

CLIFTON

Free, Please Take One

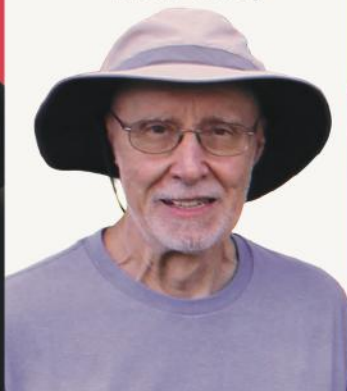


"To make a real difference in people's lives, while inspiring those around me to believe that anything is possible."

- Allison Rouse

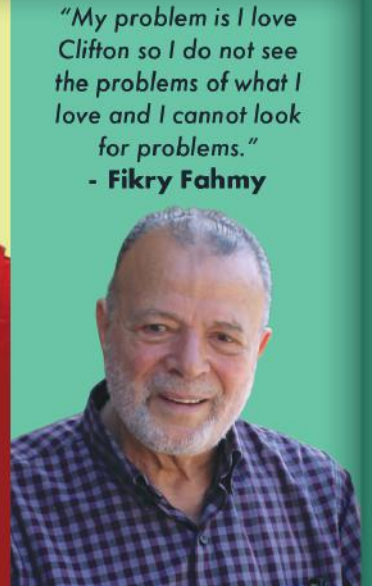
"Our kids had a very close relationship with their grandparents, because we all basically lived within three blocks of each other."

- Bruce Casey



"We like the access to parks, restaurants and shopping. We love the variety of places to go to and establishments to eat at."

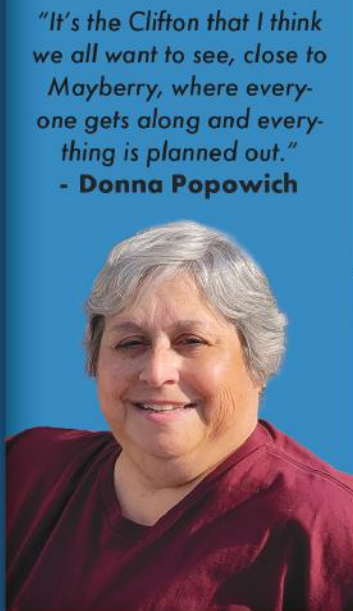
- Gina Saidi



"My problem is I love Clifton so I do not see the problems of what I love and I cannot look for problems."

- Fikry Fahmy

Voices OF THE CITY



"It's the Clifton that I think we all want to see, close to Mayberry, where everyone gets along and everything is planned out."

- Donna Popowich



"We live between two large urban towns but our crime rate is low. The bad guys know not to mess with Clifton Police."

- Mustafa Bayram



"My favorite parts of Honors and AP Chemistry were the lab experiments... which solidified my choice to enter the STEM field."

- Nadine Judeh



"Clifton is transforming. We're a huge city and have to change the way we do things. Part of that is having new leaders."

- Alias Ragsdale

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#1^{*} In the State of New Jersey

THEY DON'T CALL ME THE KING OF CLIFTON FOR NOTHING

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Mahmoud Ijbara
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“The problem is not that we’ve forgotten how to agree; the problem is we’ve forgotten how to disagree.”

—Yuval Levin, Constitutional scholar and author



From the **Editor**, *Tom Hawrylko*

Our City That Cares has become the city that is angry. Council meetings have turned into verbal slugfests. Online posts are often mean and prone to bend facts. Politicians and civilians like to talk but it seems not too many speakers truly engage, listen and respond productively. Compromise seems to be a dirty word.

Is there a way that we can talk about the way we talk?

The day after Charlie Kirk was murdered, I read Utah Gov. Spencer Cox comments as he spoke to the young people of our nation: “You are inheriting a country where politics feels like rage. It feels like rage is the only option,”

A Republican, Cox’s encouraged young people to “choose a different path,” referencing a comment Kirk made before his death about how society has to get back to having “reasonable agreement where violence is not an option.”

Impressed by his speech, his persona and attitude, I read more about Cox and found that as chair of the National Governors Association in 2023, he launched Disagree Better. “When leaders from both parties engage one another with respect and genuine curiosity,” the website stated, “they reflect the best of who we are and remind us what’s possible when we do the same.”

Disagree Better became a reality. Twenty-three governors from both parties joined. They didn’t agree on everything. Instead, they showed it’s possible to stand firm in your beliefs and treat each other with dignity and respect.

Disagreeing better isn’t just about being nicer to one another—it’s about finding a way to disagree that moves us toward solutions rather than deepening divides.

What started as one governor’s nonpartisan idea has grown into something much bigger. Now an independent nonprofit, Disagree Better is spreading across America through local and national partnerships and the sharing of ideas we do at this magazine. Perhaps Disagree Better will find its way to the next city council meeting.

As you read this month’s edition, hear the positive and constructive voices of our neighbors. My staff and I are pleased to also interview and present profiles of candidates for various offices, to give them an opportunity to share their voices about Clifton’s future.

November’s edition will continue this theme, asking readers “What are you thankful for?” Send your name to cliftonmerchant1288@gmail.com and we’ll call you to talk. We’d love to share your thoughts and opinions.



Clifton Merchant Magazine
CLIFTON
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A resident since 1997, Mustafa Bayram attended WWMS and CHS. Today he owns a mortgage brokerage in Downtown Clifton.

Mustafa Bayram has one big complaint about his hometown: “I wish I had two acres of backyard,” said the 2004 CHS grad. He and his family are active outdoors types who find relaxation in RVing, fishing and hiking. Other than up on Garret Mountain, there is not much green space. Despite that, the Lakeview resident finds a lot of positives in Clifton.

Among them: the restaurants, the diversity, housing values, the positive police presence. “We live between two large urban towns but our crime rate is low,” he said, adding: “Cops are strict but respectful. The bad guys know not to mess with Clifton Police.”

As a father of two kids attending Clifton Schools, he does have a concern about the crowding in the middle and high schools. Beyond that, he feels that with parental involvement and motivation by the kids themselves, Clifton Schools offer many opportunities for students to advance and achieve.

Another area where he would like to see improvements are along Main Ave. “There is nothing here to intrigue people,” said Bayram, who has his mortgage brokerage business on Main and Barkley.

“Look at Main Ave. up the street in Paterson. Always busy. That beautiful so-called recreation building on Washington Ave. should be sold and developed. We need more development down here. But real estate investors I do business with are hesitant to do business in Clifton. Too restrictive. There is a lack of imagination down here.”



Clifton New Jersey The Golden Years

Private group · 14.0K members



Since I haven't seen any real vintage page on Clifton NJ, I decided to start one. This is for anyone who was born, raised, went to school, lived, worked or frequented or had any connection to the city of Clifton. I did live there for 12 years and so I guess I am partially a Cliftonite. I will be looking for people to admin this page once it is up and running so if anyone is a life long resident and wants to be administrator, please let me know.

Just memories, photos etc... All that is only Clifton related. Keep politics, religion, the news all the stuff that brings life to a screeching halt off this page.

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Mike Finegan, the administrator of Clifton New Jersey The Golden Years, which was founded by Bobby Cole in 2015.

Mike Finegan

Sometimes you want to live where everybody knows your name. That was once the case for Mike Finegan, who resided in the Lakeview section on E 3rd St. for 60 years.

"The difference between then and now is that the community is no longer there [and] neighbors no longer know each other," said Finegan, 76. "I miss that. We need to reach out [and] get to know each other again. Ethnic and political backgrounds should not make us withdraw into our own 'safe zones.'"

Local merchants and everything being within walking distance was the heart of everything our city stood for during Finegan's six decades as a resident. The bakeries, grocery stores, and a variety of shopping districts in different neighborhoods "made my daily bicycle ride enjoyable."

The disappearance of businesses and replacing them with "big box" stores are what Finegan believes the city could and should improve on for the future. Finegan further emphasized that prioritizing rateables over the notion of community has led to large retail and housing proj-

ects bringing higher taxes, which has in turn "[forced] out many senior citizens who can no longer afford to live in Clifton."

When a semi-retired Finegan isn't working or riding his bicycle 12 miles per day, he enjoys his administrative duties for the Facebook group, "Clifton New Jersey The Golden Years".

Bobby Cole founded the page on Aug. 15, 2015 and Finegan became the administrator on day one.

Over the past decade, the private Facebook group has amassed 14,000 members.

"What separates 'Clifton The Golden Years' from the other 'memories sites' is the daily news clippings from the past and the names, faces, and places remembered from the past," said Finegan. "It's a unique feature of this page and brings enjoyment to our lives; young and old, alike. And, there we go, a sense of community is now returned."

And the community appreciates it, because Mike Finegan doesn't just have a sense of nostalgia for the way we were. He's an archivist and a tour guide to history, transporting us to an era we may have only heard in stories.



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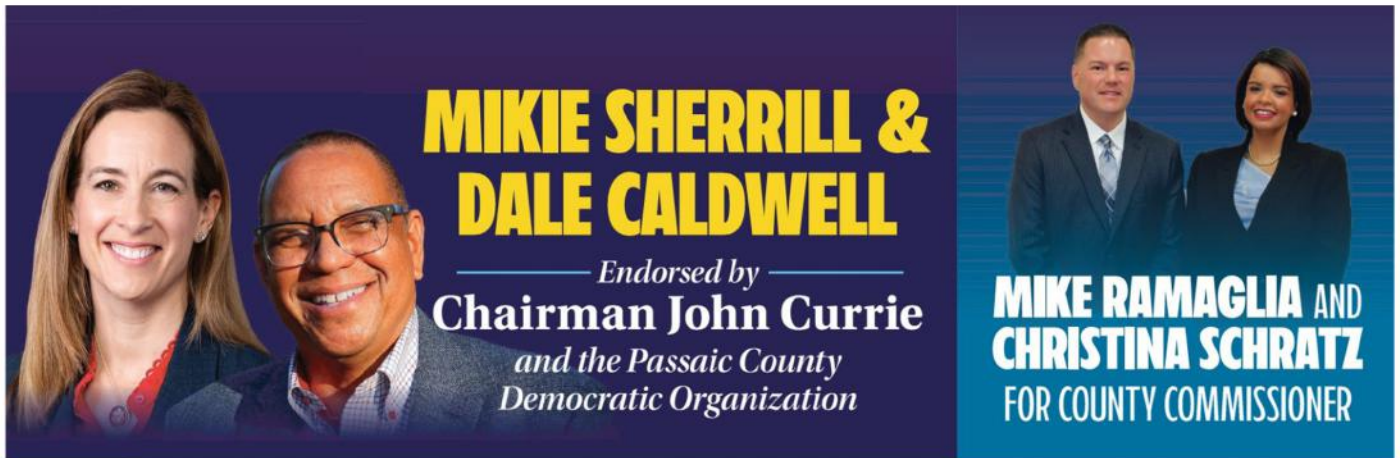
Passaic County Democrats

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- ♦ Created Passaic County MOVE: low-cost, on-demand, app-based transportation service.

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Paid for by the Passaic County Democratic Committee. 668 McBride Ave., Woodland Park, NJ 07424

3 Athenia residents offer comments and suggestions

Story by Robert Niessen

On paper and on the web, Clifton is often described as a welcoming and friendly community. Here is what some folks who call it home have to say of hometown reality and perception.

Keyla Sanchez, 16, has called Athenia home for her entire life. The CHS junior says the city and the school have shaped her in ways she didn't expect. Clifton is a place she celebrates.

"I love that I can explore so many areas of myself and have a way to share my passions," Keyla said. "CHS has all kinds of clubs, and if a specific one doesn't exist, students have the chance to make it happen."

Those opportunities have been central to Keyla's growth. Through clubs and organizations, she said she's not only discovered new interests but also formed lasting friendships.

"You can easily make friends through these activities, because there's a lot of common interest," she explained. "If it weren't for CHS' groups and organizations, I wouldn't have grown so much or met some of the best students and teachers in my last three years."

She also points to electives as another highlight. "The list of electives is endless, and those are some of the funnest, most liberating classes I've ever taken." But, like many students, Keyla sees room for improvement. Overcrowding in the hallways is the biggest issue. "There are only four minutes to get to the new room. Sometimes students have to go across the entire school for a new class."

She explained how the rush between classes can get messy. "There are just so many people who get upset because of shoving, pushing, slow walkers, door blockages,



Mohammed and Gina Saidi with son Leo, born Aug. 2.

and the hallway security trying to hurry it along." Keyla thinks that the school could make small adjustments to ease the problem.

"Perhaps a different solution would be allowing kids a minute or so after the bell to get to their new classroom before marking them late," she said, while noting "this would mean shortening class time."

Despite these challenges, the supportive community, diverse clubs, and endless opportunities at CHS help students grow, connect, and thrive.

As a young married couple who recently welcomed a baby, Mohammed and Gina Saidi said that life in Clifton brings both joy and challenges.

The Athenia residents most enjoy the variety that their city offers. Mohammed, 43, has lived in Athenia for 35 years and Gina, 41, has lived there for the past five years.

"We like the access to many parks, restaurants, and shopping," they shared. "We love that there is such a variety of places to go to and establishments to eat at."

For Mohammed and Gina, this range of options makes Clifton a vibrant and welcoming place to raise their son and build new memories as a family. Yet they still see room for improvement — especially when it comes to infrastructure and daily convenience.

"We would change the sidewalks," they explained, saying that walking as a family, especially with a stroller, often becomes more difficult than it should be. "Some sidewalks do not have pavement, only grass."

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Started in 1924 when Israel Friend and his brother, Fred Friend became partners, three of Israel's sons later joined the firm. They are: Herbert, who became a Superior Court Judge, William, who passed away in 2014 and Gerald, still a member of the firm. In 1994, Gerald's son Martin joined the firm, making it the first to have three generations practice law together. Martin married and moved to Florida in 1998 where he and his family still reside.

In 2012, Joseph Wenzel joined the firm and became a partner in 2017, at which time the name of the firm became Friend & Wenzel. Today the staff includes two additional attorneys, Carola Marquez and Richard Hawkins, and two administrative assistants, Kim Andrews and Fran Pritchard.

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Municipal Court Matters
Personal Injury
Buy and Sale of Businesses

They also pointed to parking as an ongoing concern.

“We would like to see better parking enforcement. There are too many vehicles parked right next to stop signs, blocking intersection views. There are also many work vehicles parked on the street taking up resident spots.”

The good far outweighs the struggles for the Saidis. They appreciate their neighborhood and the opportunities that Clifton offers for both new and longtime residents.



But, as they look to the future, they hope that the city will continue to grow in ways that make family life even easier.

Stanley Babula remembers a different time and a different pace of life in the city. Babula, 71, has lived in Athenia since 1968. One of his fondest memories is Bellin’s Pool on Main Ave. — where neighbors gathered, friendships formed, and summer days seemed endless. But today, Babula said, Clifton feels very different.

“They’re building homes everywhere. It’s so crowded now,” said Babula (CHS 1972), pointing to the congestion and traffic that make the city feel less open than it once did.

He misses the days when Clifton felt less hectic and more like a small town. “Clifton used to be fun in the 70’s,” he added. “It’s not fun now.”

Babula remains optimistic about what could be. His vision for the future would be initiatives that create fun and safe environments for kids, just as he once enjoyed growing up in the city.

“Do something good with the property,” said Babula. “Build something for the kids, not more homes.” He went on to say that investment in the next generation could bring back some of the joy that he remembers from his childhood.

For Babula, the spirit of Clifton isn’t entirely gone.

“Good neighborhoods, good people,” he said, recalling how the community always came together in times of need. But he also accepts that the past won’t return. “The old days are over. [There’s] nothing you can do but just look to the future.”





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Thursday, October 23rd: 2:30pm - 4:30pm

Location: Botany Satellite Office
207 Parker Ave., Clifton, NJ 07011

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**Nicolino
GALLO**
for **County
Commissioner**

NICOLINO served one-term on the Board of Commissioners, becoming the first Republican elected countywide in years.

