

The TAVI Times



A community service of The Allentown Village Initiative
February 15, 2025 **Volume V, Issue II**

“Six Triple Eight Day”

TAVI Proposed Legislation Creates State Holiday Honoring Allentown Native Marion VanOrkey



At TAVI's request, May 18th is on its way to becoming permanently known in New Jersey as “Six Triple Eight Day” honoring the 855 African American women – 27 of them from New Jersey, including Allentown's Marion VanOrkey –who served in the 6888th Central Postal Directory during World War II.

Ms. VanOrkey was born in Allentown on May 18, 1914 and attended Allentown High School. She went on to become one of the determined women who cleared a backlog of 14 million pieces of mail addressed to 7 million U.S. servicemen and civilians stationed in Europe during the war.

In 2022, Congress awarded all of the Six Triple Eight service women the Congressional Gold Medal, our nation's highest civilian honor. Ms. VanOrkey, unfortunately, had passed away in 2004 at the age of 89. TAVI is

working with State Senator Shirley Turner and the Office of the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives to arrange for posthumous presentation of the medal to Ms. VanOrkey's family, some of whom still live in Allentown.



Pvt. Marion VanOrkey

TAVI Goes to Trenton

Let our legislators know you support designating May 18th each year as “Six Triple Eight Day” in New Jersey. State Senator Shirley Turner (D-Trenton) and Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson have sponsored a joint resolution which is awaiting a full vote by both chambers. Allentown and Upper Freehold are represented by Assemblyman Alex Sauickie (asmsauickie@njleg.org, (609) 758-0205), Assemblyman Robert Clifton (732) 970-6386 and Senator Owen Henry, (732) 607-7580

How did these amazing women accomplish their mission? Join us on February 22, 2024 to find out when TAVI presents “You've Got Mail – The Story of Marion VanOrkey and the 6888th Postal Division.” The program begins at 6 pm in Allentown Methodist Church at 23 Church Street with a pasta dinner (suggested donation \$5). Please RSVP to mccormicknj@aol.com to attend.

Council approves plan to prevent forest fires

By Eddie Young

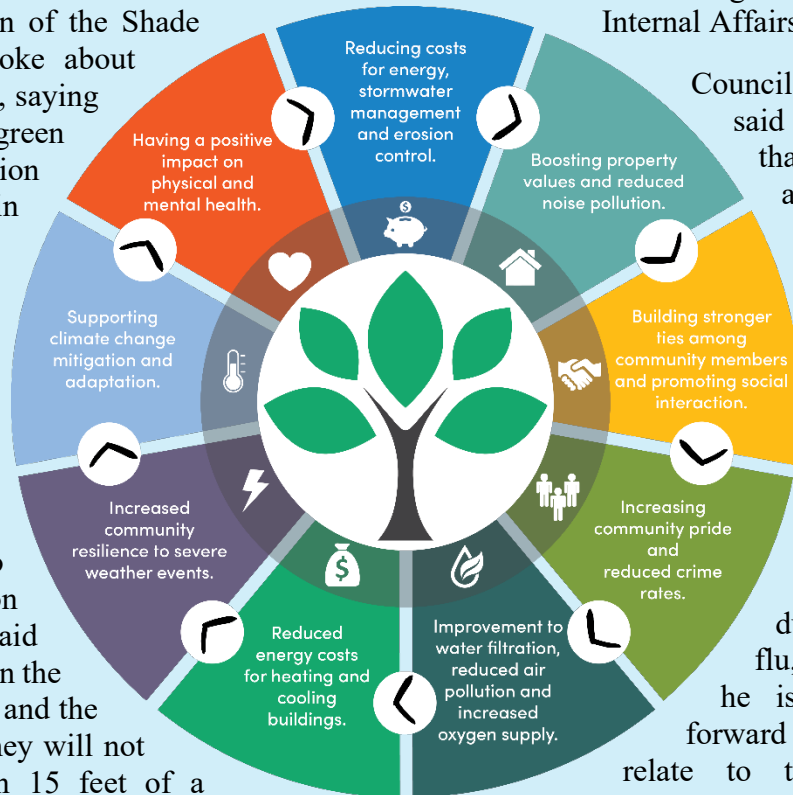
The Allentown Borough Council approved a new Community Forestry Management Plan, which could help prevent forest fires in the town, at the Council's February 11th meeting.

