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Kean loses right of first refusal In ongoing Merck property legal battle, court rules against university

By Cheryl Hehl
Staff Writer

UNION — Late Monday a Superior Court judge ruled Kean University has no legal claim to the right of first refusal on 50-acres of Merck property fronting Morris Avenue.

This means the developer who was negotiating last year with Merck to buy the property can move forward with his attempt to purchase the parcel of land.

Throwing a wrench into things, though, is the fact there is a 45-day window for an appeal of the decision, although the court ruling makes it clear there is little room for discussion on the matter.

In the meantime, newly appointed Union Mayor Manuel Figueiredo implored university leadership “to move forward in adherence with the court’s decision and begin working in concert for the betterment of the university, township and county.”

“This decision by the Superior Court is a welcome relief to taxpayers throughout the township and county,” said the mayor. “These last months have been an unnecessary financial drain on Kean University, Union Township and Union County and it is very unfortunate that the bill for these frivolous claims has been fronted by taxpayers everywhere.”

“With the court decision we can begin to move forward with the land sale offer put forward by Russo Developers that will provide critical property tax relief for residents and remove a contentious legal hurdle from our ongoing relationship with Kean University,” Figueiredo said, adding the university has been suffering through “skyrocketing tuitions, plummeting bond ratings, drastic decreases in enrollments and the national press microscope brought on by the purchase of the \$219,000 conference table.”

“I am hopeful that today’s court decision will be instrumental in allowing Kean University to move forward with the land sale offer put forward by Russo Developers.”
— See KEAN, Page 4



File Photo

Kean University had been hoping its right of first refusal on an adjacent property would hold up, but a superior court judge ruled the school has no such right, opening the door for a private developer to purchase the land.

Nursing shortage raises patient care concerns at Runnells

By Cheryl Hehl
Staff Writer

Just one day after the county handed over Runnells Specialized Hospital to a private management company, 30 nursing assistants failed to show up for work and as a result patient care deteriorated quickly and the state is now monitoring the situation.

Things came to a head last week after complaints were filed with the state health department by families of both private pay and Medicaid patients. Since then the state agency that licenses, regulates and annually inspects nursing home facilities is continuing to closely monitor Runnells.

Monday the state provided an explanation for what took place since Dec. 16, filling in blanks that patient families were unaware had even transpired.

According to the state Department of Health Director of Communications Donna Leusner, the state first received complaints Dec. 29, and made an inspection of the facility the following day. Subsequent inspections were performed on Jan. 1, 2 and 5. Leusner said that as soon as Center Management was left without nursing staff they immediately “self-imposed or voluntarily” stopped all new admissions until the staffing issue was resolved. The state followed up Dec. 31, she said, with a formal order curtailing any new admissions.

‘During its final state inspection under county management prior to the sale, Runnells Hospital had received one of the highest ratings in recent history. Center Management received a pristine facility in the sale, and it is incumbent upon them to continue to provide a high standard of care to patients under their watch.’

— Sebastian D’Elia

The letter, which LocalSource obtained, pointed out that Runnells had stopped all admissions on their own but the state was formally backing that up until the staffing situation and patient care issues were resolved.

“This action is being taken as a result of a recommendation from Health Facility Survey and Field Operations to address serious deficiencies identified during the complaint investigation survey on Dec. 30, 2014,” the letter addressed to Runnells Administrator Michael Hotz indicated.

The stopping of all new admissions remains in effect until the state health department recommends Runnells is in compliance. Center Management Group is also entitled to a “prompt hearing” at the state Office of Administrative Law, if they wish to challenge any assessment of penalties.

The owners of the facility have 30 days to request such a hearing, but regardless of the outcome, Center Management Group could receive a penalty of up to \$2,500 for each day it is found violations pertaining to the care of residents were not corrected.

The facility could also receive fines of \$250 a day for each resident neglected as a result of the violations found by state health department investigation.

Leusner, though, said the state did not find any other significant violations and Center Management Group was working with the state to bring staffing back to normal.

“They are being cooperative and are trying to hire additional staff as quickly as possible,” the state health department communications director said.

Other sources connected to Runnells said Center Management had moved nursing staff from their Lincoln Park Facility and had hired 12 nursing assistants.

