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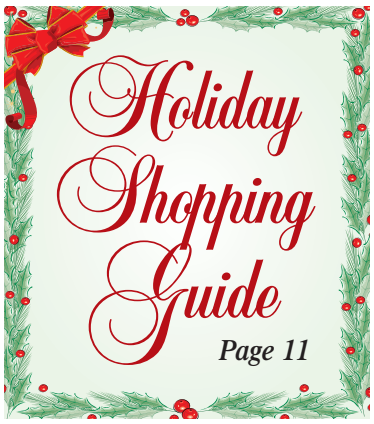
VOLUME 30 ISSUE 38 | THE PASCACK VALLEY'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER | NOVEMBER 30, 2026



PARK RIDGE

Larry McKenna, 69, a true-blue Legionnaire

BY JOHN SNYDER
OF PASCACK PRESS

In January, Larry McKenna stood with Troop 80 Scout Daniel Lopez and members of American Legion Post 153 for a photograph at the opening of the community fire pit Lopez built for his Eagle Scout project. In September, McKenna helped place his squadron's red, white and blue wreath at the borough's observance marking 25 years since the Sept. 11 attacks.

Mayor Keith Misciagna remembered McKenna as a steady volunteer at Legion events. "He always met me with a smile and a strong handshake," the mayor wrote.

McKenna, 69, died Friday, Nov. 20, after an SUV struck him on Interstate 80 in Wayne. He was on his way home from a statewide American Legion event, Misciagna said.

McKenna was a charter member and past commander of Sons of the American Legion Squadron 153, based at Cpl. Jedh C. Barker Memorial American Legion Post 153 in

See MCKENNA on page 8

JUNIOR CARDS TAKE TITLE IN DOUBLE OT

12–6 victory over Northern Valley; first championship for WT, WW combo program



The Westwood/Washington Township Junior Cardinals, Bergen County Junior Football League champions at the fifth- and sixth-grade level, allowed just 12 points in three playoff games. *Courtesy Ray Nabhani.*

DEMAREST — Sixth-grader Mason Ferraro ran 10 yards for a touchdown in the second overtime Nov. 21 to give the Westwood/Washington Township Junior Cardinals a 12-6 win over the Northern Valley Junior Knights in the Bergen County Junior Football League Super Bowl.

It was the first title for the fifth- and sixth-grade team since Westwood and the Township of Washington began fielding a combined team during the pandemic, according to the Cardinals.

The Cardinals entered the playoffs as the No. 5 seed after a 5-3 regular season. The Junior Knights went 6-1-1 and earned the No. 2 seed. According to the Cardinals, Northern Valley ranked second in the league in offense and third in defense. The Cardinals ranked third in offense and

Continued on page 6

MONTVALE

He booked a trip to watch pickleball; came home with gold

BY JOHN SNYDER
OF PASCACK PRESS

Paul Low had already bought a plane ticket to Dallas to watch the pickleball pros when he discovered an amateur doubles division he could enter. All he needed was a partner. On June 30, he played a few games with Marc Goldstein at The Picklr in Fair Lawn and asked if he'd go to Texas. They'd known each other less than an hour. Goldstein said yes.

On Nov. 8, Low, 73, of Montvale, and Goldstein, 77, of Franklin Lakes, went 3–0 at the 2026 Opendoor Pickleball World Championships in the Dallas area. They won gold in the amateur Champions men's doubles division for players ages 70–79 at the 3.0 skill level.

Readers may remember Low as the retiree who used a spreadsheet and color-coded maps to visit 64 North Jersey libraries last summer. The day before he met Goldstein, he'd drawn up another spreadsheet, this one listing Dallas-area clubs and pros who might help him find a partner.

It turned out Low had teamed up with a Goldstein before. More

See GOLD on page 18

MAKING ROOM

Hillsdale school trustees approve the latest payment for work at George G. White Middle School as new board member Kimberly Dowling takes her seat.

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Back in time...

That used-car office on Pascack Road got its start in 1925 as Van Horn's general store, where township neighbors swapped fish stories and stopped for ice cream. Kristin Beuscher reports.

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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.

Thanks to Park Ridge Police Reserves

To the editor:

PARK RIDGE RECREATION was pleased to present a check to Park Ridge Police Reserves Chief Paul Witte for the tips people generously left for food at one of our recent events.

Our Recreation & Cultural Committee appreciates the help our Police Reserves provide throughout the year, from the annual car show and town picnic to the summer concert series, fireworks, Ragamuffin Parade and tree lighting.

To our Police Reserves, your presence and willingness to help make these events safe and enjoyable for everyone. Thank you for all you do for our community. We're grateful for you!

Liz Falkenstern,
Park Ridge Recreation & Cultural Committee



Here for Park Ridge: From left, Paul Wharton, Greg Hoffman, Chief Paul Witte, Rob Nicolich and Kelly Epstein at the check presentation. *Photo submitted by Liz Falkenstern.*

Westwood Regional sets pre-Labor Day start for 2027 as Berkeley work nears

Westwood Regional students will start school before Labor Day in 2027 and finish earlier in June 2028 under a calendar the Board of Education approved Nov. 19. The change gives the district more time that summer for construction at Berkeley Elementary School.

Berkeley turns 100 in 2029. Superintendent Patrick McQueeney said the building's age and the scope of the anticipated work set the project apart from construction completed at the district's three other elementary schools. The Berkeley project is still in the planning stages. The district also hopes to give crews more time at the other end of summer. McQueeney said he expects to recommend that staff and students return after Labor Day in 2028. The board is scheduled to consider that calendar in May 2027.

For the current school year, the only change affects staff, whose last day will now coincide with students' last day under the district's latest collective bargaining agreement. All 2026–27 student dates remain the same.

Families can consult the district's school calendar page.

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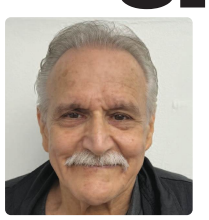
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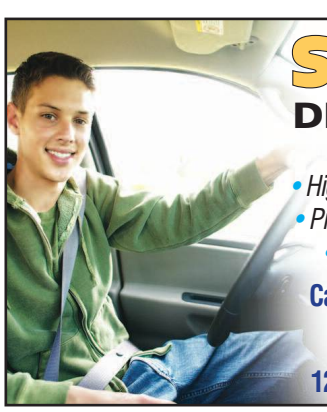
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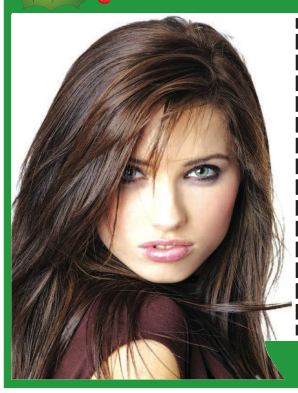
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Inclusive playground debuts to cheers

BY MICHAEL OLOHAN
OLOHAN@THEPRESSGROUP.NET

HILLSDALE

A playground designed for children with disabilities that is compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines is now open at the newly renovated Memorial Field, officials told Pascack Press.

The first phase of construction of the playground, including age-appropriate equipment for two to 12-year-olds, plus safety mulch was recently installed under a $149,800 cooperative contract approved by council in mid-June with Liberty Parks & Playgrounds, Stratford, N.J.

An informal meet-up including Sheinfield, councilors, and Roger Gross, son of Paul & Gayle Gross, occurred on November 2 during a "soft opening" for the playground, which was partly financed by a $150,000 donation by the Paul and Gayle Gross Foundation.

The playground includes ADA-compliant swing sets and slides, climber bars, ramps, climbing decks, a spinner ride, rock climber, lookout tower, a climbing pole, picnic tables, and benches.

Borough Administrator Mike Ghassali told us that Phase I of playground construction cost an estimated $161,000, including the $150,000 donation from the Paul and Gayle Gross Foundation. Ghassali said a second phase will cost an additional $240,000, and likely occur next year.

He said both phases are designed to be ADA-compliant and wheelchair accessible. He told Pascack Press Nov. 24 that no date had been set for a playground ribbon-cutting ceremony. However, he stressed that Phase I of the playground was open to residents now.

Mayor Michael Sheinfield, who attended the playground's opening on Nov. 2 said, "The Gross Family has been so generous to Hillsdale. Many of the improvements done in town would not have been possible without their contributions. I thank them on behalf of the residents. We are blessed to have them as prominent members of our community," Sheinfield said.

Asked about the public's response, Sheinfield said the new playground "is definitely being put through its paces" by children using the new park.

The Borough mayor and council dedicated a new $6.6 million Memorial Field on Oct. 18 - of which the playground is a part - following a year of renovations, complete with new synthetic turf, new batting cages, new basketball courts, a multi-use synthetic turf field for football and soccer, and a walking path. Funding for the Memorial FIeld renovations and playground was appropriated separately.

Ghassali said no new tax increases would result from the now $6.6 million Memorial Field renovations, which were above the original $5.8 million cap imposed by council. See "Memorial Field celebration set for October," by Michael Olohan, Oct. 16, 2026, thepressgroup.net.