Terry Brown, chairman of the Shade Tree Commission, spoke about the plan at the meeting, saying that it would give the green light for the Commission to look at the forests in the area and see if there is anything that needs to be done to prevent future wildfires.

Brown also spoke on behalf of the Shade Tree Commission as he pleaded with Allentown residents to start planting trees on their properties. He said that many of the roads in the town are county roads, and the county told him that they will not plant any trees within 15 feet of a county road. With that being the case, Brown and the Shade Tree Commission felt that it is important for people of the town to start planting trees on their own properties. They believe Allentown needs more trees, and that is the best way for it to happen. He also said that the commission has recommendations on where to plant a tree on your property based on the size of a house and how far it is from the road, among other factors.

The council also unanimously approved every resolution brought up at the meeting, including three Shared Service Agreements, two of them

with Robbinsville Township and the other with Englishtown Borough. The two with Robbinsville had to do with Temporary Public Works Personnel Services and Automotive Services, while the one with Englishtown had to do with Internal Affairs Police Services.



Council President John Elder said during the meeting that shared service agreements are big money savers for the town and that they participate in eight different ones with Monmouth County.

Mayor Thomas C. Fritts, who was unable to attend the meeting in person due to a bout with the flu, said on Zoom that he is looking to move forward with the appeals that relate to the Stein Property warehouse development, but he has not heard back from an attorney in Upper Freehold and cannot move forward until they find a date to pass a resolution.

Elder said that the county is also looking to provide another ride share service for people who need transportation, and that it would be in addition to the SCAT service already being offered.

The next Allentown Borough Council meeting will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 25, at the Allentown Municipal Building.

TAVI Welcomes TCNJ Reporters

TAVI is happy to welcome Eddie Young and Joshua Schulman on special assignment to the TAVI Times from The College of New Jersey. Eddie and Josh are journalism students who will be covering local news and events as part of their class assignments. TAVI is grateful for their talent, time and enthusiasm!

Bird Flu and You

An Update From the CDC

(Editor's Note: As you may have heard – and seen - there currently is an outbreak of avian flu worldwide, nationally, and throughout New Jersey. Following is a summary of bird flu adapted from recent reports by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)).



What Is Bird Flu and How Is It Spread?

Bird flu is a disease caused by avian influenza A viruses that usually spread between birds, not people. Wild birds that can carry avian influenza viruses include waterfowl, like ducks, geese and swans, and aquatic birds, like storks. While most wild birds can be infected without being sick, poultry, like chickens and turkeys, can get infected and get very sick and die. Most common songbirds found in the yard, like cardinals, robins, sparrows, crows or pigeons, do not get infected with avian influenza viruses.

One subtype of bird flu, caused by avian influenza A (H5) virus, is spreading worldwide in wild birds and causing sporadic outbreaks in U.S. poultry and dairy cows. In addition to spreading to an increasing number of mammals, H5 bird flu has caused some rare human infections (**currently, no human cases have been reported in New Jersey**). The current public health risk is low for H5 bird flu, and CDC is watching the situation carefully and working with states to monitor people with exposures to animals that are infected or potentially infected with avian influenza A viruses.

Signs and Symptoms The reported signs and symptoms of avian influenza in humans have ranged from none to severe disease and even death. Mild signs and symptoms may include: eye redness and irritation (conjunctivitis); mild fever (temperature of approximately 100°F) or feeling feverish; cough; sore throat; runny or stuffy nose; muscle or body aches; headaches; and fatigue. Eye redness has been the predominant symptom among recent U.S. cases of avian influenza A (H5) virus infection. Less common symptoms include diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting. Moderate-to-severe signs may include high fever, shortness of breath or difficult breathing, altered consciousness, and seizures.

