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VIETNAM WAR 50th Year Commemoration



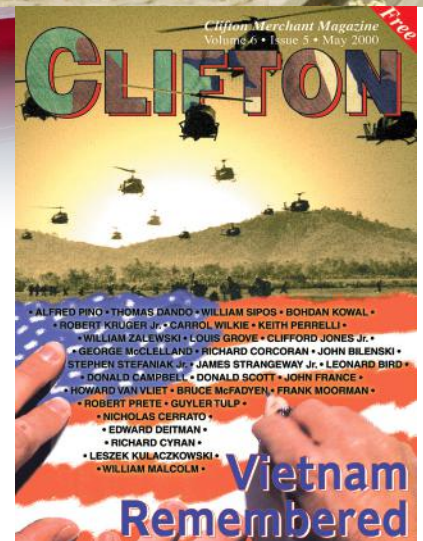
By Richard De Lotto

HONORING AND THANKING ALL WHO SERVED AND SACRIFICED.

A little over 25 years ago, I approached Tom Hawrylko about an idea that I had for an article. Namely, to remember those Clifton servicemen who lost their lives in the Vietnam War.

The timeline was simple: April 30, 1975 is when the American military pulled out. The article would run in the May, 2000 *Clifton Merchant Magazine*. I would collect all of the names, research what happened to each individual, and their sacrifice would be honored. It sounded very simple.

My late friend and ex-Clifton cop Billy Cook heard about my idea and said something very simple — be careful. Truer words were never spoken.



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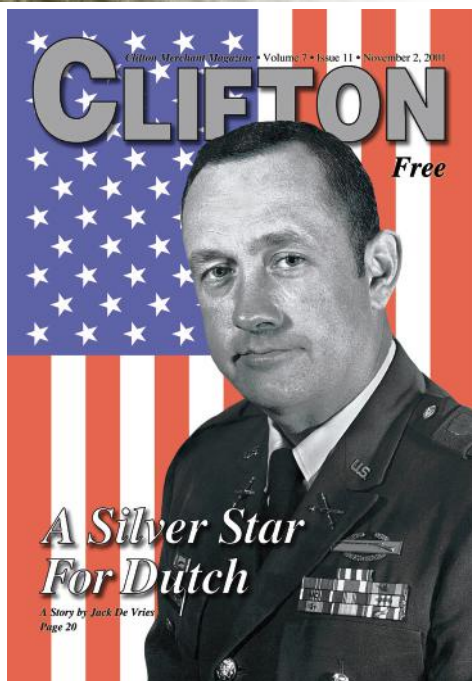
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VIETNAM WAR 50th Year Commemoration

The first man that I researched was a Marine named Al Pino, and he was the first one killed in action on March 16, 1967. I tracked down his family and called and talked to his mom. This was 33 years after his death.

I am not a professional consultant, but I knew that this conversation was going to be difficult five seconds into the conversation. Mrs. Pino could not have been nicer, but she asked me to call back in a few weeks. I hung up and wondered, "There are 26 other families. Maybe this is not a good idea."

I called back, we talked, and then Mrs. Pino shared a very terrible moment in her life. I will take her recollections to my grave. Through books, computer sites, and veterans, I learned what happened to Al Pino. He was at Khe Sanh when another unit was ambushed. His squad was ordered to move out and assist. They were spotted by the enemy and hit by mortars. Al and three other Marines were killed.

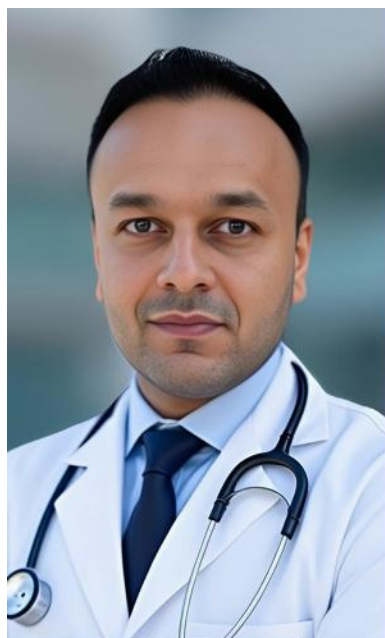


While we recall *The Fallen*, we've also written of the service of many Cliftonites. Among them was US Army Capt. Richard 'Dutch' Hoogstraten, who received the Silver Star during Vietnam.

During this two month period of the war, from March to May of 1967, three men who had graduated from CHS were lost. They were Al Pino (CHS 1965), Bernie Kowal (CHS 1965) and Bob Kruger (CHS 1966). Obviously there were others.

Around 20 years ago, I went into a 7-11 for a coffee. I got one and then got on the line. The guy in front of me was wearing a US Navy corpsman cap with a Vietnam ribbon on the brim. I introduced myself, thanked him for his service, and I asked where he served.

He served six months at Da Nang and six months at Khe Sanh, from 1967 to 1968. When I asked him if ever served on Hill 861, where Al Pino was killed, the change in that man's eyes told me all that I needed to know. I'll never forget what he said: "My man, one day on 861 was a lifetime."



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When I researched Sergeant Frank V. Moorman (US Army, killed-in-action Jan. 23, 1969), I learned that he was wounded. When a medevac helicopter arrived to get him and two others back to a medical unit, they dropped a basket and winched the men up to the chopper because of the terrain.

Now with two men up and the last on the way, an enemy rocket struck the aircraft. It crashed and exploded — four crewmen, Moorman, and two others were killed. Eventually, Moorman's remains and another man named Sgt. Luster would be interred together in a common grave.

The aircraft commander, whose name was Arvil Silverberg, was a 21-year-old warrant officer who dropped out of Amherst College as an Art major in 1966 to become a helicopter pilot. I called his family and got his father. He could not have been prouder of his son and said that is the way that Arvil lived: always willing to help someone else.

I eventually finished the article with a great deal of help from Tom and his staff. We honored these men with a ceremony on Memorial Day, 2000 and a booklet in the library. However, one thing did change.

That was me. I thought I could just walk away from all that I had learned. Never happened. To this day, something that I read or hear about will remind me of something that I researched, and it sets me off.

In 2018, I went to Washington, D.C. to attend a reunion of Khe Sanh vets with a Vietnam vet. I met an ex-Marine who arrived at Khe Sanh as a replacement for the recent mortar attack on March 16. He told me he could never forget the day of his arrival. It was March 17, St. Patrick's Day 1967. One year and two Purple Hearts later, he made it back home to Philadelphia.

Someone a lot smarter than yours truly wrote the saying: You can never go home again. We can only dream about

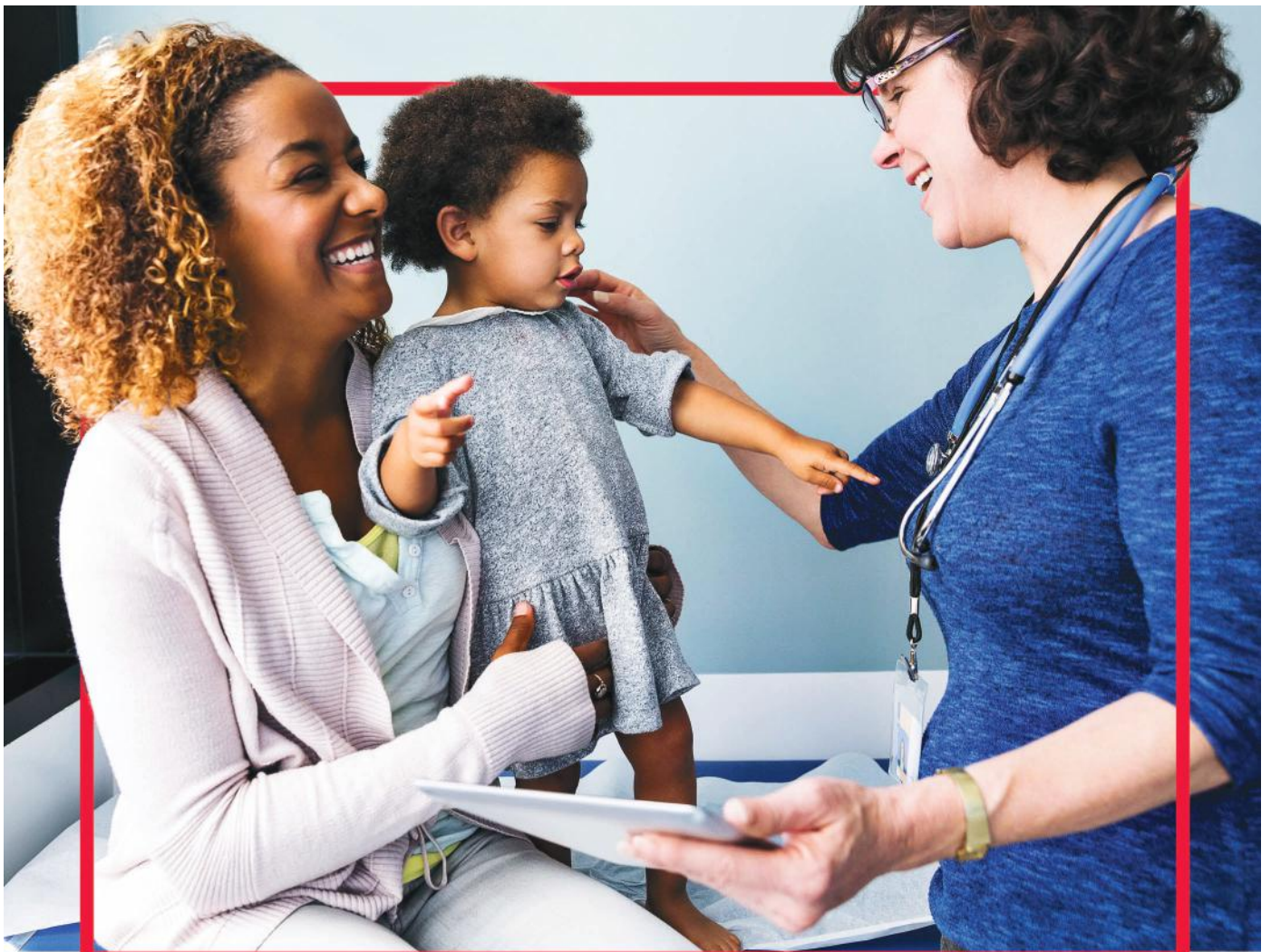


While the last combat unit departed Vietnam ending the ground war on Aug. 11, 1972, Americans were still serving in Saigon. In fact, some 7,000 U.S. Department of Defense civilians remained behind to aid South Vietnam until the final evacuation on April 30, 1975. Below in 2000, the late WWII vet Walter Pruiksmas, writer Robert Wahlers, Rich DeLotto and Norm Tahan who collaborated to make this project a reality.



what our country would have become without the Vietnam War. I can only think about what our country would have evolved into without the war.

There is one thing that I do know and will also take to my grave. I know that 30, 40, or 50 years after average American families lose their kids, they never stop remembering the joy those kids brought into their lives. Between 1940 and 1975, 498,000 American servicemen have been lost in three wars. Never forget a veteran.



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Clifton's Fallen Heroes of the Vietnam War

*Stories by Rich DeLotto & Robert Wahlers
Illustrations by Charles Bolcar*

Matt Rugel will never forget Palm Sunday, 1967. “I was on my way to St. Paul Church for services that day when I saw an Army car in front of the Dandos home on Second St.,” Rugel recalled. He stopped to speak with the sergeant, who confirmed his fears.

“The sergeant told me he was at the house because Tom Dando had been killed in action,” Rugel said.

Rugel went on to church. During the services, Father Frank Rodimer, the former bishop of the Paterson Diocese, announced that another Clifton serviceman, Alfred Pino, had died in Vietnam a few days before.

“I think that was the saddest day of my life,” said Rugel, who worked at the Giuvadan plant on Delawanna Ave. with Dando. Rugel, who now lives in Butler, recalled another sad day.

“I remember it was Tom who told me the news about President Kennedy being shot,” Rugel said.

Alfred Pino and Tom Dando were the first two servicemen from Clifton to lose their lives in the Vietnam War. Here are the stories of those that lost their lives on that Palm Sunday week long ago.



Thomas Dando was born on Feb. 3, 1945 and attended the Holy Trinity School in Passaic. He served as an altar boy at the Holy Trinity Church and was a member of the CYO or Catholic Youth Organization. Later, he attended Don Bosco Prep in Ramsey and then began taking classes at Rutgers University in Newark.

“He wanted to be a pharmacist,” said Dando’s sister, Mary Rabolli, who resides in Garfield. “But after a while, he left Rutgers and started working at Giuvadan with my father, Jacob. He decided to go back to school, however, and that’s when he started taking night classes at Bloomfield College.

Mary recalled her brother as “a very alive, happy-go-lucky guy. I remember that he drove a Pontiac convertible and that he hoped to own a boat one day.” Dando had to put his dreams on hold, however, when he received his draft notice from the Army.

In September, 1965 he took basic training at Fort Devens, Mass. During his time there, he was named “Soldier of the Month.”

An excerpt from a January 29, 1967 letter Tom Dando wrote to his 4-year-old nephew, Charles

Guess what, Chuck... your Uncle Tom is sleeping out in the woods every nite now and I go out for long walks, which we call patrols, every day looking for the bad guys.

Today a small helicopter crashed right by my foxhole when its tail got caught in barbed wire as it was landing. No one was hurt and just about an hour ago a big helicopter, called a Chinook, came and picked up the small one and took it to be fixed.

I took a lot of pictures of both helicopters and you tell Aunt Judi to show them to you when she gets them. I also took a picture of a little Vietnamese farmer boy about 5 years old as he was taking his daddy’s water buffalo out to feed.

Mommy sent me your picture and it looks like you’re getting pretty big. When I get home I guess you will be big enough to go fishing with me and Pop-Pop and swimming with me and Aunt Judi. How’s that?...

Uncle Tom



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While on leave in May 1966, he married Judith Milano at St. Paul Church and the newlyweds enjoyed some time together at their home on Second St. in Clifton.

By that summer, Dando was in Vietnam, serving with the 196th Light Infantry in and around Tay Ninh province. Eight months later, the Army transferred him to Company B, Third Battalion, Fourth Infantry Division. Dando's first mission with his new outfit involved an assault on the village of Dau Tieng on March 19, 1967, in the midst of a larger plan, entitled Operation Junction City.

The operation, one of the largest helicopter assaults ever staged, had begun on Feb. 21 and would last for 72 days. Dando was among the approximately 30,000 troops who took part in the extended operation, the goal of which was to destroy Vietcong bases north of Saigon.

According to reports, the helicopter Dando was riding in that day exploded, possibly from artillery fire or because it came into contact with a land mine. Dando died as a result of burns. "Because it was his first mission with the Fourth Infantry, no one knew Tom. Our family has never spoken with anyone who was there that day," said Mary.

Mary said she does take comfort in the fact that, like many of the servicemen from Clifton who died during war-time, a street is named in her brother's honor.

"I think it is a most fitting tribute," she said of the Montclair Heights road. "A street is a living thing. Children ride their bikes, teens play basketball, people meet and socialize, families live there. Tom would have liked this memorial."

Lance Corporal Alfred Pino, USMC, died in action on March 16, 1967 in Quang Tri province. He was 20 years old.

Born in Paterson on Dec. 13, 1946, Pino moved to Clifton when he was about six years old. The Pino family lived on both Park Slope and Lockwood Place. Alfred graduated Clifton High School in 1965 and worked at the Food Fair in Verona before enlisting in the Marines in January 1966.

"Freddie wanted to join the Navy because our father served with that branch during World War II," said David Pino, Alfred's brother. "He couldn't get in so he decided to join the Marines." David, who was two years younger than his brother, recalled that Alfred loved sports and participated in the Clifton's football and Little League programs.

Alfred also had a younger sister, Linda, who was 11 years old at the time of his death.



Alfred Pino, Keith Francis Perrelli.

After Alfred went through basic training, he arrived in Vietnam in July, 1966, assigned to the 1st Battalion of the 9th Division. Alfred planned to marry Loretta Russo upon his return; she lived on Rollins Ave.

Another early casualty of the Vietnam War was Keith Francis Perrelli, who was born on Jan. 7, 1947 and grew up on Van Houten Ave. His maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Iwanoski, owned Olly's Tavern, on the corner of Van Houten and Marconi.

In 1962, when Keith was 15, the Perrelli family moved to Oak Ridge. Perrelli became a three-letter athlete — football, baseball and basketball — while attending Franklin High School, which is now known as Walkill Valley High School. After completing high school, Perrelli joined the Marines and arrived in Vietnam in January 1967, around the time of his 20th birthday.

He would eventually be stationed at the Con Thien base camp, located two-and-one-half miles south of the buffer zone between the two Vietnams. One newspaper account described Con Thien as a "frontier fort."

Around Sept. 1, 1967, an artillery duel ensued between the dug-in Marines of the 1st Division and North Vietnamese troops, who reportedly had moved at least three divisions — approximately 35,000 men — into the DMZ or DeMilitarized Zone, in preparation for an invasion. Perrelli and his fellow Marines stood in their way.

On Sept. 25, 1967, during an artillery attack, Perrelli and another Marine were killed and 90 were wounded, bringing the total casualty count since the battle began to 63 dead and 875 wounded.

On the day that Perrelli died, Marine gunners fired 9,000 artillery shells, B52 bombers flew several raids and Seventh Fleet warships tried to lock in on suspected North

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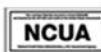


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Vietnamese gun positions. General William Westmoreland called the assault the heaviest conventional bombardment “in the history of warfare.”

Perrelli was survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank C. Perrelli, a sister Deidre, and a brother Duane, who was serving in the Air Force when Keith died.

Duane, a Sparta resident, said his parents have moved to Florida and remain active in programs related to Memorial Day and Veterans’ Day.

Some 10 years ago, Rich DeLotto, chair of the Vietnam Remembrance Committee, discovered a mystery while conducting research on the 27 Clifton men whose names are listed on the Main Memorial war monument as being killed in Vietnam.

“I had a list of the killed in action dates for everyone, so I was searching through the newspaper archives looking for Keith Perelli, who died on Sept. 25, 1967,” DeLotto said. “That’s when I came across the name of Carroll R. Wilkie and I noticed that he was a 1947 graduate of Clifton High School.

“His death was announced the day before Perelli’s, but I had never heard of him before,” DeLotto recalled. “His name was not among the 27. I also discovered that he was not listed on the Vietnam Monument in Washington D.C.”

According to the obituary that DeLotto found, 38-year-old Marine Gunnery Sergeant Wilkie had suffered a cardiac arrest while serving in the Da Nang area of Vietnam on Sept. 18, 1967. He was then flown back to Travis Air Force base in San Francisco, where he died on Sept. 20.

The announcement of his death appeared in local papers of northern New Jersey several days later.

Wilkie’s mother, Mrs. George Saretsky, resided in Garfield at the time. His wife, the former Jean Catanacci of Bloomfield, and two daughters, Carol Ann and Kathy, were living in Carlsbad, California, near Camp Pendleton.

In an attempt to correct the oversight of omitting Wilkie’s name from the national monument, DeLotto contacted the United States Marine Corps headquarters in Quantico, Virginia.

In February 2000, DeLotto received a written reply from Captain T. Walls, an administrative officer with the Casualty Branch, Personal and Family Readiness Division. Outlining the guidelines for someone to be added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C., Captain Walls told DeLotto that the “criteria does not include ser-



Carroll R. Wilkie, Bruce McFadyen.

vice members that die as a result of a service-connected disabilities or disease. Gunnery Sergeant Wilkie’s death did not occur in the defined combat zone. Therefore, he is not eligible...”

Stymied by the machinery of government, DeLotto turned his energies to his hometown. “Here’s a guy who was a Marine for 21 years,” said DeLotto, noting that besides his service in Vietnam, Wilkie was also stationed in Japan, Korea and Hawaii. “The bottom line is he died of his wounds in the U.S. rather than Vietnam. It’s a question of geography and that just isn’t fair.”

DeLotto then brought the story to the attention of Walter Pruiksmas, who then headed the Clifton War Veterans Alliance Monument Committee.

Based on the facts uncovered by DeLotto, the monument committee agreed to add Wilkie’s name to the Clifton war dead. Later research by DeLotto also uncovered the name of a 29th serviceman who died in Vietnam, Bruce McFadyen.

Navy Lt. Bruce Searight McFadyen’s name was inscribed on the Clifton War Monument Memorial in 2000, thanks to the digging Rich DeLotto did back then. The addition brought the total number of Clifton servicemen who are honored for their sacrifice in the Vietnam War up to 29.

McFadyen was born in Montclair on Jan. 12, 1943. At the time of his birth, his parents, Robert and Charlotte Murphy McFadyen, lived on Surrey Lane in the Allwood section of Clifton.

Six months later, as World War II raged, Robert left Clifton to serve in the Navy and Mrs. McFadyen and Bruce moved in with relatives. After the war, the McFadyens returned to Allwood and lived there until 1950, when they moved to Upper Montclair.

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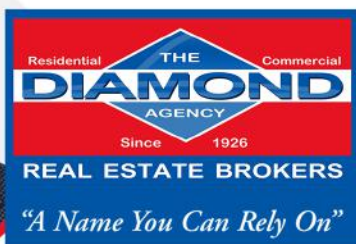


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McFadyen later attended Peddie School in Hightstown, where he served as captain of the swimming team. For several summers, he also coached the Glen Ridge Country Club swim team in the Essex Inter-Club Swim League. McFadyen later became a varsity swimmer at Colgate, where he was also an officer of the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity.

After graduating Colgate in 1965, McFadyen decided to follow in his father's footsteps and attended the Navy's officer candidate school at Newport, R.I. After being commissioned, he began his tour of duty in Vietnam in the spring of 1968, serving aboard the Oklahoma City, which was the flagship of the Seventh Fleet.