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A patriot's grave: Park Ridge Mayor Keith Misciagna says of Peter G. Haring, "I want to show this gentleman, who's been gone for so long, the respect he deserves…"

New headstone ordered for Revolutionary War veteran; borough seeks donations, volunteers

By MICHAEL OLOHAN
OLOHAN@THEPRESSGROUP.NET

A CEREMONY TO HONOR Revolutionary War veteran Peter G. Haring, who is buried in the Pascack Reformed Church Cemetery, will likely take place in spring 2027, and local officials are hoping to provide long-overdue recognition.

Officials want to replace a weather-worn, deteriorated headstone marking his grave, and also honor his service with ceremonies, recognition and gratitude, said Park Ridge Mayor Keith Misciagna at the Nov. 10 council meeting.

"I want to show this gentleman, who's been gone for so long, the respect he deserves," said the mayor, suggesting a ceremony with military honor guards, veterans, and elected

See HARING on page 14

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Back in time…

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BACK IN TIME FEATURES





Although there are no photographs from the earliest days of Stanley Van Horn's store on Pascack Road, we are happy to have this one, courtesy of Linda J. Barnes, dating to 1952. She is the little girl in the picture. For many years, this building has been a used car dealership.

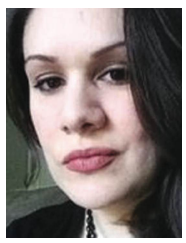
Remembering Van Horn's store on Pascack Road

ON PASCACK ROAD in the Township of Washington, between Jefferson and McKinley avenues, there sits a tiny building that has been the office for a used car dealership for as long as anyone can remember. Recently there has been a lot of action around this place, as two new houses have just gone up next door.

Here is an interesting fact: That little structure is older than nearly every house in the township.

Stanley Van Horn first opened it as a community store back in 1925, at a time when the township had approximately 300 residents and the strip mall on Pascack Road was still decades away.

The son of Peter A. and Mathilda Van Horn, whose farmhouse was on Pascack Road across from the modern-day shopping center, Stanley was about 19 years old when he started the business. He installed gasoline pumps and ran a service station. Inside the shop he sold groceries, and there were tables outdoors where he served ice cream and soda. The place became a local hangout.



SPECIAL TO
PASCACK PRESS
By Kristin Beuscher,
Historian,
Pascack Historical Society,
Park Ridge.
Call (201) 573-0307 or visit
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"Stan Van Horn owns a place in Washington Township which is a general store if ever there was one," wrote the Westwood Chronicle in 1937. "From all over the township the young blades and the aged residents gather here. Generally, though, when you enter that store they are talking about hunting, either how many animals they have killed or are going to annihilate. The boys are no slouches when it comes to reeling off fish yarns, either."

Hunting was still legal in most parts of the Pascack Valley in those days, and in the township a person could hunt on a property if they owned it or had written permission from the owner. The township had barely been developed at that time, and the landscape was mostly forest and the swamps that surrounded the Musquapsink Brook. Hunting was a very popular pastime.

In 1936, Van Horn expanded the service station business with used car sales. The shop was the victim of a brazen automobile theft in May of 1941, which was reported in the Westwood Chronicle as follows:

"It is not unusual for a young man to steal a car, but when the young man steals the same car twice, that's something else again. Jack Harron, of Newark, stole a car on Feb. 20 from the used car lot of Stanley Van Horn in Washington Township. About a week later the car was recovered by Newark police. Some time later, Harron and a friend drove up to Pearl River. On the way home they picked up the same car that Harron had previously stolen. It was parked again on the Van Horn used car lot."

The car was valued at $525, which is equivalent to about $12,000 today. The thief was placed on probation for five years and had to pay a fine of 25 cents per week.

Keeping it moving: Montvale lands $537,528 for Memorial Drive improvements

MONTVALE — The borough has secured $537,528 in state funding for pedestrian improvements and resurfacing on Memorial Drive, where construction is expected to begin in summer 2027, Mayor Mike Ghassali said in his October infrastructure update.

The state funding includes $300,000 for pedestrian improvements and $237,528 for resurfacing. LaForza submitted the apparent low bid of $766,809.78, about $229,300 more than the state funding.

At Kinderkamack Road and Magnolia Avenue, crews have removed the Magnolia Avenue slip lane and installed guide rails along a curve where crashes had occurred repeatedly, Ghassali said. The borough also completed paving work on Valley View, Powder Hill Road, Garden Lane, Beechwood Road and Hollow Wood Lane through the Riverside Cooperative Paving Program.

County road projects. Montvale is coordinating with Bergen County on two resurfacing projects. The 2026 project covers Spring Valley Road from Grand Avenue to Upper Saddle River Road and includes accessible curb ramps. The 2027 project would continue along Spring Valley Road to the New York state line and resurface Grand Avenue between Summit Avenue and the Garden State Parkway.

The borough also applied for state Municipal Aid funding to resurface Akers Avenue between Grand Avenue and Spring

See MONTVALE on page 15

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Mayor hails huge support for open space fund

BY MICHAEL OLOHAN
OLOHAN@THEPRESSGROUP.NET

PARK RIDGE

A "thrilled" mayor thanked local voters who overwhelmingly approved the continuation of Park Ridge's municipal Open Space Trust Fund by voting in favor of the public question on the Nov. 3 ballot.

According to the Bergen County Clerk's Office Elections Division, of 3.324 voters who cast ballots on the question, 2,903 voted in favor and 421 opposed continuing the Open Space Trust Fund. In total, slightly over 87% of voters casting ballots approved continuing the local Open Space fund.

Voters have supported Open Space funding since November 2016, when the fund was approved. It was approved again five years later, in November 2021.

The annual tax amounts to a levy of 0.007, or seven-tenths of a cent per $100 of assessed real property value. On an average home assessed at $475,614, the annual municipal Open Space tax would total $33.29.

At the Nov. 10 council meeting, Mayor Keith Misciagna said, "I'm thrilled. Mom and apple pie didn't get as many votes as it did." Misciagna thanked everyone who voted Nov. 3 and participated in the democratic process.

"I sincerely want to thank all the residents who supported the referendum and everyone who took the time to make their voices heard. Voting is one of the most important ways we can participate in our community and help shape our future," said the mayor.

"Your support will continue to allow Park Ridge to continue pursuing funding opportunities for open space, recreation, and historical preservation projects. Thank you for your continued involvement and caring for the future of Park Ridge," said Misciagna, a three-term mayor.

He added, "This is so important. We've gotten over a million dollars in matching grants from other people's money because we have this…So, it's huge," said the mayor. He said he spoke out in favor of the Open Space Trust Fund at a recent public information meeting and wondered if he hurt or helped the fund's future prospects. He said he thought passage of the fund was "a no-brainer and the town did too. So I'm very grateful for all those people that came out and voted," Misciagna said.

In mid-July, Borough Clerk Maggie Giandomenico told Pascack Press that the current municipal Open Space fund had approximately $622,641.77 available for local projects and matching funds.

She said the borough was awaiting a $232,000 Bergen County grant reimbursement (which it received) for its recent acquisition of the Wortendyke Homestead at 12 Pascack Road.

The historic Dutch stone house, dating to the 1750s, was the borough's most recent acquisition and is slated for historical analysis and restoration as grants become available. (See "County panel steps up for a borough gem," by John Snyder, Oct. 12, 2026, thepressgroup.net.)

Moreover, Giandomenico said Park Ridge was nearing completion of its historic train station renovation project, for which it received a $412,150 county historic preservation grant. The borough held a grand re-opening Oct. 20.

While total renovations cost nearly $900,000, she said funds would come from a $412,000 county Open Space Trust Fund matching grant, which was matched by a similar amount from the local Open Space Trust Fund.

Moreover, she said Park Ridge received a $147,000 "transit village" grant from the state for upgrades. See "'The heart of Park Ridge is beating again'," by Michael Olohan, Oct. 23. 2026, thepressgroup.net.

Giandomenico said other recent projects incorporating local Open Space funds include lighting and installation at Sulak Field; installation of a rubber safety surface at Memorial Park; acquisition of 3.15 acres on North Fifth Street for passive recreation; Davies Field improvements; and basketball court installation at Sulak Lane Park.

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FROM PAGE 1

led the league in defense, allowing five points per game.

Northern Valley struck first at Northern Valley High School at Demarest, taking a 6-0 lead on a long touchdown run. The conversion attempt failed, and the Cardinals answered with a touchdown drive to tie the score at 6. The tie held through regulation.

The Cardinals had the ball first in overtime. Neither team scored on its possession. In the second overtime, the Cardinals chose to play defense first. Sixth-grader Jackson Lawrence stopped a pass attempt in the end zone, and the Knights came away without a point.



Out on top: Sixth-graders Mason Ferraro (No. 88) and Jackson Lawrence (No. 87) helped the Westwood/Washington Township Junior Cardinals beat the Northern Valley Junior Knights 12-6 in double overtime Nov. 21 at Northern Valley High School at Demarest. With the score tied at 6 in the second overtime, Lawrence defended a pass in the end zone and the Cardinals held the Knights scoreless. Photo courtesy Ray Nabhani.

The Cardinals needed three plays to win it. A quarterback sneak gained 3 yards, and Ferraro picked up 7 more for a first down. On the next snap, Ferraro took a counter to the left and reached the end zone with several Junior Knights on his back.

