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PROJECT GRADUATION SEEKS COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Michelle Richardson, 2026 PG Chairperson

2026 marks the 35th year of Watchung Hills Regional High School's Project Graduation. Each year, a volunteer team of WHRHS Senior parents come together to plan events for the graduating class throughout the year that lead up to a safe and fun graduation celebration for the entire class. Traditional events include the Senior Panoramic Picture Day (shown in the photograph), where each senior is given their Senior Warrior t-shirt, and several Senior Week events, including a Color WARriors fun day, the Yearbook Signing social, a Senior Breakfast and the end-of-year substance-free event held on graduation night!

The committee is excited to announce this year's action-packed night will be held at iPlay America in Freehold, NJ. Graduates can choose from a full night of fun, including Two-Level Laser tag, Arcade Games, Unlimited rides, live entertainment and so much more. Of course, food and drinks will be provided throughout the night for them to share this final night with their classmates.

All 428 WHRHS seniors are welcome to attend the Project Graduation event free of charge. Every senior will participate in the Senior week events leading up to Project Graduation as well. The committee relies entirely on fundraising to make this enormous event happen, including donations from the WHRHS Community.

If you or your organization is interested in donating or



(above) QR CODE for WHRHS Project Graduation donations.

providing a service, please scan the QR Code to be taken directly to the sponsorship form. The organization accepts Venmo @WHRHS-ProjectGrad2026 or send your donation via check made out to WHRHS Project Graduation, 108 Stirling Road, Warren, NJ 07059.

All donations are tax deductible and will be mentioned in the Graduation program and in various WHRHS and local social media outlets. Please reach out to projectgradwhrhs@gmail.com with questions. Thank you in advance for supporting our students having a safe and substance-free graduation celebration.



Courtesy Photo

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Green Brook Gazette NJ

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CALLING LOCAL BUSINESSES TO JOIN WARREN LIONS CLUB EXPO IN JUNE

The tough winter is still around but the beautiful spring will knock it down! Yes, it's that time of the year again, when the Warren Lions Club team picks up speed on EXPO readiness activities, it will be here in less than 3 months. The EXPO is the biggest social and commercial event in town, held every year from 2nd Wed to Sat of June (4 days), at the Warren Township municipal field (46 Mountain Boulevard).

The gathering is a classic CARNIVAL for all ages, family and friends, 6 to 10pm from Wednesday to Saturday. This year's EXPO, in its 58th occurrence, will be hosted from 10th to 13th June, 2026. There will be amusement rides, games of chance, fireworks, food vendors, and an exposition of local businesses and not-for-profits organizations. We will also have a spectacular Fireworks, to celebrate the local community, on Friday, 10pm.

The Lions EXPO attracts more than 10,000 people, over the four days, and has become the premier family & friends' melting pot, in the Warren Township and the neighboring communities.

Our sponsors are NextHome Realty, Goddard School Basking Ridge, Mira Vie, Lightbridge Academy, Atlantic Health, and Warren Hills Orthodontics.

In addition to the daily tickets, the EXPO has the pay-one-price wristbands every night. And

don't forget the Giant 50/50 cash raffle with the drawing on Saturday June 13th, resulting in thousands of dollars payout to a single winner. The winner need not be present at the drawing. Tickets will be available for purchase at the Expo, every night, for \$5 each.

LOCAL BUSINESS EXPOSITION

The EXPO is an excellent platform for local businesses to showcase their services and connect directly with customers through the purchase of a \$500 Exclusive Game sponsor sign or a \$150 non-exclusive ride sponsor sign, displayed at the Expo for the 4 days.

"Interacting with potential customers at a high profile community event can greatly boost a company's image and customer base," noted Anthony Franchini, the Warren Lions Club Treasurer. "Community members deeply appreciate those businesses that demonstrate their local support through events like this." said Mark Ramos, the EXPO Chairperson.

We have started accepting applications for tent vendors to sell or promote their businesses to the thousands of people in attendance at the gathering. For information on becoming a tent vendor at the 2026 Warren Lions EXPO, please contact Anthony Franchini at 908-334-9304.