Treatment Flu antiviral drugs can treat avian influenza. People who develop bird flu following exposure to infected animals should receive treatment with flu antivirals (oseltamivir) as soon as possible. Also, people exposed to infected animals who did not wear the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) or who had a breach in the PPE, may be offered flu antivirals, regardless of whether they have symptoms or not. Antiviral treatment works best within 48 hours of developing symptoms and should not be delayed while awaiting test results. At this time, there is no recommendation for people to be vaccinated against bird flu and there is no commercially available vaccine to do so. Seasonal flu vaccines are not designed or intended to protect against avian influenza viruses.

General Recommendations Avoid contact with wild or domestic birds that appear ill or have died. Do not eat or drink raw milk or products made with raw milk. Choosing pasteurized milk is the best way to keep you and your family safe. While your annual flu shot will not protect against bird flu, it will reduce the risk of getting sick with human influenza and, thus, the risk for seasonal and bird flu co-infection.



First Baptist Church of Allentown

PLEASE
JOIN US FOR

SOUPER Saturday

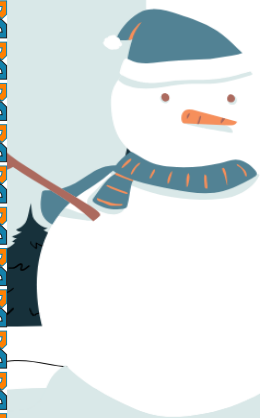
HOMEMADE SOUPS - TRICKY TRAY - VENDORS

FEBRUARY 22ND, 2025

STARTS AT 10:00 AM
AUCTION DRAWING WILL BEGIN AT 1:30PM

72 WAKER AVE, ALLENTOWN, NJ 08501

609-259-9177





Restoration Continues at Historic Robbins Burial Ground

Tucked away off Route 524 in Upper Freehold, the Ye Olde Robbins Burial Place holds the graves of Revolutionary War and Civil War veterans as well as that of the great grand-aunt of President Abraham Lincoln. It's an important part of community history which TAVI, Allentown Boy Scout Troop 180A and descendants of the Robbins family have been working for two years to restore. The site is also part

of TAVI's "Historic Cemetery Trail Driving Tour." TAVI needs your help to continue the work this spring – Please share a few hours of your time so that the stories of those who rest there are not lost to future generations. **Sign up for this year's clean-up of the site and help solve "The mystery in the woods."**

Robbins Burial Ground Clean-up

*Saturday, March 1,
2025 at 9 a.m.*

Rain Date: 3/8/25

*Route 524, Upper
Freehold (look for the
roadside marker)*

Register at

www.allentownvinj.org

*For more info call
(609) 208-9991*

Historically Speaking: A Virtual Lecture Series

The Murder of *Wench Betty*

Presented by Historian Sue Kozel

Learn about an enslaved woman's denial of justice, freedom, and human rights, and the resulting 1784 court case.

Thursday, February 20 at 7:00 pm

Co-sponsored by Monmouth County Historical Association



MonmouthCountyLib.org
@MonCoLibrary

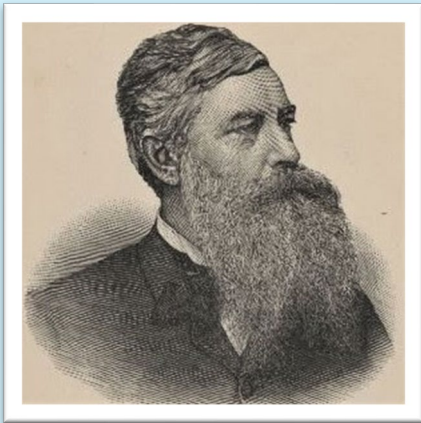


Registration required.

Join Upper Freehold resident Sue Kozel for this free zoom lecture.

Ms. Kozel, a public historian, has researched the murder of "Wench Betty," an enslaved woman in Arthur Barkalow's Upper Freehold household. The only record of Betty's life was the investigation of her murder. Despite a Court review, Betty's murderer appears to have avoided jail. Register at <https://monmouthnj250.org/event/the-murder-of-wench-betty-free-zoom-lecture-with-public-historian-sue-kozel/> to hear the fascinating story.