The Cardinals' last loss came Oct. 17 at the hands of Garfield, 13-12, after a two-point try that would have put Westwood/Washington Township ahead fell short. A week later, the Cardinals beat Dumont 28-6.

They closed the regular season with a 28-0 home win over River Vale, then beat fourth-seeded River Vale 14-6 on the road at Pascack Valley High School in the opening round of the playoffs.

That sent the Cardinals to Carlstadt for a semifinal rematch with the team that had beaten them 13-6 in the season opener. Carlstadt came in 8-0 with the league's top-ranked offense.

According to the Cardinals, their defense held Carlstadt without a first down in a 14-0 win. In three playoff games, the Cardinals allowed just 12 points.

Westwood/Washington Township Junior Cardinals Football is a nonprofit program for young athletes from the two towns, who also play together at the high school level. Many of this season's players will turn to wrestling or basketball this winter. Next fall, the current sixth-graders move up to the senior level for seventh- and eighth-graders. The current fifth-graders return to defend the junior title.

Other Bergen County Junior Football League programs include Bergenfield, Carlstadt/East Rutherford, Cresskill, Dumont, Glen Ridge, Hillsdale/Montvale/Woodcliff Lake, Northern Valley Old Tappan, Park Ridge, River Vale and Waldwick/Midland Park.

—Staff-revised team submission

WESTWOOD CARDINALS

FOOTBALL · TEAM ROSTER — 2026

PLAYER ROSTER

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	#
Grant	Sandberg	1
Cole	Perrapato	2
Kian	Littleton	3
Casey	Feinberg	4
Jack	Malyso	6
Will	McAuliffe	9
Jack	Compesi	10
Sergio	Gonzalez-Perez	11
Ryan	Kazmierczak	12
Matthew	Wagnon	15
Michael	Collins	18
Lorenzo	Abbate	22
CJ	Dauble	24
Matthew	Solga	27

PLAYER ROSTER

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	#
JT	Krenn	29
Liam	McCarthy	31
Lucas	Palmieri	32
Marcello	Putrino	41
Benjamin	Golden	44
Andrew	Dickinson	47
Brady	Dowd	55
Luke	Keller	58
Landon	Nabhani	78
Mason	Polizzano	82
Jackson	Lawrence	87
Mason	Ferraro	88
Jaxon	Cyrwus	97
Jack	Panetta	99

COACHING STAFF

HEAD COACH
Mike Sandberg

ASSISTANT COACHES

Chris Dowd
Craig Ferraro
Ed Kazmierczak
Matt Perrapato
Matt Wagnon
Pat Krenn
Ray Nabhani
Will Lawrence

GO CARDINALS!

Source: Westwood Cardinals







A.D. Dan Vivino A DAANJ North I Sectional Award of Merit Recipient

WESTWOOD REGIONAL

The Westwood Regional School District is proud to announce that Dan Vivino, Athletic Director at Westwood Regional High School, has been selected by the Directors of Athletics Association of New Jersey, Inc. (DAANJ) as the Sectional Award of Merit Recipient representing North I.

This prestigious honor recognizes Vivino's outstanding career achievements, unwavering dedication to student-athletes, and exemplary professionalism as an athletic administrator.

In a letter dated Nov. 20, DAANJ President and Sectional Award of Merit Selection Committee Chair David G. Frazier, CMAA, commended Vivino for bringing pride to his family, the school district, and the broader Westwood community.



"Dan Vivino has been a dedicated advocate for our student-athletes, coaches, and athletic programs. His leadership, integrity, and commitment to excellence have made a lasting impact on Westwood Regional. Dan is highly respected throughout the region and across the state for his knowledge, experience, and contributions to interscholastic athletics. We are fortunate to have his expertise and leadership here at Westwood Regional, and I am thrilled to see him receive this well-deserved recognition," stated Dr. Patrick McQueeney, superintendent of Westwood Regional School District.

Vivino will be formally presented with the award during the DAANJ Annual Awards Banquet, held in conjunction with the organization's Annual Workshop at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City on Thursday, March 11, 2027.

— Via Lori Perlow



Library 'Buster Box' To Offer Free Narcan

Residents will be able to pick up free Narcan at the Township of Washington Public Library through a Buster Box, a newspaper-style dispenser stocked with the nasal spray that can reverse an opioid overdose.

The library will unveil the box at 10 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 10, at 144 Woodfield Road.

The boxes are named for Buster Marri of River Edge, who was 24 when he died of a fentanyl overdose. His family helped launch the Bergen County initiative with Children's Aid and Family Services. cafsnj.org

Library Director Laura Rifkin said speakers will include members of the family sponsoring the library's box, Mayor Peter Calamari, Superintendent of Schools Patrick McQueeney and representatives of Alumni in Recovery and the Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources.

— Via WTPL

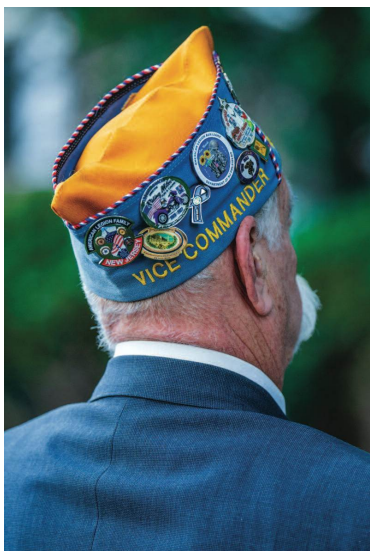


McKenna:

FROM PAGE 1

Park Ridge. At the time of his death, he served as vice commander of both the local squadron and the New Jersey detachment of the Sons of the American Legion.

"Larry was a dedicated leader and a true pillar of our organization,"





Larry McKenna, 69, of Park Ridge, was a charter member and past commander of Sons of the American Legion Squadron 153. He served as vice commander of both the squadron and the New Jersey detachment. *Photo courtesy of Sons of the American Legion Squadron 153, Cpl. Jedh C. Barker American Legion Post 153, Park Ridge.*

the squadron wrote in a tribute. "This is a tremendous loss for both Squadron 153 and Post 153."

Post Commander Ryan O'Hara told Pascack Press, "The best way to sum up Larry is that he had more passion about the American Legion than anyone I've ever met. He believed in the tradition and values of it all. So much that he was never shy about letting me know if I missed a formal step in a meeting."

He added, "He also volunteered for everything and he was always proud to donate and cook all the corn on the cob for every event. We will miss him deeply."

Born May 14, 1957, McKenna grew up in Park Ridge. Among those sharing condolences on Facebook were people who had known him since his school days. Ron Gosselin Jr. remembered him as a member of Park Ridge High School's Class of 1976.

McKenna worked for 29 years as an ironworker with Local 46 in New York. His family remembered his fun-loving nature and colorful Hawaiian shirts. He loved his cattle dogs, followed Formula 1 racing and treasured his Camaro.



Larry McKenna, center, during this year's Sept. 11 observance at Veterans Park, flanked by Sons of the American Legion Commander Frank Buonocore and Viana Mattson, who sang the national anthem. Photo at far left, McKenna's portrait at the same event. *John Snyder photos.*

New Jersey State Police told Daily Voice that McKenna pulled his Chevrolet onto the right shoulder of eastbound I-80 after a minor collision with a Kia. After he stepped out, a Toyota SUV struck him and then his car. No other injuries were reported. The crash remains under investigation.

McKenna is survived by his wife, Lisa (Veneri) McKenna, and his daughter, Caitlin McKenna, and her boyfriend, Brandon. He also leaves two brothers, nieces and a nephew, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends he considered family.

Visitation is Friday, Nov. 27, from 3 to 7 p.m. at Becker Funeral Home, 219 Kinderkamack Road, Westwood. A prayer service will be held there Saturday, Nov. 28, at 10 a.m., followed by burial at George Washington Memorial Park Paramus. In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes donations in McKenna's memory to Cpl. Jedh C. Barker Memorial American Legion Post 153.

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Valley Chabad menorah lightings set to cheer in eight towns

Valley Chabad will host free public menorah lightings in eight Bergen County towns Dec. 6–8.

The celebrations include a Chanukah party at River Vale Town Hall on Monday, Dec. 7, featuring an ice menorah and a DJ. All are welcome to join neighbors for the lightings, blessings and Chanukah songs.

Organizers say the festivities will include hot cocoa, latkes, doughnuts and prizes.

Chanukah commemorates the Maccabees' rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem more than 2,000 years ago. According to Jewish tradition, they found enough oil to light the Temple menorah for one day, but it burned for eight. Jewish families mark the holiday by lighting one additional candle each night.

The schedule

Sunday, Dec. 6

• Montvale — 4 p.m. at the Montvale Train Station.

• Woodcliff Lake — 5 p.m. at Woodcliff Park.

Monday, Dec. 7

• Township of Washington — 5 p.m. at Town Hall.

• River Vale — 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall for the Grand Chanukah Party.

Tuesday, Dec. 8

• Park Ridge — 5 p.m. at the Park Ridge Train Station.

• Allendale — 6 p.m. at Borough Hall.

• Hillsdale — 6 p.m. at Veterans Park.

• Westwood — 6 p.m. at the Westwood Train Station.

Valley Chabad is based at 530 Chestnut Ridge Road in Woodcliff Lake.

For more information, call 201-476-0157 or visit valleychabad.org/chanukah.

