

Livingston Monthly

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A NIGHT OF MUSIC TO TRANSFORM YOUNG LIVES

On March 21, Pegasus: The Orchestra will perform with the Chatham High School Chamber Choir in a dazzling benefit concert for the TheraYouth Foundation at the Dorothy Center for Performing Arts at Drew University. Led by accomplished conductor and pianist, Karén Hakobyan, the vibrant program includes Haydn's "Fire" Symphony and a rousing version of Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, both composed exclusively for this ensemble. GRAMMY-nominated cellist Sergey Antonov - hailed by The Washington Post as "destined for cello superstardom" - will bring his soaring tone and formidable technique to Saint-Saëns' Cello Concerto No.1. All proceeds support pediatric medical therapy for disadvantaged youth. Normally this ensemble performs in New York City theaters so tickets are a steal at \$41-\$61 and can be purchased at therayouth.org.

TERAYOUTH CELEBRATES THREE YEARS OF TRANSFORMING CHILDREN'S LIVES

In just three years, the TheraYouth Foundation has become a beacon of hope for families across New Jersey struggling to secure essential therapy services for their children.

Physical therapist Dr. Irina Marcoff, DPT, founded TheraYouth to address a troubling reality: too many children with treatable conditions were being left behind. Long waitlists for public Early Intervention and school-based services; a shortage of pediatric providers accepting Medicaid; and the high cost of private therapy (often exceeding \$125 per session); placed critical care out of reach for hundreds of families.

"Early therapy can change the entire trajectory of a child's life," says Dr. Marcoff. "But for many families, access is the greatest barrier."

At its Elizabeth, NJ clinic, TheraYouth provides affordable physical, occupational, and speech therapy to disadvantaged children, more than 90% of whom rely on Medicaid. Since its inception, over 113 patients have "graduated" from therapy by achieving critical developmental milestones.

The impact of timely intervention is undeniable. One young patient, unable to crawl or walk due to congenitally weak neck muscles, faced the risk of permanent disability due to delays in care. After just four months of physical therapy at TheraYouth, he graduated from treatment, able to walk normally, transforming his future.

Unfortunately, demand continues to outpace resources with more than 400 children on TheraYouth's waitlist for services. The foundation operates entirely through donations, community partnerships, and fundraisers.

On March 21st, TheraYouth will host a benefit concert to

raise vital funds for pediatric therapy services. Help transform the lives of New Jersey's most vulnerable children through buying a ticket, or through a donation at www.therayouth.org.



(above) Dr. Irina Marcoff providing physical therapy to a young patient at the Arlene S. Chasek clinic in Elizabeth NJ.


TERAYOUTH FOUNDATION PRESENTS

21 MARCH 2026
 Doors Open 3:30 PM
 Interlude Performance by CHATHAM HIGH SCHOOL CHAMBER CHOIR
Therayouth.org/events
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 KARÉN HAKOBYAN, CONDUCTOR







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Livingston Monthly NJ

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LEGACIES WRITING CONTEST - DEADLINE APR 20

Essex county

Essex County Division of Senior Services invite Essex seniors ages 60 and older to submit an original story focusing on a special person, life-changing experience, or significant period of their life to the 2026 Essex County Legacies Writing Contest. The deadline is Monday, April 20th.

“Our senior citizens have led interesting lives and I am always impressed by the stories that are submitted. Our Legacies Contest is an opportunity for our older residents to remember their past and share their experiences with family, friends, and the younger generation,” County Executive DiVincenzo said. “It’s never too early to begin collecting your thoughts and writing your drafts. I encourage all our seniors to start working on their entries now,” he added.

THE CONTEST RULES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Writers must be Essex County residents who are 60 years of age or older.
- Entries should be original stories focusing on a special person, a life-altering experience, or a significant period in your life.
- The suggested maximum length is 1,500 words.
- Stories must be typed or legibly hand-written on 8.5-by-11-inch paper.
- Entries must have a cover page with the story’s title, the author’s name, date of birth,

address, and telephone number.

