

Vietnam Oral Histories To Be Genealogical Soc. Topic

WESTFIELD — The Genealogical Society of the West Fields invites the community to join Joseph Czachowski at its meeting on Thursday, December 13, when Mr. Czachowski will discuss "Doing Oral Histories: The Vietnam Experience." The meeting will be held at 1 p.m. at the Westfield Memorial Library, located at 550 East Broad Street.

Mr. Czachowski is an adjunct professor of history at Kean University and Ocean County Community College, where he teaches United States History and World Civilization. He also has taught many other courses including The American Experience in Vietnam and Nazi Era Germany. He is the author of "Historic Photos of the Jersey Shore," "Historic Photos of Hoboken" and "Historic Photos of Long Island."

Mr. Czachowski holds a Masters of Liberal Studies from Kean University and has given numerous presentations based on his documentary *Vietnam: Confusion, the Search for Relief*.

Mr. Czachowski had the privilege of speaking with approximately 30 Vietnam veterans for a series of interviews at Kean University with a grant from Union County. The project was titled "The New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Oral History Project." The series of interviews concentrated on veterans who had spent significant time in New Jersey, even though they might not have been born in the Garden State. Although a graduate assistant, Mr. Czachowski was named co-director of the project along with Professor Jim Jandrowitz, himself a two-tour Marine veteran of the war.

Their aim was not to just collect "war stories," but to see where the Vietnam experience currently fit into their lives, and if it had any aftereffects. Many interviewees stated that they did not want the war to be the signature moment of their lives. Although not an experienced interviewer, Mr. Czachowski found the project to be a unique and rewarding experience. At times the interviewees would ask a question and the subject would just "go with it," he revealed, while others would struggle. Many were talking about their experiences for the first time.

Regarding oral histories, Mr. Czachowski stated, "It doesn't always have to be about wars or politics or heroes. If you have a relative who came to this country, or lived through the sixties, or Watergate, or a certain World Series, getting their reactions committed to paper or tape can be just as significant and interesting."

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Photo courtesy of Susan M. Dougherty
VISIT THE NATIVITY...The Presbyterian Church in Westfield invites the public to a family-friendly Live Nativity and Petting Zoo this Sunday, December 9, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. These Christmas festivities, located on the front lawn of the historic church at 140 Mountain Avenue in Westfield, are free. Costumed congregants will portray Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, the wise men, angels and shepherds. At this annual event, hot chocolate and cookies will be served and the community will be invited to sing Christmas carols with the church's choir members. For more information about the Live Nativity, call the church during business hours at (908) 233-0301.

Scotch Plains Library Slates Events For Teens, Adults

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains Public Library has revealed multiple activities for teens and adults taking place there during the month of December.

Above Grade Level of Union County will offer a free proctored SAT Practice Test at the library on Saturday, December 15, beginning at 9:30 a.m. This test is being made available as a community service with no obligation or solicitation. Advance registration is required for this test and space is limited. For more information or to register, contact Above Grade Level directly at (908) 889-6396 or gswitsky@abovegradelevel.com. Registered test takers should bring pencils, erasers, a test-approved calculator and a snack/drink (if desired, during the break).

Crafters of all skill levels are welcome to join Perthea Brown for a simple jewelry project on Monday, December 17, at 10 a.m. Those who are more advanced may bring their own supplies to work on an individual project alongside the group. Registration is required. This program is for adults age 18 and older. For more information or to register, go to scotlib.org, e-mail library@scotlib.org, call (908) 322-5007, extension no. 204, or stop by the Reference Desk.

Additionally on December 17, the Teen Anime Club will hold its third meeting of the 2018-2019 school year at 7 p.m. Participants are invited to join teen librarians and the ever-expanding membership of the club for conversation and activities. During the meeting, attendees will explore manga, watch a new show, make crafts and enjoy snacks. Registration is required. This club is for teens in grades 6 to 12 only. To register, visit scotlib.org, e-mail library@scotlib.org, call (908) 322-5007, extension no. 204, or stop by the Reference Desk.

The Scotch Plains Public Library is located at 1927 Bartle Avenue, one block from Park Avenue in the center of the township.

Decorating Contest Is Underway In Borough

MOUNTAINSIDE — Mountainside's all-volunteer beautification committee, "Beautiful Mountainside," is sponsoring its second annual home and business decorating contest for borough residents. Those interested should visit, and "like," the Facebook page "Beautiful Mountainside" and upload a photo of their home or business by Saturday, December 15, along with their address.

Entrants' homes will be visited by committee members and judged in person. Winners will receive a \$100 Visa gift card. All entrants must be willing to share their addresses on social media and make their addresses known to the public. Individuals not on Facebook may e-mail their photos to LindaCondriello@gmail.com. Winners of last year's contest may enter only if this year's decorations are new and different than previously submitted.

Participants will skate to Jewish music while watching a menorah being lit in the center of the rink. Refreshments also will be served. The cost is \$12 per person, including skates. Reservations are not required. For more information, call the Torah Center at (908) 789-5252, e-mail info@torahcenter.org or visit torahcenter.org.

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'Chanukah on Ice' On Tap Saturday

AREA — The Union County Torah Center-Chabad, together with the Chabad Chai Center in Millburn, will sponsor a "Chanukah on Ice" event this Saturday evening, December 8, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. It will take place at the Union Sports Arena, located on Route 22 West, Union, next to Best Buy.