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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. 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.

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*

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.



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Montvale students help power Newark turkey drive

The Mercy House, a ministry of the Archdiocese of Newark, distributed nearly 800 turkeys during its annual Thanksgiving Turkeys & Trimmings Distribution, held Nov. 17 in Newark, Nov. 18 in Elizabeth and Nov. 19 in Jersey City.

Each visitor received a turkey and a reusable bag filled with Thanksgiving side dishes, including stuffing, cranberry sauce, corn and green beans. Raffle winners took home new kitchen items, including a dinnerware set. Archdiocesan parishes, schools, individual donors and the Knights of Columbus supported the distribution with monetary and in-kind donations.

"The Mercy House has always given away turkeys for Thanksgiving, but it was especially necessary to do so this year because food prices are very high," said Cheryl A. Riley, director of The Mercy House. "Many of our clients would not have been able to celebrate without our help. Now, they can enjoy a nice holiday meal and give thanks for their blessings without worrying about expenses."

This year, students from St. Joseph Regional High School in Montvale helped Mercy House staff and volunteers distribute the turkeys in Newark. Turkeys that were not distributed at The Mercy House's three locations were sent to Grover Cleveland Elementary School in Newark and The Leaguers, Inc., a Newark-based social service agency.

The Mercy House will next hold its annual Christmas Gift Distribution on Dec. 16 in Elizabeth, Dec. 17 in Jersey City and Dec. 22 in Newark. All are welcome to donate new, unwrapped toys for children ages 1 to 17.

Contact Cheryl A. Riley at cheryl.riley@rcan.org to inquire about donating or volunteering. For more information about The Mercy House—which provides nonperishable food, clothing, baby supplies, furniture and support in finding employment and housing to anyone in need—visit www.rcan.org/mercy-house.



A student from St. Joseph Regional High School in Montvale (right) gives a turkey to a community member during The Mercy House's annual Thanksgiving Turkeys & Trimmings Distribution at its Newark location on Nov. 17.

(Photo courtesy of the Archdiocese of Newark/Sean Quinn)

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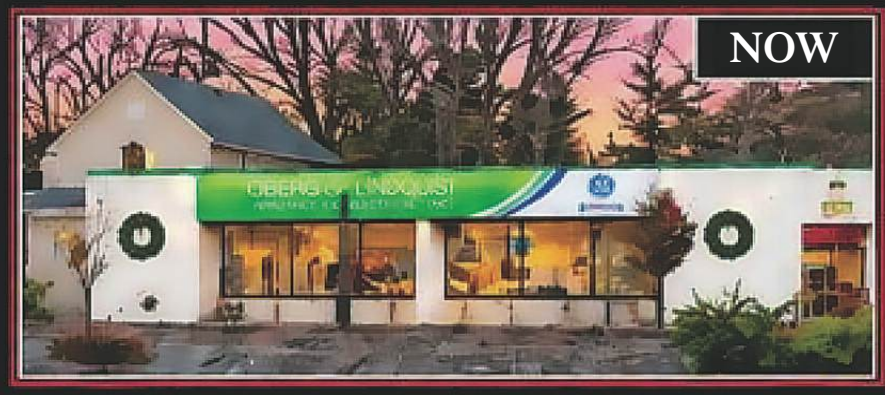

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Broadway Stars Return to Hillsdale, Delivering Christmas Magic

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



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Haring:

FROM PAGE 4

officials.

Misciagna said, "Most wars are fought by unnamed, young individuals like this gentleman. He's what most wars are fought by, 18-year-olds," noted the mayor. He said that Haring was "the original veteran, the first veteran in this town" and needs to be honored and shown "the respect he deserves.This is a big deal for me," said the mayor.

He joined the Revolutionary War as a 16-year-old, and Misciagna said Haring also helped to establish the Dutch Reformed Church.

Borough Clerk Maggie Giandomenico said a new gravestone was recently ordered and asked residents who wish to support the effort to honor Haring to make a donation to help offset the new headstone expense, estimated at $2,400.

She said checks could be mailed or dropped off at Borough Hall, 53 Park Avenue, and advised residents to write "Peter G. Haring Memorial" on the check's memo line. Giandomenico can be reached at clerk@parkridgeboro.com.

As part of the nation's 250th anniversary celebration in 2026, Park Ridge noted the initiative to honor Haring "reflects the Borough's commitment to preserving local history and recognizing the contributions of those who helped secure our nation's independence," Giandomenico told us.

According to local historian Kristin Beuscher, Peter G. Haring was born on June 1, 1760, and served as a Private in Captain Abraham Haring's Company of the Bergen County Militia during the American Revolutionary War. Like many local residents of that time, he played a role in the fight for American independence while serving in the militia here in Bergen County.

Following his military service, Haring returned to civilian life and became an important member of the early Pascack Valley community. He was a husband and the father of eleven children, helping to raise his family and shape the community during its early generations. He passed away on October 28, 1818, and was laid to rest at the Pascack Reformed Church Cemetery in Park Ridge.

Recognizing the importance of preserving his legacy, Misciagna met with Ryan O'Hara, Commander of Cpl. Jedh C. Barker Memorial American Legion Post 153, Borough Historian Ralph Donnell Jr., American Legion Liaison Councilman Robert Metzdorf, and members of Borough staff to discuss the condition of Peter Haring's gravesite and explore ways to appropriately honor his service.

Misciagna added in a statement, "This project represents more than the replacement of a gravestone. It is an effort to ensure that future generations understand that an individual who lived in the Pascack Valley, raised a family, and served during the fight for our nation's independence is buried within our community. Peter G. Haring remains an important part of the history of Park Ridge and the greater Pascack Valley, and his contributions deserve to be remembered."

Misciagna said that the borough hoped to honor another Revolutionary War veteran, Jacob Wortendyke, at a future event. The borough recently received a $175,000 county Open Space grant for planning and restoration of Wortendyke Homestead, a circa 1750s Dutch-style homestead, and in 2025 received a $232,000 county Open Space grant to support its acquisition. The Wortendyke Homestead is at 12 Pascack Road.

For additional information on Peter G. Haring, search our online story archives at thepressgroup.net.

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FOREVER YOUNG TO RING IN NEW YEAR WITH OLD FAVES

— Advertisement —

SADDLE BROOK — Forever Young will play doo-wop and other favorites from the 1950s, '60s and '70s at a New Year's Eve party at the Marriott Hotel, 138 New Pehle Ave. The party is open to the public and runs from 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 31, to 1 a.m. Friday, Jan. 1, 2027.

Formed more than 20 years ago, the six-member band plays more than 70 shows a year in Bergen and Rockland counties and beyond. Forever Young has opened for the Persuasions and the Tokens, known for "The Lion Sleeps Tonight."



Last year's party sold out, according to organizers. For reservations, call 201-707-8061.





Stars:

FROM PAGE 12

the stage.

Joining Ciarán this year are acclaimed tenor and Broadway performer John Cudia, distinguished Broadway actress and singer Kathy Voytko, talented pianist and singer James Gregory, and celebrated violinist and Irish fiddler Heather Bixler.

Together, these exceptional performers promise an unforgettable afternoon filled with beautiful music, cherished memories, and Christmas cheer.

"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.

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to welcome the Christmas season with an afternoon of Broadway's finest voices, beautiful music, and the joy of community!

Montvale:

FROM PAGE 4

Valley Road.

Parks and open space. An $80,704 Bergen County Open Space grant will fund work on Memorial Drive and at Fountain and Railroad parks, including sidewalk improvements, replacement pavers, benches and picnic tables. At Huff Park, a new shade structure is being fabricated. The borough secured a $78,000 matching grant for that project.

Montvale has also applied for a $251,018 grant to develop a pocket park near the train station. The proposal calls for playground equipment, fencing and a rubberized play surface.

Sewers and stormwater. Following sewer inspections in the Valley View and Huff Terrace pump station area, the borough is identifying sections that need repairs or relining to keep groundwater from seeping into the sewer system. Officials are developing a five-year capital plan and exploring financing through the state Department of Environmental Protection.

The borough has submitted the first phase of its watershed improvement plan to the department for review. Ghassali said work on the next phase will follow state approval.

Montvale is also revising its tax maps in response to state comments ahead of a municipal property revaluation.

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SPECIAL #3 (FEEDS 20-25) $499.00
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Holiday Wreaths for our Heroes' set for Dec. 6

PARAMUS — The Bergen County Chiefs Foundation will present a wreath to each Bergen County municipality during its annual "Holiday Wreaths for Our Heroes" ceremony at 10 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 6, at the Paramus Veterans Home.

The ceremony remembers more than 80,000 deceased veterans across Bergen County and honors all who have served, according to Emerson Police Chief Mark F. Savino, the foundation's chairman.

For more information, visit bcpcf.org.

Christ Lutheran Church to host programs on aging in place, brain health

WOODCLIFF LAKE — The Rev. Marc A. Stutzel will host two programs at Christ Lutheran Church, 32 Pascack Road. Reservations are required for both.

On Monday, Nov. 30, from 3 to 4 p.m., physical therapist Tracey Kristein will present "It Starts at Home," a room-by-room look at changes that can make homes safer and everyday tasks easier. Kristein, a certified aging-in-place specialist and founder of Better Home Better Life, will use photographs and examples from her work.