All proceed from the Lions EXPO are donated back to the community organizations and sight and hearing foundations.



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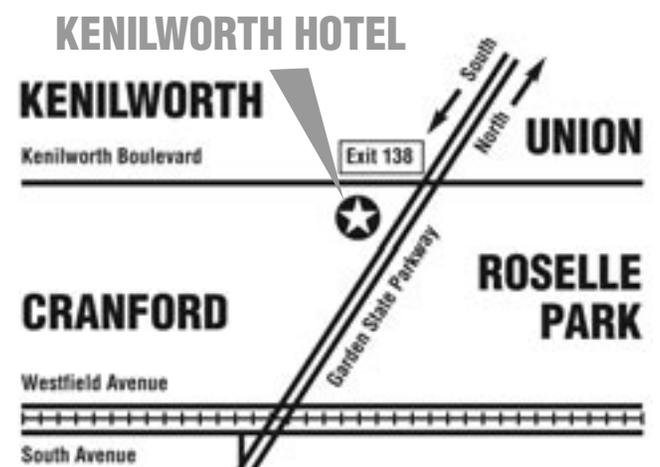
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ANYA GARG HOPES TO BRIDGE HEALTHCARE ACCESS GAP

White Coat & Beyond

Most teens who dream of a healthcare career face the same problem: inspiration without access. They see doctors on TV, hear vague encouragement to “follow your passion,” and then hit a wall when it comes to understanding what the work actually entails.

Anya Garg, a student at Watchung Hills Regional High School, saw that gap and decided to close it. She has launched White Coat & Beyond, a community-driven storytelling and mentorship platform designed to educate teens about the full breadth of healthcare careers not just doctors, but physician assistants, pharmacists, therapists, nurses, technicians, and countless other professionals shaping modern medicine.

The platform puts real healthcare professionals directly in conversation with teens cutting through stereotypes and replacing them with honest, actionable guidance about diverse career pathways.

The early momentum is striking. White Coat & Beyond has already completed interviews with more than 10 medical professionals across diverse specialties, with five features published and five more rolling out weekly. An additional seven to eight interviews are scheduled in the coming weeks, building a growing library of insider perspectives.

On Instagram (@whitecoatnbeyond), the platform is resonating: 58 followers with individual posts averaging 600 to 1,000+ views—strong traction for a brand-new student initiative still in its launch phase.

“Students don’t just need inspiration—they need access to the full picture of healthcare. Most teens think healthcare means becoming a doctor. But there are hundreds of career paths—physician assistants, pharmacists, therapists, nurses, medical technicians, and so much more. This platform shows them all of it.” Anya Garg, Founder, White Coat & Beyond

SHOWCASING THE HEALTHCARE ECOSYSTEM

The healthcare industry is vastly larger than the stereotypical doctor narrative suggests. Yet most teen career resources focus narrowly on physicians and surgeons, leaving the hundreds of other critical professionals invisible.

White Coat & Beyond flips this script by intentionally showcasing the diversity of healthcare careers from physicians and PAs to pharmacists, physical and mental health therapists, nurses, surgical technicians, radiologic technologists, and more.

Rather than recycling generic career advice, each interview explores what originally drew the

professional to healthcare, what the day-to-day reality looks like, the real challenges and rewards of the role, and concrete next steps for students considering different pathways.

The result is a platform where teens can see

themselves in the stories they’re hearing discovering that there’s a healthcare career for nearly every interest, skill set, and personality type.

BUILDING COMMUNITY, GROWING REACH

White Coat & Beyond is actively seeking healthcare professionals willing to share their journeys, schools and youth organizations interested in hosting student panels and mentorship conversations, and local nonprofits looking to engage motivated teen volunteers in health and wellness initiatives.

ABOUT WHITE COAT & BEYOND

White Coat & Beyond is a student-founded community impact platform that spotlights the full spectrum of healthcare professions through interviews and storytelling to inspire teen education, mentorship, and service. Rather than limiting focus to physicians, the platform features doctors, physician assistants, pharmacists, therapists, nurses, technicians, and other healthcare professionals who share their real-world experiences and advice with students. Based in Watchung, NJ, the platform is expanding its roster of featured professionals across diverse specialties and deepening its reach into local schools and youth organizations.