TAVI Opens Newell Award Applications



William Augustus Newell

TAVI will present the 5th Annual William Augustus Newell Award to a deserving area high school student this coming June. Applications are now being accepted for the Award, which includes a \$250 honorarium.

William Augustus Newell (September 5, 1817 – August 8, 1901) was a physician in Allentown for over 30 years (and personal physician to Abraham Lincoln), a 3-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives (during which time he was Lincoln's roommate), the 18th governor of New Jersey and the 1st governor of Washington Territory. He may be best known for the Newell Act, which created the U.S. Life-Saving Service, forerunner of the U.S. Coast Guard.

TAVI's Newell Award honors Governor Newell's amazing service to our country and to Allentown (he resided at 81 S. Main St.), The Award is given to a high-school senior for outstanding service to the local community. Award winners will be chosen based on their **significant and tangible contributions** to the community, which, like TAVI, focus on historic preservation/education, support of the local business community, natural resource protection, and/or the advancement of the arts and culture. To apply for the award, visit www.allentownvinj.org



**HELP SENIOR DOGS
DONATE YOUR UNWANTED JEWELRY**
VINTAGE - DESIGNER - COSTUME
FINE JEWELRY - WATCHES
EVEN BROKEN JEWELRY WILL BE ACCEPTED



Marty's Place Drop Off: Tues. - Sat. 11:30 am to 2:00 pm
Mail to: Marty's Place Senior Dog Sanctuary
118 Route 526, Allentown NJ 08501

Also accepting: gently used designer handbags, small collectibles, vintage concert T shirts, vintage jewelry boxes & sterling silver serving pieces/flatware

Questions? Email: Events@martysplace.org



Allentown Public Library

A branch of the Monmouth County Library System
16S Main St. Allentown, NJ 08501 Telephone 609-259-7565
MonmouthCountyLib.org Connect with us! @ MonCoLibrary

BABY STORYTIME - Ages 6 - 24 months (with parent/caregiver)

Share stories, sing songs, and make memories!
Thursdays at 10:15 am



FAMILY STORYTIME - All ages welcome! (with parent/caregiver)

Share stories, sing songs, and make memories!
Thursdays from 11:45 am

GETTING CRAFTY - Ages 3 and up (with parent/caregiver)

Come make a craft after school at the library!
Thursdays at 4:30 pm

February 6 - Valentine Rocket
February 13 - I Love You Hand
February 20 - Origami Hearts
February 27 - Paper Plate Frog



TWEEN CREATIVITY CORNER - Ages 8 - 12 (with parent/caregiver)

STEAM and stories for tweens!
Thursday, February 11 at 5:30 pm

This month: Aluminum Foil Watercolors



TAKE' N MAKE CRAFTS

Pick up a craft kit to make-at-home!
Find directions on the

[Monmouth County Library's Kids page.](#)

February 1 - 14: Penguin
February 15 - 28: Dog



Take Your Child to the Library Day ■ Saturday, February 1.
Check your local library for activities and crafts!

NJ's Wildlife Tracker Needs You!

What's roaming around your neighborhood? The State of New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife wants to know. The Division says "Wildlife sightings from the public are incredibly useful." Data collected keeps the State's Natural Heritage/Biotics inventory current and contributes to critical habitat mapping. It also aids the Division's monitoring of "habitat occupancy and population trends over time," ultimately helping to manage the recovery of potentially endangered species. The records created are utilized for conservation efforts by land-users and natural area managers.

