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PEYTON ROSE COMPLETES EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT



(above) For his Eagle Scout Project, Peyton Rose (2nd from left) planted 12 Atlantic White Cedar Saplings with tree guards in the Fanwood Nature Center with the help of his friends, family, and Scouts from Boy Scout Troop 33 in Fanwood.

Courtesy Photo

Borough of Fanwood

Peyton Rose, a senior at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, completed his Eagle Scout Project on December 6, 2025 with the help of his friends, family, Scouts from Boy Scout Troop 33 in Fanwood, and support from the Fanwood Environmental Commission. His project consisted of planting 12 Atlantic White Cedar Saplings in the Fanwood Nature Center and building tree guards to protect them from animals and encouraging their growth.

Peyton met with the Environmental Commission and offered to help with any projects or problems they might be encountering. The Commission had been nurturing Atlantic White Cedar saplings to prepare them for planting in the Nature Center.

After much planning and coordination with the Commission, Peyton gathered materials from Home Depot, Wayfair, and Tractor Supply, and set up work sessions to plant the saplings and build and install the tree guards.

Atlantic White Cedar Saplings can grow from 40 to 75 feet tall, and provide many benefits to the Nature Center including providing shelter for animals, stabilizing stream banks, as well as preventing flooding by helping to control water levels in the areas surrounding the trees.

"The Fanwood Environmental Commission has taught me that animals will eat anything, even saplings, and even as the trees grow, they can still be harmed by animals such as deer rubbing their antlers against the trees," Peyton said, "which is why it is even more important these tree guards keep any dangers to these saplings out and give these trees their best chance to fully grow."

"I want to thank the Fanwood Environmental Commission for their support, my family for being there to help in every move of this project as well as my friends and fellow Boy Scouts, who were there in the dirt and mud planting saplings and building tree guards," Peyton said.

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FAMILIES BUILD LOCAL BUILDINGS WITH LEGOS

Borough of Fanwood

Forty family teams built Historic Fanwood with LEGOS Saturday afternoon in the cafeteria of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. The Build Historic Fanwood event was the first event hosted by the Borough's Historic Preservation Commission for AmRev250, kicking off a series of events for AmRev250 celebrating America's 250th anniversary. The goal of the event was to inspire pride, connection, and joy through hands-on building and storytelling.

The family fun community event, consisting of teams of four, used some 100,00 LEGOS to recreate historic homes and buildings they choose from among 64 photo cards. Among the landmarks selected were the Historic Fanwood Train Station, La Grande School, Scotch Plains Baptist Church, All Saints Episcopal Church, the Patience Clark Farmhouse and the Osborn-Paterson House, both on Westfield Road. Teams placed their finished LEGO buildings next to the appropriate numbers for each of the landmarks on a giant map of the town.

Mayor Colleen Mahr, Council President Gina Berry and Borough Administrator Jesse Moehlman attended the LEGO Build and tried their hand at building Fanwood landmarks. Councilwomen Patricia Walsh and Erin McElroy Barker also stopped by at the start of the event.

Fanwood Architectural Treasure Hunt booklets listing the 64 sites and their history were distributed to participants at the conclusion of the event.

Photos by Paul Peyton



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SHE WAS A 48-YEAR-OLD MOM FROM BERKELEY HEIGHTS... TERRIFIED TO WEAR A LITTLE BLACK DRESS AT HER DAUGHTER'S WEDDING - UNTIL THIS HAPPENED

When guests gathered for a recent summer wedding in town, expectations were clear: a beautiful bride, proud parents, heartfelt speeches, and a lively dance floor.

What no one expected was that one of the most talked-about moments of the night would involve the bride's mother.

As Helen, 48, walked down the aisle in a fitted dress with a tastefully exposed back, heads turned. Conversations paused. By the time the reception was underway, it was clear this mother of the bride had made an impression few would forget.

It wasn't just that she looked great. She looked strong. Defined. Confident. Guests kept asking the same question throughout the night:

What does she do to look like that?

That question is how this story begins.

FROM TIRED, SOFT AND WEAK TO STRONG, LEAN AND CONFIDENT

A few years ago, Helen was not the woman people were buzzing about at a wedding. "I was tired all the time," Helen said. "My back hurt, my knees hurt, and I just felt older than I was.

