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Watchung's Hometown Newspaper

NJ

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ISSUE 29 • MARCH 2015

## SOMERSET HILLS BUSINESS NETWORK MEETING

FRIDAY,  
MARCH 27  
8:00 AM

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## WATCHUNG TROOP 32 HONORS FIVE EAGLE SCOUTS

Submitted by Suzanne Stiles

On February 10, 2015, Watchung NJ Boy Scout Troop 32, of the Watchung Mountain District of the Patriots Path Council, honored five of its young men for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. For their projects, Brian Beckert restored part of St. Mary's Stony Hill cemetery, Timothy Carroll built a picnic table and benches for the Roselle NJ public library, Jeffrey Isaacs re-built the pavilion at Mobus Field in Watchung, Justin Scalera created a photographic history of Watchung for the Watchung Historical Museum, and Hunter Stiles built two eyeglass collection boxes for the local Knights of Columbus.

Watchung Mayor Stephen Pote addressed the troop and congratulated these young men.

Wayne Hanlon of the Knights of Columbus brought greetings for the men as well. Since the chartering in 1937, over 100 young men in Troop 32 have earned the rank of Eagle Scout.



(above) Eagle Scouts Brian Beckert, Tim Carroll, Jeffrey Isaacs, Justin Scalera and Hunter Stiles Photo Credit: Sarah Isaacs

## PACK 32 RACES TO THE FINISH IN PINWOOD DERBY!

The Watchung Cub Scouts held their annual Pinewood Derby on Friday, February 20th. Over 30 scouts (and a few siblings) entered a car that, until as recently as the night before, had been a simple block of wood. Supportive families helped the boys design, shape, and decorate their creations. The All-Purpose Room at Bayberry School was filled with excitement as scouts, parents, siblings, friends, and extended family members cheered on their favorites. The Cub Scouts showed great sportsmanship even though each one was hoping to claim the title as fastest car in their den. In the end, the awards went to:

Tiger Den: 1st - River Cale, 2nd - Brais Garcia Sanles

Wolf Den: 1st - Aiden Calabrese, 2nd - Thomas Schaefer, 3rd - Nolan Weber

Bear Den, Group A: 1st - Vincent Mancini, 2nd - Eliaz Michel, 3rd - Gavin Cort

Bear Den, Group B: 1st - Cristopher Zwirko, 2nd - Dean Smith, 3rd - Nathaniel Pistorius

Webelos Den: 1st - Ethan Weber, 2nd - Liam Reddish, 3rd - Jason Ng

Arrow of Light Den: 1st - John Santucci, 2nd - Wil Kinder, 3rd - Dariush Modaressi

Pinewood Derby Cup (fastest in the pack): Cristopher Zwirko, 155.4 mph

Best in Show Award: Jason Ng

Special thanks goes to all of the Scout parents, grandparents, and Boy Scouts that rolled up their sleeves and pitched in to make the night a success. The team work put forth to execute such a complex event in such a short time was nothing short of superb. It shows that the Cub Scouts are not the only ones who can do their best!



(above) The lineup for the event boasted dozens of cars that were designed and built by the scouts and their families. While some cars had a similar shape, no two cars were alike. Each one had unique decorations and a style that set it apart. You could tell that the boys really wanted their cars to stand out in the crowd!



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# Watchung Post

Watchung Post • Page 2 • March 2015

*Watchung Post* is published by Renna Media. 3,000 newspapers are printed monthly and mailed to every business and home in Watchung, NJ and the balance are distributed for free pick-up throughout town.

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Email: joerenna@rennamedia.com

## "FESTIVAL OF SOUND" TO BENEFIT THE SEEING EYE



(above) Anita Eigen  
with Camper

Anita Eigen, representing The Seeing Eye, spoke to the Warren/Watchung Rotary Club on Tuesday, March 3. The Seeing Eye is the oldest existing guide school in the world. Since 1929, The Seeing Eye has partnered with people who are blind who seek to enhance their independence,

dignity and self-confidence through the use of Seeing Eye dogs. More than 16,000 of these specially bred and trained dogs have brought a new level of mobility, safety, and self-

sufficiency to over 8,000 men and women.

