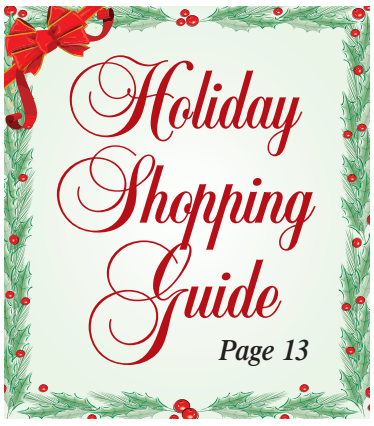
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VOLUME 30 ISSUE 37 | THE PASCACK VALLEY'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER | NOVEMBER 23, 2026



PASCACK VALLEY

His biggest ask is answered (happily so)

Son donates a kidney to former Emerson mayor; both have recovered, nonprofit cheers

BY JOHN SNYDER
EDITOR@THEPRESSGROUP.NET

In April, Steve Setteducati spoke about how difficult it was to ask someone to help save his life.

"I just don't like to be the one asking for help. I never was in my lifetime," the former Emerson mayor told Pascack Press.

His eldest son, Michael, ultimately was cleared to answer that call.

Setteducati has returned to work as CEO of New Concepts for Living following a successful kidney transplant at NYU Langone Health, the nonprofit announced Nov. 10. Michael, his living kidney donor, has also made a full recovery, according to the announcement.

"I will be forever grateful to my son, Michael, for his extraordinary and selfless gift," Setteducati said. For his part, Michael told us, "I'm

See ASK on page 37

EXTRA CREDIT ON HISTORY

Montvale middle school students host area veterans; more who served are welcome



A Fieldstone Middle School student speaks with Air Force veteran Sam Nutile during the school's Nov. 12 veterans program in Montvale. Seated behind him are Army veteran Mike Mosia and Navy veteran Ray Albano. *John Snyder photo.*

BY JOHN SNYDER
EDITOR@THEPRESSGROUP.NET

THE FIFTH-GRADERS at Fieldstone Middle School in Montvale wanted to know: Had the veterans volunteered or been drafted? What was the most dangerous thing they'd done? What was life like aboard a Navy ship?

What were their favorite moments?

"Mine was coming home," said Army veteran Mike Mosia, who spent 18 months in Korea.

Hands went up throughout the library Nov. 12 as five veterans joined a tradition that fifth grade social studies teacher Jillian Clark and her grandfather, Navy veteran Ken Florio, have kept for 11 years.

With help from Superintendent Darren Petersen, this year's

Continued on page 9

MONTVALE

Data center dispute lands on March hearing

BY MICHAEL OLOHAN
OLOHAN@THEPRESSGROUP.NET

A Bergen County Superior Court judge set the week of March 8, 2027, for hearings on Montvale's disputed fourth-round affordable housing plan amendment, which allows a developer to construct a 322,000-square-foot data center and 50 affordable housing units instead of a 250-unit residential complex, including 50 affordable units, on former KPMG property.

Fair Share Housing Center, a not-for-profit advocate for affordable housing based in Cherry Hill, opposes the Montvale amendment to combine a data center with affordable housing, citing potential noise, pollution, and energy and water usage concerns.

Fair Share contends that allowing a developer to build an enterprise data center with 50 units of affordable housing nearby would set a precedent that is not allowed under the Mount Laurel doctrine and Fair Housing Act.

Following a nearly three-hour hearing before Judge Lina Corriston on Nov. 18 in Superior Court in Hackensack, attorneys representing Montvale, S. Hekemian Group and Fair Share Housing Center agreed to continue the proceedings at what will likely be a multiday hearing

See CENTER on page 35

FOR ROCCO RODDEN

Rocco Rodden delivered on the football field, in the classroom, and in the detailing business he started as a teenager. NFL players are helping power scholarships in his name.

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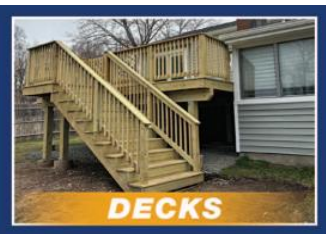
Back in time...

Kristin Beuscher on "a clock crossing the Hudson River on a ferry, surviving as it is jostled in a wagon on rutted lanes across the wilderness of Bergen County."

PAGE 4



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PASCACK PRESS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Submission deadline is **11 a.m. Wednesday**. Publication is not guaranteed. Subject to editing. No anonymous letters. Email to editor@thepressgroup.net.

Montvale's affordable housing

To the editor:

RESIDENTS OF Montvale's west side face the prospect of a large affordable housing complex, driven by a developer's demand that the borough approve a previously submitted plan ahead of an upcoming court hearing.

This situation follows heightened community anxiety over the potential development of a data center in the area.

Although Montvale officials responded months ago with draft legislation to prohibit data centers — noting existing facilities in nearby Orangeburg, N.Y. — concerns remain.

At the June 11 Montvale Borough Council meeting, a Westwood resident highlighted research on the lesser known dangers of data centers, such as noise and heat pollution. In response, the mayor stated, with the assertiveness of a president, that no data centers are on the borough's agenda and that "there is a lot of misinformation out there." He did not elaborate.

Meanwhile. the developer continues to press Montvale for approval of the proposed housing project on the former KPMG property before the matter goes to court. [See story, page 1]

Will Montvale's governing body assemble a strong legal defense team to resist this lawsuit while the land use board works to uphold local zoning standards? Will concerned residents have any voice in the decisions being made in court and at borough hall?

Kurt F. Kron
Montvale

■ **Editor's note:** Longtime readers of our *Letters* page will recognize Kurt Kron's name. Over the years, we came to know him as an alert citizen who regarded the Pascack Valley as home and took a neighbor's interest in what happened here.

Kurt called for transparency and accountability from public officials, whether they served at borough hall, on a school board, or in Trenton. He cared especially about the people most affected by their decisions.

He wrote in response to other readers' letters and to our own notes. He stuck to the substance and always had something constructive to say. Many of his letters drew our attention to stories or nuances we'd overlooked. We invite readers to use these pages as a forum for local issues; Kurt took us up on that offer.

Kurt died Nov. 16 at age 88. In his final letter, he asks whether his fellow residents will have a voice. We'll miss hearing his.

Godspeed, and thank you, Kurt. Our condolences to your family, friends, and colleagues.

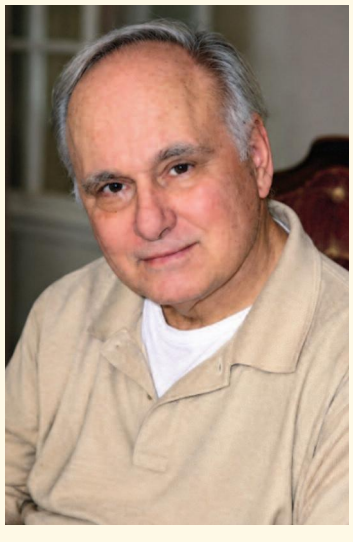
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MONTVALE

KURT F. KRON, 88

KURT F. KRON a longtime resident of Montvale, died Nov. 16, 2026. He had just celebrated his 88th birthday.



Born in Trenton to Veronica Brunn Kron and Frank W. Kron, Kurt graduated from Rutgers University, where he studied English and French.

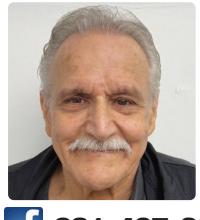
Kurt began his writing career at the *Courier-Times* in Pennsylvania and went on to work at Rodale Press and Fairchild Publications in New York City. He wrote on a wide range of subjects. For *Medical World News*, a magazine for physicians, he wrote the publication's first story on ultrasound.

He later moved into public relations, serving as a senior vice president at Burson-Marsteller, Carl Byoir and Associates and Needham Porter Novelli, all in New York City.

Kurt is survived by his wife, Diana Giannetti Kron, his daughter, Andrea Kron, and numerous cousins and nephews. His parents and his brother, Barry Kron, predeceased him.

Visitation and a prayer service were held at Becker Funeral Home in Westwood. Entombment followed at Garden of Memories in the Township of Washington.

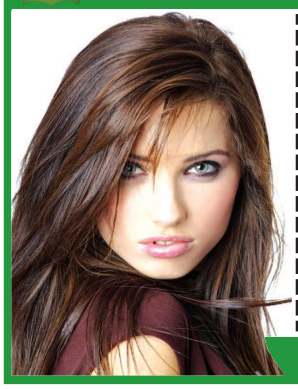
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Benefit concert for 'Meals,' pantry Nov. 29

PARK RIDGE—For the second year in a row, a benefit concert will bring the community together to support Meals on Wheels North Jersey and the Tri-Boro Food Pantry. The free concert is on Sunday, Nov. 29 at 4 p.m. at Park Ridge High School.

Meals on Wheels North Jersey provides an essential service to local seniors and residents who have difficulty preparing meals or getting out of their homes. For many seniors, these meal deliveries are a lifeline, helping them maintain their independence while also providing a friendly visit and a connection to the community. For someone living alone, that regular contact can mean just as much as the meal itself.

The Tri-Boro Food Pantry serves individuals and families in Park Ridge, Montvale and Woodcliff Lake who are experiencing food insecurity. The pantry helps ensure that neighbors have access to food when they need it, providing important support to local families and individuals facing difficult circumstances.

Mayor Keith Misciagna posted, "Both organizations make a meaningful difference in the lives of our neighbors, and this concert is a wonderful opportunity to support their work."

Admission is free, with monetary donations accepted at the door and online. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

Misciagna said, "I encourage residents to attend, enjoy an afternoon of music, and help support these two important organizations in our community."

— Staff report

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Westwood's first two postmasters were Republicans: Isaac D. Bogert, circa March 1870 to circa Jan. 1, 1893, and Abram C. Holdrum, above, circa Jan. 1, 1893, to Nov. 1, 1893.

More Forgotten Westwood: A family business

ONCE UPON A TIME, political patronage was involved in United States postmaster appointments.



BY JOSEPH OETTINGER JR.
SPECIAL TO PASCACK PRESS

For nearly half a century between 1860 and 1908, Republican candidates overwhelmingly prevailed in U.S. presidential elections. The sole exception was Democrat Grover Cleveland, who served as president from March 4, 1885, to March 4, 1889, and again from March 4, 1893, to March 4, 1897.

The Westwood Post Office was established circa March 1870, in conjunction with the extension of the railroad from Hackensack to Hillsdale. Hackensack was located within the political subdivision of New Barba-

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Back in time...

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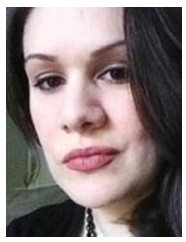
MUSEUM CLOCK: This grandfather clock, on permanent exhibit at the Pascack Historical Society, has a long and storied history in Hillsdale. An inscription inside the case door has a date of Nov. 18, 1776—making this piece 250 years old. It is still in working condition and chimes the hour for museum visitors. **WINTERS HOUSE:** Before coming to the museum, the clock had long stood in the dining room at the Winters farmhouse on Wierimus Road in Hillsdale. The residence looked like this when the family lived there, but it has since been sold and remodeled. The bottom photo shows the Winters farm stand that formerly stood across the street from the house. This land was owned by the same family for more than two centuries.