I was in my late 40s, yes — but I felt like that was my whole identity."

Like many adults in their 40's 50s and 60s, Helen assumed aches, pains, and declining energy were simply the cost of aging. Exercise felt intimidating and confusing. Big gyms felt impersonal. Working out on her own felt unsafe.

"I didn't know what I should be doing, and I was afraid of hurting myself, so I just did nothing," she said.

A friend introduced her to a local personal training gym in Berkeley Heights, and she started with a free trial.

"I was so scared. I didn't walk in thinking I'd change my body," Helen said. "I was just hoping I could finally find a program that was right for me and do something for my health consistently."

THE UNKNOWN WORKOUT PLAN THAT CHANGED THE GAME

What Helen found was not a room full of treadmills and mirrors, but a personalized fitness program led by highly knowledgeable personal trainers who specialize in working with adults ages 40–60.

Helen didn't need anything extreme — she needed the right program and the right support.



(above) Helen flexing at one of their infamous 6 AM workouts at Gabriele Fitness

She started with two days per week. As her energy improved and her pain decreased, she gradually built up to three days per week. Each workout was done in a small-group setting, allowing for personalized coaching without the pressure or cost of one-on-one training.

"The accountability mattered," Helen said. "If I didn't show up, someone noticed. And if something hurt, they adjusted things immediately."

REDEFINING WHAT SOMEONE IN THEIR 40s CAN LOOK AND FEEL LIKE

Over time, the changes added up. Helen lost body fat. She gained muscle. More importantly, she gained confidence.

"I stopped thinking about what I couldn't do... and started thinking about what was next."

Years later, Helen is still a member and has even become a Grandma! She lifts weights people half her age shy away from. She moves pain-free. She keeps up with her grandchildren - and sometimes outpaces them.

So when her daughter's wedding approached, Helen didn't think twice about wearing the dress she loved.

"I didn't choose it to show off," she laughed. "I chose it because I felt good in my own skin."

The reaction at the wedding told the rest of the story.



(above) Helen turning every head as the mother of the bride

A LOCAL SECRET GETS PUBLIC

As word spread, one question kept coming up again and again:

What is the secret workout plan that's making her look that good?

The answer was simple: Gabriele Fitness — a small community personal training gym right in Berkeley Heights.

Helen's transformation didn't come from crash diets or marathon workouts. It came from consistency, expert coaching, and a supportive environment designed for real people — not fitness models.

FEELING BETTER AT 48 THAN SHE DID AT 28

Helen's story may have started with wedding buzz, but it's really about something deeper: what's possible when people stop accepting decline as inevitable.

"I wish I had started sooner because I feel better at 48 than I did at 28," Helen said. "But I'm grateful I started when I did."

A personal and confidential message from Helen to anyone on the fence about getting started.

"Ladies, having a personal trainer changed my life. Without a trainer, I never would have come close to looking and feeling this good. I tried so many times on my own and failed. I know it's hard to get started — I was scared myself. But if you find an amazing gym like I did (Gabriele Fitness), it changes everything.

The funny thing is, on the front door of the gym there's a sign that reads, 'You just did the hard part. We'll take it from here.' And I truly believe that if you find a place you trust, that genuinely cares about you, and you show up consistently, you'll get into the best shape of your life.

For me, being in great shape has made my entire life so much better. I'm happier, stronger, full of energy... and my workouts are the reason."

For those who see themselves in Helen — those who feel older, weak, tired, stressed, struggling to burn fat, and are secretly starting to believe their best years are behind them — Read This:

Gabriele Fitness has opened 13 spots for local residents to experience their personal training program...FREE for 14 days. The offer expires on June 6th and is available to only 13 people. To get the full details on the free program and see if any spots are still available, scan below...



Scan the code or go to refer.gabrielefitness.com/helen or Call us at (908) 293-9666

P.S. Many people reading this article will be inspired by Helen... yet still feel hesitant to try the program. With anything new, there's always uncertainty — especially with something like a new fitness routine. But if you're not working out right now, or you've been inconsistent (like most people) you've read the exact article you needed to read today because...

Gabriele Fitness has helped thousands of people in this community over the past 18 years. For some, the program has had a life-changing effect, and many members have stayed for nearly two decades.