- The story title with no identifying information should appear on the first page of the story text. All identifying information about the author is removed when stories are judged by the review committee.
- Seniors may submit only one entry.
- Previously published stories may not be submitted.
- Seniors should keep a copy of the story. Entries will not be returned.
- The deadline for entries is Monday, April 20th. Late entries will not be accepted.
- Stories should be sent to the following:
Essex County Division of Senior Services
Attn: Doreatha Wertz
465 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Ste 102
Newark, NJ 07102
Or e-mailed to
dwertz@seniors.essexcountynj.org

All writers who submit stories will be invited to the Division of Senior Services Legacies Award Ceremony in May. Awards will be presented to the authors of the winning and honorable mention stories. These stories will be posted on the Essex County website at essexcountynj.org.

For a complete list of contest rules or for more information, please visit essexcountynj.org or call the Essex County Division of Senior Services at 973-395-8381.

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NJ FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA PRESENTS "MUSIC FOR A MATADOR"

An Operatic Gala Inspired by Bizet's Carmen

The New Jersey Festival Orchestra (NJFO) invites patrons and music lovers to "Music for a Matador," an unforgettable operatic fundraising gala featuring highlights from Bizet's Carmen. The event will take place Friday, April 10, 2026, from 6:00–10:00 PM at The Gran Centurions in Clark, NJ.

The evening will showcase electrifying excerpts from Bizet's iconic opera, narrated by Maestro David Wroe and brought to life by NJFO musicians alongside acclaimed guest artists. Featured performers include Lisa Marie Rogali as Carmen, Dane Suarez as Don José, Sara LeMesh as Micaëla, and SeungHyeon Baek as Escamillo. Guests can expect an immersive operatic experience filled with drama, romance, and unforgettable musical moments.

hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and community settings. Recently, NJFO has expanded this program to Overlook Medical Center in Summit, NJ, offering patients and staff moments of reflection, calm, and inspiration through music. Funds raised at the Gala help sustain these programs and ensure that NJFO's artistry and educational initiatives remain accessible to communities across New Jersey.

In addition to the performance, attendees will enjoy a beautifully curated dinner and have the opportunity to participate in both live and silent auctions, featuring exclusive experiences, gifts, and collectibles.

"Music for a Matador" offers a unique blend of operatic performance and gala celebration, providing patrons with an evening that is both culturally enriching and socially impactful. Sponsors and guests play a vital role in sustaining NJFO's mission to bring world-class music to audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

Proceeds from "Music for a Matador" support NJFO's ongoing education and community outreach programs, including Listening is Healing, which brings live classical music to

For tickets, sponsorships, or more info, visit www.njfestivalorchestra.org/gala-2026 or email info@njfestivalorchestra.org.



COUNTDOWN TO JULY 4TH, 2026

Next year, on July 4, 2026, the United States of America will commemorate and celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This historic milestone is an opportunity to pause and reflect on our country's past, to honor the contributions of all Americans, and to also look ahead towards the future that we want to create and leave behind for the next generation of Americans.

On the federal level, America250 is a nonpartisan initiative working to engage every American in commemorating the 250th anniversary of our country.

In New Jersey, RevolutionNJ has been set up and is a partnership between the New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC), a division of the New Jersey Department of State, and the nonprofit Crossroads of the American Revolution Association to plan the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in New Jersey.

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YOUTH SYMPHONY REHEARSALS FREE AND OPEN TO PUBLIC - MARCH 1-5

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), a program of Wharton Arts, invites young musicians and their families to experience the excitement of ensemble music-making during the NJYS Open Rehearsals Week, taking place March 1-5, 2026.

Throughout the week, visitors are welcome to observe live rehearsals of any of NJYS's 15 ensembles, offering a rare behind-the-scenes look at how young musicians collaborate, learn, and

grow under the guidance of NJYS's accomplished artistic staff. Open Rehearsals Week is designed for students in grades 2-11 who are curious about joining a youth orchestra or expanding their musical journey.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet NJYS conductors, experience the rehearsal process firsthand, and explore how NJYS nurtures musical excellence, teamwork, and confidence in young performers.

Said Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Helen Cha-Pyo, "At the New Jersey Youth Symphony, we hold our students to the highest standards of musical excellence and artistry because they are capable of extraordinary things. At the same time, our core mission goes beyond performance. We want our students to experience the profound connection between music and life, and to understand the power of music as a force for service, empathy, and community building. Open Rehearsals Week is an open invitation to parents, educators, and students to step inside our rehearsal rooms, feel the joy of our community, and witness the 'serious fun' that happens when young people make music together with purpose, passion, and heart."

