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DAR BRIGHTENS HOLIDAYS FOR HOSPITALIZED VETS

Elizabeth Snyder-Continental Chapter DAR

Local members of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) wanted to help ensure that hospitalized veterans would not be forgotten this holiday season. Continuing a decades-old tradition, Elizabeth Snyder-Continental Chapter members donated clothing, blankets, toiletries, books, and games for the patients at Lyons V.A. Medical Center valued at more than $400.

"The DAR is first and foremost a service organization," explained Chapter Regent Nancy Stoll. "It is how we honor our Patriot ancestors. Last year, DAR members contributed more than 17 million hours of service."

The DAR chapter also arranged for the donation of 300 cans of fruit and vegetables to the Somerset County 4-H Association for their Community Holiday Dinner. The dinner is prepared by 4-H volunteers on Christmas Day and provided free to people in need of a holiday meal.

Chapter members wrote notes of thanks to Honor Flight veterans and hosted a ceremony to honor veterans who are residents of Mira Vie in Warren. And, after flood waters damaged the Hope4Paws Humane Society shelter in Plainfield, the chapter donated to repair and renovation efforts and helped to build winter shelters for homeless cats.

In celebration of the holidays, the DAR chapter is taking part in the Somerset County Park Commission Festival of Trees, December 5-28, at the Environmental Education Center in Basking Ridge. And, on December 13, DAR members will be placing wreaths at Somerset Hills Memorial Park as a Wreaths Across America Sponsorship Group.

The DAR is open to women 18 and over who are descended from a patriot of the American Revolution. Elizabeth Snyder-Continental Chapter will be celebrating its 130th anniversary in January. The chapter is based in Green Brook and serves areas of Somerset, Middlesex and Union counties.

New members are welcome. Contact the chapter at ESCchapterDAR@gmail.com.

(above, l-r) 4-H Community Holiday Dinner Coordinator Sue MacCombie accepts a delivery of 300 cans of fruit and vegetables from DAR prospective member Clara Barbaz.

(above) DAR volunteers will be placing wreaths on the graves of veterans at Somerset Hills Memorial Park in Basking Ridge.

(above, left) The chapter delivered donations of holiday gifts to Lyons V.A. Medical Center. (above, right) The DAR has a tree focused on America 250 and members' Patriot ancestors at the Somerset County Park Commission's Festival of Trees.

Courtesy Photos

Happy Holidays!

