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Watchung's Hometown Newspaper

NJ

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## BIG NIGHT FOR WATCHUNG'S CUB SCOUT PACK 32

Watchung's Cub Scout Pack 32 recently held their annual Blue & Gold Banquet and Crossover Ceremony. This event celebrates the birthday of the Scouting movement in America and marks the culmination of years of effort from the oldest Cub Scouts. A total of six boys from Den 1 completed their journey along the Cub Scout trail by earning their Arrow of Light badge. Each boy received their recognition from their long-time Den Leader, Joanne Cort, along with their long-time Assistant Den Leader, Dennis Bakos. Supportive parents stood close by during the lighting of the ceremonial Arrow of Light candles, which stand for wisdom, courage, self-control, justice, faith, hope and love.

The boys were also each given an Honor Arrow upon which was painted a record of their advancements through the years. The bands of color on their arrows matched the color badges they received during their time in the Pack. The arrows were adorned with blue and yellow beads and feathers, that serve to remind these scouts of what they have, hopefully, gained through the years: practice of the scout law, friendship, adventure, practical skills, knowledge, and independence. This is a powerful foundation upon which they will continue to build character, foster citizenship, and stay physically healthy through their journey into and through adulthood.

Finally, the night ended with all six boys saying goodbye to their Cub Scout trail, crossing over a wooden bridge, and

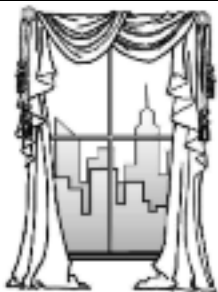
taking their first step onto the Boy Scout trail. Members of Watchung Boy Scout Troop 32 were waiting on the other side to welcome their new members. The Cub Scouts who crossed over are: Nicholas Benc, Joshua Cheng, Gavin Cort, Eliaz Michel, Sebastian Sopko, and Cristopher Zwirko.



(above) Sebastian, Cristopher, Eliaz, Nick, Gavin, and Josh (l-r) were more than happy to get this close to their celebratory cake!



(above) The boys with Joanne Cort and Dennis Bakos, the leaders who guided Den 1 from their first steps as Tiger Scouts.



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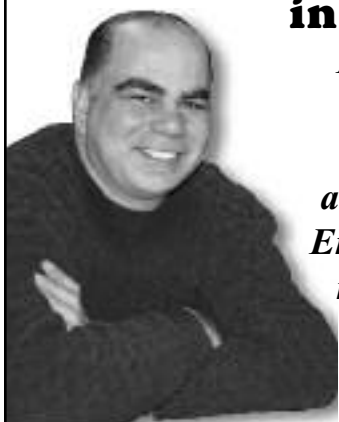
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## THREE WHRHS STUDENTS DECLARE INTENT TO PLAY SPORTS IN COLLEGE

Three graduating student athletes at Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) declared on College Signing Day, Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2017 that they have committed to play sports in the college of their choice next year. Two students intend to play football, one to run cross country.

They are: Michael Montecalvo of Green Brook Township, offensive and defensive lineman, a WHRHS Warrior football standout, who plans to play football for the University of New Haven, West Haven, Ct.; Lamar Evans of Warren Township, receiver and cornerback, a WHRHS Warrior football standout, who plans to play football for Sacred Heart University, Fairfield,

Ct; and Ryan Martins of Green Brook Township, a WHRHS Warrior cross country standout, who plans to run cross country for the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb. Coach of WHRHS Football is Rich Seubert. Coach of Boys Cross Country is Dom Tasco.

"We were so proud to have three student athletes from our WHRHS athletics program who signed letters of intent this week," said WHRHS Director of Athletics Chris Van Vliet. "Congratulations to these athletes and their families, and best of luck to them as they continue their athletic careers in college next year."



(above l-r) Michael Montecalvo of Green Brook Township; Lamar Evans of Warren Township; and Ryan Martins of Green Brook Township.

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## TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE AT FRIENDS OF LIBRARY

Friends of the Watchung Library ("Friends") is pleased to announce their new partnership with Better World Books (BWB), "the online bookstore with a soul." Like Friends, BWB is a triple-bottom-line organization, seeking not just financial results, but also social and environmental benefits.