Keeping time since the American Revolution

NOVEMBER 1776, NEW YORK CITY. After suffering a series of defeats, Gen. George Washington's army has been driven out of Manhattan and retreated into New Jersey. The British have taken control of the city, nearly one-quarter of which has been left in charred ruins after the Great Fire. New York is under martial law, a place of turmoil and political volatility. And in a little shop in lower Manhattan, a clockmaker is busy at work, building the timepiece pictured on this page. It now stands in the Pascack Historical Society's museum.

This was a milestone week for the 250-year-old grandfather clock —an excellent time to tell its story. We hope you will enjoy reading about this wonderful Hillsdale artifact.

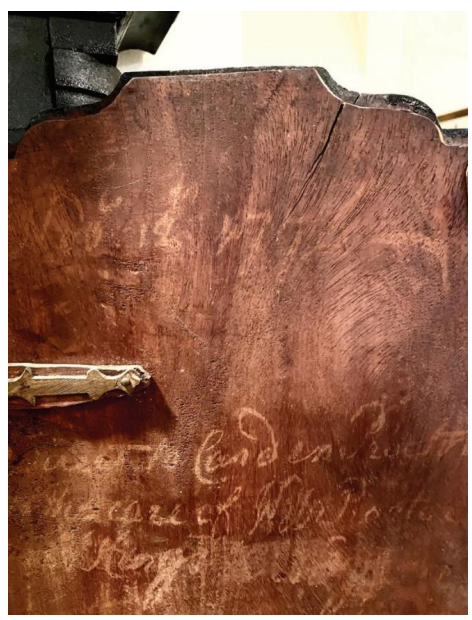
This longcase clock came into the Pascack Historical Society's possession through Judy Handwerg Williams, who grew up in River Vale. Judy's roots in the Pascack Valley go deep. On her father's side, the Handwergs were the family that started the River Vale Country Club. On her mother's side, she can trace her ancestry back to the Pascack Valley's earliest settlers.



SPECIAL TO PASCACK PRESS
By Kristin Beuscher,
Historian,
Pascack Historical Society,
Park Ridge.
Call (201) 573-0307 or visit
PascackHistoricalSociety.org

The house on the hill at 231 Wierimus Road in Hillsdale belonged to Judy's grandparents, Chester and Helen Winters. Pascack Valley long-timers might remember that years ago they ran a farm stand across the street for 30 years until they retired in 1969. Chester died in February 1976, and Helen followed two months later. The home remained in the family, but in 2022 Judy and her brother put it on the market. The family had always talked about donating the 18th century clock, which long stood vigil in the dining room, to the Pascack Historical Society. Now the time had come to clear the house, and Judy called the museum.

See TIME on page 18



The inscription inside the door: "Nov. 18th, 1776. Deliver to Carden Proctor, In the care of Will Proctor, New York City."

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New DPW tack; bids hit as 'cold slap in the face'

BY MICHAEL OLOHAN
OLOHAN@THEPRESSGROUP.NET

HILLSDALE

The borough is revising plans to renovate its public works administration building and garage after rejecting seven bids as "too high," DPW Superintendent Barry Peterson said Nov. 10.

Mayor Michael Sheinfield later told Pascack Press he hoped to put the project back out to bid before the end of the year. Peterson did not give a timetable.

The seven bids received Oct. 6 ranged from $595,000 from Veliu Restoration Corp. of Fairfield to $1,195,000 from Pal-Pro Builders of Totowa. An Oct. 13 resolution said the borough rejected all seven "because the lowest bid substantially exceeds the Borough's budget appropriation." Officials declined to disclose the approximate budget.

Sheinfield called the bids "a cold slap in the face" and said Peterson would revise the plans to bring down costs.

The proposed work includes replacing bathrooms, improving the layout, expanding the second floor and adding sleeping quarters for use during severe weather or other emergencies, Sheinfield said. The garage is inside the administration building.

Portions of the DPW facility lie within a few dozen feet of Pascack Brook and flood regularly, officials told Pascack Press. The second-floor expansion would allow the department to store more equipment and supplies upstairs, officials said.

It was unclear whether the planned renovations included repairs to earlier flood damage or specific flood protection measures. The borough administrator and Peterson did not respond to requests for comment by press time.

After severe flooding damaged the Hillsdale facilities, the DPW temporarily moved its office operations and equipment to Woodcliff Lake for eight months. Office operations returned to Hillsdale in September 2024.

In June 2024, Pascack Press reported that a Colliers Engineering & Design study estimated it would cost $2 million to $15 million to elevate the DPW buildings. The borough denied the newspaper's request for the study, saying it was an "advisory, consultative or deliberative" document exempt from disclosure under the state's Open Public Records Act.

Council members did not consider the options at the time because of the cost and a pending $62.4 million bond referendum for George White Middle School. Voters approved the referendum in September 2024.

Sheinfield said DPW employees did most of the earlier work to repair flood-damaged areas and move equipment off the ground floor to protect it from future flooding.

The other five bids were $685,400 from Pax Mundus Ent LLC of Monmouth Junction, $732,950 from BGD Contracting of Park Ridge, $799,000 from K&D Contractors LLC of Kenilworth, $813,751.10 from Nela Carpentry & Masonry LLC of Saddle Brook and $1,100,000 from Molba Construction of Little Ferry.

Each bid broke out costs for mobilization, insurance, bonds and cleanup, as well as demolition and disposal. Other categories covered plumbing, electrical and HVAC work, sanitary sewer work with cleanouts under pavement and under a concrete floor, masonry, a new toilet addition in the DPW garage, painting and finishes, and supplemental construction.

Mayor breaks tie on borough attorney vote

Sheinfield broke a 2-2 tie Nov. 10 to authorize the borough to advertise a request for qualifications for borough attorney. Two council members abstained.

Councilman John Ruocco requested a separate vote on Resolution 26245, which addressed the borough attorney position. Public records indicate that the current borough attorney, Mark Madaio, has served since May 2015. Pascack Press could not confirm his tenure with borough officials, who were attending the state League of Municipalities conference in Atlantic City.

Chris Camp and Melissa Mazza-Chiong voted to advertise the position. Ruocco and Clemente Osso voted against it. Robert Colletti Jr. and Anthony DeRosa abstained.

"We're going to move forward with it. Affirmative," said Sheinfield, a Democrat, casting the deciding vote.

Ruocco chose not to run again, and Osso lost his reelection bid. Democrats Dena Toms and Gabriela Ianni won election Nov. 3 and will join fellow Democrats Camp and Mazza-Chiong on the council in 2027.

On Sept. 8, the council approved a resolution to advertise for other borough professionals, including a borough engineer, labor attorney and risk management professional. It was unclear why the borough attorney position was omitted at the time.





Roofing milestone ahead at George G. White

BY JOHN SNYDER
EDITOR@THEPRESSGROUP.NET

■ *District says renovation remains on schedule, within budget; Lombardy warns of construction site hazards*

HILLSDALE

Major roofing work at George G. White Middle School is expected to make the building watertight ahead of winter, Superintendent Robert Lombardy Jr. told families in a mid-November construction update that also warned students against entering the active work site.

The renovation and expansion remain on schedule and within budget, Lombardy said. The project, funded through a $62.4 million bond referendum approved by voters in September 2024, will allow students to leave temporary modular classrooms and bring fifth graders back to the middle school campus.

Crews are scheduled to work first on the existing gymnasium roof, then the original three-story building, and finally the new construction. Lombardy said roofing is expected to take approximately three weeks, weather permitting.

New rooftop heating and air-conditioning units are scheduled to follow, with installation tentatively beginning on or about Dec. 1, also subject to weather. A large crane will lift the equipment into place.

Lombardy said the work will not interfere with normal use of the gymnasium.

Inside the building, installation of hydronic piping — which circulates heated or chilled water to regulate indoor temperatures — is nearly complete. Final inspections are the next step, with classroom unit ventilators expected to begin arriving in early December for installation once the work is cleared.



Superintendent Robert Lombardy, left, and project architect Joseph DiCara prepare to add their signatures to a ceremonial steel beam marking a milestone in the renovation and expansion of George G. White Middle School on July 24. *John Snyder photo*

The superintendent also

See ROOF on page 8







More:

FROM PAGE 4

does Township. Westwood's post office and its railroad depot were both situated within the political subdivision of Washington Township.



1 cent Franklin stamp, issued Jan. 1, 1870

Westwood's first two postmasters were Republicans: Isaac D. Bogert, circa March 1870 to circa Jan. 1, 1893, and Abram C. Holdrum, circa Jan. 1, 1893, to Nov. 1, 1893.

Following the inauguration of Democratic President Grover Cleveland on March 4, 1893, Democrat Thomas E. Brickell became Westwood's third postmaster on Nov. 1, 1893, a position that he held until Nov. 1, 1897.

Following the inauguration of Republican President William McKinley on March 4, 1897, Republican James M. Bogert became Westwood's fourth postmaster on Nov. 1, 1897. He died in 1907; his successor was appointed on Jan. 9, 1908.

But a deeper analysis reveals an intriguing reality beyond political affiliation in Westwood's postmaster appointments during its first 37 years: Westwood's first four postmasters all shared a familial connection to a common American ancestor.

That ancestor, Jan Cornelius Bongaert, was born in 1646 in New Netherland, a 17th-century North American colonial province of the Dutch Republic established in 1614. New Netherland included parts of the present-day states of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland.



2005 Abram C. Holdrum-Mary Leah Hopper family monument. Courtesy Westwood Cemetery History Trail, Westwood.

In 1664, the English seized control of New Netherland from the Dutch. Circa 1666, Jan married Angenietje Strycker (1639–1692) in Kings, New York Colony, English Colonial America. Angenietje was born in the Netherlands. Jan and Angenietje were the American progenitors of a number of early local families.

The couple had nine children together, four girls and five boys.

In 1686, Jan and Angenietje resided in the Village of Hackensack, County of Essex, Province of New Jersey. From 1674 to 1702, the Province of New Jersey was a proprietary colony of England, divided into East Jersey and West Jersey, each with its own governor. Each section would subsequently have its own constitution. Hackensack fell within the boundaries of East Jersey.

Angenietje died in 1692 in what would become known in 1693 as New Barbadoes Township, County of Essex, Province of New Jersey, English Colonial America. The Village of Hackensack was within the political subdivision of New Barbadoes Township. In 1702, the two sections of the Province of New Jersey were united, and New Jersey was transformed from a proprietary colony to a royal

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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Roof:

FROM PAGE 6

addressed reports of students trying to get a closer look at construction.

"While we share everyone's excitement and understand the allure of exploring an empty building, this is an active construction site with real hazards that only trained professionals with the proper protective gear are equipped to navigate," Lombardy wrote.

Students are strictly prohibited from entering the construction site or school building at any time, he said.

The latest update follows a July 24 ceremony at which current and former school board members and district administrators signed a steel beam intended for the new addition. The gathering marked a milestone in the transformation of the century-old school.