After undergoing ordnance disposal training, McFadyen transferred to the USS Enterprise, a nuclear powered aircraft carrier. He spent most of the year aboard the ship before being transferred again, this time to Saigon.

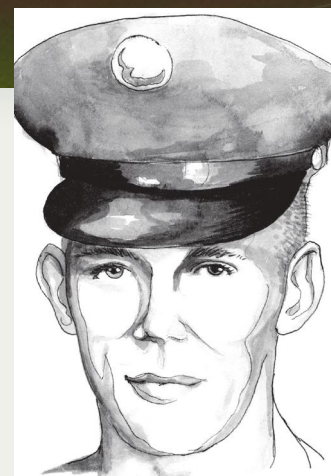
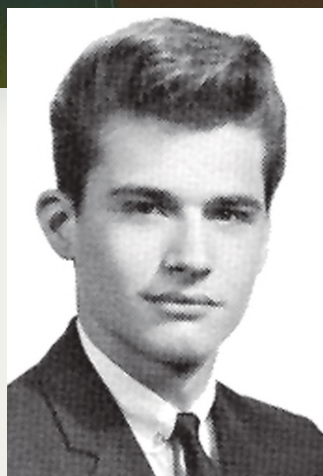
On Jan. 17, 1969, five days after he celebrated his 26th birthday, McFadyen was serving as a member of an explosive disposal unit when a 400-pound bomb exploded at the water's edge in Nah Be, located in the delta region of South Vietnam. The explosion killed him instantly. He was four months away from completing his active military service.

Spec. 4 Bohdan Kowal of Clifton was reported killed by enemy small arms fire on Saturday, April 8, 1967 in Hua Nghia Province, while serving as a rifleman with the 9th Infantry Regiment, 25th Division.

Born in Germany on May 25, 1946, Bohdan was the son of Stanley and Helen Kowal, Ukrainian immigrants who had been forced into slave labor by the Nazis during World War II. The Kowals came to the United States in 1949 and later lived on Paulison Ave. in Clifton. They had two younger sons, Michael and John, and were parishioners of St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church in Passaic.

Bohdan played soccer as a Mustang at Clifton High, graduated in 1965 and was inducted into the Army in December of that year. He began his tour of duty in Vietnam in July 1966.

Although no family members could be found in the area, the lamentful words of Helen Kowal remain preserved in a newspaper article published at the time of her son's death. "He never had anything," Helen Kowal was quoted as saying. "When he was a baby, he did not even have a piece of bread. He never went anywhere or had a chance to enjoy anything. Why do they take the boys so young, when there are so many older men around?"



Bohdan Kowal, Leszek Kulaczowski.

Like many overseas, Bohdan was homesick. Helen Kowal said in letters to her, he expressed his longing to be home. In one of the last letters she received, he told her that "I'll be home in 103 more days."

Like Bohdan Kowal's parents, Leszek Kulaczowski's mother and father were Eastern Europeans who came to America in search of a better life. That search led to tragedy for both families as a result of their sons' sacrifices. The son of Antoni and Alfreda Kulaczowski, Leszek was born on Jan. 26, 1947 in a village close to Krakow, Poland.

The Kulaczowskis came to the United States in 1964 in pursuit of their chapter of the American Dream. After finding work and settling in the community, they found a home on Speer Ave. in Clifton.

Leszek worked for a construction firm installing aluminum siding. He was a parishioner of St. John Kanty Church and a member of the church's St. Theresa Choir. Not yet an American citizen, Leszek was drafted in September 1968 and later assigned to the Army's 8th Infantry, 4th Division. It is unclear when his tour of duty in Vietnam started.

On Nov. 22, 1969, his family received two letters from Leszek, who mentioned that he was being sent to an encampment outside of the combat area for some rest. The day after Leszek's letters reached his loved ones, the Vietcong launched a mortar attack on the encampment. The bombardment claimed the life of Leszek at age 22.

Leszek was transported home to Clifton and then after services at St. John Kanty Church, his body was laid to rest in Our Lady of Chestokowich, a Polish cemetery located outside of Philadelphia.

Following the loss of their only child, Mr. and Mrs. Kulaczowski left their adopted nation behind and returned to Poland.

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VIETNAM WAR

50th Year Commemoration

Of the men listed on the Clifton war monument who died in Vietnam, the youngest to be killed in action was 18-year-old PFC Robert Kruger. The oldest to die was Master Gunnery Sgt. William Zalewski, 51. In between the two is Staff Sergeant John Bilenski, who died three days short of his 29th birthday. Despite the age differences, they had a lot in common. As the anthem goes, they were proud to hold the title of United States Marine.

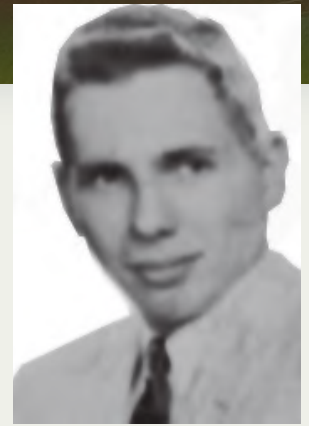
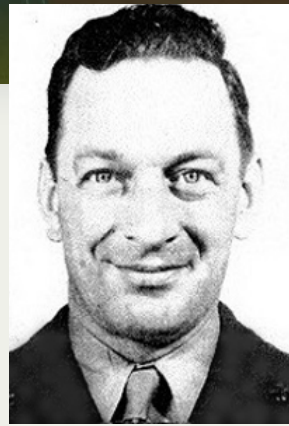
Kruger landed in Vietnam about seven months after his high school graduation. Zalewski, who as a young man fought on Iwo Jima during World War II, died four months short of retirement. Bilenski was another career soldier who had volunteered for a second tour of duty in Vietnam. What follows are the stories of these three Marines.

Born on July 19, 1948, Marine PFC Robert Kruger, was among the approximately 11,000 Americans who died in Vietnam before their 20th birthday, a fact that permeates too many wars.

A native of Passaic, he lived in Clifton most of his life. Kruger attended School 4 and Christopher Columbus Junior High School. While at Clifton High, he played on the varsity soccer team. He and his family worshiped at the Trinity Lutheran Church in Clifton.

Kruger enlisted in the Marines before his high school graduation and started his service one week after commencement ceremonies in June 1966.

By early January 1968, he was in Vietnam, as a member of E Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Regiment of the 3rd Marine Division.



Robert Kruger, William Zalewski, John Bilenski.

On May 3, 1967, his mother, Mrs. Antoinette Lineman Kruger of Second Street, received word that he had died as a result of enemy mortar fire at Houg Hoa, in Quang Tri Province.

Besides his mother, the Clifton relatives he left behind included a brother, Roger, a sister, Crystal, and a grandmother, Mrs. Frieda Leimbach Lieman.

By the time Master Gunnery Sgt. William Zalewski, arrived in Vietnam in September 1966, he had already given his country more than 30 years of service. This included contributing to the 1945 victory on the island of Iwo Jima, where he was wounded and received the Purple Heart.

Born on July 15, 1916, Zalewski joined the service shortly after his graduation from Clifton High School in 1933. When his tour in Vietnam approached an end in the fall of 1967, Zalewski decided to sign up for another six months. This would take him up to his scheduled date of retirement the following April.

Shortly after extending his tour, Zalewski, who was attached to the First Marine Air Wing in Da Nang, earned a promotion to Master Gunnery Sergeant. This is the highest ranking for a non-commissioned officer in the Marines.

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On Dec. 4, 1967, the career Marine died in Da Nang of a cerebral hemorrhage. His body was transported home and buried with honors at Arlington National Cemetery. Zalewski left behind his wife, Elizabeth, who lived in Alexandria, VA. Zalewski's mother and one of his two sisters lived in Clifton at the time of his death.



President Johnson visits Gen William Westmoreland in South Vietnam a month before Tet.

went a siege. Americans back home watching the “Television War” were shocked that such a major attack could be launched. Although North Vietnam suffered a military defeat in the Tet Offensive, they ended up winning a political victory because the wide-scale fighting convinced more Americans that a victory in Vietnam was impossible.

“He was lucky then but not this time.” That’s how John V. Bilenski of Olympic St. described at the time the fate of his only son, Marine Staff Sgt. John Bilenski.

An aerial gunner, Bilenski had made it through his first tour of duty in 1965-66 unhurt. He returned to Vietnam for a second tour in February 1968 and died about five months later, on July 3, when his helicopter crashed and exploded in Quang Nam.

Born on July 6, 1939, Bilenski signed up with the Marines on his 17th birthday, while he was still a student at Clifton High School. Following graduation in 1956, he completed six months in the reserves and then began active duty, during which time he received training as an electronics technician.

Around 1965, he married Jean O’Dell, who was living in Anaheim, California at the time of his death. Besides his father and wife, Bilenski’s only other survivor was his mother, Edith, who lived in Paterson.

January, 1968: The Tet Offensive


At the end of January of 1968, Communist troops launched the Tet (New Year) Offensive, attacking 36 of 44 provincial capitals and 64 of 242 district towns in South Vietnam. Even the American Embassy in Saigon under-

The result was a shift in American policy toward ending the war and the resignation of an embattled president. On March 31, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson announced that: “I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president.”

During the Tet Offensive, 50,000 Communist soldiers, 14,000 South Vietnamese troops and 2,000 American soldiers were killed. Thousands of Vietnamese civilians died also. The death toll on that first day included two Clifton servicemen, PFC Louis Cancian Grove and SPF Clifford R. Jones, Jr. Both men died on Jan. 30, 1968. There is no record that shows they knew one another.

Both were born in 1947 and started their tour of duty in Vietnam within weeks of each other in the summer of 1967, the so-called Summer of Love back in the States. Grove had been married for five months before entering the service and celebrated his 20th birthday in February 1967. Jones would celebrate his 20th birthday in Vietnam in October of that year.

Louis Grove was the son of John Grove, a retired Air Force Master Sergeant. While Louis served in Vietnam, his brother, John L. Grove, Jr., was stationed aboard an aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean.




On Memorial Day,

we give thanks, pay tribute and remember
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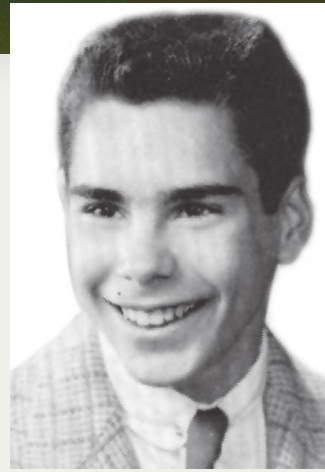
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“Louis was a nice guy,” recalls former neighbor Alice DeLotto, who lived a few houses away from the family when they lived on East Clifton Ave. “I remember that he had a motorcycle, which he loved driving around town.”

Grove, who was born in Florida, attended Sacred Heart School in Botany and graduated Pope Pius XII High School in Passaic, most likely in 1965. He worked as a truck driver before entering the service. Grove died during a mortar attack on his camp at Kontum, one of six cities hit by the Viet Cong in the Central Highlands during the first day of the Tet Offensive. His funeral service took place at Sacred Heart, with burial at Calvary Cemetery.



Lewis Grove, Clifford R. Jones, Jr.



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About six months into his tour of duty in Vietnam, Clifford R. Jones, Jr. was killed in action during fighting in Pleiku Province on Jan. 30, 1968.

Jones spent his early years on Rutherford Blvd. in Clifton, and later moved to Warren County. He graduated in 1965 from Hackettstown High School and enlisted in the Army, going to boot camp in January 1966.

He qualified, trained and earned the title of Green Beret that fall. Jones arrived in Vietnam on Aug. 1, 1967, serving as a radioman with Company B, 5th Special Forces Group. For his actions on the day he died, Jones received a posthumous Silver Star.

According to his citation, Jones rallied his beleaguered comrades by yelling words of encouragement and charging forward “in a courageous personal assault on the insurgents.” This enabled his trapped unit to reach safety.

In the 1980’s, veterans such as Joseph DeWitt and other members of VFW Post 7859 in Hackettstown succeeded in having the 1.3 mile stretch of Route 46 that runs through Independence Township renamed the Spec. 4 Class Clifford Jones Jr. Highway.

Through the efforts of this post, a granite memorial also stands in the honor of Clifford R. Jones, Jr. next to the firehouse in that community.

THIS MEMORIAL DAY...



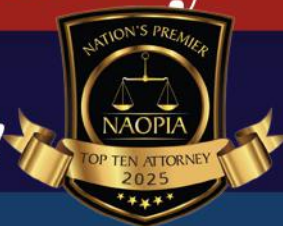
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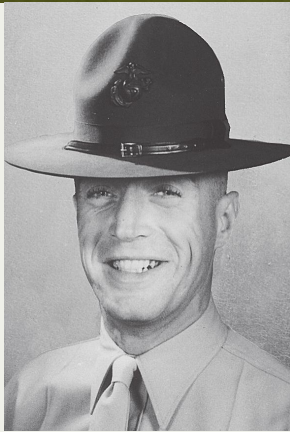


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George McClelland

"The lieutenant was learning how to lead his troops, and his patrol included the company's most experienced platoon sergeant, Staff Sergeant George McClelland." —USMC Captain Ken Pipes, Bravo Company

The quote above is from a book by Eric Hammel, "Khe Sanh: Siege in the Clouds" (1989), an oral history of the US Marines' defense of the Khe Sanh combat base, where 25-year-old George McClelland of Clifton was stationed. The strategic base in western Quang Tri Province, at the corner of South Vietnam, had been set up to stop the infiltration of North Vietnamese troops from Laos into the DeMilitarized Zone (DMZ).

On Feb. 25, 1968, McClelland, a member of the 26th Infantry Regiment, was among two squads ordered to go out on patrol beyond the fire base to search for enemy mortar.

The patrol ran into an ambush, taking on intense small arms and mortar fire. A second patrol sent to help also came under a barrage of fire.

When the shooting was over, there were 47 casualties: 21 wounded and 25 missing in action. McClelland was listed as among the 25 MIAs.

McClelland's body wasn't recovered until May 8, 1968, at which time he was officially listed as killed in action.

Born in New York City on Aug. 12, 1942, McClelland joined the Marines at the age of 17, with the intention of making a career out of the military. He served as a Marine Corps drill sergeant and began his tour of duty in Vietnam in December 1967.

McClelland grew up in New York and the family later moved to Passaic, then to Second St. in Clifton. His name is listed on both the Clifton and Passaic war monuments.

He left behind a wife, Dee, and a son and daughter. He was also survived by two sisters and five brothers. "His daughter, Susan, is going to medical school and his son, Sean, fixes cars, which is something George liked to do," said Raymond McClelland, one of George's six surviving siblings, who now lives in Howell. "We grew up on the West Side of New York. I was three years older than Georgie and we used to fight all the time, like brothers of-

ten do," said Raymond. "George liked to fix bikes and he loved playing stickball and street hockey."

"He really wanted to be the best that he could be," said Raymond. "I remember when he first went in, he was maybe 130 pounds soaking wet. After a while in the Marines, he was a solid 170 pounds."

After serving years as a drill instructor for raw recruits, George volunteered to go to Vietnam toward the end of 1967. "I remember George saying in a letter that they were training these kids for four or five weeks and then shipping them over, without getting the full boot camp training. He felt his place was over there with them, where he could at least try to help them some more," says Raymond.

"Before he left from camp in North Carolina, he told us he wouldn't be coming home for a visit because he didn't have the money to travel. Now he knew that anybody in the family would have sent him money. We always believed he didn't return for a visit because he felt in his heart he wouldn't be coming back from Vietnam. And it was just too hard for him to come back home and say good-bye to all of us."

Main Memorial Park provided bittersweet memories for the late Mary Stefaniak. It is a place where she watched her three children spend hours frolicking, fishing and skating. It is also the place where the name of her third child, Stephen Stefaniak Jr., is engraved on the war monument.

He graduated School 10 and after about a year of high school, he decided to pursue a career as a barber. He attended the Atlas Barber College in New York and afterward, worked at the US Barbershop in Paterson.

"To me, my son was a real caring person," Mary said some 25 years after his death. "He was a real humanitarian, always ready to help others, even at a young age. He truly had a heart of gold." Stephen also had a passion for fishing and took pride in his VW Beetle.

On Oct. 15, 1967, Stephen married Bonnie Ann McCrohan and found a home on DeMott Ave. Two months after they married, Stephen was drafted. Mary Stefaniak last saw her son in May, 1968, when he was back in Clifton on furlough. He would be in Vietnam by month's end.



Pfc. Stephen Stefaniak
Flare Explodes in His Hand

Clifton Soldier Dies of Injuries

Pfc. Stephen Stefaniak, 20, of 309 I Mott Ave., Clifton, has died of injuries suffered in Vietnam.
Stefaniak son of Mr. and Mrs. Sten-



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VIETNAM WAR

50th Year Commemoration

“When he arrived here on his last furlough, he walked from the bus, which was a few miles away. Bonnie asked him why he didn’t call for a ride. He said that it felt too good to be walking on familiar grounds, that Clifton never looked so good.”

By this time, Bonnie was about six months pregnant. This made it particularly difficult for Stephen to leave Clifton behind again, but he was determined to finish his commitment to his country, Mary said.

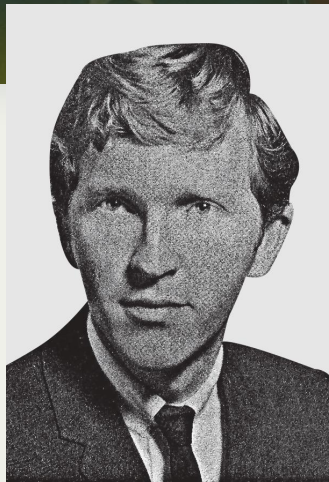
Stephen began his tour of duty on May 28, 1968, as a member of the First Infantry, 196th Light Infantry Brigade. On July 1, after 37 days in country, PFC Stefaniak sustained extensive burns to his body in a mortar attack. On July 4, he died in a hospital in Japan. The Army awarded him a posthumous Purple Heart and Bronze Star, citing him for “outstanding meritorious service... against a hostile force.”

Stephen’s body was returned back to the United States and after a funeral mass at St. Paul Church, he was buried in Calvary Cemetery. Fifty one days after he died, on Aug. 24, his son, Stephen Robert Stefaniak, was born. When the Vietnam War section of the memorial was dedicated in 1993, Stephen Robert carried a flag in the ceremony to help honor the father that he never had a chance to know.

Born in Paterson, James Joseph Strangeway Jr. joined the world on March 15, 1943, the second of four children for Genevieve and James Strangeway. The family lived on Montclair Ave. in Clifton.

Strangeway, whose nickname was “Binky,” received his high school education at St. Peter’s Prep School in Jersey City and later enrolled at the Paterson campus of Seton Hall University. His goal was to teach high school English. In the spring of 1967, before he graduated from Seton Hall, he served as a student teacher in the CHS English department.

While attending college, he worked at the A&P on Route 46 West in Clifton. “He had a talent for so many things, ranging from mechanical to intellectual,” recalled Strangeway’s cousin, Regina Fischer. “He could frequently be found with his head under the hood of a car, trying to fix something. He devoured books by the dozen. He was never afraid to try something new, so it was no surprise when he picked up a guitar shortly after the Beatles became popular and taught himself to play.”



James Joseph Strangeway Jr.

In September 1967, Strangeway was drafted into the Army. Fischer saw her cousin for the last time in March 1968, when he was home on leave. He shipped out to Vietnam the next day. Family and friends gathered at the Strangeway home to bid the soldier farewell.

“By this time, there were 500,000 American soldiers in Vietnam and the casualty lists brought the news that 500 to 700 of them died each week,” said Fischer. “Binky never let anyone get too maudlin. He made everyone laugh in his easy-going way, and the following morning, he was off with a salute and a smile.”

In the months after he left, the country mourned the loss of both Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy, who were killed within two months of one another in the spring of 1968. In the later afternoon of July 10, 1968, the Strangeway family learned that their loved one was gone, too. During his time in Vietnam, Strangeway, a member of the 101st Airborne Division, achieved the rank of Corporal and earned the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

Leonard Adrian Bird, who was born on Sept. 14, 1943

in Passaic General Hospital, is one of 57 New Jerseyans who are still listed as MIA in Vietnam. On July 13, 1968, while Bird was flying as the lead Radar Intercept Officer during an attack on a mortar position in Quang Tri Province,

enemy ground fire hit his aircraft, causing it to go into a shallow dive. The jet exploded on impact with the ground. Leonard’s mother, Wilhelmina Bird, lives in Michigan, said the Navy just contacted her in 2000 to let her know that they were still searching for Leonard’s remains in the area where her son’s aircraft went down.



“There is not a day I don’t think of him, even though it is quite a long time ago,” she said. “He was a wonderful young man and a very loving son. He was always happy and could only see the good in all of his friends. He enlisted in the Marines and when I asked him why, he said he felt it was his duty to his country.”

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The Bird family lived on Madison Ave. in Clifton until Leonard was seven years old, at which time they moved to Wilmington, Delaware.

In between his junior and senior years at the University of Delaware, where he was studying engineering, Bird enrolled in a 12-week Marine Corps program at Quantico, Va. This enabled him to earn a commission in the Marines after his graduation from college in 1966.

Afterward, he attended aviation school, flew F-4 Phantom jets and eventually trained as a navigator. In June, 1967, he married Patricia Kosey.

Six months later, 1st Lt. Bird was in Vietnam, assigned to the Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 115, Marine Aircraft Group 13 of the First Marine Air Wing. While there, he flew 253 missions. In some cases, he logged four flights within a 20-hour stretch.

Among his decorations were the Distinguished Flying Cross, awarded for service on May 14, 1968, and a posthumous Purple Heart.

His family never knew how dangerous his missions were. Bird's wife, Patricia, was attending a summer school class when she was called outside to speak to a Marine major.