- ★ Immigrated from Italy with his family at the age of 5
- ★ Resides in Totowa with Nancy and their three children
- ★ Owns and operates a local landscaping business

LEARN more about Nicolino and Danny by scanning here



**Danilo
(Danny)
RAMIREZ**
for **County
Commissioner**

DANNY is Vice-Chair of the Hispanic Heritage Committee and earned degrees from the University of Scranton and St. Peter's College.

- ★ Born, raised and attended school in North Jersey
- ★ Resides in Hawthorne with his wife Maria and two children
- ★ Proud NJ school educator, as well as football and lacrosse coach

FOLLOW Nicolino and Danny on social media by scanning here



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Marios – *Cream of Broccoli*

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The Clif—*Pork & Beef*

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On Nov. 4, two incumbents and one newcomer will run unopposed to fill three vacant seats on the nine-member Board of Education. We asked about the new middle school, state funding, and what qualities are missing from the BOE that they can bring to it.

Mark Brunciak – Incumbent

Mark Brunciak's first term on the Clifton Board of Education was eye-opening and showed him exactly what is and is not in the Board's control. But it is those obstacles that drive him forward.

Brunciak spoke for this interview with the following disclaimer: "I am speaking as a candidate for the Board of Education, and not as a sitting board member. My views do not represent or reflect the Board."

"We need more help with state funding. We've been shafted and there's not much we can do, because some things we have no control over," said Brunciak. "It basically comes down to us reaching out to our Legislature and, unfortunately, not much happened as a result of that."

"It's very frustrating to me," he added. "We want to have some sort of fiscal sanity in our district. I can't do it by myself, but I hope that we can get the past monies owed to us at this time."

Brunciak, 43, explained that the issue of funding is the "biggest question mark that we have constantly every year." He added that the Board doesn't want to raise taxes and that he has voted "no" to hikes over the past couple of years.

In 2022, the CHS 1999 grad finished second in a field of eight candidates. The margin between him and fellow incumbent Anthony Santiago was 56 votes. A self-described "money guy", he is Chair of the Finance committee and has also chaired the Negotiations committee for several of their collective bargaining units.

"I can't say enough good things about fellow commissioners," he said. "The monies and funding we are able to get make this district function. That is my main priority. When we go over these numbers, budget time is always around the corner. Sometimes the previews are in Decem-

ber for the following fiscal year."

The upkeep of the district's facilities is also deeply important to Brunciak.

"We saw the aging facilities and it's very tough," he said. "The city, itself, doesn't have a lot of resources, so the district offers significant help in synergy with the city to provide facilities for children in the district. I'm grateful we are able to fund that, because it costs a lot of money to run the facilities that we have."



Mark Brunciak.

Alias Ragsdale – Newcomer

Alias Ragsdale is set to become the youngest elected member of the Board of Ed, meaning the decisions made by current members are ones that he's experienced firsthand.

He's a familiar face and has paid close attention since the age of 15.

"I've looked at the budgets. I went to meetings. I do my homework," said Ragsdale, 19. "Clifton in general is transforming into the future. We're a huge city and have to change the way we do some things, and I think part of that is having new leaders."

Ragsdale brings a unique perspective as a recent grad, which he considers his "biggest asset." He said he knows which programs and initiatives didn't work for students. The lifelong resident, who attended School 5 and Classical Academy, also served as president of the Student Union.

"I'm not some random kid off the street who decided to [run] and fell into it," said Ragsdale (CHS 2024). Last year, Ragsdale finished fourth among five candidates with 8,558 votes — only 781 votes behind the third-place finisher. All three seats were won by incumbents.

Ragsdale is enrolled in Bergen Community College, stating that he's a "proud supporter" of community college and trade schools as alternatives to going directly into four-year schools.

His community work has included volunteering at the Boys & Girls Club, plus serving on the Passaic County Youth Services Commission, Civil Rights Committee, and the Action Clifton Committee.

One area of focus as a Board member will be strengthening the relationship between the district and parents to ensure the academic and behavioral success of students. Ragsdale added that a common denominator for



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For questions, contact Maura Holden at mholden@bgcclifton.org or 973-773-0966 x155

meeting district-wide goals is clear communication.

He also wants to continue working toward improving test scores.

“My number one question is, what is the issue where scores are terrible, yet I know my friends and I did well and had a great education?” said Ragsdale. “The answer I’ve received is there’s a large ESL population and even if you move into the district a month before the test that student has to take the test.”

“I think this is a current initiative, but we need to improve our ESL programs when it comes to that,” he continued, “because when it comes to tax increases, people are willing to pay that if they see it resulting in a positive way.”

Anthony Santiago – Incumbent

Anthony Santiago has an eye toward the future with a sense of pride for the past.

“The way I view a ... commissioner’s role is that of a public servant,” said Santiago. “Placing your interest before my own. I believe that my experience on the board for the last two-plus years has demonstrated that.”

In 2022, Santiago was the top vote-getter in a field of eight candidates with nearly 6,000 votes. He has since served on multiple committees, including as the Chair of the Security, Residency and Technology committee.

The committee has hired security specialists in every school during his tenure. His contributions have also included leading the implementation of Summer Graduation for students who missed the opportunity to walk across the



*Alias Ragsdale,
Anthony Santiago.*

stage at the stadium by one course, voting for the district’s Dog Therapy program, and supporting the new Maple Valley Middle School.

Two questions remain: What are the steps to take in the next several years to guarantee staff retention in the midst of national teacher shortages? The second question is, how can Clifton best ensure that the building is maintained without taxpayers experiencing a notable strain or consistent tax hikes?

Santiago pointed to the district’s “great new hire orientation program” and emphasized the importance of career opportunities for “any successful organization.”

“We have a comprehensive leadership development academy to retain and grow internal talent, which also helps with succession planning,” said Santiago. “Ongoing recognition and creative employee rewards that are non-monetary can be developed.

As for long-term maintenance, he proposed that the Finance and Facilities committees should “continue to work with administration to identify cost efficiencies including changing vendors as needed.”

“That is brought to the larger Board for consideration and approval,” he explained.

Santiago and his wife, Maliza, have lived in our city for 31 years. The couple’s sons are former Mustangs, Anthony Jr. (CHS 2011) and Matthew (CHS 2015).

As Santiago prepares for a second term on the nine-member Board, he is eager to be a part of implementing the 2025 Strategic Plan that rolls out over the next five years.

“There should be significant improvement over that time,” said Santiago. “Maintaining oversight of administration, continuing to ask questions, and [getting] updates on progress is a priority.”

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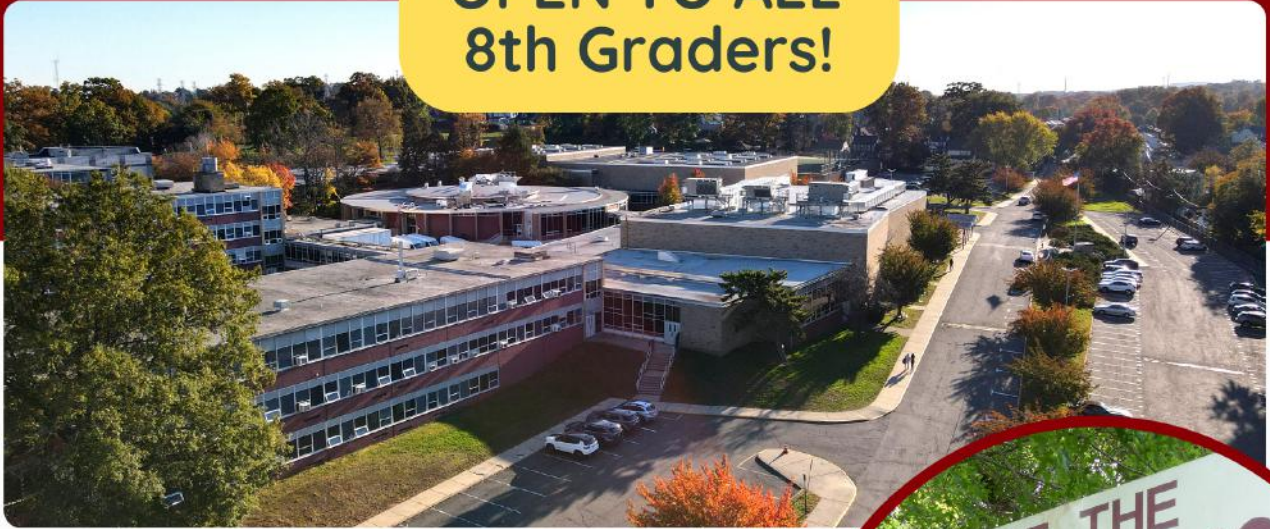
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The Bocce Boys

Bruce Casey values his hometown the same way he values his friendships: It's all for keeps.

Casey and his fellow retirees, many of whom worked for the Board of Education, have taken to playing bocce at City Hall this year. The group of men include Charlie LoPresti, Bob Getzewich, Joseph Biasucci, Dennis Gonzalez, Allan Bornkamp, and Jim Lyons (who was on vacation when we took their photo).

Golfing was how the men stayed connected with one another when they first retired. Now, the men get together on Thursdays and have played at a mix of indoor and outdoor venues in the North Jersey area.

"We didn't want to walk away and not see anyone anymore," said Casey, 79, on retirement. "We started getting together for breakfast and talked about what we could do."

"We played golf for a number of years and then that evolved because of our age into bocce," he chuckled. "We still get that social aspect, have fun, compare stories, and we tell each other what our families are doing. It's a nice outlet for getting together once a week to converse without any judgment."

Casey was a coordinator for Clifton's Work Study Program and a CHS Shop Teacher. Shop teachers also included Bornkamp, Lyons, Gonzalez, and Biasucci. LoPresti was in the Business Department and Getzewich worked directly next to the Twin Towers during 9/11.

Remaining in his hometown wasn't a tough choice for Casey. The CHS 1964 grad grew up in Allwood, married an Allwood girl, raised a family in Allwood, and it is where he remains today. "Our kids had a very close relationship with their grandparents, because we all basically lived within three blocks of each other," said Casey. "That's not so common anymore."

Arnold Korotkin

Convenience brought Arnold Korotkin and his wife, Joyce Frommer, to town. But it's community engagement that has truly made it feel like home.

The couple moved to our city two and a half years ago. Korotkin has since become a member of the Clifton Arts



At the bocce court on the City Hall campus from left: Bruce Casey, Charlie LoPresti, Bob Getzewich, Joseph Biasucci, Dennis Gonzalez and Allan Bornkamp.



Joyce Frommer and husband Arnold Korotkin.

Center Committee and the Disabilities Committee, whereas Frommer in January became President of the Friends of the Clifton Public Library. "I'm now the [first gentleman]," said Korotkin, coyly. "We're both involved as newbies."

They downsized from a townhouse to the Country Club Towers Apartments on Hepburn Rd. What Korotkin most appreciates is their proximity to any friends and family in Little Falls and Montclair while having convenient access to public transportation into New York City.

"Just on the corner, there are three or four different buses," said Korotkin, 80.

Emphasizing that the positives outweigh aspects of Clifton that he would like to see change, Korotkin did express concerns about disability accessibility and the City



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Council. He believes that “parks need to be adapted so individuals with disabilities have greater access to them.”

Korotkin has also championed an effort to put a sign outside of the Municipal Building to indicate where the ramp is located since it might not be immediately visible to someone who cannot use the building’s stairs. “I’d get some adhesive and do it myself,” he said dryly in mid-September, “but I’m waiting for the town to act on it.”

As for the Council, Korotkin stated how “amazed” he is by “how dysfunctional it is.” He would like to see more collaboration and individuals reaching a consensus. That, he said, would be one way not to repeat “how long it’s taken to reach an agreement on the city’s budget.”

Korotkin is otherwise pleased by the intergenerational and interracial demographics, noting how the city of roughly 90,000 residents includes over 60 different languages spoken. Offerings by the Arts Center and Rec Center, and the Sculpture Garden and Zumba classes are services that he said deserve more recognition.

The Weasel Brook Community Garden is a spot that Frommer visits. “It’s great for planting tomatoes, squash, and cucumbers,” said Korotkin. “The park was also developed by the Olmsted Brothers. The city has a lot of assets.”



Megha Mittal

Setting down roots in Clifton wasn’t expected or planned out, but Megha Mittal wouldn’t have it any other way.

“My husband and I were looking for houses and to move from Hackensack, but we weren’t finding anything,” said Mittal, 40. “The realtor brought us here and we loved it.”

That was about 12 years ago. Mittal and her family, including 10-year-old son Vihaan Gupta, live in the Cambridge Crossings condominium complex. Mittal appreciates the diversity and how you get the opportunity to “meet folks from all walks of life in one closed community.”

“There is always something to learn from everyone,” she said. Our city’s proximity to New York is an advantage for her since she travels there for work. Mittal also likes the city’s “small-town feel” and how you “bump into familiar faces at Stop & Shop.”

And many of those people are warm to her and Vihaan. The School 2 fifth grader and his mom are Allwood Diner regulars, especially when he gets a Chocolate Lava, and the family has also utilized the Clifton Public Library and Boys & Girls Club facilities. Vihaan, who was featured on our March 2024 edition’s cover, is a young author and has held a book reading at the library.

Their other favorite city spots are Mr. Cupcakes on Van Houten Ave., as well as Tio Taco and Tommy’s Tavern in the Promenade. Mittal hopes that the city continues embracing its diversity while also investing in the next generation through education and its parks.

“[It has] all the ingredients to keep striving while maintaining its community roots,” said Mittal. “That is what I think about Clifton.”

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Next Stop: Donna-ville

Sheriff Andy Taylor knew that what's small potatoes to some folks can be mighty important to others. That is abundantly clear to Donna Carpinelli Popowich in her day-to-day life but especially when she gets up to speak at City Council meetings as "the Mayor of Donna-ville."

The title is one of her own creations and Donna-ville is actually an idealized, aspirational Clifton.

"It's the Clifton that I think we all want to see, close to Mayberry, where everyone gets along and everything is planned out," said Popowich, 61. "It leads to solving problems, creating goodwill, and people helping each other out, which is kind of different from the Clifton we're living in."

Popowich highlighted incidents that Councilman Chris D'Amato posted on Facebook about in mid-September, where residents have witnessed others honking and yelling at stopped school buses allowing kids to board.

The video, posted on the Councilman's political page, underscored how the screaming and honking can have particularly adverse effects on neurodivergent children who may take a little longer to get on the bus or have sensory triggers that are affected by the noises. "I mean, can we go any lower? Donna-ville is a place where people would wait," said Popowich. "I know people get annoyed, but we wouldn't honk and we'd take a breath."

Popowich's "alter ego" that she adopts at Council meetings is her way of providing ideas to the elected body of seven Councilmembers. Some of the other things that are done in "Donna-ville" include planning out the water and sewage digging before paving a road, as well as going to the area that is most in need.

"We keep [things] good for our kids," she added, "because our kids are our greatest resources."

Doing For Our Neighbors

There is plenty to work on around the city, infrastructure improvements for one, but there's also aspects that are worthy of pride. For Popowich, the feeling of pride is evident in the way that residents' generosity is second to none.



Donna Carpinelli Popowich.

Popowich sees it through her efforts running Clifton's Free Little Pantries program. "The people here are very giving. If you have a need, they will fill it," she said. "They'll gladly bake you dinner ... and people are always dropping off food for the Free Little Pantries."

"They will help you in many physical ways. They don't want to just send you a check," Popowich added. "They want to become involved."

The Free Little Pantries are at Jubilee Park, on Cross Rd., and behind the Senior Barn at 900 Clifton Ave. There's also a Pet Pantry by the Fire Headquarters. The pantries first opened in May of 2024 and two more will reside at School 11 and School 17.

"There is a wide swath of people in Clifton who are just making it," said Popowich. "Our free pantries are there to help them." Learn more at Pantries Clifton on Facebook or by emailing CliftonLittleFreePantries@gmail.com.

