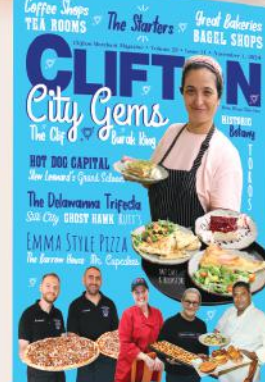
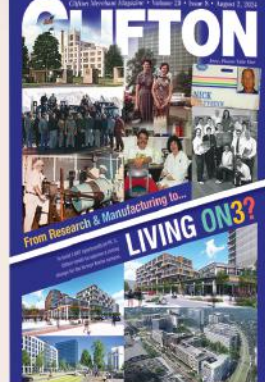
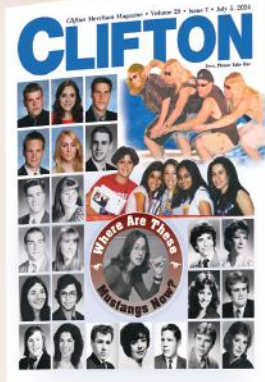
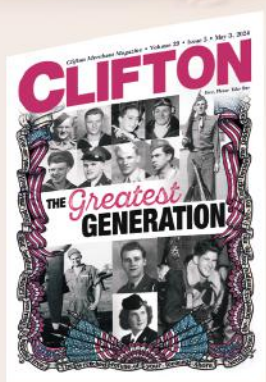


# CLIFTON

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# 2025

## Comings & GOINGS



# Clifton 2024 in Review



# HAPPY NEW YEARS

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Comings & GOINGS

# Deluxe Adieu

By Ariana Puzzo

Even after starching their last shirt and preserving one final gown, the DeLora siblings of DeLuxe Cleaners didn't stop treating their customers like family. That's a multi-generational value dating back 94 years.

DeLuxe Cleaners took its final order the week of Dec. 9. A few days earlier, the team behind a once-Downtown Clifton staple took to social media with an announcement: The owners are retiring.

"My sister and I have had so many phone calls. We've been called to the counter all day long, because customers want to see us or hug us and say goodbye," said Patrick DeLora, Jr., the third-generation co-owner, in mid-December.

"We've had customers crying and hugging us. It was really emotional actually."

DeLora (CHS 1979) added some customers came in and started telling him and sister Linda (CHS 1976) stories about their father, Patrick F. DeLora, Sr. Other long-time customers have had family members who undoubtedly knew the dry cleaner's founder, Joseph DeLora, Sr.

"What kept us around is giving consistent quality work for all of these years," said DeLora. "Our grandpa instilled that in our dad and our dad instilled that in us. It's what drew customers back to the business time and time again. They knew what they were going to get every time."

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### Contributing Writers

Ariana Puzzo, Joe Hawrylko, Irene Jarosewich, Tom Szieber, Jay Levin, Michael C. Gabriele, Jack DeVries, Patricia Alex

**Editor & Publisher**  
 Tom Hawrylko, Sr.

**Art Director**  
 Ken Peterson

**Associate Editor & Social Media Mgr.**  
 Ariana Puzzo

**Business Mgr.**  
 Irene Kulyk



*Founder Joseph DeLora, his son Pat and wife Albina. From our cover: Linda DeLora, Bob Genuardi, and Pat and Colleen DeLora. Also on our cover are Michael and Rosemary Corbo and Ellen and Stephen Corbo. Their store is closing as well.*

Joseph took a chance when he opened DeLuxe Cleaners in 1930 amidst the Great Depression. When Patrick Sr. took over in the 50's, he ran the business with brother Jim.

The 1990s saw the business transition into its third generation with cousin Robert Genuardi running the Formal Wear Department. He expanded the business to include regular suit rentals and catering attire for many large catering halls in our region.

Deluxe Formal Wear remains open and is for sale.

Pat DeLora, who started working at age 14 for the family business, explained there was no single reason why it was time to retire. When speaking to us, he said DeLuxe would remain open for another few weeks into January so people could pick up any remaining orders.

"It's been a long time coming. My sister and I are the third generation. We're not getting any younger," said DeLora. "The business is very tough and COVID really affected the dry cleaning industry. We just sort of felt that it was time. There wasn't anything that triggered it but there isn't another generation coming into the business."

### Nothing But Gratitude

DeLuxe care for its customers and its employees never wavered.

Joe Siano of JK Realty handled the sale of the property at 1280 Main Ave. for an undisclosed amount to Downtown resident Diab Mustafa. The closing is scheduled for mid-January and what becomes of the property is yet to be determined. Home delivery customers of DeLuxe are now being handled by Tide Cleaners of Wayne.

"That was one of the first things that we wanted to do. We didn't want to leave our customers without a cleaner, because they were used to the twice a week service that we provide," said DeLora. "[Tide] took over those services and took our trucks and drivers. It was very seamless."

It was hard saying goodbye to their employees. There were about 25 when they closed and a great deal of them were employees for 15 to 20 years. It meant, like the sibling owners, these employees also saw a shift in the cleaning industry. "There's a lot of competition," said DeLora. "The slice of the pie is getting smaller and smaller."

But there are other factors. Speaking on the pandemic, DeLora explained how the pre-COVID period to their closing saw their piece count down as much as 25 to 30%. He added that people don't dress up like they used to — whether to go to restaurants or church — and the rise in remote work also affected business.

The evolution of Downtown Clifton cannot be dismissed. When the Downtown Clifton Economic Development Group started the Special Improvement District project back in 1999, DeLora got involved. He plans to stay involved and loves seeing dedicated residents and business owners revitalizing and growing the Downtown area.

"The group helped revitalize the area a bit when we lost the foot traffic from City Hall and certain retail stores," he said. "That definitely affected the area quite a bit." That's around the time that DeLuxe shifted more to pickup and delivery services from people's homes in Essex, Bergen, and other counties throughout northern New Jersey.

DeLora isn't sure what the future holds just yet, but he doesn't think he wants full retirement. While he figures it out, he does want to express his gratitude.

"We just want to thank the community who have been so supportive of us for all of these years," said DeLora. "We've striven to give back by volunteering and doing our own community work, because Clifton has been great to us."

"My sister still lives in Clifton and Clifton is still my home, where I grew up," he continued. "I try to do all I can in Clifton, because I really enjoyed growing up and having a business here."



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By Ariana Puzzo

## 4th Generation

**There may be a two-minute age difference** between brothers Hart and Dan Fette, but they're in lockstep when it comes to the future of their family's company.

"We love Clifton. It's been in my family for four generations now," said Dan, 32, above left, the "younger" of the twins. "Clifton has given us everything that we can ask for, and we appreciate what the town has allowed us to grow over the past [nearly] 75 years."

Located at the intersection of Rts. 3 and 46, Fette Auto Group is a Ford, Infiniti, and Kia dealer that sells vehicles to Clifton and throughout the greater metropolitan area. The family-owned dealership sells new and used cars, trucks, and SUVs with servicing and collision repair.

That legacy began with Hart and Dan's great-grandfather Henry Fette. Known as a showman extraordinaire, "HF" founded Henry Fette & Co in 1952 at Main and Madison Aves. The store moved near the Allwood Circle, where the AutoZone store is today, by 1954. It's resided in its current location, the former site of Bowlero, since 1977 when just Fette Ford moved there.

HF is the one who put the Fette Ford nameplate on thousands of vehicles for decades to follow. During the post-war growth years, he beat the band to do what was right for Clifton. HF was on the Board of the Boys & Girls Club — the same Board that grandson John still serves on — and was the grand marshal of Clifton's 50th Anniversary Parade.

On April 3, The Club will honor Fette Auto Group as well as the Clifton Health Department at its "Great Futures Gala." It's an honor that means a great deal to the Fette family. And the Fette family has meant a great deal to The Club's kids.

"My grandfather Henry was one of the early Board members back in the day and my father, Lawrence, also supported financially as he could. My mother, Nancy Fette, still does," said John, 60. "The Club's programs are tremendous. If the kids weren't at this Club or spending afternoons or days somewhere like this, where would they be?"

That's why Fette Auto makes every effort to support The Club's programs. The Annual Boys & Girls Club of Clifton Car, Truck & Motorcycle Show is organized each September by Fette Auto for the past decade. The show raises anything from \$20-25,000 that goes directly to The Club, with some Club kids' parents volunteering to help at the event.

In November 2020, former BGCC Development Director John DeGraaf also received a call from John. He explained how he and his wife, Kristin, wanted to offer a one-time \$50,000 gift during The Club's "\$200,000 Ask" for the Annual Campaign.

John's motivation was witnessing the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on The Club's income and its resources. As a member of the finance committee, he and Kristin stepped up because they had the ability and the hope that their do-





## 3rd Generation

JOHN AND KRISTIN FETTE

## 2nd Generation

LARRY AND NANCY FETTE

## 1st Generation

HENRY AND LEE FETTE

nation would match other donations, dollar-for-dollar.

That faith in Clifton's loyalty toward its own is understandable. "We sell to families of three, four, five generations now," said John. "Our customer base is pretty solid ... [and] we appreciate their support. We're also glad to be a supporter of the Boys & Girls Club. Hopefully there will be another 75 years of service or more to the City of Clifton."

### Future Leaders

As The Club celebrates "great futures", look to the men who came up through Fette Auto.

For the past year and a half, Dan has worked as a sales manager in the Infiniti showroom. It wasn't a job that was handed to him. He and Hart started working during summers when the brothers were in sixth grade.

They began in the parts department and by doing odd jobs around the dealership. It included painting gas tanks and working on clean-up duty until the eighth grade. During their high school years, they would check in cars as they arrived in the service lane, check oil, and change the washer fluid.

"We did a lot of earning-our-stripes stuff for the business before becoming full time," said Dan. "We've always had a good time. There are a lot of people who work here, so it is never a dull moment."

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Across the three showrooms and service centers, there are about 140 people working on staff. Dan works directly with about 15 people, but he said he speaks to at least 100 people per day just by his time spent popping into other departments to see what's going on there.

"I try to make the rounds to see everybody. Everyone has something to tell you," he said. "I like to be involved in what's going on in the store. You have to be knowledgeable of what's going on even if it's not in your department."

When Dan came onto the job full time fresh out of college, he worked in the Infiniti store as a finance manager for about two years. Next, he worked as a used car manager in the store for another year and a half.

Over the past decade, he's also worked as a sales manager in the Kia store, service advisor in the Ford store, spent a year offsite working at their used car reconditioning lot, and returned to take on the role that he has today.

Expectations are part of the deal — whether they come from his father, John, at the top or his colleagues. But Dan isn't opposed to consistency or proving his value.

"It's not easy, but you've got to be strong. Everyone is looking to you as an example," he said. "Maybe there is a negative assumption about kids working in a family business, but pressure creates diamonds."

## The Company's Engine

It's impossible for us to pay no attention to that man behind the computer screen — especially if it means that Hart is getting his due credit. The Wizard of Fette, himself, is more widely known as the Dealership Operations Manager. Hart focuses partly on used car internal paperwork across all three stores, but he's situated within the Infiniti showroom.

This year marks his and Dan's 10th year as full-time employees with Fette Auto. The early skills that he developed on the job were staying organized and making sure that everything was where it's supposed to be. That also translated to making sure that he was punctual and that "nobody's waiting for me."



*Main and Madison Aves. was at the center of it all in 1952 when Henry Fette established his automotive business there, across from the current post office. Prior to that, Fette had an auto supply store on Main (center). By 1954, Fette moved near the Allwood Circle, where the Auto Zone store is today. Fette Motors moved to the firm's current location, at the intersection of Routes 46 and 3, in 1977.*





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There were certain learning curves along the way. “Dan’s definitely the more outgoing one of us,” said Hart. “That was the most difficult adjustment during my time as a salesman. Getting comfortable in a customer-facing role. ... It’s why I do the more backend stuff now, but it was an interesting experience.”

One of the best opportunities that comes with working in a family-run business is actually getting to spend time with family. It is not just seeing Dan around the Infiniti showroom, or the father and sons trio traveling to dealer meetings around the country. Kristin also works for Fette Auto as the company’s vice president.

Working with family undoubtedly keeps them honest.



*Fette Ford, KIA and Infiniti broke ground on Jan. 19, 2012. From left: Gloria Martini, of the North Jersey Regional Chamber of Commerce, John and Kristin M. Fette, Mayor Jim Anzaldi and John Manfra of Infiniti.*

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**Said Aref, EA  
CHS Class of '96**

“Sometimes you butt heads in ways that you might not with other co-workers and that’s a little bit difficult,” said Hart. “We’re held more accountable than the average employee. I always try to stay busy and put in as much effort as I can every day, so that people see I’m working hard.”

Hart recently took over the role previously held by employee Bob Weber. Described by Hart as “a jack of all trades.” Weber worked at Fette Auto for around 40 years before his retirement. The Fette family said Weber was a self-taught guy who “knew everything from fixing your car to fixing your computer.” Perhaps most important, he was a mentor to Hart.

The day now begins for Hart at 5 am when he arrives to open the gates and the buildings. When he’s not in the Infiniti store, Hart walks around to make sure that everything works as it should.

“I’m kind of like the IT guy on site. If someone is having trouble with a computer or phone, I’m the



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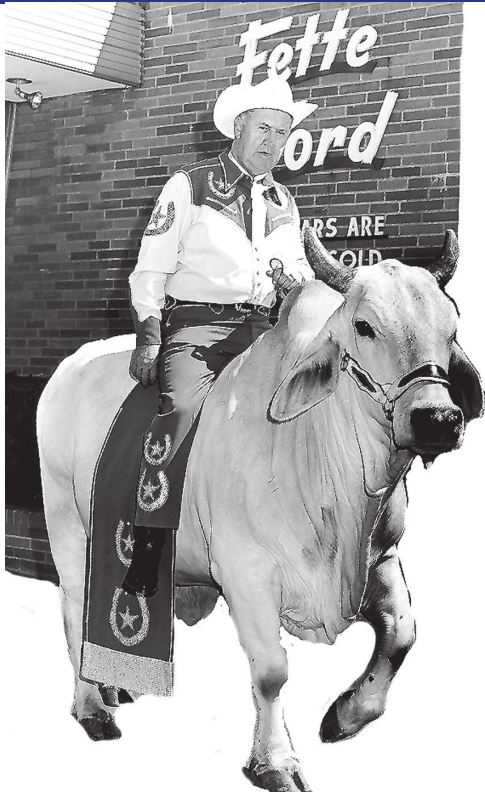
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guy that they call to fix it,” explained Hart. “It’s a lot of stuff behind the scenes that people might not realize, but I’m learning as I go and it’s about keeping the dealership functioning as smoothly as possible.”

### Synonymous with Clifton

Moving to Clifton made sense for both brothers. Hart and his wife, Kristina, married on July 30, 2023 and found a home near Montclair State. He’s never had an easier commute to open up in the morning. “The business is always gonna be here and it’s perfect for us, too,” said Hart.