NJYS is one of New Jersey's premier youth orchestra programs, serving talented young musicians from across the region through a comprehensive range of ensembles and

educational experiences. Open Rehearsals Week reflects NJYS's commitment to access, education, and artistic excellence.

Attendance is free, but advance registration is encouraged. Registration and additional information available at NJYS.org.

ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY YOUTH SYMPHONY

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), a program of Wharton Arts, provides exceptional orchestral and ensemble training to young musicians in grades 2-12. Through a wide range of ensembles, performances, and educational opportunities, NJYS fosters musical excellence, collaboration, and a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

Wharton Arts' mission is to offer accessible, high quality performing arts education that sparks personal growth and builds inclusive communities. Wharton Arts' vision is for a transformative performing arts education in an inclusive community to be accessible for everyone.

Wharton Arts is located in Berkeley Heights, New Providence, and Paterson, NJ and reaches students from 12 counties. All of Wharton Arts' extraordinary teaching artists, faculty members, and conductors hold degrees in their teaching specialty and have been vetted and trained to enable our students to achieve their personal best.



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Helen H. Cha-Pyo, Artistic Director & Principal Conductor



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Level 3 & 4 May 20

Oboe & Bassoon
Level 1 & 2 May 12
Level 3 & 4 May 21

BRASS

All Brass
Level 1 & 2 May 12
Level 3 & 4 May 17

STRINGS

Violin
Level 1 & 2 May 13 or 14
Level 3 & 4 May 15 or 16
Level 5 & 6 May 19, 20 or 21

Viola
Level 1 & 2 May 15
Level 3 & 4 May 13 or 14
Level 5 & 6 May 26 or 27

*At 60 Locust Avenue,
Berkeley Heights

Cello & Bass

Level 1 & 2 May 15
Level 3 & 4 May 13 or 14
Level 5 & 6 May 26 or 27

JAZZ

All Instruments
All Levels May 17

PERCUSSION

All Levels May 26

HARP & PIANO

Level 5 & 6 May 18



All auditions will take place at 570 Central Avenue,
New Providence, NJ, unless otherwise noted.

For questions, email us at info@njys.org
or call (908) 771-5544.

Chamber Music Program
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NJYS.org



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YOU HAVE A BUSY LIFE. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU HIT “PAUSE”?

The parishes of St. Bartholomew the Apostle, Immaculate Heart of Mary in Scotch Plains along with the Church of the Little Flower Berkley Heights and St. James the Apostle Springfield are inviting men of all ages to attend this year’s Men’s Cornerstone XVII retreat. It will be on Friday March 6th and Saturday March 7th and held at St. Bartholomew in Scotch Plains.

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WHAT IS CORNERSTONE?

Cornerstone is an opportunity to hit the “pause button” in life and a chance to renew and strengthen your faith and grow in your experience in the Christian faith. It is led by a team of parishioners from various backgrounds and ages who themselves have experienced an increased presence of Christ in their lives.

WHY SHOULD I ATTEND CORNERSTONE?

You will have a unique opportunity to meet other men of the community and together listen, reflect, and share real life experiences. Taking the time to retreat from daily routine and stress is both a necessary and rewarding experience.

WHAT DOES “CORNERSTONE” MEAN?

The word “Cornerstone” describes Christ as the main foundation (“the cornerstone”) of our lives. His presence within us allows us to live, grow, and become more loving and vibrant people of God.

WHAT HAVE OTHER MEN WHO HAVE ATTENDED CORNERSTONE EXPERIENCED?

“It gave me a chance to connect with God.” David D.

“Cornerstone helps me to realize that we are all in this together, and we are not so different from one another.” John O.

“Cornerstone helped me see all the times God’s grace has been bestowed on me and my

family.” Jim B.

“I was initially uncomfortable about attending but I am so glad I took that first step to renew my faith. It was such a satisfying experience and was exactly what I needed to refocus my life priorities.” Colm K.

“Cornerstone helped me to make new friends and put some of my troubles in perspective since they are shared by others.” Glenn R.

What can I expect at Cornerstone? It will begin on Friday evening March 6th at 6 p.m. and end on Saturday evening March 7th after Mass and dinner. There will be talks, followed by small group discussions, time for quiet personal reflection, Reconciliation, and Eucharist. There will also be ample time to interact with others who are looking to grow spiritually.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

Please visit the web sites of either St. Bartholomew the Apostle at stbartholomewchurch.org/mens-cornerstone or Immaculate Heart of Mary at ihmparish.net. You may also reach out to the co-directors: Jim Brennan 908-337-6874, jpbrennan1946@gmail.com; Jose Montero 201-310-4278, josergomezmontero@hotmail.com; or Pat Cetera 908-230-7282, ceteras4@verizon.net.