Popowich strives to acknowledge the kindness of others on a monthly basis. She's handed out a "Donna-ville Citizen of the Month" award this past year to people who have done something that "exemplifies what Donna-ville is about." One past recipient is Michael Tromb, who attends Council meetings and acts as an unofficial citizen scribe.

Tromb provides summaries and blow-by-blow recaps that he later uploads onto Facebook for people who cannot attend or see the meetings.

Popowich also gave awards to Gary DeMarzo when he became the city manager and to Nancy Ferrigno when she retired as the city clerk. Popowich awarded Joe Siano of JK Realty with the recognition twice in response to him opening his doors to many nonprofits who use his office as a centralized point to fundraise and collect donated items.

“It’s hard to find a space to meet in the city,” Popowich acknowledged.

There was also the Director of Clifton’s DPW Jason Van Winkle, and Popowich had shirts made up that she gave to Mayor Ray Grabowski for his contributions in running the Clifton Street Fair on Van Houten Ave.

As Barney Fife once said: “Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their neighbor! Repeat! Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their neighbor!”

Preserving Our Parks

And the Richfield native likes her neighborhood’s little slice of suburbia. Having a bigger yard has meant that she can enjoy putting in flower beds and planting vegetable gardens. But the CHS 1981 grad sees where the neighborhood can also be improved.

“I would like to see Urma Ave. get paved,” said Popo-

wich. “When they came through and did the water meter work, they kind of left a giant trench in the road.”

Roadwork is a big issue that Popowich sees as a top priority, as well as the traffic. Popowich is also a proponent of seeing our parks become “more diverse.” It would look like introducing new, more inclusive ways for children to play aside from swings or climbing structures.

“My kids went to Grove Hill Nursery School and they had wooden child-sized trains where kids could climb into the cars. Imaginative things like that,” said Popowich. “Or a pirate ship. More than something that they climb all over, because not every kid is capable of that.”

Popowich sees the popularity of walking in our city. She would like to see more benches around the city and walking paths in each park. These types of concerns, and many others, are often a point of discussion on the Facebook page that she created and runs, Clifton Citizens Concerns.

She noted that many residents feel unheard when they speak at Council meetings and nothing is done to address their concerns or the problems. One ongoing resident request is introducing a dog park. Others echo Popowich’s desire to see park upgrades and a more active approach when it comes to the city developing its first-ever Open Space and Recreation Plan.

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“But there are no plans to meet again until January,” said Popowich.

Popowich recognizes that improving infrastructure is reliant upon having the funding. When proposing different ways to finance these upgrades, one idea was opening up pot shops.

“I’m not a proponent of pot, myself, but they’re giving it away all over town in smoke shops if you buy \$100 [of certain products],” she said. “We might as well get money from it.”

There’s discussions of building a bandstand on City Hall property and Popowich also suggested renting out parking lots, focusing on the development of a stronger shopping district, and adding more civilian jobs to City Hall that could be done remotely and don’t require tons of training.

“All of these things would fund the parks,” said Popowich.

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An Open Mic

At the end of the day, Popowich is eager and dedicated to sharing her ideas and perspectives with the community and its leaders who are in a position to address residents’ concerns.

The lifelong resident maintains that doing so is vital.

“I like to think I go [to meetings] to remind [the Council] that they are here to provide a service to the community,” said Popowich. “Unfortunately, there are not a lot of people who go and do that. There’s a good block of us who show up and speak, and, sure, they think of us as gadflies. But I think of us as true citizens.”

“Being a citizen is more than going to vote. It’s shaping our community,” she added. “I think a lot of people like to run for office, but I think true power is at that microphone every two weeks.”

Popowich emphasized the importance of bringing levity to certain discussions, stating that it’s important for us all to “laugh at ourselves.”

“If we’re laughing, we’re not arguing. Everything on Facebook seems to go to an immediate argument,” she said. “Lately, it’s been so much of Democrat versus Republican, and we don’t even have a partisan government.”

“I’m trying to show that this is the way things could be for all of us,” said Popowich. “But we have to work together.”

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Clifton News and Community

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GROUP GUIDELINES - PLEASE READ

TLDR Version: This is a great place to get information on everything from "Who has a good plumber?" to "What time does the animal shelter open?" It is for CLIFTON news and happenings. Be a decent human being or at least act like one. Don't make fun of people, don't share your racist beliefs, and don't post things with the sole intent of causing a disruption. If you behave like an obnoxious, caustic, pain in the ass, you will be removed from this group.

Celebrating Clifton's diversity matters to Tova Felder, and it's not uncommon to see her doing that online or simply in how she lives her life.

"The people [in our city] come from everywhere in the world, speak all sorts of languages, and represent the full spectrum of what humans look like, sound like, love like, and worship like," said Felder. "Along with the different cultures, we get the delicious benefit of a richly diverse cuisine. We can find practically anything we want to taste somewhere in Clifton."

Felder and her husband, Andy Pfaff, relocated from Nutley to the Athenia section almost 23 years ago. The couple didn't know much about the city or neighborhood, but they realized a Cape Cod on a quiet street would be a great first home. It's also where they eventually raised their son, Jesse (CHS 2022).

The "nice neighborhood" is mostly quiet and respectful, though Felder shared another equally valid reality.

"There are times when someone else's choices impact others, and I wish there was less of that," she said. "Every summer, there are people who live nearby setting off loud, illegal fireworks — sometimes, well past midnight. It would be nice if people considered how their noise will affect everyone else around them."

It's a balancing act like with any community.

Felder is grateful for how easy it is to find what they want or need, especially when they were new homeowners. "I wanted to install small glass shelves in the cut-out for doorbell chimes," said Felder. "I found a glass cutter right here in town. Plumbers, electricians, painters, or mechanics; [they're all] here."

So are grocery stores, specialty stores, many types of doctors, and coffee shops. But Felder is not afraid to get candid. She believes that the community could show more pride in properties when it comes to keeping our sidewalks, curbs, and public areas free of litter.

Even bigger than that, for her, is the belief that everyone could stand up more for one another.

"There is too much bigotry and finger-pointing. There is not a single demographic where you could say, 'These people are all fill-in-the-blank' and be right," said Felder. "I hate when anyone is made to feel less-than because of other people's attitudes."

New Steps Forward

Although it would be easy enough to share her opinions and leave it at that, Felder also strives to inform. She does it as an editor for The Clifton Times and also as the creator of a Facebook group entitled, "Clifton News & Community".

Whether it's covering meetings or events for The Clifton Times, or helping to provide resources to other homeowners in the Facebook group, Felder has seen changes in the last two decades. Some "dramatic shifts" have occurred on the Board of Education.

"When Dr. Danny Robertozzi came on board, the tone of those meetings began to shift," said Felder. "It's not unusual to find the superintendent smiling or even cracking jokes — and that energy is contagious."

Felder attributed "massive revamping" of the Board of Ed building and the schools throughout the district as having "breathed new life into our schools." That has included HVAC updates to buildings, new bathrooms, and better communication.

"We skyrocketed from the 1970s into the 2000s practically overnight with the passage of the district's huge referendum," said Felder. "My son didn't reap the benefits of most of these changes but, as a homeowner here, it's important to me that our school district continues to improve. We all benefit from a happy, educated population."

There's also something to be said for bringing in "big taxpayers and some higher-end amenities" at sites like

ON3, which Felder asserted is "a great thing for Clifton." She is optimistic that a new hotel will attract visitors and "provide hundreds of jobs to locals."

She added that her perspective would differ if anyone was displaced by the development. From 1929 until the end of 2013, the 116-acre Hoffmann-La Roche Inc. campus operated on the site.

The site was sold to Prism Capital Partners in 2016 and rebranded as the ON3 development.

Felder has different feelings about the Black Prince Re-development Project near the NJ Transit Station on the corner of Clifton and Paulison Ave.

"I'm very surprised that something so large was permitted to be built practically on the sidewalk," said Felder. "I suspect that it will attract a lot of train commuters and hopefully not contribute a substantial amount of traffic to that area, but only time will tell."

"While overcrowding is always a concern, the tenants who move in will also become new customers for local businesses," Felder added. "If we want to benefit from bringing in new revenue and jobs, we have to accept some other, less desirable consequences, too."

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Whether reflecting upon her years as a student, parent or employee of the school district, her involvement with local businesses or, most importantly, her lifelong residency, Janet Kolano recognizes that Clifton has had much to offer herself and her family.

Kolano, 80, was raised by parents Ed and Claire Looney. The youngest of five lives in the Albion section next to Lambert's Castle, a few blocks from her childhood home. Kolano attended Clifton Schools through eighth grade and graduated from Pope Pius XII HS.

"My parents were very involved with their church, St. Agnes in Paterson, and their community," said Kolano. "They were good-natured and giving people who always supported one another and the community, but in a quiet way. That is how we were raised." Ed and Claire worked for years at Henry's Deli, which Kolano's late brother Ed (CHS 1952) owned.



*Pope Pius 1962
grad Janet (Looney)
Kolano and today.*

Fast-forward to the present, Kolano will celebrate 55 years of marriage to her husband, Dennis (CHS 1962), in November. They have five children, all Clifton grads, and eight grandchildren.

"Two of our children live in Blairstown and have encouraged us to move up there, but I can't do it," said Kolano. "I have made a lot of great friends [in Clifton] through the years."

Neighborhood diversity and accessibility to major roads are top features for Kolano. So is the way that her neighbors take care of their properties. Staying in her hometown also came with the benefit of a short commute to work.

Kolano was employed full time by the Board of Education from 1982 until her retirement in 2007. She started in

Basic Skills at two schools, then became the counselor for 13 elementary schools after the State Department awarded Clifton a grant. The scope of her job changed as more

counselors were hired and she eventually settled at School 12, where she later became an assistant principal. Kolano became the principal of School 8 in the same week as the 9/11 attack.

“It was definitely a challenge, and I was glad at the time that I had a counseling background.”

Kolano worked as a substitute principal in the district after retiring. Her last assignment ended in December of 2024, after being called upon to lead the School 2 community through the untimely death of beloved principal Jennifer Lucas.

The work that she’s done over the years — in any of her roles — with at-risk kids and their families might be better described as a calling than a job.

“I am a mother of five so, in that sense, I kind of recognize some of the difficulties that families and children go through,” said Kolano. “I was focused on the Early Intervention program. The younger they are when you can address those needs, the more hope there is that children will be able to work through [specific issues] and use skills hopefully instilled in them to get through difficult times.”

The evolution in schools for how mental health issues are addressed comes with a sense of pride, especially knowing just how difficult it is for families to sometimes access the external services that counselors recommend.

The district offered supplemental parenting groups that

Kolano ran with fellow counselor Joanne Shapiro, giving parents essential skills to support whatever their child was experiencing. Being able to provide the skills and, later, her style of administration traces back to another colleague.

“My style of administration was more collaborative, and I got that from working with Betty Gochman,” said Kolano.

Gochman retired in 2003 after 37 years in Clifton Public Schools, spending those last 14 years as School 14’s principal. “We were all BSI teachers and we were a team,” said Kolano. “Betty signed off on things, but she wanted a collaborative environment. To make decisions together.”

“I tried to do that for years as an administrator. I’m not a top-down type of person,” she added. “Betty was my first boss in Clifton. She was very genuine, very caring, and she gave it her all, but she also respected all of us. It was definitely mutual.”

Giving back to Clifton kids is the surest way of advancing our community, which means it’s no surprise that Kolano is still paying her upbringing forward.

The former trustee of the Clifton Education Foundation and currently serves as President. She is an active member of Saint Philip the Apostle Roman Catholic Church, 797 Valley Rd., where she serves as a Eucharistic Minister. “I am very blessed to have worked with such dedicated people and dedicated volunteers,” said Kolano, “and I have made good friendships that will last a lifetime.”



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Diversifying Our Slice of Life

Mike Hruby gives a little bit of himself to everything that he does. Sometimes, more literally than others might expect.

“I was on the frontlines early on during COVID throughout Hudson and in surrounding counties,” said Hruby, 38. “I wasn’t even in the red zone, I was in the purple zone. The reddest of the red.”

“I found out when I recovered that I had the antibodies. They had a plasma donation program then ... and you could donate your antibodies to the COVID recovery program. I managed to donate to six people.”

Hruby (CHS 2005) has worked for 13 years as an EMT and works full time for Hackensack Meridian Health. It’s a rewarding job that keeps him on his toes, which is exactly the appeal.

“I couldn’t be a pencil pusher for eight hours; I would go crazy,” said Hruby. “It provides me with the opportunity to care for people in the best possible way ... and it forces you to think on your feet.”

Hruby is currently enrolled at Passaic County Community College to finish his paramedic school prerequisites and aims to attend Bergen next.

Despite his fast-paced job, the Athenia resident appreciates how his neighborhood is a little more quiet. That “suburban kind of feel” is part of why he still calls our city home, but he’d like to see more shops.

“Not quite specialty shops, but there could be more comic book stores or more for people to explore different hobbies,” said Hruby. “Even something like an old-fashioned mom and pop magic store. I don’t feel there’s

enough of that.”

Hruby, who is engaged to fiancée Nicole Del Toro, likes that a lot of things are closer to home and people recognize one another. He supports Agamie’s Deli in Allwood and does deliveries for owner CJ Liquori some Tuesdays.

But he’d like to see restaurants and coffee shops be less concentrated in Botany Village.

“Clifton needs a good specialty niche coffee shop. And I don’t mean Starbucks. We don’t need a Starbucks,” he said. “Like a Paper Plane in Montclair or a Cedar Bean’s.”

“A traditional Friends coffee shop-feel,” explained Hruby, “for the standard 20- or 30-something person who might not want a full breakfast, but a croissant and a cup of coffee.”



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Advancing Clifton

Gerard Scorziello is homegrown, but he knows there's still room for both him and the community that he loves to grow and evolve.

The Delawanna native has lived in the Richfield section for 28 years. After graduating CHS with the Class of 1980, he went to college and later returned and bought a house in Clifton. He lives there with his wife, Kim Renta, and it's where they raised their kids Katie (CHS 2014) and Kevin (CHS 2018).

"It's a wonderful neighborhood by evidence that I have been here so long," said Scorziello, 62. "We have fabulous neighbors and live on a very nice street with well-kept and well-maintained houses."

"Our street is pretty well-traveled — sometimes it's quiet, sometimes it's more active. A lot of people walk up and down the street with dogs or exercising," he continued. "I actually get to meet a lot of people who live in my neighborhood. I love that about my street."

A less desirable, yet common, reality is traffic, but Scorziello sees it through a pragmatic lens: When cities grow, so tend to their populations. Rather than focusing on how more people and change can feel overwhelming, he prioritizes getting to meet new people.

Scorziello noted how he has seen many young people move out of their mutual hometown and new people moving in, which makes him wonder what the city is missing out on or not doing.

"I'm trying to assess what that is, because I don't think Clifton doesn't make an attempt, but it's made welcome to outsiders coming in but not made comfortable enough for people growing up here to stay," said Scorziello. "I think that's a problem in Clifton and for our community."

Raising Our Voices

Tradition matters to our residents and Scorziello is no exception.

He appreciates the long-standing community value of the schools, the band, and the sports programs. But he recognizes that traditionalism can run counter to accepting change and, in turn, stem essential progress.

Scorziello previously spent 16 years acting as a commissioner, and also as Vice Chair, on the city's Zoning Board.

"What our town lacks is visionaries, people who can prepare for the future," said Scorziello. "We have very old,



outdated zoning laws. Many houses are built for people who lived comfortably in the 60's, 70's, and 80's with two-to-three bedrooms and bathrooms."

"The standard of living has changed dramatically," he added. "My observation is, we don't have people in our town, whether it's the citizens or the government, who want to have any kind of vision for the future."

Scorziello went on to pinpoint the back-and-forth debates and arguments on development and any redevelopment, including many objections to people expanding their homes. He sees how other communities, like Montclair and Rutherford, have built a community and atmosphere with restaurants and entertainment.