(above) Anya Garg founder of “White Coat & Beyond”

Courtesy Photo

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WARRENBROOK SENIOR CENTER - APRIL CALENDAR

Warrenbrook Senior Center located at 500 Warrenville Road is one of the six county operated Senior Center. Somerset County residents who are 60 years and older are welcome to participate in any of the programs at Warrenbrook Senior Center. They also provide a choice of 4 different meal choices during lunch that seniors can take advantage of during the weekdays. All the programs are free for the registered members. Please call 908-753-9440 for more information on how to become member of the Warrenbrook Senior Community.

Watercolor Paint Class

Wednesdays, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

All supplies are included.

Chair Yoga with Kartika

Mondays, 10 a.m.

This class is open to all levels of skill.

Studio 60+

1st & 3rd Mondays, 1 p.m.

Plan the events they are interested in.

Mahjong for Intermediate Players

Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

For intermediate mahjong players.

Tai Chi with Roger Hsu

Tuesdays & Fridays, 10 a.m.

This program can be practiced while either standing or sitting.

Bridge Group with Ronnie

Tuesdays, 1 – 4 p.m.

Welcome new members and beginners (lessons available).

Project Healthy Bones

Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

This peer-led, 24-week exercise and education program is for individuals who are at risk of osteoporosis or have it.

(Video) Cardio Exercise

Wednesdays, 1 p.m.

Designed with safety and comfort in mind, to stay fit, feel strong, and enjoy a quick boost of vitality throughout the day.

Craft Activities

2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 1 – 4 p.m.

Work on doing craft work for Community Service projects throughout the year.

Line Dancing with Linda Hyland

Thursdays, 9:30 – 10:15 a.m.

Suitable for participants with limited mobility.

Afternoon Yoga with Wai-Ling Poon

Thursdays, 12:45 p.m.

Class uses seated and standing poses perfect for all fitness levels.

Bridge

Fridays, 1 – 4 p.m.

Bridge is a mentally challenging card game that offers intellectual and social stimulation.

Blood Pressure Screenings

April 1, 10 a.m.

Take your blood pressure and ask questions.

Bingo with Bob Mazet

April 1, 16, 11 a.m.

Strengthens hand-eye coordination, and improves listening and short-term memory.

Easter Trivia

April 2, 11 a.m.

Participants can test their knowledge of spring traditions, holiday history, fun facts, and nostalgic Easter favorites.

Differences in Physical Therapy Settings

April 6, 11 a.m.

Individuals can become more informed about the range of physical therapy and rehabilitative.

Creative Movements

April 7, 11 a.m.

Get moving, grooving and laughing on your way to the dance floor with Tom McKie.

Musical Entertainment

April 8, 11 a.m.

Broadway Then & Now invites participants to tap their toes, reminisce, and enjoy the unforgettable spirit of musical theater.

Boggle

April 9, 11 a.m.

This is a challenging game that is played using a grid of letters.

Understanding Vertigo

April 10, 11 a.m.

This presentation will explain common causes of vertigo, when to seek medical care, and practical strategies for managing symptoms.

Mental Health & Medication

April 13, 11 a.m.

Discuss common mental health concerns, how medications can help, potential side effects, and tips for safe use.

Wheel of Fortune

April 14, 11 a.m.

Spin the colorful wheel and watch the anticipation build as participants try to match clues and solve word puzzles.

Monthly Book Club

(Hybrid) April 14, 1:30 PM

New members are always welcome!

Casino Games

April 15, 10:30 a.m.

Pre-registration is required.

Price is Right

April 17, 11 a.m.

Test your shopping savvy, guess the prices of everyday items, and win fabulous prizes.

Build your Flower Bouquet

April 20, 11 a.m.

Choose from a variety of fresh, seasonal flowers and create your own beautiful bouquet to take home. No experience needed. Pre-

registration is required.

HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) Exercise

April 20, 27, 1 p.m.

The exercise can be done seated or standing.

Wordle

April 21, 11 a.m.