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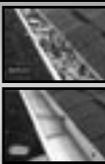
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In December 2025, BookSmiles announced its 4,000,000th book given away, highlighting the urgency for the pending move to an improved, expanded 14,000 sq. ft. facility in Cherry Hill, NJ. In the new location, the non-profit will enlist the help of thousands of volunteers to distribute three to four million books each year to children and teachers in Philadelphia and New Jersey who need them most.

It underscores the organization's unwavering commitment to promoting literacy, book-access, and educational equity in communities facing socio-economic challenges, both at home and abroad using innovative programs for book-intake and distribution.

Founded in 2017 by Larry Abrams, a veteran teaching high school English, BookSmiles has worked tirelessly to bridge the literacy gap, keeping costs down by providing quality upcycled books for children who may not otherwise have the means to build their home libraries. The organization's innovative and community-driven approach has garnered widespread support and enabled the distribution of an impressive number of children's books to schools, community centers, and organizations serving youth living in book deserts.

BookSmiles is the first kids book bank to commoditize used children's books by swapping several tons of used adult books each week. Adults can now unclutter and donate their

collections and estate libraries for a cause, knowing that their beloved collections will be traded for quality children's books.

Abrams remarked, "The passion project that started in my garage moved to our current 4,300 sq. ft. location in September 2022. We quickly outgrew it, expanding from two to our current nine coworkers. We routinely distribute 100,000 children's books each month. In 2025, our four programs planted 1.3 million books in book deserts throughout the region and around the world, maximizing production and using every square foot of space. We keep used children's books out of waste streams and landfills, simultaneously ensuring that the children we serve can build their own home libraries. And I'm proud of our Read the World program, allowing us to send dozens of pallets of overflow abroad each month. I'm honored that teachers from Philly and around New Jersey flock to the Book Bank to get a one-stop-shop classroom library."

BookSmiles has invented a replicable formula when it comes to acquiring pallets of quality children's books for very little cost. We trade grown-up books that are donated ton by ton for children's books. With a lean staff of nine coworkers and an army of volunteers, they are irrigating local and international book deserts.

Those interested in the organization, can visit BookSmiles.org, or contact Larry Abrams at Larry@booksmiles.com or 856-986-2707.

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24/7 EMERGENCY SERVICE

MARCH 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, 9:30am, 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. Website address is www.summitoldguard.org.

In March, we will have five speakers:

MARCH 3, STEVE BONDY

On March 3rd, Steve Bondy, the recently retired US Ambassador to Bahrain will speak about the role of the Foreign Service in advancing US policies internationally, describe his 34-year career with the State Department, and, as a career Middle East specialist, discuss topics, conflicts and trends that are strategic to the interests of the United States in the region. Among other achievements, Steve led 6,000 employees and contractors as COO at the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan; worked to reconcile armed militias fighting U.S. and local forces in Iraq; assisted Jordan and Israel to negotiate their 1994 peace agreement; created the 2023 U.S.-Bahrain Comprehensive Security Integration and Prosperity Agreement and also confronted Iranian interference and aggression throughout the region.

MARCH 10, RICK HARTLEY

Next, on March 10th, Rick Hartley, local bridge teacher and author, will talk about the many facets of bridge. He'll describe his own journey into the land of bridge, highlight celebrities who play bridge with some interesting quotes, discuss the many personal benefits to playing bridge, describe a scandal in an otherwise honorable game, provide an overview of how to play the game, explain why it might be the only “perfect” card game, and where you can learn to play this fascinating game.

MARCH 17, ANAT SHMULOVICH

On Saint Patrick's Day, March 17th, Anat Shmulovich will be interviewed about her book, “Where the Night Train Ends: How I Survived Russia, Ukraine and the Loss of the Man I Loved”. The book is a personal memoir of her youth in the Soviet Union describing her passion for advancing her education in music as well as the personal challenges and sacrifices she and her family made along the way. It also describes the experience of life in the Soviet Union in the 1960s and the repression and antisemitism experienced by Anat and her family. She will discuss issues raised in the book and read passages that highlight important milestones in her life: “Many people change careers or pursuits multiple times. On the contrary, I haven't changed careers my entire life. All my life I either taught or played piano, and my only pursuit was to get better in what I do. I feel I haven't worked a day in my life”.