A restaurant row is one of the things that Scorziello believes our city has needed for some time, acknowledging that people also eat, drink, and entertain themselves differently today than in the decades past.

"I don't know how it gets addressed [other than] more people like me have to be vocal about it," he said. "I've tried to be vocal, ... and I choose to live and interact with people in the community, but some of the things that I want to experience and that others want to experience, we have to do in other towns."

Thinking Ahead

Can't-miss dining spots for Scorziello tie in to their community-mindedness. Among them are Tony's Pizza Pasta Grill on Van Houten Ave., Bruno's Pizza on Rt. 46, and the Allwood Diner.

"I think there are a lot of small businesses that make themselves very welcoming and endearing in Clifton because of their philanthropic-ness and ability to

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make people feel welcome,” he said.

But there can be missed opportunities for enjoying newer dining destinations, which goes back to the city’s Master Plan. During his time as a Zoning Board commissioner, the restrictions that Scorziello found related to the Master Plan and the city’s adaptability to life today.

“It wasn’t that the Zoning Board got [things] wrong, but city planning was totally inadequate, slow to move, and very inefficient in staying current,” said Scorziello. “That is a loss for the citizens, the businesses, any future businesses, and businesses that might have come to Clifton, but for whatever reason there was too much friction or too many obstacles.”

Scorziello doesn’t want to see that continue happening in other avenues where investment is possible and the returns are even greater. As a numbers man, he speaks regu-

larly to analysts and economists. Being a forward-thinker, to Scorziello, means that our city should not dismiss the country’s growing interest in data centers and the constantly advancing technology of AI.

“Things have never moved so fast and they will never move so slow again,” he said. “There are trillions of dollars to be captured. Companies are looking to spend a lot of money, and they want to go into areas of big cities, and near big cities, with the electrical capacity and grid for it.”

Scorziello went on to say our city checks those boxes with our accessibility to multiple thruways and its existing infrastructure.

“The window is open now, and now is the time to do it,” he said. “It’s not traditional thinking and it is not traditional technology. It is all fairly new stuff, but I would like to keep presenting it to the City Council.”

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Love from the Labriolas

The Labriolas love their hometown and they love spending time together. So, why not live under the same roof and share in life's moments?

"I think what's nice — and today with costs being so high — is that a lot of families are living in a multi-generational atmosphere," said Jean, 81. "Between babysitting kids and sharing the cost of a home, it's not a terrible thing for multi-generational people to live together and think it should not be frowned upon."

Jean (CHS 1962) and her daughter, Jeannie (CHS 1985), recalled growing up in Delawanna and living now in Montclair Heights. Living in the house today is Jean's husband, John; son Jeff (CHS 1997), and Jeff's kids: Grace, 5, and Jack, 2. The Labriolas' third child, John (CHS 1988), lives in Fair Lawn.

For Jeannie, the Montclair Heights property sizes are beneficial and so are all of the "wonderful neighbors." Living near School 16, where Grace goes for kindergarten, is a great advantage as well and makes it easy for Jeannie to park the car and walk her niece to the school.

Jeannie would like to see a more cohesive City Council. She emphasized that our city has a lot to offer and even more that it could focus on bringing to its residents.

"I would like a big pool like other towns have and a community center," said Jeannie, 58. "But Clifton is great and that's what I like to stress, too."

She praised the Recreation Department, highlighting the Harvest Fest and Candyland. Nephew Jack is enrolled in the Clifton Arts Center's Storytime Group program, which thrills the family.

"It's like a Hallmark movie," said Jeannie. "At Candyland and the Halloween Harvest fest, you get to see all of the Clifton people who love their town so much."

Jean echoed her daughter's sentiment, adding the Rec Department does a great job at making sure "fees are so nominal that it's not a hardship for most people to participate." Jean similarly admires the Clifton Arts Center, where Jeff served as past president of the Advisory Board.

"Having two little ones and being a single dad, Jeff had to step down, because he is a very busy and wonderful dad," said Jean. "But we still have a great connection there. Roxanne Cammilleri does a wonderful job at keeping it together." Far be it from the Labriolas to ask what their community can give them.



Jeannie Labriola, standing left, with mom Jean, niece Grace, and nephew Jack.

Even if you have not seen them at city events, someone in your family or your friend's family has possibly passed them in the halls of Clifton Schools.

Jean taught kindergarten at School 8 until Jeannie was born then returned to substituting on the elementary level years later after caring for her parents and babysitting her older grandchildren, Anthony, 28, and Kristina, 25.

Jeannie taught Special Education Kindergarten and First Grade at School 2 under former Principal John Baskinger, then she worked in School 11's Resource Room until her retirement in 2022 to help take care of the kids.

As for Jeff, he also went down a similar Clifton Public Schools path. He is currently in his 25th year as an Art teacher at Christopher Columbus Middle School. He is also a PBSIS coach.

Jean stressed that, however you do it, it's important for everyone to give back for the betterment of any community.

"I think volunteerism is a very important part of a community. A lot of people have free time, but I think they don't know what they can do," said Jean. "If that is made clearer, maybe they could sit and read to children or help children with their homework a few days a week. There needs to be some way for people to find out what they can do to help."

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Sweet As Can Be

Life was sweet when Fikry Fahmy moved to Clifton in the early 70's, but not because he was working for Givaudan Corp.

Fahmy, now 83, was in his mid-twenties and living in Jersey City when the company, known for its flavors and fragrances, announced that it was building a new facility on Delawanna Ave. The decision to relocate was simple and provided him the ability to settle in a suburban community.

"The company had some sort of arrangement to make it easier for whoever wanted to relocate," said Fahmy. "They called real estate agents and arranged everything for us."

"In the meantime, [my new] neighbors were really very beautiful and were very welcoming," said Fahmy. "They made me feel like one of them and we visited each other. The beginning was not really difficult at all."

Fahmy grew up in Egypt and immigrated to the United States in 1969 when he was around 26 years old. Since settling in our city, he has remained in the Allwood section and has become a husband, father of seven, and eventually a grandfather.

He has found the city's residents to be extremely giving to each other and their neighbors.

"Clifton is a diverse community with people from different ethnic backgrounds. It feels like you're in an international community rather than around just one specific group," said Fahmy. "Some of us came from overseas, others have been here. The blend is really nice."

Fahmy described an early generosity-meets-camaraderie dynamic. It was apparent when one of his neighbors traveled overseas for two months and he had just moved to the city. That neighbor approached Fahmy and handed him a key to the house to check on it from time to time.

"It was a nice feeling that a neighbor trusts you that much to give you a key to their house while they're away," he said. "That kind of feeling was really, really beautiful."

Active in Allwood

No one feels estranged in Clifton, which is largely why Fahmy couldn't name something that he disliked about the city he's called home for over 50 years.



"My problem is, I love Clifton," said Fahmy simply. "So I do not see the problems of what I love."

The positivity that he embraces in his daily life and attitude is nurtured by and directly linked to his faith. Fahmy is a long-time member of the Islamic Center of Passaic County, and since the establishment of the mosque on Pershing Rd., he worships there.

Like every practicing Muslim, Fahmy prays five times per day and does so for five minutes. The obligatory prayers are called Salat and are among the Five Pillars of Islam, to connect with Allah, show gratitude, and seek guidance. The five prayers are Fajr (before sunrise), Dhuhr (noon), Asr (late afternoon), Maghrib (sunset), and Isha (nighttime), with each prayer's timing tied to the sun's position.

"It is not just a relationship between you and the Lord. It's how to live your life," said Fahmy. "From A-to-Z the Quran, the holy book, [provides guidance on] how to live, how to be a good neighbor, how to deal with bad neighbors, how to deal with the environment, how you should spend money, and your obligation toward poor people and society."



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Prayer, fasting, and journeying to Mecca are “all designed to connect the heart to the Creator.”

“You want to please Him all the time and you fear displeasing Him hopefully all of the time,” said Fahmy. “Islam is very comprehensive in every area ... so I don’t have freedom to do whatever I want.”

“I do what the Lord wants me to do. I do ‘this’, I guarantee paradise,” he continued. “I do ‘this’, it guarantees punishment. ‘The one who submits his will to the will of his Creator’ — that means ‘Muslim.’”

Fahmy remains agile and active, enjoying pastimes like fishing, walking, and reading. After four years at Givaudan, he switched companies and worked at International Flavors & Fragrances for 30 years and rose to the level of Senior Creative Perfumer.

Now retired, Fahmy volunteers three to four times per week in the ICPC’s Community Center. He does religious teaching with mainly teenagers and adults.

So it’s really no wonder how a man who gives back to

others formed such deep bonds with his neighbors. When he worked for Givaudan as a perfume designer, he even distributed some of the perfumes that the senior officers received for Christmas to his neighbors.

It was a small act of kindness that he believes they appreciated, and they returned the favor by inviting him and his family into their homes and vice versa.

“My children never felt discriminated against. They felt very safe in the neighborhood and never had any problem in Clifton when it came to safety,” said Fahmy. “These are all of the things that made Clifton a real home for me and my family.”

And he hopes our city’s newest residents take a similar approach when it comes to connecting with those who live around them.

“Just get involved. Don’t be passive,” he advised. “Get involved in politics, in sports activities, in Little League. Any kind of activity. The city is beautiful and if we are all involved, we will make it even more beautiful.”

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Planning For Tomorrow

Contention and disagreements are part of life, but Matt Ward believes there's a better way to approach how we discuss our opposing and passionate views.

"We can disagree, but we don't have to be disagreeable," said Ward, 68. "There will be issues people passionately feel about, but when I was on the School Board and on the Council, there was always a tomorrow."

"How you handle today sets in place how things will be handled tomorrow," he elaborated. "If you burn a bridge with somebody, it may not be in the best interest of yourself or what you're advocating for. Some people get that, some people don't."

Like many Cliftonites, Ward identifies where he lives based on the nearest landmark. "I live near the White Castle," he said proudly. "Just two blocks away."

Ward attended the former St. Paul's School on Main Ave. and graduated from Paul VI Regional High School in 1975, now the new Maple Valley Middle School. "I'm happy it's of use [to the school district] rather than it becoming housing or being for commercial use," said Ward.

Where he lives now with his wife, Celeste (CHS 1974), is just a few blocks from his childhood home. The point is he's seen the ways that the neighborhood has evolved over the several decades. For example, dining establishments.

When the legendary Italian eatery Belvedere closed, it made way for Yasmeen Mediterranean Cuisine in Downtown Clifton. In Botany, the Dayton is now a Columbian restaurant. Toros, a Turkish restaurant, was once Ed Hol-lar's Inn, a Hazel Ave. watering hole.

"It's evolving to fit the needs of people who live here now," said Ward. "You're going to see a different ethnic mix, specifically with restaurants, serving the different needs of the people with many neighborhoods still being, in many places, residential."

Certain quality of life issues are perhaps inevitable. As the city grows in its population, issues of traffic and people littering are increasingly relevant. There's also the noise pollution.

"People driving with what I call a 'driving concert', where they have to make sure their music is being blown out with the windows up or down," said Ward. "A lot is by



virtue of the evolution of an area, but we need to maintain vigilance."

"Sometimes the [city's enforcement] is not as active as it should be in that area," he added, "and it's like a spiral. The spiral only becomes more so if you don't pay attention to those things."

United, But Unique

Getting where we need to go in a short amount of time is what makes Clifton desirable to many, including Ward. Whether it is to the Parkway and major highways, the airport, or New York, it is what Ward

believes is "one of the reasons Clifton really took off."

That, and the attractive neighborhoods. He got a closer look at how the different sections of our city operate in his past public service roles. Ward served on the Planning Board from 1988 until 1992, the Board of Education from 1999 until 2002, serving as president in his last year; and he was a city councilman from 2006 until 2014.

A positive change that he's seen in politics since those years is the accessibility that residents have when it comes to watching meetings from home.

"We've had [the Clifton Cable channel] for quite some time," Ward said, "but if they really want to keep up with what's going on and can do it from the comfort of their home that's a positive."

"It helps people understand what's going on and not be dependent on someone interpreting the news for them, like a newspaper," he added. "They can just watch the meetings and make their own interpretations."

One misconception about our neighborhoods that Ward would like people to consider is how they're different from one another and, by nature of these differences, have unique needs.

"Although we use the name 'Clifton', it's important to really understand the neighborhoods," said Ward. "They're not the same. It's not to say that one is better or worse, but Clifton encompasses a range of different neighborhoods and in [them] ... are a range of different people."

"It requires a real good understanding for people who are fortunate to get elected on the School Board or Council," he continued. "They need to understand how the neighborhoods evolved. It's not one-size-fits-all in Clifton."

*“Did I die and
just go to Heaven?”*



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Nadine Judeh, Allison Rouse, Abigail Prawetz, Milena Bednarczyk.

These Mustang leaders **have a voice...**

and their peers elected them to use it as Clifton's newest student representatives.
Read more about them, their goals, achievements, and who inspires them.

Student Council Association President Nadine Judeh

Nadine Judeh's family has led by example and fostered confidence in the Student Council Association Executive Committee President to do the same.

"My parents and my younger sister ... help me navigate my busy schedule and are always there for me, no matter what," said Judeh (CHS 2026). "I know that I can count on them, regardless of the circumstances."

"I am very blessed to have such an amazing family," she added. "I would be nowhere near the person I am today without their unwavering love and support."

Judeh doesn't shy away from challenging herself in her academics. There will be plenty more of it as she aspires to become a physician. Judeh loves math and science classes like Chemistry, Geometry, and Precalculus.

Teachers whose influence will stay with her after graduation include Math teachers Mr. Rafat Ewais and Ms. Lucyna Mierzwa, AP Chemistry teacher Dr. Lori McCoy, and violin teacher Mr. Jason Leshowitz.

"These classes have solidified my choice to enter the STEM field in college and beyond."

Outside the classroom, Judeh is Co-President of National Honor Society, President of National Math Honor Society, a member of the National Social Studies Honor Society and the National Science Honor Society, and a member of the Pre-Med Club.

Senior Class President Milena Bednarczyk

Social work is Milena Bednarczyk's calling and might lead her to supporting children someday.

"Right now, though," she said, "I aspire to finish college applications and do so without a pinch of procrastination. I hope to have an eventful and memorable senior year."

Bednarczyk (CHS 2026) is grateful for the influential teachers who've helped guide her to where she is now. One teacher is Ms. Andrea Miller-Hamilton, who taught Bednarczyk's AP Language Arts class in junior year.

The senior described her junior year as "one of my most stressful years both personally and academically" but said Miller-Hamilton's support and creation of a safe space allowed her to "express personal issues, which is something I will forever be grateful for."

"She is down-to-earth, witty, and extremely caring," said Bednarczyk. "Her honest disposition and outlook on the world is something I strive to have."

The Senior Class President's other extracurriculars include serving as the President of Kindness in Plants, a Witness Captain in Mock Trial, the Historian of Tri-M, and a four-year member of the CHS Orchestra. Bednarczyk's older sister Zofia inspires her on a daily basis.

"Zofia is someone I can be myself around and no matter where we are, whenever I am with her, I feel at home."

Junior Class President Abigail Prawetz

Abigail Prawetz has danced competitively for most of her life. So perhaps it's not a surprise that she'd like to help others dance through life as well, whether it's on a stage or in pursuit of their own passions.

That translates to ideally attending her dream school, the University of Michigan, or other top options of Monmouth or Rutgers. "I want to do something medical," said Prawetz (CHS 2027). "Whether that is nursing or opening my own physical therapy practice."

Time management is one major high school hurdle that Prawetz has needed to navigate, but she has a strong support system. Prawetz's biggest inspiration is her mother, who she said is the one who "shaped me into the person I am today."

"She is one of the kindest people that I know," said Prawetz, "and I have always strived to be like her."