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Green Brook Gazette NJ

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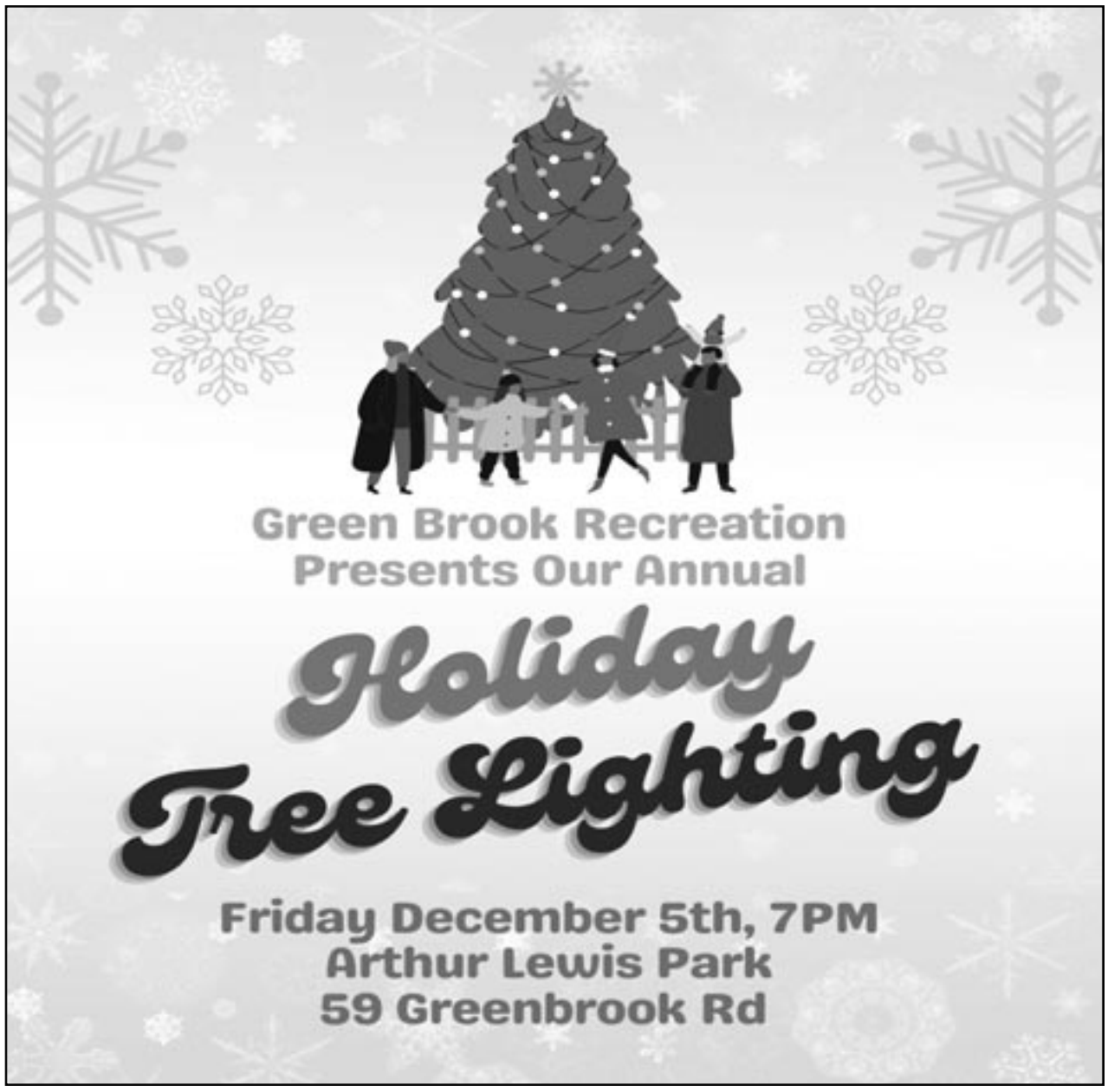

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FARE-FREE SHUTTLE TO LYONS VA MED CENTER

Somerset County

Veterans traveling to the Lyons VA Medical Center in Bernards Township from the Lyons Train Station will be able to catch a fare-free ride thanks to a cooperative partnership between Somerset County, the Lyons VA Medical Center, NJ Transit, and the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA).

The new Veterans Lyons Shuttle began operations on November 7, 2025 and will run 5 days a week, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. The shuttle will run from the Lyons Train Station to the Lyons VA Medical Center and back, in a loop, approximately 8 times daily, supporting and coordinating with the preexisting Morris & Essex Line rail schedule.

"We are pleased to support this shuttle connection, which will make it easier for veterans to access the care they need at the Lyons VA Medical Center," said NJ Transit President & CEO Kris Kolluri. "This partnership helps us close another gap in first- and last-mile service that will directly improve the travel experience for those who depend on public transit for their healthcare needs."

In addition to Veterans, employees from the Lyons VA Medical Center as well as friends and family will be able to use the shuttle for greater ease of travel.

"For too long, New Jersey veterans with disabilities have faced challenges accessing reliable transportation to the Lyons VA Medical Center. That changes with the launch of the Lyons VA Shuttle Service," said Congressman Tom Kean, Jr. (NJ-07). "This milestone demonstrates what we can achieve when we work together across all levels of government. On the federal level, I am also pleased to build on this progress by introducing legislation to ensure this service remains a sustained, long-term solution. With Veterans Day just around the corner, this launch could not be more timely — it will improve lives, ease burdens, and honor those who have served our nation."

The ADA accessible shuttle, which was funded under the Casino Revenue Program (SCDRTAP) through the FTA Section 5310 program administered by NJ Transit, will seat 16 passengers and additionally has 2 wheelchair securement locations. Somerset County will operate the shuttle as well as maintain the vehicle for use.

(above) An official ribbon cutting celebrated a cooperative partnership between Somerset County, the Lyons VA Medical Center, NJ TRANSIT, and the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA).