At that time, the district was working toward opening the renovated building for the 2027–28 school year, with substantial completion and a temporary certificate of occupancy anticipated by Aug. 7, 2027. Lombardy's November update affirmed that the project remains on schedule but did not provide a new opening date.

The addition includes six classrooms, a multipurpose room and two additional classrooms extending from the rear of that space, according to the district's earlier project description.

Lombardy credited ongoing coordination among those overseeing the work with keeping the project on track.

"It takes daily communication, decisive problem-solving, and a team that stays aligned every step of the way," he wrote.

He also thanked students and families for their flexibility during construction, district staff for their work, and Board of Education members Kevin Donatello, Sal Sileo, Michael Kenduck and Kathleen Puerta for their dedication.









Vets:

FROM PAGE 1

visit — the first since the school's referendum-powered overhaul, and a day after Veterans Day was officially observed — grew from one veteran to five. The students made good use of the opportunity, asking about military ranks, sleeping arrangements, distances traveled, and letters home.

We attended one of two sessions at Fieldstone that day.

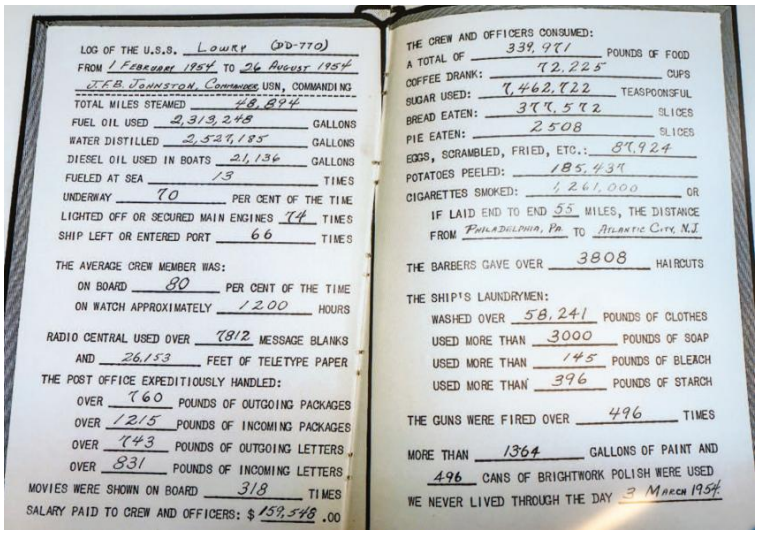
For Clark, the visits give students a chance to ask veterans about lives very different from their own — living aboard ships, traveling far from home and waiting for letters from family.

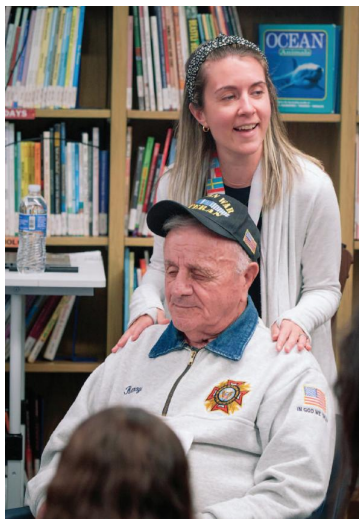
"I just thought it was a fun experience for them to speak to someone that experienced it," she said.

Florio, 95, served aboard the destroyer USS Lowry during his 1951–1955 Navy service. He described supplying the ship as a storekeeper, patrolling off Korea and following aircraft carriers, ready to rescue aviators whose planes went into the water.



Army veteran Ted Hajek, Navy veteran Ken Florio, Air Force veteran Sam Nutile, Army veteran Mike Mosia, and Navy veteran Ray Albano visit Fieldstone Middle School Nov. 12. At right, Florio, 95, shares his Navy experiences with fifth graders, continuing an 11-year tradition with his granddaughter, teacher Jillian Clark, below. *John Snyder photos*


LOG OF THE U.S.S. LOWRY (DD-770)
FROM 1 FEBRUARY 1954 TO 26 AUGUST 1954
J.F.B. JOHNSTON, COMMANDER USN, COMMANDING
TOTAL MILES STEAMED 48,894
FUEL OIL USED 2,313,248 GALLONS
WATER DISTILLED 2,527,185 GALLONS
DIESEL OIL USED IN BOATS 21,136 GALLONS
FUELED AT SEA 13 TIMES
UNDERWAY 70 PER CENT OF THE TIME
LIGHTED OFF OR SECURED MAIN ENGINES 74 TIMES
SHIP LEFT OR ENTERED PORT 66 TIMES
THE AVERAGE CREW MEMBER WAS:
ON BOARD 80 PER CENT OF THE TIME
ON WATCH APPROXIMATELY 1200 HOURS
RADIO CENTRAL USED OVER 7812 MESSAGE BLANKS
AND 26,153 FEET OF TELETYPE PAPER
THE POST OFFICE EXPEDITIOUSLY HANDLED:
OVER 760 POUNDS OF OUTGOING PACKAGES
OVER 1215 POUNDS OF INCOMING PACKAGES
OVER 743 POUNDS OF OUTGOING LETTERS
OVER 831 POUNDS OF INCOMING LETTERS
MOVIES WERE SHOWN ON BOARD 318 TIMES
SALARY PAID TO CREW AND OFFICERS: $ 152,348 .00
THE CREW AND OFFICERS CONSUMED:
A TOTAL OF 339,971 POUNDS OF FOOD
COFFEE DRANK: 72,225 CUPS
SUGAR USED: 7,462,722 TEASPOONSFUL
BREAD EATEN: 377,572 SLICES
PIE EATEN: 2508 SLICES
EGGS, SCRAMBLED, FRIED, ETC.: 87,924
POTATOES PEELED: 185,437
CIGARETTES SMOKED: 1,261,000 OR
IF LAID END TO END 55 MILES, THE DISTANCE
FROM PHILADELPHIA, PA. TO ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.
THE BARBERS GAVE OVER 3808 HAIRCUTS
THE SHIP'S LAUNDRYMEN:
WASHED OVER 58,241 POUNDS OF CLOTHES
USED MORE THAN 3000 POUNDS OF SOAP
USED MORE THAN 145 POUNDS OF BLEACH
USED MORE THAN 396 POUNDS OF STARCH
THE GUNS WERE FIRED OVER 496 TIMES
MORE THAN 1364 GALLONS OF PAINT AND
496 CANS OF BRIGHTWORK POLISH WERE USED
WE NEVER LIVED THROUGH THE DAY 3 MARCH 1954



The students brought knowledge of their own. When Florio mentioned training at Guantanamo Bay, they identified Cuba and associated the base with its present-day use as a detention facility. At Pearl Harbor, the student supplied the location and the Japanese attack before Florio could ask his follow-up.

"Okay, well, skip that question," he said.

Clark, who called her grandfather "Pop," helped explain naval terms and shared slides of him as a young sailor and during a return visit to South Korea in 2014. The photographs included young Florio in his Navy uniform — and atop an elephant during a stop in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka.

Clark also shared a tally from her grandfather's 1954 cruise aboard the Lowry: 48,894

See UETS on page 11 ▸





A holiday tradition, brought to life by local talent

Ballet Arts and Adelphi Orchestra unite for 'The Nutcracker' Dec. 12–13 in Oradell

— *Advertisement* —

For Iris Armstrong of Hillsdale and Emme Alvarado of Emerson, this year's "Nutcracker" offers a chance to step into the heart of a holiday favorite. For Margaret Hahn of Oradell, it brings the sparkle—and responsibility—of dancing the Sugar Plum Fairy.







Ballet Arts and the Adelphi Orchestra will present "The Nutcracker" Saturday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 13, at 2 p.m. at River Dell High School in Oradell. *Photos by Julia Chang Photography*

And for audiences, it offers the pleasure of watching familiar local talent perform to Tchaikovsky's score played by a live orchestra.

Ballet Arts and the Adelphi Orchestra will present "The Nutcracker" Saturday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 13, at 2 p.m. at River Dell High School in Oradell. The production brings together student dancers, professional musicians and a young guest artist pursuing his own ballet ambitions.

Harrison Cornellier, 17, a student at American Ballet Theatre's Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School, will appear as the Cavalier opposite Hahn, a junior at Immaculate Heart Academy.

Originally from Derry, New Hampshire, Cornellier trained for 11 years under Barbara Mullen before attending The HARID Conservatory from 2023 to 2026. According to the production's organizers, his honors there included the Rudolf Nureyev Award and Male Dancer Scholarship. He also reached the final round of the 2025 Youth America Grand Prix Finals.

His appearance adds a visiting talent to a cast rooted in Bergen County and neighboring communities.

Local dancers in the spotlight

Armstrong and Makayla Verbitski of New Milford will share the role of Clara. Alvarado and Eva Shunina of River Edge will share the role of Franz.

For Trixie Iurato of New City, New York, this production marks a milestone. A graduating student who has been with Ballet Arts since 2013, she will perform Trepak, Dew Drop and Moor—bringing more than a decade of experience with the school to this year's performances.

The cast also draws on community members whose lives extend well beyond the ballet studio. Dr. Fred Fakharzadeh, a retired Bergen County hand surgeon, will portray Drosselmeyer. Amy Brandt, a former professional dancer and editor-in-chief of Pointe magazine, will appear as Mrs. Stahlbaum, with Fraser Wilsher of Closter as Mr. Stahlbaum.

Behind the scenes, Haruka Fujii of River Edge leads the costume department, helping create the production's colorful storybook world.

For the young dancers, the performances bring months of preparation into focus. Working with a live orchestra also gives them an opportunity to experience the score as a collaboration with the musicians performing it.

Two arts traditions come together

Ballet Arts is celebrating 50 years of dance education. Former Radio City Rockettes Jane Silane and Marilyn Westlake-Nichols became its directors in 2014, working alongside the school's founder, affectionately known as Madame, who continued teaching until her death in August 2020.

The school carries that legacy forward through classical training and performances, with an emphasis on creativity, confidence, discipline and self-expression.

The Bergen County-based Adelphi Orchestra, celebrating its 73rd season, brings its own commitment to music education and opportunities for emerging artists. Its programming includes symphonic, chamber, opera and ballet performances throughout New Jersey and New York.

Principal conductor Kyunghun Kim will lead the orchestra for "The Nutcracker." Kim also serves as artistic director of the Ridgewood Symphony Orchestra and is a member of the music faculty at Lehman College in New York.

Together, the two organizations offer families a holiday outing with a distinctly local connection: neighbors onstage, musicians in the orchestra, and a new generation discovering ballet through a story that has welcomed audiences for generations.

Tickets and information are available at BalletArtsNJ.com. For more information, call 201-970-7690.







Vets:

FROM PAGE 9

miles traveled, 72,225 cups of coffee consumed and more than 3,808 haircuts. Letters home were counted by weight — more than 743 pounds outgoing, with more than 831 pounds coming back.



The other guests brought their own experiences:

Ted Hajek, Petersen's father-in-law, served as an Army paratrooper with the 325th Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, rising to sergeant. His sweatshirt read, "I jumped out of planes on purpose." He explained that jumping earned an extra $90 a month.



