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BROWNIE TROOPS BRING HOLIDAY CHEER TO SENIORS

Long Hill Township Girl Scout Brownie Troops 98840 and 98535, comprised of 2nd- and 3rd-grade scouts, visited the Lounsberry Meadow senior community to spread holiday cheer through music, cards, and cookies.

The event was coordinated with Kristen Oleske, Event Coordinator for Lounsberry Meadow. During the visit, the Brownies sang classic holiday favorites including Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, Frosty the Snowman, The Twelve Days of Christmas, Feliz Navidad, and The Dreidel Song. The troops also brought cookies to share and presented residents with handmade holiday cards they created especially for the occasion.

Residents at Lounsberry Meadow delighted in singing along to the festive music and expressed admiration for the thoughtful, handmade cards. The community also provided snacks for the scouts, adding a warm and welcoming touch to the celebration.

The troops hope to make this visit an annual tradition as a way to bring joy and connection to their local senior citizen community during the holiday season.



Courtesy Photos



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Long Hill LEADER

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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, adding window decals is a simple way to help.

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,
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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.

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 descendant from a patriot of the Revolution and would like to join the DAR, contact the chapter at

ESCCchapterDAR@gmail.com.



We are proud to serve the residents and visitors of Long Hill Township and help our surrounding communities.

WANT TO BECOME A STIRLING FIREFIGHTER?

Anyone age 16 or older in good health may become a Stirling Vol. Fire Co. firefighter. All firefighter training is provided at no cost by the fire company. Firefighting gear and parade uniforms are also provided at no cost to the firefighter. The pay is memorable ... zero (they're volunteers), but the satisfaction received helping others is extremely rewarding and cannot be experienced elsewhere! For a firefighter application stop in during the breakfast or email them at: stirlingfirecompany@gmail.com

PANCAKE BREAKFAST STIRLING FIREHOUSE SUNDAY MAR. 1

The Stirling firefighter's pancake breakfast will be held on Sunday, Mar. 1 from 8 a.m. – Noon in the Stirling firehouse to benefit the Stirling Volunteer Fire Co. Adults \$15 donation and kids under 12 and seniors \$10 payable when you enter. The pancake breakfast includes pancakes with butter and syrup, fresh eggs cooked a you like, sausage, bagels, orange juice, coffee, and milk. Seconds are free!

If you can't stay to eat, a take-out box is available by telling the firefighter at the door you want an order to go.

This is a fun event that will help your local firefighter heroes, who are unpaid residents donating their time, expertise, and compassion to residents and businesses of Long Hill Township. They are on duty every hour of each day 24/7 all year long. Your support is always greatly appreciated.

Children attending will be given a complimentary fire prevention coloring book and a junior firefighters' hat.

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SOUP AND PASTA CONTEST - FEBRUARY 13

Meyersville Grange 188 invites you to our next monthly Soup and Pasta Contest at The Grange Hall, 500 Meyersville Road, Gillette, at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, February 13, 2026.

Cooks are invited to enter their favorite recipe for a Soup or Pasta Dish by bringing a generous pot of soup, or a family-size portion of pasta to share.

Come and enjoy a family-style meal with neighbors while listening to live music by The Long Hill String Band.

Everyone who attends gets to sample all of the entries and then vote on their favorite. The top three are awarded certificates as Best Cooks and "bragging rights!"

The Meal: All of the Soup and Pasta you can sample, Rolls and Butter, Hot Coffee/Tea, Iced Tea. Desserts (\$3.00) and Bottled Water (\$1.00) are available for purchase.

Admission: \$10.00 Adult;
\$5.00 Child under 12.

Cooks who Enter the Contest: Free!
We hope you will join in the fun!



(above) The Long Hill String Band.

VIRTUAL VALENTINES BINGO

Join Long Hill Township Parks & Recreation for a sweet night of Virtual Bingo - Free for Long Hill residents only and open to all ages! Snuggle up at home and play along on Wednesday, February 11th at 5:30 p.m. for a

chance to win fun prizes. Register on Community Pass as a family under "2026 Valentines Bingo". Once you're signed up, we'll email you your special Valentine's Bingo card and login instructions.