On Thursday, Dec. 3, from 5:30 to 7 p.m., Marymae Henley, a clinician with the Clinical Research Center of New Jersey, will lead the final session in a three-part series on brain health. She will discuss medications, the benefits and limitations of blood testing, how clinical trials work and resources for people affected by Alzheimer's disease or other cognitive disorders. Community educator Terry Ciulla sponsors the session.

Refreshments will be served at both programs. To reserve a spot, call the church office at 201-391-4224 or email office@clc4u.com.



Lookin' good! Members of American Legion Post 162 and the Sons of the American Legion on post beautification detail. *Courtesy photo.*

Westwood rings in 2027 with 6 p.m. ball drop

Families can count down to 2027 before bedtime at Westwood's eighth annual early New Year's Eve celebration, set for 5 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 31, at Veterans Park in downtown Westwood. The free event, organized by Celebrate Westwood, will feature music and a countdown as an illuminated ball is lowered at 6 p.m. All ages are welcome. Those planning to shop or dine downtown before or after the celebration should check holiday hours and restaurant reservation requirements. For updates, follow Celebrate Westwood on Facebook or Instagram or visit celebratewestwood.org. Prospective sponsors and volunteers can email celebratewestwood@gmail.com.

Legion members spruce up Hillsdale post

Members of American Legion Post 162 and the Sons of the American Legion cleared leaves and tended to the post grounds Saturday, Nov. 21,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

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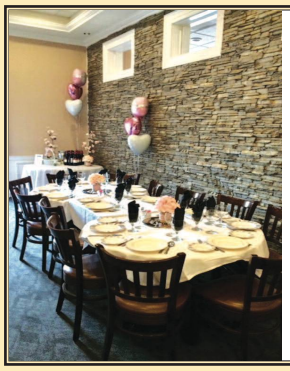

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FROM PAGE 16

ahead of Thanksgiving. The post serves Hillsdale, Woodcliff Lake and Old Tappan. Legionnaires and Sons members wished all a happy Thanksgiving.

Women's Bible study meets in Hillsdale and online

Community Bible Study invites women of all ages to join its weekly interdenominational program, which combines personal Bible study, small-group discussions, lectures and fellowship. Participants can attend in person Wednesdays from 9:15 to 11:15 a.m. at Pascack Bible Church, 181 Piermont Ave., or online Tuesdays from 7 to 8:15 p.m. The program runs through May 19, 2027.Call Manda at 201-967-9343.

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.

Admission is free. To reserve a seat, call the church office at 201-261-9452.

Westwood Senior Fellowship Club Holiday Luncheon Dec. 8

The Westwood Senior Fellowship Club Holiday Luncheon is set for Dec. 8 at Armando's Tuscan Grill, 688 Westwood Ave. #2, River Vale. Doors open at 11:30 am; lunch starts at noon.

Westwood Senior Fellowship Club president Mary Cerrati says, "At your pleasure bring your own beverage. Merry Christmas to all and healthy New Year."

PASCACK VALLEY

Can't get out to Giulio's Restaurant? Prepare its signature dish at home

Giulio's Restaurant meets a full array of dining and entertaining needs. Giulio's welcomes walk-ins, but takes reservations and offers takeout.

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Enjoy making our Signature Dish at Home!

Salmon Giulio stuffed with crabmeat

What you'll need:

- 10 oz. Salmon Filet
- 3 tbs Colossal Crabmeat
- 1 tsp. honey mustard
- Dash of honey & balsamic vinegar
- 1 pepper diced
- Stalk celery diced
- Salt & pepper to taste

What to do:

Slice Salmon down center (lengthwise). Dice up peppers & celery add salt and pepper to taste.

Add honey mustard mix together w/crabmeat. Stuff in center of salmon. Cook 10 minutes at 375 degrees Fahrenheit.

Drizzle with a dash of honey & balsamic vinegar dressing

- Buon Appetito!

Giulio's Restaurant is located at 154 Washington Street, Tappan N.Y. Open 7 days a week for lunch and dinner.



Salmon Giulio stuffed with crabmeat

Visit Giulio's website for its menu and so much more: giuliosrestaurant.com.

For reservations, takeout, catering, and more, call (845) 359-3657.





Gold:

FROM PAGE 1

than a decade earlier, he and Marc's wife, Salma, had played doubles together in several tennis tournaments.

In July, Low and Goldstein were the only team in their age and skill division at the New Jersey Amateur Pickleball Championships. They went 2–4 in a combined bracket. Their division medal qualified them for Dallas, where, Low said, the gold meant more because they'd earned it against their peers.

Dallas was Low's hometown. The day before the tournament, Low and a high school friend he'd known for nearly 60 years took Goldstein sightseeing. They drove about an hour to introduce him to Buc-ee's, then stopped at Ten50 for Texas barbecue.

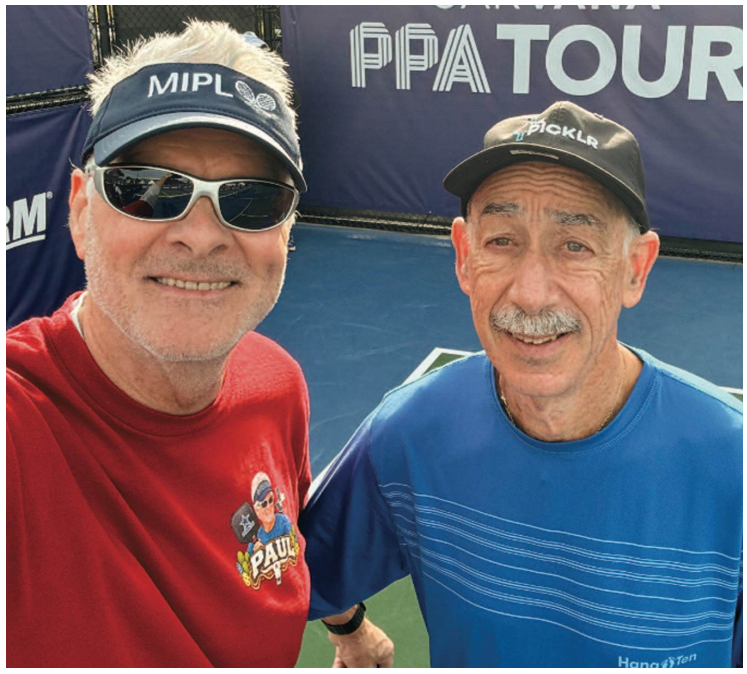
On the court Sunday, the partners' closest call came in their second match. They won the first game 11–8. In the next, Low began to wonder if they'd get "pickled" — lose without scoring a point. They managed one, lost 11–1, then came back to take the deciding game 11–3.

They won their final match 11–7, 11–1. Low's high school friend, who'd watched the pros with him earlier that week, took photos of the two partners on the medal stand.

Back in the good old Garden State, Low said, Goldstein thanked him for "one of the most enjoyable and memorable weekends of my life."







Paul Low, 73, of Montvale, and Marc Goldstein, 77, of Franklin Lakes, won gold Nov. 8 in amateur men's doubles for ages 70–79 at the 3.0 skill level at the Opendoor Pickleball World Championships near Dallas, Low's hometown. The day before the tournament, Low and a high school friend he'd known for nearly 60 years took Goldstein sightseeing

— Photos courtesy Paul Low



Chef brings taste of 'The Nutcracker' to author events in Montvale

Alexis Sicklick once danced as a snowflake in "The Nutcracker." Now the chef, who grew up in Woodcliff Lake, recreates that snowfall with white chocolate shaved over almond eggnog granita. She calls the dessert "Let Them Eat Snow!" Sicklick will share samples from her cookbook, "This Cookbook Is for Dancing: A Taste of The Nutcracker," at four free tastings in December, including two in Montvale. Drop in!

Meet the chef:

• Tuesday, Dec. 1, noon–3 p.m. — The Depot, 22 Prospect St., Midland Park.

• Thursday, Dec. 3, 2:30–6:30 p.m. — Williams-Sonoma, 410 Market St., Unit 6341, Montvale.

• Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2–3 p.m. — The Ridgewood Y, 112 Oak St., Ridgewood.

• Thursday, Dec. 10, 7–8 p.m. — Montvale Public Library, 12 DePiero Drive, Suite 100, Montvale.

— For more on this story, visit thepressgroup.net

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Retirement income threats — how to respond?



ERIC KOHLMEIER

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When the daily news is filled with discussions about inflation, interest rates, market volatility, and endless other angst-producing events, how you react could make a difference in your financial outcomes. These tips may help you sort through the noise and create an action plan that fits your situation.

1. Evaluate. Do you have a current retirement income plan that you have been following? If your plan is documented, it is likely that it includes how much cash flow you need to meet your day-to-day expenses as well as for discretionary spending. Pull out your plan and take a look to determine where adjustments might be applied.

If you do not have a plan or it has not been updated to reflect your current circumstances, document your assets, income sources, expenses, and debt. Gathering all the information in one place helps clearly define your total money picture. In the process, you may uncover expenditures that can be reduced or eliminated. A few adjustments may be enough to reduce the pressure on your income flow.

2. Retain or adjust If your plan is addressing your current needs, it can be reassuring to confirm that your plan is working as you had expected.