"At that time, that was the car payment for me."

Sam Nutile served in the Air Force from 1952 to 1956, working in base headquarters in Korea and Japan. He told the children he had intended to join the Navy, but its recruiter was out to lunch. An Air Force recruiter struck up a conversation and changed his plans.

Mosia served in the Army from 1951 to 1954, serving at Fort Bliss, Texas, before his assignment in Korea. He continued in the reserves until 1960.

Ray Albano, a retired school superintendent, served in the Navy 1955–1957, primarily in Newport, Rhode Island. He recalled expecting to enter the Army when drafted, then learning the Navy was accepting draftees, too.

Petersen also pointed to the veterans' work in education and volunteering: Their service to others continued after they left the military.

Students examined photographs and mementos, including a Korean-language newspaper (in which a prominent headline translates to "Never put your beloved baby to sleep on a sofa"), and spoke with the visitors. Their questions drew out the practical details of service: Florio's ship carried about 220 men; letters — lifeblood — kept the veterans in touch with family.

Afterward, Clark said Petersen proposed bringing in more veterans. She welcomed the idea. "Please, please, let's expand this," she recalled saying.

Indeed, Clark says she aims to keep the program growing, including visits from women veterans and women currently serving. Those interested may contact Petersen at dpetersen@montvalek8.org or (201) 391-1662.

Before heading to their next class, the fifth graders had one more thing to say to their guests: *Thank you for your service*.

— John Snyder photos

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Broadway Stars Return to Hillsdale, Delivering Christmas Magic

'A Very Broadway Christmas Concert' returns Dec. 13

THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT is already stirring in Hillsdale, where anticipation is building for the return of "A Very Broadway Christmas Concert." Inquiries have been pouring into Saint John the Baptist Church, with many asking the same hopeful question: *Will the concert be back this year?* Now that the date has been announced and the performers revealed, anticipation has turned into excitement—and a sense of urgency: *How can we get our tickets before they sell out, as they did last year?*

— Advertisement —

The concert is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 13 at 3:30 p.m. Every effort has been made to make the event convenient for all, allowing guests ample opportunity to travel, gather, celebrate, and enjoy an extraordinary artistic and spiritual experience. Excitement is already spreading throughout Northern New Jersey and the surrounding counties of New York.



"It is beautiful to witness how God-given gifts and talents can inspire joy, beauty, and a deep sense of community. This has certainly been true of our "Very Broadway Christmas Concert"—a wonderful, faith-filled and joy-filled annual community event that reaches far beyond what we might ordinarily consider our own community," said Msgr. Peter Smutelovic, pastor of Saint John the Baptist Church, when asked about preparations for this year's concert.

Returning to lead the cast is acclaimed tenor Ciarán Sheehan, whose impressive Broadway career includes more than 1,000 performances as the Phantom in "The Phantom of the Opera," along with roles in "Les Misérables," "Camelot," and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33





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FROM PAGE 7

colony of England.

Following the Acts of Union in 1707 merging the kingdoms of Scotland and England, New Jersey became a royal colony of Great Britain, and would remain so until 1776.

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In 1710, New Barbadoes Township was removed from Essex County and added to Bergen County. Jan Cornelius Bongaert died circa March 1712 in New Barbadoes Township, County of Bergen, Province of New Jersey, British Colonial America. His Bongaert descendants born after the year 1699 are identified by the surname Bogert.

Isaac D. Bogert (1834–1918) was six generations removed from J.C. Bongaert, as follows: Jan Cornelius Bongaert (1646–1712) > Albert Jansen Bongaert (1686–1736) > Isaac Albert Bogert (1718–1781) > Cornelius Albert Bogert (1743–1833) > Isaac A. Bogert (1768–1847) > David Bogert (1800–1872) > Isaac D. Bogert (1834–1918).

Abram C. Holdrum (1837–1909) was the husband of Mary Leah Hopper (1848–1918), who was six generations removed from J.C. Bongaert, as follows: Jan Cornelius Bongaert (1646–1712) > Albert Jansen Bongaert (1686–1736) > Isaac Albert Bogert (1718–1781) > Jacobus Bogert (1748–1779) > Leah Bogert (1770–1852), married to Abraham J. Hopper (1764–1842) > Johannis A. Hopper (1799–1878) > Mary Leah Hopper (1848–1918), married to Abraham Cornelius Holdrum (1837–1909).

Thomas E. Brickell (1848–1919) was seven generations removed from J.C. Bongaert, as follows: Jan Cornelius Bongaert (1646–1712) > Johannes Jan Bongaert (1676–1727) > Guillaume Janse Bogert (1703–?) > Johannes Guilliam Bogert (1725–?) > Guilliam "Gilbert" Bogert (1747–1809) > Aeltje Bogert (1782–1864), married to Thomas G. Brickell (1775–1855) > David Brickell (1822–1884) > Thomas E. Brickell (1848–1919).

James M. Bogert (1841–1907) was seven generations removed from J.C. Bongaert, as follows: Jan Cornelius Bongaert (1646–1712) > Jacobus Jansen Bongaert (1679–1760) > Albert Jacobuse Bogert (1707–?) > Jacob A. Bogert (1738–?) > Steven J. Bogert (1763–?) > James S. Bogert (1788–1871) > James K. Bogert (1820–1894) > James M. Bogert (1841–1907).

Sources: *The author's research in microfilmed editions of The Bergen County Democrat and The Hackensack Republican at Hackensack's Johnson Library, conducted between 2002 and 2006; genealogical research using FamilySearch in 2024, revisited in November 2026.*

Joseph Oettinger Jr. is a local historian, and author of "Ultimate Pascack Classics" & "Westwood Classics: Select News Accounts From the Early History of the Pascack Valley & Westwood, N.J. (Six Miles West of the Hudson)," a two-volume collection of vivid news vignettes from the late 1800s and early 1900s.

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Time:

FROM PAGE 4

Owners across time

The Italianate-style Victorian at 231 Wierimus dates to the late 19th century, but this replaced an earlier house that stood a short distance north and across the street, around the area of 300 Wierimus. The Winters property can be traced back within the same family since the 1760s at least. Back then this was Vanderbeek land, and the family built a sandstone homestead that served for generations.

Coenradus Vanderbeek of New York (b. 1695) married Angenitie Westervelt (b. 1690s) of Bergen County at the Dutch Reformed Church in Hackensack. They had a large family, and among their children was a son, Juryan (1730-1794). Juryan, sometimes alternatively spelled Jurrye or Yury on different records, married Marytje Ackerman (1734-1816). They had children Coenradus, Arie, and Maria.

Two old families were joined in 1789 when 18-year-old Maria Vanderbeek married 19-year-old Frederick Van Riper at the Paramus Dutch Reformed Church. The couple moved into the old Vanderbeek homestead at Hillsdale and had three children: Maria in 1790, Agnes in 1794, and Harman in 1800.

After Frederick's death, Harman bought out the estate, which included about 127 acres, from his sisters' families. He and wife Catherine Delamarter raised a family there, with Harman residing at the homestead until his death.

After Harman Van Riper died in 1874, his will devised all the real estate to his son, Abraham (1825-1886). The land would later be divided between Abraham's two children, Catherine and Daniel.

Daniel received the portion of the east side of Wierimus, including the old homestead, and Catherine receiving the land on the opposite side, where she and husband Sanford Bogert started building a new house—the current home on the hill at 231 Wierimus—in 1877. While in residence there, Sanford Bogert was elected as Hillsdale's first mayor in 1894.

The house then passed to their daughter, Ada Bogert (1864-1960), who married Henry Winters, and thence to son Chester Winters, to daughter Beatrice Winters, and finally to Judy Handwerg Williams and family. It was an unbroken line going back centuries on the same Hillsdale land.

Colonial Clockmaker

The clock's cabinet has writing on the inside of the door. Four lines stand out in a color that is a few shades lighter than the surrounding stain, but it took some work to decipher what they say. We were excited to realize that the first line is a date: November 18, 1776.

The lines below the date read *Deliver to Carden Proctor in care of Will Proctor, New York City.*

A delivery note from the cabinet maker to the clockmaker—four lines of text, mundane in their time, that mean so much to us 250 years later.

Carden Proctor was a prominent clock and watch maker in lower Manhattan in the 18th century. William was his brother. By 1756, the Proctor shop was located on Queen Street—later renamed Pearl Street after the Revolution.

The clock's movement was imported to America from a maker in Cornwall, in the southwest of England, and the face bears an inscription reading "Rich Wills, Truro." Our research shows that Wills was rather well-regarded in his day.

According to Howard Miles Brown in his book "Cornish Clocks and Clockmakers," "It is with Richard Wills that we reach the zenith of the Truro skill, and perhaps indeed that of the county. He began work about 1750 and was making clocks up to about 1805. Wills in his day speedily became a fashionable craftsman, if the quality and distribution of his work is any guide."

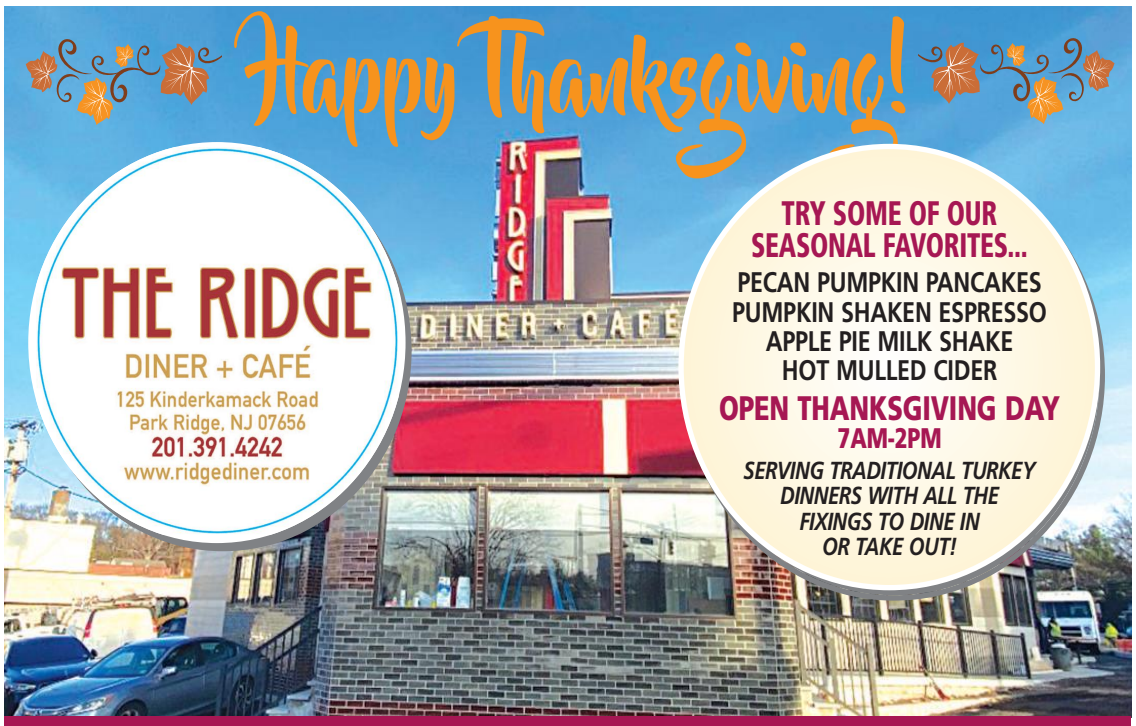
The cabinet, standing at 92 inches, was almost certainly made in America, though the name of this colonial craftsman is lost to history.