Courtesy Photo

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YOUNG MARTIAL ARTISTS EXCEL INTERNATIONALLY

Vedika Ghosh, 15, of Berkeley Heights, and Julia Barrance, 13, of Stirling, received their international certification as junior instructors in the art of Soo Bahk Do Moo Duk Kwan on Thursday, October 9th at Chu's Academy of Martial Arts.

As first degree black belts, Ghosh and Barrance excel in advanced techniques and understanding the underlying principles. The rigorous three month instructor program challenged them to add articulation and logical development of technique to effectively instruct their students.

Ghosh and Barrance have been training at Chu's Academy for seven and eight years respectively. Both are members of the elite Leadership Team at the Academy, and Ghosh is a member of the Academy demonstration team that took first place in the national competition this past July. "The effort I put in, and supported others to put in, is what I'm most proud of ", said Ghosh. "I know that I will discover many, many new things. I'm excited to keep on growing and immersing myself in the art, no matter what stands in my way", said Barrance of this new certification and what the future holds.

(above, l-r) Vedika Ghosh, 15, of Berkeley Heights and Julia Barrance, 13, of Stirling

ABOUT CHU'S ACADEMY OF MARTIAL ARTS:

Chu's Academy of Martial Arts, located in Gillette, has been developing positive attributes in children since 1982. The Academy is led by co-owners Lydia Chu and Michelle Cavett, and Program Director Andrew Masini. Chu, Cavett and Masini are internationally certified master instructors in the Korean martial art of Soo Bahk Do Moo Duk Kwan.

For more information, call or text 908-647-4194 or go to www.karate4peace.com

DAR SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

High school seniors in New Jersey who are U.S. citizens, are in need of financial assistance to continue their education, and plan to attend a college or university in the U.S., may apply for one or both scholarships offered by the New Jersey State Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

The Vail Scholarship provides a one-time award of $2,000 to a student who plans to major in political science, history, government or economics.

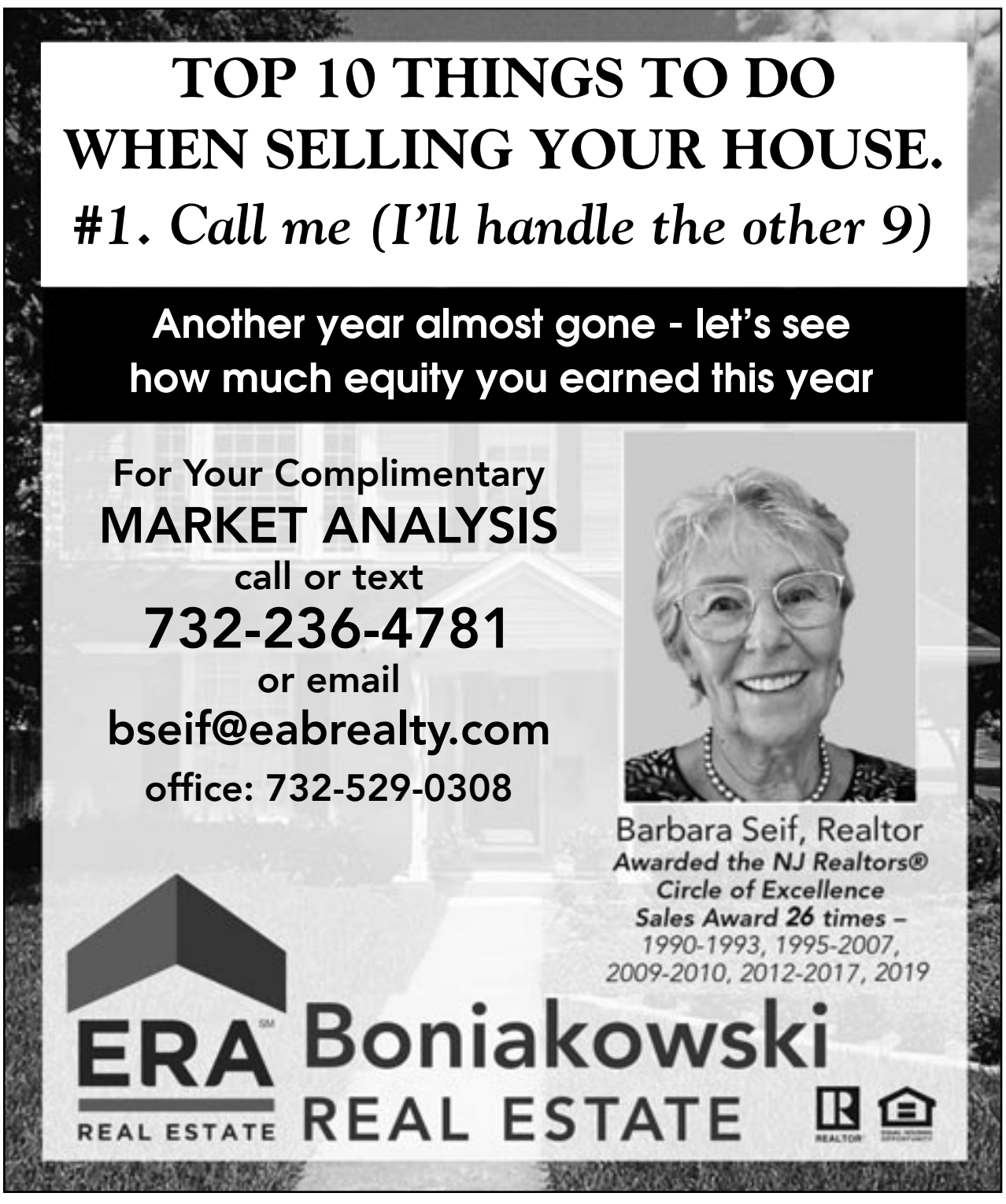
The New Jersey State DAR Scholarship offers a one-time award of $1,000 to a student who reflects the DAR objectives of community service and patriotism.