The county reacted to the situation at Runnells Tuesday with a statement.

“During its final state inspection under county management prior to the sale, Runnells Hospital had received one of the highest ratings in recent history. Center Management received a pristine facility in the sale, and it is incumbent upon them to continue to provide a high standard of care to patients under their watch. We are aware they are

See PATIENT CARE, Page 8



Care and giving at Overlook

Members of the Union County Coalition on Family Caregiving gather to make a donation to Overlook Medical Center's Thomas Glasser Caregivers Center in Summit late last year. The contribution will go toward services and supplies provided to caregivers who have hospitalized loved ones. The Caregivers Center offers a soothing environment where caregivers can relax, receive support and access helpful resources. The Coalition on Family Caregiving is a group of community-based organizations, businesses and individuals whose mission is to assist family caregivers by offering support, education and information on resources and services.

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Photo Courtesy of Jim Lowney/Union County

Freeholder Chairman Mohamed Jalloh was sworn into office on Sunday afternoon with his family, friends and dozens of local officials on hand.

County reorganizes for 2015

Jalloh is sworn in as chairman for 2015

By Cheryl Hehl
Staff Writer

Amid a sea of political dignitaries and over 200 people, Freeholder Mohamed Jalloh took the oath of office as the new chairman at the annual Union County Freeholders reorganization meeting.

The 158th reorganization meeting had the usual highlights, with honored guests and political supporters jamming into the Union County Courthouse to watch as Jalloh took the oath of office with his wife Maria and other family members by his side. This was followed by Freeholder Bruce Bergen being sworn in as vice-chairman.

Also sworn in for additional three-year terms on the board were Angel Estrada, former chairman Christopher Hudak and Vernell Wright.

The reorganization meeting had the usual highlights and pomp and circumstance, including speeches and presentations by Republican Congressman for the 7th District Leonard Lance, Democrat State Sen. Ray Lesniak and Republican Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, among others.

Jalloh, a resident of Union, reflected on a number of tough governmental decisions made by the board over the past several years because of the global recession, noting the county was rebounding and must continue to “play offense” through a series of strategic initiatives in the coming year.

“Those steps proved very effective and we have emerged a stronger county government because of it,” Jalloh said, adding, “It is time again for the county to focus on making the investments in our future that will help boost the economy and enhance the quality of life for our residents.”

The board chairman did not mention the sale of Runnells Spe-
See **JALLOH'S**, Page 6

Cryan officially takes over as county sheriff

By Cheryl Hehl
Staff Writer

Sunday, former undersheriff Joseph Cryan stepped down from his elected position as 20th District Democrat assemblyman to take the oath of office as Union County’s next sheriff.

The moment was bittersweet in many ways, not only because of the untimely death of former Sheriff Ralph Froehlich last summer, who he worked for as undersheriff, but also his late father, John, a former Essex County politician, assemblyman, undersheriff, sheriff and lifetime mentor.

At his swearing-in on Sunday, Cryan was flanked by his wife Kathy, who held the bible his hand rested on, son John and daughters Hannah and Katie. The former assemblyman was stoic as New Jersey Superior Court Judge Joseph Donohue administered the oath of office.

As a former state Democratic Party chairman and outspoken member of the Assembly budget committee, Cryan was known to use this political clout in Union to defeat challengers in Democratic primaries and local general elections. But his political power also holds considerable weight in other municipalities and throughout the state.

Prior to his death, Froehlich made it clear to LocalSource in an interview last February whom he would like to see step into his shoes.

The issue, while not on the table at the time, was brought up by Froehlich, who mentioned that should he ever retire or become ill, he would want Cryan as his successor. As the longest serving sheriff in New Jersey, Froehlich explained the only reason he was able to do the job he did at his age “was because Joe handles budgets and all the work behind the scenes flawlessly.”

See **CRYAN**, Page 6



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Jalloh's initiatives focus on the arts in 2015

(Continued from Page 3)

cialized Hospital as one of those steps, or that the county put \$26 million in its coffers as a result. Nor did he bring up the fact the county has been negotiating with Hudson County to possibly move all 700 adult inmates to their facility, which is underutilized.