(above) November 2025 Soup and Pasta Contest Winners: 1st Doris Mertz (Gillette), 2nd Jamie Thorn (Chatham), 3rd Fritz Kielblock (Meyersville).

Courtesy Photo

HEADACHE You Don't Have To Live With It!

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STIRLING'S FIREFIGHTER SANTA 2025

For 15 years Stirling Volunteer Fire Co. took Santa to visit more than 100 families in Long Hill Twp. that bought much excitement and delight to well over 100 children in the Township on Dec. 13. A few minutes before his arrival, one of Santa's elves called to advise the family he would be arriving in minutes.

A few houses away the flashing lights on the fire engine were turned on and a blast of the siren cut through the cold air. Santa sat in the front seat waving out the window as the fire engine came to a stop.

At one family's house the 6-year old Madison sprung up from playing and ran to the front door. She had heard that Santa may visit her and come

on a fire engine. She raced to get on her boots, coat, and hat. With her mom and dad and grandparents they raced out the door to the sidewalk. The big red fire engine stopped and Santa stepped down. To Madison it was like a miracle come true!

Santa and Madison talked and then Santa handed her a present. Santa said to be extra good and he'd bring her some nice presents. A photo was taken of Santa with her family, she hugged Santa with great endearment, and Santa was off to the North Pole!

Firefighter Santa is one of the happiest Stirling Volunteer Fire Co.'s fund raisers that brings delight and happiness to children and residents.



(above) Santa with Madison's mom, dad, and grandparents

ROBOTIC PETS BRING COMFORT TO SENIORS IN COUNTY HOUSING

County of Morris

Morris County recently distributed robotic companion pets to seniors living in county-supported housing as part of the "Joy for All" Companion Pet Program, sponsored by the Morris County Office on Aging, Disabilities and Community Programming and expanded this year to include the Morris County Housing Authority.

The Office on Aging partnered with the Housing Authority in 2025 to broaden the program's reach to seniors residing in senior housing. As part of the expansion, the Housing Authority received 36 robotic companion pets, 26 of which have already been distributed to residents age 60 and older.

The companion pet program was launched in 2024 to help reduce social isolation, loneliness and cognitive decline among older adults by providing the comfort and companionship of a pet without the responsibilities associated with caring for a live animal. In its first year, the program distributed 110 robotic companion pets to eligible residents and facilities throughout Morris County and partnered with the Morris County Sheriff's Office Project Lifesaver program.

The robotic cats and dogs are designed to

respond to motion and touch, offering realistic behaviors such as purring, rolling over, barking and wagging their tails.

"The companion pets have been the focus of rigorous, peer-reviewed studies demonstrating their effectiveness in reducing loneliness and



(above) Morris County resident Ana Rios receives her companion pet dog.

social isolation," said Christine Hellyer, director of the Office on Aging, Disabilities and Community Programming. "Recipients often name their pets and keep them as long as they wish, forming meaningful emotional connections."

The program is funded through the Aging American Rescue Plan. To qualify, recipients must be at least 60 years old, homebound, and either socially isolated or living with dementia or a similar cognitive condition.