A large number of them are now in the best shape of their lives (...and 2 decades older) — but they all started in the same place as anyone reading this and considering starting their fitness journey.

If you're still hesitant, visit our website gabrielefitness.com/results for an ocean of success stories from people just like you... who've transformed their lives... and in some cases, the lives of everyone in their family. This is powerful stuff.

WHY GABRIELE FITNESS FOCUSES ONLY ON ADULTS OVER 40

Adults over 40 face a perfect storm of demands that make fitness more critical — and more challenging — than ever before. They're in the prime of their careers, often in leadership roles where the pressure is relentless and the hours are long.

They're raising children or supporting aging parents — sometimes both at the same time. Their stress levels are high, their metabolism is slowing down, and their bodies don't recover like they used to.

Yet this is precisely when they need their health and energy most — to perform at work, to be present for their families, to enjoy the success they've worked so hard to build, and to avoid the chronic diseases that affected their parents' generation.

The cruel irony is that when fitness matters most, it's also when finding time for it feels nearly impossible.

That's why adults over 40 don't need another generic gym membership. They need expert guidance designed specifically for their unique challenges, their busy schedules, and their refusal to accept that their best years are behind them.

To get the full details about the Free Personal Training Program and to see if any of the 13 spots are still available scan below...



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UNICO AND LOCAL SCHOOLS HELP ST. BART'S, IHM FOOD PANTRIES

Submitted by Matt Marino

During the weekend of April 25, Scotch Plains-Fanwood UNICO coordinated a food drive with students from two area high schools that, upon completion, supplied much needed food items to the food pantries at the churches of St. Bartholomew the Apostle (St. Bart's) and Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM).

SP-F UNICO member Joe Schiavo managed the food drive's logistics, from soliciting food donations to collaborating with the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Italian Club and the Union Catholic High School Italian Honor Society students. Schiavo and the schools' Italian organizations collected the food over several days and then brought the food to St. Bart's and IHM on April 25 and April 26, respectively.

Representatives from both food pantries helped the volunteers sort the food and restock the shelves in preparation of bagging the food and delivering it to the families.

With so many more families experiencing food insecurity due to rising costs, food pantries have found their shelves emptying more quickly than ever before. Both parishes expressed their gratitude for SP-F UNICO's and the students' hard work to make the food drive a success. IHM Pastor Father Michael Ward and Food Pantry Director Mary Kate Schiller were extremely grateful for all the donations they received from the community. St. Bart's Food Pantry Director Patricia Vignola added, "The generous donation of non-perishable food this past Saturday helped to restock our shelves and will allow us to

provide many local families with the items they need."

ABOUT SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD UNICO

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Chapter of UNICO was chartered in 1973. Our chapter has raised and donated thousands of dollars annually to support scholarship programs, organizations, and individuals in the New Jersey area. Since 1974, we have co-sponsored the St. Barts/UNICO Italian Festival, which attracts thousands of visitors over Labor Day weekend. Our local chapter also has been recognized as "Volunteer of the Year" and has earned its place in our community for service to others and charitable contributions since its inception. For more information on Scotch-Plains Fanwood UNICO, visit unicospf.org or email spfunico@gmail.com.



(above) Scotch Plains-Fanwood UNICO recently coordinated a food drive with students from two area high schools to benefit local food pantries.

Courtesy Photo

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CLASS OF 2026 VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools



(above, l-r) Isabella Mirinda, Valedictorian and Gabriella Suriani, Salutatorian

Courtesy Photo

Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School is thrilled to announce the valedictorian and salutatorian of the Class of 2026. Our valedictorian is Isabella Mirinda, while our salutatorian is Gabriella Suriani. Both students have attained remarkable academic success while also taking active roles in our school community.

Isabella (Bella), who has not yet committed to the college of her choice, earned a weighted GPA above 4.78. Her favorite courses included AP Chemistry, AP Calculus, AP Psychology, and AP Biology. Bella plans to major in engineering, and her experience with AP Chemistry has her leaning toward chemical engineering at this time.

Bella also has been very active in our music department, singing alto in three choirs (Virtuoso Voices, Select Choir and Concert Choir), and playing clarinet in the concert band and marching band (where she was a section leader). She also has served as secretary of the French Club and as a Girl Scout ambassador.