Participants will skate to Jewish music while watching a menorah being lit in the center of the rink. Refreshments also will be served.

The cost is \$12 per person, including skates. Reservations are not required. For more information, call the Torah Center at (908) 789-5252, e-mail info@torahcenter.org or visit torahcenter.org.

Stacy Kaplan Has Doubled Center For Hope Volunteers

SCOTCH PLAINS — Since starting in her role as the volunteer coordinator at the Center for Hope in April of this year, Stacy Kaplan has doubled the number of volunteers, with many of them joining her team since August and about eight more set to start before the end of the year.

Thanks to her outreach efforts, the center has welcomed more local organizations and individuals into the volunteer program at Peggy's House in Scotch Plains and Father Hudson House in Elizabeth, the nonprofit's two residences that offer hospice and palliative care. The volunteers are spending time with patients, lifting spirits, bringing smiles and comforting families, with positive results for all involved.

"Stacy has dedicated her efforts to building our volunteer ranks and involvement, which complements the high quality of care our patients and their families already receive at the Center," said President Frank Brady. "The benefits of her hard work are seen every day in the wonderful interactions between volunteers and our patients, who are so appreciative of the visits and activities."

Growing the volunteer community has allowed her team to reach more patients and provide more frequent visits. New volunteers have

made a significant contribution to the Center for Hope, helping to organize and run events and games every week as well as special programs. The Center's volunteer program is very flexible in terms of the types of activities available and who can participate.

Organizations in the area have become more involved this year, including St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church in Scotch Plains, St. Helen's Church in Westfield and Unity Bank. Ms. Kaplan is in contact with local colleges and nursing schools, and with the Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCA and the Junior League of Elizabeth-Plainfield to discuss volunteer opportunities.

Ms. Kaplan noted that the volunteers also are getting tremendous personal benefit out of the program. "We have a great team of people who are enjoying their time with our residents as much as the residents are enjoying their company. The increased activity has been enthusiastically welcomed by our patients and their loved ones."

To find out about volunteer opportunities for individuals or groups, contact Stacy Kaplan at skaplan@cfhh.org or (908) 288-9111, or fill out the form at <http://www.cfhh.org/center-volunteer.html>.



Stacy Kaplan



FAITH JOURNEY...Members of several local parishes recently took a pilgrimage to Portugal that included visits to Lisbon, Tomar (Home of the Templars), Fatima and Madeira, led by Father William Benedetto of the Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Mountainside. Parishioners from Our Lady of Lourdes, as well as St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church and Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, both of Scotch Plains; St. Helen's Church in Westfield and St. Catherine's Church in Spring Lake were among the participants. Pictured are Father Benedetto and other members of the group outside of a cafe in Nazare, Portugal.

Garwood Library Posts Further December Events

GARWOOD — The Garwood Public Library has announced additional events that will be held there during December. Patrons are advised that the library will be closed Monday and Tuesday, December 24 and 25, for Christmas and again on Monday and Tuesday, December 31 and January 1, for the New Year holiday.

Adult Craft will be presented on Tuesday, December 11, at 6 p.m., and is limited to 10 people. Participants will be able to make a holiday craft to bring home. Registration is required.

Kid's Craft will be featured on Wednesday, December 12, at 3 p.m., for children in second grade and up. Participation is limited to 20 and registration is required.

Aging Services Kiosk will be available on Thursday, December 13, from 10 a.m. to noon. Union County Division on Aging staff will be on hand to assist senior citizens, age 60 and older, or their caregivers with information on services such as meal de-

livery, respite care, adult day care and support services for caregivers.

Additionally on December 13, the Thursday Night Book Club will meet at 7 p.m. to discuss "The Winter Sisters" by Robin Oliveira. No registration is required.

The Monday Afternoon Book Club will meet at 1 p.m. on December 17 to discuss "And Then There Were None" by Agatha Christie. No registration is required.

The library is open Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fridays, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Garwood Public Library is located at 411 Third Avenue. For more information and to register for programs, call (908) 789-1670. Further information also is available at youseemore.com/garwood.

Service Set Sunday For Healing, Hope

CRANFORD — The First Presbyterian Church of Cranford will hold a Service of Healing and Hope this Sunday, December 9, from 5 to 5:45 p.m., sponsored by the "Journey to Wholeness-Healing the Grieving Heart" program.

In recognition that for many people, the holiday season may be difficult and painful due to loss of a loved one, this special service will feature prayer, poems, music and a candlelight remembrance for loved ones. Participants also will have an opportunity to gather in community to receive comfort from one another. A time of fellowship will follow the service.

The First Presbyterian Church is located at 11 Springfield Avenue, Cranford, and is handicapped-accessible.

Santa Due Saturday At Garwood Library

GARWOOD — Santa Claus will visit the Garwood Public Library this Saturday, December 8, at 10 a.m. Refreshments will be on hand. The library is located at 411 Third Avenue.

Parents and caregivers are invited to bring their cameras for a Christmas season photo opportunity. The first 50 children will receive a small gift from Santa. Space is limited and registration is required.

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Happy Hanukkah from our "Family" to yours.

May the peace and joy of the holiday season remain with you through the coming year.

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