Dan is in a relationship with girlfriend Victoria and they relocated from Jersey City to Valley Rd.

“The commute from Jersey City could sometimes take an hour,” said Dan. “Now I’m two minutes and it has enhanced my life.”

Now closer than ever to their roots, it’s also clearer than ever how they stand on the shoulders of the gi-



*Founder Henry Fette was bullish on Clifton. He purchased the dormant Bowlero property and built his dream dealership as seen in this classic rendering.*

ants who came before them. Along with admiring their father, John, lasting legacies of HF and their grandfather, Larry (CHS 1954), keep the company moving forward.

“Hart and I do a lot of meetings outside of the dealership with other dealership groups similar in size to ours. It gives us great ideas on how to push forward,” said Dan. “Since we’re twins, we are both best friends and spend a lot of time with each other.”

Dan added that there is a lot of discussion about the future and how the two men “want to guide the compa-

ny” in future decades. Hart echoed a similar sentiment, adding that they’ve spoken to one another about the possibility of “expanding or purchasing more dealerships or properties outside of Clifton.”

Yet Fette is synonymous with Clifton. That is undeniable. “The Fette name has been in Clifton for decades. We want to make sure that we can do the best that we can to maintain the family name and the respect that it has in the community,” said Hart.

“Dan and I want to continue growing the business and keep things going in the right direction.”

*The Boys & Girls Club will fete the Fette family and the Clifton Health Department at the April 3 Gala. Contact Maureen Cameron for tickets or to become a sponsor. Write to [mcameron@bgclifton.org](mailto:mcameron@bgclifton.org) or call 973-773-0966 x 144 for details.*





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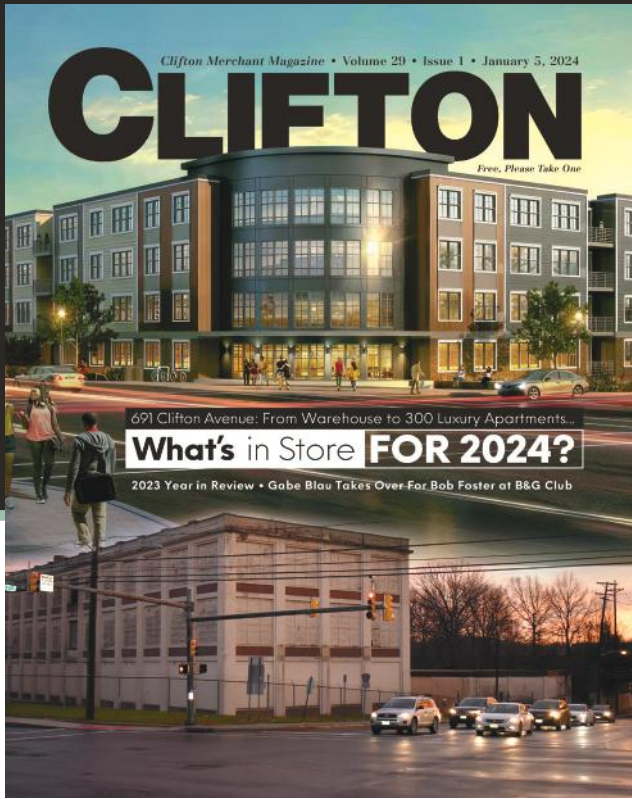
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There was a lot in store for 2024, including new developments. The Boys & Girls Club bid farewell to retired Executive Director Bob Foster and welcomed CEO Gabe Blau. The expansion of the Adult Opportunity Center continued after breaking ground in December. It wasn't the only construction happening in Clifton. Residents watched as 300 apartments continued to be built at the corner of Paulison and Clifton Aves. and more across other neighborhoods. The community mourned the losses of Councilwoman Lauren Murphy and Sheriff Richard Berdnik.



Making sense of trends: Pina Nazario, Joe Siano, Frank Cortes, Gerard Scorziello, Nick Tselepis, Mahmoud Ijbara, Dom Iannarella.



Chewie, Clifton School's therapy dog, turned one on Jan. 22 with a party at School 9 on Brighton Rd. Originally Chewbacca, the golden doodle is trained to provide emotional support for the school district and is handled by Assistant Superintendent Mark Gengaro.



Mahmoud Ijbara (CHS 2005) opened Compass Real Estate at 1221 Van Houten Ave. on Jan. 26. He's seen in a welcoming headlock by Tom Hawrylko.

Sold at \$1,995,000, 284 Grove St. set a Clifton record. Jose A. Perez of Howard Hanna Rand Realty and Julian Nazario of the Pick Pina Group at Coldwell Banker teamed up for the Jan. 31 sale.







*Dolores Healey, Director of The Club from 1986 to 2006, retired CEO Bob Foster (2006 to 2023), and incoming CEO Gabe Blau. Maria Jose Martinez, accepted into the US Naval Academy, with CHS ESL/Bilingual teacher and USNA 2014 grad Luke Walsh.*

**Gabe Blau took over the helm of the Boys & Girls Club of Clifton.** In 2024, it was about getting Clifton kids *future ready*, focusing on college and life after high school. “We are also looking to an expansion of the programming experiences all of our youth members have access to,” he said, noting classes in dance, art, coding, community service and career development are offered. The Club will continue its never-ending evolution, articulating the ways it will meet the needs of Clifton’s youth today, and help them on their way to *great futures* tomorrow.

**CHS Class of 2024 Maria Jose Martinez** reported to the U.S. Naval Academy in June 2024 to begin training for a career as a naval officer. The Mustang will graduate in 2028. Martinez’s mother emigrated from Peru and the family lived in Mexico prior to moving to the U.S. “My mom sacrificed everything so my sister and I could have a better life,” said Martinez. “I’ve received an education, countless opportunities, and safety that I wouldn’t have had the privilege to experience somewhere else.” The Naval Academy’s acceptance rate is 8% annually.

# CLIFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Strategic Planning Meetings

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On Feb. 6, the first item on the City Council's agenda was filling the late Councilwoman Lauren Murphy's seat. Eighth place finisher Chris D'Amato was nominated and approved by Council's unanimous vote. On the Mustang homefront, CHS' Cheer team went on to state championships and Saif Al-Deen Saleh scored his way into Clifton history with his 1,000th rebound and 1,000th point in the same game on Feb. 17. After his graduation, Saleh, inset left, made a huge impact on the FIBA U18 Asia World Cup Qualifiers for Jordan. City residents strove to combat hunger by seeking sponsors to help fill three new Little Free Pantries.



Council appointee Chris D'Amato and the late Councilwoman Lauren Murphy.



We met: Denise and Ryan Fanelli, Richard and Linda Onorevole, Robin and William Gibson. Ken and Marianne Kurnath...



...as well as Michael and Marisol McIninch, Salvatore Yakimik and Bianca Hernandez, Kimberly Breznak (CHS 1988) and Edward Tuccio and Tony and Debra Gretina...But wait! We shared more love stories...





...there is Michael and Rosemary Baran, Janet and Steve Mozolewski, Al and Sue Zwiazek, Tyler Novielli and Diana Diduch...



...as well as Mark and Bonnie Marquart, Donald Lopuzzo and Melissa (Ayers) Lopuzzo, George and Jane Scarfo and Joe and Bernadette Salerno. Clifton love stories...find them every Feburary... have a love story to share? Email tomhawrylkosr@gmail.com.



On Feb. 24, Congressman Pascrell was at St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church and said: "The Ukrainian people continue their brave fight for two years now after Vladimir Putin drove his tanks right at the heart of Ukraine, in an illegal, brutal, and unprovoked war of aggression. Ukraine deserves America's support." NOVA UA FCU provided the busses and dozens boarded them in the morning of Feb. 24 for Washington DC to show their support and advocate for US funding to fight the Russian war.

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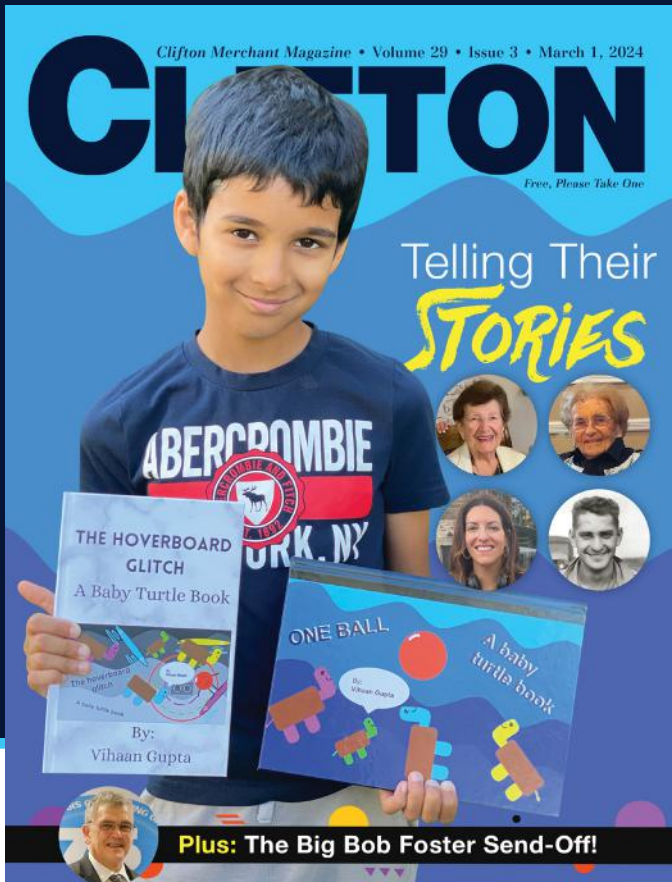
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Mustang alum and author Camille Gomera-Tavarez (CHS 2015) released her first full-length novel at the Clifton Public Library. On the west coast, city native Hailey Mia took Hollywood by storm at age 16 after her successful American Idol audition. The Garden State Film Festival presented three films by city residents: “No Witnesses” by Rob Watt, “Saint Michael Of The City” by Kevin Interdonatol, and “Clifton: My Hometown” by Matthew Mendoza. Outdoor activities mattered, too. The Council approved new equipment and playground safety surface material for the Oak Ridge Playground. Below, Mary Jo and Bob Foster at his March 14 party.



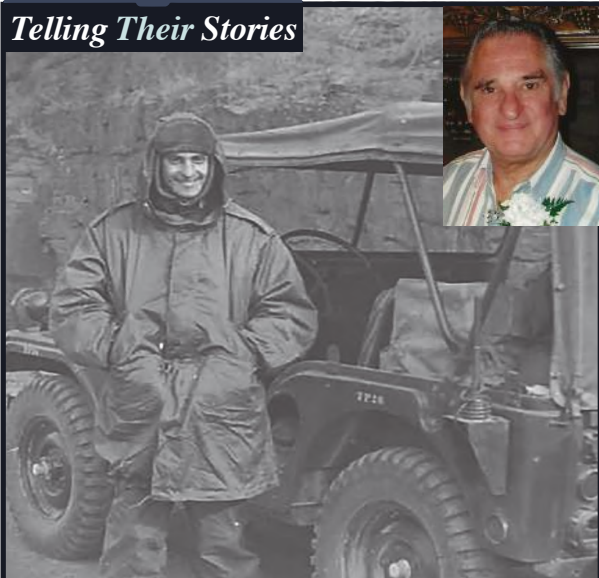
The Big Bob Foster sendoff with comments by John DeGraaf, Clifton Mustang coaches Stan Lembryk and Frank Pajuelo. Tom and Amy (Pilipski) Acton, former Club Counselors, as well as Officer Kevin Collucci, Dr. Mukundha Maneyapanda.



Also offering their memories of Foster: sisters Monique and Candace Mariso, former Mayor James Anzaldi, who is now the Boys Club Historian, Peter Dones, Gloria Martini, Club Trustee and Paula Benjamin, the Club’s Program Director.



**Telling Their Stories**



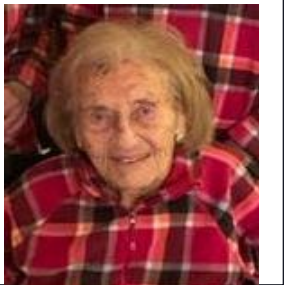
Basil Worhach in the Korean War, author Gina (Barbone) Azzi and centenarian Rose (Gibba) Klemans.



Marching Mustang Lee Sanderson is also a certified Boys Club Sunfish.



Lori Huk with her husband Patrick Tierney, coach Israel Reyes. Huk and Reyes, along with Sanderson, were inducted on March 14 into the BGCC Alumni Hall of Fame.



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*Drenching downpours on March 23 sent over 500 bunnies scurrying from Nash Park to Christopher Columbus Middle School to enjoy a morning of Bunny-themed activities thanks to the Clifton Rec team.*



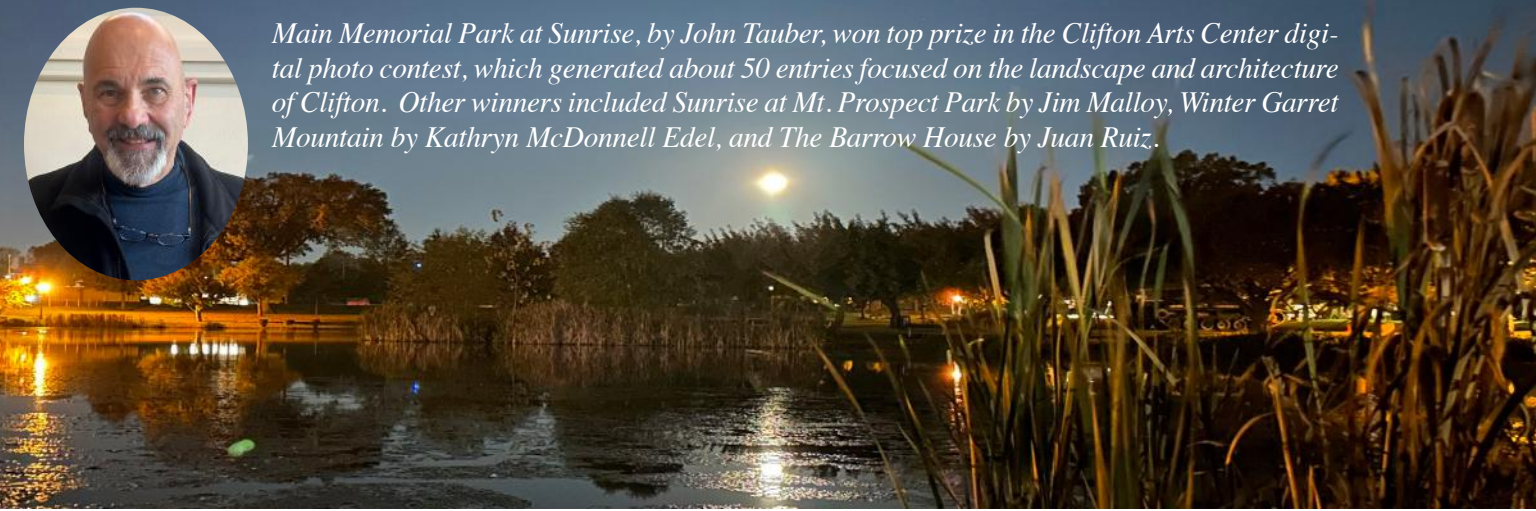
*Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa received the key to Clifton from City Manager Nick Villano on March 2 at New Jersey City University. Councilwoman Rosie Pino said the goal was to strengthen the relationship between Clifton and sister city, Guayaquil, Ecuador.*