BWB helps libraries and friends of libraries raise funds by selling books online and sharing the proceeds - yielding financial results. The environmental benefits stem primarily from books being reused instead of going to landfills. The social benefits come from BWB's support of its Literacy Partners, primarily Books for Africa, The National Center for Families Learning and Room to Read.

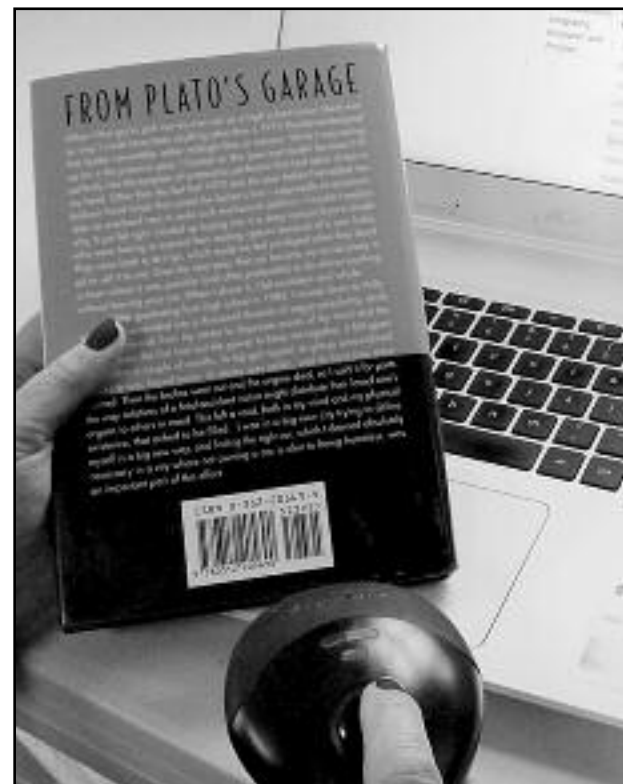
Friends' long history of triple bottom line includes raising funds to support the programs and services of Watchung Library, keeping used materials from landfills, and donating books to area nonprofit organizations, particularly schools in Watchung and nearby communities.

Because of limited space at Watchung's small library, Friends have often been unable to accept donations in the past, but now donations that cannot be displayed in the Friends' book store, Second Story Books, will go to BWB. Thus Friends can accept donations of books (except encyclopedias or books in poor condition), DVDs, CDs and video games at any time. They can also accept textbooks published within the last 10 years.

Books, DVDs, and CDs donated to Friends will be sorted by volunteers. Items that Watchung Library patrons might like to purchase will be priced and displayed in Second Story Books, the Friends' book store upstairs at the library. Other items will be scanned before being sent to Better World Books for sale or for distribution to their literacy partners in the US and around the world.

An additional benefit of the Friends' partnership with BWB is that they can vary the selection in Second Story Books more. Marcia Walsh, President of the Friends, says "Stop by and take a look! There are new books from which to choose every week."

Now you can support Friends' triple bottom line in any of three ways: visit Second Story Books and take home a book, DVD or CD; donate new, like-new or gently used books, DVDs, CDs and video games; or shop online for books, DVDs and CDs at BWB ([www.betterworldbooks.com](http://www.betterworldbooks.com)). To learn more about Friends of the Watchung Library, go to [www.friendsofwatchunglibrary.org](http://www.friendsofwatchunglibrary.org).



(above) A friend of the Watchung Library scans a biography before packing it for shipping to Better World Books.

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## LOCAL STUDENT TO HOST ECO-FRIENDLY CRAFT PROGRAMS FOR KIDS AT LIBRARIES

Watchung Hills Regional High School sophomore Jacqueline Lee, 15, will lead a series of programs at Somerset County Library System of New Jersey's Warren Township and Watchung Library branches this March. The programs will teach children ages eight and up how to recycle paper, plastic, and tin into beautiful art.

The Eco-Friendly Craft programs at SCLSNJ's Warren Township Library branch, located at 42 Mountain Boulevard in Warren Twp., will be held March 16 & 30 at 7 p.m. Participants will make Origami using recycled sticky notes on March 16 and crochet with recycled plastic bags on March 30.