Prawetz's favorite subject is English, because she has "always loved expressing my emotions and creativity through writing." Yet Prawetz credited AP U.S. History teacher Mr. Christopher Henry as her most influential teacher.

"He consistently challenges us to think critically and engage with the material," she said. "He uses unique teaching methods, such as requiring handwritten notes, which encourage us to process information more thoughtfully."

Sophomore Class President Allison Rouse

No longer among the youngest students to walk the halls on Colfax Ave., Allison Rouse is dedicated to growing, giving back, and connecting with her school community.

Her extracurriculars include Student Council, the Teachers Assistant Program, Superintendent Ambassadors, Heroes and Cool Kids, and the Global Mentor Program. Rouse also plays in a volleyball league and hopes to try out for new sports in the coming year, as well as Key Club.

"These experiences have taught me leadership, teamwork, and the importance of staying engaged and curious, both inside and outside the classroom," said Rouse (CHS 2028). Math piques Rouse's interest, because it requires her to tackle it like a puzzle. Rouse always finds it rewarding "when everything falls into place."

"I love how it combines logic and creativity, and how every problem has its own path to the solution," she said. "It keeps me engaged and thinking, and I'm always excited to learn more."

Rouse also learns a great deal from family and friends. She appreciates their ongoing love and encouragement, which ties into her career goal of becoming a psychiatrist.

"I hope to make a real difference in people's lives, offering comfort, hope, and even a smile when it's needed most, just as they have always done for me."



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Pick 2 for NJ Assembly

Adam Kraemer – Republican

If he is elected to the General Assembly next month, Adam Kraemer's top priority is making New Jersey an affordable place to live.

"To do that," said Kraemer, 58, "I think we have to shrink the size, scope, and tax burden of the state and local government." Kraemer grew up in Maplewood and now resides in West Orange with his wife, Ruth. They are parents to adult triplets Edna, Benson, and Naomi.

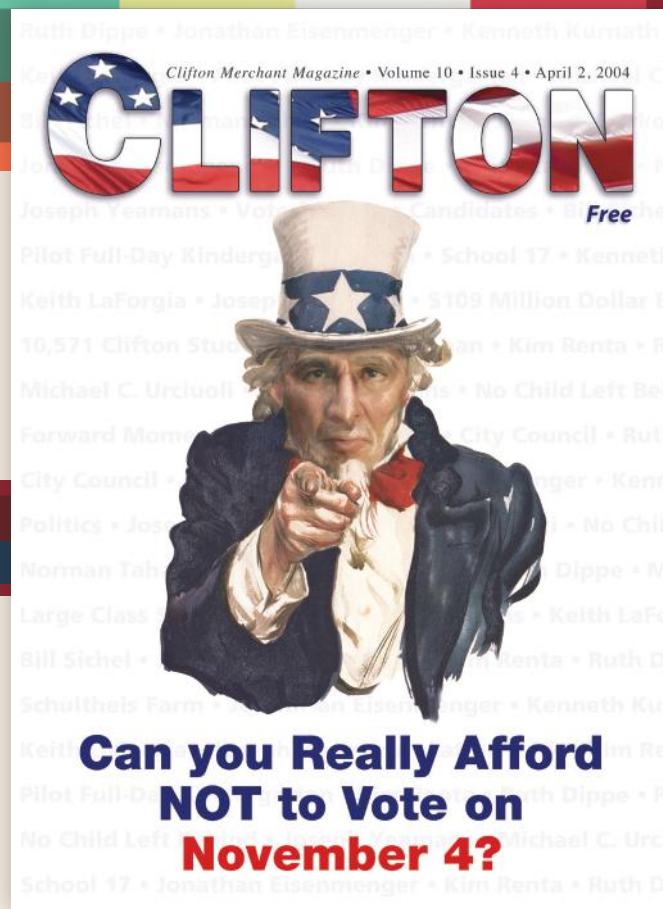
He earned his bachelor's from Colgate University and two master's degrees from Teachers College, Columbia University. Kraemer spent seven years in the classroom teaching Social Studies and is now semi-retired after working 25 years in credit and collection.

"I'm very good at budgets and have seen what happens when smart business decisions are not made and bad government decisions harm businesses and force them into financial problems," he said. "[That inspired] a lot of my motivation into running."

An emerging issue that he sees in Clifton — and throughout the 27th District and the state — is affordable housing mandates. Kraemer advocated for market solutions to "deal with affordable housing."

"We have to remove the restrictions on building housing so we can have developers that expand the housing supply, and thus lower the cost," said Kraemer. "In New Jersey, we have not been growing the supply of housing for a long time to meet the demand."

Kraemer also discussed methods for improving statewide efficiency, including ending prevailing wage in public construction and "making sure our electrical grid works at an affordable price." He noted it costs "well over \$200 million to make one-lane mile of road in New Jer-



sey." In 2016, the American libertarian think tank The Reason Foundation conducted a study with this finding.

The Department of Transportation and a study done by the University of Utah contradicted the 2016 findings, the latter stating that Reason improperly compared "a mile of one-lane country road in Wyoming to a mile of four-lane Turnpike in New Jersey."

Taking care of the electrical grid would involve needing to "fast-track natural gas, nuclear power generation, and get regulations out of the way to build needed natural gas pipelines. If we don't have an electrical grid that's working and has affordable power, we can't have a growing economy in New Jersey," said Kraemer. He previously ran for school board and county seats in Essex County, and State Senate. As someone who observes Orthodox Judaism, he said that he knows many rabbis in our city.

He has separately spoken to members of the Board of Education as a "big believer in changing how we run schools in New Jersey." The changes include ensuring "more parental control" and making sure that teachers can "maintain discipline and order in the classroom."

"We have to give people options with charter schools and home schools when their particular district may not provide educational services that work for them," he said.



Republican candidate Adam Kraemer, Democrats Rosy Bagolie and Alixon Col-lazos-Gill. Republican candidate Robert Iommazzo did not respond to our calls.

Rosaura “Rosy” Bagolie – Democrat

Assemblywoman Rosaura “Rosy” Bagolie believes kitchen table meetings are where productive civic growth is achieved. “How we feed our families, educate our children, and mitigate the high costs of electricity and water,” said Bagolie, 45, on topics that everyone can find a middle ground.

Bagolie was elected in 2023 to New Jersey’s Legislative District 27. Prior to that, she was on the Livingston Township Council. In addition to her work in the NJ Legislature, she has a career in public education. She is Superintendent of the East Newark Public School District and Principal of the East Newark School.

Nearing the end of her first term in the NJ Assembly, she still embraces individual rights, education, and the rights of workers. “I think I had a very successful first-term run,” reflected Bagolie. “Those topics are still at the forefront of everything I accomplished in the Assembly. I’ve moved legislation that has had a direct effect on our educators.”

Bagolie has acted as primary sponsor for over 100 bills, including Bill A4319: “Stop Antisemitism on College Campuses Act”; Bill A4855, which concerns policies governing a student’s use of cell phones and social media platforms in schools; and Bill A4680, requiring schools to universally

provide free meals to all students regardless of their federal eligibility for free or reduced meals.

On Sept. 5, Governor Phil Murphy and Bagolie were grand marshal and deputy grand marshal, respectively, at the Essex-West Hudson Labor Council-sponsored labor parade in Newark.

“[I’ve had] major pieces of legislation for a newbie that have made their way to the governor’s ear,” said Bagolie. “People think you’ll go [to Trenton] and change the world, but it’s really hard to move legislation.”

Bagolie said she is often in Clifton, attending flag raisings, veterans events and other civic forums. She responds when community leaders reach out in garnering funds for back-to-school initiatives.

Bagolie grew up in Elizabeth and lives in Livingston with husband Ricky, who grew up in Clifton and is the former Passaic-Clifton Unico president. They have three sons: Frank, 19, and twins Jacob and Aaron, 16.

She received her Bachelor’s in Social and Behavioral Sciences at Seton Hall; Master’s in Elementary Education; Doctorate in Educational Leadership, Management, and Planning; and Master’s in Special Education and Learning Disabilities from Rutgers.

And she’s eager to continue serving, whether it’s fighting for funding for new families who need childcare subsidies or writing bills to support individuals struggling with water bills. Bagolie has also spoken with our Board of Ed regarding connectivity issues.

“I’ve contacted Verizon to make sure they address the needs of the school district,” she said. “I’ve sat with the CEO of the Passaic Valley Water Commission to address concerns about brown water. Our district is complex ... and it’s a road to navigate to see where we can assist everyone.”

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Alixon Collazos-Gill – Democrat

Assemblywoman Alixon Collazos-Gill is running on immigration, the environment, and being vocal about why she's a Democrat. She emigrated from Columbia at age 14 and grew up in Long Branch.

"In high school, there were ESL classes that helped me learn English, but also free and reduced lunch. These were not charity programs," said Collazos-Gill, 49. "These were investments made in me by policymakers."

"I do believe that policies have been put in place, because Democrats believe it's great to invest in ... services that help people, especially kids, be their best selves," she added. "That's what I'm running on."

The Montclair resident said how federal detentions and ICE raids have contributed to an added urgency versus two years ago. She's a primary sponsor for Bill A4987, to establish protections for immigrants interacting with government agencies with the "New Jersey Immigrant Trust Act."

Collazos-Gill serves on the Environment, Natural Resources, and Solid Waste Committee, which she asked to serve on after being elected.

"I was told I was crazy for choosing that ... since it's al-

most like a punishment, because it's so complicated, long, and no one is ever really happy with what happens in that committee," said Collazos-Gill. "These [climate issues are] happening right now, but I do believe that these are big, global, long-term issues that will affect New Jersey."

Part of her approach to the climate crisis is addressing how it affects our infrastructure. She's a primary sponsor for the "Climate Superfund Act", to impose liability on fossil fuel companies for certain damages caused by climate change.

"It's a big idea, but a very possible idea. I'm really hoping we move forward with that bill this year," said Collazos-Gill, "because taxpayers have been paying the cost of infrastructure [damage] due to climate change."

"When [flooding and fires] happen, we have to repair the roads, beaches, and public buildings that get fully destroyed," she continued. "How about having some of the polluters aware of the damages they caused be part of the solution? They wouldn't be fully paying for it, but they'd be another partner."

Collazos-Gill is married to Essex County Commissioner Brendan Gill and has two kids, Gabriel, 16, and Kristen, 13. She earned her bachelor's at Rutgers – Newark in Sociology and Latin American Literature. Her professional and political backgrounds have included creating a government relations and communications firm with Gill, as well as acting as a state committee person and DNC delegate.

She is proud to have brought the Economic Development Authority to our city in March when they provided a session on women entrepreneurship, plus all the available grants to address economic development.

"Clifton is a really diverse town. It has a lot of heart and passion, and I love that," she said. "One of the things that I've heard is not every community feels like they're being heard."

Collazos-Gill is eager to continue meeting with residents and is willing to explain where to find resources, adding that sometimes it's not a lack of resources but helping connect the dots for community members. "Bringing the resources from Trenton to my district feels like my other job," she said.

And so is knowing how to prioritize what you bring to the Legislature. "[The Legislative process] can be complicated but ... understanding what your priorities are ... and having that big goal is really important."

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A seven-member Board of Commissioners governs Passaic County. These elected officials serve as the middle layer of government between the federal, state and 16 municipalities in Passaic County. Voters will elect Commissioners at large for a three-year term. Three candidates are newcomers and one previously held a seat.

passaic COUNTY NEW JERSEY

Pick 2 for Passaic County Commissioners

When Michael Ramaglia visits any of our county's 16 municipalities, residents have a simple but pressing request: "When you get elected, please don't forget to come back."

"People see how active I am at events. I don't take it lightly; I'm not in and out," said Ramaglia, 50. "I like to communicate. A fundraiser is fun to go to for a few moments, but I'd rather knock on doors and hear about the concerns that 'Mrs. Jones' has."

"I receive a tremendous amount of ideas from the public," he continued, "and you should come back like you visited while you were seeking office. It makes you a better leader and is good to be accessible at all times to constituents."

Ramaglia grew up in Middletown, NY before relocating 30 years ago to the Garden State. He lives in Pompton Lakes with his wife, Heather, and they have two daughters, Gianna, 18, and Antonia, 11.

Ramaglia works as the Division Manager of Building Solutions at The Falcon Group, a leading engineering and architectural firm based in New York City. He is also a former Councilman of West Milford and a former Commissioner of the Passaic County Board of Elections.



Democrats Michael Ramaglia and Christina Schratz.



He currently serves as a Commissioner for the Passaic County Improvement Authority, enabling Ramaglia to "contribute to public development initiatives that promote long-term regional growth and community well-being."

The candidate for Passaic County Commissioner is now running on issues such as affordability, protecting seniors and youth, and economic development. "[We need] to keep the progress moving in Passaic County with infrastructure, our parks, protecting seniors with the Board of Social Services, and our youth with Camp Hope," he explained. "[We also need to do] whatever we can do to advocate for local businesses."

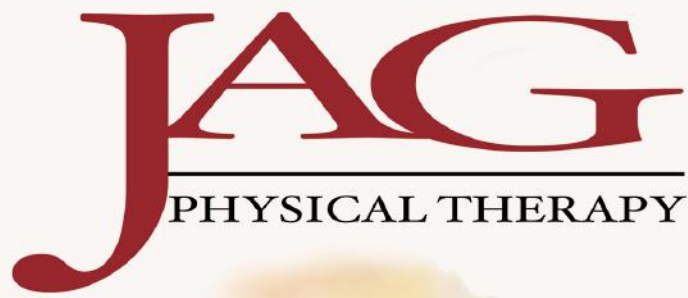


Republicans Danilo Ramirez and Nicolino Gallo.



"It's about realizing that people are living check-to-check and things are very expensive at the moment," said Ramaglia. "Hopefully it will take a turn, and I will continue to advocate for the things that Passaic County does very well."

When asked about the much-contested proposed improvements to county-managed Allwood Rd., Ramaglia said that it was a topic brought up during his different times visiting the city for meet and greets or at the Food Truck, Music, & Car Show Festival in August.



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“The short answer is, I think [fellow Democratic candidate Christina Schratz] and myself need a little more time to get up to speed on it, because there is a lot of documentation behind that,” he said. “While I don’t think everyone will be 100% happy with what goes on there ... I do know the residents should have their input, most certainly.”

Striving to enrich her community is why Christina Schratz got involved in the banking industry — and now it’s what Schratz hopes to bring to all 16 municipalities if she’s elected next month onto the Passaic County Board of Commissioners.

Born and raised in Passaic, she still resides in Clifton’s unofficial sister city and highlights the importance of entrepreneurship. She is a VP / Business Development Officer in Community Lending for a financial institution and always strives to “enrich small businesses so they can become bigger businesses.”

“I give [small businesses] the knowledge of the resources that New Jersey has to offer them,” said Schratz, 42. “For women-owned businesses, I also assist them to get together, network, and to help each other become better and successful business owners.”

Schratz started working in banks at the age of 17 as part of a high school program that prepared her for the industry. She attended Passaic County Community College while gaining her footing, and the mother of three is currently working toward her degree in Business Administration from William Paterson.

Her entry into politics came in 2017 when she was elected onto the Passaic Board of Education. She served as President of the Board for two years during the COVID-19 pandemic and serves as a member today.

“I always looked, as a community person, at how I could help the community whether it involved preparing the residents for financial literacy or for being homeowners or small business owners,” said Schratz. “When I came into politics that’s exactly what I wanted to do.”

Schratz emphasized that she believes the “entire Commission has done a great job in different areas”, which includes supporting services for seniors and for parks and recreation. Schratz is also impressed by the microtransit program, Passaic County MOVE, which launched May 20. The service offers Passaic and Clifton residents a trans-

portation option for \$1.80. “I’m hearing that a lot of our residents are using it to get rides for kids to go to school or seniors using it to go to doctor’s appointments,” said Schratz. “That is a great addition to the resources and services that the Commission is bringing to residents.”