The deadline to submit applications is December 31, 2025. Scholarships will be awarded in April 2026.

For application forms, contact Elizabeth Snyder-Continental Chapter DAR at ESCchapterDAR@gmail.com.

DAR is a nonprofit, nonpolitical, service organization open to women 18 and older who are descended from a man or woman who aided the cause of American independence. The mission of the DAR is to promote education, historic preservation, and patriotism.

Learn more at www.DAR.org.



NEW BUILDINGS CELEBRATED WITH RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

Somerset County Vocational & Technical Schools

State and local dignitaries were on hand to mark the official opening of two new buildings at Somerset County Vocational & Technical Schools (SCVTS) during a ribbon cutting ceremony held on October 3. The event celebrated the completion of a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) building and a new gymnasium, both of which were funded through grants from the State of New Jersey and Somerset County. Though the ceremony was just held, the new facilities, which were completed in 18 months and on budget, were ready to greet students on the first day of school this year.

(above, l-r) SCVTS Board of Education Member Matthew Loper, NJ State Assemblyman Erik Peterson, Somerset County Commissioner Paul Drake, Commissioner Director Shanel Y. Robinson, Commissioner Sara Sooy, Commissioner Elizabeth Graner, SCVTS Superintendent of Schools Robert Presuto, Commissioner Deputy Director Melonie Marano, SCVTS Board of Education President Gregory Lalevee, NJ State Assemblyman Roy Freiman, NJ State Assemblyman John DiMaio, and Executive County Superintendent Roger Jinks, attend the ribbon cutting ceremony for two new buildings on the campus of Somerset County Vocational & Technical Schools.

Courtesy photo

SCVTS Superintendent Robert Presuto greeted the guests, thanking government officials and the people of New Jersey for funding the project through the Securing Our Children's Future Bond Act, which was set up to provide financial resources to increase the ability of schools to offer CTE programs. "Somerset County Vo Tech's expanded facility and mission to prepare our students for high demand, high wage, highly skilled careers, while earning their high school diploma, remains healthy and strong. These new buildings will allow Somerset County Vo Tech to both grow in enrollment and expand course and career offerings."

The new CTE building houses 8 programs, including Business, Entrepreneurship, & Management (BE&M), expanded Health Occupations, Computer Science, and Mechatronics, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing (MEAM) programs, and new HVAC-R, Finance, Biomedical, and Global Business Operations programs. The expansion of facilities and programs will allow SCVTS student enrollment to increase to over 1000 high school students from Somerset County and other nearby communities.