Bella participates diligently in class to help process and absorb the learning material. She said that being an active learner has helped her greatly in high school.

"I've found it important to not just do what the course is asking of me but to also push myself to find out what more I can do if I set my mind to it," she said. "Schools and educators are giving you the tools to explore, but having the drive to do it yourself means so much more and opens a

lot more opportunities. This makes you more likely to succeed and want to succeed."

Gabriella (Gabby), who has committed to Wake Forest University, earned a weighted GPA above 4.71. Her favorite courses included AP Chemistry, AP Physics, AP Statistics, AP Biology, and AP U.S. Government and Politics. Gabby will be a biochemistry and molecular biology major on the pre-med track, and may also explore the field of public health.

Gabby was heavily involved in the SPFHS Model United Nations program. She served as an officer of the Model UN's World Health Organization, managing 50 delegates and helping plan a conference of 1,500 people. Gabby also will serve as a delegate this summer for the Model UN's Conference on National Affairs. She also has served as co-coordinator of the SPFHS Raider Peer Tutoring program, treasurer of the Senior Support Club, and member of the SPFHS girls swim team. Gabby also serves as a mental health advocate through the Prevent Suicide New Jersey planning committee, and as a swim teacher and coach at the JCC.

"The biggest thing about my high school experience has been community," Gabby said. "I enjoy showing up. I genuinely like the content and the classes. When you genuinely enjoy what you're doing and you surround yourself with a community you love, it makes it really easy to show up and succeed."

FANWOOD LIBRARY AT YOUR DOOR

In partnership with the Friends of the Fanwood Memorial Library, the Fanwood Library now offers a home borrowing service. This service is for Fanwood library cardholders residing in Fanwood who are experiencing health, mobility, transportation, age-related, or other qualifying barriers to using the physical library location, whether long term, permanent, or temporary.

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ROBERT KEITH ESTRIN - DECEMBER 25, 1952 - OCTOBER 26, 2025

Longtime Scotch Plains resident Robert Keith Estrin, died October 26, 2025 in Nashville, Tennessee, just weeks before his 72nd Christmas birthday. Robert was born and raised in Scotch Plains, living there until 2011, moved to Bridgewater for two years, and in 2013 finally relocated to Nashville in order to be closer to his sister, Kari Estrin, his only surviving family member.

An outstanding graduate of SPFHS in 1970, Robert also distinguished himself at Kean College, graduating Summa cum laude (No. 1 in his class); then continued his learning earning two masters degrees (Political Science and Master of Letters Arts & Sciences) at Drew University and at NYU. A committed scholar, Robert went on to become a beloved teacher at both Solomon Schechter Day School and Bridgewater High School. Robert was also known as a respected and sought after paralegal at Budd Lerner Law Firm in the 90s. Robert left to care for his father in the final weeks of his life, Dr. Herman A. Estrin, who passed in 1999, and then continued to care for his mother, Pearl Simon Estrin, who passed 2007, in the house where Robert grew up.

After moving to Nashville, Robert again chose teaching, though at retirement age, joining the Metro Nashville school system as a substitute. In an underfunded Public School system that had mostly students of color, Robert was a favorite teacher, making school



work relevant, caring individually about students and encouraging them to want more. His dry sense of humor mixed with his take-no-nonsense approach went a long way to winning over skeptical students, along with his special way to make learning exciting. Propelled by a personal mission to empower all those to learn, to understand the value of a good education with effective study habits, and what that would bring to a young adult later in life, Robert was a frequently requested presence throughout the school system.


An aficionado of the arts, Robert was raised in a home where the Metropolitan Opera was faithfully broadcast each Saturday morning and

he could already identify arias by age 3, becoming a passionate, discerning and knowledgeable lover of not only Opera and Classical music, but of ballet, museum art, glasswork and as well was an avid collector of various pieces from The Art Deco period.

Outside of work, Robert was a private person, but those who came to know him became his friends and admirers; Robert always being eager to help out or lift up a friend or someone new he would meet, and remembered for his incredible intellect, fascinating conversation and gentle demeanor.