If your income needs no longer match your income plan, depending on your circumstances, there are actions you may want to consider to get your plan on track. These may include:

• Altering your withdrawal strategy to change the amount in taxes you pay on your retirement income to give you greater spending power

• Reallocating your assets or temporarily reducing withdrawal amounts to address any concerns about drawing down your investments in a down market

• Including inflation-indexed investments or other income-generating strategies in your portfolio

• Adding an annuity with income protection, which may help ensure an income stream that lasts for life, even in the event of poor market performance. A variety of annuities, such as variable annuities, registered index-linked annuities (RILAs), fixed and fixed indexed annuities, and immediate annuities, may provide income protection. One of these products may be appropriate for a portion of your assets, depending on your specific needs and risk tolerance.

Your advisor can help you explore how alternatives such as these may fit into your strategy. Indeed, both your tax advisor and financial advisor can be helpful partners in assessing your situation.

3. Periodically revisit and adjust again, if needed. Regular reviews of your income flow and income strategy are helpful to identify if changes are needed in your strategy or to confirm that things are working as planned.

These are just a few examples of changes that could help your retirement income deliver on your strategy. Contact your financial advisor and legal and tax advisors to review your specific situation and help address your changing needs.

Annuities are offered by prospectus. Please consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses carefully before investing. The prospectus, which contains this and other information, can be obtained by calling your financial advisor. Read it carefully before you invest.

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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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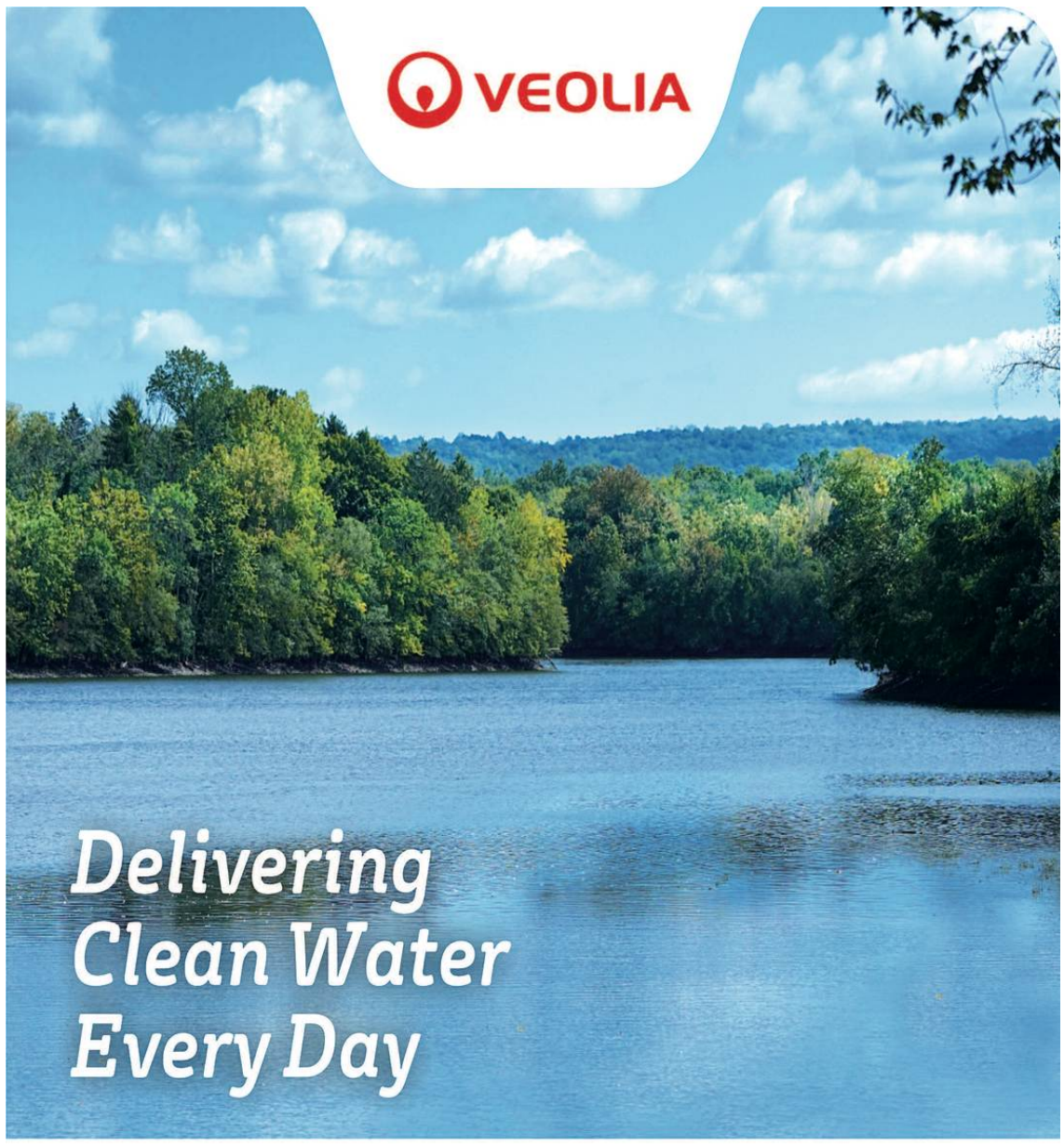

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Health, Wellness & Fitness Guide



Finish the year strong — with the gift of better health



BOOST YOUR BRAIN POWER

By Dr. Eric Kaplan, DC, DACNB, FACFN, FABVR

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DECEMBER is here. Before we start making New Year's resolutions that last approximately as long as a Christmas cookie, let's give ourselves a little credit. A walk around the block counts in December. So does making the doctor's appointment you've been putting off. And you can enjoy the cookie.

Heart disease and cancer were the two leading causes of death in the United States in 2024. According to final figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease accounted for 683,491 deaths and cancer for 619,876. Those are big numbers. For any one of us, a useful place to start is with a much smaller number: our own blood pressure. Do you remember yours from your last checkup? Did you understand what it meant or when to have it checked again? Those are good questions to bring to your next visit.

There are things we can do for our hearts in the meantime. Regular physical activity, avoiding tobacco and eating more vegetables, fruits and fiber-rich foods can help lower cardiovascular risk. Walk, swim, dance, ride a bicycle or lift weights. Pick something you enjoy enough to do again. Your heart does not care whether you wear expensive workout clothes.

Here's one way to make room for a walk in December: Invite the relative you never get enough time with. Once dinner is over and the leftovers are put away, take a turn around the neighborhood together. You might get more of a conversation in those 15 minutes than you did in two hours at a crowded table.

Give yourself the same latitude in the kitchen. If your family looks forward to a special holiday dish, enjoy making it together. For the ordinary Tuesday nights in between, keep something easy on hand. A can of beans, some frozen vegetables and yesterday's chicken can go into a pot of soup. Make enough for tomorrow's lunch, too. That's one less decision to make on a busy day.

December is also a good time to look back at the things you meant to follow up on this year. If your clinician recommended a cancer screening and the referral is still sitting on the kitchen counter, make the call. If you're unsure which screenings are appropriate for you, write that question down for your next appointment. Bring along any family health history you've learned since your last visit.

The same goes for prescriptions. If you've forgotten what a medicine is for, are having trouble taking it as prescribed or have noticed a possible side effect, tell your pharmacist or prescriber. Ask what to do before changing how you take it. A written list of your medicines and questions can make that conversation easier, especially when you're trying to remember everything in the few minutes you have together.

Finally, leave a little room in the holiday calendar. You can turn down an invitation, get to bed at your usual hour or call someone whose December is going to look different this year. If you're looking for a gift, an offer to drive someone to an appointment, bring over dinner or spend an afternoon together might be the one they remember.

At Kaplan Brain & Body, I'm offering quantitative electroencephalography, or qEEG brain mapping, for $21. The usual fee at my practice is $600. If you're interested, call the office to ask what the appointment includes and how you'll receive your results. Reach us at 201-261-2150 or info@kaplanbrainandbody.com. You can also visit kaplandc.com.

You can hear my radio program, Boost Your Brain Power with Dr. Eric Kaplan, Saturdays from 8 to 9 a.m. on AM 970 and from 2 to 3 p.m. on AM 710. My book, Boost Your Brainpower: A Guide to Improving Your Memory and Focus, is available on Amazon. You can also find me on social media at Kaplan Brain and Body.

Pick one thing you'd be glad to have done by New Year's Day. Put the appointment on the calendar. Ask someone to take that walk. Then enjoy the part of December you made time for.



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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By staying committed to an investment strategy, you can harness the power of compounding returns, which can help build wealth over time. The key is to remain focused on your goals, diversify your portfolio, and continue invest regularly, even when the market seems uncertain.

Remember, the best time to invest was yesterday, and the next best time is today.