The new gymnasium will hold approximately 150 spectators and will provide students in both physical education classes and sports programs with an additional court to play and practice on.

State Assemblyman Roy Freiman was impressed by the new facilities, stating that "when I had a chance to actually walk through it, I didn't expect to be stunned" adding that the buildings were "college level." He also spoke about the importance of CTE programs. "This type of education is not just fulfilling what is needed in the marketplace. It also taps into the passions of our children."

In her remarks at the ribbon cutting, Somerset County Commissioner Director Shanel Y. Robinson stated that the new facilities are a "testament to the continued investment in our students' future" and that the Somerset County Commissioners are committed to "making sure that our residents have a pathway forward for careers that are on the leading edge, and the opportunities to be competitive in those sectors."

SCVTS Board of Education President Gregory Lalevee echoed Commissioner Director Robinson, praising the "commitment by all those people" involved in the project "to do what's best for the children of this county and provide them a good education." He also thanked the team at USA Architects who designed the gymnasium and CTE building, as well as the management and workers of Epic Management who built them.

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CELEBRATE THE SEASON WITH GINGERBREAD

Somerset County 4-H Association

People of all ages are invited to enter the Somerset County 4-H Association Gingerbread Contest on December 6 & 7, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., in conjunction with the 4-H Holiday Craft Festival at the Ted Blum 4-H Center of Somerset County, 310 Milltown Road, Bridgewater.

Participants must register when they drop off their entry on December 6, 8-10 a.m. There are divisions for youth and adults. Ribbons and a $25 gift card will be awarded the following day. There is no fee to enter, but participants are asked to bring a canned vegetable to donate to the 4-H Community Holiday Dinner. Entries must be picked up at 3 p.m. on December 7.

The mission of the Somerset County 4-H Association is to support the 4-H Youth Development Program of Somerset County. The Association owns and maintains the Ted Blum 4-H Center, hosts the annual Somerset County 4-H Fair, offers scholarships and provides monetary and volunteer support for programs and events. Learn more at 4HisTOPS.org.

(right) All ages are invited to display their gingerbread creations.

Courtesy Photo

(above) Show off your creativity in gingerbread.

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TWO CONCERTS: HOLIDAY TENORS & BROADWAY THROUGH THE AGES

New Jersey Festival Orchestra ushers in the holiday season with two major December performances that showcase the full breadth of the orchestra's artistic range.

Under the direction of Maestro David Wroe, NJFO welcomes audiences to celebrate the magic of the season with Return of the 3 Holiday Tenors on December 6 and 7, followed by the orchestra's signature New Year's celebration, Broadway Through the Ages, on December 31 and January 1.

Return of the 3 Holiday Tenors features award-winning vocalists John Kun Park, Luke Norvell, and Michael DeShield, each bringing a distinct artistic profile to this beloved NJFO tradition. Park, praised for his "radiant lyricism," has appeared with major opera houses across the country. Norvell, known for his "effortless charm and ringing tenor," continues to shine as a rising star on both concert and operatic stages. DeShield, celebrated for his powerful presence and versatility, is a frequent soloist with ensembles throughout the Northeast.

The trio joins NJFO for a sparkling program of holiday favorites, classical tenor showpieces, and uplifting choral moments. They are joined by the Holy Trinity Choir of Westfield and Central Avenue Choir of Madison, adding festive warmth and community spirit to this seasonal celebration. Performances take place Saturday, December 6 at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield and Sunday, December 7 at Drew University in Madison.

The festivities continue with Broadway Through the Ages, NJFO's dazzling New Year's tradition performed in Westfield and Basking Ridge. This year's concert brings together a powerhouse lineup of guest artists: Tess Marshall, acclaimed for her magnetic stage presence and vocal brilliance; Lisa Marie Rogali, a versatile performer equally at home in opera and musical theater; and Peter Kendall Clark, praised for his "commanding baritone and dramatic flair." This year's program also features stars from the Dance Theater of Harlem, adding movement, elegance, and theatrical artistry to this musical celebration. Together with NJFO, the ensemble leads audiences on a spirited journey through iconic Broadway classics.