A word-based brain game where participants have six chances to guess a five-letter word.

Hail to Chiefs' Pets

April 22, 11 a.m.

Hear about the antics of these President's pets.

Bird Feeder Craft

April 23, 11 a.m.

Celebrate Earth Day with a hands-on craft!

All materials will be provided.

Pre-registration is required.

A Tribute to American Music

April 24, 11 a.m.

Re-live the music from your favorite singers from the 50s to the 90s.

Wonders of New Jersey Night Sky

April 27, 11 a.m.

Participants will receive a tour of the night sky over New Jersey, including stars, constellations, planets, nebulae, and galaxies.

Instrument Meditation

April 28, 11 a.m.

No experience needed - just come, sit comfortably, and enjoy.

Orchestra Performance

April 29, 11 a.m.

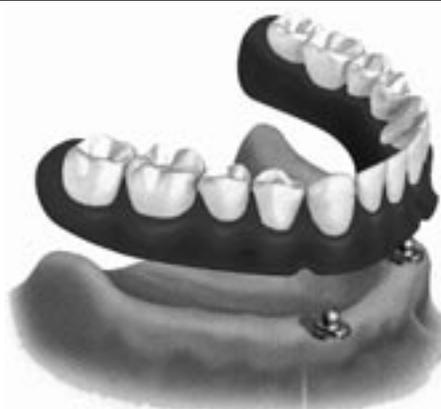
NJIO provides opportunities for musicians of all ages and abilities to study and perform classical music.

Minute to Win It

April 30, 11 a.m.

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(above) Philip Levonian

Courtesy Photo

PHILIP LEVONIAN EARNS SEAL OF BILITERACY IN FIVE LANGUAGES

Submitted by WHRHS

Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) senior Philip Levonian has achieved an academic milestone, earning the Seal of Bilingual Proficiency in five languages: Italian, Chinese (Mandarin), Russian, Spanish, and French, an accomplishment that reflects years of dedication, cultural curiosity, and a deep passion for language learning.

The Seal of Bilingual Proficiency is awarded to students who demonstrate high levels of proficiency in both written and spoken language. Successfully earning the distinction in five languages is a rare and impressive achievement.

Growing up in a multilingual and multicultural household laid the foundation for this success. Russian is his native language, and he also understands spoken Armenian. Philip's early exposure to language sparked a lifelong interest, which deepened when, at the age of six, his mother enrolled him in Murray Hill Chinese School. Immersed in the school's community and environment, he quickly fell in love with learning Mandarin.

His language journey continued throughout his academic career. He began studying French in middle school, followed by Spanish and Italian in high school. Philip shared that his family's annual tradition of traveling to new destinations, now totaling 25 countries, mostly throughout Europe, has played a critical role in shaping his global perspective. During these trips, he seeks out authentic cultural experiences, navigates countries using public transportation, and practices languages with native speakers whenever possible.

This approach has helped him recognize patterns across languages. With the exception of Mandarin, the languages he speaks belong to the Indo-European macro-family, sharing common roots, grammatical structures, and semantics. This linguistic awareness has also supported his recent studies in German, a language known for its

complex grammatical case system. His background in Russian, which also uses grammatical cases, has helped him better understand German grammar concepts.

His academic path in world languages has been marked by ambition and initiative. After self-studying Spanish over the summer following his sophomore year, he placed directly into AP Spanish, skipping all previous levels. With the support of his teacher, Mr. Commerford, he was also permitted to study two languages simultaneously. He similarly advanced from French 4 Honors to AP French in his junior year. Last year, he earned Seals of Bilingual Proficiency in both Spanish and French and achieved scores of 5 on both AP exams.

This year, he added Italian to his studies, the only language offered at his school that he had not yet learned. Beginning in September, he quickly achieved proficiency and earned another Seal of Bilingual Proficiency. He is now pursuing German independently and plans to attempt the Seal of Bilingual Proficiency in that language as well.