Beginning June 2, 2026, Robert's sister, Kari, plans to carry forward their shared commitment to honoring their father's legacy at NJIT by supporting and celebrating Dr. "Doc" Estrin's profound contributions to the interdisciplinary and literary life of NJIT students. Robert played a pivotal role in preserving and advancing his father's vision. In 2021, Robert personally researched more than 400 living New Jersey authors, continuing the foundational work his father began in creating the original New Jersey Literary Map.

An informal gathering will be held at B'Nai Abraham Memorial Park 2600 Us-22, Union, New Jersey, at 10:30 a.m., for those who wish to attend. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in honor of Robert's life and legacy. Please contact kmm225@njit.edu for more information to contribute.




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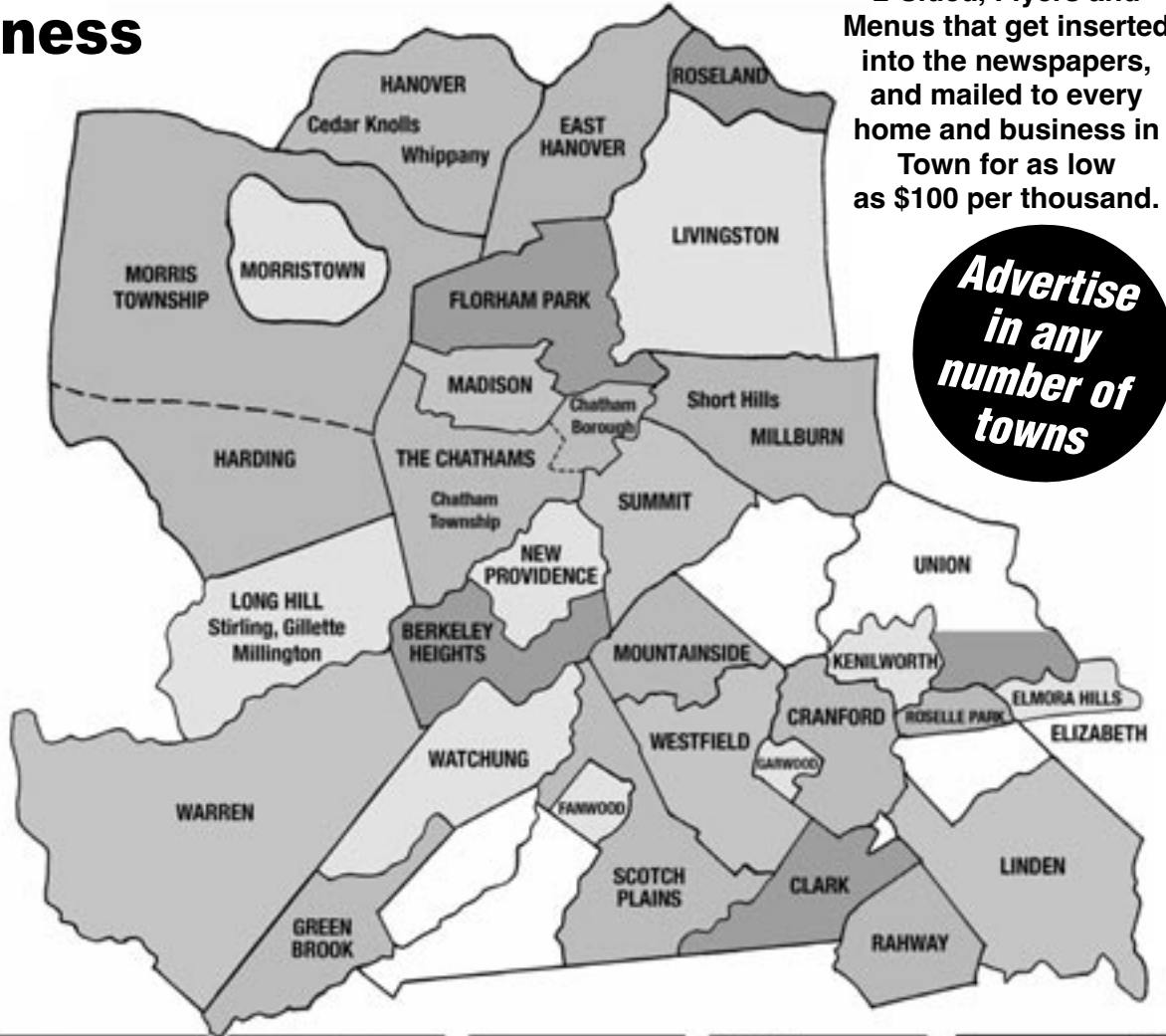
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2 Units	6.5"x2" or 3.25"x4"	150	360	560	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200	1300
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6 Units	6.5"x6.25" or 10"x4"	320	760	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	2400	2600	2800
9 HALF PAGE	6.5"x9" or 10"x7"	360	860	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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VOLUNTEERS TAKE PART IN CLEAN COMMUNITY DAY