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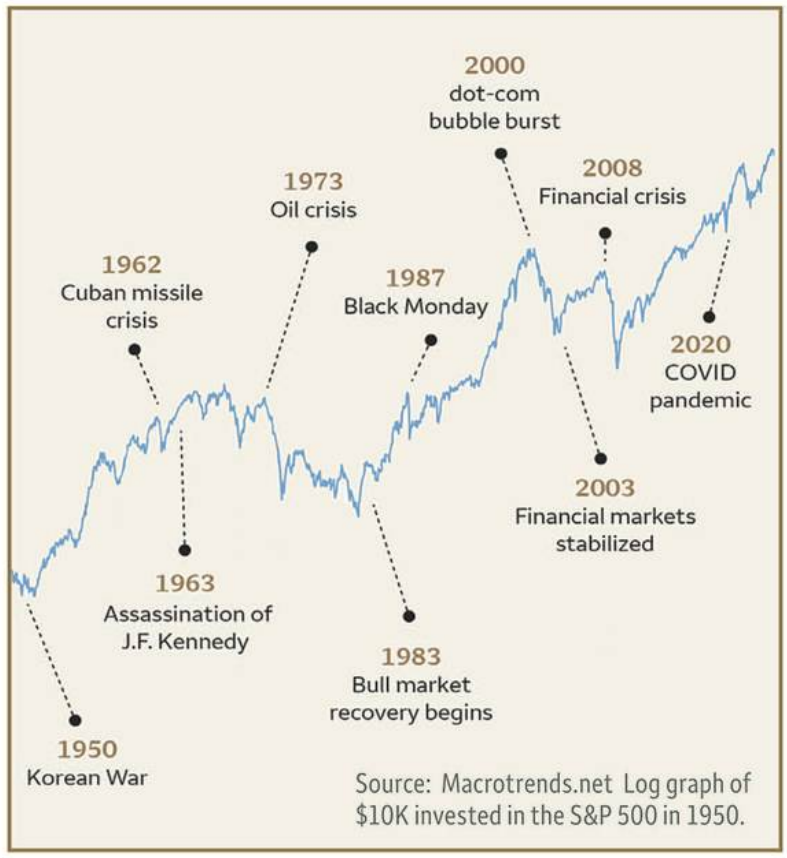

Source: Macrotrends.net Log graph of $10K invested in the S&P 500 in 1950.

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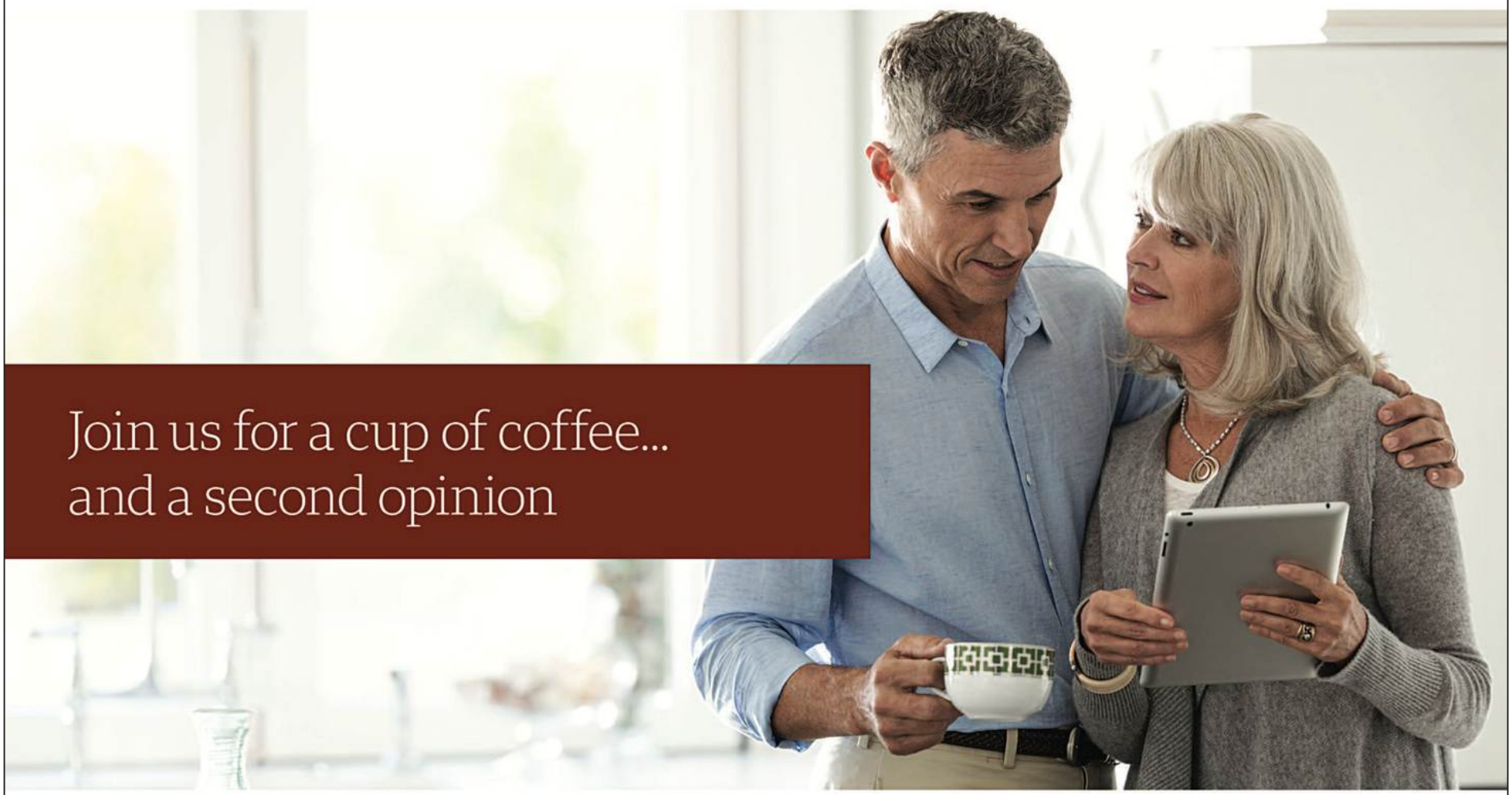

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By appointment, you're welcome to come in and sit with us for a while. We'll have a conversation and talk about your financial goals — what you'd like your investment portfolio to do for you. Then, we'll review the portfolio and discuss our thoughts with you.

If we think your investments are well-suited to your long-term goals, we'll gladly tell you so. If, on the other hand, we believe some of your investments may no longer fit with your goals, we'll explain why, using plain English. We will also recommend some alternative strategies for your consideration.

Either way, the coffee is on us!

For a free consultation, please contact my office at 201-505-0472 and let us know if you like milk or cream. Or, if you prefer, we will bring the coffee to you.



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Saturday nights at 'Cinderella' bring gifts for children, chance for tea with the cast

ORADELL — One child and up to five friends will have tea with Cinderella, Prince Charming and the Fairy Godmother as part of Bergen County Players' "Royal Saturday Nights" promotion. The company will present Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella Dec. 5–20 at the Little Firehouse Theatre, 298 Kinderkamack Road.



Each family ticket order for a 7:30 p.m. Saturday performance automatically enters the family in the drawing. Every child attending one of those performances will also receive a holiday gift at the door.

The company will select a winner at random and notify the family Dec. 20. The family and theater will choose a date for the private tea party, which will include refreshments, activities, storytime and photos with the three characters.

Performances are Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 3:30 and 7:30 p.m., and Sundays at 12:30 and 4 p.m. The show runs 100 minutes and is open to ages 3 and up. Audience members can meet the cast after every performance.

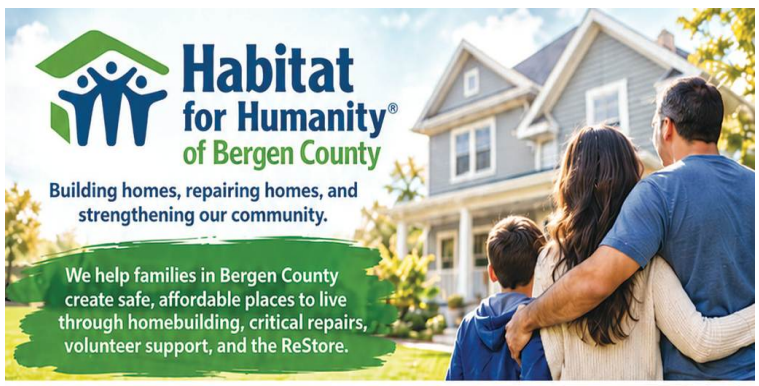






Tickets are $35 for adults and $21 for children and students ages 21 and younger with valid ID. To order, call 201-261-4200 or visit bcplayers.org. Online sales close two hours before showtime. The box office opens one hour before curtain.

— Richard Frant/ FrantVisuals LLC photos











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HILLSDALE

TRUSTEES OK $3.3M PAYMENT FOR GEORGE WHITE WORK

School trustees on Nov. 16 approved a ninth progress payment to Dobco Inc., totaling $3,302,518.13, for ongoing renovations and a six-classroom addition at George G. White Middle School.

The payment brings the total paid to the contractor to $21,180,634.79, Superintendent Robert Lombardy told Pascack Press.

Renovations are scheduled to be completed by September 2027, school officials have said.

Approved change orders total $5,068,735.01, increasing the original $33,557,000 construction contract to $38,625,735.01, Lombardy said.

That total includes a previously approved $3.5 million increase for additional work, including slab removal, and an accelerated construction scheule.