RETURN OF THE 3 HOLIDAY TENORS
Sat Dec 6, 7 PM
The Presbyterian Church, Westfield
Sun Dec 7, 3 PM
Drew University, Madison

BROADWAY THROUGH THE AGES
Wed Dec 31, 5 PM
Westfield High School
Thu Jan 1, 2:30 PM
Sieminski Theater

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

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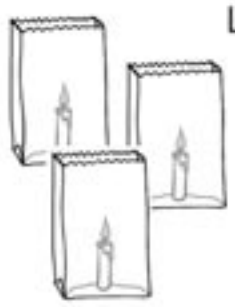

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WARRENBROOK SENIOR CENTER - DECEMBER CALENDAR

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
Mondays & Wednesdays, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
For an experienced artist to meet new people while water coloring. All supplies are included.

1 on 1 Computers with Sal
Mondays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
By the end of an 8-week, one-on-one class, you will understand computer programs.
No class on Dec.22 & 29.

Chair Yoga with Kartika
Mondays, 10 a.m.
This class is open to all levels of skill. Hatha yoga poses can be practiced while either sitting or standing.

Mahjong for Intermediate Players
Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Intermediate mahjong player and would like to play this game of skill, strategy, and calculation.

Take Control with Exercise
Tuesdays, 10 a.m.
This is an ongoing exercise program, in video form, for all skill levels that can be practiced while either standing or sitting.

Zumba Gold with Judith
Tuesdays, 10:15 a.m.
This class is achievable for beginners or others who need modifications to their exercise routine. Build cardiovascular health.

Bridge Group with Ronnie
Tuesdays, 1 – 4 p.m.
Welcome new members and beginners (lessons available).

Strength
Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m.
The exercise can be done with or without weights. The hand weight of 2-5 pounds is recommended.

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.

Craft Activities
2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 1 – 4 p.m.
This quarter, we are creating cards for our Meals on Wheels clients. All supplies provided.

Line Dancing with Linda Hyland
Thursdays, 9:30 – 10:15 a.m.
You don't need a partner. It's suitable for participants with limited mobility.

Afternoon Yoga with Wai-Ling Poon
Thursdays, 1 p.m.
Seated and standing poses. Perfect for all fitness levels. Come stretch, breathe, and enjoy.

Tai Chi with Roger Hsu
Fridays, 10 a.m.
This program can be practiced while either standing or sitting.

Bridge
Fridays, 1 – 4 p.m.
Bridge is a mentally challenging card game that offers intellectual and social stimulation.

Christmas Tea Party
December 1, 11 a.m.
Gentle holiday music will set your mood while you relax, sip the tea and mingle with friends.

Somerset County Traveling Library
December 1, 1 p.m.
Sign up for a library card, get help troubleshooting technology, check out a book, or just share a favorite book.

Wordle with Warrenbrook Staff
December 2, 11 a.m.
Wordle is a word-based brain game.

Bingo
December 3, 11 a.m.
It promotes socialization, and improves listening and short-term memory skills.

Build Your Own Snowman
December 4, 11 a.m.
Make charming snowmen using recycled materials like bottles, jars, fabric scraps, and more. All supplies provided.

RVCC Dance Ensemble
December 5, 11 a.m.
Performance includes dances created by RVCC faculty, students and guest artists, and exposes the communicative aspects of the art form.

Calcium Connection
December 8, 11 a.m.
Learn the health benefits of calcium and the food sources rich in this important mineral.

Drum Circle
December 8, 1 p.m.
This is a holistic experience that leaves participants feeling a sense of joy!

Wheel of Fortune
December 9, 11 a.m.
Perfect for all levels of ability, offering a wonderful mix of entertainment and socializing.

Monthly Book Club
(Hybrid) December 9, 1:30 PM
discuss the book of the month and select the next book to read. New members welcome!

Jeopardy
December 10, 11 a.m.
Whether you are a trivia buff or just enjoy a friendly competition, this interactive game is sure to keep you engaged and entertained.

Breathing Techniques for Mental Wellness
December 11, 11 a.m.
Develop awareness of trigger situations and to calm and regulate the nervous system .

Star of David Craft
December 12, 11 a.m.
This versatile piece can be used as a coaster, trivet, wall hanging, or shelf display. All materials will be supplied.