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9 HALF PAGE	6.5"x9" or 10"x7"	360	860	1300	1600	1900	2200	2400	2600	2800	3000
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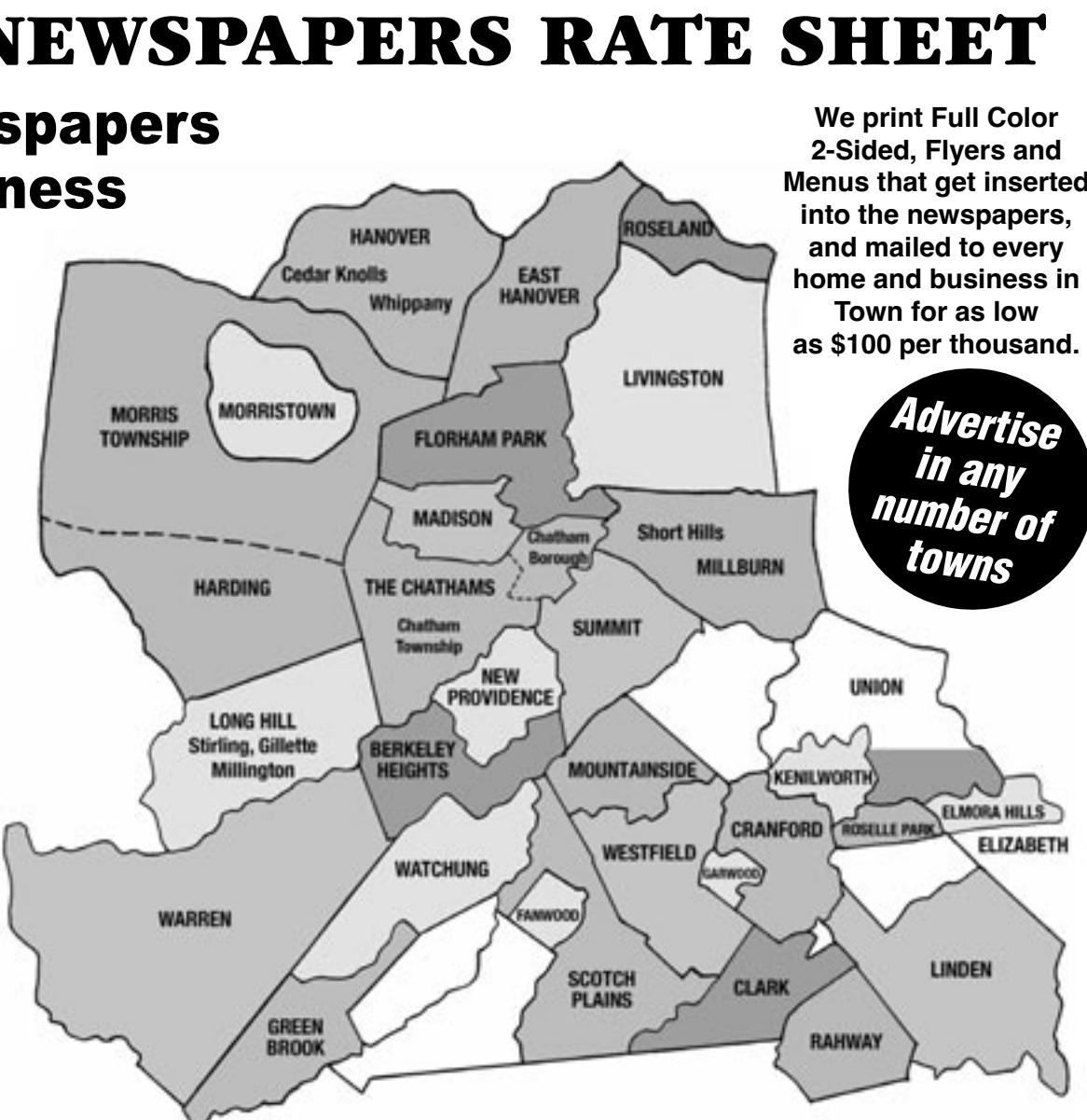
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LONG HILL LIBRARY FEBRUARY PROGRAMS

CHILDREN / TEEN PROGRAMS:

Alphabet Storytime Series (Ages 2-6)

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, & Fridays at 10:30am

Journey through the alphabet with us! An alphabet themed storytime that introduces a new letter each week and builds early literacy skills through stories, crafts, and activities.

Rhyme Time Storytime (Ages 0-2)

Wednesdays at 10:30am

Enjoy 20 minutes of songs, fingerplays, and simple stories.

Hackaneers Coding Club (Grades 3-8)

Saturdays at 1pm

An engaging, beginner-friendly coding club led by experienced high school coding instructors. Everyone is welcome, no experience needed!

Please bring an iPad or laptop.

Library Chef for Kids and Teens

February 4 and 11 at 6pm

Enjoy live, virtual classes that teach basic kitchen safety and cooking skills, while demonstrating how to make delicious recipes.

This month's recipes include Homemade Nutella + Storytime (Ages 5-9 on 2/4) and Hummus and Pita Chips (Ages 10+ on 2/11). Classes are recorded and available to view.

Take Your Child to the Library Day

February 7 from 10am-2pm

Families are encouraged to bring their children to the library to read and explore together. We will have special story times throughout the day, plus other literacy activities and crafts!