Schratz is eager to continue working with individuals, non-profits, and business owners in our city. She has connected with clients in the Botany neighborhood and around Paulison Ave.

“There are so many different areas in Clifton and before saying that I’m going to work on this specific project or in a specific area, I’d want to see where there would be the most benefit. [I would also be] working with the other commissioners, because it is a commission board.”

Education, affordability, and immigration are all hot topics for Danilo Ramirez. On the education front, he plans to leverage his 23 years of experience as an educator.

In early August, the Passaic County Education Association endorsed Ramirez and Democratic candidate Christina Schratz. That endorsement was significant to Ramirez.

“It’s why I would like to run for [Passaic County Commissioner],” said Ramirez, 45. “I know a lot of what the county can do is based on the state, and that is based on [gubernatorial candidate] Jack Ciattarelli and a lot of his great plans for New Jersey.”

Ramirez oversees the World Language Department and is a Network Coordinator for Spanish for the College Achieve Public Schools in Paterson. He also serves the Plainfield and Asbury Park campuses and holds undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctorate degrees in his field from the University of Scranton and Saint Peter’s College (now University).

“First would be to [focus on] equalizing funding for all students,” Ramirez continued. “There is a disparity in the educational formula for money. Jack Ciattarelli is about there being accountability for all types of education — public, private, and charter.”

Where economic development is concerned, Ramirez pointed to his and fellow running mate Nicolino Gallo’s interest in “looking at how we can get businesses back into Passaic County.” Communication on all levels affects many issues where Ramirez is concerned.

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He highlighted having strong relationships with Senator Kristin Corrado, Assemblyman Christopher DePhillips, and Assemblyman Al Barlas. He wants that open line of communication with law enforcement regarding immigration.

“We’re not at the point of looking at hard-working illegal people here,” said Ramirez. “Just at the people who are committing crimes. First off, you came in illegally and, second, you are breaking our laws.”

Ramirez was raised in Jersey City and lives in Hawthorne with his wife, Maria, and two children, Michaela, 8, and Danny, 5. He has stayed civically active in Hawthorne with roles on the Zoning Board, as Vice President for the Hawthorne Regular Republican Organization, and as Chairman for the Hispanic Heritage Committee.

Looking ahead to serving Clifton as one of 16 municipalities, Ramirez has existing relationships with Mayor Raymond Grabowski and Republican Chairman Bob Calcagno. As a newer face on the county level, he’s ready to hear whatever issues concern our residents.

One of those might be improvements to county roads.

“If we ... bring back incentives for businesses to come into town, any monetary gain should go toward the infrastructure of roads,” said Ramirez. “People’s cars keep getting flats, and that’s not right. We would look to improve any county road, and I think that’s a bipartisan priority.”

Nicolino Gallo believes that more can be done in our county and in our country, but first there needs to be unity.

“Considering everything that is going on in the country, state, and world,” said Gallo, 56, “I hope there’s more peace and everyone can work out these differences.”

“It’s upsetting, it really is, especially for the youth today because, as they grow up, it’ll be more difficult,” he continued. “Unity is strength. If we’re united as Democrats and Republicans, then we can do so much more.”

In 2022, Gallo was sworn in for his first term as Passaic County Commissioner and became the first Republican elected to the Board since the GOP swept three seats in 2009. Gallo’s first term ended in 2024 and, although he did not win re-election last November, he’s optimistic and eager to focus on the big issues.

“The biggest concern in Passaic County and the state of New Jersey is affordability,” said Gallo. “It’s very difficult,

especially after COVID, with such astronomical inflation.”

“The prices of health insurance and electricity? It’s difficult nowadays, especially for seniors,” he continued. “[But that could be addressed if] we could reduce property taxes and reduce the cost of energy.”

Born in Calabria, in southwest Italy, Gallo grew up in West Paterson after immigrating to the U.S. with his family in 1974. It was challenging, Gallo recalled, arriving in March and starting Kindergarten in September.

He would go on to start his business, Superior Sod & Land Design Inc., in 1987 when he was in high school and continues to run the business after 38 years. His entrepreneurship tied into his interest in his first term with helping local small business owners recover from the pandemic so more job creators would be encouraged to settle and thrive in our county.

Gallo and his wife, Nancy, are long-time Totowa residents. They have three grown children: Michael, Alyssa, and Nicolino Giovanni.

When asked about Downtown Clifton’s business strip, he offered a couple of thoughts. “If they beautify the neighborhood a bit with planters and with benches, I think that it would bring more traffic,” said Gallo. “If there are also older buildings that the municipality can purchase, if in budget, adding more parking spaces down there could get more foot traffic.”

He also touched upon Clifton’s infrastructure needs, which included a conversation that he had at the Clifton Street Fair last month with an older gentleman who uses a scooter.

“He asked, when I get elected, to address the dropped curbs on Van Houten Ave.,” said Gallo. “Evidently, the street sank a little bit [making it difficult for] scooters, bicycles, or pedestrians to ride or walk over them safely.”

New Jersey’s next governor is also on the Nov. 4 ballot. Voters will be choosing between Democrat Mikie Sherill and Dale Caldwell for Lieutenant Governor who are facing Republican Jack Ciattarelli and running mate Jim Gannon in a tightening race that continues to make major headlines. Are you registered to vote? The voter registration deadline for the election is Oct. 14. Learn more at vote.org/new-jersey or call 1-877-NJ-VOTER (1-877-658-6837) with questions.

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Main Cure Pharmacy opened at 1245 Main Ave. in Downtown Clifton on Sept. 20. Owners Bassel Fattal, George Fattal and Fadi Sarkis, with family and friends, celebrated with a ribbon cutting and a reception. "We are an independent and family-owned pharmacy, offering personal care as a great option to corporate owned pharmacies," said George Fattal. Pictured right is Father Richard Shackil, a pastor at Sacred Heart Armenian Catholic Church in Little Falls and longtime Clifton resident.

CHS 1975 50th reunion is Nov. 15 at the Glen Ridge Country Club. Call Susan (Stier) Boscia at 973-405-1552 or join the FB group CHS Class of 1975. Deadline is Oct. 31.

The CHS '76 Mustangs Bicentennial class will host its 50th reunion in June of 2026. Email Big Johnny George at georgesservice@gmail.com.

Passaic County 200 Club's "Ignite the Night Fall Fund-raiser" is Oct. 14 at 6:30 pm at The Grand in Totowa. Magician and mentalist Gianni Palumbo will entertain before and after dinner. Cost is \$125 or 10 for \$1,100. Sponsors, membership and sales provide assistance, scholarships and support to first responders and their families in Passaic County. Go to pc200club.org or email pc200club@aol.com.



The late Fred Torres at right with family: wife Anna at left, and their kids Brian and Jessica.

The 12th Annual Fred Torres Memorial 5K takes place Oct. 12 at Garret Mountain Reservation, starting at 9:30 am. Race proceeds go to the Fred Torres Memorial Fund, supporting the Clifton Mustangs Summer Track Camp held at CHS Stadium, and the Fred Torres Memorial Scholarship, presented each year to outstanding CHS senior student athletes in cross country and track & field. Fee ranges from \$10 for kid races to \$35. Register at fredtorresmemorialfund.org. The race honors the legacy of Fred Torres, a dedicated runner who suffered a heart attack on Jan. 20, 2014 while jogging with colleagues.



Boy Scout Troop 21's annual Spaghetti Dinner is Oct. 26, noon to 5 pm at St. Philip the Apostle Church Auditorium, on Valley Rd. Monies raised help fund activities for the scouts. The all-you-can-eat spaghetti is served by the scouts topped with home-made sauce and meatballs. There is also salad, bread, coffee, tea, dessert and refreshments. Takeout orders are also available. Price is \$18, seniors pay \$15, kids 5-11 are \$10, and those 4 and under are free with a paying adult. Tickets at the door. For details about the dinner or joining Boy Scout Troop 21, email: troop21clifton@gmail.com.

Clifton Garden Club meets Oct. 14, 6:30-8:30 pm at the Allwood Library. Master Gardener and photographer Mary Jo Sichak will present "More than Monarchs," a look at over 125 species of other Garden State butterflies, their life cycles, and how to attract them to your garden. Guests welcome. Questions? Call Donna Fantacone 973-473-0577.

The NJ Elks fundraiser at Wendy's, 83 Main Ave., on Oct. 14 will benefit the Peer Leadership Conference on Drug Awareness. The Elks receive 15% of the total receipts from all patrons dining in, taking out or driving through between 5-8 pm. No coupons needed. October kicks off Red Ribbon Week and Drug Awareness Month.

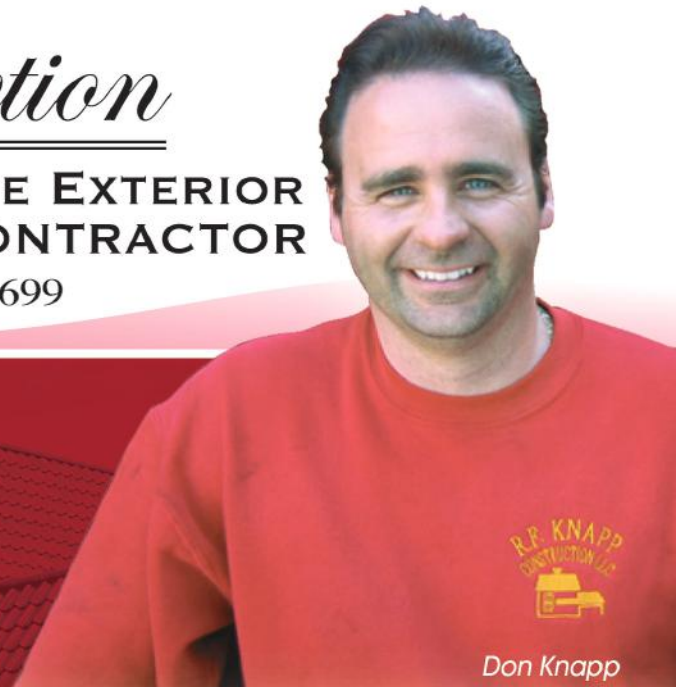


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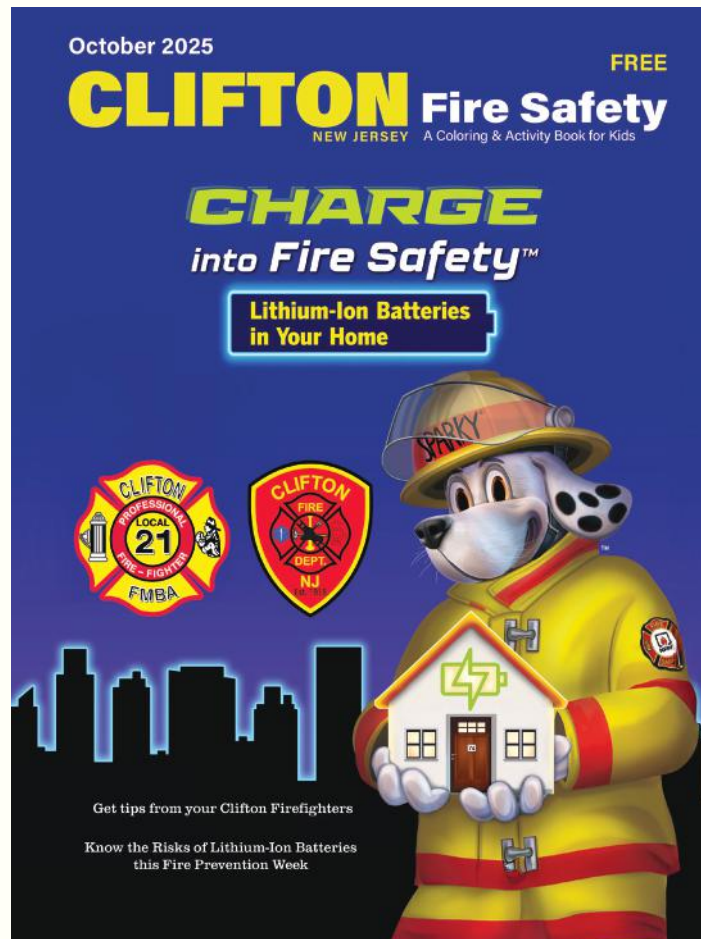


The improper use, charging and disposal of lithium-ion batteries can cause fires in homes, storage units and in businesses. That is why “Charge into Fire Safety: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home” is the theme for the 2025 national campaign during Fire Safety Month.

To help promote that message, the Clifton Fire Safety Coloring & Activity Book is once again available. The booklet is published by Tomahawk Promotions, *Clifton Merchant Magazine* and local businesses, listed below, who banded together to pay for the booklet’s printing.

Clifton Firefighters will visit public and private schools to talk about fire safety and distribute the books during October. In case you did not get a copy, call 973-470-5801 to find out where you can pick them up.

Clifton Firefighters/FMBA 21 Winter Coat Drive is underway to help keep our community warm this winter. Donate new or old coats for adults and children to be distributed to Clifton charities and families in need. Donation drop-off at Station 1 (69 1st St.), Station 2 (7 Dumont Ave.), Station 3 (180 Mahar Ave.), Station 4 (144 Main Ave.), Station 5 (51 Brighton Rd.), Station 6 (1202 Van Houten Ave.). Email info@cliftonfmba21.org with questions.



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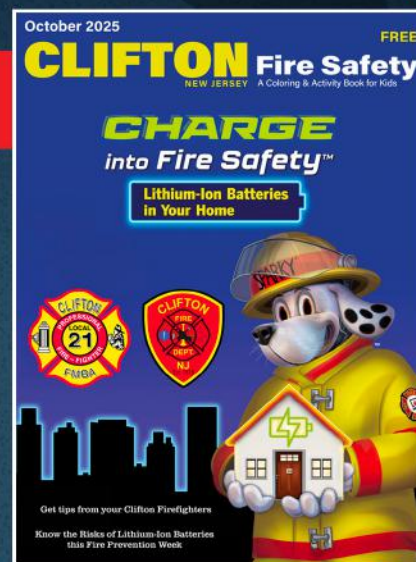
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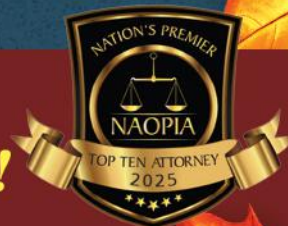


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Courtesy of Sony Pictures Television

Competing in the living room with your family during game night is one thing. For Andrew Smith, it was a precursor for appearing in front of a much larger audience.

To be exact, an estimated audience of seven to eight million people. And the stage? Stage 11 of Sony Pictures Studios in Culver City, California.

Smith, an 8th grade Social Studies teacher at Christopher Columbus Middle School, appeared on the Sept. 17 episode of Wheel of Fortune's Teachers Week. Although Smith admits that he was only an occasional viewer, the events leading up to his appearance began when his sisters forgot to cancel their free trial of different game show games through the Roku TV application.

The games included karaoke, Jeopardy, and Wheel of Fortune.

"I figured, we might as well make the most of these games that we have on the TV," said Smith, 28. "We were playing Jeopardy, then Wheel, and while we were playing Wheel, I kept winning. I guessed words before they could figure out what the word meant."

That led to sisters Sarah and Abby taking matters into their own hands. Smith credited Sarah for the idea and Abby for being his biggest supporter, and he explained how getting him signed up started "kind of as a joke."



"Then the first interview came and the whole process turned from a joke into reality," he recalled.

The first interview went well, which led to the show scheduling him for a second longer one. The second round involved him practicing puzzles and competing against other people. It took about two months before he heard back from the game show, so he didn't have any expectations.

"They asked if I could go out and film on April 24," said Smith. "What started as a family game night on Christmas turned into me being on a national game show on television."

Blink and You Miss It

Self-described as a "classic game-show version of 'Hangman'" where contestants "solve word puzzles for cash and prizes", Smith described the interview process as "a little nerve-wracking at first."

It also seemed far out of reach.