On Saturday, March 21, Beacon Hill Musicians will be holding a "Festival of Sound" concert at the Bickford Theater, Morris Museum, in Morristown, NJ, featuring Rio Clemente, Marty Eigen, Carrie Jackson, Grover Kemble, Rob Paparozzi, Gene Peria and Bernard Purdie. Proceeds from ticket sales will benefit the Seeing Eye.

Tickets can be purchased online at <https://festivalofsound.eventbrite.com> or by calling the Bickford Theater Box Office at 973-971-3706. If unable to attend, please consider making an "angel donation" directly to the Seeing Eye, PO Box 375, Morristown, NJ 07963. Please write "Festival of Sound" on the memo line.

If you are interested in joining the Warren/Watchung Rotary, please contact Bob Asner at 908-755-8724. They meet every Tuesday at the Twin Brooks Country Club, in Watchung, NJ.

## PROMOTE YOUR COMMUNITY EVENT

Community service organizations and sports teams are encouraged to submit news of upcoming events or highlights and photos on recent events.

Organizations who are interested in submitting content can email Lynn Sjurset at [lynn@rennamedia.com](mailto:lynn@rennamedia.com).



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## SEN. KEAN RECOGNIZES WATCHUNG STUDENTS

Following their third place win at the NJ Future City competition, Valley View 8th grade students Jacqueline Lee, Annika Schmidt, and Isabel Vala were invited to visit with Senator Kean and Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz on Wednesday, February 18. The students talked about their solution to the problem of feeding their “city of the future”. Mr. Kean and Mrs. Munoz expressed their congratulations and encouraged the girls to pursue studies in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math).



(above, front, l-r) Annika Schmidt, Jacqueline Lee and Isabel Vala  
(back, l-r) Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz and Senator Kean

## WATCHUNG RESIDENT’S REUNION JAZZ BAND

Tenor saxophonist Ed Finkel brings a group of well-known New York jazz artists to the Heinz W. Otto Gallery at the Watchung Arts Center, on Saturday, March 28 at 8 PM. A dessert reception will follow the performance.

In addition to Mr. Finkel, the band will consist of Glenn Mills on trombone, pianist Tardo Hammer, bassist Patrick O’Leary, Tom Melito on drums, and vocalist Gabrielle Stravelli.

Watchung resident Ed Finkel played in big bands as a young man, touring throughout the



(above) Watchung resident and tenor saxophonist Ed Finkel

eastern US and on an ocean voyage aboard the Queen Elizabeth II, with Helen O’Connell and the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, as well as performing with the Vaughn Monroe and Sammy Kaye orchestras and others, before embarking on a career as a structural engineer.

For more than 25 years, Ed was a member of The Jazz @Noon Band, the longest running jazz institution in New York City, launched by Les Lieber, circa 1965, for businessmen-musicians. Gathering every Friday this event featured weekly visits by renowned Jazz artists from all musical eras, including: Benny Goodman, Stan Getz, Zoot Sims, Dick Hyman, Joe Wilder, Doc Cheatham, Harry Allen, Wycliffe Gordon, Anat Cohen, Ken Peplowski, Claudio Roditi, and Paquito D’Rivera. Ed has also performed with pianists Dave McKenna at the Copley Plaza in Boston and in Hyannis, and Dorothy Donegan at Fat Tuesday’s and the Fortune Garden Pavilion in New York City.

Tickets are \$16 in advance, \$20 (18 for WAC members, \$10 for students) at the door. Tickets may be purchased online at [watchungartscenter.eventbrite.com](http://watchungartscenter.eventbrite.com). To obtain more information about upcoming performances, classes and workshops, and monthly art exhibitions, please visit [WatchungArts.org](http://WatchungArts.org) or call 908-753-0190.

The Watchung Arts Center, located at 18 Stirling Road in Watchung on the Watchung Circle, is a multi-disciplinary performing arts facility serving Watchung, the surrounding communities and the Tri-State Area.

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## LOCAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE VOLUNTEERS APPLAUD OSCAR WINNERS

While most Americans were focused on the films "Birdman" and "American Sniper" at this year's Academy Awards, a group of about 200 volunteers at a local suicide prevention and crisis intervention hotline were more touched by two obscure winners.