"At first, I thought it was Lenny and I laughed," she said. "Then he told me that my husband was dead. We were so sure that he'd be back. So, so sure. We had plans. He was going to study business administration at the Wharton School."

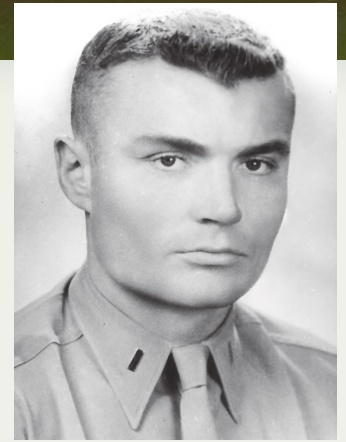
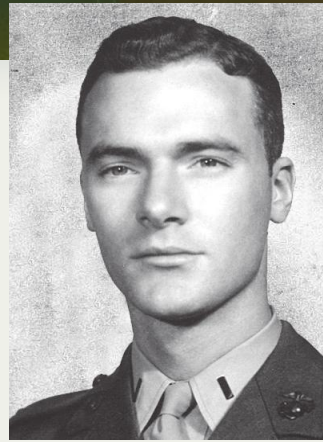
During his first tour of duty over Vietnam, Marine Captain Richard F. Corcoran was wounded three times. The last time, shrapnel hit his bomber and pierced the shell and hit him. He underwent major surgery but was not done with flying over the war zones.

After recuperating in Okinawa, Corcoran returned to the States for an eight-week intensive training course in aerial observation.

By the fall of 1967, he was back in Vietnam. He had another month left in his second tour when the small observation plane in which he was flying crashed on a hilltop near Quang Tri on June 7, 1968.

Born on Aug. 21, 1938 in St. Mary's Hospital in Passaic, Corcoran grew up on Burlington Road, in the Allwood section. By the time of his death, his parents, William and Agnes, had moved to Florida.

Corcoran attended St. Thomas the Apostle School in Bloomfield and St. Benedict's Prep in Newark. He contin-



Richard F. Corcoran, Donald Campbell.

ued his education at St. Mary's College in Maryland and graduated Providence College in Rhode Island in 1961.

That year, Corcoran then entered the Marine Corps and was commissioned a second lieutenant after training at Quantico, Va. Corcoran never married.

He left behind a brother, William Jr., and two sisters, Patricia and Eileen. Corcoran's father, William, worked for Hewitt Robins Inc. in Passaic for 50 years until he retired in 1962.

The elder Corcoran was among the organizers of both the Allwood Civic League and the Civic Club of Allwood.

The son of Frank and Hilda Campbell, Donald B. Campbell was born in Passaic on May 31, 1936. The Campbells lived in Clifton from 1952 to 1958 before they moved to Wayne and later, to Birmingham, Alabama.

After graduating high school in 1954, Donald attended Auburn University for two years and then enrolled in the Naval Air Cadet Station, located in Pensacola, Fla. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in June 1957 and began flight training the following spring. In December 1959, he was commissioned a second lieutenant.

"He was qualified to fly the A4E Skyhawk, the C130 Hercules and also flew refueling missions as well as support early on in Vietnam," said Donald's sister, Judy Stine, who lives in Wayne.

While stationed at Chu Lai during his third tour of duty in the Far East, Campbell, who now held the rank of major, embarked on a bombing mission on July 28, 1968. His plane never returned.

It is unclear whether the aircraft was hit by ground fire or failed to recover from a dive-bombing maneuver. Campbell was unable to eject and the aircraft crashed. Stine said her brother was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

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By April 1969, U.S. combat deaths in Vietnam had overtaken the 33,629 Americans who died in the Korean War. That same month, the number of American forces in Vietnam reached its highest level: 543,000. A gradual troop withdrawal began in the summer.

Back home, the “Curse of the Kennedys” continued when Sen. Edward Kennedy drove his car off a bridge on Chappaquiddick Island in Martha’s Vineyard, resulting in the death of his passenger, Mary Jo Kopechne. Two days later, on July 20, Neil Armstrong became the first man to set foot on the moon.

In October, the New York Mets amazed the baseball world by winning the World Series, nine months after Joe Namath and the Jets achieved a similar feat by winning the Super Bowl.

On Nov. 15, anti-war demonstrations reached a peak when 250,000 protesters marched in Washington D.C. The following day, the media broke the story of My Lai, which occurred the previous year. Although only one officer was eventually tried and found guilty of war crimes in connection with the incident, the unsettling news caused more Americans to question the conduct of the war in Vietnam, the images of which were broadcast daily on the evening news.

In Clifton, telegrams and military personnel continued to arrive in the city to inform families of their loss, including these brief profiles of five young men who died during the last year of a tumultuous decade.



Howard Van Vliet and John France.

A Different Kind of Casualty

Dying while in service to country has many meanings. That’s why the names of seven Clifton servicemen who died in a 1961 military plane crash are engraved on the war monument in Main Memorial Park. During the Vietnam War, more than 20 percent of the 58,193 Americans who died—10,811—were classified as non-combat deaths.

In 1968, accidents claimed the lives of two servicemen from Clifton.

Born in Clifton on Oct. 4, 1928, Howard Elmer Van Vliet graduated Clifton High and attended the Newark College of Engineering (New Jersey Institute of Technology) for two years before joining the Air Force around the time that the Korean War first erupted.

During that three-year “police action,” Van Vliet flew an F-84 fighter and his actions earned him the Distinguished Flying Cross. In the years between Korea and Vietnam, Van Vliet earned a degree from Florida State University and performed military duties in France and Germany.

In April 1968, he started his Vietnam tour.

A few weeks after he celebrated his 40th birthday on Oct. 4, Major Van Vliet and 23 other servicemen died when their C-47 transport plane crashed while en route from Saigon to Hong Kong.

The cause of the crash, which occurred either on Oct. 20 or 21, was attributed to engine trouble. Van Vliet left behind a wife and three daughters. At the time of his death, his mother, Winifred, lived on Hamilton Avenue, and his sister, Mrs. Edna Budz, resided on Eighth St.

Born Feb. 19, 1948 in Passaic, John D. France spent most of his life in Clifton. On many days during his growing years, he could be found enjoying the various activities that took place at the Clifton Boys Club.

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VIETNAM WAR

50th Year Commemoration

He attended Clifton High but left to enroll at Lincoln Tech in Newark, from which he graduated with honors. Drafted by the Army, he completed basic at Fort Dix in Spring, 1968, then went to Camp Gordon, GA.

France returned for leave, bought a motorcycle in Clifton and spent the summer of 1968 at the Jersey shore. He shipped the bike to Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri, where he trained to be an MP.

"He was thinking about becoming a state trooper after his army service ended," said France's mother, Harriet, who was interviewed for this story some 20 years ago, as she still lived in Clifton with her husband, John.

On Aug. 29, 1968, while driving a motorcycle in St. Roberts, Missouri, a car coming in the opposite direction crossed the median and collided with him head-on, killing him. Besides his parents, France also had sisters, Karen and Janis, who were attending Clifton schools.



Frank Moorman.

MEDEVAC, or medical evacuation, helicopters flew nearly 500,000 missions in Vietnam. When 20-year-old Frank David Moorman was wounded on Jan. 23, 1969, he could count on being at a hospital in less than one hour. But his helicopter was hit by enemy fire and crashed. For seven years, the Army listed Moorman as missing in action. As the Moorman family, who lived on Washington Ave., awaited closure on Frank, the Army, as is its custom, posthumously promoted Moorman over the years, eventually to staff sergeant.

His remains were recovered on April 8, 1976, seven years after his death. A funeral service was held at Arlington National Cemetery, where Moorman was laid to rest. It is unclear when Moorman started his tour in Vietnam. He served with Company D of the 4th Infantry Division, U.S. Army. Moorman was raised in Clifton, was a parishioner at St. Peter's Episcopal Church and many family members worked at Athenia Steel.



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Quentin Roosevelt (Nov. 19, 1897 – July 14, 1918) was the youngest son of President Theodore Roosevelt. Family and friends agreed that Quentin, at left, had many of his father's positive qualities and few of the negative ones. Encouraged by his father, he joined the United States Army Air Service where he became a fighter pilot during World War I. Extremely popular with his fellow pilots and known for his daring, he was killed in aerial combat over France.

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VIETNAM WAR

50th Year Commemoration

Nicholas Frank Cerrato was born in Paterson on Dec. 27, 1947 and attended Passaic Valley High School. He also belonged to the St. John's Boy Scouts and worked at the Big Apple Supermarket in Wayne before he enlisted in the Army, and moved to Martha Ave. in Clifton.

He arrived in Vietnam in June 1968, as a Ranger with the 1st Division. Cerrato received a Purple Heart for wounds he sustained while on patrol in early 1969. Cerrato, who held the rank of Spec. 4, also received the Bronze Star. Cerrato was killed in action on May 10, 1969. After his death, Cerrato's mother Katherine became active with the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign War Post 7165. Cerrato's grandparents and his brother, Frank, also lived in Clifton at the time of his death.

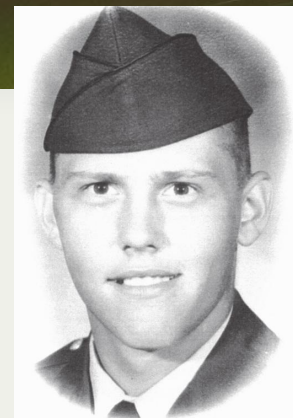
Little is known about Robert Prete or Edward Deitman because no family members could be found. But there is one thread that ties them together. They both began their service in Vietnam knowing that they would soon be a father. Robert Prete was born on Aug. 2, 1947. In the fall of 1967, he married Felicia Tencza, whose parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Tencza, resided on Lakeview Ave.

At the time of his death Robert Prete, who held the rank of sergeant, was reported to have been in Vietnam for eight months. His obituary states that he had a seven-month-old daughter. Prete had been attached to the 101st Airborne Division. While serving in Thua Thien Province on April 3, 1969, he was killed by a mortar blast.

Sixteen days after the death of Prete, Edward Deitman arrived in Vietnam. Deitman had just turned 26 two weeks before his arrival. Like Prete, Deitman also served in Thua Thien province. Less than one month later—May 17—he was dead. The cause of his death is unknown.

A post on the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation by Deitman's friend, Michael Long, revealed the most information about this Clifton serviceman: "Ed Deitman and his wife, Iris, were the closest friends of myself and my then-wife Judy while Ed and I attended the NCO academy at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Ed was a gentle soul, a good friend and a loving husband who left Iris expecting their first child when he was sent to Vietnam.

"He went in country a few weeks ahead of me. I received



Edward Deitman, Nicholas Frank Cerrato and Richard Cyran.

a letter from Iris notifying us of Ed's death on the eve of my own departure, making it a more solemn moment. I remember him often for his simple love of his wife, his mother, his unborn child and his love of life. I miss him still."

Late in 1968, the Cyran family of Samuel Ave. had little time to celebrate the safe return from Vietnam of their eldest son, Air Force Sgt. John Cyran Jr. That's because their other son, Richard Cyran, had just received his orders from the Army to go there.

A 1967 CHS grad, Richard began his tour in Vietnam in November. Holding the rank of Spec. 4, he served as a driver for Company B, 4th Battalion of the 23rd Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. During his time there, he received the Purple Heart for wounds suffered in action.

Richard died in Tay Ninh province on June 6, 1969, the 25th anniversary of the day that thousands of Americans from the previous generation had died on the beaches of Normandy, France.

Overcome by grief, Richard's father, John Cyran, expressed his anger about the mounting casualties to a newspaper reporter at the time. To the elder Cyran, the war could not be justified. It was a feeling that continued to grow. By the time of Richard's death, 36,000 sons had died in Vietnam. Besides his brother and parents, Richard also had three sisters.

When Clifton Merchant requested information about residents who had served in Vietnam, one of the most poignant responses came from the family of Guy Tulp.

Cynthia Safonte, Guy's sister, was 11 years old and a student at School 2 when she learned of her brother's death. Years later, Cynthia's daughter, Francine, was asked by a teacher to write an essay about her American hero. Francine chose the uncle that she never knew. Here's an excerpt from that essay.

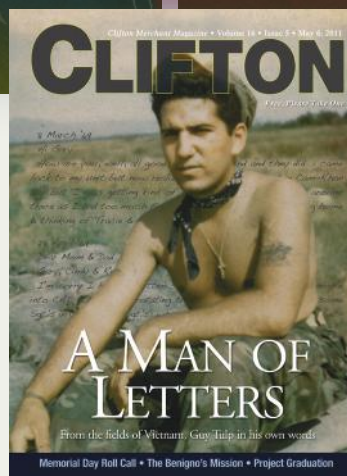
"The reason I have chosen my uncle is because he is what America stands for. He represents America's finest... He fought for the people's rights and for what he believed in, and that is what makes this country so strong and powerful."

Cynthia said her daughter's essay is a reminder that Vietnam not only affected the people who lived through those times, but also impacts future generations.

"I was just my daughter's age when my brother died as she was when she wrote this paper. And now she is the same age as Guy was when he joined the service," said Cynthia.

Born in Jersey City on Jan. 8, 1949, Tulp came to Clifton when he was about six years old. He was the oldest of four children born to Guyler and Josephine Tulp. Besides Guy and his sister Cynthia, the Tulp family, who lived on Thanksgiving Lane, included Gary and Robert. While attending CHS Tulp worked part-time at the Parkway Service Center at Van Houten Ave. and Broad St. He worshiped at St. Phillip's Church.

A few months before he was to graduate Clifton High in 1967, Tulp enlisted in the Marines with four of his friends.



Guy Tulp on our cover in May 2011.

While in the service, he earned his high school equivalency diploma. In Dec. 1967, he became engaged to Tracie Dudinyak of Clifton.

He arrived in Vietnam in July 1968. Sometime around Feb. 1969, he was wounded in action and spent three weeks recuperating at a hospital in Vietnam.

On April 30, 1969, Tulp's outfit, the Second Combined Action Group, was ambushed about 15 miles from Dang Nam. During the attack, a missile shell exploded and killed Tulp. In another 83 days, his tour of duty in Vietnam would have ended.

REMEMBERING VIETNAM AND ALL THOSE WHO SERVED AND SACRIFICED



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Although he never lived here, Donald Scott often paid visits to his grandmother, Janet Murdoch on Cottage Court. Scott, who was born on July 4, 1949, joined the Marines, attained the rank of lance corporal, and spent five months in Vietnam, from March 1968 to his death on Aug. 2, 1968.

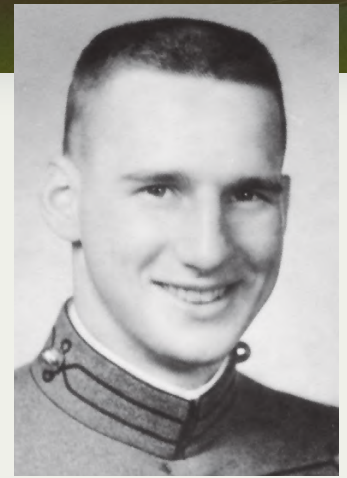
About a quarter-century later in 2000, as the Vietnam section of the monument was being planned, Murdoch asked that the Clifton War Veterans Alliance Monument Committee honor her grandson's memory by including his name. Recognizing that a sacrifice of this kind knows no boundaries, the monument committee agreed.

Some who knew Scott shared their memories through the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Web Site.

"My older sister was the same age as Donald and went to high school with him," said Sharon Vanna Cuff. "Although I wasn't a friend of Donald's, Harrison was such a small town that I felt personally connected to him. When I heard of his death, it brought the war home to me and made it very real and very ugly. I have never forgotten Donald and I will never forget to honor him in my thoughts and prayers every day of my life."

Dave Grady served with Scott and was with his friend during the artillery barrage in Quang Nam that claimed Scott's life. "Red was a good Marine and friend through some difficult times," said Grady. "Although I knew him for only months, we shared much and he was like a brother. I never recovered from his loss and will always remember him. I hope he is at peace wherever he is."

Born on Oct. 4, 1941 and raised in Garfield, William George Sipos had many friends in Clifton, thanks to his years at Pope Pius XII High School, which graduated a number of Cliftonites, including Elaine Wolfer, a member of the Class of 1959.



Donald Scott and William Sipos.

"I thought he was one of the nicest guys in the world," said Wolfer, who retired after a long teaching career at Clifton High School. "He was very serious-minded and the kind of person who would never think of pulling a practical joke, yet he maintained a great sense of humor."

At Pope Pius, Sipos was captain of the football, basketball and baseball teams and the school's baseball and football teams won state championships. He graduated 16th in a class of 168 in 1959. He then entered the US Military Academy at West Point and played football as both a quarterback and defensive back. Among the players he competed against were Roger Staubach and Mike Ditka.

Graduating West Point in 1963, he joined the Air Force and from 1964 to 1966 was with the 3rd Air Transport Squadron. At the end of 1966, his wife gave birth to a daughter, Michele. He then began a year's tour of duty in Vietnam, piloting the Cessna 0-1 "Bird Dog" aircraft on reconnaissance missions, which involved marking targets with smoke rockets. In March 1967, he was promoted to captain. Sixteen days later, April 6, 1967, his plane was shot down in Quang Nam. His body was transported back home and interred at West Point.



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Many historians point to the assassination of President Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963 as the day that America lost its innocence. Three days after that tragedy, Clifton native William Malcolm, the commander of the honor guard at Arlington National Cemetery, helped America bury its leader. In his 1967 book, *The Death of a President*, noted historian William Manchester described Malcolm's role on that historical day:

"At the rim of the hill, Sgt. William Malcolm barked: "Ready!" A squad from the Old Guard executed a half-right face, whacked the ground with the butts of their M-1s, and came to port arms.

Malcolm ordered "Aim!" The rifles came up together at a 45-degree angle. Then: "Fire!" The neat crack resounded across the copses and dells of Arlington as it had, for this squad, in four thousand funerals before."

The following year, Malcolm performed similar service at the funeral of General Douglas MacArthur. Six years after that, Malcolm died in Vietnam. He is the last Clifton serviceman to lose his life in the Vietnam War.

"Bill was regular Army and a good soldier," said Clifton resident Melvin Hockwitt. "We were friends through high school. We hung out a lot and used to go hunting together."

When Malcolm married Nancy Binkert of Toledo, Ohio, Hockwitt served as the best man.

"She was a registered nurse and I think Bill met her in Washington, D.C.," Hockwitt said. "We all went out to Ohio for the wedding."

Born on Sept. 4, 1941, William Edward Malcolm lived on Bergen Ave. in Clifton and worshiped at St. Paul Church. He was the son of William and Mary Malcolm, who also had a daughter, Mary Elizabeth.

The elder Malcolm served as a staff sergeant in the Army Engineers during World War II and Korea and later worked for the Clifton Public Works Department. Aunts and uncles included Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Stasiak and Mrs. Rose Malcolm. After graduating Clifton High in 1960, Malcolm followed in his father's footsteps and entered the Army.



William Malcolm

Four years of duty at Arlington National Cemetery, Malcolm was transferred to Germany, where he served for about three years. He began his tour of duty in Vietnam in September 1969.

Waiting at their home in Tennessee for his safe arrival were Malcolm's wife and three children, ranging in age from 3 to 5.

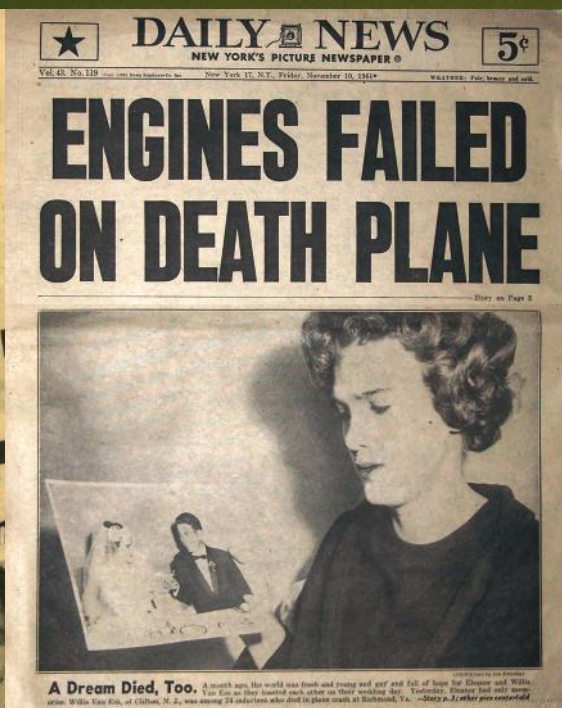
Back in Clifton, Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm had put aside a bottle of champagne, which would only be opened when their son returned.

Bill kept in touch with his parents, informing them of his whereabouts during his final tour of duty: "Keep the champagne cold. I'll be home in 140 days."

On May 5, 1970, while serving as the acting field first sergeant of Company C, 502nd Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, Malcolm was killed by enemy artillery fire in Thua Thein, near the DMZ.

His death occurred less than a week after American and South Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia, in an attempt to destroy Viet Cong bases.

The day before Malcolm died, four students were killed at Kent State University in Ohio by National Guardsmen during an anti-war protest.



THEIR DESTINATION: DOOM

By Joe Hawrylko

As various local war memorials can attest, Passaic County was well represented by many young, brave men who made the ultimate sacrifice. But the unexpected loss of life that occurred on Nov. 8, 1961 shocked the community unlike anything prior.

That morning, 26 newly enlisted Army recruits arrived in Newark Airport, ready to depart for boot camp at Ft. Jackson, SC. Imperial Airlines flight 201/8 took off without any issues, and made stops in Pennsylvania and Maryland to pick up additional recruits, bringing the total to 74.

About 30 miles from Richmond, VA, the two right engines on the Lockheed Constellation failed, and the pilot attempted to make an emergency stop that was aborted due to landing gear issues.