Legend from the Revolution

At Carden Proctor's shop, a Cornish movement had been married with an American cabinet, and the clock was ready for a buyer. Was the original owner a Winters ancestor?

According to family tradition, the clock was already in Hillsdale in the late 1770s. There is even a Revolutionary War legend surrounding it. In those days, Pascack Valley farms were ripe for the picking as soldiers passing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24





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THE TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON SHOWED UP FOR REFUGEES

On Thanksgiving Eve 1956, Larry Wolff, 15, helped deliver clothes from good Samaritans at home to Hungarian refugees at McGuire Air Force Base. Seventy years later, he wants his neighbors given their due



BY CAPT. LARRY WOLFF
as told to John Snyder
SPECIAL TO PASCACK PRESS

I FIGURE we were at it from 6 in the morning until 2 in the afternoon. Eight hours, and what I remember amounts to half a dozen slices of time.

One stop I remember was on Woodfield Road. A girl named Karen lived there. She was 15 and I had a secret crush on her. That might account for my memory of the address.

I was 15, too. Sid Barnes, the father of a friend of mine, was collecting clothes for Hungarian refugees. He lived on Sussex Road. He got a truck and recruited me to ride along. At each stop I'd hop out, pick up what people had left at the curb and load it in the back.

We'd moved out from Brooklyn when I was 12. I used to trap muskrats here, if that gives you an idea of the township back then. We rode our bicycles. I was a charter member of Boy Scout Troop 227 and later joined the first Explorer Scout group in town. Sometimes when I leave David's Bagels in Washington Town Center, I still take the long way home to go past the house of a fellow I knew in those days.

Earlier in 1956 my father and I helped begin the monumental task of manually clearing a dense, heavily wooded lot to build Clark Field. I recall loading our rake, hoe, shovel, and wheelbarrow into the car with my neighbors on Woodfield road and Sussex road and heading out.

We had the rough making of a diamond after a long weekend or two.

Some roads in the area were not blacktop, but constructed of used roofing tile that was sliced into 6-inch-long and half-inch-wide pieces.

I didn't understand much about Hungary at 15. That October, students had marched in Budapest, and their protest grew into an uprising against Soviet rule. On Nov. 4, Soviet tanks moved in to crush it. Some 200,000 people fled Hungary in the months that followed, most of them crossing into Austria.

On Nov. 21, the first 60 Hungarian refugees coming to New Jersey landed at McGuire Air Force Base through Operation Safe Haven. The Army had reopened Camp Kilmer to receive them. They'd get there in time for Thanksgiving dinner.

How Mr. Barnes knew to take the truck to McGuire, I have no idea. I can't remember the words he used when he told me where we were going. I remember his face, though. He had an energy about him when he talked about McGuire. I could feel it.

I don't remember arriving at the base. But I can see myself standing by the truck on the tarmac, watching people come down the steps of the plane. They came over and stood in line. I took clothes out of the truck and handed them around.

There was a little girl who looked about 6. I remember her barefoot, wearing a nightgown. I never knew her name or what became of her.

John asked me if that day changed me in any way. What I can say is I appreciate it more now. Take the hangers. There'd be bags and boxes at the curb, and on top of a box there might be 10 hangers all together, with the clothes still on them. At 15, I picked them up. It took me years to think about the person who'd stood in front of that closet. From the way those hangers were bunched together, it looked to me like somebody had reached in, taken a whole *armful* right off the rod, and carried it outside. Whatever was on those hangers, they gave.

Years later, my ham radio group used to go over to the falls in Paterson, where kids were hauling junk out of the river. We'd bring our gear and show them how to send their names in Morse code. I'd have one kid sending his name and another looking over his shoulder. By the time the second kid got to me, he knew the routine. Kids do a lot of good work. They just don't get publicized.

Years ago I went to the library to see if anybody knew about our clothing drive. I could find accounts of the plane landing and the refugees getting on buses for Camp Kilmer. What drove me nuts was the little piece missing in between.

So that's the part I wanted to get into the paper: the *esprit d'corps* of the Township of Washington. This is a thorn out of my side after all these years. No one ever reported on it. The people back home who'd put those clothes out on the curb, and were so generous, ought to get a little credit, even though they never asked for any.

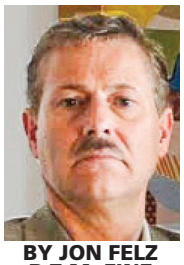
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Fuller facts on 'French' cut-crystal wine carafe



BY JON FELZ
R.Z.M. FINE ARTS & ANTIQUES INC.

Dear Jon,

I recently found this piece while cleaning out my father's house. I was about ready to just toss it because I'm told people no longer want or use crystal serving items. But tucked inside, my mother had written a short note that explained this item was French from the 19th century and that it was valuable. After reading this note, I decided to send you some pictures and request your expertise. It stands about 1 foot tall and appears to be in great shape.

—Gail in Montvale

Hi, Gail,

I'm looking at this magnificent piece of glass and thinking two things: First, that it probably spent the Gilded Age making someone at a dinner party look incredibly sophisticated. Second, if you run your finger too aggressively down these miter cuts, you'll need a Band-Aid. Let's figure out whether we're looking at an heirloom or just another garage sale item.

I'll begin by telling you that the piece is a silver-mounted cut-crystal wine carafe, and that your mother's note was only partially correct. Mom was right that this carafe definitely dates to the 19th century. However, it is not French. It was produced in Austria around 1820.

Senior appraiser Jon Felz of R.Z.M. Fine Arts & Antiques Inc. answers your questions on fine art, American coins, and great antiques. Send your questions and photos to rzmantique@aol.com

How do I know this? The silver hallmarks: a crescent before a crown with an "800" mark, followed by another symbol indicating the year 1820.

This finely crafted Gothic Revival silver-mounted wine carafe features a faceted colorless crystal body flaring gracefully from a serrated circular foot. The neck, spout, cover and handle are richly chased with stylized Gothic ornament, evoking medieval architectural motifs rendered in delicate silverwork.

I'll note that the Gothic style, which flourished in 19th-century Europe, reflected a romantic fascination with medieval art and architecture. Silversmiths in Germany and Austria embraced this aesthetic, incorporating pointed arches, trefoils and tracery into both ecclesiastical and domestic silver. Pieces such as your carafe illustrate the period's technical virtuosity and historical imagination, combining the brilliance of hand-cut crystal with the refined craftsmanship of Continental silver mounts.



Mom was right that this carafe definitely dates to the 19th century. However, it is not French. It was produced in Austria around 1820.

The current value of this elegant antique Austrian silver and cut-crystal wine carafe is approximately $3,500.

I'm very glad you didn't "just toss it." Hopefully you have some good wine worthy of pouring into it. Enjoy!

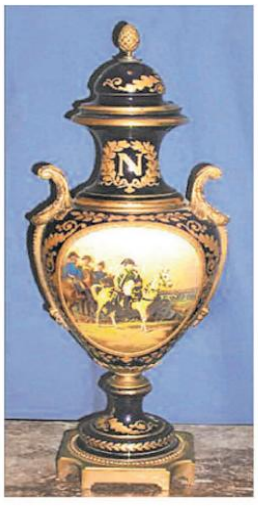
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Time:

FROM PAGE 18

through Bergen County foraged for food and supplies. They were known to steal valuables and destroy property. The rumble of approaching troops on the horizon would have the farmers scrambling to hide their most valuable possessions.

The 1953 book "Revolutionary War Days in Paramus" offers this: "Much property escaped the invaders, such as the standing clock at the Van Der Beek, later the Van Riper farm on the Wearimus Road (now at Hillsdale). The grandfather's clock was hidden in a box and buried on a hill on the farm before the arrival of the invaders. It is still in existence and is yet in running condition. The tradition of the clock was given to the compiler by Mr. and Mrs. Harry D. Winters, who live at the farm."

Is there any truth in this story? All those who knew for sure are long gone. Either way, one's imagination can run wild while thinking about the clock's journey up until this point.

We picture the wrapped-up workings crossing the ocean in the cargo hold of an 18th century ship. We think of a busy clockmaker in his New York City shop. What does he see outside his window as he looks up from his work in the year 1776? We picture a clock crossing the Hudson River on a ferry, somehow surviving as it is jostled in a wagon on rutted, dirt farm lanes across the sparsely populated wilderness of Bergen County. We hope you will visit the museum soon and see this wonderful artifact for yourself.

Housed in a 150-year-old former chapel, the Pascack Historical Society's museum tells the story of our local history through thousands of artifacts spanning centuries. It is open to the public every Sunday afternoon from 1-4 p.m. Admission is free.



"The Watchmaker," from an 1805 copper plate engraving. Clockmaker Carden Proctor's shop in New York City might have looked like this.

Christmas Gala at Church of the Savior Dec. 5

PARAMUS—Church of the Savior, Lutheran, will host its annual Christmas Gala on Saturday, Dec. 5, at 6 p.m. at 643 Forest Ave., Paramus, across from Bergen Catholic High School.

Professional and amateur musicians will perform selections from opera and Broadway, along with Christmas music featuring instrumental soloists and ensembles. Hors d'oeuvres will be served before the concert, with desserts afterward.

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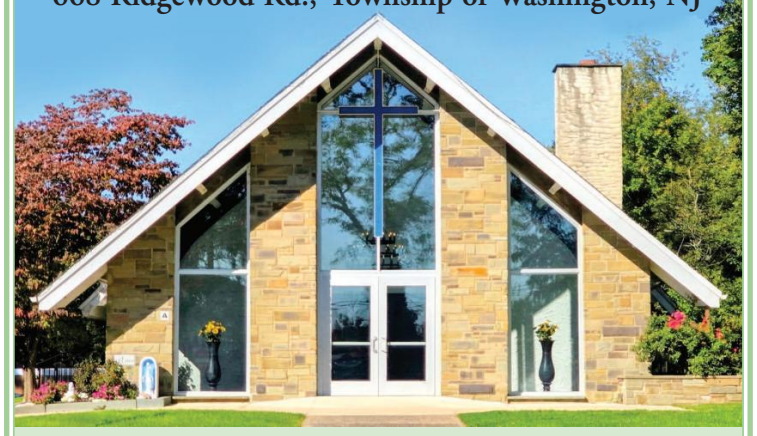


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NFL players help carry on Rocco's legacy

BY JOHN SNYDER
EDITOR@THEPRESSGROUP.NET

MONTVALE

Rocco Rodden's work ethic charged forward on the football field, in the classroom, and in the detailing business he started as a teenager. Now, supporters including two NFL receivers are helping advance the drive through scholarships in his name.