Borough of Fanwood

A rainy and cold Saturday morning did not stop dozens of volunteers from taking part in the 37th annual Fanwood Clean Community Day.

Volunteers started gathering at the Southside Train Station parking lot at 8:30 a.m. Earth Day T-shirts were given out along with work gloves, pick-up devises, and biodegradable bags to pick up litter around town. Coffee was available along with sandwiches provided by The Bagel Café. A ticket for a free pizza slice were also provided to each participant, courtesy of Fabio's Bistro.

Mayor Colleen Mahr gave a brief welcome to volunteers, announcing the event would start earlier than the typical 9 am kickoff to get a jump on rain that began around 9:20 am.

"This is our 37th year that we have come together to pick-up garbage, to be around our fellow community members and to really make a statement of what our community means and how

we want our community to be seen," Mayor Mahr said.

Public Works Director Clint Dickson invited volunteers to break off into groups to begin the cleanup, each led by a DPW staff member, to remove trash from public areas of the Borough including North Avenue and the areas around the Train Station south and north side parking areas, municipal parking areas, La Grande Park, Midway Avenue, and the Fanwood Nature Center, and the brook on the Scotch Plains border off of Farley Avenue. Members of the Environmental Commission helped clean up the section of the brook that runs through the Nature Center.

NJ Transit provided flagmen provided security for those collecting trash near the train tracks.

Grant money for the event was made available for the event through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.



(above) Mayor Colleen Mahr with a group of young Clean Community Day volunteers.



(above) Picking up litter along on the side of the railroad tracks at the Fanwood Train Station.



(above) Councilman Patricia Walsh with the DPW crew of Jimmy Yannazzo, Donovan Garrett, Andy Baldassarre, and Tony Marques.



(above) The Fanwood Green Team.

Photos by Paul Peyton

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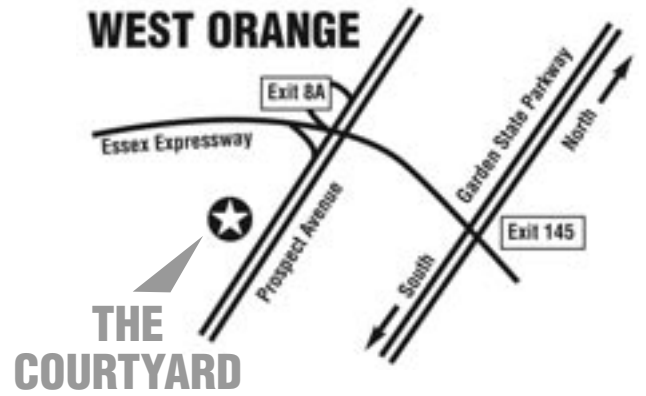
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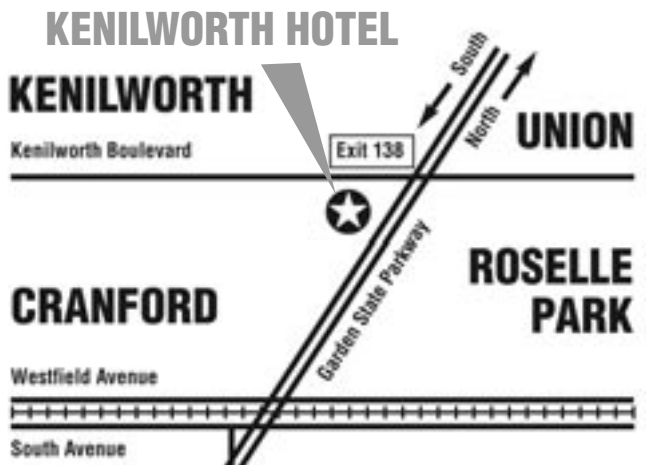
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