Edward R. Shamberger, Patrick R. Purcell, Vernon Griggs, Robert Rinaldi, Harold Skoglund, Willis Van Ess Jr., Robert DeVogel, Henry J. Barna.



Joseph Kandravy, Donald R. Kaplan, David N. Moore, Richard J. Vanderhoven, Bernard B. Olster, Donald N. Gurtman, Stephen P. Soltesz, Robert J. Marositz. We tried our best to collect bios and photos of all the fallen but some are missing.

Minutes later, the crippled aircraft went down through a dense forest and into a swampy ravine at 9:24 pm EST.

The terrain was so difficult that it took more than an hour for fire equipment to reach the site, even with the assistance of armored cars from the Virginia National Guard's 183rd Reconnaissance Squadron. By 2 am, all that remained of the burned out plane was its skeleton.

The young men had been in the Army for less than seven hours. All 74 recruits and three crew members died after being trapped in the wreckage.

John Zipf, a former Clifton police officer of 32 years, graduated from Clifton High in 1959, and was friends with several of the young men on the flight.

"I was very good friends with Pat Purcell, as well as Steve Pados, Robert Rinaldi, and Joseph Kandravy," he recalled. "Pat graduated in '59. We got him a job as a builder in Woodcliff Lakes. We saw him the previous day. We had a little party with all the guys."

"Everybody was getting drafted, which was normal at that time. They went to Paterson, and then to Newark," Zipf continued. "They left early in the morning, and I got a phone call at 6 am the following morning that the plane had gone down. I can still remember it today, myself, Ray Palmentera, and Albert Olster walking away from the Armory after the memorial. We all said it was something that shouldn't have happened."

Gary Bekker, a retired Clifton police officer who served on the force for 28 years, recalled the passing of his friend, Willis Van Ess, Jr., of Clifton.



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Hours before their deaths—the recruits from Passaic, Clifton and Paterson, on Nov. 8, 1961—at their induction in Paterson.

“Bill Van Ess, he was big into cars. We all used to hang out at People’s Auto on Main Ave. Bill’s family lived over on Burgh Ave.,” he recalled. “I was in the Army at the time in Germany when the news broke. After Bill died, it just destroyed their family.”

“Bill and myself were also good friends with Eddie Doncoes, who lived on Grove St. His mother saved all of the newspapers from the accident,” Bekker continued. “When she passed on, she gave the articles to her sons. Her youngest son, Randy, knew I wasn’t here when it happened, so he gave me all the articles to read up on it. And after I got them, the first thing that came to mind was to contact the *Clifton Merchant*.”

This collection of more than 50 articles captures the surprise, grief, and outrage that consumed Passaic County. A total of 22 northern New Jersey recruits perished in the accident, including 15 from Passaic, and six from Clifton.

The media quickly and thoroughly covered the incident, and the Civil Aeronautics Board swiftly launched an investigation. Within days, the dubious history of Imperial Airlines was front page news for every publication, and there was a push from the media and politicians

to address the issues plaguing charter flights.

It was the fifth crash for what The New York Mirror dubbed the ‘Death Line’. The first two accidents were non-fatal. In 1950, a crew member was killed in a crash out of Teterboro. On Sept. 1, 1953, 19 Army recruits and two crewmen perished in a crash near Vail, WA, in what was previously the worst incident for the airline to date.

The investigation revealed inconsistencies in maintenance, but ultimately the FAA representative said all seemed in order leading up to the crash.

Scrutiny also turned to the pilot, who failed testing three times before being licensed. The pilot had inadvertently dumped fuel that caused the crash and killed everyone but himself and the flight engineer.

In addition, the passengers were not prepped on emergency procedures. Most survived the crash, and tragically died of carbon monoxide poisoning when they could not open the doors.

It was soon revealed that the airline won the government bidding process because it was \$18 cheaper per seat. Laws forbid the Army from using its aircraft domestically.

continued on page 40 

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Ultimately, the government took action on ‘nonsked’ flights, forcing all companies to reapply for certification, leading to the closure of more than 20 businesses. Imperial Airlines lost its license three weeks after the accident.

But while the accident left a lasting precedent on aeronautical laws, not all of those who died are honored on local memorials. Finally, 55 years after the tragedy, that is about to change.

Forever Remembered in Third Ward Park, Passaic

The Passaic City Council had previously considered memorializing the fallen, but nothing ever materialized from those discussions. Now, the American Legion Rosol-Dul Memorial Post 359 of Passaic is leading the cause to properly honor the 15 Passaic boys who died.

John Dubya, the Vice Commander of Post 359, explained that the original champion of the project was Dr.

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At left, *The Herald-News* Nov. 9, 1961 front page. Also pictured John Zipf, Albert Olster and Ray Palmentera after a memorial service for the recruits.

John A. Testa, who started a campaign in the Facebook group, Passaic Beyond the Memories.

“My sister-in-law, Arlene, called me and told me about the project, and asked that I give Dr. Testa a call,” he recalled. “John is a gentleman, and believes in, and is driven, in his campaign to honor these 15 Passaic soldiers, who after 55 years of silence from the Passaic Community, have yet to be honored with a monument.”

Dubya took over as the project champion when Dr. Testa fell ill with kidney disease.

“This is what we do. As an American Legion post, we have the responsibility of honoring our fallen soldiers. That was back in April or May, and we’ve since raised enough money to get started. Our members are committed 100%.”

Dubya came to Passaic 1951 from Germany and is a proud American. “I love the city, and I am Vietnam veteran myself. I enlisted in 1964 right out of high school, and served for three years. I was in Vietnam in ‘65 and again in ‘66 with the 1st Air Cavalry Division,” he explained.

“I am on service connected disability myself, and I know what it is like for a veteran to come back from war, and in my case, not be respected as much as they should be.”

“These 22 guys from our area were drafted, and didn’t get a chance to show their community their love of their country,” Dubya continued. “It’s one thing if you’re in war, but these guys didn’t even get a chance. Right out of the starting block, they went down. We are all in agreement that they deserve the same honor and respect that our battle-hardened veterans deserve.”

Those 15 young men were finally memorialized with a 7-ft granite monument and flag pole, which was erected at Third Ward Park, Passaic, across from the restored boat-house.

A ceremony was held on Nov. 9, 2016, exactly 55 years and one day after the accident took place. The monument cost \$25,000, and fundraising efforts were at \$3,400 and growing when this story was originally published. Post 359 sold brick pavers for \$100 to offset the cost.

“The memorial will also feature a rose garden,” Dubya explained at the time. “Rose gardens symbolize these young men who left, never to return home. Young men who gave up their civilian life willingly, with thoughts of serving their country honorably. And not even 24 hours later, they were gone.”

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
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VIETNAM WAR

50th Year Commemoration

List of the Honored Dead

Below are bios compiled from the sources provided by Gary Bekker.

David Moore, 22

David Moore lived on Central Ave. with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Rutherford. Moore attended local elementary schools and Passaic High School before going to work for The Nevins Company of Rt. 3 in Clifton.

Robert DeVogel, 23

A graduate of Passaic High, Robert DeVogel lived in Clifton for five years, and was employed in the tabulating department of the Mutual Benefit and Life Insurance Company, Newark. DeVogel was a member of St. Stephen's Guild of the church, where he served as an usher and was on the men's bowling team.

Paul Stephen Soltesz, 22

The only child of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Soltesz, Paul Stephen Soltesz had a reputation of always wanting to help out, even if it was something as simple as giving a neighbor a lift. Soltesz was an outstanding halfback for the Indians from 1955-1957, playing under legendary coach Manlio Boverini, and earning The Herald-News All-Valley Conference football team.

Joseph Kandravý, 22

Born on Madeline Ave., Joseph Kandravý lived in Passaic, moving to Garfield 14 months prior after marrying Elaine Derco. Rt. Rev. Joseph A. Havriliak, dean of SS. Peter-Paul's Russian Orthodox Cathedral said that Kandravý was, "One of the finest boys in the parish," while comforting the family at their Passaic home.

Donald Gurtman, 22

A resident of Gregory Ave., Donald Gurtman was an alumnus of School 11 and Passaic High School. He also studied at the University of Miami for a year before working with his father, Sigmund, as a plumbing and heating contractor. Gurtman's passion was in motorcycles, which he would tune himself and compete in rallies conducted by local clubs.

4 DAILY NEWS, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER

Passaic's Heart Is at Half Staff

14 of Her Boys Were Among Plane Dead

By EUGENE SPAGNOLI and SIDNEY KLINE

In Passaic, the flags flew at half staff yesterday. Fourteen of her young men, who had bantered lightly on Wednesday upon entering military service, were dead. Dead less than seven hours after induction.

In neighboring Clifton also, voices were muted. Five of her young men were dead. Among the fatalities in Wednesday night's plane crash near Richmond were 26 boys from New Jersey and one from Brooklyn.

They Learn the Hard Way

From newspapermen, by radio, on TV, shocked relatives and friends learned that sons and husbands were gone. Army regulations stipulate that formal notification can be made only after the victims were identified.

80 Names in Death Roll But Luck Erased Three

By HENRY MACHIRELLA

Three young men who should have been aboard the chartered airliner that crashed and burned with a loss of 77 lives in Richmond, Va., were alive yesterday because one improperly filled out his Army questionnaire, another failed to pay a traffic ticket and the third joined the Air Force.

The tragic news made regional and national news.

Henry Barna, 23

A graduate of the Passaic High Class of 1957, Henry Barna was employed as a bookkeeper at the Bank of Passaic and Clifton, then located at Main and Passaic Aves. Barna also loved theater, and collected record albums of his favorite New York musical shows.

Hellmut Petraschek, 24, and Hartmutt Kuttnick, 21

Born in Kaufbeuren-Neugablonz, Germany, Hellmut Petraschek came to Passaic by way of Ottawa, where he met Hartmut Kuttnick, a native of Dortmund, Germany. The two bricklayers struck up a friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Helmut Holzenger, who were also from Germany. The Holzengers moved to Passaic in 1960, and shortly after invited friends to follow.

Robert Marositz, 22

Robert Marositz was born in Passaic, but resided in Clifton his entire life. He was a graduate of Holy Trinity School and Pope Pius High School--both in Passaic--and graduated with honors from St. Peter's College, Jersey City, in the summer prior to the accident that took his life. Marositz worked as a physicist at Fort Monmouth for the Army Signal Corps., and was a member of Holy Trinity R.C. Church, Passaic.

Bernard Burrill Olster, 22

Born in Passaic, Bernard Burrill Olster attended Passaic High for one year before attending Storm King School at Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY, where he was a lettered in football, baseball, basketball and tennis.



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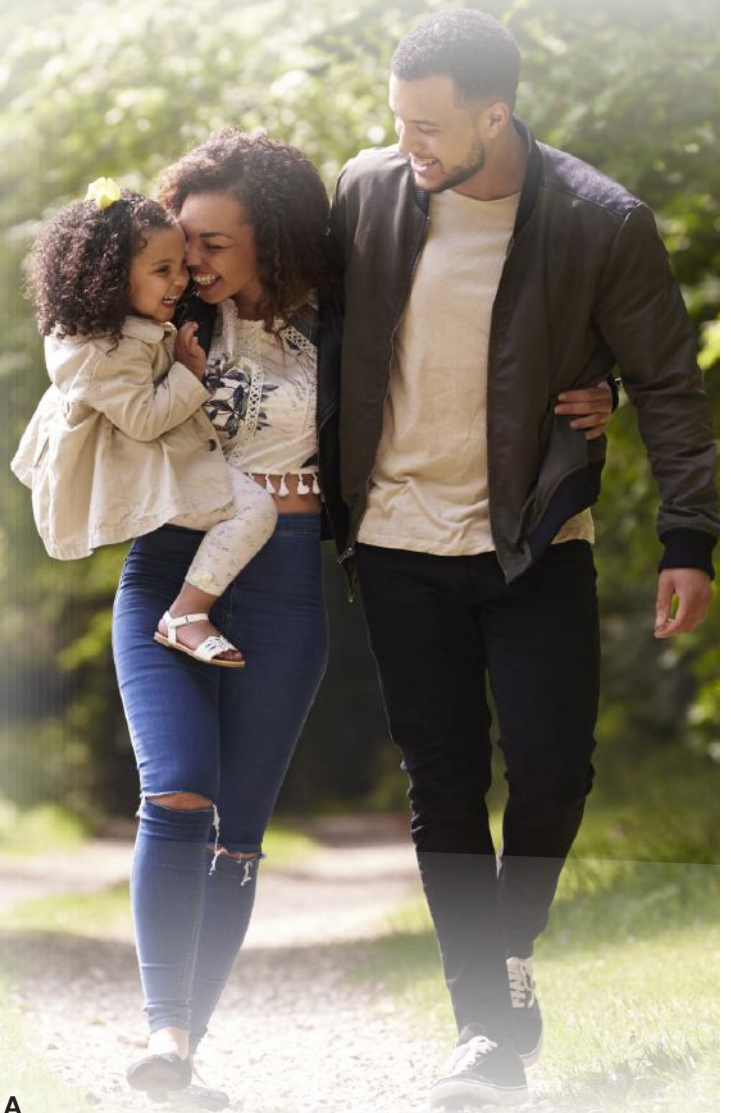
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After college, he started working as the vice president of production at Flexicote, Inc., in Clifton, which was owned by his father, Ned. His fiancée Cynthia Freeman, recalled his final words: "We'll be married as soon as I get this over with."

Edward Shamberger, 22

When Edward Shamberger found out he was traveling to Ft. Jackson on a plane, he immediately called his mother, who said that he should not be afraid, since he was a soldier now. It was the last time Stella Shamberger spoke to her son. She learned about the accident the following day when listening to the radio in her Vreeland Ave. home.

Richard Wall, 22

Richard's father, Passaic Police Lt. Richard Wall, recalled how happy his only son was after enlisting in the Army. The tragic death was noted by Mayor Paul G. DeMuro, who lived across the street from the Wall family on Ayerig Ave.

Donald Kaplan, 22

Donald Kaplan was a graduate of Fairleigh Dickinson University, and hoped to pursue his masters after completing his service. His father, Sidney, mother, Lee, and sister, Marilyn, were enjoying breakfast at their home on Brook Ave. when a friend stopped by to break the news gently. Sidney Kaplan simply repeated: "He was just 22."

Richard Vanderhoven, 22

Standing 6'4", James Vanderhoven was the grandson of the late Passaic Deputy Police Chief Frank Vanderhoven. Much to the amusement of his friends, he was afraid of heights, and joked about having to go on a plane after enlisting in the Army. Like so many who lost their son that day, the tragedy hit Mr. and Mrs. Vanderhoven hard as Richard was their only son.



These vets helped build the Passaic Monument in 2016: Ben Lanza and Jeremiah Drozd with his dog Mac, and from rear left: John Abdul, Walter Bysiek, John Dubyna, Joe Dudek, Cmdr. Jerry Pigan and Fred Corbitt of the Passaic DPW.

Valerie Korschuk, 22

More than 150 people came out to celebrate the life of Valerie Korschuk on Nov. 15, 1961. Services were held at the Scarpa Funeral Home, 125 Lexington Ave., Passaic. A native of Russia, Korschuk came to the United States at 10 years old. He was a member of St. John's Lutheran Church of Passaic, and lived with uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Mostowoj.

Patrick R. Purcell, 22

Patrick Purcell was a graduate of the Passaic High School Class of 1957, where he was an outstanding athlete, lettering in basketball.

At the time he was drafted, Purcell was working at a construction company in Woodcliff Lake. His brother, Jimmy, was a deputy chief in the Passaic Police Dept., and passed away in 2013.

Alberto Zyczynski, 23

A native of Poland, Alberto Zyczynski and his parents relocated to Argentina to flee the growing Russian oppression which was going throughout eastern Europe after World War II. They came to the United States just 18 months prior to the accident. His mother, Cataline, requested that the Army bring the body of Alberto's late father to New Jersey so that the two may be laid to rest together, per her son's wishes.

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Orrie De Groot	★	Emilio Lazzerin	★	Michael Vernarec
Olivo De Luca	★	Joseph Liechty	★	Cornelius Visbeck
Italo De Mattia	★	Jacob Morf, Jr.	★	Ignatius Wusching
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Jurgen Dykstra	★	Edwin C. Peterson	★	Otto B. Zanetti

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Over the past year, we have had the privilege of serving the families of many veterans. In recognition of the service these veterans rendered to their country, we would like to show our appreciation this Memorial Day. In memory of their lives and their service, we recall...



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Brian G. Sieper
Daniel Franklin Stroup
Robert Sommer Wolfe
Peter Zevas



Memorial Weekend

Sunday, May 25

6 am: Volunteers needed to help set up 2,295 flags at Avenue of Flags, in and around City Hall, weather permitting

Monday, May 26

8:15 am: Fire Dept. Service, Brighton Rd. followed by **9 am** Parade from Clifton & Allwood Rd. to Chelsea Park

9:30 am: Service at Chelsea Park

11 am: Main Memorial Park Service

2 pm: Athenia Veterans, Huron Ave.

6 pm: Avenue of Flags Take Down

Questions? Visit Avenue of Flags barn near City Hall or call Joe Tuzzolino at 973-632-9225 to volunteer, or for info.

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As we recall the service of Clifton's Veterans, we also honor the late Joseph M. Shook, Sr., founder of Shook Funeral Home, Inc., and father of our President, Nancy Shook Garretson, and Thomas F. Garretson, father of our Manager, Roy B. Garretson.



Joseph M. Shook, Sr. 1924-2008
US Marine Corps, Sept. 1942 - Dec. 1945



Joe was stationed at the Commandant's Headquarters in Washington, D.C. for a short time. He then proudly served his country as an Armored Amphibian Crewman and saw action on both Peleliu and Okinawa during WW II.

Thomas F. Garretson 1924-2012
US Navy, Jan. 1943 - Feb. 1946



Tom served with the 121st Naval Construction Battalion, attached to the 4th Marines Division, in the Battle of Kwajalein and Roi-Namur. Known as the SeaBees, the 121st went ashore with the Marines as they invaded Saipan in WWII. The 121st NCB helped build the airstrips on Tinian from where B-29 bombers took off to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.



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World War II	★	Thaddeus Bukowski	★	David Ward
Joseph Sperling	★	Leo Grossman	★	Edward Rembisz
Charles Peterson	★	Michael Kashey	★	Lawrence Zanetti
Thomas Donnellan	★	Stephen Messineo	★	Alfred Jones
Jerry Toth	★	John Janek	★	Stephen Blondek
Frank Lennon	★	John Yanick	★	John Bulyn
Joseph Carboy	★	Herbert Gibb	★	Gerhard Kaden
Julius Weisfeld	★	William Nalesnik	★	William Lawrence
Edward Ladwik	★	Joseph Sowma	★	Robert Doherty
Israel Rabkin	★	Bronislaus Pitak	★	Samuel Guglielmo
Peter Pagnillo	★	Harry Tamboer	★	Robert Parker
Harold Weeks	★	John Olear	★	Joseph Molson
William Weeks	★	John Koropchak	★	Stephen Kucha
Salvatore Favata	★	Joseph Nugent	★	James De Biase
Herman Adams	★	Steven Gombocs	★	Dominick Gianni
Edward Kostecki	★	Thomas Gula	★	Manuel Marcos
Charles Hooyman, Jr.	★	Raymond Curley	★	Nicholas Palko
Salvatore Michelli	★	Harry Earnshaw	★	William Slyboom
Richard Novak	★	James Henry	★	Herman Teubner
James Potter	★	John Layton	★	Thomas Commiciotto
Adam Liptak	★	Charles Messineo	★	Stephen Surgent
John Van Kirk	★	Joseph Petruska	★	Albert Bertneskie
Carlyle Malmstrom	★	Bogert Terpstra	★	Charles Gash
Francis Gormley	★	John Kotulick	★	Peter Jacklin
Charles Stanchak	★	Peter Vroeginday	★	Peter Shraga, Jr.
Joseph Ladwik	★	Michael Sobol	★	John Aspesi
Karl Germelmann	★	Donald Sang	★	Micheal Ladyczka
Robert Stevens	★	Andrew Sanko	★	Edward Marchese
Albert Tau	★	George Zeim, Jr.	★	Robert Stephan
William Scott	★	Robert Van Liere	★	Roelof Holster, Jr.
Benjamin Puzio	★	Vernon Broseman	★	Alex Hossack
James Van Ness	★	Harold O'Keefe	★	Siber Speer
Gregory Jahn	★	Edward Palffy	★	Frank Klimock
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Stanley Swift	★	John Kanyo	★	Andrew Servas, Jr.
Charles Lotz	★	Bryce Leighty	★	Francis Alesso
Joseph Prebol	★	Joseph Bertneskie	★	Walter Bobzin
Walter Nazar	★	Samuel Bychek	★	Vincent Lazzaro
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A granite monument etched with the names of 283 Cliftonites Killed in Action during WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam and Iraq was unveiled on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2020 across from the barn which serves as the 'headquarters' for the Avenue of Flags.