Jalloh did, though, refer to what took place last year in Ferguson, Missouri and Staten Island, mentioning that "it is incumbent upon all of us as government leaders to assist in the effort to maintain or restore the bond of trust between our different communities and our police department."

Jalloh said in order to further this effort he initiated discussions with Democrat Assemblyman Jerry Green, also the Union County Democratic chairman, the Union County Prosecutor's office, the Sheriff's Office and county public safety director about initiating programs that could be offered at the Police Academy and through the county police.

"We want to raise the bar of tolerance and professionalism for those in the line of duty and in turn we hope to create an atmosphere of renewed respect that our officers deserve for making the ultimate sacrifice of putting their own lives on the line," the new freeholder chairman added.

Jalloh did not, however, bring up that the county was also involved in a similar incident at the county jail where an inmate died as a result of six jail guards restraining him and cutting off his airway. This alleged incident resulted in the filing of a civil lawsuit in Superior Court in mid-December.

The new board chairman did announce the formation of a new "street crimes unit" through the Sheriff's Department, which he said would focus on emerging public safety concerns. Jalloh also noted the county would be installing safety cameras in locations such as parks and the department of public works to deter crime. The county will also be continuing the successful gun buyback program, with another round coming in the summer.

Other initiatives involving the "Investing in Union County" initiative included a "road map to success," which will involve commissioning a report from the Bloustein School at Rutgers. This report will focus on examining trends in Union County's overall economy and finding strengths to focus resources on that ultimately have a positive outcome.

Jalloh did not, though, mention what this report would cost taxpayers, or when such results could be expected.

The new freeholder board chairman also mentioned that he will be focusing heavily on the arts. The "Build a Community of the Arts" initiative involves a set of initiatives that will build a county-wide "ecosystem."

This included an arts master plan, assisted by former Rahway mayor Jim Kennedy, who would be charged with cataloging the county's arts resources to determine how best to utilize, market and move forward with a plan for advancing the arts.

Also included was an effort to advance community theater through which the county will sponsor and promote five or more theater events at Union County Performing Arts Center. This program was designed to build on a recent success of the play "Rent," a pilot the county initiated in November through a partnership with UCPAC.

The county will also be forming a new partnership with Union County College to offer acting, dance and public speaking classes that will be open to all residents.

Another arts related initiative will involve covering traffic control boxes with the work of local artists which is specifically aimed at enhancing community arts and revitalization.

An arts education initiative will focus on yet another partnership with Union County College to expand a pilot program that tests high school juniors at the end of the school year to ensure they are prepared for college.

The "Families First" initiative includes a partnership with the United Way of Greater Union County, the Workforce Investment Board and County Department of Human Services. This initiative, Jalloh said, is geared to provide after school programs, workforce investment training and family support.

The new board chairman is also setting up a pilot program with Community Coordinated Child Care, also known as "the four 'C's,'" to serve families that do not meet eligibility for state subsidized child care. Jalloh said the county also will be working on a series of economic development and workforce initiatives, including a \$2.3 million expansion of the Union County Workforce Investment Board, an entrepreneurship training program to help those who want to start their own business, and the creation of a Union County economic response team to approach each municipality about their needs. This liaison, Jalloh explained, would open up a dialogue about sharing services, identifying opportunities and maximizing resources in order to spur economic growth.

Jalloh closed his speech by quoting President Barack Obama: "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek," he said.

"I look forward to working with my colleagues, county staff and members of the community to effect this change," the 2015 board chairman added.



Photo courtesy of Jim Lowney/Union County

Sheriff Joe Cryan is sworn in Sunday afternoon with his family at his side, and his wife holding the bible. Cryan takes the place of longtime Sheriff Ralph Froehlich, who died in office last year.

Cryan is sworn in as sheriff

(Continued from Page 3)

The former sheriff specifically said "when and if I can't do this job anymore, the only man I would trust to do it and do it right is Joe Cryan."

While Cryan's decision to run for sheriff came as a surprise to his political cronies and adversaries alike, he remained quiet about the decision. However, his life mirrors that of his father, almost eerily so. In 1965 Cryan's father ran for the assembly and won, serving until 1967 when he left for a position as undersheriff for Essex County.