Tis the Season with Discovery Orchestra
December 15, 11 a.m.
Violinist Michael Avagliano, joined by Executive Director Rick Kaller on piano, will explore Handel's Messiah!

Studio 60+
December 15, 1 p.m.
Plan the events they are interested in. They will also practice for their quarterly musical entertainments & drama.

Christmas Card-Making Workshop
December 16, 11 a.m.
We'll provide all the supplies.

Christmas and the Winter Solstice
December 17, 11 a.m.
We travel around the world seeking out the best Christmas markets.

Bingo
December 17, 10:30 a.m.
It promotes socialization, strengthens and improves listening and memory skills.

Holiday Party
December 19, 10:30 a.m.
Merry mix of tunes sure to get you singing, dancing, or simply smiling with friends.

Holiday Cheer Through Song
December 22, 11 a.m.
Spark new friendships, and remind us all of the simple joy of singing together.

A Very Merry Christmas Trivia Fun
December 23, 11 a.m.
Put your holiday knowledge to the test at our Christmas Trivia event!

Boxing Day Board Game Social
December 26, 11 a.m.
Fun-filled day of board games and good company!.

New Year's Eve Party Popper Craft
December 29, 11 a.m.
These cheerful little poppers are perfect for ringing in the new year with gentle pop and a sprinkle of joy. No mess, no fuss. All materials provided.

Boggle
December 30, 11 a.m.
Attendees search for words that can be constructed from letters of sequentially adjacent letters. Words must be at least three letters long, but they may not use the same letter on the grid and may not be used more than once per word. Then, look for words within a larger word. Join us as we try to find as many words as possible.

Ringing in the New Year Together
December 31, 11 a.m.
with Musical Entertainment by Candy Nelson sponsored by Christine Getz from Gratitude Senior Living Solutions. We will welcome the new year in style at our Senior Center's New Year's Eve Party with music, dance, and festive decorations as we count down to 2026. Come celebrate a joyful morning filled with laughter, reflection, and hope as we celebrate the moments that brought us together – and look forward to a bright year ahead. Here's to a happy, healthy, and joyful New Year to all! Pre-registration is required.

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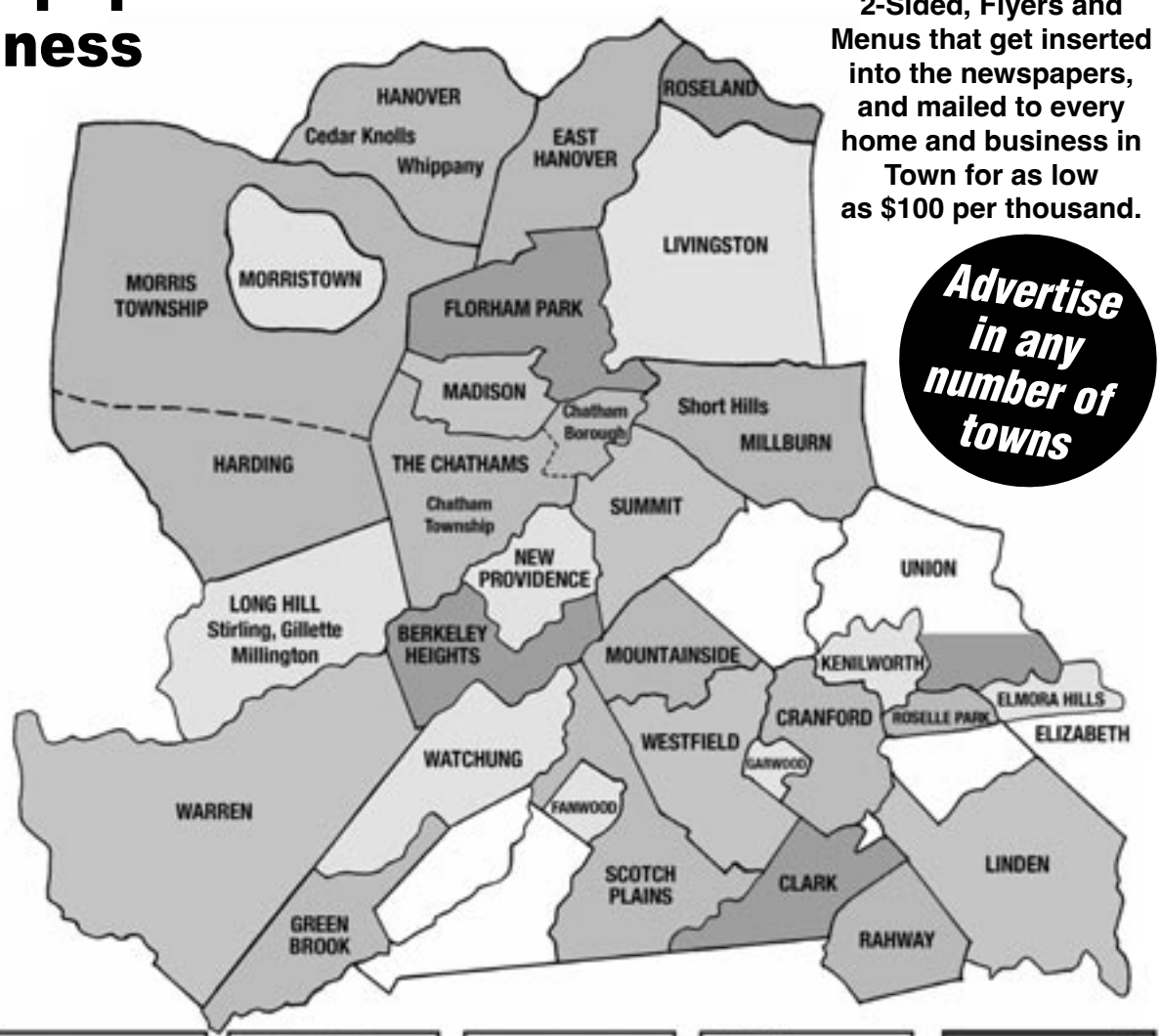