World War II

Joseph Sondey
John Zier
Peter Hellrigel
Steve Luka
Arthur Vanden Bree
Harold Baker
Hans Fester
Patrick Conklin
John Thompson
Thomas Dutton, Jr.
Harold Ferris, Jr.
Donald Freda
Joseph Guerra
Edward Hornbeck
William Hromniak
Stephen Petrilak
Wayne Wells
Vincent Montalbano
James Miles
Louis Kloss
Andrew Kacmarcik
John Hallam
Anthony Leanza
William Sieper
Sylvester Cancellieri
George Worschak
Frank Urrichio
Andrew Marchincak

[illegible]

Carl Anderson

George Holmes
Edward Stadtmauer
Kermit Goss
George Huemmer
Alexander Yewko
Emil Chaplin
John Hushler
Edgar Coury
Robert Hubinger
Wilbur Lee
Vito Venezia
Joseph Russin
Ernest Yedlick
Charles Cannizzo
Michael Barbero
Joseph Palagano
William Hadrys
Joseph Hoffer, Jr.
Joseph Piccolo
John Robinson
Frank Torkos
Arthur Mayer
Edward Jaskot
George Russell
Frank Groseibl
Richard Van Vliet
Benjamin Boyko
Harry Carline

★ ★

Paul Domino

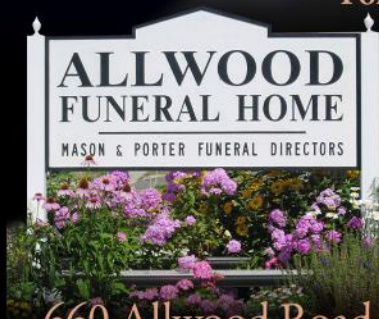
John Fusiak
Louis Ritz
William Niader
Alfred Aiple
Mario Taverna
Sebastian De Lotto
Matthew Bartnowski
John Bogert
Joseph Collura
Matthew Daniels
James Doland, Jr.
Walter Dolginko
Peter Konapaka
Alfred Masseroni
Charles Merlo
Stephen Miskevich
John Ptasienski
Leo Schmidt
Robert Teichman
Louis Vuoncino
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Memorial Day, 1944, at the dedication of the honor roll at the Italo-American Circle of Albion Place, Valley Rd., one of 12 posted in Clifton neighborhoods to show support for the 5,500 men who shipped off to war. Note the names highlighted. They are the young men who were killed in action, just six of the 269 Cliftonites who would die during WW II.

US Army/Special Forces Captain Michael Tarlavsky



was killed in Najaf, Iraq on Aug. 12, 2004 and buried with honors in Arlington National Cemetery on Aug. 24. Tarlavsky, CHS Class of '92, was captain of the Swim Team and enlisted in the Army in 1996. He served in Iraq and Afghanistan and was awarded the Bronze Star.

He is survived by his wife Tricia, son Joseph, his parents Yury and Rimma and a sister, Elina. The Veterans Alliance engraved his name on the Downtown Clifton Main Avenue War Memorial in 2004—the first name added in 34 years.

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| ★ | Vietnam War | ★ | Guyler Tulp |
| ★ | Alfred Pino | ★ | Nicholas Cerrato |
| ★ | Thomas Dando | ★ | Edward Deitman |
| ★ | William Sipos | ★ | Richard Cyran |
| ★ | Bohdan Kowal | ★ | Leszek Kulaczowski |
| ★ | Robert Kruger, Jr. | ★ | William Malcolm |
| ★ | Bruce McFadyen | ★ | Leonard Bird |
| ★ | Carrol Wilke | ★ | John France |
| ★ | Keith Perrelli | ★ | Stephen Stefaniak Jr. |
| ★ | William Zalewski | ★ | |
| ★ | Louis Grove | ★ | Nov. 8, 1961 |
| ★ | Clifford Jones, Jr. | ★ | Plane Crash |
| ★ | George McClelland | ★ | Robert De Vogel |
| ★ | Richard Corcoran | ★ | Vernon Griggs |
| ★ | John Bilenski | ★ | Robert Marositz |
| ★ | Donald Campbell | ★ | Robert Rinaldi |
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| ★ | Howard Van Vliet | ★ | Willis Van Ess, Jr. |
| ★ | Frank Moorman | ★ | |
| ★ | Robert Prete | ★ | Gulf War |
| | | ★ | Michael Tarlavsky |

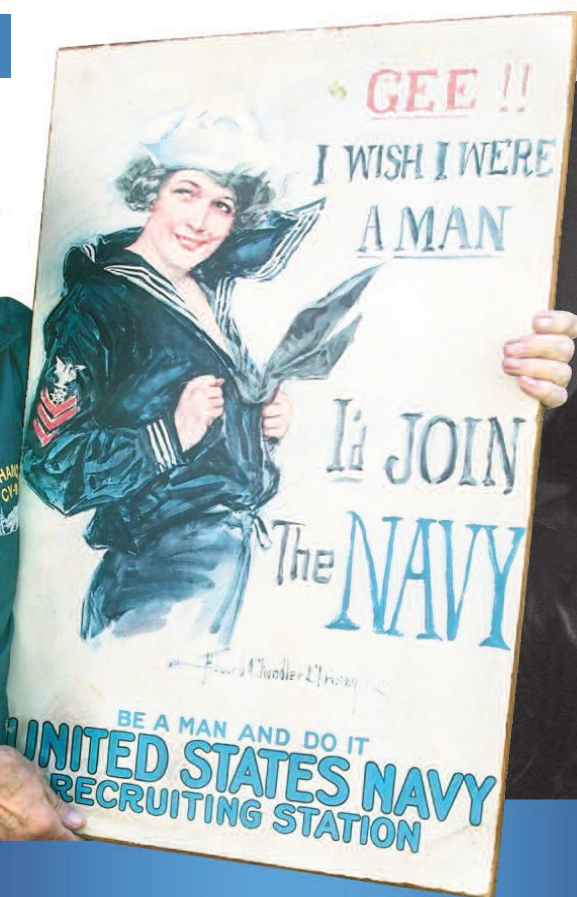


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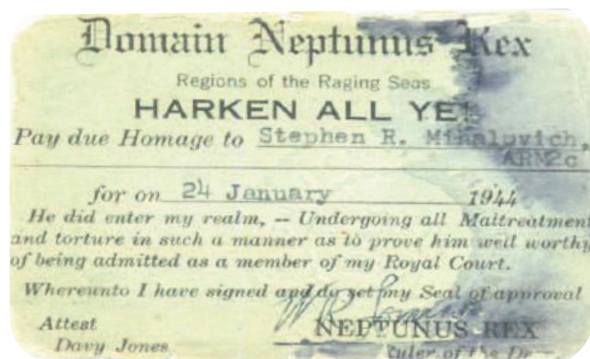
By Joe Hawrylko

“You just get used to it in training, and you don’t think about it much when you are up there,” explained Stephen Mihalovic. It’s surely the most nonchalant way anyone has described what it’s like to be in a plane you’re not flying that’s doing 300 mph and headed straight at the ground. **“But you never forget how to pray.”**

It takes some serious mettle — and a healthy dose of teenage invincibility — to voluntarily trade in the comforts of home for a cramped cockpit halfway around the world in the Pacific Theater. Mihalovic did just that in 1942, when he elected to drop out of CHS at age 16 and take up arms against the Axis powers.

“We had to go win the war first,” a then 90-year-old Mihalovic told Clifton Merchant in 2015.

By the time the Clifton native was discharged from the Navy in 1946, Mihalovic was an aviation radioman first class who had



flown 23 combat missions off of the USS Enterprise, USS Intrepid, and USS Hancock, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross and three air medals — all while still a teenager. He was truly scared of only one thing: mom and dad.

“That was a pretty rough deal,” laughed Mihalovic. “After nudging for maybe two or three weeks, they finally consented and signed the waiver. My friend Lou DeLotto [and I] were contemplating going in together, so we had all our tests done before we got to the service. My intention going in was to stay for 20 years.”

Turning 100 later this month, May 23, 1942 marked Mihalovic’s 17th birthday and is the day that he left his home on Knapp Ave. He boarded a bus for 90 Church St. in New York to enlist in the Navy. He completed boot camp at Newport, RI and went to aviation radio school in Jacksonville, FL. Mihalovic was sent to San Diego in May, 1943 to join the USS Enterprise and Air Group Sic.

He ultimately logged countless hours and flew almost two dozen combat missions in several major battles. One vivid memory is the first time that he hopped in the back of a Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bomber and heard that iconic roar of a WWII prop plane charging at the earth.

“I was in San Diego on Mother’s Day; I remember that very clearly,” he said. “We were just put into the squadron and two guys were going up, and I said I had never been up before. They told me to get a parachute and up we went.”

“At about 5,000 feet they open the hatch, which you do in case something happens, and say we are going to make a few dives. Without any other words, we go down and I was thinking, ‘This is not for me!’” he

recalled. “But the second dive was a lot easier than the first, and the next was better, too. By the fifth dive, I was OK.”

Combat Ready

Mihalovic first entered combat in November of 1943, when the Enterprise and Air Group Six engaged the Japanese at the Gilbert Islands, and soon after at Marshall Island.

At the end of 1943, Mihalovic was

attached to the USS Intrepid as it was heading toward the Marshall Islands. Once captured, the islands put the Allies within striking range of Truk Lagoon, which is where the Imperial Navy was headquartered.

On Feb. 16, 1944, Operation Hailstorm commenced, as three carrier groups put up a near-constant assault on Truk that cost the Japanese two Imperial destroyers and nearly 200,000 tons in supplies.



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“That was basically the Japanese Pearl Harbor,” recalled Mihalovic. “That was a two-day engagement. I remember that day in particular; the flak was very heavy.”

The intense firepower stood out as a personal memory, but Operation Hailstorm is also recalled for an odd bit of Navy lore. In the waning hours of the battle, a Japanese pilot was able to evade Allied anti-aircraft long enough to fire off an aerial torpedo, which slammed into the Intrepid on her right side, roughly 15 ft. below the waterline.

“We were on torpedo defense. I had to fly early in the morning, so I decided to stay in the ready room,” said Mihalovic. “Many guys went to the bunks, but in the ready room we had reclining chairs.”

“I was putting my legs over the one in front of me and getting ready to go to la-la land when all of the sudden there was an explosion,” he explained. “We got hit from a torpedo on a torpedo plane, and we really got rocked. The torpedo hit the chief’s quarter below us.”

Though the Intrepid remained afloat, the torpedo tore open the hull, causing flooding, and also damaged the rudder badly enough that the ship was listing to the left.

“We weren’t allowed downstairs to get our stuff until the next morning,” he said. “When I went down, I saw a big chunk of the torpedo sitting there on my pillow. If I ever got weak in the knees while in the service, it was at that sight.”

“That was also the first time we lost anyone from our squadron, and we had a burial at sea,” he said. “That’s a sight now that, even if I see it on TV, I get choked up.”

Crippled and unable to navigate normally, the Intrepid only reached sage harbor thanks to some quick thinking.

“We were sitting there, sailing in circles, until the chief petty officer had the bright idea to take the canvas we had downstairs and make a sail out of it,” said Mihalovic. “That ended up in the Navy periodicals: how we ended up sailing back to Pearl Harbor.”

Shellback And Altar Boy

Despite the constant threat of danger, Mihalovic and his other sailors occasionally found brief periods of levity.



Steve and Dorothy Mihalovic with their daughters in 2008: Mary Ann Sidebottom, Dorothy Sarisky, Diane Bigos and Denise Kearney.

Mihalovic became a shellback when he crossed the equator while serving on the Intrepid in 1944.

“That really broke up the monotony,” he said.

The line-crossing ceremony is an international naval tradition where pollywogs — those who haven’t crossed — engaged in a series of rituals at the behest of the shellbacks, who previously crossed. No rank is safe from the pranks, and the gags can get downright odd.

“They saved all the garbage for two weeks and packed it into a makeshift tube. We had to crawl through 15-20 ft. of that stuff,” Mihalovic laughed. “All the while, a guy was hosing us down and then we had to run through a gauntlet. I hid right behind one of the guys ahead of me, because I didn’t want to get catapulted off the deck!”

After Truk, the Intrepid went to dry dock. Mihalovic kicked around San Diego briefly before being sent to Hawaii to relieve the air group aboard the USS Hancock in March of 1945.

“The chaplain on the ship made an announcement for Mass. I ended up volunteering to be the altar boy,” he recalled.

Afterwards, Mihalovic noticed a copy of the Passaic Herald News, and that’s how he met Father James Doyle, formerly of St. Paul’s Church. The two struck up an enduring friendship. Mihalovic still proudly wore in 2015 a USS Hancock belt buckle that Father Doyle gave to him. The Father was a calming influence for Mihalovic.

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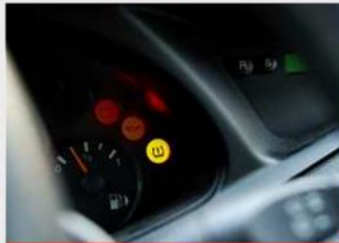
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On March 18, 1945, the Hancock led the Navy's first air strike on Kyushu, the southernmost large island of the Japanese archipelago.

"We were the first carrier airplanes to bomb Japan proper," said Mihalovic. "Our target was the airfield at Southern Kyushu. We were staging out of Okinawa, which we had recently captured. I remember I was scared knowing how many anti-aircraft installations they had. I almost had the feeling I wasn't coming back."

"In the two days before, I must have said about 5,000 Acts of Contrition. We were on the plane, waiting to take off, and I [was] nervous," he said. "I look out and see the Father look at me; he motions a cross, and he blessed me. Instantly, a calm came over me. I knew that I was coming back."

Mainland resistance was indeed ferocious, unlike any of the previous defenses Mihalovic had encountered.

"Normally, a burst of flak shells emits a black smoke," he said. Due to the sheer number of anti-aircraft installations, the Japanese gave each station color-coded rounds to track their targets. "There were big bursts of color everywhere. Green smoke, red smoke, some blue. It was actually very pretty, almost like a show in a way, but it could kill you."

"We actually got hit by flak once while bombing Kuril," continued Mihalovic. "Right in the engine. We were able to just make it back to the ship. We got back and everyone was just staring and wondering, 'How did we ever make it?'"

The pilot also had run into trouble on the descent to land.

"On the way back, we engaged a kamikaze, so we knew the gas was low. I notice the gear isn't down and the pilot just says, 'I know,' and that's it," said Mihalovic. "He puts them down at the last second, the cable catches and everyone comes running up, but oddly enough I don't hear any sound. The two guys directly behind us went down in the water and we had to get them. We just made it."

The Hancock next traveled to Okinawa for another bombing mission, and spent the next week supporting troops up and down the island coast. On April 7, 1945, it suffered significant damage when a kamikaze and its payload breached the AA defenses, killing 62 men and wounding another 71.

"I was typing a letter to my then-girlfriend in Santa Rosa, and they sounded the torpedo defense alarm," he said. "I decided to leave this alone and get below deck."

Mihalovic ran for the nearest hatch, pushed his way

in, and got below just moments before the Japanese pilot slammed into the Hancock near where he was located.

"I didn't realize it until they found me, but my friends were on the deck picking up blankets to see if it was me. Meanwhile, I was down in the mess hall, playing a couple games of cribbage after things calmed down."

Hints, A Celebration, And A Return Home

The Hancock went to port for repairs and returned to action in June.

Mihalovic saw limited action until the Japanese announced their surrender on Aug. 15, 1945. In hindsight, there were hints about what was to take place.

"Three weeks before they dropped the bombs, we received orders to not attack three cities in any form, as well as the emperor's castle," said Mihalovic. "At that point, we had no idea."

"When they finally announced that Japan had surrendered, I was in the middle of my routine of breakfast and then communion," he continued. "I had my life jacket on and I was loading my .38 when my pilot came and said, 'Steve, we're not going.' That night, I had a party all by myself. When we used to come back from flights, we'd be given two ounces of liquor. I would always drink half and save the other, so I had more than a pint!"

After the surrender, Mihalovic enjoyed his leave in Japan before being discharged in May of 1946, after reconsidering his plans.

"I wanted to do a career, but I didn't like the peacetime Navy," he said. "I changed my mind the last six months or so. I wasn't making a difference. Everything was spit and polish inspections. I was used to the air group, where everything was top notch."

Mihalovic returned home and briefly considered diamond-cutting school but instead worked at Curtiss-Wright, the company that built the SB2C Helldiver he flew later in WWII. He worked in manufacturing until retiring in 1992. Mihalovic had four daughters, eight grandchildren, and six great grandchildren as of 2015.

Mihalovic remained active in meeting his former sailors through the bi-annual reunions for the USS Hancock. "We used to have them in a different place every year," he said. Mihalovic was inducted in the Enlisted Combat AirCrew Roll of Honor on USS Yorktown CV 10 in November, 1999. "These days," he told us a decade ago, "everyone is older, so we keep in touch on Skype more. It's a brotherhood."

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Non-Stop Dining on Market St.

By Ariana Puzzo



No two days look the same for Jay Bakshi.

"Every morning I wake up [with the mentality]: 'A new day, a new goal,'" said Bakshi, 59.

The owner of Non Stop Chicken, 64 1/2 Market St., opened his business's doors in 2023 and is working alongside his business partner, Sabiha Shakil. They met while working at Papa John's.

"She is a hard working lady," he said. "We teamed up together to make our dreams come true."

Bakshi is committed to his work, going as far as saying he has a "passion" for it. It's what guides him during the early years as a business owner.

"You have to know when you start a business that you have no weekends or days off," he said. "You need to be on your toes 24 hours, because you're not working for someone. ... That's only possible if you have passion for work."

As a self-proclaimed foodie, Bakshi meets that passion and pushes onward to deliver the best quality of food. It also helps that he simply loves chicken and is enjoying his unique role in our city as a purveyor of fried chicken.

"I always ate from Popeyes or KFC ... but I wanted something that I could do that was different," said Bakshi. "I try to make the experience more 'homestyle' than com-



mercializing it, and people love it."

It's just Bakshi and Shakil running the show with occasional help from Bakshi's son, Neel, 27. Bakshi makes it a point to talk to the customers and be a friendly face.

"These days, no one talks to you in any franchise stores. They don't care," said Bakshi. "Now it's more of a commercialized thing, and there is no love left anymore. They don't even ask you how you like the food."

"This is like a family," he added about Non Stop Chicken. "I want to do as much as I can to get that kind of affection and love back."

Taking A Chance

Expansion is the long-term goal. Bakshi would like to eventually open a shop in Bergen County.

His previous employment was as a supervisor for Papa John's in Hackensack. Opening his own business was a long-term goal. Bakshi was inspired by his brother's success as the man behind Chicken Magician in Hackensack.

"It's not easy to get out of a job and take a risk on opening a business," Bakshi admitted. "You spend a lot of money and money does not come in for years. It's not the easiest step."

"After working for so many years, I thought, 'I want to do something different,'" he continued. "If I want something different in life, I need to do something different. So I took a chance."

The best part of Bakshi's entrepreneurial role is that he is only reporting to the customers. But he acknowledged that being the boss is a lot harder than doing a job, because there are more hours of work and more accountability.

He's in good company. Residents don't need to book a trip to Epcot to eat around the world. All they need to do is head on over to Market St.

Bakshi saw there were lots of apartments nearby, plus offices on Allwood Rd. and Clifton Ave. and the now-closed Allwood Cinemas. But he knew that Market St. was famous for its diverse array of restaurants.

"There is Japanese food, Chinese, Indian, pizzerias, Thai, a deli, Spanish food, a breakfast bagel shop, and me with my fried chicken," he said. "It's a very good street."

Always Fresh

Bakshi encourages customers to talk to him so he can make the food better for everyone.

He and Shakil cook from scratch, learning everything "the right way", and Bakshi handles the operations end of things like ordering the food.

The restaurant is open daily. View their menu at non-stopchickennj.com. Bakshi gets there half an hour before opening to set up all the fresh food. There is limited seating and many patrons order take-out.

"All of my chicken is fresh, whether it's for tenders, sandwiches, or fried chicken," said Bakshi. "We also have freshly breaded fish."

Bakshi grew up in Mumbai and lived in the U.S. from age 18 to 26. He returned to India and moved back stateside six years ago. He lives in Wallington with wife Seema. The couple are parents of two adult children, Megha and Neel.

As for his business, Bakshi encourages city residents to form their own opinions.

"I love my business. We are passionate about it and cooking good food," said Bakshi. "I'll let people come in and decide how they like it, because they're the bosses."



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Auto tech Joe Barcellona, at left, has been with the Clifton ETD since it opened 28 years ago. He is pictured with Emir Tatarov who is now in his third year. Clifton's management team, from left, David Sanchez-Martinez, Billy DiLeo, and Raid Younes.

The Road Best Traveled

By Ariana Puzzo

When ETD Discount Tire first opened its doors in 1945, it was a time when your word meant everything. That hasn't changed over 80 years and two generations of leadership.

Owner John Boyle and wife Kathy (Piersall), along with a team of employees who are like family, uphold the legacy at ETD Discount Tire's nine locations. The Clifton location, at 960 Bloomfield Ave., opened in 1997.

"Our focus has always been to do the right thing for our customers and our employees, and success will follow," said Kathy, a Paul VI 1971 graduate. "It has been a winning formula. We pride ourselves on living up to our roots as a small, family-centered business [that emphasizes] quality of experience over quantity of stores."

Clifton made sense as part of their Passaic County locations. It's not only the city where Kathy grew up in Richfield Village, but John noted that there was plenty of opportunity.

"Clifton has a lot of people and a lot of cars," said John, 72. "It's a solid market that we wanted to be in. My wife and I both knew Clifton well. It's a town that we liked, so we wanted to build a store there." Visit ETD's website at etddiscounttire.com.

Starting with a Handshake

ETD Discount Tire Centers have over 1,000 tires in each location, plus over 300,000 tires in the local warehouses,

but they aren't just about making the wheels on your car go round-and-round.

Customers can seek out their services if they need an oil change, wheel alignment, new battery, new brakes, air conditioning repair, or other repair and maintenance work. The team consists of ASE-certified technicians and mechanics who get the job done right the first time.

But it really started with John's father, Jerry. He returned from the United States Army Air Corps and opened a tire sales and service center in Englewood.

Jerry bought a load of tires in 1945 out of a bankruptcy in Hackensack and learned the business from the ground up. The business's start was in large part thanks to Walter Stillman, who owned a Buick dealership and took the Boyles' business on as a division.

"In 1989, Mr. Stillman gave us the opportunity to separate ourselves from his company and chart our own course," said Kathy. "It's been a fantastic business and currently supports 90 families."