The Eco-Friendly Craft programs at SCLSNJ's Watchung Library branch, located at 12 Stirling Road in Watchung will be held March 8, 13, 22, & 29 at 7 p.m. Participants will: make origami with recycled post-its on March 8; crochet with recycled plastic bags on March 13; make jewelry and crafts with soda tabs and more on March 22; create even more recycled crafts on March 29.

At Watchung Hills Regional High School, Lee is a member of various math teams and enjoys studying algorithms and engineering. She plays hockey and is a member of the school's varsity fencing team. As a member of the school's Environmental Club, she enjoys sharing her enthusiasm for environmental protection. Jacqueline also enjoys knitting, making origami, weaving, and creating other crafts. She is excited to combine both interests in the Eco-Friendly Crafts series at SCLSNJ's Watchung Library branch.

"I have been an avid reader since I was in grade school and reading at the sunny Watchung Library has always been --and still is--one of my favorite pastimes," said Lee. "I wanted to give back to my community and share some fun crafts that protect the environment. I thought March was the perfect time to hold these classes because March 8 is International Women's Day and the month of March is Makers Month. I am excited that we can bring together members of the community to celebrate both empowering women and creativity."

Registration is required to attend these programs. To register, visit [SCLSNJ.org](http://SCLSNJ.org) or contact your local SCLSNJ library branch.

About Somerset County Library System of New Jersey

Somerset County Library System of New Jersey (SCLSNJ) partners with you to connect, to explore, to share and to discover. Together we enrich lives, expand knowledge and strengthen communities. SCLSNJ branches can be found in Bridgewater, Bound Brook, Hillsborough, Manville, North Plainfield, Peapack & Gladstone, Rocky Hill at Mary Jacobs Memorial Library, Somerville, Warren Township, and Watchung. Additionally, there are two SCLSNJ reading stations in Branchburg and Washington Valley. Visit [SCLSNJ.org](http://SCLSNJ.org) for further information about library services offered at SCLSNJ.



(above) Watchung Hills Regional High School sophomore Jacqueline Lee, 15, will lead programs at Somerset County Library System of New Jersey's Warren Twp. and Watchung Library branches this March.



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# JULIA CUNNINGHAM HITS 1,000 POINTS

One of the highlights this season for Watchung Hills Regional High School Warrior Girls Basketball Team came at 5 minutes and 50 seconds in the second period of the home game against Ridge High School on Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2017. That's when with a foul shot on the back end of a "and one" three point play, Junior Julia Cunningham scored the 1,000th point of her illustrious career as a Warrior.

Cunningham scored the 1,000th point on her 23rd point of the game. She went on to score 40 points in the game, which set her own personal game best record as a Warrior and set the new WHRHS school record for most points by an individual girls player in a game.

Cunningham is only the second girl to amass 1,000 points in her career at WHRHS. The school record for scoring among girls basketball players is 1,234, set and held by Meghan Kopecki. Only varsity points count toward this record, Coach Kirchofer said.

"The game against Ridge was an incredible night for the Lady Warriors basketball program, but was extremely special for my family and myself," said Cunningham. "Hitting my 1,000th point was something that I had been dreaming of since I was a little kid and to break the scoring record and eclipse the 1,000th point mark in the same night was an unbelievable feeling."



(above) Junior Julia Cunningham was congratulate by her teammates after she scored the 1,000th point of her illustrious career as a Warrior on January 24, 2017.



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## SCOUTS START THEIR ENGINES!

One of the highlights of the scouting year is the annual Pinewood Derby race. For months, weeks, and days (or for some, just a few hours!), Cub Scouts are shaping a block of wood into their vision of the greatest car to ever grace the 40-foot aluminum track. The variety of designs on display during race night is nothing short of awesome.

The entrants for Watchung Pack 32's Pinewood Derby in February did not disappoint. Themes this year included classic cars, hot-rods, razor-thin wedges, sports, MEMEs, and food-themed cars. The creativity adds to the excitement as the crowd cheers during each shot down the track.