MARCH 24, MATTHEW WUNDER & SAM KEANE

March 24th will feature Matthew Wunder and Samantha (Sam) Keane who will speak on several investment, tax and estate planning topics. Matthew, a certified financial manager, is

a partner at Park Avenue Capital, an investment advisory firm associated with Northwestern Mutual, and Sam is an account manager and also a certified financial planner. They will discuss investment strategies deployed by Park Avenue Capital that are designed to produce attractive after-tax returns with reduced risk for their clients, as well as providing insightful tax, retirement and estate management strategies.

MARCH 31ST, LARRY O'GORMAN

Finally, on March 31st, we will hear from Larry O'Gorman, a Fellow at Nokia Bell Labs Research in Murray Hill, NJ. His current work areas include efficient AI and multimedia analytics. He has also taught multimedia security at Cooper Union and New York University. Larry

will describe how technology has contributed to the creation of visual art from the time of Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) in the 1960s to today's era of generative AI (artificial intelligence). Over this period, the artist's role has evolved from solitary creator to orchestrator of immersive viewer experiences to one where the “brushwork” has been ceded to artificial intelligence. Larry will show a sampling of the interactive artworks starting with the Experiments in Art and Technology that involved New York artists working with Bell Labs engineers in the 1960s, and up to present day. With this increasing use of AI technologies, we will ask the question: whose creation is this – human or machine?



(above, l-r) Steve Bondy, Rick Hartley, Anat Shmulovich, Sam Keane, O'Gorman

Men of a Certain Age: Inside the "Well-Oiled Machine" of the Old Guard

A RITUAL OF FELLOWSHIP

The Old Guard's Tuesday sessions, located at New Providence Presbyterian Church located at 1307 Springfield Ave, follow a time-honored rhythm. The 9:30 a.m. coffee hour is followed by a prompt 10:00 a.m. start, beginning with a tradition that is increasingly rare in modern civic life: communal singing.

The meetings serve as a hub for a wide-ranging network of sub-clubs. Before the main event, announcements detail a dizzying array of "ancillary activities," including a Technology Users Group, a Book Club, and a "Timely Topics" discussion circle. For those looking to stay active, the group coordinates golf, bocce, and walking groups, while social calendars are rounded out by occasional New York City theater trips, an annual picnic, and the popular "Ladies Day" luncheon.

THE "MEAT" OF THE PROGRAM

After a few jokes—which members admit range from "pretty good" to "not", the meeting moves to its centerpiece: the featured speaker.

With over 4,000 presentations logged since its inception, the Old Guard is a "well-oiled machine" that consistently punches above its

weight. The membership, primarily composed of well-educated professional retirees, leverages its deep connections to secure an exceptional array of presenters. The podium has been graced by Nobel laureates, professional athletes, entertainers, and politicians at every level of government, alongside world-class scientists and business leaders. Occasionally, our own members will step up to relate special events or professional experiences that are just as riveting as the guest experts.

OPEN DOORS FOR NEW MEMBERS

Despite its name and storied history, the Old Guard remains remarkably accessible. The group prides itself on being a welcoming space for any "man of a certain age" looking for intellectual stimulation and social connection.

The organization's invitation to the public is simple: drop by on Tuesday morning around 9:30 a.m., introduce yourself to a greeter, and see if the culture fits. As their long-standing motto suggests, the draw may be the high-level lectures, but the lasting impact is the community. "Come for the Programs," the motto reads. "Stay for the Friends."

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SMALL BUSINESS MENTORING HELP MILITARY VETERANS SUCCEED

SCORE Central Jersey

During National Military Appreciation Month and beyond, SCORE mentors offer resources for veterans to start and grow their entrepreneurial enterprises.

Veterans' training, resolve and fortitude to overcome challenges make them the ideal entrepreneur. They soar as small business owners. According to research, 80 percent of the 1.7 million veteran-owned business owners consider themselves successful. The small business five-year survival rate for veterans is double that of the non-veteran population.

Data from the U.S. Small Business Administration has shown that small business owners with an established mentor have twice the success rate – 70 percent versus 35 percent – as those who do not have a mentor.