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CELEBRATE THE SEASON WITH ANNUAL HOLIDAY OPERA SPECTACULAR

December 7, 2025, 3:00 PM - Celebrate the magic of the season as Opera at Florham presents its beloved Annual Holiday Spectacular at St. Margaret of Scotland Church, 6 Sussex Avenue, Morristown, NJ.

After an incredible turnout at our recent Due Soprani e Un Tenore concert, you've GOT to get your tickets for the December 7th Holiday Spectacular! This concert will be held at St. Margaret of Scotland Church in Morristown, which offers FREE PARKING and plenty of room in the beautiful sanctuary—so gather your friends and family for an afternoon of festive music and joy.

Whether you're a lifelong Opera lover or discovering Opera at Florham for the first time, this delightful performance captures the spirit of the holidays through music that transcends generations. From beloved Arias to familiar seasonal melodies, the Holiday Spectacular is a joyful celebration of artistry and community - perfect for audiences of all ages.

Why You Can't Miss It

Opera at Florham's Holiday Spectacular is more than a concert—it's a heartwarming experience that has become a highlight of the holiday season across New Jersey. Each year, this festive performance transforms St. Margaret of Scotland Church into a winter wonderland of music, where world-class voices and live accompaniment inspire wonder and joy.

Expect to be swept away by the power of the human voice, the beauty of timeless melodies, and the spirit of togetherness that defines this special time of year. Whether you come to be uplifted, share the magic with family and friends, or simply savor the music of the season, the Holiday Spectacular is a gift you'll remember long after the final note.

Tickets are $30 for general admission, with student discounts available. For tickets and more information, please visit operaatflorham.org. Purchase in advance on line or at the door.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

- Sunday, February 15, 2026
  – Valentine Serenade
- Sunday, April 12, 2026
  – Revenge, Romance & Revelry: Scenes from Die Fledermaus
- Sunday, May 17, 2026
  – 36th International Vocal Competition

Founded in 1982, Opera at Florham is northern New Jersey's premier Opera company, presenting annual concerts, the International Vocal Competition, and the Opera Talk educational series.

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pipesofchristmas.com

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Join us in celebrating the season at this wonderful community event. Be sure to stop by our table to say hello - and don't miss our FREE Holiday Photo Booth for a festive selfie! Wishing you and your family a warm and joyful holiday season

- Roseann O'Keefe

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