"I was driving home from Christmas with my girlfriend, Lauren, joking around with her by saying, 'Imagine, I'll be on Wheel of Fortune,'" Smith laughed. "It says that over a million people audition every year. You never think that you'll be the one going on the show."

Despite not knowing what to expect, the first-round interview was straightforward. Smith told the show about

himself and whether he was interested in any themed show. That's when he said he would be interested in participating in Teachers Week.

"Honestly, [the process] was cool, because it brought my family together," he said. "We started watching it every night throughout the audition process. At 7:30, we'd all gather around the TV and I would practice."

"I became so competitive that I'd get mad at my sisters and mom for yelling out before I could answer," said Smith. "I'd tell them, 'I need to practice!' The competitive side came out of me."

The trip out west marked Smith's first time in California. He was joined by his girlfriend, Lauren, sister Abby, and his mother, Holly. The group made a three-day trip out of it, exploring the Santa Monica Pier, Malibu, and Hollywood.

Getting to the studio is when he met teachers and fellow contestants "Donna" from Tennessee and "Ursula" from California. That is when everything kicked into overdrive. He was only about \$2,000 short of making it to the final round.

But Smith said he's glad that he really took in the moment.

"I remember while [Ryan Seacrest and Vanna White] were walking out, my heart was pounding out of my chest. After that, it was all a blur," he said.

Smith remembers the puzzles, but he was amazed by how the whole process took about four months. He knew about three weeks prior that he'd be on the show and then filming only took roughly 30 to 35 minutes.

"It's over in the blink of an eye," he said. "I tried to take mental pictures and notes while standing up there before the first shoot happened. I was looking at the crowd, the board, and the wheel. I knew it would go so fast."

One Last Word ... of Advice

The Parsippany resident hopes that he did his Clifton community proud.

The middle school teacher was able to tell his students last year about the show, who ended up getting involved once the show requested videos and photos from students wishing him luck.

Smith credited his ability to adapt to the fast-paced game show as a combination of preparation and him being "a pretty good logical thinker."

"I definitely had to put some work into it to make sure that I perfected my craft before I was on the [show]," said Smith. "But teaching is also a profession where ... anything can be thrown at you at any second."

He is especially pleased that his episode aired during Teachers Week, stating that our city has felt like a second home to him since he started working in the school district at the end of 2019.

"I'd love to bring some positive light to the school district. It's such an awesome place to work," said Smith in early September. "There have been teachers and students who have asked me about Wheel and supported me and can't wait to watch with me. I hope it brings some light to how wonderful Clifton is as a place to work."

Our city is no stranger to the television set. We cheered as resident Hailey Mia took the stages of The Voice and American Idol in 2021 and 2024, respectively. We rooted for the Judeh family when they appeared before host Steve Harvey on Family Feud in 2023.

More recently, we watched shocking scenes unfold at the Tick Tock Diner in February when it appeared as a backdrop for the situational hidden camera TV series, "What Would You Do?"

Now with his own "once-in-a-lifetime" experience, Smith is eager for Mustang students not to be afraid to try new things like he did.

"School is a place where you should feel comfortable being you and expressing your opinions and values freely," he said. "Continue being you and keep growing and working on yourself to be the best person that you can be."

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At the Sept. 21 festival of the Holy Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral on Broad St. from left: Ivan Sukhyy, Iryna Sukha, Andriy Rivny, Oksana Knygnytska, Oksana Khan, Yaroslava Klymovych, Volodymyr Mohuchy, Fr. Oleksij Holchuk, Ivanna Semyrozum, Lillianna Chudolij, Maryna Gavrylchuk, Irina Erdogan, Natalia Holchuk, Iurii Baiurak. The parish's 100th anniversary banquet is Nov. 23 at the Westmount Country Club. For tickets and info, call Iurii Baiurak at 631-829-8656.

The construction of Holy Ascension began in 1968 with architectural design by Jaroslav Sichynsky and construction by Minnema Brothers (at a cost of \$750,000) was completed in 1971. The landmark house of worship accommodates 400 and blends classic and contemporary Byzantine styles.

Inside, the symbolism of God's house of worship is embodied in brick and laminate beams. They contrast with marble altars, stained-glass windows and elegant, unusually highly-extended wood-planks and a battened cupola.

The Iconostas, together with remodeled Austrian crystal chandelier, bridge old and new. The exterior, of stone and brick, is further enhanced with a copper dome, crowned with the three-barred cross covered in gold leaf.

The cathedral has become a beautiful addition to the cityscape as it is strategically located for its architecture to be visible at multiple points of travel into Clifton.

Passaic Ukrainian Church To Dedicate New Location

PASSAIC — Holy Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 47 Hope Ave., will dedicate its new rectory and grounds at 635 Broad St., Clifton, at 2 p.m. Oct. 1.

The Very Rev. Mitered T.O. Forsty, pastor of the church, will officiate at the ceremonies. Friends and clergy from New Britain, Conn.; Johnson City, N.Y., Philadelphia, Carteret, and Wilmington, Del., have accepted invitations to attend.

Following the dedication there will be a banquet at the Clifton Casino, 435 Broad St. Clifton Mayor Joseph J. Vanecek and members of the Clifton City Council have accepted invitations to attend. Frank Nakonechny and

Walter Sosonka are chairman and cochairman, and Peter Dutkevich, president of the church, will be toastmaster.

Holy Ascension was founded in Passaic in 1925, when the present Hope Avenue church was purchased. The first president of the congregation was Dmytro Leshchyhyn. The old building will be taken to make way for Route 21, and the church formed a building committee to plan a replacement.

The congregation purchased a 2.39-acre site, formerly known as "Hacker's Farm," on Broad Street for \$100,000. The site will accommodate a new church hall, which will house the church school, in addition to the church and the rectory.



Thanks to "Clifton The Golden Years" a Sept. 23, 1967 Herald News clip of Holy Ascension tells of the first liturgy to be celebrated in Clifton. The undated photo is of festival co-chairs Walter Raketsky, William Kraus and Paul Voinov.

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www.novafcu.com

Dine for a cause with HG McCully Upstate Chapter 12 Pioneers on Oct. 21 from 5 to 8 pm at Wendy's, 83 Main Ave. No coupons needed. Dine-in, drive-thru, or take-out during the allotted time and 15% of your purchase will support the nonprofit's mission. Questions? Email: newvisionhgmccullyupstatepioneer@gmail.com.

The St. Brendan & St. George Church Tricky Tray is noon on Oct. 11, 154 East 1st St. Discounts on entry and ticket packets before Oct. 6. Call 973-772-1115. Buy tickets at stbrendan-george.org/tricky-tray.

School 5 Home & School Association's 90's Theme Tricky Tray and Bingo is Nov. 14 at the Boys & Girls Club, 181 Colfax Ave., from 6-10 pm. Tickets are \$25. To purchase: school5hasa.membershiptoolkit.com. Bring your own food and drinks. Questions? Email school5hasa@gmail.com.

The Valley Seniors Social Club is traveling to Lancaster, PA, Nov. 18-19 for Sight & Sound in Dutch Country. Call 973-420-8605 or 973-473-2321 for ticket prices.

Swingman & the Misfit Mutts at Ukie Center



Music, dancing, food and a pitcher of beer for your table all for \$50? That's what makes Oktoberfest at the Ukrainian Center on Oct. 25 a great deal. Doors open at 6pm at 240 Hope Ave., Passaic. There is also a tricky tray. Tickets purchased after Oct. 15 are \$60. Visit eventbrite.com.

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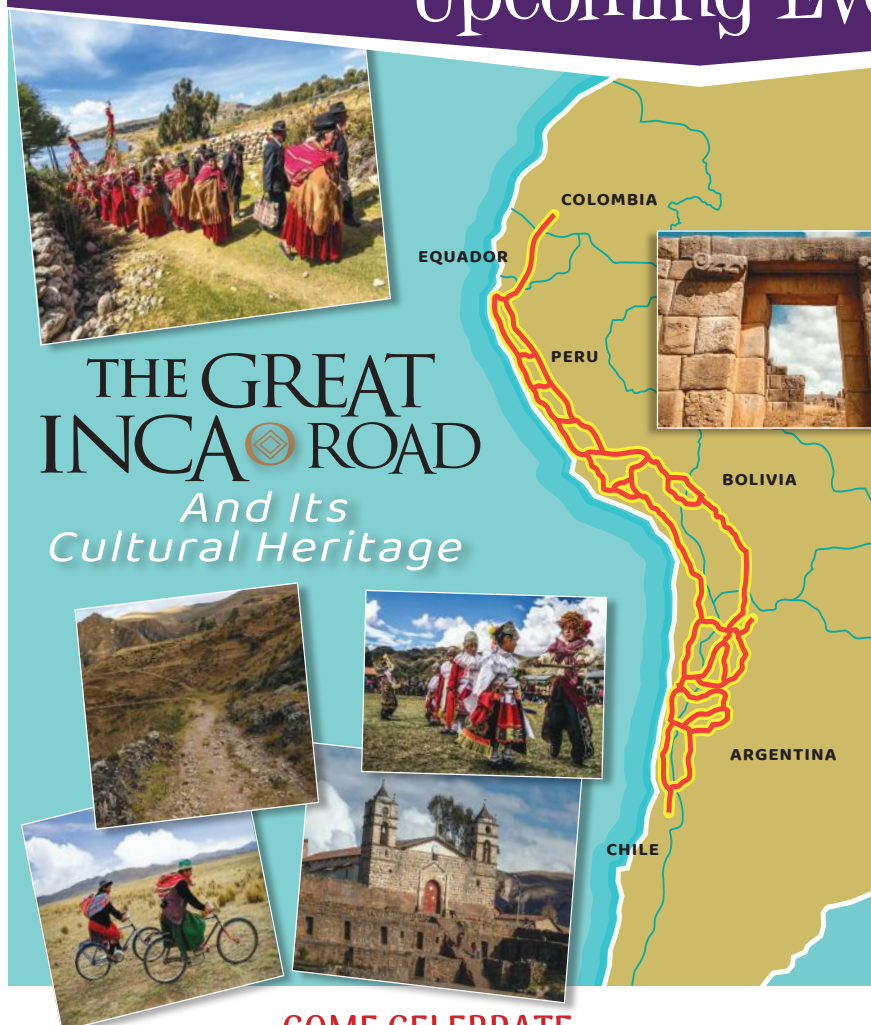
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Children ages 1 thru 6
Caregivers stay and play

Oct. 18th

2pm until 3pm

Residents \$25

Non-Residents \$28



Cast and crew for Kismet's production of "And Then There Were None." From left rear: Paul Carrazzone, Ryan Ruhl, Joel Wayne, Anthony Rotondi, Timothy Rodriguez, Barry Roy, Alan Niebuhr. Seated: Judi Niebuhr, Andrea Young, Kahleen Kellaigh, Caroline DeDios. Not pictured: Atilla Toy, Tara Freifeld.

“Ten little soldier boys went out to dine...” Thus begins the nursery rhyme with dark roots and a darker history that threads through the mind of Agatha Christie to give us this classic tale, which readers and audiences have enjoyed for generations. In November, Kismet Performing Artists The-

atre stages the dark Christie classic *And Then There Were None* at the Clifton Arts Center in a joint fundraiser. Performances are Nov. 7, 8, 9, 14, 15 and 16. Friday and Saturday performances are at 7:30 pm while Sunday's show is 4 pm. Go to kismettheatre.org or call 973-559-3276 for tickets.

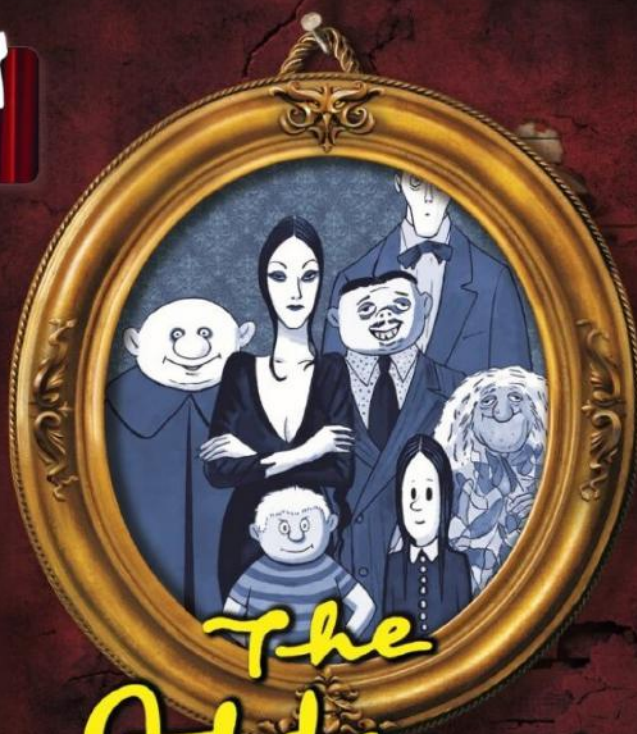


At the opening of the Hispanic Heritage Month exhibit at the Clifton Arts Center, from left: Councilwoman Rosemary L. Pino, Carlos Yamberla De La Torre of the Consulate of Ecuador, Rosario Canarte Valle, Peter Cedeno Castro, Paquita Delgado Madrid of the Ecuadorian Alliance Organization and Roxanne Cammilleri, CAC director. The exhibit continues through Oct. 25, open Wednesdays to Saturdays, 1 to 4 pm.

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This program is funded, in part, through a grant from the New Jersey State Council of the Arts, Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment of the Arts.



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11th Annual Fundraiser

Over 400 vehicles and thousands of visitors, vendors and volunteers turned out for the Clifton Boys & Girls Club's 11th Annual Car, Truck & Motorcycle Show. Held on Sept. 14 in the Summit Health parking lot on Broad St., the goal is to raise funds for Club programs. And thanks to sunny skies, exhibitors, volunteers, sponsors and attendees, the show is now a must-attend regional event.





MUSTANG

SPORTS



Story by Tom Szieber
Photos by
Ian Matthew Photography

From left seniors Hillary Batista
and Alexis Smith with
Junior Samantha Rodriguez.

The Clifton girls have been outstanding this season in cross country competition and could be on the verge of bringing home some championship hardware. The Mustangs, led by senior Alexis Smith, are a perfect 5-0 in division dual meets.

Smith most recently took first place in the Brett Taylor Invitational at Darlington Park in Mahwah on Sept. 27 with a time of 20:40. Junior Samantha Rodriguez (21:38) finished fourth overall. Rodriguez and senior Hillary Batista — who finished 12th in the BTI — have consistently finished in second and third for Clifton on the trails this year.

The Clifton boys finished September 2-3 in duals and have good leadership at the top of the lineup, though they are still working to string wins together. Senior Anthony Pichardo (18:11, 10th place in the BTI) has been the Mustangs' top runner and continues to improve.

"The girls have improved a bit quicker," head coach John Pontes acknowledged. "But as the season goes on, we have the North Jersey Championship at Garret Mountain and the Big North Liberty Division Championship, and I look for [the boys] to move up a little in that. The girls will be chased by Bergen Tech and Passaic Tech [in the Liberty Division meet] and I think we have a chance to win."

Clifton football, meanwhile, enters October on a bye week. It couldn't come at a better time, as the Mustangs will need some major recalibrating to turn their season around. Their 0-4 start is their worst since the year before head coach Ralph Cinque took over the program. They lost their first nine games that year (2014) before defeating Passaic on Thanksgiving. They will be on a two-game road trip to start the month, facing Bayonne (2-3) on Oct. 3 and Morris Knolls (2-3) on Oct. 11.

In boys soccer, the Mustangs are off to a solid start — though not a dominant one in the manner Clifton fans are used to. They won four of their first six games, but suffered upset losses to Wayne Hills and Passaic. Star senior forward Simon Deossa leads Clifton in points (13) and goals (six) as of Sept. 28.