The Stillmans ultimately sold the Boyles the tire business that February, given they were already running it. John acknowledged how different it was to do business and transactions at that time. "Unlike how things operate today, we had nothing but a handshake with the Stillman family from 1945 to 1989," he said. "You didn't need a contract. They were just wonderful people."



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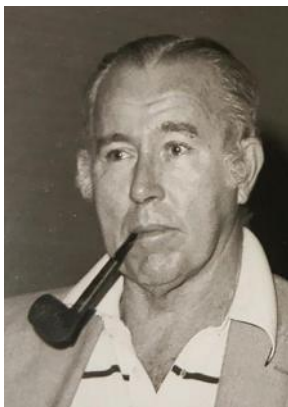


John's official entry into the family business, which he experienced firsthand throughout his life, began in high school, pre-dating the division's separation. High school summers were spent driving trucks or working in a warehouse.

John learned all aspects and primarily grew up on the wholesale distribution end of the business, which operated from 1950 until they sold it in 2011.

Wholesale distribution accounted for 95% of the business at its height. ETD Discount Tire had 60 trucks delivering to stores from Maine to Baltimore, working out of five different warehouses.

As he matured in the company, Jerry eventually had a desk and a phone for his son to try his hand at sales. That was in 1974 and, from there, John was working full time in the family business. Fast-forward to 1993: John took over as owner and focused entirely on retail. They upgraded store facades and interiors to make them more welcoming and comfortable.



In 1974, the late founder Jerry Boyle and his son John. Above in a recent photo, John and his wife Kathy (Piersall), who grew up in Clifton and is a 1971 grad of Paul VI High School.

CLIFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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- Go to Student Registration from the Registration Services page of the Clifton Public Schools website
- <https://www.clifton.k12.nj.us/Page/4900>
- Select Step 2: Student Registration
- Select Pre-Register a Student
- Select 2025-2026 for the Pre-Registration School Year



“We have gutted and rehabbed every store with the exception of the Hillsdale location,” said John. “We are going to get to that, but it is a difficult one to do. The store is so good and so busy. It’s an impossible decision to shut it down and knock it down.”

John credited Kathy’s “touches” for beautifying the stores and how these upgrades allow the business to recognize that “half of our customers are women.”

“If we don’t have a facility that appeals to women, we’re not doing our job,” said John.

Not Just Numbers

The long-time commitment of ETD team members makes it less lonely at the top.

Clifton’s store manager Bill Dileo has worked with the company for 23 years. He has moved up the ladder in that time, starting as a mechanic and later working in sales before his current role.

“Anything that happens in the shop, he’s stood in that guy’s shoes ... and done every job out there,” said John. “If a customer walks in and says, ‘This is the problem that I’m dealing with’, he’s probably handled that problem in his career at some point.”

“A store manager that started in the company as a mechanic is a great store manager,” he added. John saw how that worked for ETD and how some competitors did not nurture talent or take care of employees. In turn, their cus-

tomers service suffered and the business weakened. Some competitors sold their businesses to private equity firms or were acquired by larger retailers. John saw what it did to a previously small, possibly family-run business.

“Those stores lose the personal touch. Employees don’t feel like part of a family anymore,” he said. “They become a number, and we don’t want to let that happen.”

“We are closed on Sundays, because we want people to have time with their families,” John added. “We’ve always operated that way. We lose a day of business, but we’re OK with that.”

John and Kathy have two daughters, Kate and Suzanne, and there is no end in sight for the family business. Now with 90 overall employees, John sees a future where there is a third generation to one day take the lead.

If history is anything to go on, John’s successor will have big shoes to fill like he did in the 90’s.

But what did he learn first and foremost from his father?

“You’ve got to pay attention,” John laughed. “It sounds so simple, but if you look after customers and employees, the company is going to do well.”

“My father’s greatest skill was his ability to get along with people. Suppliers, manufacturers, customers, and employees,” he continued. “He was just a really nice guy who got along with everyone. You can tell when the person you’re doing business with has that skill.”

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Inspired by Roy

By Ariana Puzzo

LIV Physical Therapy is a multidisciplinary clinic, but Dr. Marissa Fragapane has one top priority. “I want to be the change in a system that can be impersonal or overwhelming,” said Fragapane, 31.

Fragapane is the owner of LIV Physical Therapy, 6 Main Ave. in Delawanna, and has experienced what it feels like to be a patient. She found herself on the opposite side of a treatment table, unable to use her hand and forced to navigate multiple surgeries after an accident in 2013.

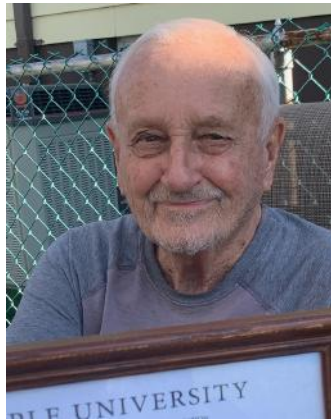
“I understand being in pain, being frustrated, and hoping for healing,” she said. “I wanted to create a place that felt more personal ... so patients could be seen, heard, and truly cared for.”

Opening LIV Physical Therapy in her hometown was always a goal, but there were a few steps to take first. Fragapane grew up with Mustang parents Sal and Luanne (Ohlandt) and her sister, Frankie (CHS 2014).

She attended St. Andrew’s and WWMS before graduating CHS in 2012. She perfected the art of multitasking as a waitress and a bartender at Matthew’s, 1131 Bloomfield Ave., as she earned a bachelor’s at MSU in Biology in 2017. Fragapane went to Temple University and graduated with a Doctor of Physical Therapy in 2021.

The first-generation college grad left corporate health-care and opened her clinic in November of 2023. Opening LIV Physical Therapy felt right because of her “deep connection to Clifton”, partly thanks to her grandfather Roy Ohlandt growing up in our city.

Ohlandt, who passed away aged 93 last November, remains a big inspiration. “He was a patient and my best friend. I’m excited I get to make him proud,” she said. “He was able to see my clinic and see me get engaged to my fiancé, Michael Rocco. It’s been an honor to open up a clinic and start my journey here.”



Wellness for All

Working alongside Fragapane is business partner, Dr. Hussein Jaafar, and occupational therapist Paul Giordano.

The office is rounded out by several staff members. Fragapane is grateful to them all.

“I have a really good team that I work with,” she said. “Without them, I wouldn’t be able to run a clinic. I am grateful for the hardworking staff.” Learn more at livphysicaltherapy.com.

There were hurdles. Physical therapy clinics aren’t novelties in our city, so it’s competitive. One aspect that helped was there was more space readily available after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The support from her family also made a big difference.

“My grandfather was my mentor. He was someone I would confide in about some of this stuff,” said Fragapane. “[Opening my own clinic was] 100% worth it. It was really tough to get started, but I would do it all again in a heartbeat.” Fragapane is paying that generosity-of-spirit forward with wellness events for community members, particularly Clifton Public Schools and first responders.

The clinic has visited locations like WWMS and the Passaic County Police Department to do free physical therapy screenings. “We examine patients for free and, depending on findings, will talk about what might be wrong with them, whether it is back pain or knee pain,” said Fragapane. “We like to be involved and check in every few months.”

“[Teachers and police officers] basically sacrifice their bodies or themselves for other people,” she continued. “Often when you have these jobs where you’re working for other people, you forget to take care of yourself. It’s nice that I can be there for them if they haven’t been to the doctor in a while and can check in on them to make sure everything’s OK.”

Frankie, who wrote to Clifton Merchant about her sister’s clinic, explained that the desire to help others is exactly in line with Fragapane’s personality.

“Marissa has been a hard-working individual her whole life, aspiring to be the best doctor that she can be,” said Frankie. “She always had great grades and worked extra hard to be in the place that she is in now.”

“I am extremely proud of her and all that she does to give back to the town,” Frankie added, “as well as her patients every day.”

Setting Down Roots

Getting close to patients is unofficially in the job description — and Fragapane does it well.

“My previous jobs felt more like a routine. I didn’t get to know patients on a personal level,” said Fragapane. “For me, how I act is like second-nature. It feels good when patients care about you and you care about them. They tend to get better, quicker that way.”

Fragapane pointed to one example where a patient was scheduled for surgery mid-April and she texted her to wish her well. She also reached out to let her know that she’s just down the street if the patient needs help with carrying groceries.

Whether she treats a seven-year-old or 90-year-old patient, or she is focusing on post-surgical treatment or for arthritic pain, Fragapane said it’s always slightly bittersweet when a patient no longer needs their services.

“But you got them to the point where they can be independent again and they’ll come back to visit you,” she said. “I have some older patients who will drop off pastries or candy for me. It is really good to see them, even outside of the clinic.”

Fragapane has two long-term goals for the future. The first is to open up another clinic, though she is not yet sure where and would like to be more established in the Clifton community. She would also like to get back to her roots as a Clifton student-athlete. Fragapane was a midfielder for all four years at CHS under Stan Lembryk.

“Those were the glory days,” she said. “I would love to be more involved with sports in town.”



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Mixin' It up with DJ Ant

By Ariana Puzzo

Anthony Feliciano is young and hungry for opportunities. Which is why, for over a decade, he's mixed it up at parties and events.

The lifelong resident is the owner of DJ ANT Productions and started DJing in his freshman year of high school. Feliciano (CHS 2018) worked at LJDJs Event Design and Entertainment, 412 Main Ave., for two years after graduating CHS. He became licensed as a full-time DJ in 2022.

He has traveled to gigs down the shore and even DJed for a wedding in Puerto Rico, but most of his clients and events are in the Northern New Jersey and Passaic County area. Specifically, his own hometown.

"Clifton's school district is one of my main clients," said Feliciano, 25.

The former Mustang regularly does events hosted by his alma maters: School 5, WWMS, and CHS. He has also worked at Schools 13, 8, and 11. Feliciano did his first CHS prom last year, and Clifton has booked him for the next five to six years.

He additionally connected last year with the Clifton Education Foundation and gave back to the Clifton Public Schools by DJing at the CEF's 25th anniversary of the CHS Film Festival for free.

"I've always felt, 'This is where I'm from.' It hits home for me," said Feliciano. "Clifton is where my career started and is what made me, me. Especially the CAST program."

"[I'll always be] willing to help out in any way I can," he added. "Other than helping the students, it was heartwarming to be in the high school building and having the nostalgia of being a part of the film festival and the community."

More Than A Job

An early fascination with DJing equipment inspired Feliciano's future career. But his parents, Jose Feliciano and Jackie Toledo, are the ones who truly set him up for life.

Feliciano had recently graduated from WWMS in the Honors Society when Jose asked his son what he would like



as a graduation gift for doing so well. Feliciano dreamed big and requested his own DJ mixer controller.

"I didn't think he'd get it, but the next day he came to my house with it," recalled Feliciano. "That is what I did all summer."

Feliciano began booking events in his freshman year, starting with a house party. His first big event was a Sweet 16 and, over time, Jose started to see how invested he was in DJing.

Investing in a sound system and good microphones came next. Feliciano continued developing his name and reputation so that he would be hired for more private events. He also got involved in DJing events for School 5 and CHS got him into doing their pep rallies.

But when did he know this not only could, but should be his career? "In my senior year, I took CAST and that was my 'this is it' moment," said Feliciano. "I knew that I wanted to do something in a field that involved cameras, audio, music, and lighting. I was very into production [and learned from my teacher Michael McCunney. He's the man.]"

Feliciano went to Montclair State for two years until the coronavirus pandemic interrupted life and many people's education. While at the university, he studied Communications and had a radio show called 'Sounds of Evolution'.

He hosted the two- or three-hour show weekly in his sophomore year and focused on a different decade or genre of music. Feliciano educated listeners between songs about a genre or the artists who became famous in that genre.

Feliciano did not end up graduating between the pandemic and then his business taking off, so he went straight into working full time. DJ ANT Productions is a mostly one-man operation that does everything from weddings and birthdays to Sweet 16s and corporate events.

Feliciano is also known for bringing a photobooth to events and engaging with clients to have a fun-filled night. Follow Feliciano on Instagram @djant411 and @djantproductions. Email him at Djantproductions@gmail.com.

“I don’t feel like I’m working. ... I’m very grateful to be doing this,” he said. “It is something that I have always wanted to do since I was 14 years old. [Being my own boss] pushes me further to be more ambitious so that I can do this for as long as I can.”

Grab The Mic

Achieving his dreams has already begun.

One of Feliciano’s goals was returning to “the motherland and to DJ on the soil.” He got to DJ a wedding in Puerto Rico in 2023 and recalled crying after the final song.

Working full time was the other dream and he’s had some help. He lives in Clifton with girlfriend Allison

Fuquene (CHS 2020) and their six-month-old son, Ayden. The nature of his job makes it possible to spend time with Ayden during weekdays.

“Honestly, it has been a really great last three years with more ups than downs,” said Feliciano. “There were times when I might have forgotten a piece of equipment at home and [my mother, Jackie] came to the rescue.”

“I was also a DJ at a local bar and there was a time when we weren’t doing great,” he added. “My mom got coworkers, friends, and family to come out to make sure we were still booming. Even now with my new son, when I have to get the van ready during the week or sit down for meetings and get contracts ready, she watches my baby when I’ve got my hands full.”

Feliciano’s advice to young DJs is to stay humble, learn about different genres and what is trending, and practice.

That is more than physically DJing at home. It’s working on MCing skills, which can even be done while driving. “Just keep going,” said Feliciano. “My dad used to MC for me, because he knew how shy I was. ... Work on your weaknesses earlier, because doing that will get you far. I’m now MCing crowds sometimes of 400 people. Don’t be scared to grab that microphone,” he continued. “Keep pushing forward. Eventually your hard work will pay off.”

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Cutting Edge Business

By Ariana Puzzo

A little bit of luck and a \$175 loan from his father helped Dave Feinberg get Cutters Edge Sharpening Service off the ground and cover the first month's rent.

Times, not to mention the value of the dollar, were different in 1975. Work was always good to Feinberg as a boy — he started out working in diamond shops and gas stations. But the early years of starting his own business on his own were tough.

So he focused on making the dream of owning his own business that he had “from the time that I was a youngster” a reality.

Cutters Edge got its start on the corner of Piaget and Lakeview Aves. for 13.5 years. He learned how to do many things, but an uncooperative landlord and leaky roof saw the business move to Lexington Ave. Located at 345 Lakeview Ave. since 1995, Cutters Edge was built larger with the help of the community.

“We ran some ads in Clifton Merchant and that really helped put us over the top when we got here,” said Feinberg. “Things went well for a long time.”

It wasn't without challenges. The first year at the new Lakeview location, which is incidentally the first year that this magazine was published, there was 3 ft. of snow. Feinberg noted how it complicated life when it came to paying the mortgage, but it didn't stop him from persevering.

The hard work has paid off and he's now had four generations of customers walking into his shop for all sorts of services. Many people are from the local area, whereas others relocated down south but still bring their equipment up when they visit family. He's even had a box sent from Texas to his shop. “I enjoy it to no end,” said Feinberg, 76. “I've met tons of very nice people.”

Adapting in a New Era

The Belleville resident may not have married or had children, but he understands commitment.



“I married this place,” he quipped. “I married a door.”

That commitment was clear during this interview as he manned the shop while discussing its history. Two customers dropped into the shop during the phone call, but Feinberg seamlessly pivoted without splitting his focus.

He spoke about the business taking off in the mid-80's and how it brought in a lot of work for him and his contractors.

“I was able to bring in product designs for them, and I would give it to them at a fair price then service the product,” he said. “Then big box stores like Home Depot came and they absolutely destroyed that business for me.”

That is when he truly learned how to pivot by making new arrangements with his services. The business today sells replacement blades for multiple cutting apparatuses from several different manufacturers. Clients can also request saw sharpening, cutlery sharpening, and the chain-saw services. More details at cuttersedgenj.com.

Feinberg went on to add that the scissors are all made domestically in New York, without tariffs playing a factor, and the industrial shears aren't what you'll find in Walgreens.

“Plus,” he added, “when a guy comes in to see me or calls me, I give him individual attention. ... What I

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life of patients and their families.
Use the QR code to contribute.



always like to do is give customers the best that I can give them. Whether it's in a service or a product."

Tailoring any product to the person in need of it is something that Feinberg has learned to excel in over the years. That's played a significant role in his success, and he encourages any young, aspiring entrepreneur to learn their craft.

"If you're selling something or repairing something, find out as much as you can about where to get the parts, what's good quality, and what is garbage that you shouldn't touch," said Feinberg. "Then do everything that you can — take every business class [available] to learn how to run a business."

"The business [end of things] is more difficult than the actual job that you're doing," he added. "Everybody thinks it's different until you get into it and realize how much money you'll have to spend."

Phenomenal Community

Living with the mistakes is also part of the process. But what really matters is learning how to correct mistakes so

that you don't repeat them. "A business is not just opening a door, hanging a shingle, and expecting everyone to come out for you. You need to put all of the little things together to make everything work," said Feinberg. "If you're not working seven days a week at your own business, you're not going to make it."

It's also OK if you don't know where you want to go or how to get there just yet. Feinberg was in that same scenario. He sat down and spoke with some people for guidance, and he worked for his father, Harry, who was a carpenter.

Feinberg keeps the same hours as he did when he was starting out five decades ago. The shop is open weekdays from 8:30 am to 6 pm and Saturdays from 8:30 am to 1 pm.

"Contractors would say to me, 'I'm glad you're here so late so I can pick up my stuff,'" recalled Feinberg. "As long as I get to eat, I'm happy."

He's also happy with the strong relationship that he has generated with our city over the years. Feinberg has provided services for the Department of Public Works, Board of Education, Fire Department, and the Clifton Police stop in on occasion as well.

"Business in a community like this makes you part of the community," said Feinberg. "And being part of this community is phenomenal."

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*As we enter our 3rd year, we thank our
customers, neighbors and friends.*

Owners CJ and Malinda
with their son AJ



Economic Development

By Ariana Puzzo

The words “economic development” paint a fairly vague image. They certainly don’t hold much warmth. But the slogan for Clifton, “The City that Cares,” does. In a city which is largely developed, with no main shopping district, small businesses remain the heart of the community.

“Large businesses start as small businesses,” said Passaic County Commissioner Rodney A. De Vore. “We want to make sure that if [a business owner] wants to invest in Passaic County, they’re set up [to do so].”

Elected to the Board of County Commissioners this past November, De Vore is the chairperson of the Planning & Economic Development Committee. Clifton, he said, is on the map as “one of best places to live and raise kids.”

Livability.com listed Clifton on its “2025 Top 100 Best Places to Live” list, among “the nation’s most vibrant and livable small to mid-sized cities.” Learn more about Livability’s methodology and its ranking criteria at livability.com/nj/clifton.

In a city of nearly 88,000 residents, Clifton ranks 13th with a LivScore of 771 out of 1,000. It is among the highest for amenities, education, and health. But it isn’t unprecedented. Last year, Clifton was named the best place to live in Livability’s “Top 25 Best Places to Live in the Northeast”.

“The county investing in parks and historic sites allows for walk-throughs and visits,” said De Vore, 56. “[These efforts are] all for Clifton. The businesses in Clifton have become models in Passaic County.”

Always Evolving

Newer residents and lifelong ones have witnessed Clifton’s evolving landscape. But let’s narrow the scope by considering two well-known, historically high-in-foot-traffic areas. Downtown Clifton and the Historic Botany Village are both designated by the City of Clifton as SIDs or special improvement districts.

Amidst a display of busy commerce within these neighborhoods, there is a concerted effort by



Passaic County Economic Development Director Giancarlo Di Lonardo and Commissioner Rodney A. De Vore in Downtown Clifton. Below them is the stately former US Post Office, now an obsolete but sturdy Clifton Rec building, at the corner of Washington and Main Ave.

CLIFTON ARTS CENTER

Upcoming Events



Art Talented and Gifted (TAG) Overview

The Art TAG program is for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students who have the potential for developing talented and/or gifted



Clifton's NEXT Generation



Art Talented & Gifted (TAG)

CLIFTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

ART EXHIBIT • Open to the public

**May 14th thru
June 14th, 2025**

Wednesdays thru Saturdays • 1pm till 4pm

MEET & GREET Reception
Thursday, June 5th • 6pm - 8pm



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www.cliftonnj.org

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Music for Spring!
at the Clifton Arts Center

Saturday May 10th
Starting at 2pm

Tickets Per Person \$20 Call 973-472-5499 to pay by Check or Cash
Pay online at www.govpaynow.com/gps/user/cyg/pic/a006kg



Watercolor Techniques

Instructor:
Maria Siano

at the Clifton Arts Center

**Tuesdays, May 13th, 20th,
27th & June 3rd**
11:00am - 12:30pm

Register on www.CliftonRec.com

Residents \$80 • Non-Residents \$83

Students must bring their own watercolor supplies to each class.



Music Together

Instructor:
Kim Latiano

at the Clifton Arts Center

Nurture Your Child's Inner Musician

For ages: 6 months - 5 years

**Thursdays, June 12th, 19th, 26th
and July 10th, 17th**

1:00pm - 1:45pm

**Residents \$75 •
Non-Residents \$78**
for whole 5 series session



Register on www.CliftonRec.com



Clifton Historic Botany Village was cited for serving the commercial district for 20 years at an April Council meeting. Trustees include (but not all are pictured): Ahmet Akdag, Val Bogattchouk, Kim Castellano, John Damiano, Josephine Fabi, Chris Freire, Margaret Kardasz, Donika Lepencia, Jeff Mathusek, Richard Mejia, Snezana Milic, George Silva, Gloria Vidal, Mark Ygarza.

these respective special improvement districts, the Downtown Clifton Economic Development Corporation, and Clifton's Historic Botany District, Inc. to improve the business climates while maintaining the best interest of each property owner.

In layman's terms, everyone's interests should be represented. "If there are people who continue investing in us," said De Vore, "we will continue to have a conversation with them."