Trustees approved the $3.5 million increase in late March. Officials attributed the additional costs to unanticipated work and efforts to recover time following what they described as a 91-day delay involving a local construction official's review of building specifications.



Hillsdale BOE President Kevin Donatello welcomes school trustee Kimberly Dowling at the board's Nov. 10 meeting. Dowling replaces Justin Saxon, who resigned and moved out of the district. *Photo: Mike Olohan*

See "$3.5M increase on George G. White School overhaul — trustees approve 10%-plus boost as catch-up," March 29, 2026, at thepressgroup.net.

The latest payment covers work from Oct. 1 through Oct. 31 and was reviewed by construction manager Epic Management Inc. and project architect BWS Architects.

The board unanimously awarded the original construction contract on Sept. 26, 2025, to Wayne-based Dobco, the lowest of 10 bidders. The project includes a full-scale renovation of the century-old school and construction of the addition.

The Nov. 16 meeting also marked newly appointed trustee Kimberly Dowling's first meeting since her selection to replace board Vice President Justin Saxon, who resigned after moving out of town.

— Staff writer Michael Olohan

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‘Jingle Bells’ by choir, band, and bagpipe

■ *Westwood’s Home for the Holidays starts with carols at the library and winds up with jazz at the community center*

BY JOHN SNYDER
EDITOR@THEPRESSGROUP.NET

WESTWOOD

You can hear “Jingle Bells” at least three ways in Westwood on Saturday, Dec. 5. The Westwood Regional High School Chamber Singers have it on their program at the library. The high school marching band will tuck it into a medley on Westwood Avenue. The third version should be easy enough to pick out. That’s the one on bagpipes.

The singing starts at 4:30 p.m. at the Westwood Public Library, 49 Park Ave., where families can drop in for a children’s craft at 3:15 and a reading with Mrs. Claus at 4. No registration is required.

The Chamber Singers are a select group of 26 students in grades 10 through 12. Along with “Silent Night” and “O Holy Night,” they’re bringing a piece listeners might not expect at a holiday parade warmup: Michael John Trotta’s “Dies Irae.”

Director Joseph Fritz said the dissonant harmonies and driving rhythms demand precision from the singers. He chose it in part for the chance to let students “explore the dramatic intensity and expressive possibilities of choral music.” It’s also a preview of the high school’s winter choral concert, set for 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9, in Campbell Auditorium.

Downtown, five dance troupes and a martial arts demonstration are on the bill for the 5:30 p.m. preshow at Center Avenue and Broadway. For those watching from home, WTV, the high school television crew, begins its livestream at the same hour.

The parade steps off at 6 p.m. on Westwood Avenue, rain, snow or shine. This year’s theme is “Stars, Stripes & Holiday Lights,” and Westwood Regional’s marching band has the lights covered.

“The town always looks great during this parade, and the students really enjoy getting into the spirit of the night by decorating their instruments with lights and more!” Dan Peña, who teaches instrumental music at the high school, told Pascack Press.

Peña’s students are preparing Leroy Anderson’s “Sleigh Ride” and “Christmas Carols on Parade,” the medley that puts “Jingle Bells” in the company of “Joy to the World” and “Jolly Old St. Nicholas.” The Emerson Marching Cavos and Park Ridge Marching Band will be on the avenue, too.

The bagpipes belong to the Police Pipes and Drums of Bergen County, made up of law enforcement officers and career firefighters who live or work in the county. Tim Barrett is the band president. On the street, he said, Pipe Major John “Johnny Mac” McMorrow leads the way.

The St. Patrick’s Day parades keep the band busy in March. For Westwood in December, the pipers have “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” “The Little Drummer Boy” and “Auld Lang Syne” in their repertoire. And if you miss a favorite along the route, you may get another chance. Barrett said the band will play at Five Dimes Brewery and P.J. Finnegan’s after the parade.

More than 50 local organizations, businesses and youth groups will take part. Look for a USO float for the Sgt. Christopher Hrbek Scholarship and for Santa, whose ride through downtown on a Westwood fire truck dates to the 1960s. The tree and menorah lighting and photos with Santa follow in Veterans Park.

There’s one more stop for music, this one indoors. The Westwood Community Band Jazz Ensemble plays its Home for the Holidays concert at 8 p.m. at the Westwood Community Center, 55 Jefferson Ave.

Follow the fun

To view the parade poster and map, visit facebook.com/westwoodnjrec or westwoodnj.gov/recreation.

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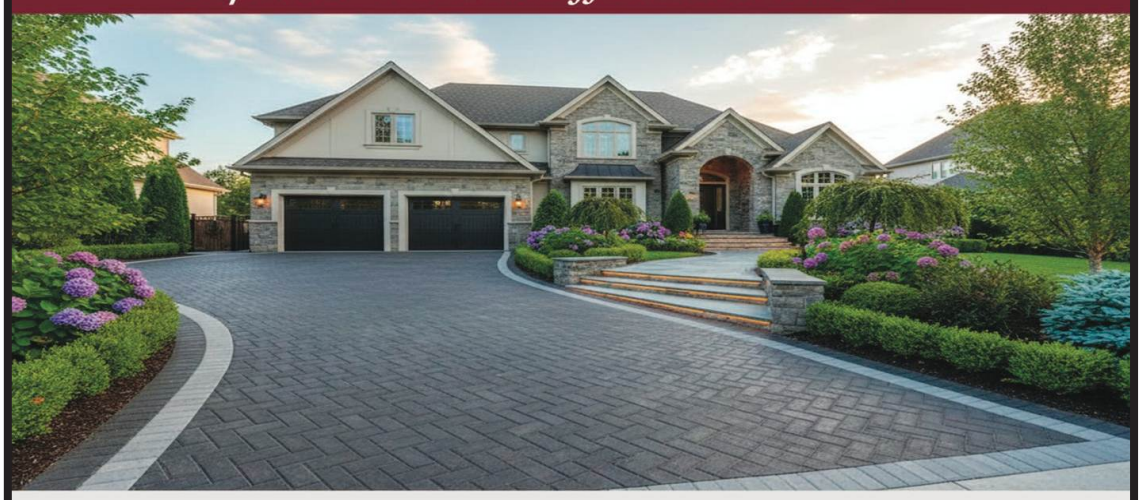

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Scouts team up on lasagna gifts

Park Ridge Girl Scouts assembled more than 60 lasagnas for the Tri-Boro Food Pantry and the Parkside Food Pantry, each with a handmade note from a Scout.

The Scouts also collected leftover candy and packed it into goody bags to go with the lasagnas.

"It takes a village, and we had a great one this weekend to help out in our community!" wrote Carrie Rauschenberger of the Park Ridge Girl Scouts.









Park Ridge scouts prepared more than 60 lasagnas for two local food pantries, adding a handmade note to each one. *Courtesy of Park Ridge Girl Scouts*

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Reliance Gold Buyers attributes its years of success to professionalism, dedication, honesty, integrity and teamwork.

"With the volatility of precious metals, a concern of many customers, we always offer the highest prices because we understand the importance of a good reputation and repeat business," explained RGB's owner.

The family-owned and operated company's team includes fourth-generation jewelers, fine art specialists, watch repair specialists, diamond experts, numismatists and philatelists—specialists in coins and stamps.

Located at 34-10 Broadway in the heart of Fair Lawn, Reliance Gold Buyers purchases unwanted jewelry, coins, stamps, currency, diamonds and platinum.

The company's buying process involves three steps: testing, weighing and determining a cash value.

First, jewelry is tested using a Thermo Fisher XRF precious metal analyzer. For coins, the company uses a precious metal verifier.

"We think we have state-of-the-art technology to assess your valuables and give you the best price. There is no guesswork involved," said Rosey.

The company also uses a testing plate and nitric acid as additional checks. Next, pieces are weighed using New Jersey-certified scales. Finally, a cash value is determined and payment is made in cash.

Rosey recalled a customer who brought in a necklace she believed



was worth about $40. According to Rosey, the company's testing identified it as 14-karat gold, and the customer received $3,000.



"She was delighted because she thought her necklace was only worth $40," Rosey said.

Reliance also offers house calls and gold parties. A customer invites friends, family and coworkers to their home, where an RGB staff member evaluates and purchases gold and silver for cash on the spot. Reliance also provides food and drinks.

These gatherings offer another way to bring unwanted jewelry and precious metals to the company's attention, with evaluations and purchases conducted in the host's home.

Whether visiting the store or arranging a gathering, customers can turn to Reliance Gold Buyers to sell unwanted valuables.

Reliance Gold Buyers is located at 34-10 Broadway, Fair Lawn. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and by appointment.



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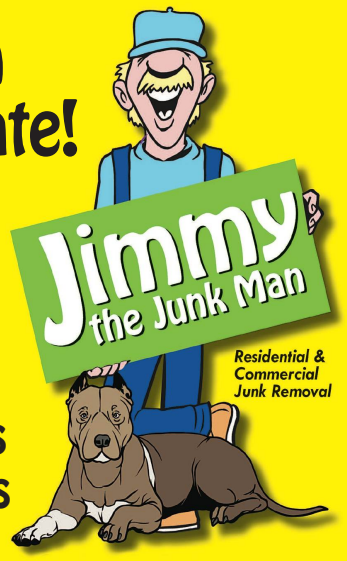

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