*Nearly 400 friends of the Boys & Girls of Clifton honored retired Executive Director Bob Foster at the Valley Regency on March 14.*



*Main Memorial Park at Sunrise, by John Tauber, won top prize in the Clifton Arts Center digital photo contest, which generated about 50 entries focused on the landscape and architecture of Clifton. Other winners included Sunrise at Mt. Prospect Park by Jim Malloy, Winter Garret Mountain by Kathryn McDonnell Edel, and The Barrow House by Juan Ruiz.*







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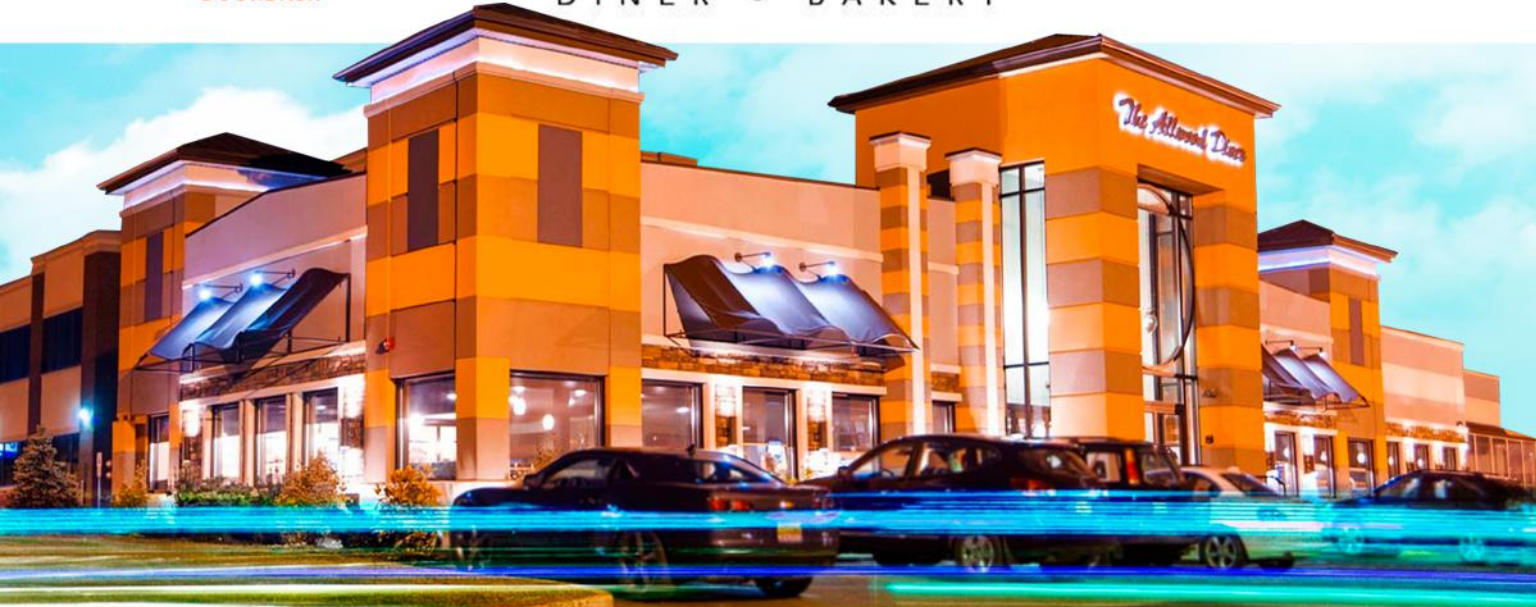


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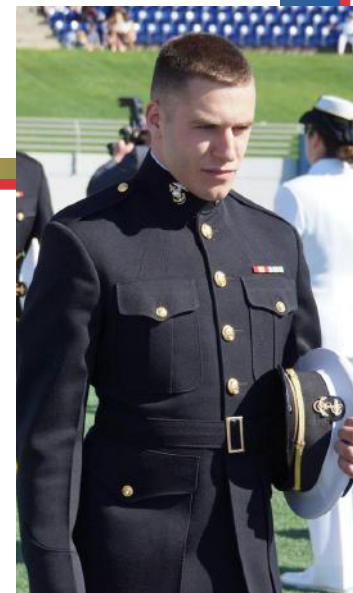
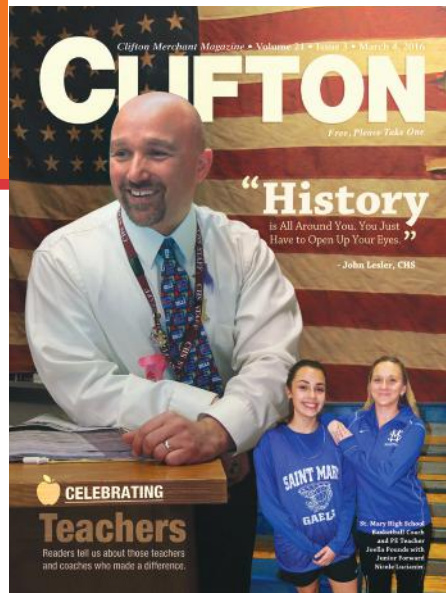
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On April 4, Congressman Bill Pascrell visited Clifton Firehouse 5 on Brighton Rd. to award \$637,195 to acquire property to construct a new firehouse with an emergency operations center. On April 23, the Health Department conducted its last focus group for its Community Health Assessment, determining new focus on health priorities. The Passaic County Board of County Commissioners honored Gabriella and Bob Marriello of Clifton PRAISE — Parents Requiring Assistance In Special Education — for Autism Awareness Month. Guillermo Garcia, of Paulison Ave. ShopRite and Cuellar Family Markets, was recognized for the business’s commitment to employing workers with disabilities. At the April 11 BOE meeting, Lori Lalama addressed the vandalism of newly-renovated middle school bathrooms and encouraged more community pride.



At left, Lori Lesler sending love on our cover and above, Lori's husband John who was our cover teacher feature in March 2016. US Naval Academy and USMC Lt. Luke Walsh, a teacher at CHS.



From top left and moving clockwise, teachers Annemarie Montesinos Tate, Olga Figol with her mom, Antonina Zielonka, her first teacher, Amanda Rhodes, Anthony Goglia.



Joanna Huster, Michael McCunney, Susan Schemly, Yelena Vayner.





Passaic County Film Festival contributors from Clifton included students Matthew Mendoza, Brenna Vazquez, Elian Saldivar, Mikael Simon, Szymon Sudol, Hana Tripathee, and independent film maker Sam O'Donnell. The 20th Festival was April 27.



Maria Rado, left, is a custodian on the CHS campus who keep the place clean and is often planting greens and flowers on the grounds.



St. Peter's Bloomin' 5k & 1 Mile Walk was April 28, which raises funds for St. Peter's Haven. The 2025 date is April 27.

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From left: Commissioners Orlando Cruz, Sandi Lazzara, Terry Duffy, Tom, Bob and Gabriella Mariello of Clifton PRAISE, Bruce James, John Bartlett, Nicolino Gallo and Pat LePore. At right, Gulliermo Garcia and his wife Digna Perez with their son Chris.

The national celebration of Arbor Day is always the last Friday of April. So on April 26, Clifton's Beautification Committee marked it with the planting of another crepe myrtle, which will bloom in summer, on the grounds of the City Hall campus. The event also celebrated that Clifton was founded on that date, 107 years ago, in 1917.



The Health Dept.'s Spring Rabies Clinics for Dogs & Cats was a free program at the DPW Garage, 307 E. 7th St., on April 13. Dog licenses are available for city residents.



Troop 21 Boys Scouts, along with Pack 21 Cub Scouts, dug, raked and bagged debris on Dundee Island, part of an April 13 city clean up of the Passaic River island.





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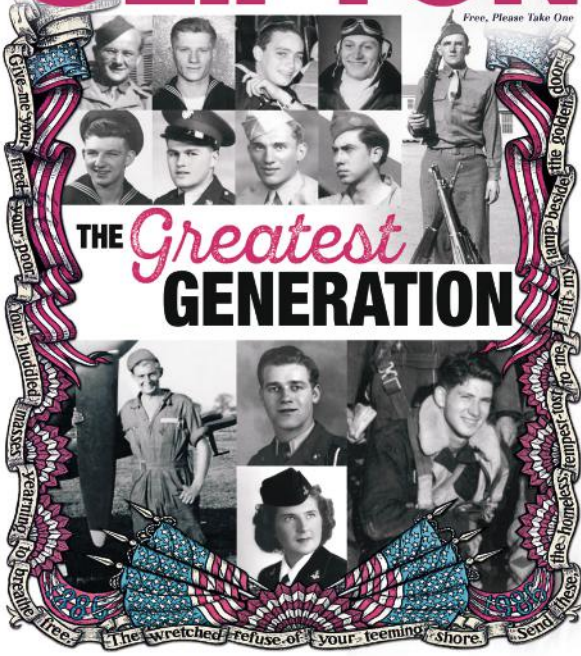


Android

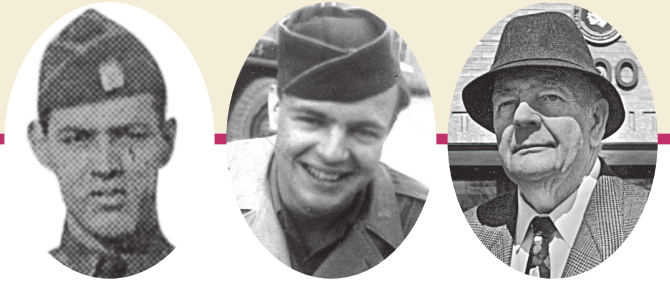


# CLIFTON

Clifton Merchant Magazine • Volume 29 • Issue 5 • May 3, 2024



Flags flew at half-staff to mark the passing of former Councilman, Freeholder and Assemblyman Peter C. Eagler, at the age of 69, who lost his battle with laryngeal cancer on May 11. Councilwoman Lauren Murphy's legacy lived on thanks to Clifton's Committee for Individuals with Disabilities, which donated books to the Clifton Public Library. The Fire Department, with a total of 143 firefighters, held a promotion ceremony on May 22. Clifton Health's wellness fair was at 999 Clifton Ave., and offered information and free medical services. Looking back on three decades of telling the stories of The Greatest Generation, these pages show some of the photos of those that served during WWII.



William Herrschaft, his brother Les, Clifton's former councilman.



Charles Librizzi, Robert Wilcox in 1944 and 2008. Lou Wong, Christopher Sotiro in 1944 and in 2000. Below, Chip Zaczagnini, William Niader, Frank Uricchio, David Eagler in 1994 and in 2019, and Walt Pruiksma.



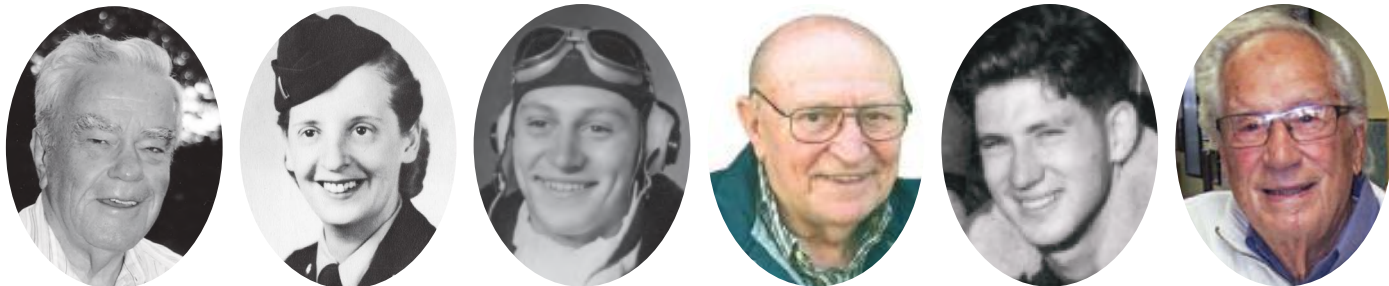
Mario Talamini in 2008 and during the war. At right, three of the Breure brothers served simultaneously during World War II, from left, Matthew, Cornelius and Adrian.







Then and circa 2010 pics of Raymond Chitko, Raymond Yannetti and Pauline Trella. Below, David C. Van Dillen, Dorothy Den Herder, Stephen Mihalovic in 1944 and in 2015. George Kroll during the war and in 2015.



Emil and Ethel Kudlack in 1945, Jack Kuepfer during WWII and in 2007. George Balkjy in the service and in 2007.



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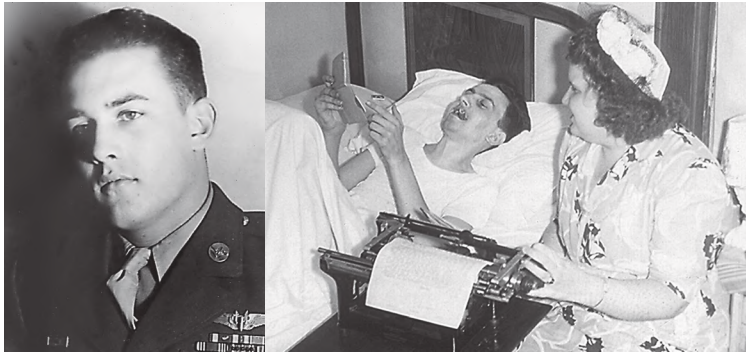
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At the Athenia Canteen, circa 1944, from left, Coast Guardsman Peter Capponi, Stanley Zwier, Navy Petty Officer Andrew Koribanics and US Army Cpl. Salvatore Griffo. Each visiting serviceman received a carton of cigarettes. Smoke 'em if you got 'em!



At left, Joe Menegus. That's Willie Zawisha, who was bed-ridden most of his life, dictating a letter to his niece that would be sent to "Clifton boys," serving across the globe, back during World War II.



From left, Joe Hawrylko in 1943, Fred Lombardo in 1999, Helene Lenkowec when she told of her service during WWII. On our May 1999 cover, from left: Joe Tuzzolino who served in Vietnam, John Biegel, who enlisted during the Korean War, Helene, WWII vet Walter Pruiksma and Randy Colanadras, who served in the Persian Gulf.