Beyond the classroom, Philip has contributed to advanced linguistic research. Over the past two years, he worked with NYU Professor Maria Gouskova on a project documenting the endangered Pipil language of El Salvador to create accessible digital resources for young members of the Pipil community. He has also collaborated with Pace University Professor Andriy Danylenko on editing a manuscript about Old Church Slavonic, scheduled for publication this year, and previously worked as a copyeditor for the Encyclopedia for Slavic Languages and Linguistics, published by Brill.

In addition to languages, music has been a central passion throughout his life. He has attended New Jersey Symphony Orchestra concerts since the age of six, plays the violin, and composes original music. He has been accepted to Berklee College of Music, where he plans to pursue a professional career in composition.

ASTRONOMY
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DAR CHAPTER CELEBRATES 130 YEARS

Submitted by Holly Dunbar

With a toast of champagne, the members of Elizabeth Snyder-Continental Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) recently celebrated the chapter's 130th Anniversary at Bruno's Bistro in Warren.

As part of the festivities, two new chapter members were sworn in, Carol Chasse of Green Brook and Angela Ryder of Warren. Three members were recognized for milestone membership anniversaries: Barbara Kuzma of Iselin, 45 years; Ruth Ryno, 45 years, and Cate

Carley, five years, both of North Plainfield. Sons of the American Revolution member Bruce Ryno of North Plainfield received the DAR's Hannah White Arnett medal for providing assistance to the DAR. Prospective DAR member Clara Barbaz of Green Brook received a Clover Award from the N.J. State Society DAR for her support of 4-H programs.

"It was a time to gather with family and friends to celebrate," said Regent Nancy Stoll. "2025 was a busy year with a variety of service projects. In fact, chapter members volunteered 2,800 hours

to support education, promote patriotism and historic preservation and to build community."

The DAR is a nonprofit, nonpolitical service organization. Any woman, 18 and over, who is descended from a man or woman who aided American independence, may join the DAR. Founded in 1896, the Chapter serves areas of Somerset, Middlesex and Union counties.

The next chapter meeting is March 10, 7-9 p.m. and women interested in joining the DAR are invited to attend. Contact the chapter at ESCchapterDAR@gmail.com.



(above) DAR members pose with profiles of their Patriot ancestors.



(above) Prospective member Clara Barbaz (l.) accepts her N.J. State Society DAR Clover Award from Nancy Stoll.



(above) Angela Ryder (l.) and Carol Chasse are sworn in as members of the DAR.



(above) Bruce Ryno was presented with the DAR's Hannah White Arnett medal by Regent Nancy Stoll (r.) as his wife, DAR member Ruth Ryno, looks on.



(above) Leslie Strohmeier-Sheridan (r.) presents a membership pin that belonged to her late mother, chapter member Catherine Strohmeier, to Barbara Pollison-Beck.



BUDDY BASEBALL LEAGUE

The Ability Foundation of NJ proudly presents the Diamond Dogs Buddy Baseball League. (Formerly Buddy Ball of Watchung Hills Baseball/Softball Association).

Played on Saturday mornings in Warren, NJ, Diamond Dogs Buddy Baseball empowers individuals with disabilities to embrace their unique abilities and challenge themselves on a week-to-week basis. It offers participants in the program a chance to meet friends, get exercise,

and have fun. We believe that playing on our team is so much more than just playing a game - it is an opportunity to shine.

The Diamond Dogs Buddy Baseball League is free to participate in, and we have no age limit. We can organize teams from elementary school through adulthood.

To register visit and to find out more about the Diamond Dogs Buddy Baseball League, visit: theabilityfoundationofnj.org