In conjunction with National Military Appreciation Month in May, SCORE, a national nonprofit organization that assists small businesses, has developed specific resources for use by its 10,000 mentors nationally in mentoring veterans.

The SCORE Veterans Small Business Resource Guide features veterans-specific resources to offer insight on developing a business plan, securing funding, starting a business, buying an existing business, buying a franchise, connecting with one of SCORE's volunteer mentors, and gaining a better understanding of business through webinars and



(above) Since 1964, SCORE has helped more than 17 million entrepreneurs start, grow or successfully exit a business. SCORE's 10,000 volunteers provide free, expert mentoring, resources and education in all 50 U.S. states and territories. Visit SCORE at score.org.

Courtesy photo

workshops.

"Volunteering at SCORE is my way of showing appreciation to those who helped and guided me during my career while sharing my background and experience to help entrepreneurs succeed," said SCORE Mid-Atlantic Regional Vice President Ed Coleman. "While I enjoy working with all SCORE clients, as a U.S. Army veteran, I particularly enjoy working with veterans to translate their military experience into entrepreneurship. Helping clients realize their

dreams is very gratifying and the essence of the SCORE mission."

SCORE Central Jersey Chapter Chair Nancy Verduin said mentors continually expand their knowledge base to better assist veterans on their entrepreneurial journey.

"Military transitioning from active duty have different needs than civilians in terms of starting a business," said Verduin. "It's wonderful to have veterans' resources at our volunteers' fingertips to aid in mentoring our service men and women."

Veterans account for about 10 percent of SCORE's client base. Veterans own 10 percent of small businesses and 14 percent of franchises. Since franchisors have a defined plan of what the business should entail, veterans represent the perfect franchisee given their ability to effectively execute plans as intended.

Nationally, veterans own nearly 2 million businesses, employing more than 5 million Americans, and generating more than \$1 trillion in annual income. Of those, 40 percent of veteran-owned businesses generate more than \$500,000 in annual revenue.

To learn more about SCORE, request a mentor or volunteer to be one, visit score.org.