On May 14, Stew Leonard, Jr., cut the ribbon on their new wine and grocery store in Styertowne Shopping Center and dedicated a 300-pound bronze statue in honor of founder Stew Leonard Sr.

A small group attended the wreath laying at Main Memorial Park at 11 am on Memorial Day due to unpredictable weather. On hand to lead the tribute was Joe Tuzzolino of the Avenue of Flags. Tim Keith volunteered to lead the group in prayer. He drew notice to a name etched on the monument—his uncle, US Army Sgt. Peter Vroeginday, who was in the 88th Infantry Division and lived at 254 Burgess Pl., before being killed in action on July 12, 1944.



St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic School pupils shared in a prayer for children at risk on May 31. Prayers were especially offered for the Ukrainian children in the middle of the war in Ukraine and those kidnapped by Russian troops, said Principal Sister Kathleen Hutsko, of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate.



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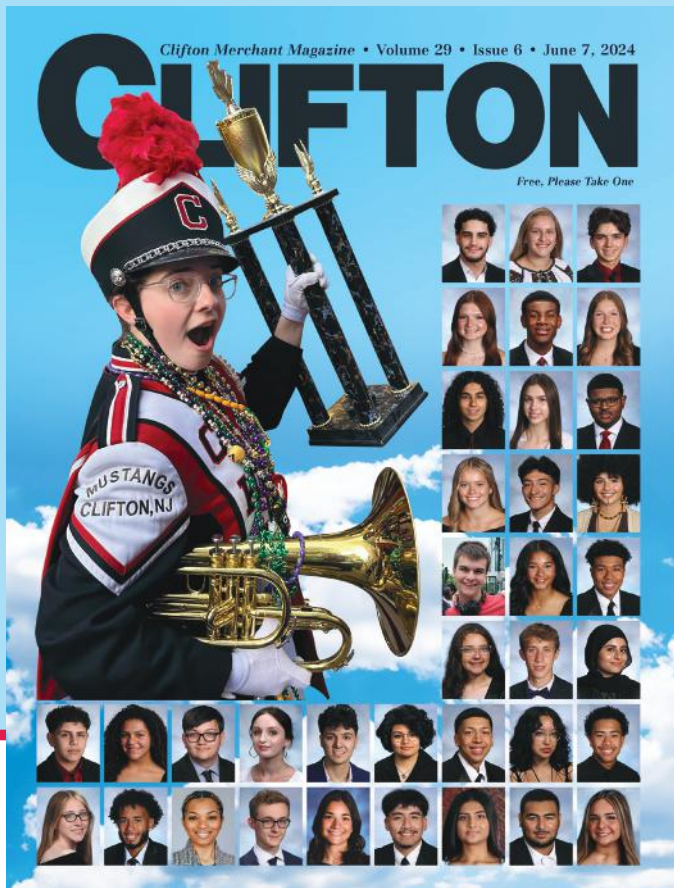
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Dean & Al





**Chris Farrell becomes President of Paramus Catholic High School**, joining Principal, Dr. Stephanie Macaluso, at the helm of the largest regional Catholic high schools in New Jersey. On June 7, Diane Fasino was torchbearer for the 41st NJ Law Enforcement Torch Run. On June 30, Clifton Rec dedicated the playground next to School 3 at Washington and Paulison Aves. as the Thomas Mullin Playground. Mullin served for over 40 years as a Recreation Commissioner. The retired CHS teacher has served as a trustee with the Clifton Education Foundation since 2001. And we celebrated the Class of 2024...



*Working their way through CHS, Xavier Valerio, Alexander Franco, Abel Chong of VFC Landscaping.*



*Anro Boukattaya, Michelle Antero Cabrera, Jackeline Vizcaino, Nicole Acuna, Alias Ragsdale, Patrick Du Bois, Yousef Saleh, Dina Asad.*



*Mariam Gebril, Jordan Edie, Stefanie Feliciano, Tatyanna Zurawski, Anja Cobani, Isabel Cohn. At right, the CHS Top Ten.*



# Clifton's HISTORIC BOTANY DISTRICT CLIFTON, NJ



## It Takes a Community to Make A Great Neighborhood...

...Clifton's Historic Botany District (CHBD) would like to thank the City of Clifton and the many volunteers, and especially our generous sponsors for once again making the CHBD's Christmas Tree Lighting festival a wonderful event... Botany Village is truly a great community with great people...



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Vitalii Datsyk, Riya Shah, Dion Gray, Mr. William Colligan, Renad Taha, Gabriela Arias, Isabel Cohn and Eleny Gervacio.



CHS grads Alex Ralli, Chloe Hernandez, and Tom Mullin. On June 30, Clifton Rec dedicated the School 3 playground in his honor. Mullin served for over 40 years on the Rec board and he taught French, English, and Russian at CHS. Chris Farrell, President of Paramus Catholic High School and Principal Dr. Stephanie Macaluso, the largest Catholic high school in the state.

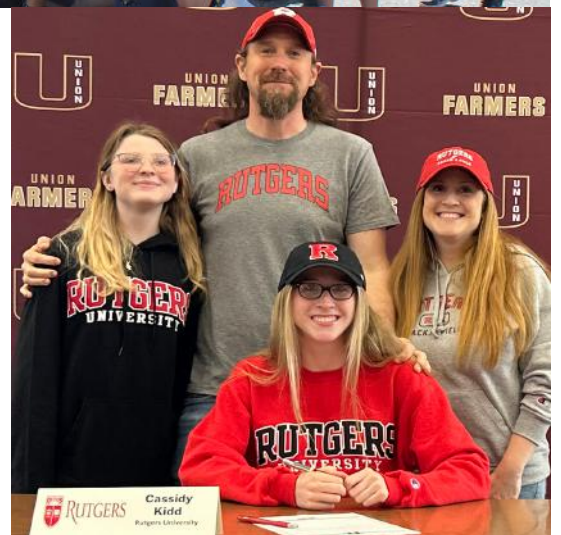


Diane Fasino was torch bearer on June 7 for the 41st NJ Law Enforcement Torch Run. Diane carried the torch to the Clifton Rec Center on Main Ave. as it wound its way across the Garden State and on to the Special Olympics New Jersey Summer Games, at The College of New Jersey campus June 7-9.



Giulia Russo of Mary Help of Christians Academy of North Haledon continued her Salesian journey at DeSales University in P.A.

Cassidy Kidd, seen with her family, has committed to Rutgers University and will be running Cross Country and Track.





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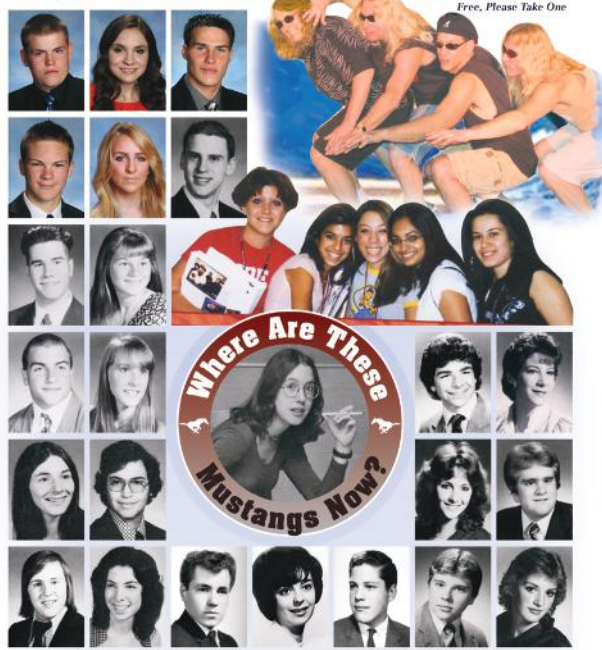
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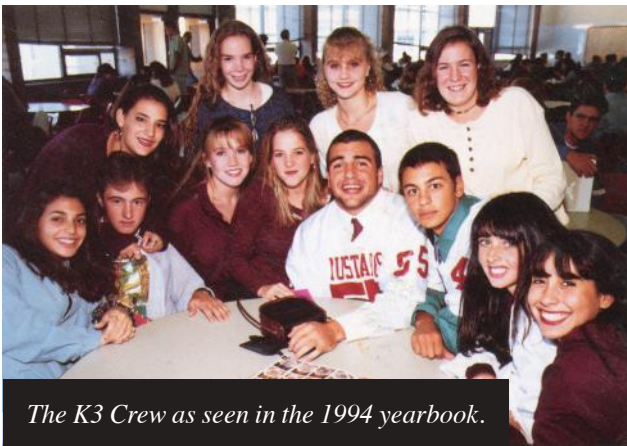




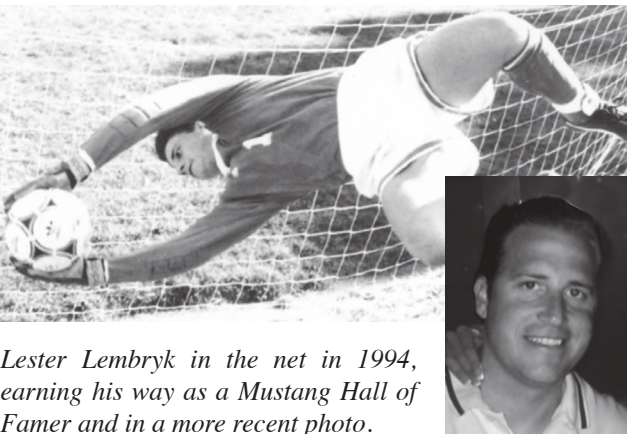
Clifton Merchant Magazine • Volume 29 • Issue 7 • July 5, 2024  
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We asked, as we do every July, “Where are these Mustangs now?” and more than a few of you answered. From the Class of 2014 all the way back to the Class of 1954, we heard about what past and lifelong city residents are up to today. There was also the Flying Mueller Brothers who got their start back in the day in Clifton and are still beloved, especially in the wake of Carl’s passing on May 5 and Donny’s in 2014. And it is safe to say that there is no party quite like when the Class of 1954 reunite. Just ask co-reunion organizer Barbara Denherder!



*The K3 Crew as seen in the 1994 yearbook.*



*Lester Lembryk in the net in 1994, earning his way as a Mustang Hall of Famer and in a more recent photo.*



*CHS drum major Kelly Williams back in 1984. Mustang sweethearts 2014 Nick and Adriana (Rakic) Glodava.*



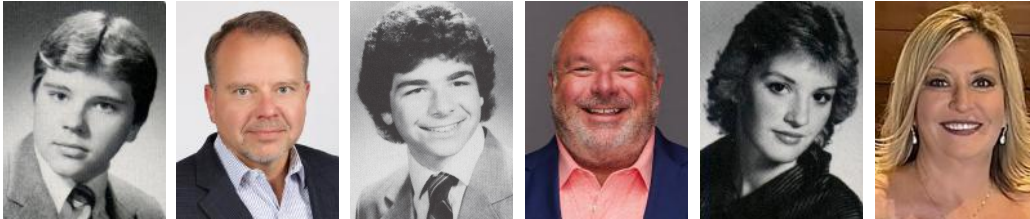
*Jilian Fueshko in 2004 and today. CHS 2004 bowler Kyle Handoga today with daughter Charlotte. And also from 2004: Tom Garretson and Kevin Green behind the bar in Hell’s Kitchen.*





US Army Sgt. Robert Capo, CHS '94, and above, with the Mustangs that went 28-3. From left rear, Doug Sieminski, Anthony DeStefano, Scott Orlovsky, Jason Fitz, Lou Magliarditt. Middle: Craig Valenz, Bob Capo, Anthony Galizio, Mike Valles, Tom Bisignano. Front: Chuck Kling, Kevin Dobko, Greg Takvorian, Dave Jiminian, Bob Luczun.

Some 1974 committee members, Frank Klump, Diane Elardo De Muro, Gary Steele, Donna Bancroft Betar, MaryFran Cini, Kathy Fusco, Karen Pisani Zayat, Maryann Riotto Zacagnini. Jeri Fried in 1974 and today.



Look back to 1984 and today: George Oliarnyk, Ricky Bagolie and Dana Porter

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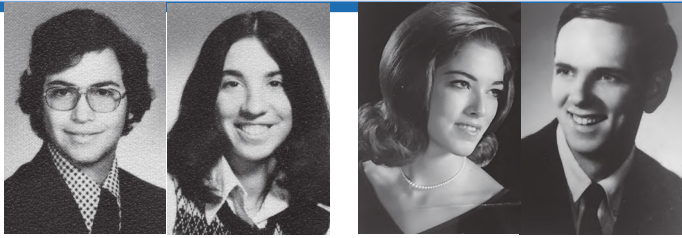


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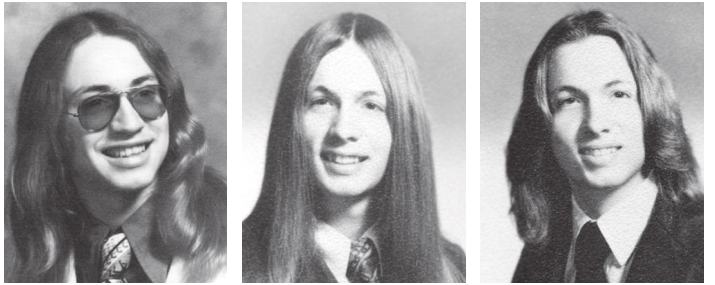
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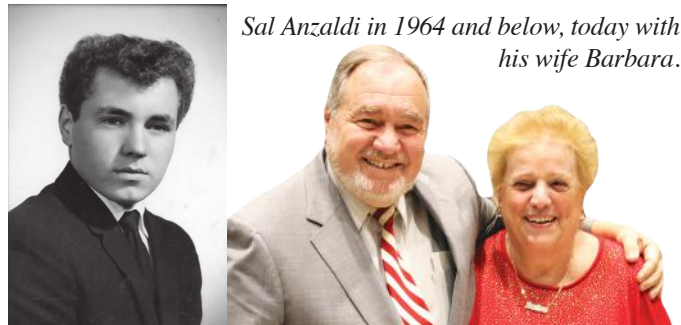


A Mueller Brothers scene at Joey Harrison's Surf Club, circa 2009. Below, Don Mueller '76, Carl Mueller '74, Bill Mueller '74.

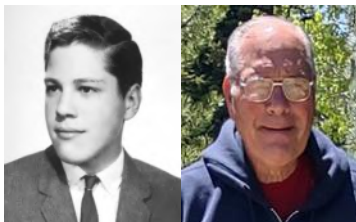
Michael and Lynn Gochman-Simon back in 1974 and in a recent photo. '64 grads Sharon Walsh and Stephen Gola.