For our city, the busy commerce of Main Ave. runs into Crooks Ave. On the border of Clifton and Paterson is where you'll find an array of vibrant and diverse eateries, offering patrons everything from Arabic, Palestinian, Turkish or Portuguese cuisines to creative fusion destinations.

The SIDs and their partnerships protect the small business investments and the people behind them. The Downtown Clifton Economic Development Corporation and Clifton's Historic Botany District, Inc. can adopt bylaws on how businesses conduct themselves.

The entities can additionally fund the rehabilitation of properties in the District and "fund the improvement of the exterior appearance of properties in the District through grants or loans." More detailed information can be found on ecode360.com when searching for: Chapter 393 Special Improvement Districts.

What are the Assets?

Middle government is more of a mystery, but it's not just De Vore interested in removing the mystique of how Passaic County should work for business owners.

The county's new Director of Economic Development is Giancarlo Di Lonardo. He stepped into a role held for nearly 25 years until this past March by retiree Deborah Hoffman. Di Lonardo sees vibrancy in Clifton through two different but related prisms: proximity and positioning.



Hazem Asad, co-owner of Chocolate House and Slap Burger, recently opened Yaffa Coffee & Kunafa on Crooks Ave. He said he loves doing business in Clifton but finds the government is slow to respond and expedite openings of businesses.

Proximity to Routes 3 and 46 is an asset for the suburb. Our city is also well-positioned with two train stations and multiple bus corridors, offering residents and commuters easy access to Hoboken and New York City.

But perhaps our city's biggest asset is despite its ongoing flirtation with reaching a population of 90,000, it maintains that small-town feel.

"[Sections like] Downtown Clifton, Botany, Athenia, and Allwood make Clifton homey compared to Routes 3 and 46 with commercial businesses," said Di Lonardo. "The Downtown section has people walking around, eating and shopping."

"Angela Montague, the Executive Director of the Downtown Clifton Economic Development Group, Inc., [continues to do] wonderful stuff in Downtown Clifton," Di Lonardo added. "So do the folks who are part of the [Clifton History Botany District]."

What are the Incentives?

Across 16 municipalities and roughly 198 square miles, supporting development in a county with a population of over 524,000 means directing people to state and federal resources.

“The county doesn’t offer direct incentives [to prospective developers and retailers], itself, but we leveraged money from the state during the pandemic,” explained Di Lonardo, 35. “We also work closely with state and federal partners. We have great connections with the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency and the Small and Medium Business Administration.” More resources in Passaic County Economic Development’s monthly newsletter.

Growth is not just about transportation infrastructure or the commercial and industrial parks. It’s also about culture and entertainment. There is a Cultural Arts Facilities Expansion Program, providing tax credits to encourage “broad scale capital projects for arts and cultural venues.” The application window closes on June 6 at 5 pm. Apply online at njeda.gov/cafe.

Di Lonardo pointed to the film industry as another key marketing fulcrum for the state. “Governor [Phil Murphy] invested in film tax credits and Passaic County is no stranger to that,” said Di Lonardo. “There have been a number of productions here in the last couple of years.”

Steven Spielberg’s 2021 adaptation of *West Side Story* had 10 days of shooting in Paterson with an outdoor set built in August, 2019. James Mangold’s 2024 film, *A Complete Unknown*, filmed throughout the state. Five production locations were set in Paterson.

On May 31, 2024, residents had to take a day off from ordering a Ripper when the film used Rutt’s Hut, 417 River Rd., as an early 60’s backdrop.

“We’ve had productions in the upper part of the county. We’re grateful for that,” said Di Lonardo. “I think that [some films have] shot in nine or 10 of the 16 communities. We would love to get all 16 and the state has a Film Ready program.”

The State of New Jersey describes its “Film Ready New Jersey Program” as an initiative of the New Jersey Motion Picture and Television Commission. A five-step certification and marketing program helps to educate municipalities on these types of productions and allows its cities and towns to “effectively accommodate on location filming and market their communities as filming destinations.”

One investment that Clifton is looking to make is filling an Economic Development position.

“As of right now, that position has not been filled,” said City of Clifton Communications Manager Margaret Morse. “But the city is still looking.”



Market St. is a small but food-intensive dining destination in Clifton. Among them are Lamoon’s, a Thai restaurant that originally opened in 2017 and reopened this year. Pictured are chef Lamoon and her daughter Bee.

The main function of the position, as described in the April job posting, is to “direct the planning and promotional activities involved in the economic and industrial development of the City of Clifton.” A part-time Director would further be responsible for coordinating federal aid programs “relating to the economic growth of the jurisdiction.” See the listing on New Jersey State League of Municipalities’ website: shorturl.at/RCIjy.

On the county level, there’s one milestone on the horizon: the United States’ 250th anniversary. “The county is doing a lot to make connections with the business community and assets,” said Di Lonardo. “The Club World Cup this year and the World Cup next year [will be in New Jersey]. Passaic County will have different activities and partnerships over the next 18 months.”

Although the tournaments are at MetLife Stadium, sports tourism brings employment opportunities. Whether for event management or retail, rises in full-time, part-time, and temporary work support residents and local economies. “Everyone will get to eat at the table,” said De Vore.

Even if you cannot visit their offices at 401 Grand St., Paterson, De Vore and Di Lonardo are accessible.

Call De Vore at 973-881-4402 or email RDeVore@passaiccountynj.org. Call Di Lonardo at 973-569-4720 or email GiancarloD@passaiccountynj.org.

Call Downtown Clifton Economic Development Group, at 973-557-3886 or email info@downtownclifton.com.

Call Historic Botany District at 856-900-2200 or email jwaninger@americancleanandsafe.com. Further details at downtownclifton.com and historicbotanyvillage.org.

CLIFTON RECREATION PRESENTS:

SUMMER DAYS IN THE PARK


\$150/R
\$240/NR
PER SESSION




Camp Information:

 **Session 1: June 30– July 18**
(no camp July 4th) (M–F)
Session 2: July 21 – August 8 (M–F)

 **Ages: 5 as of October 1, 2024 through**
13 as of October 1, 2024

 **9 am–3:30 pm**

 **School #3 – 365 Washington Ave.**
School #16 – 755 Grove St.

For More Information:

 **(973) 470–5956**

A daily program featuring a variety of activities, games, dress-up days, contests, and more! Trips and special events are offered for additional fees! Most of the day is spent outdoors.

Future Leaders Program: \$75 per person. Residents only. Designed for teens who have completed 9th grade and up, or are age 15 or older to learn the responsibilities of becoming a summer program counselor in the future. They will work closely with the staff and children while assisting in daily activities conducted at the program.



Register at www.cliftonrec.com





Clifton Recreation Presents:

2025 Summer Specialty Camps

July Camps

Karate & Ninja Martial Arts - July 7-17 Ages 7-14 \$75 R/\$85 NR 4-5 PM (M-Th)
Volleyball - Session 1: July 7-10 Ages 8-15 \$60 R/\$70 NR 11 AM - 12:30 PM (M-Th)
Baseball Pitchers/Catchers - July 7-10 Ages 7-17 \$125 R/NR 9 AM-12 PM (M-Th)
Battle Robots Tanks Camp- July 7-11 Ages 8-12 \$215 R/NR 9 AM - 12 PM or 1 PM - 4 PM
Fun on The Farm - Session 1: July 8-18 Ages 5-7 \$150 R/NR 9-11 AM (T/TH/F)
Swiftie Camp - July 7-11 Ages 4-10 \$160 R/NR 10 AM - 1 PM
Baseball Skills - July 14-17 Ages 7-17 \$125 R/NR 9 AM-12 PM (M-Th)
Volleyball - Session 2: July 14-17 Ages 8-15 \$60 R/\$70 NR 11 AM-12:30 PM (M-Th)
Chemical Creations - July 14-18 Ages 6-10 \$175 R/NR 9 AM-12 PM
AI SmartCore 4 Robot - July 14-18 Ages 6-10 \$175 R/NR 12:30-3:30 PM
Tennis - Session 1: July 21-25 Ages 7-17 \$215 R/NR 9 AM-12 PM
Cyber-Crawler Robot - July 21-25 Ages 7-11 \$175 R/NR 9 AM-12 PM
Future Engineers - July 21-25 Ages 8-12 \$175 R/NR 12:30-3:30 PM
Fun on the Farm - Session 2: July 22-August 1 Ages 5-7 \$150 R/NR 9-11 AM (T/TH/F)
Tennis - Session 2: July 28- August 1 Ages 7-17 \$215 R/NR 9 AM-12 PM
Broadway - July 28- August 1 Ages 6-9 \$225 R/NR 9 AM-3 PM

August Camps

Puppet Theater - August 4-8 Ages 5-7 \$155 R/NR 9 AM-12 PM
Puppet Theater - August 4-8 Ages 8-11 \$155 R/NR 1-4 PM
Multi-Sports - August 4-8 Ages 5-11 \$215 R/NR 9 AM - 12 PM
Expedition Mars - August 4-8 Ages 8-12 \$215 R/NR 9 AM - 12 PM or 1 - 4 PM
Fun on The Farm - Session 3: August 5-15 Ages 5-7 \$150 R/NR 9-11 AM (T/TH/F)
Redbulls Soccer Skills Mini Bulls- August 11-15 Ages 4-5 \$300 R/NR 9 AM-12 PM
Redbulls Soccer Skills Half-Day - August 11-15 Ages 6-14 \$335 R/NR 8:30 AM-12 PM
Redbulls Soccer Skills Full-Day - August 11-15 Ages 7-14 \$430 R/NR 8:30 AM-3 PM
Loco-Motion - August 11-15 Ages 7-12 \$215 R/NR 9 AM-12 PM
Fairies and Unicorns Camp - August 11-15 Ages 4-8 \$160 R/NR 10 AM - 1 PM
NASA- Academy of Future Space Explorers - August 11-15 Ages 7-12 \$215 R/NR 1-4 PM
Jewelry Design - August 18-22 Ages 8-13 \$155 R/NR 9 AM- 12 PM
Amazing Athletes Multi-Sport - August 18-22 Ages 3-7 \$215 R/NR 9 AM - 12 PM
Intro to Sewing Machine - August 18-22 Ages 7-12 \$155 R/NR 1 - 4 PM
Summer Love Art - August 25-29 Ages 5-10 \$215 R/NR 9 AM -12 PM
Animals Gone Wild Art - August 25-29 Ages 5-10 \$215 R/NR 1:30 PM -4:30 PM
Ninja Warriors - August 25 - 28 Ages 5-12 \$215 R/NR 9:30 AM-12 PM (M-Th)



For camp descriptions, locations & to register: cliftonrec.com

Call Clifton Recreation at 973-470-5956 for any additional information.



In 1971, future Mayor Jim Anzaldi with Rec Board member John Geiger and an unidentified angler in the Fishing Derby. Above the 2025 volunteer coordinator Antonio GoGo Gomez.

The Great Falls Bass Masters Fishing Derby is **May 10**, 7 am at Main Memorial Park for ages 5-17 with an 18+ adult category. Judging ends with the last fish in at 9:45. Awards for largest fish and most fish caught by hook (no net trapping). Fishing rods and tackle provided if you don't have any. Sign up in-person. More info? Call GoGo Gomez Fishing for Kids & Family 973-518-1477 or email gogogomez04@yahoo.com.

Clifton Garden Club's meeting is May 13, 6:30 pm at the Allwood Library, 44 Lyall Rd. Speaker is farmer Shaun Ananko, the Director of Agriculture and Education for Grow It Green Morristown who will discuss soil management, extending growing seasons and small-scale tool use. Guests are welcome. Questions about the club? Call Donna Fantacone at 973-473-0577.

Clifton Behind the Scenes with Echo Unity Series invites all to learn about how Clifton's government functions and more about services offered. Programs are in English and Spanish, at 5:30-7 pm and 7-8:30 pm, respectively. Upcoming dates are May 15, June 12, Sept. 9, Oct. 15, Nov. 13, and Dec. 11. The free series is hosted by Councilwoman Rosemary Pino and include tours of City Hall, plus the chance to explore the city's grounds and landmarks and learn about the responsibilities of city departments. Simply attend or visit @rosiepino04 on Instagram to RSVP.

The Passaic County 200 Club's 2025 Valor Awards is May 20 at 5:30 pm at The Grand, Totowa. Attend to honor the Public Safety Officers serving the 16 communities in our county. Tickets are \$100 and include cocktail hour, dinner and dessert. Cash bar. Purchase at pc200club.org.

Power of One Christian Coaching and Outreach Ministries walkers meet at Richardson Scale Park, 680 Van Houten Ave. Mondays and Wednesdays at 8 am for an hour walk. The walk is free and so is parking in the lot. The group also offers Smart Finance, Bright Futures, a comprehensive, free financial wellness program at the Clifton Main Memorial Library. The next program, at 292 Piaget Ave., is May 22 at 6:30 pm. The initiative aims to empower the city to achieve financial stability and security. Future dates are: June 19, Sept. 18, Oct. 16, Nov. 20, and Dec. 18. Space is limited. Register with Kim Castellano at info@powerofoneccom.org or call 862-239-5905.

St. Paraskevi Philoptochos

Society's Power of the Purse Bingo on May 15 at St. George Greek Orthodox Church, 818 Valley Rd. opens at 5:30 pm. Tickets are \$50 and include 10 games of Bingo, door prizes, dessert, and coffee. The Society is the women's philanthropic society of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Attendees must be 18 years or older. BYOB and outside food are welcome.

Call Lucy (973-902-1600) or Anthoula (973-714-8124) for more info. Confirm your reservation with cash or checks made payable to St. Paraskevi Philoptochos Society. Proceeds will benefit charities in and around Clifton, including St. Peter's Haven.



The Clifton Education Foundation's Tricky Tray is May 30 at the Boys & Girls Club, 181 Colfax Ave. Doors open at 6 pm. Tickets are \$25. No admission tickets sold at the door. All attendees must be 18 years or older. Food and beverage vendors are Agamies Italian Deli and The Wandering Cup. Checks payable to Clifton Education Foundation. Mail to: Loretta Ahmad, 19 Maple Hill Rd., Clifton, NJ 07013. Must be received by May 23. Questions? Email cefdcommdirector@gmail.com.

Relay for Life of Clifton is May 31 from 6 pm to midnight at Tryon Field in Rutherford. The American Cancer Society's Relay for Life is a celebration of hope and survivorship. Team members take turns walking or running on the track all day to fight cancer. For info or to create a team, visit secure.acevents.org or cancer.org. Follow @rfl_cliftonrutherfordnj on Instagram.



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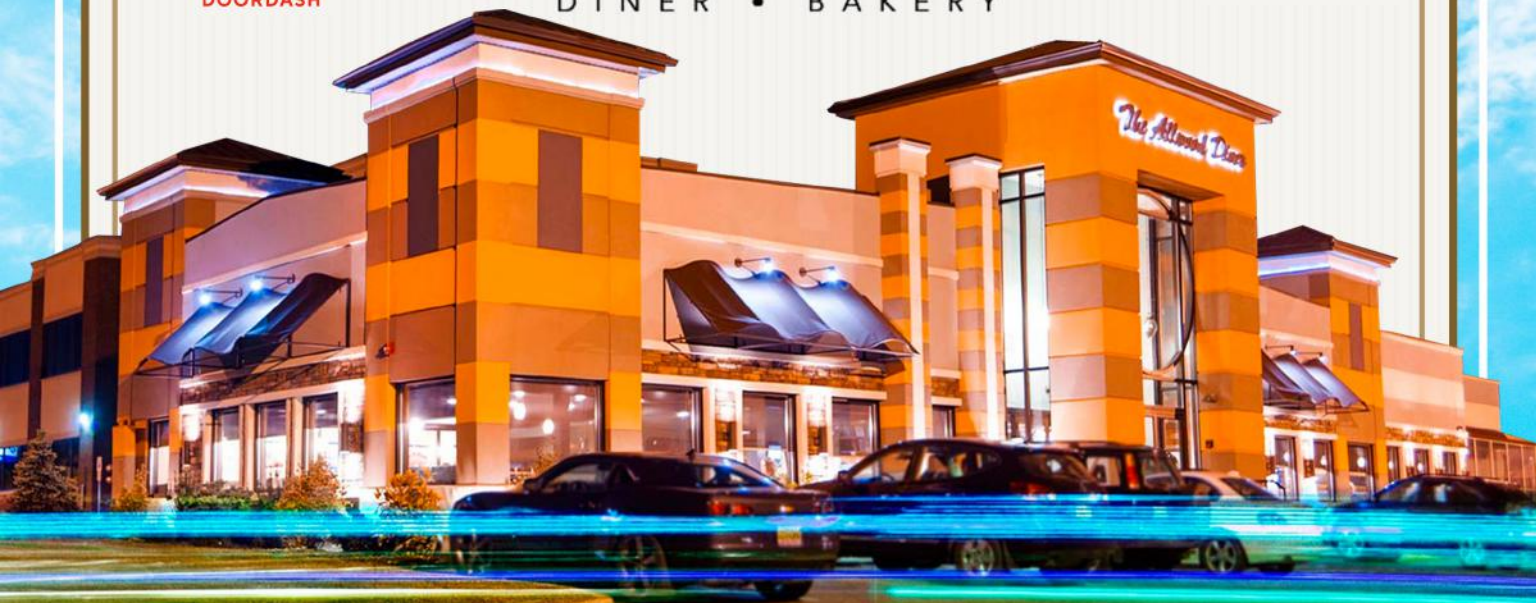
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The Clifton Little Free Pantry is collecting no-longer-needed treasures throughout May for its Garage Sale Fundraiser, part of the Citywide Garage Sale in June with all profits going to feed Clifton. Bring donations to 57 Dalewood Rd. and drop them in front of the garage door. Gently used items are needed, but no clothing or books. Donated appliances, sports equipment, and household items will be recycled or sold and turned into food for those in need.

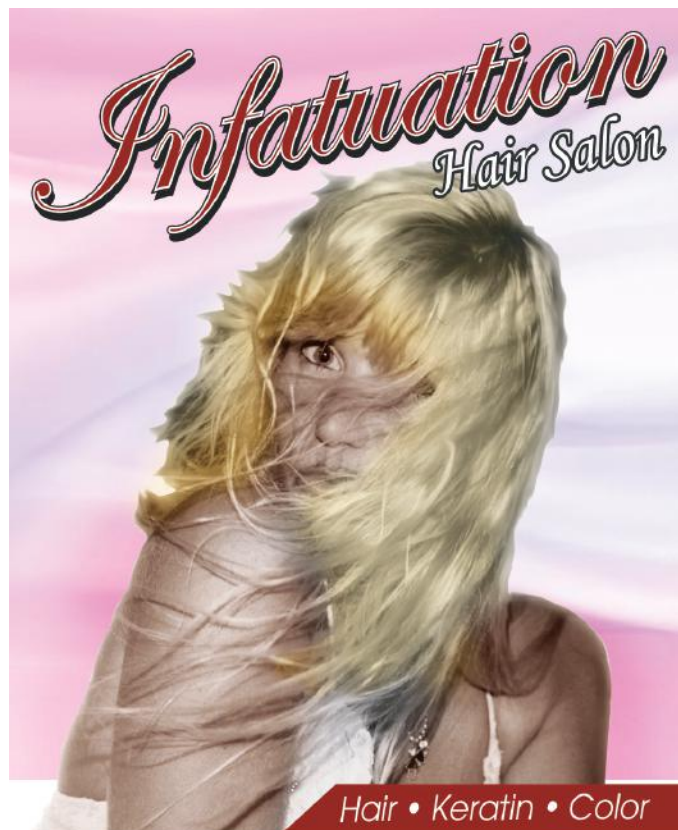
Watercolor Techniques at the Clifton Arts Center workshops are May 13, 20, 27, and June 3 from 11 am to 12:30 pm. Registration for residents is \$80; non-residents is \$83. Students must bring their own watercolor supplies to class each week. Art class sessions, 900 Clifton Ave., are for adults and geared to beginners. Light refreshments will be served on the last day. Watercolor artist Maria Siano will lead the class, teaching on topics like charging color, glazing, scoring, and negative painting. Siano has had work previously displayed at the Montclair Art Museum and the Farmstead Arts Center. More info? Register online at cliftonrec.com or register by check or cash at: 973-472-5499.

Clifton Rec's Sundae Bingo is June 1, 3 pm at the Rec Center, Downtown Clifton. Tickets are \$6 with ice cream sundaes and Bingo. Register by May 30 at cliftonrec.com.

Clifton Early Learner Academy's 3rd Family Fun Day is June 14 at 10 am at CELA, 290 Brighton Rd. Run by Clifton Public Schools and the Clifton Education Foundation, the free event features Touch A Truck, music by DJ Joe Canova, registration for Clifton's free preschool program, with food available for purchase. Vendors space is \$50. Register at shorturl.at/MAq4c. Questions? Call 973-470-2060 or email mpapamarkos@cliftonschoools.net.

Clifton's Next Generation art exhibit is displayed May 14 to June 14 at the Clifton Arts Center, 900 Clifton Ave.,. The public is invited to meet the Clifton Schools artists in a reception on June 5 from 6-8 pm. The Art TAG program serves all elementary third, fourth, and fifth grade students who show potential for talent and/or giftedness in visual art. The TAG program is at School 1 for two hours one day per week. Questions? Visit clifton.k12.nj.us/domain/471. The Arts Center is open to the public Wednesdays to Saturdays, 1-4 pm. Call the office at 973-472-5499.

Clifton Arts Center's Music for Spring! is May 10 at 2 pm in the Atrium of the center. Featuring John Palatucci on the euphonium, Ron Levy on piano and Richard Hagen on horn, tickets are \$20. Info: call the Arts Center at 973-472-5499 or visit cliftonartscenter.org.