Two years later he ran for sheriff and defeated his opponent, an incumbent. Although he died ten years ago, people still remember the elder Cryan, noting that he was "an institution."

On Sunday, many of his political constituents on both sides of the fence spoke highly of Cryan, and wished him well. However, there was no doubt his presence in the assembly would be missed.

"Union County's gain is certainly the legislature's loss," said Democrat State Sen. Nick Scutari, adding that Cryan was "a man of the people who speaks what he believes."

When it was his turn to speak, Cryan credited his father for "keeping me grounded in life," pointing out that he "blazed a big path."

"With new days and new changes and new leadership comes new vision," Cryan told those attending the ceremony, adding "and we in the Union County Sheriff's Office celebrate our success and want to build on it."

He also mentioned that this county department had already taken steps to review employees so productivity would increase, changes would be made to hiring practices and the office would begin using K-9 sweeps in county buildings.

"We want to create a culture of expectation of excellence," Cryan said, adding "we tried that and we have done that already."

Interestingly, while there were few Republican elected officials at the annual Union County reorganization meeting, Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick of the 21st legislative district, which overlaps into Union County, was one of the dignitaries invited to step to the podium to say a few words.

"I come here to congratulate the winners of the election because that is what we do in America. We recognize who won and then we support leadership and work together," he said, but added "those who want to divide us, they have no place in Union County. We work hard together, show respect for each other and show civility. That's what America is about."

Liberty Hall offers 'Frozen' and 'Downton' themed events

Liberty Hall Museum at Kean University may be closed to public tours throughout the winter season, but will offer a full slate of seasonal programming for all ages, highlighted by a Frozen-themed party for children on Jan. 24 and 31, and Feb. 7, and a Roaring Twenties-era Downton Abbey Luncheon for adults on Jan. 17, Feb. 21, and March 21.

"While Liberty Hall Museum is closed for public tours during the winter months, reopening April 1, we are open for special events and group reservations of 10 people or more," said Bill Schroh, Jr., Liberty Hall's Director of Museum Operations. "So now is a great time to grab a group of friends and schedule a private tour, or attend one of our many seasonal events. We're also offering 40 percent off your entire purchase at our museum store, which remains open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., for our very popular 'January Joy' sale."

Inspired by the Academy Award-winning animated film "Frozen," Liberty Hall's Frozen Ball, Saturday, Feb. 7 from 2 to 4 p.m., is recommended for children ages 3 to 10, and invites participants to dress up as their favorite character from the movie. While the museum's first two dates in January are currently sold out, reservations are still available for the Frozen Ball on Feb. 7. Admission is \$20 for one child and accompanying adult, and parents are strongly encouraged to call 908-527-0400 or email libertyhall@kean.edu as soon as possible to reserve.

"With the incredible success of the Disney movie "Frozen", we thought it would be fun to offer a family-friendly event celebrating the film during our coldest time of year," said Lacey Bongard, Liberty Hall's Coordinator of Museum Programs. "But we certainly never expected the overwhelming demand we've experienced. We are already offering a third date for the event, and can't wait to see all the excited children come out to make Frozen-themed crafts, enjoy our hot chocolate bar, and meet a very special guest."

Liberty Hall Museum will also unveil the newest iteration of its tremendously popular Downton Abbey Luncheon on Saturday, Jan. 17 from Noon to 3 p.m., with additional dates scheduled for Feb. 21 and March 21. A stylish buffet fit for the Crawley family themselves, the luncheon includes dessert, a selection of red or white wine, and an intimate, guided tour of the museum. The luncheons, conceived to emulate the tastes and atmosphere of each time period depicted on the show, have transitioned from evoking the Edwardian era to the Roaring Twenties.

"Liberty Hall is so excited that Downton is back on the air, and we're thrilled to be offering our infamous Downton Abbey Luncheons again," said Bongard. "To keep up with the show, we have added something new and fun to our luncheons this year; we'll be exploring how dining, fashion and music have evolved, as well as how upper-class Americans dealt with Prohibition."

Admission for the luncheons is \$55 per person, and reservations are required. Call 908-527-0400 or email libertyhall@kean.edu to reserve. Liberty Hall Museum's full event calendar can be found online at www.kean.edu/libertyhall.