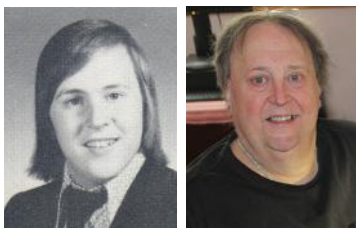
Sal Anzaldi in 1964 and below, today with his wife Barbara.



Lucretia DiMartino-Rotella, '74, with John Rotella, Sr., son-in-law John Gallo, Analisa (Rotella) Gallo, and John Rotella Jr.



Martin Bania in 1964 and today. Greg Lacki, 1974, and now.



No one enjoys the Class of 1954's company more than each other. The 70th reunion was June 7 at Bella Napoli in Bloomfield, with a turnout of about 31 people, pictured above.

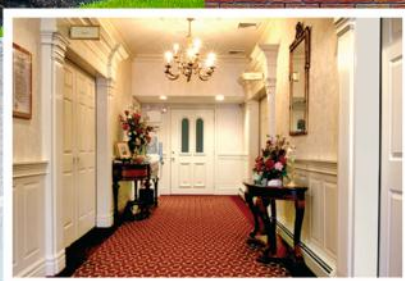




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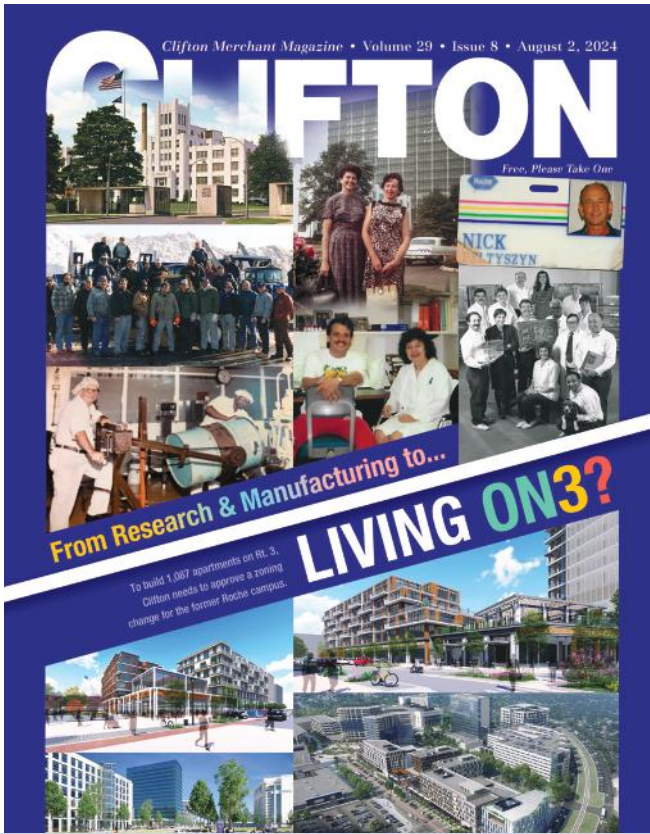
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**What does the future hold for Clifton?** Eugene Diaz has his vision — and it is visible to all those who drive along Route 3 East on a daily basis. On3 is set to become a place where people can live, work, and shop. It’s meant to pick up, in many ways, where Hoffmann-La Roche left off in 2013 — connecting the community. We spoke to generations of workers who told us of Roche’s legacy on their families. On Aug. 21, Congressman Bill Pascrell, pictured below in 1991, also passed away at age 89. Elected to Congress in 1996, he served 14 terms and focused on legislation to help “regular Americans pay their bills.”



Photo by Tom Franklin

# BEFORE AND TO THE FUTURE: ON3



*Nick and Tricia Zygnerski. Her grandparents, Michael and Helen Gimon, with newlyweds Michael and Adele Gimon in 1967. All four retired from Roche.*



*Mary Ann Scucci Petersen and Dot Cruz during Christmas, 1973. In July 2024, Mary Ann Scucci Petersen visited the former Roche parking lot where she learned to drive. John Galka, Roman Diduch, Horst Staudner and Linda Darragh. Ted Dziuba Jr., Kenneth and Joann Dalton at Johnny’s Bar and Grill in Botany Village.*



*From left, Michael Diduch, Roman’s dad, and his father-in-law Stefan Peltyszyn. Bo Yaremko today and in the Roche days with lab partner Bev Simko.*





### ON3 DEVELOPMENTS ON THE FORMER ROCHE CAMPUS



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In 1968, Anna Sovich and Anastazia Andruch with Building 86 in the background. They worked in Quality Control in Building 59 on the production line for many drugs, including Valium.

Our January, 2018 edition with the late Dr. Bonita Stanton, first Dean of the HUMC Seton Hall Medical School.



Nick Peltyszyn and his brother Stefan, below, who worked in the animal care facility.



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*The long gone from Valley Rd, Paul VI High School grads still stay connected. From left: Class of 1974 grads: Lisa Geider, Mary Vladichak and Jaqueline (Saco) Kossel, Norm Tahan today, Patrick Gingerelli, and Jim Tuohy. At right, the always remembered leader of the school, Father Thomas Suchon.*





The vision is clear: Eugene Diaz sees Clifton's potential. After Roche left Route 3 in 2013 and took hundreds of jobs with it, it left a vacuum. Enter, Diaz and Prism Capital Partners, who have privately owned the property since July 2016. Now with well over \$250 million of its capital invested on improvements to infrastructure on the site, Diaz wants what Clifton wants: long-term stability. That means, living, working, and playing all in one area. "We want people that are ... going to continue and understand the value of ... being within that community," said Diaz. If anyone understood that desire, it was Roche's past employees.



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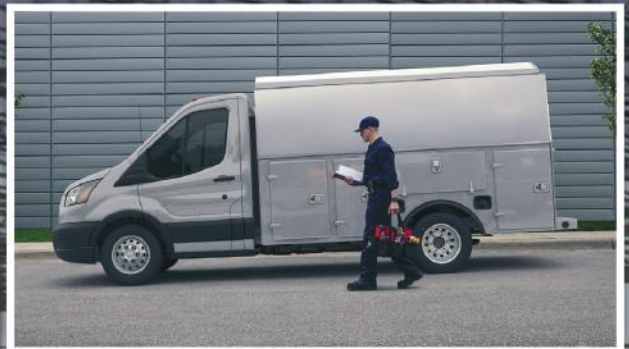
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The Alonzo F. Bonsal Wildlife Preserve, a 21-acre wilderness and wildlife refuge at the Clifton/Montclair border, marked its 50th year as community leaders and residents gathered to mark the green space. Swimmers and supporters alike gathered on Sept. 13 for the Boys & Girls Club's 25th anniversary celebration of The Nicholas Martini Aquatics Center. On Sept. 15, First Lutheran Church, a landmark at Grove and Van Houten Aves., hosted a construction Renewal Celebration. The liturgy was co-celebrated with Pastor Jeff Miller and Rev. Tracie L. Bartholomew. City Green Farm Eco-Center on Grove St., marked its 20th anniversary celebration under the stars on Sept. 28.



Helping to chill, Clifton Health mindfulness team Nate King, Erika Shyroky, Ashley Peralta, Kim Finkler, Tom Sadowski.



Clifton Schools' therapy dog Chewie, at left, usually handled by Mark Gengaro, welcomed Kobe and Teddy. These new dogs will be wrangled by Paula Raygoza and Jessica Tremble.



The BOE maintenance team front left: David Reeves, Javier Obregon, Stefano Alberga, Mo Capaci, Ed Rakitin, Cordero Law. Second row: Flavio Jimenez, George Balkjy, Eddie Maldonado, George Grosz, Ramon Ribot, Andy Diekhaus. Rear: Emilio Vega, Oligert Macolli, Len Romano, George Adorno, Aladdin Karce, Gaston Orlando, Daniel Kasten, Mike Klingler.



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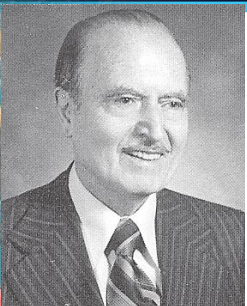
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For the Sept. 13 celebration of the Boys Club pool, meet namesake Nicholas Martini, his nephew Bill, and at right, Gloria and Bill Martini, with daughter Marissa and grandson Cameron.



Boys Club's Aquatics leaders: Nadia Stavko, Scott Nerotto, Anna Abakumova. B&G Club Director Gabe Blau. At right, Ivo Rodrigues of New Trimble Auto Body, who refurbished and donated three vehicles to veterans and a city service for the third year.



Clifton's 9/11 memorial service, set among nearly 2,300 American flags, remembered, among the many, Port Authority Officer John P. Skala.



The Sept. 15 Athenia Street Fair was staged in memory of organizer Valerie Grabowski, who passed on May 28.

The Sept. 8 Boys & Girls Club Car Show is one big Mustang reunion. Held in the parking lot of Summit Health on Broad St., 6,000 visitors strolled the grounds on the sunny day, including Mike Skala, pictured center, and his friends and family.



The ribbon cutting of Agamie's Deli on Market St. was on Sept. 27 with owners CJ and Malinda Liguori (behind their 2-year-old son AJ) celebrating their second year of ownership. More than 35 people attended the celebration.



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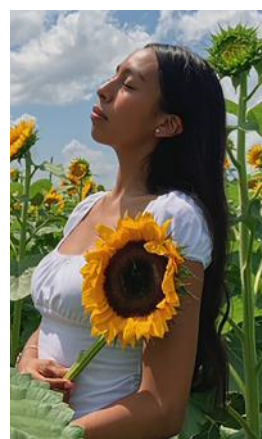




Clifton's Annual Halloween Parade & HarvestFest was Oct. 27. Hundreds of costumed kids, families, adults and animals marched along Van Houten to City Hall where Clifton Rec offered dozens of inexpensive family activities. There were also vendors and apple pie contestants. Earlier in the month, Clifton Merchant wrote a follow-up piece on the former Black Prince Distillery redevelopment project after a surprise online bidding Sept. 24. Another city landmark had far better news — Grand Saloon, without the “e”, held its grand reopening Oct. 30. Maria Dokum celebrated five decades—50 years— of employment at the ShopRite Cuellar Family Markets on Paulison Ave.



Some Clifton Arts Center leaders, from left, Tom Dzubina, Kim Oeffler, Michael Gabriele, Mike Bertelli, Sharon Koribanics, Joan Sanford, Barbara Novak, Amie and Joseph Kolodziej, Roxanne Cammilleri, Wes Krygsman and Kathleen Kellaigh.



That's Mike Bertelli looking up at the Spartacus bust created by Reuben Kadish. Denisse Rodriguez has found more than one way to provide healing, using the power of music, nature and words. The Made In Clifton 18-piece big band, One More Once, performed at the Clifton Arts Center and had folks dancing. Cliftonites in the band, from left: Timothy Hayward, CCMS Band Director, John Rivas, CHS 2022, Joe Verderese, CHS 1999, Glen Lebitsch and Julie Krygsman, CHS 2001, who helped pull the performance together.



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*Churchill Drive Oct. 5 block party where neighbors kicked things up as the sun was setting.*

*Boy Scout Troop 21 all-you-can-eat spaghetti fundraiser was on Oct. 13 at St. Philip auditorium.*



*On Oct. 26, captains Richie Hanle from DePaul and Aaron Miller from CHS battle on the pitch at Passaic Valley High School. Final score Clifton 6-1.*

*We first met Chris Mariano in 2010 when he was part of the Clifton-based boy band O>Matics. These days he is a lounge singer with a comedy act entitled the Peppermint Kaleidoscope Sound Company with a weekly gig at the Foreign Objects Beer Company in Monroe, NY.*



*Featured in our pages... Maria Dokum, Martin Pfefferkorn, Rulan Yassin, Thomas Charsky, Michael Solomon, Brian Coleman.*



*Brothers Andrew and Joel DeMicco dropped a letter and cut the ribbon on Oct. 30 to open the Grand Saloon on Van Houten Ave.*



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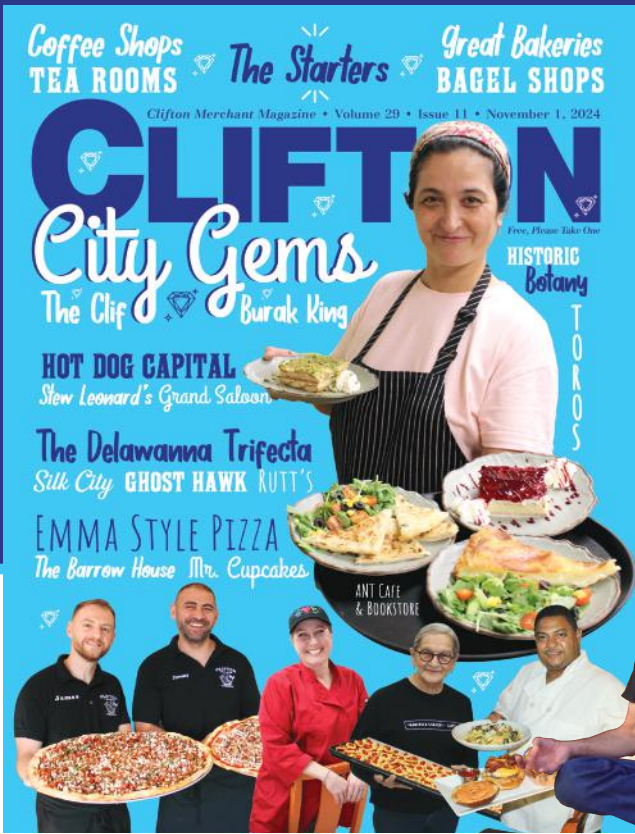
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November's magazine took readers on a culinary tour — starting with the Delawanna trifecta, with a bite and a drink at Rutt's Hut, Silk City Distillery, and Ghost Hawk Brewery. From there we took a lengthy gastro tour of other neighborhoods such as Botany Village (Polmart Pierogie) and Lakeview (Lakeview Bakery). We also caught up with residents who have formed second families in local eateries, among them The Clif's loyalists and the Tuesday and Friday Breakfast Club who meet at George's Coffee Shop and Love of Grub.



The Clif's late spiritual leader Skip Kazer, left, and current owners Anthony and Alex Barone with Dean Paccioretti, Brian Eromenok and Ron Gumann.



We're the Hot Dog Capital, agree John Huseyin holding deep-fried crullers and Peter Doris with two-all-the-way at the New Corral. Rebecca Swiatkowski and Lyubomyr Vovk at Polmart Deli in Botany Village. Mukrem Kamber at his well-stocked store and restaurant on Parker Ave., Burek King.



Clifton Village owners James Koka and Jimmy Zenelaj (missing is Genti Shaololli), Market Street's Francesca's Cristina Melchiori, and owner Paula Cotic. Patrons at the Chocolate House in Richfield Center and Lynn and Frank Krause at Mario's.