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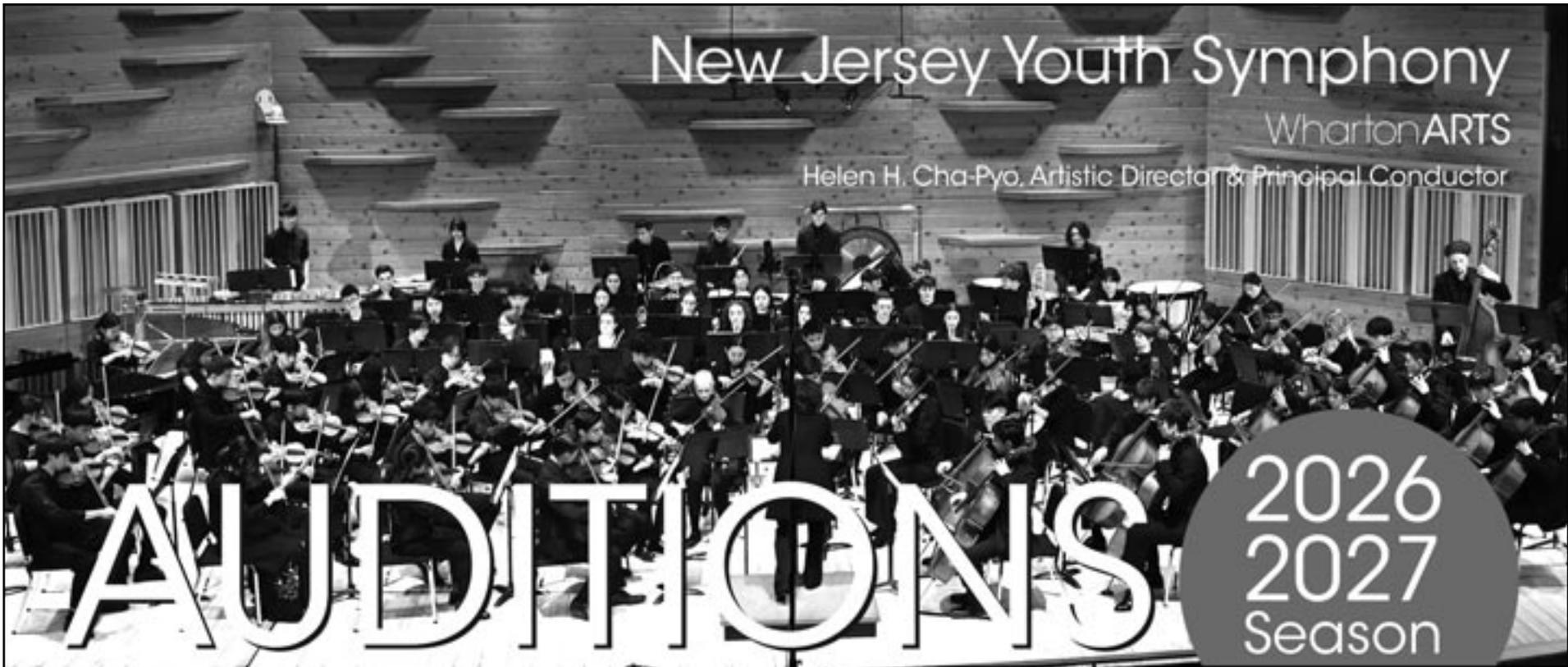
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*At 60 Locust Avenue, Berkeley Heights

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

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FINISHING THE HAT: THE MUSIC OF SONDHEIM AT THE SIEMINSKI THEATER APRIL 19

The Actors Studio of New Jersey and The Sieminski Theater proudly present *Finishing the Hat: The Music of Sondheim*, a spectacular tribute to the legendary composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim. This exciting collaboration marks the first producing partnership between the two acclaimed arts organizations, joining forces to pay tribute to one of musical theater's most influential voices.

Performances will take place Saturday, April 18 at 7:30 PM and Sunday, April 19 at 2:30 PM at The Sieminski Theater in Basking Ridge, New Jersey. Tickets on sale and available through the Sieminski Theater website at

SieminskiTheater.org
or box office at 908-580-3892

Finishing the Hat: The Music of Sondheim is an unforgettable musical journey through Sondheim's unparalleled body of work, featuring songs from his most celebrated musicals, including *Company*, *Into the Woods*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Follies*, *A Little Night Music*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, among others. Audiences will experience the brilliance, complexity, and emotional depth of Sondheim's music and lyrics in a performance that honors his timeless artistry and profound impact on the art form.

"Collaborating on this production is a thrilling opportunity to bring together two creative forces dedicated to enriching the performing arts in

New Jersey," said Michael Restaino, Artistic Director of The Actors Studio of New Jersey. "Sondheim's music reminds us of the beauty and intricacy of storytelling through song - something we are proud to share with audiences at The Sieminski Theater."