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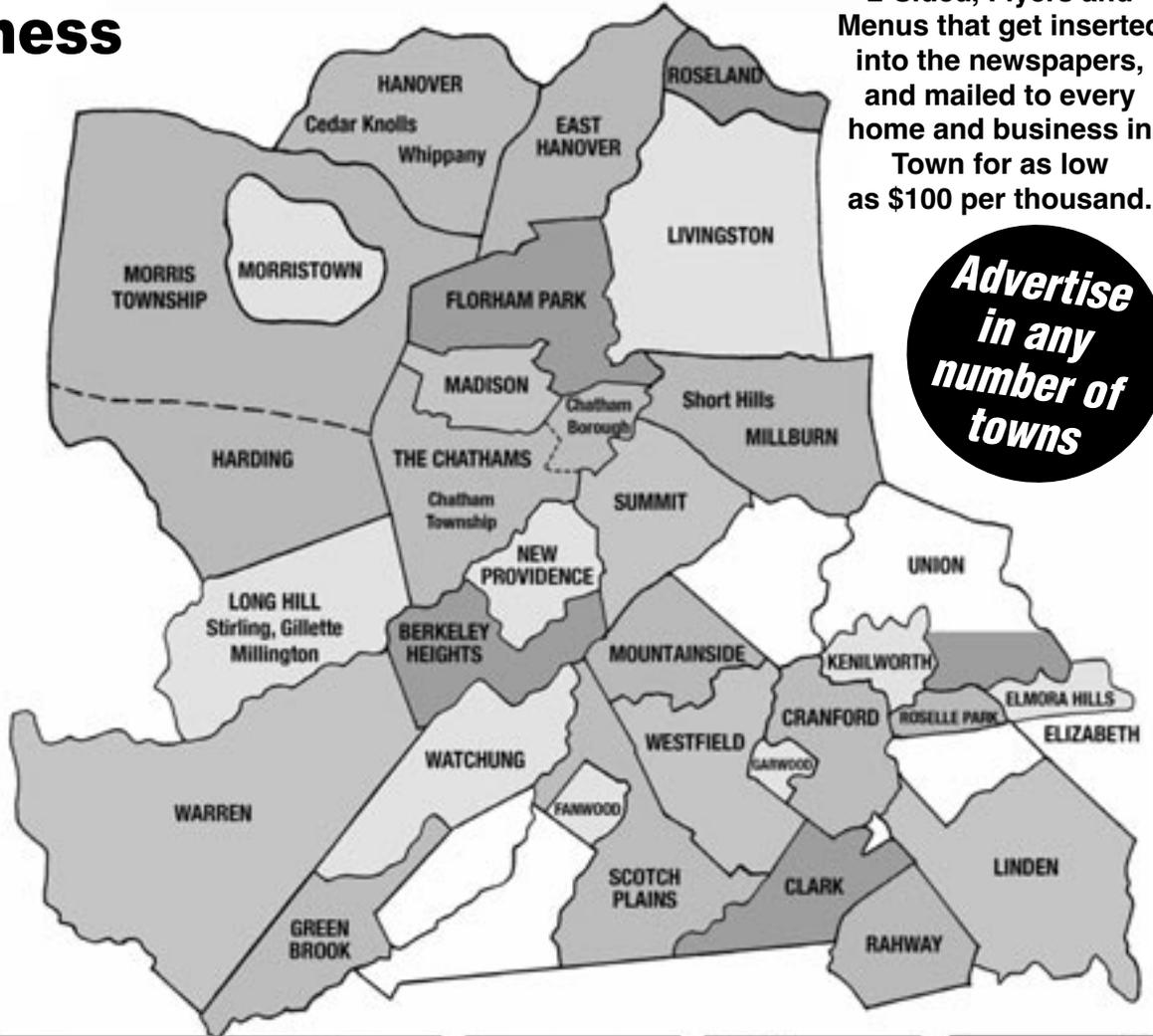
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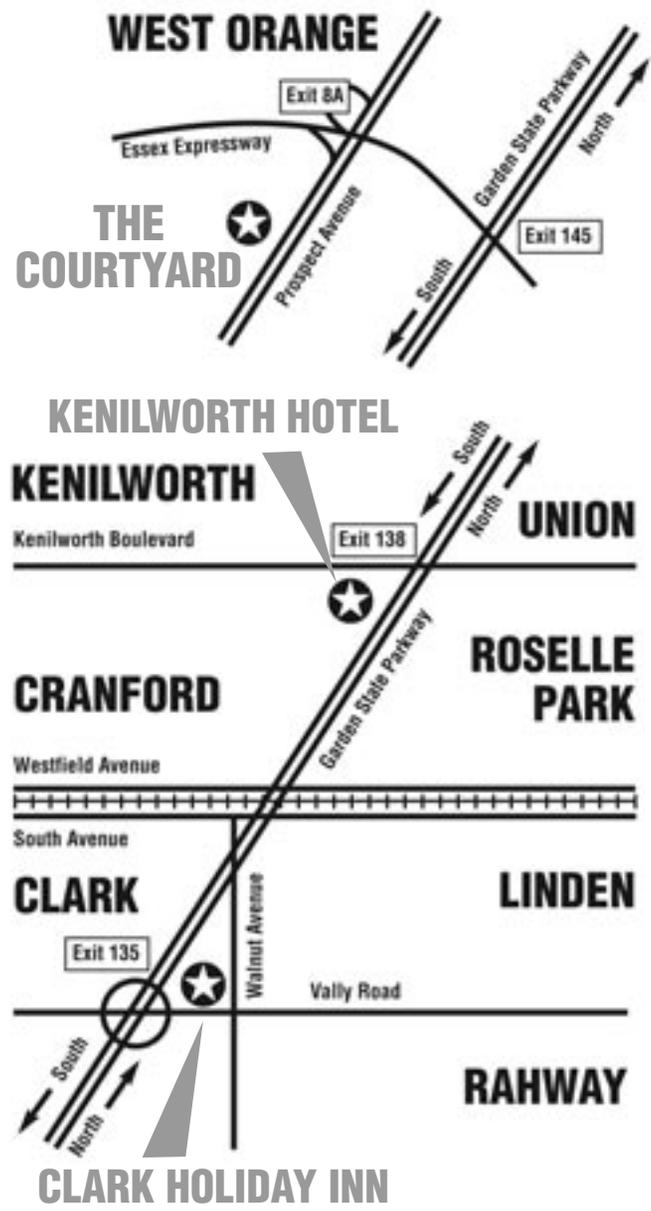
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