Buffalo Bills receiver DJ

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



Ty Marion says he hopes the new support will encourage others in Bergen County, New Jersey's high school football community, and beyond to help the fund serve students for years to come. *Photos via roccoroddenlegacy.com*

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- 1 Yellow onion chopped
- 1 Bottle Red Wine

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- Pre-heat oven to 375 degrees. Place in roasting pan. Sprinkle Rosemary, 1 bunch Thyme, 2 Bay Leaves (remove before serving).
- Cook for 3 hours covered.
- Serve over Gnocchi Pasta with Roasted Vegetables.
- Serves 8
- Buon Appetito!

Giulio's Restaurant is located at 154 Washington Street, Tappan N.Y. Open seven days a week for lunch and dinner.

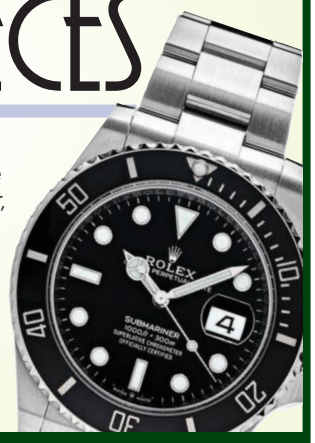
Visit Giulio's website for its menu: www.giuliosrestaurant.com



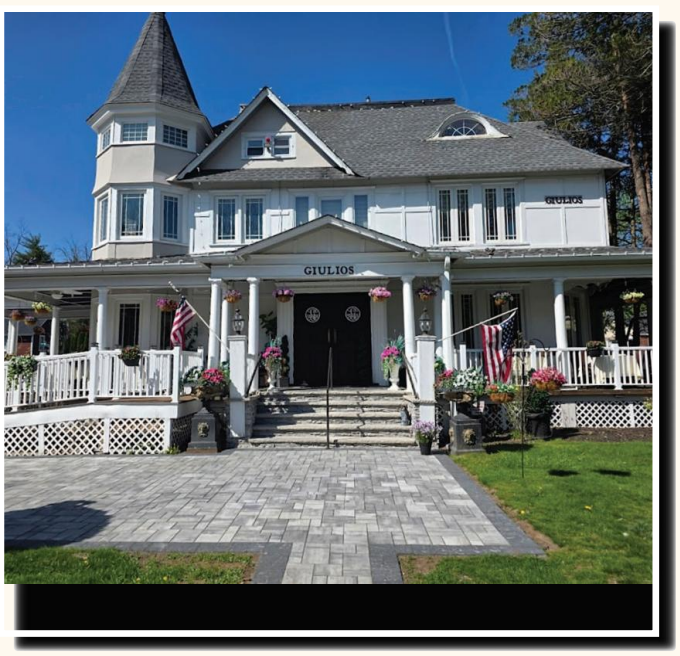
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Rocco:

FROM PAGE 25

Moore, Green Bay Packers receiver Jayden Reed and Warren entrepreneurs Jake Checchio and Luke Marion of Scrubs Enterprises contributed to the cause, according to Ty Marion, who shared Rocco's story with athletes he works with through his media business.

Their messages of support appeared in a video presented at the Third Annual Rocco Rodden Memorial Fundraiser, held Oct. 28 at The Venetian in Garfield. Billed as "A 'Knight' to Remember," the event was advertised as sold out.

"I shared Rocco's story with a few NFL players that I work with, they loved what the cause was and donated," Marion wrote to Pascack Press.

He added at press time, "I also got a note from Kyle Monangai that he donated as well. He was not on the video but I shared the story with him and he just told me he made a donation. Kyle played at Seton Hall Prep and Don Bosco, and is now a great player for the Bears."



For Marion, who spoke at the fundraiser, the effort is personal. In a written message accompanying the video, he remembered Rocco as "a little brother to me" whose determination was evident even on snow days.

Marion recalled visiting the Rodden home, where he and Rocco's brother Tony would be throwing snowballs in the backyard when they would hear Rocco clearing the driveway.

"He would make sure there wasn't an inch of snow left," Marion wrote. "The funny part is, I don't think anyone told him to do it. He was just *wired* that way."

Born in Summit and a lifelong Warren resident, Rocco died Nov. 23, 2023, at 17. He was a junior and starting left guard at Saint Joseph Regional High School in Montvale, where he was known for his leadership, academic ability and warmth toward others.

According to his family's account of his life, friends nicknamed him "Cug" because he treated everyone like a cousin or brother.

His entrepreneurial streak extended beyond school and football. Rocco started Balboa Detailing, cleaning cars and boats, and worked winters in his family's business, DCR Companies, operating equipment including backhoes, skid steers, and excavators.

His family established the scholarship fund to support students while preserving the qualities that defined him. Pascack Press reported on its launch in 2024, when Rocco would have been entering his senior year.

"These scholarships allow us to honor his memory and ensure that his positive impact will be felt for years to come," his mother,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

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Rocco:

FROM PAGE 26

Angelina Porchetta, said at the time.

The fund's 2026 recipients include students from Saint Joseph Regional, Bergen Catholic, Don Bosco Prep and Immaculate Heart Academy, along with other schools and youth football programs. The fund recognizes academic excellence, athleticism and strong moral character.

At Saint Joseph Regional, listed recipients are Cristian Alvarez, Brady Shust, Nathan Bailey, Will Rosario, Ryan McCabe and Zoe Zacardi, along with incoming freshman Mateen Hatami. Bergen Catholic recipients are Mason Marck and Timothy Hogan; Don Bosco Prep recipients are Jack DeMenna and Dante DeLuca. Immaculate Heart Academy recipients are Riley Nightingale and Vanessa Marian.

The fundraiser video shows how Rocco's story is reaching supporters beyond his immediate community.

Moore spoke about a donation involving his family and foundation and about keeping Rocco's dreams alive. Reed credited Marion with sharing Rocco's story and said he was honored to contribute. Checchio and Luke Marion described themselves as longtime friends of Rocco and his family who hoped to carry his example into their entrepreneurial work.

The video also introduces TradeMark Sports & Entertainment and OTM Media Group, described in its accompanying text as a venture that began in high school in 2019 and grew into a media company serving athletes and businesses.

According to that description, Marion received the Balboa Entrepreneurial Award at the fundraiser. The honor draws inspiration from Rocco's work ethic, selflessness and drive. "Carrying his name through this award is something I will forever cherish," Marion wrote.

Marion says he hopes the new support will encourage others in Bergen County, New Jersey's high school football community, and beyond to help the fund serve students for years to come.

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THANKSGIVING is one of America's favorite holidays. It is also the one day when people can eat enough food to feed a small village and still ask, "What's for dessert?" Between the turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, bread, lasagna, gravy, cranberry sauce and three different pies, the dinner table can look like it's set for a competitive eating championship.

But Thanksgiving does not have to become a nutritional disaster. You can enjoy the holiday without eating everything in sight. Just because food is available does not mean you have to put it on your plate.

Start with the turkey or another protein, then add plenty of vegetables and salad. Enjoy the foods you genuinely love, but remember that you do not need potatoes, stuffing, lasagna and rolls all on the same plate. You can choose a few favorites instead of treating the buffet like an all-you-can-eat obstacle course. If there is fresh fruit salad, consider it instead of another enormous slice of apple pie. You can enjoy dessert without making it a second dinner.

Pay attention to the extras, too. Sauces, gravies, dressings and ketchup can add plenty of sugar, salt and calories. Use smaller portions and taste your food before covering it with sauce. You might discover that the turkey actually tastes like turkey!

You also do not need soda or alcohol to celebrate. Water with lemon, lime or cucumber is refreshing and keeps you hydrated. You can even add a small pinch of salt if that is appropriate for your health needs, but most people do not need extra sodium in their water. The important thing is to drink water and avoid turning every holiday beverage into a sugary treat.

And please, do not eat dinner and immediately become one with the couch. Walking after a meal can aid digestion and help manage blood sugar. Take a family walk, play outside with the children, throw a football around or help clean up. You do not need to run a marathon after eating turkey. Just get moving. Your digestive system and your waistline may appreciate it.

Thanksgiving is about family, friends and appreciating what we have. Do not spend the entire day stressing about who is coming, who is late, who forgot the dessert or who brought a dish nobody requested. Someone will arrive late. Someone will bring something unexpected. Someone will complain about the temperature. That is called Thanksgiving. Go with the flow.

Instead of complaining about how many dishes you have to wash, appreciate that you had food to serve. Instead of complaining that you have to work the next day, appreciate that you have a job. Instead of criticizing your relatives, appreciate that you have people who want to spend time with you. Nobody is perfect, including the person complaining about everyone else.

Perspective changes everything

We often focus on what is missing instead of what is already present. We complain about traffic while forgetting that we have a car. We complain about getting older while forgetting that growing older is a privilege denied to many. We worry about tomorrow while overlooking the opportunities we have today.

Take a moment to appreciate the simple things. Be thankful that you can see the people around your table, hear their voices, walk across the room, talk, laugh, eat and drink. Be thankful that your heart is beating, your lungs are bringing in oxygen and your body is doing thousands of things without asking your permission. Yes, even be thankful that you can use the bathroom without assistance. Sometimes the most important blessings are the ones we never think about until something goes wrong.

Gratitude can also change how we feel. When we focus on what we appreciate, we give our minds something positive to pay attention to. That does not mean gratitude magically eliminates anxiety, depression or life's problems. It means we can practice noticing the good even when life is difficult.

There is one more thing I want everyone to do this Thanksgiving. Make plans with the people you love. Call your parents. Visit your grandparents. Spend time with your grandchildren. Invite an old friend to lunch. Take photographs. Share stories. Put the phones away and have an actual conversation.

We never know how many more Thanksgivings we will have with the people sitting around our table. Do not wait for a special occasion to tell someone they matter.



Westwood Gingerbread House Contest

WESTWOOD — Celebrate Westwood Arts Hub will hold its fourth annual gingerbread house contest Monday, Dec. 7, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Westwood Community Center, 55 Jefferson Ave. This year's contest has its first official theme, "Stars, Stripes & Holiday Lights!" Builders of all ages may enter a house made from scratch, assembled from a kit or constructed from cardboard. Entries should be decorated in advance and dropped off 4 to 5:30 p.m. on the day of the contest

Visitors can view the houses and vote alongside local judges 6 to 7:30 p.m. Awards presented at 7:45 p.m. Sponsor Matt O'Hare of Coldwell Banker Realty NJ will provide gift cards to Westwood businesses as prizes in several categories.

Registration $5 per entry via westwoodartshub@gmail.com.

PKRG-TV Holiday Lights Contest and Program

PKRG-TV, Park Ridge, 18th Annual Holiday Lights Contest and TV program. Residents are eligible to enter their holiday lights displays for consideration, with prizes awarded. Winners will be announced by Mayor Misciagna and a PKRG-TV host. Deadline for entries via the PKRG-TV website is Friday, Dec. 11 at 9 p.m.

Park Ridge residents can enter online after Thanksgiving Day (starting Nov. 27) by visiting www.pkrgtv.com and clicking on *Holiday Lights*.