'While Liberty Hall Museum is closed for public tours during the winter months, reopening April 1, we are open for special events and group reservations of 10 people or more.'

— Bill Schroh, Jr.

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The group will meet in Room 1-H in the school building, 110 Roosevelt Ave., Berkeley Heights. All are welcome to join the group; registration is necessary.

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Photo by David VanDeventer

Commuter's nightmare

A minivan takes it slow on Stuyvesant Avenue in Union as snow begins to blanket the heavily traveled street. Driving was a difficult process on Tuesday as snowfall accumulated significantly for the first time in the new year. Many commuters may have felt the sting of the winter weather on their way to work, as there were several accidents reported on the Garden State Parkway causing delays.

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OPINION

A new year to volunteer

It has been a week since New Year's Day and, already, many people have cast those New Year's resolutions by the wayside. Lose weight and start exercising? Maybe in the spring, or the fall, or let's just try again next year. That's probably the most popular resolution these days, one that involves self-improvement, but there are numerous others that we have all made more times than we can remember: This year, we are going to save more money. This year, we are going to clean out the garage or basement. This year, we are going to volunteer.

Volunteer? Why would we do that? There are more than enough volunteers, aren't there? In a word, no.

There is always a need for volunteers, and there are numerous reasons why the effort is worthwhile. Unfortunately, the Garden State isn't exactly overflowing with volunteers.

According to a federal study by the Corporation for National and Community Service, between 2011 and 2013, New Jersey ranked 45th out of the 50 states and District of Columbia, with only 22.4 percent of our state's population volunteering. Only residents of West Virginia, Arkansas, Florida, Nevada, New York and Louisiana volunteer less than we do, and this alone should motivate us to do more.

You can come up with reasons why we volunteer so little in New Jersey, such as the inordinate amount of commuting we do. But, in the end, it is up to us to find the time.

It's possible that some of our volunteer work slips through the cracks, as a survey for the Center for Non-Profits claims that 65.5 percent of New Jerseyans engage in informal volunteer work, compared to 62.5 percent nationwide. But if we're going to focus on numbers, New Jersey's millennial population ranks 49th in the nation, with just a 17.3 percent volunteer rate. So what should we do to make a change?

We should do the obvious: start volunteering. There are

EDITORIAL

numerous opportunities to volunteer. Union County CASA — Court Appointed Special Advocates — are volunteers appointed by judges to watch over and advocate for abused and neglected children, staying with each case until it is closed and the child is placed in a safe, permanent home. CASA volunteers are involved in the educational component of those in their care. The National Council of Jewish Women Outreach has numerous groups in its purview, including the American Cancer Society, in Springfield; Bridges Outreach, in Summit; the CARES Foundation, in Union; the Community FoodBank of New Jersey, in Hillside; and Homeside Hospice, in Clark; to name a very few.

New Jersey Courts, the website for the New Jersey judicial system, lists numerous programs in which one could volunteer in every county in the state. In Union County, this includes the Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns, the Child Placement Review Board, Courthouse Visitors Assistance, the Guardianship Mentoring Program, the Juvenile Conference Committee, the Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program and more. Each group meets different needs, but volunteers are always needed, so they will adjust their needs to fit your schedule.

The great thing about volunteering is that it lessens the cost of helping the community by not passing the bill on to the taxpayers. It also gives volunteers a greater sense of self-worth and a feeling of belonging.

There are numerous groups that need volunteers; just check in at your local town hall or house of worship and someone will be glad to provide you with a list and point of contact to find out more information. And don't forget your schools; volunteers are always being sought there, too, especially by the local parents' groups. Just remember, background checks are often required, especially when working with children, so allow time for this process.

Inching into the middle class

Brendan works part time at a Linden fast food place. He was one of an estimated 73,000 residents who saw their paycheck minimum wage rise from \$8.25 to \$8.38 an hour last week.

It may not be a big deal for most wage earners, but to quote Jon Whiten "It has helped low wage New Jersey worker's take home a little more pay, while improving the chances that those workers who are increasingly older and more educated can survive and begin to chart a course to the middle class."

There is also a modest bounce effort since it is estimated that 100,000 or so other workers who are just slightly above the minimum wage will also get a small bump upwards.