Being able to compete against your peers where your focus is on having fun, even in the face of losing, is a sign of good character. Whether it was their first Derby or their fifth, the boys showed great character and sportsmanship

in congratulating the winners and offering support to those who did not come out ahead.



(above) The crowd's eyes are fixated in anticipation of a photo finish!



(above) Tiger Scouts watch eagerly as their cars are loaded onto the launch.

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# CUB SCOUTS DID NOT NEED SNOW NEEDED FOR KLONDIKE TREK

A stalwart group of Cub Scouts from Pack 32 competed in the Watchung Mountain District Klondike Trek last month and had a blast doing it, even without a flake of snow on the ground. The event, named after the cold and snowy region in Northwest Canada, is held each winter at Watchung Reservation's Loop. It puts scouts to

the test as they race through stations throughout the park, demonstrating the skills they have been learning in scouting. Stations include: distress, first aid, orienteering, fire-building, cooking, knot-tying, and building a shelter. Volunteers from numerous local Scout organizations dedicate their time and sacrifice their warmth to

spend hours in the field, hosting the stations and guiding the boys to a strong finish at each station.

The group of boys form a patrol, similar to Boy Scouts, and compete against patrols from neighboring towns for best times and points. The patrol is responsible for being prepared with certain supplies and for working together to achieve their tasks. Pack 32's patrol, known as Destiny, was made up of 8 first-time Trekkers: Nicholas Benc, Nicolas Betancourth, Grant Miller, Thomas Schaefer, Henry van Maanen, Nolan Weber, and Sean Weiss. The 9th member, Gavin Cort, was competing in his 2nd Klondike trek.



(above) Destiny patrol pulls together for a group photo before starting on their adventure.



(above) The scouts roast marshmallows over the fire they have successfully, and safely, built.

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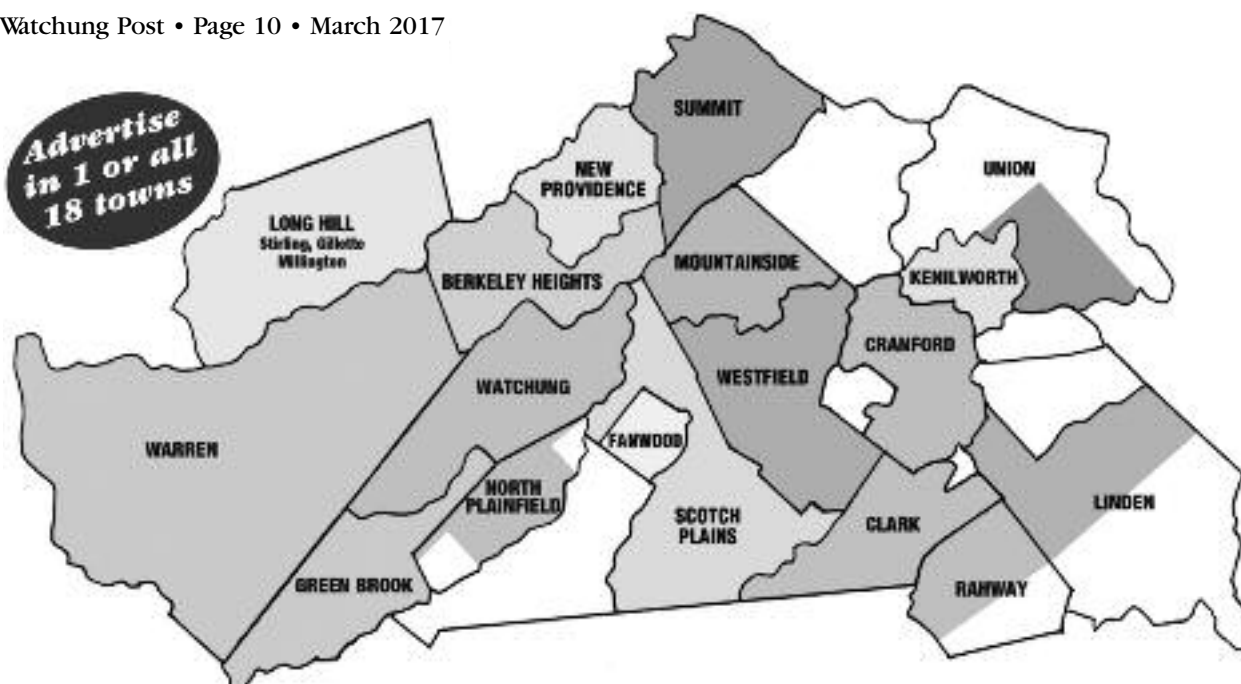
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# FRIENDS OF LIBRARY HONOR 15-YEAR CAT-IN-THE-HAT VOLUNTEER