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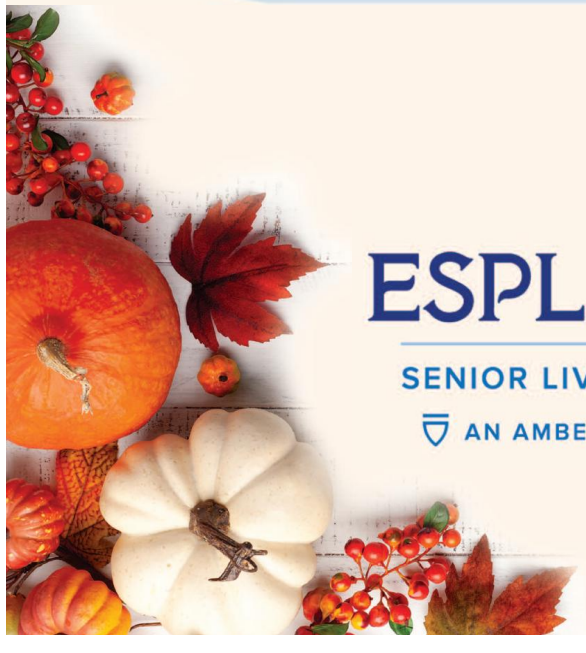
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Paying down debt vs. investing: the debt dilemma



ERIC KOHLMEIER

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PAYING down debt is often difficult, and even more so in a challenging economic environment. You may be wondering which to tackle first — pay down your debt or invest for the future?

Balance is best

A balanced approach to wealth management serves both today's needs and tomorrow's goals. For some that may mean paying off some debt today while simultaneously investing for the future.

Your own needs and circumstances will be unique. The following guidelines can help you evaluate alternatives and find an approach that fits your situation and goals.

Don't forget emergency fund

In addition to paying down debt and settling on an investment strategy, make it a priority to set up an emergency reserve. Traditional "rules of thumb" suggest setting aside three to six months or more of living expenses in traditional savings or very short-term, highly liquid, low-volatility investments.

While ideal, that goal may not be realistic for everyone. Start by building up a reserve of a month's expenses, and make it a goal to increase your emergency fund over time as resources permit.

Your future first

When making decisions about debt and investing, be a long-term thinker. Consider "what position do I want to be in 10 or 20 years from now?" Then evaluate what actions today will be most effective in helping you achieve your long-term financial goals.

For example, if you have high-interest debt that is compounding, this could eventually become a serious impediment to reaching your long-term goals. In contrast, you might not be in a hurry to retire low-interest debt, if the potential return on long-term investing would be greater.

When making decisions about debt reduction vs. investing, keep in mind that the need to eventually pay off principal is certain, but investment returns are not. Investment performance will vary over time, and it's possible to experience losses as well as gains. At the same time, it is well known that investors who start earlier can benefit from compounding and "time in the market."

If you have the opportunity to participate in a retirement plan at work, and your employer makes matching contributions, that could be a compelling reason to prioritize investing up to the amount that the employer will match.

But there are no magic numbers. That's why it's important to work with a financial advisor to create an investment strategy that fits your financial expectations for the future.

Prioritize your debts

With your emergency fund and investment strategy in place, you can begin deciding on a strategy for reducing your debts. But how do you decide which debts to pay down first?

Mathematically, it makes sense to focus on paying off high-interest debts like private student loans and credit-card debt first. Federal student loans and mortgages might be lower priorities because their rates are often lower and their terms longer. Vehicle loans might fall somewhere in the middle. Tax considerations may also come into play.

An alternative approach is to start with the smallest debt first. It might be motivating to get a "quick win" by paying off a smaller debt before beginning to chip away at a larger one.

Once you pay off one debt, add that payment amount to a different debt payment amount to accelerate its pay off.

It's personal

One last tip: Don't discount your emotions. If paying off a certain debt will help you feel more secure, you may want to follow your gut. Or discuss with a financial advisor before you decide. Also, identify some key milestones that you want to reach, and celebrate (modestly) when you achieve those goals!

This article was written for Wells Fargo Advisors and provided courtesy of Eric Kohlmeier, Senior Financial Advisor, Managing Director – Investments in Park Ridge at 201-505-0472.

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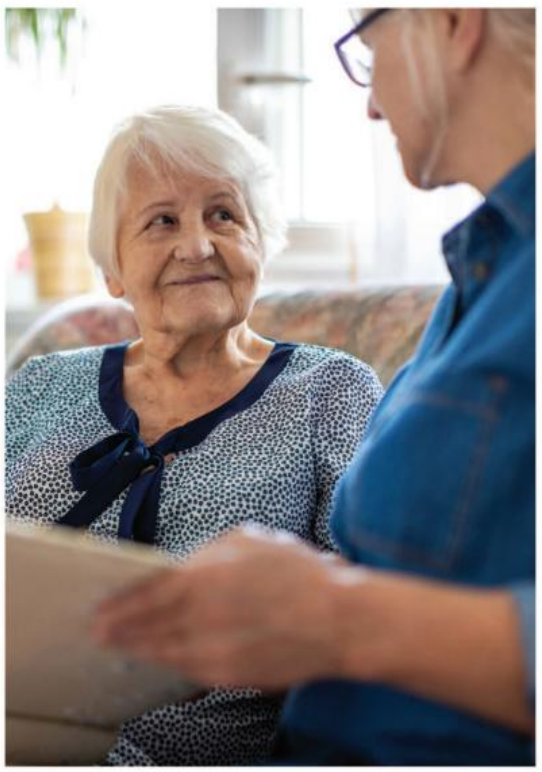
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Reviewing beneficiaries across your retirement accounts, life insurance policies, and bank and investment accounts can help clarify your wishes and reduce avoidable complications.

Let's review your beneficiaries. Call **201-505-0472** or email **eric.kohlmeier@wellsfargo.com** to schedule a meeting.



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Find holiday gifts at Paramus Thanksgiving Craft Show Nov. 29

Get a head start on your holiday gift list at the Thanksgiving Craft Show at Paramus High School on Sunday, Nov. 29, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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Other finds include wooden bowls, pens, charcuterie boards, birdhouses, bonsai, soaps, candles, stained glass, chocolates, sports clocks, florals, pottery and diamond art. Homemade pickles, kettle corn, desserts and tie-dye items will be available outside.

Make a day of it with breakfast and lunch available in the cafe.

Admission is $4. For more information, visit pjspromotions.com or call 201-410-5416.











Winter HOME IMPROVEMENT GUIDE

Sheehan:

FROM PAGE 12

"Finian's Rainbow." A native of Dublin, Ireland, Sheehan brings both extraordinary vocal talent and heartfelt warmth to the stage.

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"We're just as excited as the audience," said Sheehan. "There is something truly special about this concert. It lifts us both as artists and as people. The joy we experience in giving is matched only by the joy we see in the audience."

Tickets are now available at christmasconcert.stjohnhillsdale.org, through a secure, user-friendly platform that provides immediate purchase confirmation.

For those who prefer to pay by cash or check, tickets may also be purchased in person at the Saint John the Baptist Church Rectory Office, at 69 Valley St., Hillsdale. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m.

For artist biographies, concert updates, and additional information, visit the official concert website.

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Center:

FROM PAGE 1

starting next March.

The developer, H&R Montvale LLC, a partnership of S. Hekemian Group and Russo Development, has already applied for a zoning permit to construct the data center and received approval from Montvale's construction official that a data center is allowed in the OR-2 (Office Research) zone.

Mostly, the Nov. 18 hearing was to discuss the scope and motions to be included in a future trial. The judge previously issued a public notice limiting the scope of the Nov. 18 hearing to Montvale's amendment.

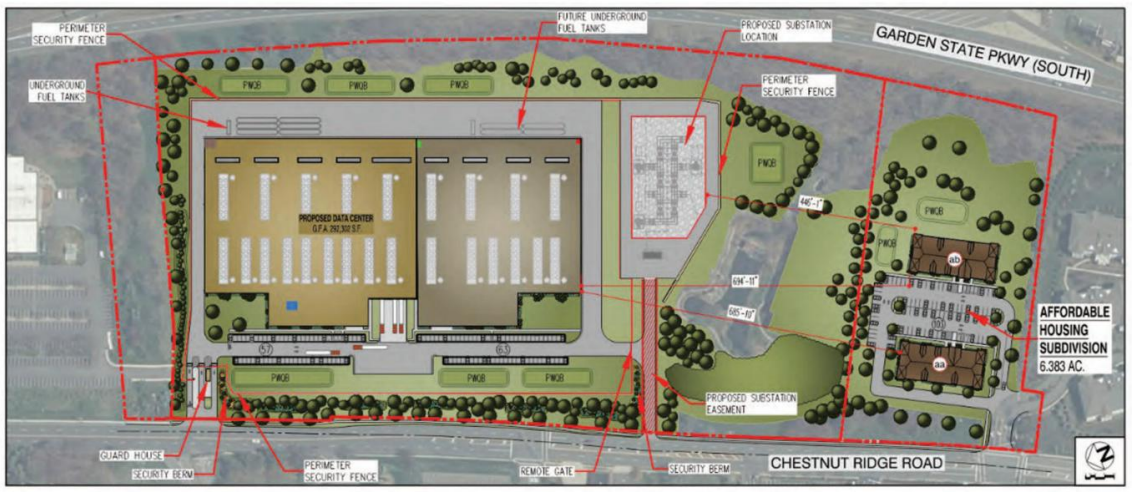
However, attorneys also raised legal and procedural issues before Corriston that she will likely decide in a ruling expected by early December, said a Fair Share Housing Center spokesperson.

"Today's hearing was an opportunity to explain why Montvale's agreement with the data center developer sets a troubling precedent," said Joshua Bauers, director of exclusionary zoning litigation at Fair Share Housing Center, who represented the organization at the hearing.

Bauers added, "The agreement requires Montvale to provide the developer with a PILOT tax break. If the court approves the settlement, it would give the developer the right to sue Montvale to approve the PILOT and every other step needed to move the project forward. In effect, it creates a way for the developer to bypass meaningful public review and secure financial benefits it wouldn't otherwise be entitled to. That's a fundamental misuse of New Jersey's affordable housing process."

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Proposed Data Center & Affordable Housing



By early afternoon, only hours after the morning hearing ended, Montvale Mayor Mike Ghassali issued an email update to residents.

"Today, the Court heard arguments regarding the proposed data center, our affordable housing agreement, and objections raised by Fair Share Housing Center and AvalonBay. The Court denied all five motions filed by AvalonBay and moved the fairness hearing to March 2027. A new public notice will be issued, without additional objections," he wrote.

He noted that the court did not make any final decisions on Fair Share's arguments opposing a data center but decided to hold a future hearing where both sides will present their cases.

"This (upcoming hearing) is important because Fair Share Housing Center had argued that the proposed agreement should be rejected outright, without such a hearing. Montvale remains confident that our amended agreement complies with New Jersey law. We also believe Fair Share Housing Center is trying to reopen issues that have already been addressed during the affordable housing process. We look forward to presenting our case in March and remain committed to protecting Montvale's interests while meeting our affordable housing obligations," wrote the mayor.