Whiten is an advocate for New Jersey Policy Perspective, which has led the charge for the increase. His group was in some part responsible for the support and passage of the amendment to the state constitution to tie minimum wage raises to the state inflation rate.

Placed under the category that for every action there is a reaction, the NJ Business and Industry Association, through a

LEFT OUT

BY FRANK CAPECE

spokesman, countered "How will business budget for an unknown amount of inflation each and every year?"

Stefanie Riehl, a Vice President at the trade industry, made a telling point.

"Where businesses can afford to pay workers they will pay more," she said. "No business wants to lose a good worker."

One Cranford waitress on occasion reminds "you have to learn to deal with reality."

With the complexity of the global economy, initial purchasing offers and technology eliminating jobs, the reality may be that labor has lost its bargaining power with management.

The argument about income disparity and the end of the middle class is gaining steam. It may be the national political issue of the next few years.

Joe Naroff, an economic adviser, says, "McDonald's may have minimum wage workers, but they also have a lot of low-income customers."

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Photo By Dave VanDeventer

SNOW WHERE TO GO — Union County saw its first significant snowfall of 2015, and many residents out on the road are probably hoping it will be the last. Temperatures warmed up last weekend for a day, but immediately plunged below freezing as the week began. Commuters were welcomed on their way to work on Tuesday morning by light but persistent snow showers.

Get 'Inspired' by county art display

The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders will present an exhibit of photographs by Agnieszka Solawa of Summit in the gallery space at the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, located in the historic St. John's Parsonage at 633 Pearl St. in Elizabeth.

A selection of her work entitled "Inspired" is on display at the Pearl Street Gallery through March 27.

Solawa was born in Krakow, Poland, where she grew up surrounded by art. Her mother was an artist and her father was chief architect of the city of Krakow and a professor at the School of Architecture. Agnieszka's family immigrated to South Africa to escape from communism. She earned a Diploma of Fine Art from the Pretoria and Cape Town Universities and a BA in Architecture from the University of Cape Town. In Paris, France, she studied Graphic Arts at the "Atelier 17." She later won a scholarship to study art and Italian language at the University of Urbino in Italy.

In 1987, Agnieszka Solawa moved to Summit, New Jersey with her husband Sam, who also is an architect and photographer.

Union County artists whose works can be hung on a wall and are interested in exhibiting in the gallery space are welcome to apply. For more information about the Pearl Street Gallery or other programs, please contact the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, 633 Pearl Street, Elizabeth NJ 07202. Free on-site parking is available. Telephone 908-558-2550. NJ Relay users can dial 711. Send E-mail to: culturalinfo@ucnj.org.

CRANFORD NEWS

Library looking for more 'Friends'

The annual membership drive of the Friends of the Cranford Public Library is under way.

Founded in 1979, the Friends of the Cranford Public Library support the library in dozens of ways, including sponsorship of the various film series, reading programs, discussion groups, readings and children's programs.

The Friends also purchase furniture and equipment for the library, fund an annual library studies scholarship, and fund the library's museum pass and book club programs. The Friends ask residents to support the library by becoming a member or by renewing membership for \$10.

Membership applications are available at the main desk of the library and can also be found at cranford.com/library/friends/applicationform.asp.

Theater Project to present reading of 'The Franklins of Pennsylvania'

The Theater Project will present a staged reading of a new play, "The Franklins of Philadelphia," by Michael McGoldrick on Saturday, Jan. 17, at 2 p.m. in the Cranford Community Center, 220 Walnut Ave.

Spanning a time period of more than 20 years, the play investigates the ideals that gave birth to our country, as well as analyzing the tortured interpersonal dynamics of one of the nation's founding families.

Following the reading, the play will be discussed by the audience, the director, the actors, and the playwright.

Admission is free and all are welcome.

For more information, visit cranford.com/library.

Book sale continues Jan. 8 and 9

The Friends of the Cranford Public Library's used book sale will be open during the following dates and times: Thursday and Friday, Jan. 8 and 9, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, Jan. 10, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Items for sale include adult and children's books, as well as CDs, DVDs, and recorded books. Prices range from 25 cents to \$2. Saturday is Bag Day; fill a bag with books for \$8.