"The Phone Call," a short film about a suicide prevention hotline operator and her distraught caller, won for Best Live Action Short Film. "Crisis Hotline: Veterans Press 1," a documentary about the employees who staff the suicide hotline of the Veterans Administration, took home Best Documentary. Both films are heart-wrenching.

The volunteers of CONTACT We Care understand why these two films garnered such honors. As real-life operators who take the calls of people in crisis, many of whom are suicidal, they understand the emotion that goes into these exchanges – on both ends.

CONTACT We Care, headquartered in Westfield, is a suicide prevention agency that operates a suicide prevention and crisis intervention hotline and provides suicide prevention training to the public, community groups and businesses.

The agency relies on more than 200 volunteers to staff its listening lines and texting

services and the hotline is always looking for new volunteers, according to Joanne Oppelt, CONTACT's executive director. Listeners answer about 14,000 calls and texts each year.

"It is so essential that people in crisis or distress have someone they can talk to who will listen in an empathetic and non-judgmental way," Oppelt said. "Our callers come from all walks of life and every socioeconomic level. They are our neighbors and at a dramatic moment of crossroads in their lives, our listeners are here for them. What our listeners give is a remarkable story – Oscar-deserving in itself."

CONTACT volunteers undergo 50 hours of instruction in empathetic and nonjudgmental active listening and mental health issues and go through a two-day intensive session on suicide intervention called ASIST, or Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. Training is followed by an internship.

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer listener or texter at CONTACT We Care should contact Sue Fasano, director of programs, at 908.301.1899 or [sue.fasano@contactwecare.org](mailto:sue.fasano@contactwecare.org).

CONTACT We Care also provides training to members of the public, community groups and businesses in suicide awareness and prevention, active listening, mental health first aid and preventing teenage suicide. Anyone interested in learning more about or scheduling training also should contact Fasano.

CONTACT We Care serves Central and Northern New Jersey and is a primary responder to calls to the national suicide prevention line (1-800-273-TALK or 1-800-SUICIDE) that originate in New Jersey. Callers also reach CONTACT by dialing 908-232-2880 or texting "CWC" to 839863.



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Please register by visiting their website at [www.ucedc.com](http://www.ucedc.com). If you have any questions or problems regarding registration, kindly contact Jerry Phillips, 908-527-1166, x23 or email [jphillips@ucedc.com](mailto:jphillips@ucedc.com).

## WATCHUNG LIBRARY

Watchung Library is located at 12 Stirling Road in Watchung, behind the Watchung Arts Center.

For complete program registration information, please check the online calendar

([www.somerset.lib.nj.us](http://www.somerset.lib.nj.us), then go to Evenys/Programs for Watchung).

Program information is subject to change, so also look online for updated programs and additions.

## WATCHUNG LIBRARY CELEBRATES HARRY POTTER AND FRIENDS

On February 5th at 7:00 PM the Watchung Library hosted a family program about some of Harry Potter's owl friends. The presentation WHOOO'S THERE? HARRY POTTER'S FRIENDS, sponsored by the Friends of the Watchung Library and presented by Giselle Smisko of the Avian Wildlife Center was truly magical as the audience was introduced to three live owls. The information about these beautiful raptors was pitch perfect as the owls were compared with their fictional counterparts. The audience ranged from young children through adults. As if under a spell, everyone was enraptured by the owls.

Fans of the Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling know that it was an owl who first introduced Harry Potter to wizarding world by delivering a letter to him from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. To introduce the next generation of readers to the popular series, the Watchung Library invited children and adults to stop by the library from February 2 through February 6 to participate in activities featuring Hedwig, Harry's owl. Library visitors played Hedwig's Hunch, and tried to guess the

number of feathers in a jar. The correct guess earned the winner, Zoe Tseng, an assortment of candies, including Bertie Botts jelly beans, slugs and chocolate frogs. Families had the opportunity to make an owl, see how much Harry Potter trivia they knew, and of course, check out Harry's stories.



(above) Giselle Smisko of the Avian Wildlife Center introducing a live owl to patrons

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# SHAKESPEARE LIVE AT WHRHS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

By Denis J. Kelly



(above, l-r) Actors from "Shakespeare Live," Marielle Rousseau, Kelsey Burke, Ajna Jai, Austin Blunk, Felix Mayes, Travis Johnson, James Costello, and Shamsuddin Abdul-Hamid; meet with students from WHRHS, juniors Sara Choudhury and Zuzanna Kasper of Warren Township, Evani Ricaldi of Green Brook Township, and Max Sherer of Warren.