ABOUT THE SIEMINSKI THEATER:

Bringing a professional performing arts venue with a diverse lineup of entertainment to Basking Ridge and the surrounding communities makes the Sieminski Theater and Somerset County an artistic and cultural destination. Enjoy a newly expanded performance schedule from American Theater Group, Light Opera of New Jersey, New Jersey Festival Orchestra, Trilogy Repertory, The Actors Studio of New Jersey and countless national touring groups. Our intimate, award-winning non-profit venue features technical amenities that rival any Broadway theater. Visit us at www.sieminskitheater.org to view our upcoming entertainment schedule, where any seat is the best seat in the house.

ABOUT THE ACTORS STUDIO OF NEW JERSEY

The Actors Studio of New Jersey is a nonprofit professional theater company dedicated to fostering excellence in the performing arts through powerful storytelling, dynamic productions, and arts education. The Actors Studio of New Jersey is committed to producing high-quality theatrical experiences that celebrate creativity, accessibility, and community engagement.

ORCHESTRA PERFORMS ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

The New Jersey Festival Orchestra brings its season to a close with *One Thousand and One Nights*, an evening shaped by storytelling, imagination, and the vivid orchestral palette of two beloved works. Performances will take place on Saturday, May 30, at 7:00 pm at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield, and Sunday, May 31, at 2:30 pm at the Sieminski Theater in Basking Ridge.

The program pairs the elegance of Joaquín Rodrigo with the sweeping narrative of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, inviting audiences into a world where music and myth intertwine. At its center is internationally acclaimed Slovak guitarist Karol Samuelčík, whose appearance is presented in collaboration with the Slovak American Cultural Center.

Samuelčík takes the stage in Rodrigo's *Fantasia para un gentilhombre*, a work that draws from Spanish baroque dances and unfolds with graceful lyricism and rhythmic vitality.

A seasoned international performer, Samuelčík has appeared across Europe, Asia, and the Americas, with engagements at venues including London's Purcell Room and Shenzhen Concert Hall.

The program culminates in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, a work long associated with the fantastical tales of *One Thousand and One Nights*. Though the composer ultimately removed explicit programmatic titles, the music retains its narrative spirit; waves swell and recede, melodies shimmer and twist, and the orchestra becomes a storyteller in its own right. Echoes of distant voyages, whispered secrets, and unfolding drama emerge through richly layered textures and luminous orchestration.

Tickets are available at www.njfestivalorchestra.org/concerts or by calling (908) 232-9400.

Student discounts are available to high school and college students.