The library is located at 224 Walnut Ave. Entrance to the sale is through the side door, just off the main parking lot. The sale is wheelchair accessible. Proceeds benefit the library.

Library has adult reading program set for this winter, begins Jan. 20

The Cranford Public Library announces its first Adult Winter Reading Program for adults 18 and older. The program will run for six weeks, from Jan. 20 to March 3. There will be weekly random drawings for prizes; and two grand prizes — \$75 gift certificates to the Cranford Theatre and the Il Gabbiano Restaurant — will be awarded at the end of the program. For questions about the program, call the library at 908-709-7272, or send an email to library@cranfordnj.org. The program is sponsored by the Friends of the Cranford Public Library.

Make a M.E.S.S., bring the whole family at the Cranford Library

The Cranford Library, 224 Walnut Ave., invites children to get their hands dirty at "Family M.E.S.S. — Math, Engineering, and Science Saturday" on Saturday, Jan. 10 at 11 a.m. in the Library's Raddin Room. Families will attempt hands-on experiments, solve problems, and have fun at this educational program, created for families with children between the ages of 2 and 10.

Registration is required; reserve a spot by calling or stopping by the library. Admission is free and all Cranford residents are welcome.

Readers' Forum has meeting dates set

The Readers' Forum, the book discussion group, now in its 22nd year, will meet in the library's Fridlington Room on the following Mondays at 7 p.m. to discuss the following titles:

- Jan. 26, "Loving Frank," 2007, by Nancy Horak;
 - Feb. 23, "Orange Is the New Black," 2010, by Piper Kerman;
 - March 23, "Kitchen House," 2010, by Kathleen Grissom;
 - April 27, "Americanah," 2014, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie; and
 - May 18, "The Circle," 2014, by Dave Eggers.
- New members are welcome at any time.

Four locals to be inducted into Union County Baseball Hall of Fame

The Union County Baseball Association will induct four new members into the Union County Baseball Hall of Fame and honor local student athletes for their achievements in 2014 at the 79th annual Hot Stove League Baseball Dinner on Sunday, Feb. 8. The event begins at 1 p.m. at the L'Affaire Banquet Center, 1099 Route 22 East, Mountainside.

The dinner is sponsored by the Union County Baseball Association, in cooperation with the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation. During the afternoon awards ceremonies, the UCBA will induct four new members into the

Union County Baseball Hall of Fame: Jorge Comas of Elizabeth, Barry Kaverick of Kenilworth, Richard McCormack of Elizabeth, and Jack Shaw of Roselle Park.

Roy White, former New York Yankees All-Star outfielder and two-time World Series champion, will be the special guest speaker. White played his entire Major League career with the Yankees from 1965 through 1979, compiling a .271 career batting average and a .360 on-base percentage. He led American League left fielders in fielding percentage for four consecutive seasons.

Since 1937, the Hot Stove League Dinner has been the

primary fund-raising effort for the Union County Baseball Association's summer and fall programs. The awards dinner has honored many local and national baseball luminaries, including Phil Rizzuto of Hillside, Don Newcombe of Elizabeth, Joe Collins of Union, Jeff Torborg of Mountainside, Willie Wilson of Summit, and Elliott Maddox of Union. Tickets for the dinner are \$45 each. Proceeds will help fund the Union County Summer Youth Baseball League for youngsters 8 to 15 years, and the Fall Teen League. Tickets are available at www.UCBA-NJ.org. For more information, call Jim Iozzi at 908-917-2523.

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THANKS FOR ALL THE HARD WORK — On Dec. 22, the Roselle Board of Education honored teacher Marcella McCarthy, who retired as a district elementary school teacher after serving for nearly 35 years. The board also recognized the career and retirement of Allen Jacobs, who served in the district as a special education teacher for more than 25 years.

ROSELLE NEWS

Roselle maintains its A+ bond rating

The Borough of Roselle has maintained its A+ bond rating for another year, with Standard & Poor's Rating Services affirming the municipality is on strong financial footing with a "stable outlook".

"In our view, residents benefit from the borough's participation in the broad and diverse New York City-Newark-Jersey City metropolitan statistical area; we view this as a credit strength," according to a recently-released Standard & Poor's report.