Eight actors from the "Shakespeare Live!" a school outreach program of the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey (STNJ) in Madison, staged "Macbeth," before an audience of about 100 English, World Languages and Arts students on Wednesday, Feb. 18, in the Performing Arts Center at Watchung Hills Regional High School.

The performance, which was presented immediately following classes, was funded through financial support of the Watchung Hills PTO (Parent Teacher Organization).

English Department Supervisor Marlene Stoto said that the opportunity for Watchung Hills students to see Shakespeare performed live on their school stage was additionally pertinent because Macbeth, and other plays, poems and references to Shakespeare, is part of the English curriculum.

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Mary Ellen Phelan, a former English teacher, said the performance was another in a series of ways the school was augmenting instruction in class with additional sources for the study and critical analysis of literature.

# PRODUCER SEEKS SOUNDS OF WATCHUNG

When you think of your hometown, chances are images come to mind. Perhaps it's an historic structure or maybe it's a feature of nature, but have you ever stopped to consider the sounds of your town? A life-long resident of New Jersey hopes to create an audio mosaic of the state made up from a sound from each one of its 565 municipalities.

Bernie Wagenblast began his quest on July 4, 2013 in Milltown at the town's Independence Day parade. Since then he's added over 140 towns around the state. Wagenblast calls his project New Jersey 565 and says he tries to find a sound that's unique for the town. In many instances the audio clips, and the story behind them, may even be surprising to long-time residents.

Wagenblast's goal is to collect 100 sounds a year and complete the project in six years. You can hear other communities' sounds at [pinterest.com/brwagenblast/new-jersey-565/](http://pinterest.com/brwagenblast/new-jersey-565/)

If you have a suggestion for a sound for New Jersey 565 you can reach Bernie at [bernie@bwcommunications.net](mailto:bernie@bwcommunications.net).



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# 7 HILLS STUDENTS SELECTED FOR REGIONAL AND STATE MUSICAL GROUPS

By Denis J. Kelly

Three students at Watchung Hills Regional High School have been selected for the Central Jersey Music Educators Association (CJMEA) regional orchestral string or symphonic bands, and another four have been selected to CJMEA regional choral groups. In addition, two of the band students who were selected for regional bands from Watchung Hills were also selected to state bands, according to Band and Instrumental Music Director David Udell.

The state auditions were held Thursday night, Jan. 29, at East Brunswick High School, according to Udell. Auditions for All-State Orchestral Strings and All-State Chorus have yet to be scheduled.

The regional musical groups have already performed in concert, according to Udell. A performance of the regional orchestra and

symphonic bands was held on Sunday, Jan. 18, at Montgomery Township High School. A performance of the regional choirs was held on Sunday, Feb. 1, Super Bowl Sunday, at Monroe Township High School.

According to Udell, the following three students were named to orchestra or symphonic band: To the Region II Orchestral String Band, Sophomore Brian Zeng of Warren Township on Viola; and to the Region II Symphonic Band, Freshman Ethan Marmelejos of Watchung on Tuba and Junior Isis Zhang of Stirling on Clarinet.

According to Choral Music Director Angela DiIorio Bird, the following four students have been named to regional choral groups: To mixed choir, Sophomore Allison Horvath of Warren Township and Sophomore Veronica Mu of Warren Township; and to Women's Choir, Sophomore Kira Leinwand of Warren Township and Freshman Abby Watkins of Watchung.

According to Udell and Bird, that selection for the state and regional bands and various choral groups is competitive. Students sit for auditions, and once selected, participate in rehearsals to prepare for the concert performances, and then play or sing in concert

along with fellow musicians and singers from across the region before an audience of family, friends and musical educators.

"Competition is intense for the instrumental students with as few as 10 percent being accepted on some instruments," said Udell. "Students know that they must not only get into their region ensembles, but also must finish high enough in their sections to be invited to audition for all-state. I am proud of all the students who auditioned. I am also pleased that all those who were successful were invited to the all-state auditions." Bird agreed.

"These students who got accepted into regional choirs were selected among several hundred students," said Bird. "They prepared a very intense audition and have exceeded my expectations. What a hard working group of students! I am very proud of them! This is quite an honor."