This month, for the 15th year in a row, volunteer Jessica Wexler brought her creative Storytime with Cat in the Hat program to the Watchung Library. To celebrate Wexler's milestone, Friends of the Watchung Library threw a surprise party, with cake, a card, and a gift. Guests who came out to honor Wexler included members of the Friends of the library, members of the Library Advisory Board, Watchung Borough Council members, and library staff and patrons.

Storytime with Cat in the Hat celebrates the birthday of Theodor Geisel, better known by his pen name, Dr. Seuss. Seuss is the popular author of children's books including The Cat in the Hat, Green Eggs and Ham, One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish, and many others.

Wexler says she first got the idea for bringing The Cat to the library after a Seussville Fair her children attended at Bayberry Elementary School. "I bought the costume to wear for the day, and it seemed a shame to only wear it once. We've always been voracious readers, and the library was our second home when they were little. The first year, I just stopped by in my Cat costume after the Seussville Fair for fun and to say hello to any children that happened to be there."

Even after so many appearances as The Cat, Wexler admits to still having butterflies in the stomach just before the start of the program each year, but once the children arrive, she's fine. "It's my love for the kids that gets me through those few minutes of being nervous," she says.

There was a surprising moment during the very first Cat in the Hat program in 2002. The costume Wexler bought came with a rubber mask, which she wore "to look authentic," but it scared one of the children so much that he started to cry. She pulled the mask off to show him that she was a real person, but, she says, "I don't think he was fully convinced." She hasn't worn the mask since. "Besides terrifying the audience I was supposed to delight, it was hard to see out of it and I sounded like Darth Vader every time I took a breath."

Over the years the activities at Storytime with Cat in the Hat have included face painting Cat

noses and whiskers, McElligot's Pool fishing game, The Cat's beanbag toss, Green Eggs and Ham relay races (a favorite with the children), tumbling using Wexler's nylon tunnel and small balance beam, reading Dr. Seuss stories, making birthday cards for the Cat, and enjoying birthday cupcakes and juice. Wexler makes pink cupcakes because Cat in the Hat eats pink cake in the bathtub in Cat in the Hat Comes Back.

But Dr Seuss Day at the library is more than just fun. As Wexler puts it, "I hope the kids are learning that creativity and fun with books can continue even after the book itself has been closed. I love when children know that Laura Ingalls was a real little girl. I love when children know that you can see Christopher Robin's real Winnie the Pooh and his friends in the New York Public Library, and that Bambi is a novel written by Felix Salten .... Books can be the starting point of so many wonderful things."

Watchung Library Youth Services Librarian Sharon Orlando praised Wexler. "Joy, dedication, creativity, generosity, love of reading, and sense of belonging are what Jessica brings to the library each time she visits. Although the Cat in the Hat and Dr. Seuss are celebrating a birthday together, Jessica is the gift to the families who come to the party. The magic she creates never gets old, and the memories she leaves last a lifetime. I, like so many children and parents who have come to her programs over the years, am so grateful for all she has given to us."

Friends' of the Watchung Library Board member Hazel Bell agreed, adding, "Jessica's generosity with her time and talents are a bright reflection on the nature of the Watchung community. She is a fitting example of community spirit, and we are all richer for her contributions."

The Friends of the library are counting on many more appearances of The Cat to entertain future Watchung preschoolers. Wexler says "After 15 years I can't imagine not doing Cat in the Hat at Watchung Library. The whole day would feel empty, and I might have to wear the costume to Target or something to get it out of my system. I guess I'll keep going as long as they'll have me!"



(above) For the 15th year in a row, volunteer Jessica Wexler brought her creative Storytime with Cat in the Hat program to the Library.

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