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US Army Michael Pizzimenti and USN Master Chief Carl Bowman and Clifton Veteran Parade Marshal Paul DiGaetano. At right, the announcer for the parade, Joe Imperato.



At left, Dan Shackil had two goals in 2024: break the Cans for Dan collection record and put in the work to achieve a healthier, happier Dan. Shackil made strides toward both goals. Speaking with us for November, Shackil said, “You’ve got to start somewhere” — and watch him go! Shackil lost 87 lbs. in four months and collected 2,771 donated items, including the whole pallet of turkeys that each weighed in at 20 pounds.



Clifton voted for city, county, and state candidates on Nov. 5. Passaic County Commissioner victors were Democratic Cassandra Lazzara, John Bartlett, and Rodney De Vore. Sheriff Democratic candidate Thomas Adamo won to complete Richard Berdrik’s term. Democratic Nellie Pou won the 9th District seat in the House of Representatives and Democratic Andy Kim won the U.S. Senate.



Hundreds, including Carol Loden’s family, filled empty bowls and supported Clifton’s food pantry, St. Peter’s Haven. The 2nd Annual Empty Bowls event was Nov. 8 at Athenia Veterans Post. Patrons took home a handcrafted ceramic bowl after enjoying a meal and supporting their neighbors. Local eateries and pottery handcrafters Emma Tabachnick, Groundhog Blues, Irene Tsakiris, and the Immaculate Heart Academy/National Art Honor Society made it all possible. Pictured, Carol Loden, center, with daughters Sara Jack and Helene Sonnema and grandsons Owen Jack and Jake Sonnema.

**Board of Education:**

Lucy Danny .....11,891  
 Alan Paris .....11,879  
 Judith Bassford.....9,339  
 Alias Ragsdale .....8,558  
 Cameron Hebron ....5,593

**Council Special Election:**

Chris D’Amato .....8,833  
 Richard Mejia.....5,903  
 George Silva.....5,105  
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The Clifton Jewish Center on Delaware Ave. closed on Dec. 31 after 81 years of serving the conservative, egalitarian Jewish community. As parting gifts, congregants gave \$3,600 each to Clifton PBA 36, Clifton FMBA 21, St. Peter's Haven and the Power of One. Also closing was DeLuxe Cleaners after 94 years in Downtown Clifton. Brothers Stephen and Mike Corbo, below, continued selling their inventory ahead of their February or March closure after five generations and 106 years of business.



Our December magazine shared the history of Corbo Jewelers in Styertowne Shopping Center. Brothers Stephen and Mike will be there until they sell all their merchandise.



Sarah Lombardo, 97 years young, can spot a Cliftonite a mile away. So it's no surprise that the resident of The Delaney of Bridgewater ended up connecting with Alex Lopez, the Food & Beverage Director there. "It felt like we knew each other without knowing each other." said Lopez, CHS 2005.



Victor Campolattaro knows Santa and makes things happen. Just ask Ashley and Bartek Polowniak. As their family sat for their annual Christmas Eve dinner, Victor arranged for the 54th annual Santa tour and his entourage to stop at 66 Van Breeman Dr. and help the couple enjoy a gender reveal with a pink smoke bomb ahead of their June 21 due date.





The Board of Rec judged its Annual Holiday Door Decorating contest the week of Dec. 9-13. This year's winners included: Luczan Family (Santa's Favorite), Winkler Family (Most Retro), Deribin Family (Best Craftsmanship), Alicea Family (Best Winter Theme), Labriola Family (Most Traditional), Denizac Family (Most Cheerful), Popowich Family (Best Holiday Message), Zhitnick Family (Old Fashioned Christmas), Scorziello Family (Most Environmentally Friendly), and Barrett Family (Best Holiday Classic). Grand prize winners received a trophy, ribbon, gift certificates for dinner and more.



The new Mustang Strength and Conditioning facility at Clifton Schools Stadium opened on April 11. Coach Ralph Cinque said the Fighting Mustangs use the facility year-round as they prepare for the 2025 season.

Former city councilman, commissioner, and past president of the Board of Education, Matt Ward, was honored for outstanding service with the Hudson-Essex-Passaic Soil Conservation District. Ward joined the HEP District in 1986 and is chair of the five-person volunteer board. He is pictured with Janet Rekesius and Scott Howard.





**Deborah Hoffman** retired as Passaic County’s Director for the Division of Economic Development on Dec. 31. She worked closely with members of the county’s business community for over 24 years and launched the annual Passaic County Film Festival.



**Hundreds of volunteers and contributors** make the holidays brighter for our troops serving overseas. Clifton Cares has sent over 13,100 packages, and ongoing generosity with monetary donations makes postage possible. Make checks payable to Clifton Cares Inc. and mail to Clifton Cares Inc., 900 Clifton Ave., Clifton, NJ 07013.

**Corrado’s retail area** between Main and Getty Aves., will shrink in 2025. Architect Gerald Held outlined the proposal to move Planet Fitness, currently situated about 500 ft. away, onto Corrado’s property. Space will be made for the fitness center and approximately 10,000 sq-ft. will be added to the building over an existing parking area, offering more storage and warehousing. Site engineer Bruce Rigg also spoke at the Dec. 4 Zoning Board meeting about driveways, loading docks, and parking requirements.



*In 2004, the second generation owners Jerry, Peter and Joey Corrado. At left, the founder James Corrado.*

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# Public Health Pride

By Ariana Puzzo

**It was a normal world when Kasey Molner** began her public health journey. Then, COVID-19 hit.

Molner, 26, already planned on going into nursing or some sector of the medical field. She was undecided for her first three years at Montclair State until deciding in her junior year to major in Public Health.

At the time, the nursing program was relatively new and they weren't accepting upperclassmen. But she was instructed to look into a Public Health degree and, from there, she'd be able to do an accelerated nursing program after graduating in 2021.

"I ended up falling in love with public health and staying with it," said Molner. "[Health Officer] John Biegel was one of my professors for a public health course."

"I showed up wearing a Clifton sweatshirt one day, and he and I started talking," she continued. "He said that he would definitely take me on as an intern. So in January of 2021, I interned right as the Health Department was doing the [COVID-19 vaccination] clinics."

It was trial by fire for the Delawanna native and the other workers and volunteers who had boots on the ground. Molner described the busyness as ideal for her, because she

*At a rabies clinic, some of the Clifton Health team: John E. Biegel, Toyin Gayle Sutherland, Dr. Edward Unay Jr., Dr. Edward Unay Sr., Victoria Kaufman, Christopher Peltyszyn, Jennifer Terwilliger, Steel Leon, Lauren Campolattaro, Jennifer Kidd, Alyssa Torres, Melissa Payne, Kasey Molner, Cody Davis.*

isn't someone who likes to sit still, and said she "fell right into place."

All of the people working around her meant that Molner could get up close and personal with residents while also developing relationships with higher-ups across different departments. It included getting to know who's who in the school system, the DPW, and the Police and Fire Departments.

Molner interned from January to May of 2021 as part of Health Projects Coordinator Jennifer Kidd's logistics team. In July of 2021, she was brought on part time as the COVID Generalist. She became full time the following July and her title now is Infectious Disease Preparedness Generalist.

"I made amazing connections with so many other partners that we work with [while I interned]," said Molner. "I was getting myself established in the city as someone who would eventually be working in the Health Department."



## Swiss Army Knife

It wasn't exactly a risk bringing on Molner, but she still proves herself every day on the job.

Molner is a lifelong resident who attended School 8, CCMS, and graduated CHS with the Class of 2016. She's the daughter of Dennis Molner and Maria Cartagena-Molner. Dennis has worked part time as a Project Consultant at the Recreation Department since 2023.

Grandmother, Ramona Cartagena, is fluent in Spanish and volunteers her language skills to help the Health Department communicate with residents. Her uncle, Michael Molner, helps to maintain our city's parks and serves on the Board of Adjustment.

"Kasey truly is a special person. Clifton — and I know I am — is lucky to have her, and that goes back to her family," said Biegel. "Her dad and uncle's ... work ethic rubbed off on her. They're an amazing family."

Biegel saw great potential in her early on and describes Molner as the "Swiss army knife of the Health Department." Aside from the work that she does within her job's normal parameters, she is responsible for the Health Department's social media, updating the Human Services page on the city's website, and she is often working closely with Lead Animal Control Officer Steel Leon and his team.

For all the praise that she receives from Biegel — Molner expresses her own admiration for him.

"Without John Biegel, I wouldn't be where I am today,"



*Kasey with mother Maria Cartagena-Molner, who passed away in August of 2021, and father Dennis.*

said Molner, matter-of-factly. "When I met him, he was the right person at the right time, for sure."

Molner recounted how she met Biegel when mother Maria was diagnosed with cancer in 2019. She noted how he helped her through that and, even after Maria passed in August of 2021, he continued that support.



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## Public Health Pride

“He was the most supportive person throughout that process for me,” she said. “It made it easier for me to do my job, because he was so understanding ... both personally and professionally.”

That means everything to Biegel, who emphasized they’re all family in the Health Department.

“When people hurt, we all hurt. If I can, I will always be there for her,” he added. “I can relate to Kasey, because my mother died when I was at a young age too. I know the hurt and the pain. It unfortunately happened to one of the other employees, so we have that special [connection].”

Molner named Kidd as another one of her mentors, as well as Environmental Services Hazmat Coordinator/REHS Jennifer Terwilliger. The women, Molner said, taught her that working in the public health field is more than sitting down to read paperwork or do research.

“It’s boots on the ground and getting to know the residents that you live with,” said Molner. “It’s about building partnerships with the different city organizations and divisions we work with. We can’t do our jobs [without them].”

### Doing What She Loves

The job is always engaging — and it often involves Molner making sure that the public receives crucial services.

She has a role in the Health Department’s educational programs, such as going into the schools for handwashing and vaping presentations. Molner assists with scheduling events at the Botany Village Satellite Office, 207 Parker Ave., which sees to it that traditionally underserved residents receive sometimes life-saving screenings and health exams.

“We have developed a good relationship with residents down there [over the past three years],” said Molner. “They see and trust us. It allows them to get the services that they need.”

Molner works closely with colleagues Ashley Peralta, another generalist who runs clinics out of the Satellite Office, and Local Health Outreach Coordinator Kimberly Finkler. Molner and Finkler work closely to ensure the success of the annual Senior Barbecue.

The second annual event was held in September — with over 250 seniors who mingled while learning what Health Department services may apply to them. It’s an event that Molner never would have imagined coordinating when she was in college.

“One of the amazing things with the Department and John is that he kind of pushes you out of your comfort



*Kasey with John Biegel and Jennifer Terwilliger.*

zone. Enough to show you that you can do amazing things even though you may think you can’t,” said Molner. “It’s a good thing to have a boss who is so supportive in allowing you to figure out what to do and how to do it.”

Which is why she doesn’t see herself making a job change. Though, she added that she doesn’t like to think too far ahead into the future.

“Planning is great, but life goes the way that it wants to go,” she said. “Right now, I’m in a great place with a great boss and great coworkers. I’m doing what I love and helping residents in the town I live in. I don’t see myself going anywhere any time soon.”

And if you thought public health was her only interest, you’d be mistaken. Molner is a nature lover and is gradually getting back into nature photography. She can sometimes be spotted around Garret Mountain Reservation or at Ramapo Valley County Reservation.

### Still a Marching Mustang

When she isn’t there, follow the music. Molner is the Majorette/Color Guard Advisor Assistant Director for the Marching Mustangs. She assumed the role just two years after she graduated as a trumpeter. She was a quartermaster and rank sergeant.

“It’s definitely a strange experience. It took me a minute to adjust [to instructing some kids that I went to school with],” said Molner. “It’s an interesting learning curve.”

*The Boys & Girls Club will honor the Clifton Health Department and the Fette family on April 3. Contact Maureen Cameron for tickets or to become a sponsor. Write to [mccameron@bgcclifton.org](mailto:mccameron@bgcclifton.org) or call 973-773-0966 x 144 for details.*



*Feliz Año Nuevo • Happy New Year*

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# Signing On TO STOP Gun Violence

By Ariana Puzzo

Even though she remained apolitical throughout the day, there's one message that JoAnne MacBeth conveyed to voters at the polls on Nov. 5.

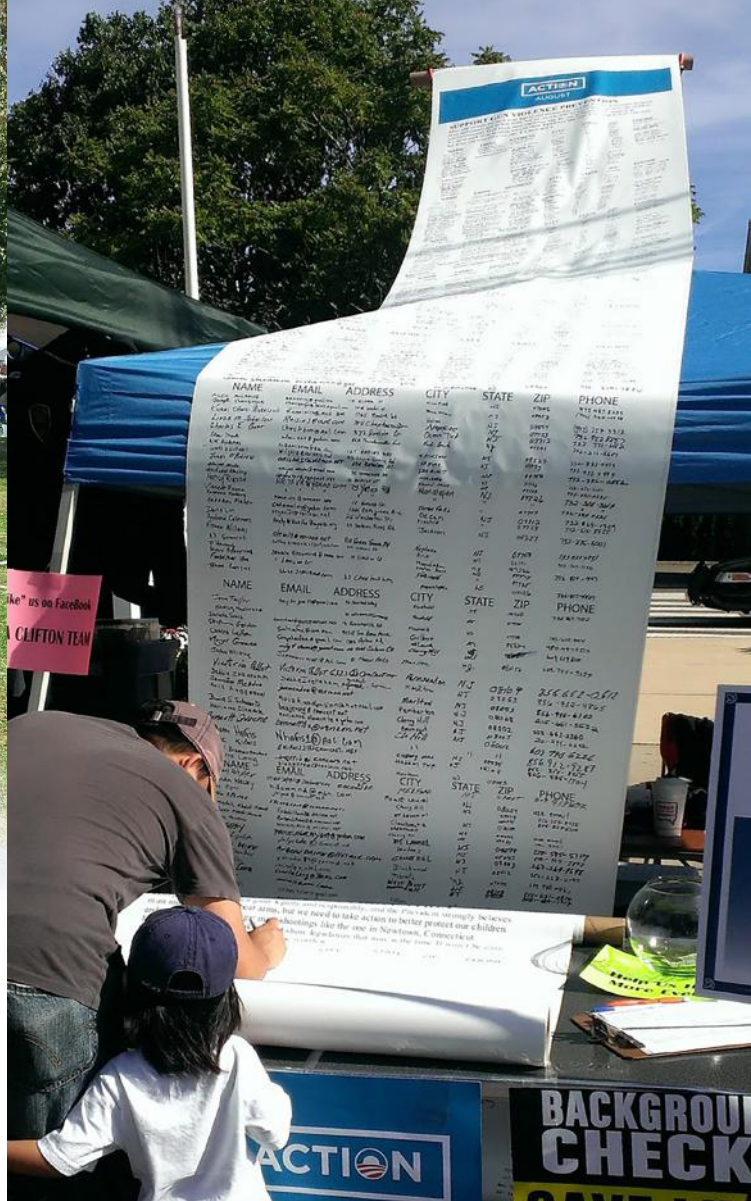
"With the young people on the line, I kept telling them to go save the world," said MacBeth.