Udell said two Watchung Hills students have been named to All-State Band. "Isis Zhang has won a position in the All-State Symphonic Band on Clarinet and Ethan Marmelejos won a position on Tuba," said Udell. "In fact, Ethan was the only Tuba player to be appointed to the All-State Symphonic Band."



(above, l-r) Three students at Watchung Hills Regional High School have been selected for the Central Jersey Music Educators Association (CJMEA) regional orchestra or symphonic bands. To the Region II Symphonic Band, Freshman Ethan Marmelejos, of Watchung on Tuba and Junior Isis Zhang of Stirling on Clarinet. Not photod: Sophomore Brian Zeng of Warren Township, who as selected on Viola for Region II Orchestra.



(left) Four students at Watchung Hills Regional High School have been selected to two CJMEA regional choral groups. They are (l-r) Kira Leinwand of Warren Township to Women's Choir; Sophomore Allison Horvath of Warren Township to Mixed Choir; Sophomore Veronica Mu of Warren Township to Mixed Choir; and Abby Watkins of Watchung to Women's Choir. A performance of the regional choirs was held on Sunday, Feb. 1, Super Bowl Sunday, at Monroe Township High School.

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# GATEWAY CHAMBER HONORS LOCAL BUSINESSES AT 103RD ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

The Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce recently honored three local businesses and a local chamber of commerce at its 103rd Annual Dinner Meeting, held in February at the Newark Airport Marriott.

Renna Media, publishers of the Cranford Monthly, was honored as Small Company of the Year. Founded and operated by Joe and Tina Renna, the small publishing house publishes 13 hyper-local newspapers in Union, Somerset and Warren counties.

Other honorees included Infineum USA L.P. of Linden, Large Company of the Year; R. Seelus & Company, Medium Company of the Year; the Linden Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of the Year.

Visit [gatewaychamber.com](http://gatewaychamber.com) or call 908-352-0900 or for more information about Gateway.



(above) Kamal Assad, owner of Sign-A-Rama of Kenilworth, presents Tina and Joe Renna, publishers of the Cranford Monthly, with the Small Company of the Year Award on behalf of the Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce.

## “BLACK & BLUE”

Artists At Watchung Arts Center



(left) Jane Caminos' (Watchung) “Spears”

The “New Art Group” will once again be taking center stage at the Watchung Arts Center. Their exhibit, Black and Blue, will be on view from March 2-March 31, 2015 with an opening reception on March 8th from 1-4pm. All are welcome to come and hear the artists talk about their work beginning at 2pm. Refreshments will be available with some items being supplied by local vendors. The reception is free and open to the public. The gallery hours are: Tues-Fri noon to 5pm and Sat 10am-3pm, or by appointment.

Beautiful blues with black silhouettes, fist fights and bruised bodies, blue skies, police and the military... you name it, Black and Blue can conjure up a lot of different images when you hear those words. The newest exhibit at the Watchung Arts Center touches on these thoughts and more with each artist supplying their own interpretation of two simple colors and how they can work together. With media varying from photography and encaustic wax to assemblage and painting, these works touch on an exploration of these archetypal colors and the many subtler ways in which their combination has implications for the human condition.

The current members of the New Art Group are Susan Ahlstrom from Stirling, Francesca Azzara from Westfield, Jane Caminos from Watchung, Nancy Ori from Berkeley Heights, Paul XO Pinkman from Plainfield and Heidi Sussman from West Orange. All are professional visual artists with many years of exhibiting and teaching experience. Visit their website for more info about other local exhibits or workshops being taught by the various members: [www.newartgroup.com](http://www.newartgroup.com).

Jane Caminos from Watchung relies on a heavy use of saturated color and recalls the influences of Matisse, Gauguin and Rousseau. Susan Ahlstrom from Stirling brings the symbolism of the colors forward – blue for sky and ocean and the black for night scenes and woods. The elements of travel and other places is very present in her mixed media work.

The Watchung Arts Center, located on the circle at 18 Stirling Road in Watchung, presents a new art exhibition each month along with performances of music, and comedy. Call 908-753-0190 for more information about these programs or [www.watchungarts.org](http://www.watchungarts.org).

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