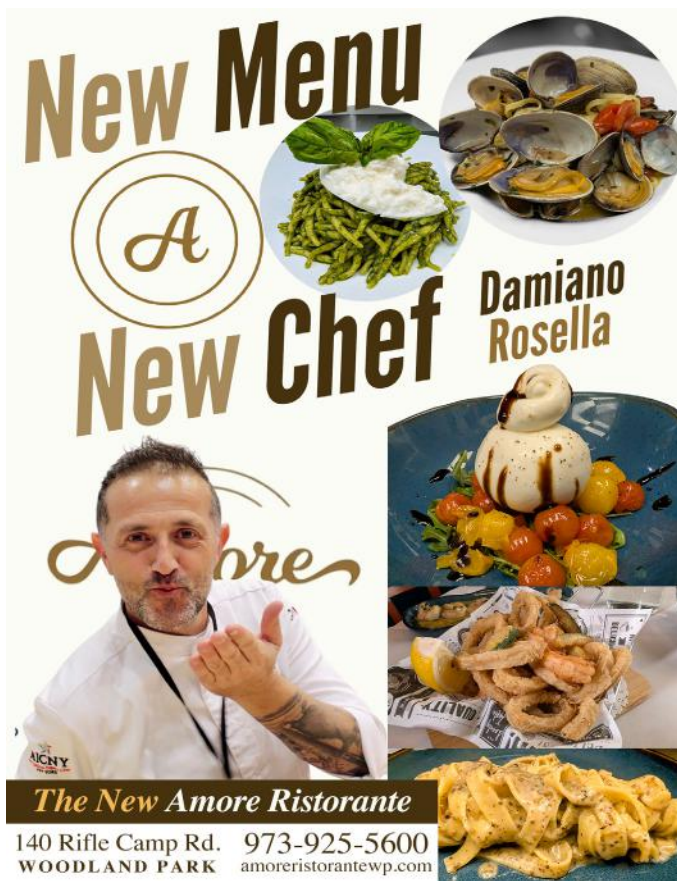


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Dedication, Leadership, and Unwavering Commitment to the Mental Health Community.

That is the legacy which defined Dr. Sybil Schreiber.

The Mental Health Center of Passaic will honor the life and legacy of Dr. Sybil Schreiber on June 5 from 6-10 pm at The Barnyard & Carriage House, at 754 Totowa Rd., Totowa.

Tickets are \$100 per person with a Cash bar. The dinner will celebrate the leadership and memory of Schreiber, who passed away at age 84 on May 5, 2024.

Schreiber was Executive Director of the Mental Health Center of Passaic and a cherished member of the New Jersey Association of Mental Health & Addiction Agencies, Inc.

The MHCP, 1451 Van Houten Ave., has five locations. The private, not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) community organization provides comprehensive outpatient and school-based services to children, adults and families who are experiencing emotional and/or behavioral difficulties.

Questions? Visit mhcp.org or call 973-473-2775.



Dinner Celebration



In Memory of Dr. Sybil Schreiber

Thursday, June 5, 2025

6:00pm-10:00pm

The Barnyard & Carriage House

754 Totowa Road
Totowa, NJ 07512

Silver Sponsor



Tickets \$100 per person-
cash bar

www.mhcp.org
973-473-2775



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Volunteer to raise 2,295 flags on May 25

at 6 am to help the Avenue of Flags honor Clifton military who have served our country. The number of volunteers has dwindled due to illness, age, or those who have moved away. Simply show up or call Joe Tuzzolino or Marie Schultheis at the Clifton flag barn 973-365-2630. Volunteers are also needed May 26 at 5 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 \$120. 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 cliftonnj.org and search for Flags.



Clifton's Memorial Day Parade is May 26

stepping off at 9 am at the Valley National Bank at the intersection of Allwood Rd. and Clifton Ave. The Parade is led by the Showband of the North East, the Clifton Marching Mustang Band, under the direction of Bryan Stepneski. The band will proceed down Allwood Rd. to Chelsea Park by the Allwood Library for a ceremony honoring those who sacrificed their lives for our country. Interested in joining the parade? Call Joe Gaccione at 973-725-8024. Bring your flag and a chair and cheer the veterans to show your appreciation for their sacrifices.





The Mustang Band's Wind Ensemble performed at the April 27 State Gala Concert at The College of New Jersey, which featured the top 12 Garden State high school bands. The Mustangs earned their ticket to this gig by winning a Gold Rating and Outstanding Percussion and Trumpet Sections in March's North Jersey Region Concert Band Festival. Clifton was in the top four of the 45 bands, securing an invitation to perform in the State Gala.

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Mustangs of the Month



Paula Marina Ordonez Silva, Angelika Miniewicz, Bradley Claudio, Aaron Hatcher.

Here are the **Mustangs of the Month** for May 2025.

These four students, one from each grade, were selected by the vice principals at CHS, to be spotlighted for their personal achievements and school-wide contributions.

Paula Marina Ordonez Silva – Freshman

What inspires Paula Marina Ordonez Silva the most is the ability for people to constantly learn new languages.

“I believe that knowing more than one language can open up so many doors and provide more opportunities in life,” said Silva (CHS 2028). “Being multilingual allows you to connect with more people, understand different perspectives, and pursue careers or experiences that might not be possible otherwise.”

Silva is nearly finished with her first year of high school and has a variety of prospects for the future. She hasn’t participated in any academic programs yet, but she is interested in seeing what they have to offer her.

“I know that CHS offers many opportunities for students to get ahead,” she said, “and I would love to take part in something that helps me grow and prepare for my future goals.”

Silva’s favorite class is English, because it allows her to learn a new language. She especially enjoys learning new words and “getting better at speaking and understanding English.”

The freshman strives to stay focused and keep a positive attitude. She recognized ESL/Bilingual Teacher Ms. Judit Conetta as her most influential teacher.

“She explains things very well and is kind to her students. She makes learning easier and fun.”

Angelika Miniewicz – Sophomore

Angelika Miniewicz knows that it may surprise some people, but her favorite school subject is Chemistry.

“I love how structured and logical it is,” said Miniewicz (CHS 2027). “Every formula has a specific set of rules, and every mixture or compound has a name and structure that reveals exactly what it’s made of.”

“It’s like solving a puzzle,” she continued, “and it gives me a real sense of satisfaction when everything clicks into place.”

Science isn’t the only thing that seems to have clicked for Miniewicz. The sophomore has found success in high school by balancing her academic and personal life.

“I believe it’s possible to do your best in school while also making time for your family, friends, and the things that bring you joy,” said Miniewicz. “Staying organized, focused, and emotionally balanced has helped me manage both.”

Miniewicz plays lacrosse, enjoying the challenges and Mustang team spirit. She is involved with Heroes & Cool Kids and plans to apply next year for the National Honor Society, because “I value both academics and service.”

Her biggest inspiration is her mother, who Miniewicz describes as hard-working, dedicated, and determined. “She constantly motivates me to push myself and become the best version of who I can be.”

Bradley Claudio – Junior

Bradley Claudio has a clear vision for his future. The junior is eager to attend Montclair State University, where he might major in Arts and Music.

It's perhaps not a surprise to those who know Claudio best. His favorite class at CHS is Music.

"I really enjoy playing the drums and listening to music," said Claudio (CHS 2026). "Music class makes me very happy."

Claudio has had influential teachers in other subject areas. One of the most influential ones is Special Education Teacher Ms. Jennifer Weitzman.

"She has helped me improve and strengthen my math skills," said Claudio. "I also enjoy her English activities."

Claudio participates in Project Unify Sports and has proven that overcoming hurdles is not something that he shies away from doing.

"One major hurdle ... was working up the courage to perform at The Annual Project Unify Talent Show in front of a lot of people," he said. "I learned and taught myself how to play the drums."

A strong support system makes all the difference. "My dad, Papa Luis inspires me the most. He makes me want to be a better person, shown me what strength and courage look like. He teaches me to always help other people."

Aaron Hatcher – Senior

There's every possibility that Aaron Hatcher's name will one day be linked to curing cancer. But in the meantime, the Mustang senior plans to attend the University of South Florida this fall and major in Biology.

Working in cancer research is his long-term goal. "I want to be part of the scientific community that helps find treatments and solutions to one of the world's most challenging health issues," said Hatcher (CHS 2025). "I'm passionate about making a difference through science and helping others through medical research."

Hatcher is no stranger to using both sides of his brain. He recognized Art Teacher Ms. Reem Ibrahim as the most influential teacher that he has had while at CHS.

"Her positivity, energy, and dedication to her students make her stand out," said Hatcher. "She challenges us to grow while also being incredibly supportive. She's the kind of person who makes a difference in people's lives beyond the classroom."

Hatcher's extracurricular activities include participating on the Spring and Winter Track & Field teams. Being a student-athlete has taught him discipline, time management, and the necessity of working hard toward one's goals.

Yet his parents are his main inspiration. "Their strength and example continue to motivate me every day."



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Thank you to all who participated in the race and walk this year to support St. Peter's Haven Food Pantry. This was our largest 5K/1Mile event to date. Thank you also to our wonderful Sponsors, the City of Clifton, the Police Department, DPW, the Clifton Road Runners Club, Elite Racing and our many Volunteers. Congratulations to our winners! We look forward to seeing you next year. Mark your calendars to join us on
Sunday, April 26th, 2026.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS









The Dutch Hill Residents Association's Flea Market is June 7 from 9 am to 4 pm in Weasel Brook Park, along Paulison Ave. Vendors are assigned an 18-ft space. No pre-registration. Space cost \$40 each and are collected in cash at the flea market. Set up begins at 6:30 am.

Gary S. DeMarzo was named Interim City Manager on April 16. He succeeds the temporary leadership of First Assistant City Attorney Andrew Oddo after City Manager Dominick Villano announced his retirement at the April 1 meeting. He served for more than 15 years. At the same meeting, City Attorney Matthew Priore handed in his papers, effective April 16. Oddo and Thomas Egan will continue to lead the city's Legal Department amidst a search for Priore's replacement. DeMarzo, selected from a pool of nine applicants, began his career in law enforcement and served for two years as Wildwood City Mayor.

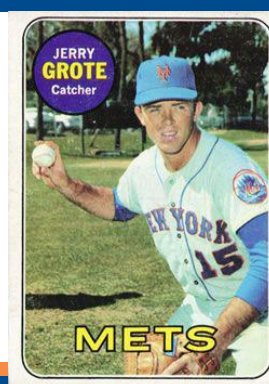
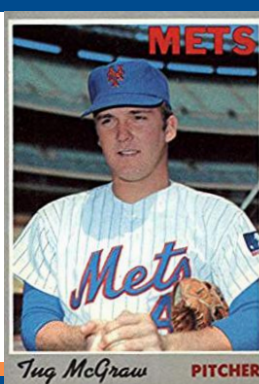
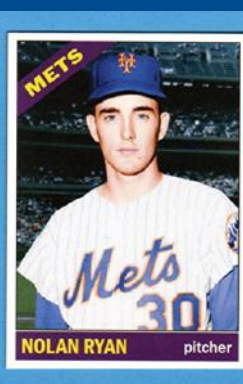
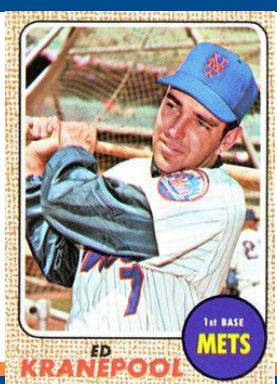
Clifton PRAISE's CML/CJAL Bambino Buddy Ball Spring Baseball season continues May 4. Home games are at Albion Field 1, corner of Maplewood Ave. and Warren St. (237 Maplewood Rd.) The team's upcoming schedule is May 10, 18, 31 and June 1, 8, 14. Questions about game locations? Email cliftonpraise@gmail.com.

The Garden State Opera's "La Cambiale di Matrimonio" by Gioacchino Rossini is at St. John Lutheran Church, 140 Lexington Ave., Passaic, on May 4 at 3 pm. Free admission with a suggested donation of \$25. Register at garden-stateopera.org or email garstaopera@gmail.com.

Join St. Philip's Prime Timers on May 13 at Resorts Casino in Atlantic City. Tickets are \$50. Bus leaves at 9:30 am from St. Philip's. Call Sylvia at 973-742-9286.

Clifton High's Health Occupation Students of America will host blood drives at CCMS on May 5 from 9:30 am to 2 pm and at WWMS on May 12 from 10 am to 2 pm, respectively. The Bloodmobile will be at both locations to offer a safe and sterile environment. Appointments recommended. Donor guidelines: Must weigh at least 110 lbs., bring ID, eat a meal before donation, drink plenty of water before and after donation. Info visit donors.vitalant.org (using blood drive code XCCOL) to schedule.

CHS 1976's reunion is being planned by Johnny George. The Bicentennial Mustangs will meet in June, 2026. Email George at georgesservice@gmail.com for details.



The lineup for the 1969 Mets is back in full color at the Clifton Public Library's Main Branch in May, thanks to Jack Susser. A '74 CHS grad who grew up in Downtown Clifton, Susser has amassed more than 1,000 Mets items. They include 25 game-used jerseys, along with game-used bats and autographed balls. In fact, his display in Clifton may even include pitcher Danny Frisella's game used jersey—one of his favorite pieces. Other treasures include a 1962 bobble head bank and a 1969 press pin. Susser also owns every Mets baseball card, program and yearbook going back to 1962, as well as pennants and records. His collection is so extensive that he's loaned items to the Mets museum. See it all on the second floor of the library. Free admission.



There is a reason Clifton is so green and livable. Clifton's Beautification Committee and the DPW met on April 25 at Delawanna Park, at the intersection of Delawanna and Main Aves., and added to the tree canopy there. The planting marked the national celebration of Arbor Day, always the last Friday of April.



Do you smoke, pose a litany of questions and have an interrogatory Peter Falk detective side to your persona? If so you may fit the cast for The Theater League of Clifton's next production, "Murder at the Banquet," in July. But first, there are auditions for eight characters in a plot involving the celebration of a hall of fame inductee at the fictitious "International Association of Mystery Solvers" (IAMS)

organization when tragedy strikes. Auditions (and in July, the performances) are at Mario's Restaurant on May 16 and 19, 7-9 pm, and May 18, 5-7 pm. Go to theaterleagueofclifton.com for info.

Up-Cycling Adventures with Clifton Rec & Recycling will get kids thinking and creating about the planet. Drop in the Recycling Center behind City Hall at 10 am on May 10 with your family to create a one-of-

a-kind up-cycled art creation. Other dates are June 28, July 19, Aug. 9, and Sept. 6. Program runs 10 am to noon and is free. No registration is required. For more info, visit clifton-rec.com or call 973-470-5956.

CHS Class of 1970's 55th Reunion is Oct. 11 at the Best Western Executive Plus Inn, Fairfield. Email clifton1970reunion@gmail.com to inquire or request your name be placed on the mailing list.



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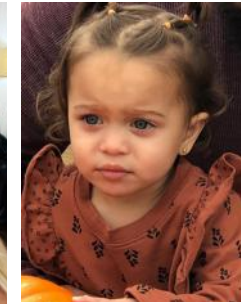
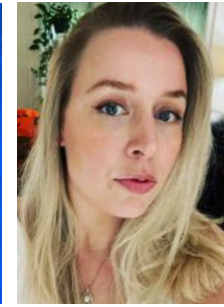
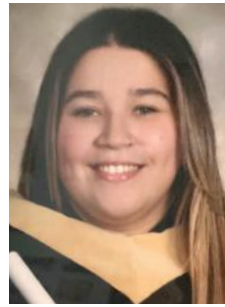
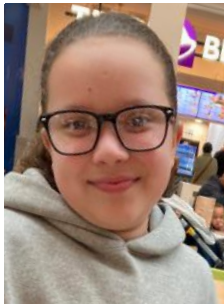


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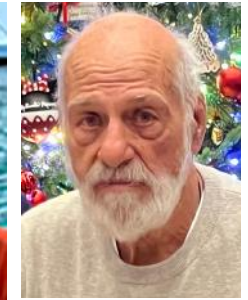
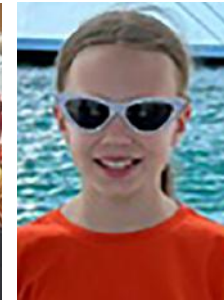
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May 2025 Birthdays & Celebrations



Mia Medina is 11 on May 22. **Heaven Medina** is 23 on May 2 and she also graduates Monmouth University with a Masters degree in Social Work. Their uncle **John Hand** turns 80 on May 11. Happy Birthday to **Devan Simpson** turning 10 on May 7. Can it be? **Brittney Abell** will be 36 on May 25! **Ariella Buonafina** will be 3 on May 21.



Ihor and **Kristy Andruch** celebrated 24 years of marital bliss on May 4; their son, **Stefan Andruch** is 21 on May 3. At right, **Jurij P. Dubas** turns 21 on May 3. **Frankie Bergen** will celebrate her 11th birthday on May 22. **Robert Jaworski** turned 82 on April 28.

Richard Hango..... 5/1
Mike Szwec..... 5/1
Samantha Cruz..... 5/2
Lou DeStefano..... 5/2
Jessica Perez 5/2
Jordan Lynn Bykowski..... 5/3
Maria DeGraaf..... 5/3
Julia Komarczyk..... 5/3
Irene Kuruc 5/3
Margie Maloney 5/3
Thomas Zangara 5/3
John Anderson Jr..... 5/4
Spencer Flynn 5/4
Russell Courtney..... 5/6
Dolores Hatala..... 5/6
Jordan Kulesa..... 5/6
Vanessa Laine Montesano 5/6
Mary Domyon..... 5/7
Margie Hatala 5/7
Dorothy Alburo 5/8

Terry Capilli 5/8
Jim Findlay..... 5/8
Alexandra Homsany 5/8
Rory Houston..... 5/8
Ashley Kulesa 5/8
David Peter Mosciszko..... 5/8
Matthew Nagy 5/8
Christine Siluk..... 5/8
Thomas Steranko 5/8
Petey Pathos 5/9
Amelia Smith 5/9
Ray Zang 5/9
Joe Gore..... 5/10
Rebecca DeChellis..... 5/11
Brandon Gorny 5/11
Jessica Camp 5/12
Joe De Liberto 5/12
Michael Lonison..... 5/12
Donna De Liberto..... 5/13
Jeff Reilly..... 5/13

Michael Zawicki 5/13
Yassin Aburomi..... 5/14
Chloe Landrith..... 5/14
Chuck Amucka..... 5/14
Alice De Liberto..... 5/14
Dorothy Brown 5/15
Earl Grosser Jr. 5/15
Victoria Leja..... 5/15
Fred Gurtman 5/16
Mark McGuire..... 5/16
Rosemary Canavan..... 5/17
John Hawrylko 5/17
Vick Ascencio 5/18
Jamie Antal..... 5/18
Michele D'Amico 5/18
Walter Hryckowian 5/18
Mariana Pineda..... 5/18
Becky Kuter..... 5/19
Jennifer Mulick 5/20
Julianna Smith 5/20



Josie Louise Bivaletz turns 2 May 27.



Celia and Bong Bunagan
celebrate their 51st wedding
anniversary on May 11.

William J. Portocarrero III..... 5/21
Ken Bender..... 5/21
Joe Murolo 5/21
Matthew Palladino 5/21
Kage Lord..... 5/22
Danica O'Brien..... 5/22
Danah Alburo..... 5/23
Jessica Bielen 5/23
MaryEllen Krattinger 5/23
Donald Lopuzzo 5/24

Michael Santosuosso 5/24
Andrea Schweid 5/25
Brittney Abell..... 5/25
Olivia Hryckowian..... 5/25
Connie Paladino 5/25
Derek Bykowsky..... 5/26
Alyssa Dalbo..... 5/26
Danuta Dymora 5/26
Kaylee Pinter 5/26
Jonathan Rideg 5/26
Fred Antes..... 5/27
Kyle J. Magaster 5/27
Steve Bielen..... 5/27
David J. Ricca..... 5/28
Anthony Alcalde 5/29
Valerie Gancarz 5/29
Anthony DeSomma..... 5/30
Rachel Gergats 5/31
Christopher Ramirez 5/31
Zachary Sjosward 5/31
Christopher Smith..... 5/31
Logan Thompson..... 5/31

Send June dates & names...
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WHERE ARE THESE '05 MUSTANGS NOW?

Dave Smith, above center, was given an in-the-paint farewell from his fans and fellow CHS seniors at the last home game of his Mustang basketball career on Feb. 17, 2005. Smith played four years of CHS roundball and he and the team dominated the game against Nutley, beating the Raiders by 17 points. They finished the season with an 11-12 record. Members of the rooting section pictured with Smith, from left, are Adam Bania, Joe Musleh, Joe Hathaway, Tom Szieber and Tom Hawrylko, Jr.

It's been 20 years since the Class of 2005 roamed the halls of Clifton High in their baggy jeans, trucker hats, and early iPods. But here we are—two decades later, and it's time to reconnect, reminisce, and raise a glass to the good old days. The Class of 2005 is throwing a 20-year reunion on June 7, and trust us—Paul Boyko writes—you won't want to miss it.

The evening is at The Woodford Hall in Little Falls at 7 to 11 with great music, food, and even better company. Whether you were Most Likely to Succeed or Most Likely to Skip Class, this is your chance to catch up and maybe even recreate a few senior year selfies. The planning committee, led by Kim Williams, has tickets (\$130) on sale through Cheddar Up, or write Paulboyko@gmail.com.

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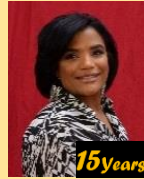
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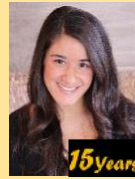
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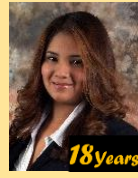
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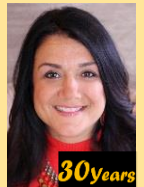


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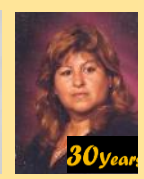
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