Beaded Bracelet Making (Ages 10-18)

February 10 at 5pm

Learn to make an intricate beaded bracelet in this teen craft class.

Exploration Stations (Toddlers)

February 13 at 10:15am and 11:15am

This sensory play program is specifically designed for toddlers! Themed stations are expertly curated to use a child's senses to learn through imagination and play. Registration required. Space is limited.

Traditional Lion Dance Performance

February 16 at 10:30am

by the NJ Garden State Lions

The program begins with traditional drumming, some story telling, which leads into the lion dances and Kung Fu performances.

Creative Movement

February 27 at 10:30am

with Starstruck Dance Studio (Ages 18mo-4yrs) Starstruck Dance Studio of Gillette presents a class of dance and movement activities with stories in between!

Read to a Dog Storytime

February 21 at 10:30am

with Creature Comfort Pet Therapy Participants will have a chance to sit independently and read to one of the dogs.

ADULT PROGRAMS:

Elaine's Peacock Creative Writers Group

NEW TIME Mondays at 3:30pm

Each session offers writing prompts, gentle critiques, and lively discussions on writing craft. No experience needed. Just bring your ideas - and something to write them down on!

Moonlight Meditation

Mondays at 8:30pm online

On Zoom. Appropriate for new as well as experienced meditators.

Italian Conversation Group

Tuesdays at 1pm

Our experienced instructor Gail leads all levels of Italian learners through exercises and conversation. Whether you're learning Italian for the first time, or refreshing your memory, we'd love to have you!

German Conversation Classes

Wednesdays at 1pm

Learn German at the Library with Anne, a native speaker and experienced instructor. Come sit in on this 8-week class to learn the basics of conversational German.

Backyard Birds with Ben Barkley

February 3 at 6:00pm

Gear up for the Great Backyard Bird Count (Feb 13-16) by getting acquainted with many of New Jersey's common backyard birds. Join Naturalist Ben Barkley to learn the fundamentals of backyard bird watching, including basic identification skills, what to feed backyard birds, as well as when and where to place feeders in your yard.

ABCs of Candy: A Virtual History Talk

February 4 at 7:00pm online

Explore the history of a variety of different candies. The program is conducted alphabetically, discussing a different "sweet" for each letter of the alphabet.

NEW Spice Club + Library Chef

Virtual Wellness & Cooking Classes

February 4, 11, and 18 at 7:30pm online on the Library Chef platform

This month's live, virtual, expert-led classes include Easy Sourdough Flatbread (2/4), Seared Scallops with Sage Lemon Butter (2/11), and Breathwork Basics (2/18). Classes are recorded.

Pick up a sample of Sage, as well as the Scallops recipe at the library as part of our new spice club!

Vermeer's Love Letters and the New Frick: A Virtual Art Talk

February 12 at 7:00pm online

The Frick Collection reopened and is hosting an intimate exhibition on Vermeer's Love Letters.

American History Through the Lens of Black Baseball

February 21 at 11:30am

The history of Black baseball is the history of Black America and, by proxy, the history of America. Blackball was a cultural phenomenon that reflected the resilience and pride of African Americans in the face of the horrors of racial discrimination perpetrated by segregation.

Mindful Movement

February 28 at 11:30am

Join us for an hour-long movement class, focusing on breathing, stretching and light aerobic exercise.

MORRIS COUNTY SURROGATE LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

Morris County Surrogate Heather J. Darling is pleased to announce the official launch of morrissurrogate.com. The newly modernized website was designed to better serve Morris County residents.

The newly designed website offers a cleaner layout, improved navigation, and clear explanations of court procedures related to probate, administration, guardianships, adoptions, and other Surrogate matters. Visitors can quickly access this resource for frequently requested information, forms and fees, as well as to learn more about upcoming events and educational programs offered by the Surrogate's Court. The Surrogate's website continues to offer 24 X 7 access to services with the ability to make appointments, file cases electronically using eProbate, and an AI-powered chat tool designed to assist with questions.

For more information, visit morrisurrogate.com.

CASTING CALL

UGLY HOMES WANTED

A television and streaming renovation project is seeking a limited number of homeowners in this area with outdated or distressed homes requiring substantial remodeling. This opportunity is for full-scale renovations only-not cosmetic repairs.

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