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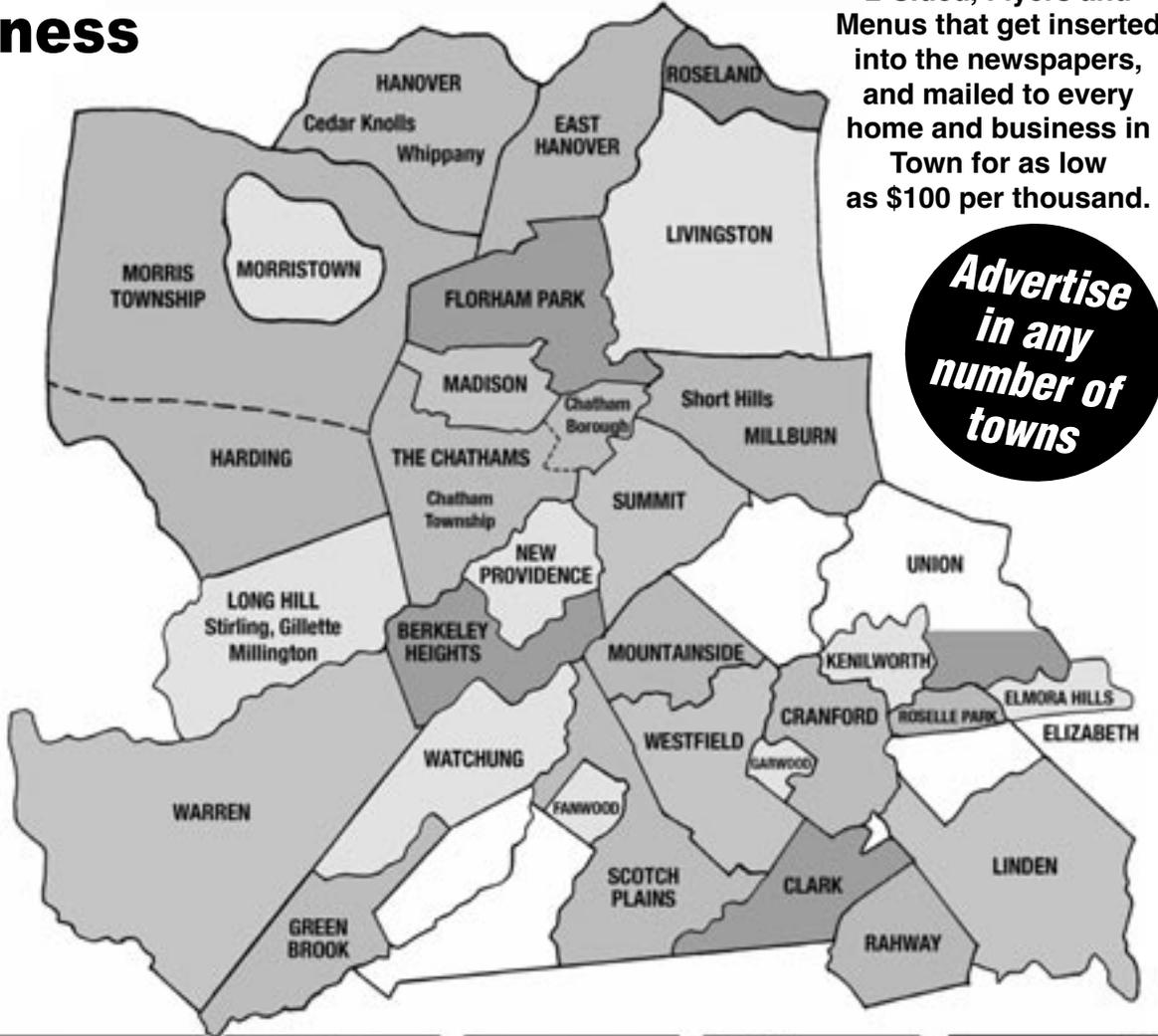
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Fresh off their top-scoring performance at the 2025 Sweet Adelines Region 15 competition, the chorus has earned a coveted spot in the Harmony Classic at the 78th Annual Sweet Adelines International Competition in Columbus, Ohio, October 2026. Now, they're building their sound for the world stage.

Open auditions will be held in Stirling between 6:30-7:00 p.m. on Wednesday evenings from

March 4 until April 8, 2026, and will take less than 10 minutes (flexible scheduling is available). Singers are asked to perform a brief a cappella song of their choice. No experience required, just a love of singing and a desire to grow.

For details and to schedule your audition, email us at info@hickorytreechorus.org or call 908-337-8810.



(above) Hickory Tree is an award-winning women's chorus dedicated to advancing the musical art form of four-part a cappella harmony sung in the barbershop style. We are dynamic, diverse women, passionate about music, performance, fun & friendship. Our musical journey of ringing chords and sparkling overtones drives personal growth and relationships that last a lifetime. As a chapter of Sweet Adelines International Organization, The Hickory Tree Chorus has been entertaining audiences in the New Jersey area since 1968. We believe every voice counts and encourage women singers of all ages colors, ethnicities, and orientations to visit us and share our joy of music.

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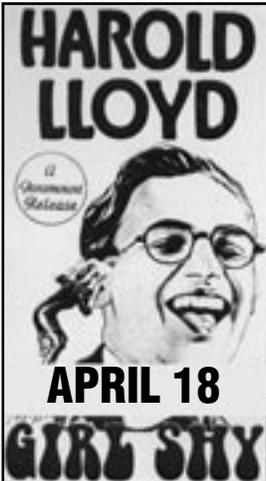
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