MacBeth (CHS 1976) was busy as a poll worker leading up to the 2024 Election and on Election Day. During early voting, she was placed in Hawthorne and saw what she described as a strong turnout that impressed her.

"I always think that more voting is good, whether it turns out in your favor or not," she said. "That is the voice of the American people. Wrong or right — that is the American voice."

Fast-forward to Election Day and you might have seen her in her neighborhood of Ward 1, District 2. She was stationed at School 8, located at 41 Oak St., where the polls remained significantly active from 6 am through 7:30 pm.

"We didn't have any less than 10 people. Sometimes we had as many as 60 people on the line," said MacBeth. "I am really fast doing this electronic check-in stuff and couldn't get the line down. Not all day, not one bit. It would go down to 10 people, then right back up to 60."



Secure voting is one of several issues that matters to MacBeth. No stranger to elevating an important cause or to raising her voice, MacBeth has championed gun violence prevention efforts for the past 12 years. Her advocacy work took hold after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting on Dec. 14, 2012.

"The thought of those little children torn apart by those bullets ... is what started it for me," said MacBeth. "I had already been working with the Clifton Democrats. They worked to elect people, but they were not doing anything about issues. They didn't even discuss issues at meetings."

So MacBeth decided to hold vigils. Down in Delawanna, there was a monthly vigil in the park and MacBeth's like-minded friends who "understood what was going on" got involved to help make signs. They would gather monthly on the anniversary of the shooting. What started as only a few signs transformed into making signs with each name of the child who was killed.

But MacBeth wanted to extend her efforts further. By





*In 2013, Clifton residents gathered for monthly vigils to remember the Sandy Hook victims.*

mid-2013, she had called into Thom Hartmann’s radio show and embraced his notion of: “Activism begins with you, Democracy begins with you, get out there, get active! Tag, you’re it.”

### Taking the Next Steps

That’s when she started getting more attention and she connected with Organizing for Action, a non-profit founded after President Barack Obama’s reelection that sought to mobilize supporters in favor of Obama’s legislative priorities. The issues covered included gun violence, as well as climate change, immigration reform, and women’s reproductive freedom.

MacBeth knew that she couldn’t get involved in all four issues without diluting each cause. She put her focus on gun violence and, eventually, decided to create a petition calling for support of gun violence prevention.

“I had a friend at the time ... who had a sign business,” said MacBeth. “He would canvas signs. So I said, ‘What if we made a petition that’s big?’”

A paper petition was out of the question — at 20-feet tall, it would immediately rip apart. They went the vinyl route, and she took it on a bus tour to collect signatures. She even brought it to the Van Houten Ave. Street Fair, borrowing tents and ladders to make the display

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work.

“It was very successful,” she recalled “The girls from Moms Demand Action couldn’t believe that I had lines of people waiting to sign.”

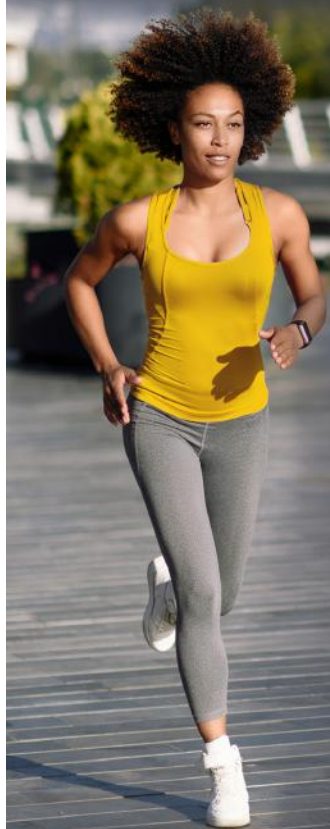
MacBeth continued with the petition for a while, ultimately gathering 300 to 500 signatures per petition across six petitions and speaking at the Legislature in Trenton. Although OFA came to an end once Obama left office, it opened the door to other opportunities. Ones that would help her get inside the room versus being on the outside of the decision-makers.

Since 2018, MacBeth has served as a Democratic representative of the Members of the County Committee in Pas-



*JoAnne MacBeth, at center, with Gabby Giffords and Senator Mark Kelly in 2016.*

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saic County. The County Committee includes Republicans and Democrats — and MacBeth noted that her district is the biggest in all of Clifton.

“Clifton has some severe issues,” she said. MacBeth’s proposal includes getting a charter study done to examine the way that things are done in Clifton versus how surrounding towns do these same things. “We’re not a tiny Mayberry town,” she continued. “We need citizens to vote on it — and to get it to the citizens, we need a petition.”

“It would take 8,000 signatures, or four City Council members to say, ‘Yes,’” said MacBeth. “That’s our heavy lift.”

Pushing forward and staying active is how MacBeth fulfills herself. Not only during a major election year, but especially when the outcome isn’t what she sought.

“The despair that everyone felt the day after the election? I feel that this is a way of dealing with that despair,” she said. “If I sit around and say, ‘Woe is me’, then nothing gets done.”

“If you’re working on something, you’re working toward a goal,” added MacBeth. “You’re working toward something better. That’s what makes it better for me.”





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# NJEDDA's Furry Ambassadors

By Ariana Puzzo



**Tina Schvejda has always loved dogs** — but especially the sassy, smart ones.

Enter Heidi von Luftiz Weisse, the therapy dog that not only captured Schvejda's heart but those who work and learn at the North Jersey Elks Developmental Disabilities Agency. Schvejda, who bought Heidi from a breeder in 2012, was looking for a long-haired German Shepherd to train.

It led her to a breeder in Rochester, NY that said Heidi's father and some siblings from different litters were trained as therapy dogs. The softer genetic line made the choice easy. "There are some cute dogs out there but man, you could probably try to teach them until you're blue in the face," laughed Schvejda. "Some dogs might be sassy, but I always take smart ones."

Heidi served as a therapy dog for NJEDDA from 2013 until 2023, retiring a few weeks before her passing. Schvejda is training a long-haired German Shepherd, Greta von Luftiz Weisse, to follow in her "big sister's" footsteps.

Greta was eight months old in mid-December. She comes from the same breeder, but different parents, and Schvejda has "very special high hopes" for her. "I hope to continue the legacy of having German Shepherds be good ambassadors," said Schvejda, 70, "and not just known as being aggressive."

## More Than A Playmate

It's not enough to want a therapy dog. Schvejda thoroughly trained Heidi and Greta, explaining how there's a 13-point test. Greta will take the test at age 1 like Heidi did. The test is conducted by Therapy Dogs International.

Heidi aced it when she was one year old to the day, making her the youngest ever to graduate from TDI. While training her, Schvejda took Heidi, who was wearing a harness, to a local North Haledon voting area. That's where she met a woman who told Schvejda about NJEDDA.

"It was exactly what I wanted. I wanted to get involved with special needs kids," said Schvejda. "I went down to Clifton and they were thrilled that I wanted to make [visiting] a regular thing."

It wasn't the first time that Schvejda spent time with special needs kids. Her parents, William and Ruth Morewood, were friends with someone whose son had Down Syndrome. Another good friend had cerebral palsy. As a teenager, Schvejda volunteered at a summer camp for children with special needs.

When she and Heidi connected to NJEDDA, 1481 Main Ave., they became regular fixtures on Tuesday mornings. The duo visited the high school and grammar school, but eventually just visited the little ones so as not to overwhelm Heidi. Find NJEDDA's services at [njedda.org](http://njedda.org).



At Elementary Principal Marianne Idenden’s guidance, Schvejda sat down with a team including a speech, physical, and occupational therapist to discuss Heidi’s role with the students.

“She was not there for their entertainment,” explained Schvejda. “There was a child who had to exercise their fine motor skills by opening and closing a hand. That’s not much fun when you’re doing repetitions of 10. But what if, instead, they played ball with the dog?”

Children could call Heidi to get her attention, which Schvejda saw as good for them. They also played adapted versions of hide-and-seek, where Heidi looked for a small treat that a child hid.

Other times, children in wheelchairs would hold up a bar and instruct Heidi to jump over it or through a hoop. Sometimes just greeting her would elicit positive responses.

“People might ask, ‘What’s the big moment with her?’” said Schvejda. “For some special needs kids, it might be extending an arm fully and opening their fingers up to just be able to pet a dog. We’re not looking for ‘da-da-da-da!’ but rather what would be appropriate for children.”

### Unconditional Love

Heidi’s visits weren’t just therapy and social opportunities. They bordered on life-saving.

One time, Heidi did a one-on-one session with a child during a break. The child was tossing Heidi the ball when suddenly Heidi dropped it and ran from the room and down the hall.

It was unprecedented. Schvejda coaxed Heidi back into the room, only for her to dash again.

“Heidi ran to the same little boy who was having a seizure,” said Schvejda. “I could never have taught her something like that.”

“She knew what was going on before he had the seizure and wouldn’t leave,” she continued. “It lasted for maybe 10 seconds, but she stayed with him the entire time until feeling he was good.”

Heidi was between 10 and 11 years old when she started to slow down. Idenden proposed that she could return in the fall

to have children read to her in the library.

Heidi retired in June of 2023 and passed away a few weeks later.

Heidi’s titles included AKC companion dog, AKC canine good citizen, Therapy Dog international Ambassador, and she received AKC national recognition of dogs in the service to mankind. Heidi always placed first or second for obedience.

Schvejda expressed gratitude for her husband, Dennis, who is “very supportive” of her desire to have a German Shepherd that she trains for these purposes.

“I am truly blessed to have been part of Heidi’s incredible life,” she said. “Her service and unconditional love for all human beings was what she lived for.”

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# Patient, Healer, Advocate

By Ariana Puzzo

**Everyone deserves an advocate.** And, sometimes, you're your own best champion.

Retired CCMS teacher Kim (Carline) Mouzon is still advocating for others. Mouzon, who retired last June after 22 years in Clifton and 32 years of teaching, is a volunteer in Pathways Women's Cancer Teaching Project through The Connection.

The Connection is a non-profit, women-led organization. It offers programs and services, like Pathways since 1994, where breast and gynecological cancer survivors are Patient Educators.

The mission is to educate those training to be medical professionals about the needs of women with cancer. Patient Educators strive to enhance patient-centered humanistic healthcare while gaining a supportive network.

"Hearing the other survivors' stories, the ways that they were told about their diagnoses is not always super compassionate," said Mouzon, who joined two years ago. "I make sure to tell the students, 'It may be your hundredth double mastectomy, but it's my first.'"

Mouzon emphasized the importance of patient self-advocacy. She recounted how one survivor requested that the nurses enter her room before her procedure. "She said, 'I want them to see me; not laying down but to know me as a person,'" said Mouzon. "Not as a cancer."

## Get Checked

Survivors are often told that first-hand stories are better than what you might read in a textbook. "It's live. It's emotional," said Mouzon. "I always say, 'Don't stand above me. Sit next to me and make eye contact.'"

Mouzon has long-championed raising awareness about cancer and calling on Clifton's ongoing generosity to support that cause. From 2006 to 2024, she led CCMS' annual Cut-a-thon — only pausing for the coronavirus pandemic and in 2023.

In Mouzon's final year, Clifton produced 1,000 inches of hair for Children With Hair Loss. For Clifton Merchant's October 2023 edition, Mouzon spoke about how the Clifton Public School District was reaching out to the city about Rainbows of Hope at St. Joseph's Health.

The hospital offers free screenings to detect the existence or warning signs of breast, cervical, colorectal, and prostate cancer. Screenings are available to help better serve Pas-



*Darryl and Kim (Carline) Mouzon.*

saic County women 21 and older and men 45 and older who are uninsured, low income, or undocumented. Call to make an appointment at 973-754-3646 or 973-754-2705. St. Joseph's University Medical Center provides bilingual patient navigators who speak Spanish and Arabic.

"I know some people never go and think, 'I feel fine' ... but I was fine," said Mouzon. "I was diagnosed when I felt perfectly fine."

After a seemingly routine mammogram and ultrasound in 2022, Mouzon received a call asking her to return for a follow-up biopsy. The biopsy showed cancer. Two surgeries followed.

"I am so happy that I even journaled when I was in the hospital," said Mouzon. "Nurse Michael [at Morristown Medical Center] took such good care of me. My first note after my surgery was that I had somebody at my side to say that it was okay."

## Helping and Healing

Mouzon was visiting Morristown Memorial when she asked if there were programs to join as a peer-support volunteer.

After learning about Pathways' program in Summit, she began training by sitting in on one of the sessions. Sessions are generally virtual over Zoom. A panel with students and survivors meets from 9:30-11 am.



Patient Educators tell students about the project and about three survivors share their journey of how they were told about their diagnosis to where they are now. Breakout sessions for Q&As let two or three students speak directly with survivors. “I let them know that I’m free to answer anything,” said Mouzon.

One memorable moment was when a medical student told her that they were thinking about pursuing a career in oncology but thought it might be too fresh due to a family history. That changed after the breakout session. For anyone in Clifton in need of support, connect with Mouzon via email at mouzonkim@gmail.com.

Those interested in becoming a Patient Educator or would like educators to meet with students or residents at their healthcare institution or university should contact Pathways Director Lesley Andrews at Lesley.andrews@theconnectiononline.org.

“Kim is such an inspiration, because she turned her experience into something positive by helping so many other women and influencing students of healthcare and doctors to become more empathetic caregivers,” said Pathways Director Lesley Andrews. “She talks about her journey so eloquently and is so heartfelt.”

### Lasting Connections

Andrews got involved with Pathways in 2003 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She joined a support

group for women under 40 and, in 2004, the new Pathways Women’s Cancer Teaching Project at Overlook Medical Center. She became the Project Manager in 2008 and has served as Director since 2015.

There are approximately 40 breast or gynecological cancer survivors involved in the Project.

“We are always eager to welcome more breast and gynecological cancer survivors who are willing to share their stories and be open,” said Andrews.

Andrews acknowledged how Mouzon’s former students made comfort bags and breast cancer magnets to distribute to other survivors and encourage early detection. Mouzon participated in the Pathways Sister Strong Fitness Program also “to become stronger and more empowered.”

The fitness program offers free professional one-on-one training for female cancer survivors. Call 908-273-4242 ext. 154 to register for sessions, held at 79 Maple St., Summit. More info: TheConnectionOnline.org.

“Kim is a very special lady,” said Andrews. “We are lucky to have her.” Mouzon credited everyone involved in making the resources available and the women who make the connections possible.

“I’m the new kid on the block,” said Mouzon. “Some of the women are 20 to 30 years out from their cancer diagnosis.” Some of the cancer survivors have recurrences.

“They’re just so strong,” said Mouzon. “I’m blessed to have found Lesley and Pathways.”