The credit agency noted the borough has available reserves of 6.4 percent of operating expenditures, as per the fiscal 2013 budget, with an estimated fund balance of \$1.6 million, or 4.2 percent of operating expenditures, at fiscal year-end 2014, which is considered "adequate."

"We expect Roselle to maintain its adequate financial performance," the report said. "Roselle has a stable revenue source with property taxes generating 75 percent of total general fund balance. Based on past debt issuance, we believe Roselle has strong access to capital markets to provide liquidity, if necessary."

Roselle Mayor Jamel Holley attributed the borough's strong bond rating to the work of the Borough Council and the municipal finance office, led by CFO Dorothy Gallagher, which consistently demonstrates careful, watchful spending.

"Our Administration treats the borough's finances with the same careful approach as a household budget," Holley said. "We don't spend money we don't have. And we don't spend money if we don't have to spend it. I appreciate that the credit agency continues to recognize our hard work on behalf of our taxpayers."

Roselle receives grant to bolster recycling

The Borough of Roselle received part of more than \$15 million in state recycling grants to help implement and enhance local recycling

efforts. The funds, based on 2012 recycling data, are being awarded through the state's Recycling Enhancement Act. Roselle received more than \$52,000 in the grants.

Nearly 20.2 million tons of solid waste (including construction debris and other types of non-MSW waste) were generated in New Jersey in 2012, of which 11 million tons were recycled. The overall waste generated and amount of materials recycled were impacted significantly by debris generated by Superstorm Sandy.

For more information on recycling in New Jersey, visit: www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/.

Free health screenings for Roselle residents

Trinitas Regional Medical Center and the New Jersey Cancer Education and Early Detection Program offer the following services to Roselle, NJ residents:

- Free Mammograms
- Free Pap Smears
- Free Prostate Screenings
- Free Colorectal Screenings

If you are uninsured or underinsured, and interested in these services, please call (908) 994- 8244 for an appointment.

Girls Leadership Institute comes to Roselle

The Girls Leadership Institute is bringing a Parent & Daughter Series workshop to Roselle starting Jan. 10 at Abraham Clark High School, 122 E. 6th Ave. Participate in a fun, engaging workshop, where parents and daughters will build a common language, practice healthy approaches to conflict, and learn authentic communications skills. Workshops will be open to the public and are limited to the first 15 adult/girl pairs. They will be offered for Roselle parents and daughters grades 2/3, 4/5 and 6/8.

Community grants available through Roselle; deadline Jan. 20

Applications are due at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 20, for local non-profit groups seeking to receive Community Development Enhancement Grants through the Borough of Roselle.

The new grant program, with awards beginning at \$500, is geared to support non-profit and faith-based organizations that are working to improve the quality of life in Roselle. The borough will assess how each applicant would serve residents, including children, seniors, people with disabilities, veterans and those with a lower income.

"We strongly encourage non-profit organizations to submit applications for this competitive grant program," said Roselle Mayor Jamel Holley, noting a committee of elected representatives and community leaders will closely review all applications and make careful decisions based on who "can do the most with the least" to help Roselle residents.

All grant awards must receive final approval from the mayor and council and are ultimately based on the availability of funds.

Applicants must fill out an application, and provide four additional copies, detailing how their projects support community-centered activities, help local children and families or create economic opportunities for Roselle residents. Applications should be mailed or dropped off at Borough Hall, 210 Chestnut St., to the attention of the Division of Economic Development in the Department of Administration.

Learn more by contacting the mayor's office at 908-245-5600.

Literacy New Jersey holding workshop

Literacy New Jersey's winter tutor training workshop will take place at the LNJ Union county office, 121-125 Chestnut St. in Roselle on Jan. 20, 22, and 29, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., with a class observation on Monday, Jan. 26.

Attendance is required at all sessions to become a certified tutor of both Basic Reading Skills and English as a Second Language.

Volunteers do not need to know a foreign language or have teaching experience, but must be at least 18 years old and able to speak, read and write English; willing to tutor in Union County; and commit to volunteering at least two hours per week for one year.

For more information about Literacy New Jersey, call 908-486-1777, send an email to vsimpson@literacynj.org or visit www.literacynj.org.

