.25" or 10"x4"	320	760	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	2400	2600	2800
9 HALF PAGE	6.5"x9" or 10"x7"	360	860	1300	1600	1900	2200	2400	2600	2800	3000	3200
12 Units	6.5"x14"	400	960	1400	1800	2100	2400	2700	3000	3300	3600	3900
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LIBRARY FEBRUARY PROGRAMS

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ADULT PROGRAMS

Romance Readers Book Club

Monday, February 2, at 7pm

Today's book is "Honeymoon Phase" by Amy Daws. If you don't want to read that book, or feel free to come anyway to discuss whichever romance you've recently read.

Cookbook Club

Monday, February 2, at 6:30pm

Practice your appetizers before the Super Bowl!

Come to cookbook club with your favorite appetizer cooked and ready to share. There will be a selection of cookbooks at the library you can choose from or make your favorite handed down family recipe. Registration recommended and can be done through the Library website.

Movie Night

Wednesday, February 4, at 7pm

First Wednesday of the month for a screening of a recently released DVD! Please visit our website or contact the library for film titles.

Junk Journaling

Thursday, February 5, 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, February 9, at 12:30pm and 7pm

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

Understanding AI

Thursday, February 12, at 7pm

Join us for an engaging and informative presentation by Eddi Khaytman that provides an introduction to the world of artificial intelligence (AI) and how it is applied in the real world and why folks are concerned about it. Eddi Khaytman is a multifaceted expert in the digital landscape, specializing in web design, SEO, and Artificial Intelligence. He is the Founder & CEO of PromoAmbitions LLC

Wednesday Morning Adult Craft

February 18, at 10am

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, February 18, 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.

Theater Project

Saturday, February 21, 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 have also been provided by the Friends of the Cranford Public Library.

Books and (Coffee Brew)

Monday, February 23, at 2pm and 7pm

Join us for our monthly book discussion at The Morning Roast! This month's book is "Dracula" by Bran Stoker. Coffee and non-alcoholic beverages will be available for purchase. Registration is recommended and can be done through the Library website.

Readers' Forum Book Club

Monday, February 23, at 7pm

All are welcome to join this book club! Additional copies are available at the Circulation Desk. This month's book is "Home Front" by Kristen Hannah

Art Roulette

Monday, February 23, at 7pm

Everyone will walk out with a unique, community created piece of art. Every 5 minutes you'll pass the canvas to the person next to you, until everyone has a chance, ending with your original canvas. What will it look like at the end? Registration is required and can be done through our website; space is limited.

Hamentaschen Baking Workshop

Tuesday, February 24, at 7pm

Join Rachel to learn how to make hamentaschen for Purim! No previous baking experience necessary. Registration required; space is limited. Sponsored by the Friends of the Cranford Public Library.

PEER-TO-PEER TUTORING PROGRAM

Dr. Mylissa Bauman, member of the Friends of the Cranford Library, has started a peer-to-peer tutoring program available for high school students, enrolled in both public and private schools. All tutoring will take place at the Cranford Public Library, by high school student volunteers for their peers in grades 9-12. There is no cost for all tutoring services. To become a volunteer tutor, to request tutoring or to learn more about the program, please contact Dr. Bauman at CranfordLibraryTutoring@gmail.com. Tutor Request Forms and Volunteer Tutor Applications are also available at the Cranford Public Library. This program is made available through the Friends of the Cranford Public Library.

CHILDREN PROGRAMS

Build the mini-est mini golf course

at Cupid Mini Golf

Monday, February 2 at 5:00 p.m.

This program is for children ages 6-12, no registration required.

Pajama Storytime

Thursday, February 5 at 6:00 p.m.

Let's snuggle with our favorite stuffed animal and listen to a fun story at Pajama Storytime!

For children in Kindergarten and older.

Messy Storytime!

Friday, February 6, 2026 at 10:15 a.m.

Children ages 2+ and a caregiver are invited to listen to a story and then create some art.

Middle Grade Book Club

Readers in grades 3-5 are invited. We'll be reading and discussing the Wings of Fire series. Registration is required and begins two weeks before the program. Middle Grade Book Club Registration is required and can be done online.

Valentine Cupcake Wars

February 11 at 5:00 p.m.

Middle Schoolers will decorate two cupcakes with a Valentine theme and the winner gets prize. Every contestant gets to snack on or bring home their two cupcakes. Ages 10+. Registration is required and begins two weeks before the program date, call or stop by the Children's Department to enroll.

Winter Reading Challenge

The program runs from Sunday, December 21 through Saturday, February 28.

Children ages 0-12 are invited. Log the time that you spend reading in Beanstack cranfordlibrary.beanstack.org and earn fun prizes! This challenge is open to Cranford residents and cardholders only.

This is just a sampling of our programs, visit our full calendar at cranfordlibrary.org/calendar-view to see more!

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