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# MUSTANG SPORTS



Senior 165-pound wrestler Joe Geleta, with his father, head coach Dan Geleta, was Most Outstanding Wrestler of the Dec. 22 Mustang Invitational. Junior Volodymyr Kozliuk is ranked third in the state, clearing 6' 6" in the high jump indoor competition on Dec. 21. Trevor Rascher (left) and Ryan Montana have pushed Clifton United ice hockey to a 6-1 start to the 2024-25 season.

**Clifton United may play on ice,** but it is as hot as any team representing CHS. The co-op with Cedar Grove and Passaic Valley is off to the best start by any Clifton hockey team in recent memory, winning six of its first seven contests to begin 2024-25. The last time a Clifton team won at least five of its first eight outings was 2016-17.

"I expected to compete with everybody on our schedule," said head coach Mike Santosuosso. "I know the guys are capable of [a 6-1 start]. I think it has showed what we are capable of when we are at our best, but we still have a long season ahead of us."

Trevor Rascher, a junior forward from Clifton, has been marvelous, totaling 17 points during the month of December. Rascher exploded in United's Dec. 6 season-opening 13-1 win over Vernon, recording a hat trick and assisting on two other goals.

Clifton United head coach Mike Santosuosso purposely aimed to keep Rascher and forward Ryan Montana of Cedar Grove on separate lines, and the strategy has paid off. Montana, too, used a huge opening day performance (4 G, 4 A, 8 total points) to ignite a productive start to the winter. He leads the team with 19 points as of Dec. 31.

United closed out 2024 with a 4-3 road win over Madison (2-7) in which Montana recorded his 100th career point, rallying from an early 2-0 deficit. Dodgers sophomore Lucas Gero and senior Chris Palawasta each scored

to put Madison up early, but it was the Montana show from there.

The junior assisted on a goal by his classmate, forward Eric Ring, to make it a one-goal game going into the third, and then nabbed two goals of his own in the final stanza. He found forward Leo Marzullo, another junior from Cedar Grove, for the game-winning goal with twelve-and-a-half minutes to play.

United kicks off 2025 on Jan. 3 hosting River Dell (1-5) (whom it beat, 4-3, on Dec. 21) before welcoming Pascack Valley/Park Ridge to Montclair State Ice on Jan. 10. The Bergen County co-op is 7-0 as of the turn of the calendar.

"I think we've got a really good opportunity to put ourselves in a good spot," Santosuosso said. "This is the part of the season that is going to be the most challenging and let us know where we are. But that is what our guys want."

## **Wrestling drops opener but wins home tourney**

Clifton wrestling suffered a disappointing setback in its Dec. 21 season opener but bounced back to win its own Mustang Invitational the next day.

The Mustangs were fired up for their dual match with Passaic County Tech to kick off the winter season but were defeated relatively handily by the host Bulldogs, 41-



23. They trailed 26-0 in the blink of an eye but started to rally with five consecutive wins.

The victories by senior 165-pounder Joe Geleta, junior 175-pounder Joe Dumeng, senior 190-pounder Nick Doktor, senior 215-pounder Justin Gaviria and senior 285-pounder Isaac Cazimoski cut the Mustang deficit to six, but Clifton's lightweight group struggled, dropping the 106-, 113- and 120-pound bouts.

"It was a big match for newcomers stepping into the lineup, and it didn't go the way they expected," said Mustangs head coach Dan Geleta. "But we knew PCTI would be really competitive because they returned 13 out of 14 starters. Our younger kids are going to need more mat time to see results that will favor our team."

It didn't take long to get on track, though, as Clifton won its own Mustang Invitational with 211 team points—far ahead of second-place Becton/Wood-Ridge's 165.5. Joe Geleta—the tourney's Most Outstanding Wrestler—defeated Becton/Wood-Ridge senior Javier Pelaez by pin in the 165-pound final. Doktor and Cazimoski defeated



a pair of Morristown seniors, Henry Daxton and Joseph Deleg, by 2-1 decision and pinfall, respectively.

### Kozliuk dominant early on

Junior Volodymyr Kozliuk didn't waste time bringing a title home for the Mustangs, taking first place in the high jump, with a jump of 6'4", at the season's first Garfield High School High Jump/Shot Put Invitational on Dec. 14.

Kozliuk's winning jump was five inches higher than the next best attempts. A week later, he outdid himself in the second edition of the Invitational in the Boilermakers' house, reaching a height of 6'6".

That was one day after he had PRed in the triple jump at the Paul Schwartz Invitational at Rockland Community College in Suffern, N.Y. with a 40' 1/4" effort. He finished 2024 with a 6'4" high jump at the Coach Glynn Holiday Invitational in Staten Island on Dec. 28.

"He is just jumping out of the building," said Clifton head coach Kareem West. "It is hard in your first meet to clear that height [that he did]. He has been on a roll."

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# Mustangs of the Month



*Nathan Capili, Keyla Sanchez, Violet Kasm, Anthony Ovalle.*

## Here are the **Mustangs of the Month** for January 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.

### **Nathan Capili – Freshman**

Nathan Capili enjoys Art and being creative while finding ways to help out others.

As one of the youngest Mustangs, he has channeled his passions by participating in Art Club with Ms. Cynthia Sauchelli and Stage Crew with Mr. Chuck Kushla.

Capili is thinking about joining the Clifton Volleyball team in the future and possibly “more clubs as the year progresses.” His favorite school subject is Math with Ms. Eftihia Kelso.

“I enjoy working with numbers and solving problems,” said Capili (CHS 2028). “It always satisfies me when I get the correct answer and when I understand the topic.”

He named his teacher as the most influential to him, because she has used her “great teaching skills” to help him “enjoy Math more.”

“I was never as good at Math until now, and I really appreciate it,” said Capili.

The freshman is most inspired by his friends and family. He appreciates how they always try to encourage him to do his best, especially during challenging times.

“They always comfort me when I have doubts about myself or when I don’t do the best on an assignment,” he said. “I am so thankful to have all of them be with me and support me.”

### **Keyla Sanchez – Sophomore**

Keyla Sanchez wants to make the most of her high school experience. The first step that she took toward making that possible was joining the Visual & Performing Arts Academy prior to starting ninth grade.

Sanchez (CHS 2027) also hopes to get into honor societies and wants to take the Bi-literacy Exam and try to do the Teacher Assistant Program in her senior year.

“Thankfully, this school offers the chance to advance in areas that I like, such as the arts, but I also work hard academically,” said Sanchez.

Since her freshman year, Sanchez has taken all honors classes and is now enrolled in APUSH. Her extracurriculars include her participating in the Fall Play, Spring Musical, MadCaps, Drama Club, and The Artists’ Hub.

She joined Key Club and Mustang Ambassadors this year and will join the STANJ Competition Team, a theater and performing competition.

“I think that my inspiration comes from the want to succeed and to make my family and friends proud,” said Sanchez. “A bunch of famous and successful people have to work hard to make it somewhere, so I can’t think of one singular person that has inspired me. The stories of triumph and lives filled with satisfaction are the ones that encourage me.”



## Violet Kasm – Junior

Learning new languages is one of Violet Kasm’s favorite things to do. “Growing up in a multicultural family and fluently speaking three languages,” explained Kasm (CHS 2026), “I learned that understanding the language is the first and most crucial step in understanding the culture.”

Kasm takes Spanish III at CHS and enjoys discovering more about cultural nuances that help her to understand native speakers.

Transferring in her junior year from a small school wasn’t easy, but Kasm wasn’t as intimidated as she thought would be the case. What she found was that her teachers genuinely cared and supported her.

“They not only prioritize my academic success but, more importantly, my overall wellbeing.”

Kasm learned how to read sheet music before she learned to read. She has spent her most formative years prioritizing piano practice and counts herself fortunate to receive a professional classical music education. She’s won national and regional competitions, while also performing at venues like Carnegie Hall and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

“I would like my career choice to be a reflection of who I am and what’s important to me,” said Kasm. “Attending college is a major part of my future. Some of the schools I aspire to get into [include] Columbia, UPenn, and NYU.”

## Anthony Ovalle – Senior

Anthony Ovalle’s start to high school looked different than the effort that he puts into his studies today. He recalled how he was often unmotivated and only aimed for the bare minimum passing grade.

“I was also struggling through a lot of mental battles, which also made it difficult for me to stay focused in school,” said Ovalle (CHS 2025). “I realized that I have the potential to do so much better than what I was putting out.”

Ovalle did not let that senior year realization discourage him from making a change before his graduation.

He added how he learned that it is “never too late to be the person you want to be. All it takes is hard work and dedication.”

The senior Mustang is a member of the Christian Students Association. He plans to try out for Outdoor Track and Volleyball in the spring. Science is his favorite classroom subject, because he enjoys learning how the world works and how people function.

Ovalle’s most influential teacher is science teacher Ms. Monica Youssef.

“During my sophomore year, I was very careless as a student and she was always there to make sure that I was on task,” said Ovalle. “She was very understanding and she was strict when she needed to be.”



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# Birthdays & Celebrations - January 2025



**Austin Blesing** turns 19 on Jan. 17. **Kyle Stone Osborne** is 19 on Jan. 19. **Cindy Hawrylko** is 34 Jan. 22. **Isabel Victoria Calvin** turns 10 on Jan 13.



**Alyssa Philhower & Becca Potocki** shared a birthday on Jan 1. **Vicky Petrovic** will party on Jan. 5. **Kevin Gorman** turns 67 on Jan. 29. And many birthday wishes to **Bob Sandri** who celebrates on Jan. 6. **Joan Murphy** turns 91 on Jan 7. She is seen above with husband **Gene**, grandsons **Nick** and **Joe** and son in law **Joe**.



Shaun LaGala ..... 1/1  
 Marek Rzasa ..... 1/1  
 Connie Zangara..... 1/1  
 Chrissy Cetinich..... 1/2  
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 Kristin Reilly ..... 1/2  
 Steven Hrina..... 1/3  
 Rosalie Konopinski..... 1/3

Ray Krenc ..... 1/3  
 Emily Zawicki ..... 1/3  
 James Dohm ..... 1/4  
 Rich Peterson ..... 1/4  
 Mohamad Bekheet..... 1/5  
 Missy Fazio..... 1/5  
 Alexander Ortiz..... 1/5  
 Jeremy Delaney ..... 1/6  
 Gay Eaclie..... 1/6

Amanda Curtiss..... 1/9  
 Ariana Hryckowian ..... 1/9  
 Joseph Perzely..... 1/9  
 Fatma Bekheet..... 1/10  
 Ronald Calo ..... 1/10  
 Michael Gorny..... 1/11  
 Katy Sokolik ..... 1/11  
 Nicole Unis..... 1/11  
 Megan Duffy..... 1/12





**Angely Sotomba** will celebrate her 13th birthday on Jan. 26.

- Daisy Colman..... 1/13
- Olivia Dohm..... 1/13
- Rob Generalli..... 1/14
- Joe Musleh ..... 1/14
- Ernie Rodrigues..... 1/14
- Mark Stuart ..... 1/14
- Kyle Santiago..... 1/15
- Susan Hernandez ..... 1/16
- Jennifer Montanile ..... 1/16
- Matthew Soprano..... 1/16
- Anna Tatarenko..... 1/17
- Kim Barilari..... 1/18
- Erica Pangilinan ..... 1/19
- Lindsay Dueben ..... 1/20
- Luke Falzo..... 1/20
- Payton Bogatch..... 1/21
- Douglas Ciallella ..... 1/21
- Daniel Shackil ..... 1/22
- Evelyn Montague..... 1/23
- Cheryl Vigh ..... 1/23
- Catherine Coloccia..... 1/24
- Greg Collucci..... 1/24

Send birthdays to  
tomhawrylkosr@gmail.com



Standing from left back: Alex, Junior & John  
Standing from left front: Mondo & Yahia

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| 5 Hawthorne Ave · Park Ridge<br>(201) 391-3333<br>M-F: 7am-5pm, Sat: until 4pm  | 25 Route 23 South · Riverdale<br>(973) 835-5666<br>M-F: 7am-5pm, Sat: until 4pm       |
| 60 Franklin Turnpike · Mahwah<br>(201) 529-5770<br>M-F: 7am-5pm, Sat: until 4pm | 23 Goffle Rd · Hawthorne<br>(973) 423-1700<br>M-F: 7am-5pm, Sat: until 4pm            |
| 1278 Broad St · Bloomfield<br>(973) 338-9292<br>M-F: 7am-5pm, Sat: until 4pm    |   |

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*While I had some problems with insurance coverage and my disability insurance has not yet kicked in, I am getting behind on the daily and monthly bills. That is why I am posting this appeal. I am in need of financial assistance.*

*If you could help out, please send whatever amount you can via Zelle to SSGbuonafina@yahoo.com. The money will be deposited in my friend Juan Bravo's account.*

**You can also help at GoFundMe using this link:**  
[gofund.me/939d8b7c](https://gofund.me/939d8b7c)

*From there, I will be able to catch up on what's past due and get ahead of the weekly and monthly bills coming in.*

*Oscar Buonafina with his kids Landon, Zayden and Liam. Not pictured is son Isaiah.*

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# Chocolate House



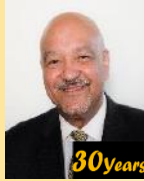




**46years**  
 Fred Spaelstra  
 Broker Associate



**20years**  
 Nancy Rodriguez  
 Sales Associate



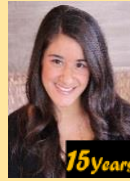
**30years**  
 Linton Gaines  
 Broker Associate



**15years**  
 Roselys Ramirez  
 Sales Associate



**44years**  
 David Kelley  
 Sales Associate

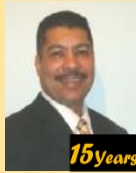


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 Patricia Elmahdy  
 Sales Associate



**15years**  
 Cesar Guzman  
 Sales Associate



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 Angela Cardenas  
 Sales Associate



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 Walter Porto  
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 Sales Associate



**15years**  
 Alberto Mesones Jr.  
 Sales Associate



**30years**  
 Gladys Mesones  
 Sales Associate



**8years**  
 Micah Francis  
 Sales Associate



**18years**  
 Sheila Esdaile  
 Sales Associate



**40years**  
 Wendell Maki  
 Broker Associate



**25years**  
 Juana Torres  
 Broker Associate



**25years**  
 Bobby Persaud  
 Sales Associate



**7years**  
 Angelica Saenz  
 Sales Associate



**SCAN ME**



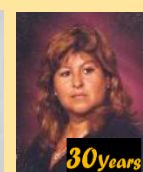
**5years**  
 Maribel Feliz  
 Sales Associate



**8years**  
 Raquel Familia  
 Sales Associate



**5years**  
 Denny Cruz  
 Sales Associate



**30years**  
 Nina Robayo  
 Sales Associate