On the clay, Mustangs girls tennis has been steadily improving under new head coach Nicole Mooney. Clifton earned shutout road wins over Passaic and Hackensack on Sept. 15 and 19, respectively, to get them to .500 before dropping a close 3-2 match to Lodi. Clifton took on West Orange in the North I, Group IV tournament on Sept. 29 and Paterson Eastside on Sept. 30, both on the road, in matches that did not make press.

Clifton's Code Blue Warming Center, a lifeline for the unhoused, is in operation from Nov. 1 through March 31. The warming center, at the Rec Center, 1232 Main Ave., opens when temperatures dip below freezing and Code Blue is activated. Health Department Social Worker Nate King told The Clifton Times in January that extremely cold weather this past winter season kept their doors open 24/7.

For 2025, Clifton Health received a \$50,000 grant that covers only part of the ongoing expenses related to the operation of the warming center. Last season's expenses were close to \$95,000, including salaries for police, a security company, Health Dept. staff, clothing, and office supplies.

Support is essential and appreciated. Food was donated by the Love of Grub, Allwood Diner, Power of One, St. Peter's Haven, and Food Brigade. You can help, too. To donate essential items, visit City Hall, 900 Clifton Ave., with items like body wipes, toothbrushes, mouthwash, toilet paper, hairbrushes, body wash, deodorant, body/hand lotion, vaseline, shampoo, underwear, gloves, and long sleeve sweats. Interested in volunteering or want to help? Call Nate King at 973-470-5780.

Clifton Cares supports our troops but mailing costs are now \$29.95. To contribute, make check and mail to: Clifton Cares Inc., City Hall, 900 Clifton Ave., Clifton, NJ 07013. The holiday mailing includes cards from children and residents. To add a card, leave it in the city hall bin before Nov. 15. Also seeking candy, peppermints, chocolate, ramen noodles, beef jerky, packaged hot chocolate, sweetener for water, and any kind of gummy candy. Got a question? Email Chris Lyszner at grandmachrissy99@aol.com.



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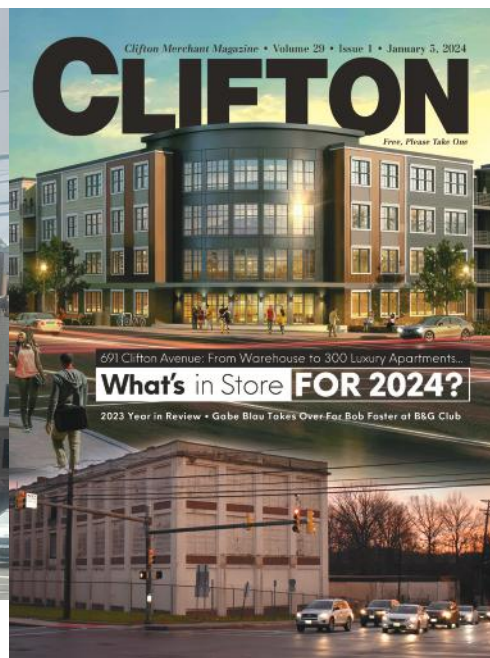
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The project above on Sept. 30 and illustrated on our January 2024 cover.



Fright, flight, or freight? Spooky season may have begun, but October might bring residents the treat that we've waited close to five years for: real progress on the Black Prince Redevelopment project. If it does, the first 100 units on Paulison Ave. will be ready for occupancy.

Many people were left scratching their heads when site work came to a halt in September of 2024. That's when we also learned that the project's original developer, Kevin X.

Codey of Clifton Station Developers, LLC, put the project on the auction block in an online bidding.

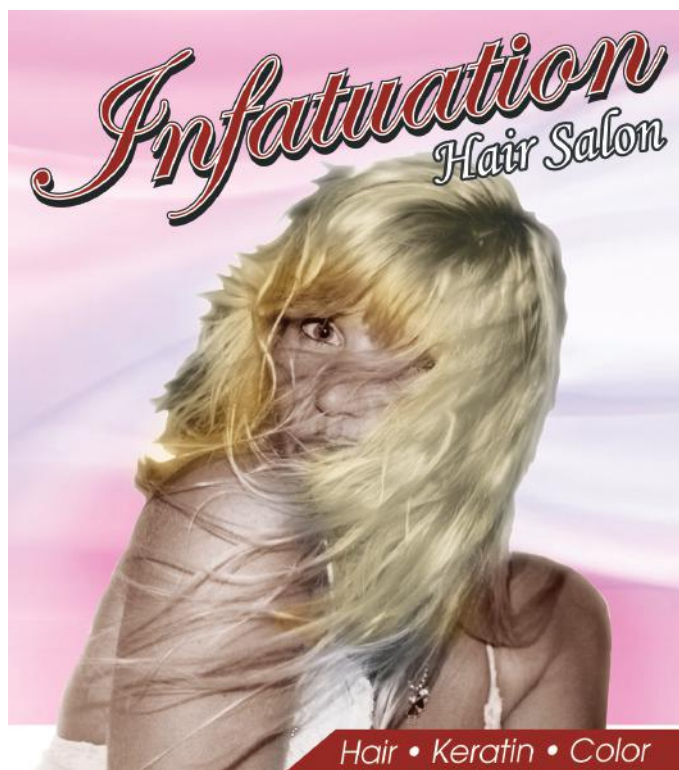
Now it appears to be full steam ahead for Clifton's future but yet unnamed transit village. Speaking at the Aug. 6 City Council meeting, City Manager Gary DeMarzo updated residents and council that a property transfer was done just days prior in lieu of foreclosure.

Now at the helm is Zach Kadden, Managing Director of Development at Madison Realty Capital Advisors, LLC. Though we were unable to reach Kadden before our magazine's deadline, his company bio states that he joined the firm in 2015 and focuses on "adaptive reuse commercial development projects, as well as ground up developments, which include mixed-use and mixed-income components." His experience and education span real estate development, design, construction, legal, land use planning, and policy.

"The gentleman was introduced to (the city officials in) construction and legal," DeMarzo said of Kadden. "It looks like they are motivated to finish the project, and so they made the representation that the first hundred units will be available for CO and then taxable in October."

There will be 300 units in total and DeMarzo said they will be offered for rent in three different phases. As we went to press on Sept. 30, the fence obscured the entire property. But it was busy. Deliveries were being made and landscapers were grating the property. Those first 100 apartments appear to be weeks from being offered for rent.

DeMarzo offered optimism in the Aug. 6 meeting: "They were very motivated in getting that project back online and back into [being] a revenue source for their organization, as well as the city."



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Death, Sex *and* Money

The Scoop on Community Lawyers



John A. Celentano, Jr.



You won't specifically find the names of William Holster or Bill Shershin, nor will you read of Don Hetchka, Harry Peterson, Harry Fengya, Dolph Corradino, Israel Friend or his son Gerry, who is still with us. Nor will you specifically read about the antics and deeds of former politicians, publishers or assorted hangers-on from the hey days of Clifton.

But if read between the lines of "Death, Sex and Money The Scoop on Community Lawyers," by John A. Celentano, Jr., you'll realize the author, a former municipal judge and seasoned community lawyer, is a great short story teller, often concluding with a wise morsal of truth.

In brief, easy-to-read paragraphs, the now 91-year-old dishes here and there on topics as explained in the book's title. It's funny stuff. While he does not invoke the names of most of his fellow old school Clifton barristers, he does write of William Carlos Williams, Lou Costello and even

Gov. Chris Christie. The stately gentleman also thanks his former law partner Henry C. Walentowicz, as well as his long-time legal secretary Christine Fucito, who also worked with him when he was Chair of the venerable Clifton Savings Bank.

The 1951 CHS grad concludes the book with a few helpful tips. Among them: "Avoid getting in a fight with a newspaper unless you own one too." Our good friend's book can be found and purchased on Amazon.com by searching for it under that provocative title.

Clifton's annual Veterans Parade is Nov. 9, starting at the Athenia Veterans Post on Huron Avenue, continuing along Van Houten Avenue, and into the Avenue of Flags on the grounds of the Municipal Complex. Come out to support our veterans with performances by the Mustang Marching Band and led by this year's Grand Marshal, Clifton Recreation Supervisor Debbie Oliver. Guest speaker TBD.

Volunteer to raise 2,305 flags on Nov. 11 at 6 am to help the Avenue of Flags celebrate Veterans Day. The number of volunteers has dwindled due to illness, age, or those who have moved away. Simply show up or call Marie Schultheis at the Clifton flag barn 973-365-2630, to help or contribute. Volunteers are also needed Nov. 11 at 2 pm for flag removal. To sponsor a flag in honor of a person who served in the military during war or peacetime, the fee is \$140. That pays for a flag, pole, sleeve, a name plate encribed with the person's name and service, and ground socket. Flags are displayed on the roads around City Hall on Memorial Day, Flag Day, Patriot's Day and Veteran's Day. To honor someone, a form must be completed at clif-tonnj.org and search for Flags.

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Birthdays & Celebrations - October 2025

Sarah Bekheet.....	10/1
Melissa Szwec.....	10/2
Awilda Gorman.....	10/3
Ashley Messick.....	10/3
Christopher Papademetriou.....	10/3
Charlene Rivera.....	10/3
Grace Robol.....	10/3
Frank Antoniello.....	10/4
John Brock Jr.....	10/4
Kimberly Ferrara.....	10/4
Kayla Galka.....	10/4
Lisa Junda.....	10/4
Alan Merena.....	10/4
Bruce Merena.....	10/4
Rosalie D. Konopinski.....	10/5
Kyle Takacs.....	10/5
Gene D'Amico.....	10/6
Nicole Nettleton.....	10/6



Kenny Peterson (CHS '08) and his wife **Nicole Rosoline-Peterson** (PC '08) welcomed their daughter **Mackenzie Jeanette Peterson** on Aug. 1. **Joe and Arielle Hawrylko** celebrate their third anniversary on Oct. 14!



Jennifer and Kevin Kames celebrated the first anniversary Sept. 28! Twins **Jeffrey and Renee Angello** turn 23 on Oct. 4. **Susan and Ray Cramer** will celebrate 31 years of marriage on Oct. 1. **Steve and Barbara Bivaletz** were married 47 years ago on Sept. 30! **James Zutic** turns 65 on Oct. 18, writes his lovely wife **Carmen**!

Joseph Tahan.....	10/6
Cheryl Cafone.....	10/7
Christopher Phillips.....	10/7
Jilian Fueshko.....	10/8
Nick Kacmarcik.....	10/8
Michael Biondi.....	10/10
Rich Montague.....	10/10
Kyle Zlotkowski.....	10/10
Eileen Patterson.....	10/11
Anthony Shackil.....	10/11
Michael D. Rice.....	10/12
Stephanie M. Palomba.....	10/13

Kimberly Beirne.....	10/14
Lil Geiger.....	10/14
Mary Anne Kowalczyk.....	10/14
Andrea Kovalcik.....	10/15
Stephen Kovalcik.....	10/15
Maria Kulyk.....	10/15
Marianne Meyer.....	10/15
Nicole Zlotkowski.....	10/16
Benjamin Brody.....	10/17
Nancy Hromchak.....	10/17
Devin DeVries.....	10/18
Matthew Fabiano.....	10/18

Jamie Norris.....	10/18
Brian James Grace.....	10/19
Kristen A. Hariton.....	10/19
Ben Brody.....	10/19
Joseph Siano.....	10/19
Joan Bednarski.....	10/20
Jean Chiariello.....	10/20
Lea Dziuba.....	10/20
Pactrick M. Doremus Jr.....	10/21
Eugene Osmak.....	10/21
Nathaniel Santelli.....	10/21
Kathryn Siano.....	10/21



Dorothy M. O'Shea, will be 96 on Oct. 8. **Noel Coronel** turns 21 on Oct. 16. Our favorite retired Clifton cop **Edward Holster** celebrates on Oct. 18. **Kim Oeffler** has a birthday on Oct. 8. Congratulations to **Orest** and **Barbara Luzniak** who celebrate their 45th anniversary on Oct. 11. Belated greetings to **Andrea Roza** whose birthday was Sept. 24. At the Paulison Ave. ShopRite, let **Maryann Illenye** know about her 64th birthday on Oct. 31. **Joseph** and **Louise Siano** celebrate their 55th anniversary on Oct. 4. Belated wishes ! **Mary Birchell-Skoglund** turned 95 on Aug. 8!!!

Katelyn Smith..... 10/21
 Ted Guzowski..... 10/21
 Jonathan Rossman 10/22
 Toni Van Blarcom 10/22
 Daniel Atoche 10/23

Andrew J. "Dez" Varga 10/23
 Allison Beirne 10/24
 Sandra Kuruc 10/24
 Heather Fierro 10/24
 Paul G. Andrikanich..... 10/25

Matthew McGuire 10/26
 Joe Siano Sr..... 10/26
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Follow the yellow brick road to Richfield Farms on Oct. 5 from 11 am to 4 pm. Their annual festival will offer a petting zoo, music, vendors and fun under the autumn sun. Admission is free. On Oct. 26, follow the yellow brick road along Van Houten Ave. as the Halloween Parade steps off at noon. Go to cliftonrec.com for details and to find your starting cross street. We may not know where the road took these kids since appearing on the October 2010 cover, but there'll be more kids like them at the HarvestFest. Staged on the rolling grounds of City Hall, it follows the parade from 11:30 am to 4:30 pm. Games, rides, music, vendors and inexpensive family fun await you!

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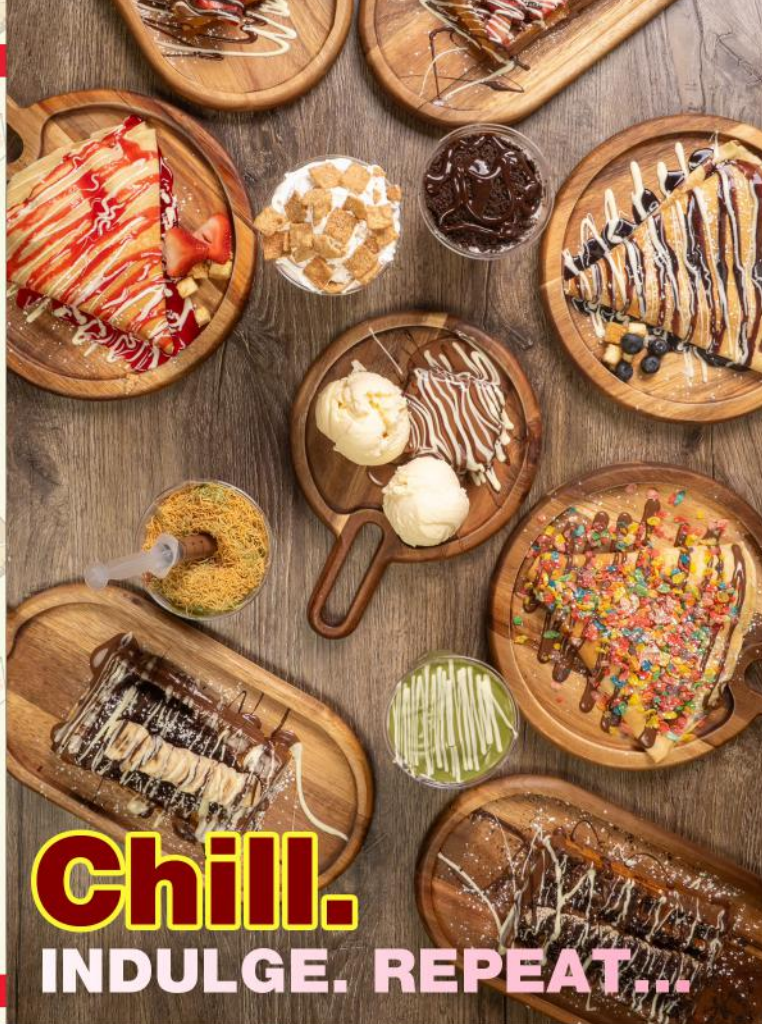
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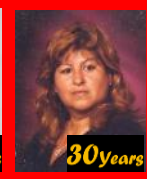
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