Bauers said that Fair Share objected to affordable housing being put close to a data center and that Montvale was using the Mount Laurel law to attempt to site a data center next to affordable housing. Also, Bauers accused Montvale of "hijacking the Mount Laurel process" to put in a data center.

Attorney Michael Edwards, representing Montvale, said Fair Share was conducting a "massive sleight of hand" by trying to relitigate issues previously decided by the settlement agreement and Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program. At one point, Edwards told Corriston that Montvale was "riding the tide on what the market wants" with data centers, versus a previous market for warehouses. He also opposed Fair Share's efforts to relitigate housing unit density on the former KPMG site.

See "Developer driving data center at former KPMG site," by Michael Olohan, Nov. 6, 2026, at thepressgroup.net. Also, search "Data Center" on our website for previous articles.

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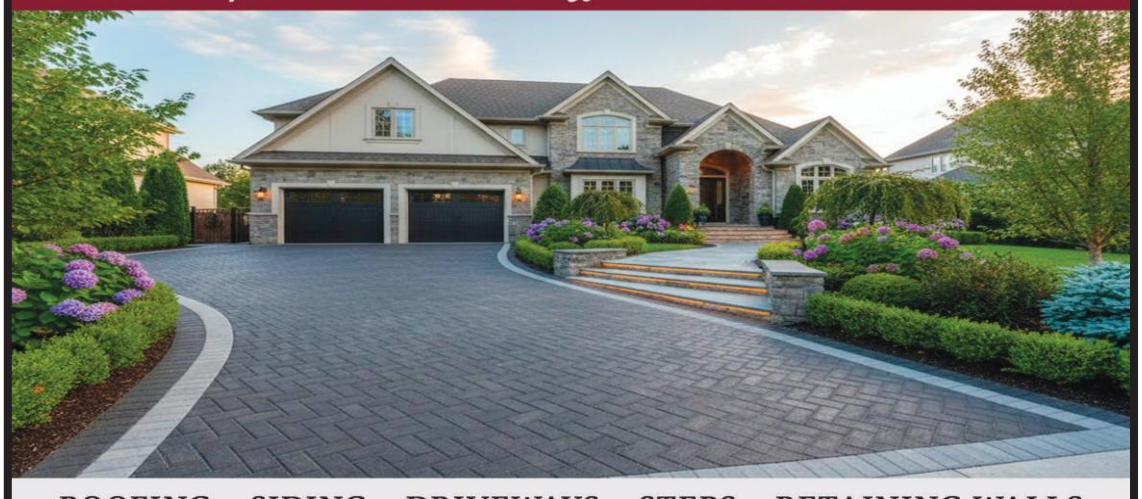
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Ask:

FROM PAGE 1

incredibly grateful that I was able to donate a kidney to my dad. He's always been a role model to me, and I'm glad I could do something so meaningful for him and our family."

The news follows a public appeal by the family this spring, when Setteducati said his progressive kidney disease had worsened and he expected to begin dialysis within weeks.

His sons, Michael and Steve Jr., were being evaluated as potential donors. They also took to social media to widen the search. "This is a big ask, but it will save his life," they wrote in April. "There is still so much life ahead of him and so many more moments for him to experience, and our family is holding onto hope that we can find a match."

Pascack Press reported the family's appeal April 19 in "The biggest ask of his life."

Even before that public appeal, more than 20 employees at New Concepts for Living had volunteered to be evaluated as donors. Setteducati said in April that some were ruled out through health screenings and others could not proceed because of the employer-employee relationship.

In the November announcement, he thanked the employees, relatives, friends and guardians of people served by the organization who had offered to help. "To know that so many members of our NCFL family were willing to make such a significant personal sacrifice on my behalf is something I will never forget," he said. "Words cannot adequately express my gratitude."

A NCFL spokesperson told us the procedure went off without a hitch in July.

Setteducati credited his NYU Langone medical team, particularly transplant nephrologist Dr. Nicole Ali and surgeon Dr. Robert Montgomery. He also singled out nurse Chloe Fusco for her professionalism



Michael Setteducati, left, donated a kidney to his father, Steve, a former Emerson mayor, and CEO of New Concepts for Living. Both have recovered, and Steve has returned to work, according to the nonprofit. *Courtesy photo*

and compassionate care during his recovery. "I feel incredibly fortunate to have been under his care, along with Dr. Ali and the entire outstanding NYU Langone transplant team," Setteducati said of Montgomery.

A lifelong Emerson resident, Setteducati served on the borough's Planning Board before being elected mayor in 2003. His work in local government included support for housing for adults with special needs.

He later joined the board of New Concepts for Living and became CEO in 2016. The Paramus-based nonprofit provides housing, day programs and support services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Gus Loukas, the organization's chief financial officer, said Setteducati remained involved even while recovering.

"Just days after his surgery he remained engaged with our leadership team, focused on the individuals we serve and passionate about the future of the organization," Loukas said.

Setteducati said "Receiving this incredible gift of life has reinforced my belief that there is no greater purpose than helping others. I return to NCFL with renewed energy and an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of individuals with I/DD and providing their families with the peace of mind they deserve."

Living kidney donation: Where to start

Bergen County residents interested in living kidney donation can begin by contacting a transplant center. Donors need not be relatives: Friends and people who do not know the recipient can also be evaluated. Living donation can shorten a recipient's wait for a transplant. NYU Langone Health

Evaluation comes first. Prospective donors undergo medical testing and a psychosocial assessment. An independent living donor advocate helps protect their interests.

Donation involves surgery and potential short- and long-term risks, which the transplant team should explain for each candidate. Asking questions or beginning an evaluation does not commit someone to donating; candidates can withdraw, with their reasons kept confidential.

Not a match? There may be another route. Kidney paired donation connects incompatible donor-recipient pairs so that donors give to other compatible recipients, helping their intended recipients receive kidneys through the exchange.

Ask about costs and time off. The recipient's insurance generally covers donation-related evaluation and surgery. Lost wages, travel, lodging and dependent care may require separate arrangements. Financial assistance may be available; a transplant social worker can explain eligibility and coverage.

You can learn more here:

- **Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center, Livingston:** Call 888-409-4707 to discuss living donation. An initial health questionnaire is available through its Living Donor Institute.
- **NYU Langone Health, New York:** Call 212-263-3621, email NYUTrLivingDonor@NYULangone.org, or visit its living kidney donor program for information and confidential screening.

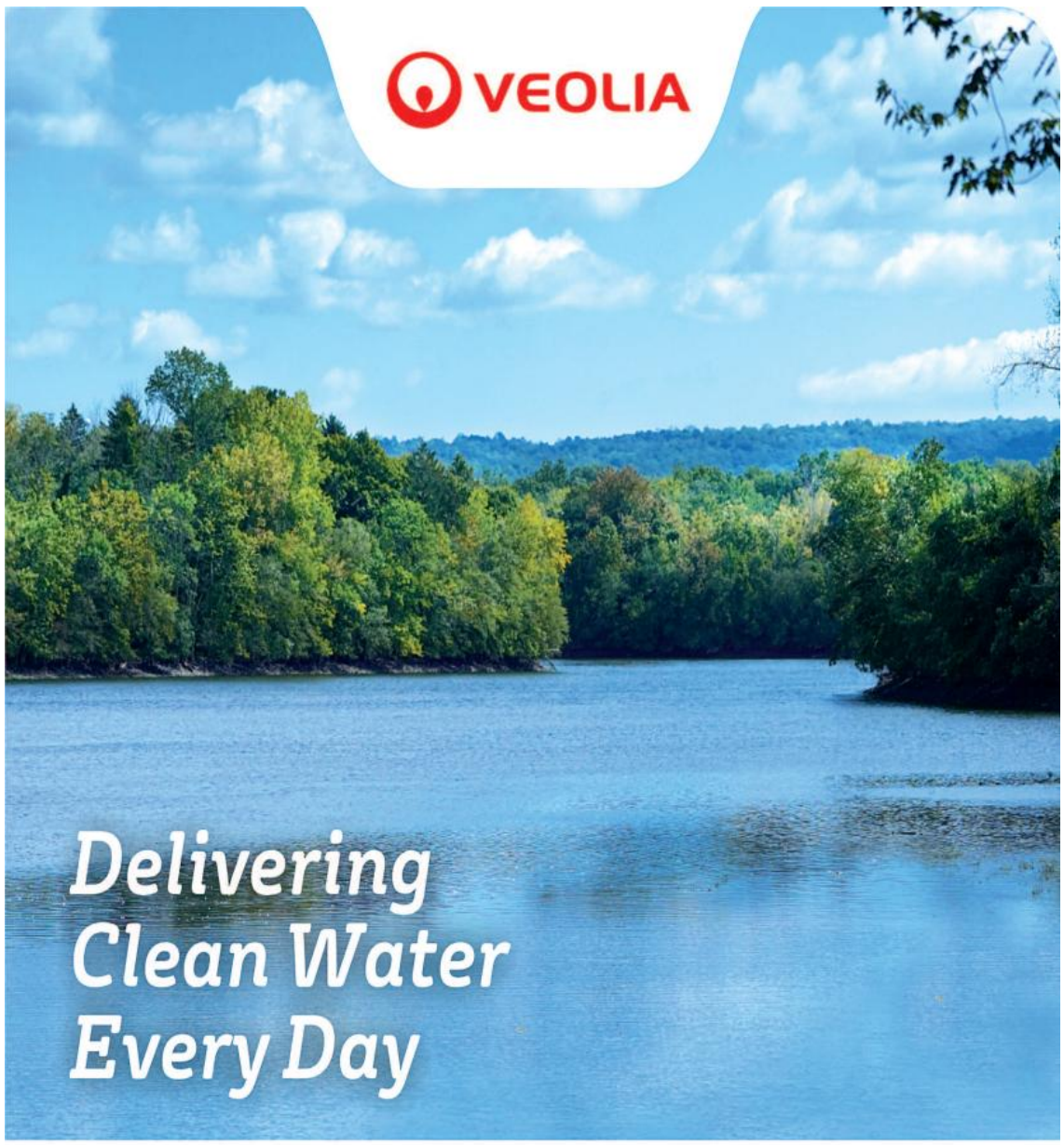
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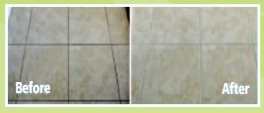
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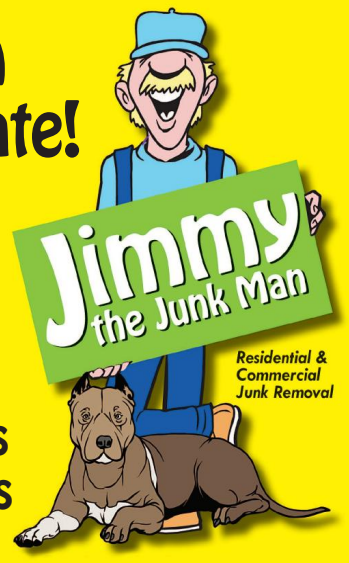
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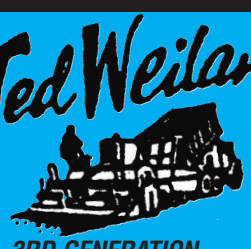
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