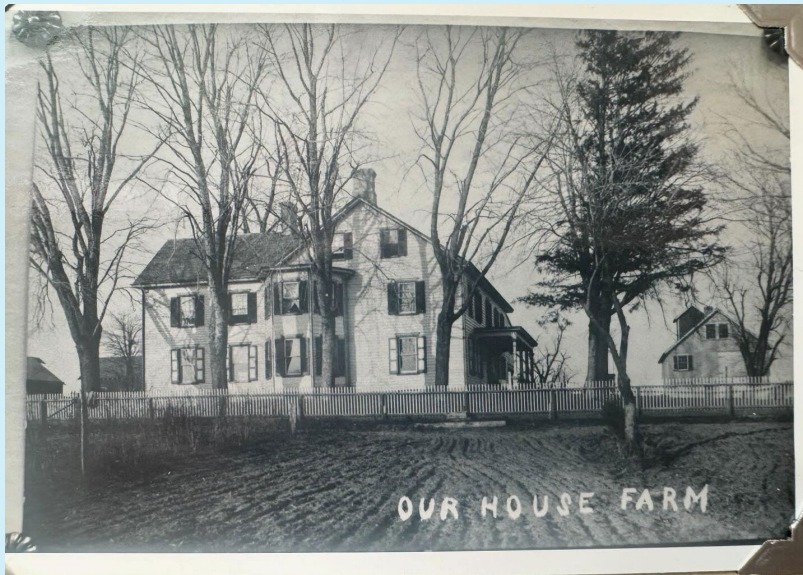


Even roadkill reports can help, since the State uses the information in efforts to make our landscape easier for wildlife to move through. Visit <https://dep.nj.gov/njfw/conservation/reporting-rare-wildlife-sightings/> or scan the QR code for more information and to report wildlife sightings, including rare species and roadkill incidents. Bobcat, river otter, fox, "Upland Game Bird" – every critter counts! If you see a bear, call the DEP Hotline (1-877-WARN-DEP or 1-877-927-6337).

Happy Anniversary

Bullock Farm Celebrates 165 Years in Upper Freehold

When the Bullock family started farming on Emleys Hill Road in Cream Ridge in 1860 Lincoln was just running for president. Seven generations, 31 presidents and 165 years later, the Bullocks are still working their 175-acre farm in Upper Freehold Township. The family will be celebrating all year long, highlighting the history of their farm and what life was like for their ancestors who built the family tradition of farming in Central New Jersey.



Bullock farm is one of many preserved farms in Upper Freehold, and also boasts the State's first farm brewery – Screamin' Hill – opened by the family in 2015 in the farm's original rustic red barn dating from the 1800's. The Bullocks grow corn, straw, soybeans, wheat and barley, but may be best known in the community for their beautiful Christmas trees. The farm hosts pick-your-own pumpkins during fall harvest festivities and opens Cranberry House craft shop each holiday season. For more information, visit the farm website at <https://www.bullockfarms.com/>

Congratulations to the Bullocks – We are grateful for their dedication to their farm and our community.



Save the Dates: April 5 & 6, 2025

TAVI's 4th Annual

Daffodil Days

*Back better than ever,
with over 10,000
daffodils across town.*

*Make plans now to be part of
the celebration!*

Featuring:

Saturday, April 5, 2025 –

Walking Tour Weekend – Take a walk around town to learn about Allentown's history, architecture, the Underground Railroad and historic cemeteries. Bring your children to Heritage Park for the return of the Library's "Story Walk" through the daffodils. Work up an appetite for the FFA's Spaghetti Dinner starting at 5:30 at Hope Firehouse.

Sunday, April 6, 2025 –

"Sounds of Spring" – Join us for performances by the WilloLand Duo and Yvonne Rondinone, in concert at Allentown Methodist Church, free at 3 pm.

**Stay tuned for the full
Calendar of Events coming soon!**



A Little Magnanimity Goes a Long Way

TAVI's been told by an important figure in town that we are 'political' despite our statement in TAVI's Community Engagement Policy that we try our best not to be. Of course, we qualified our statement by indicating that by 'political' we meant 'partisan,' which, as a group, we are not. Unfortunately, life, by its very nature, forces folks to take a side, or no side at all, about a variety of things, which results in a political (involving human interaction) outcome. TAVI has, in fact, taken positions on a number of topics, including the fact that warehouses are being foisted on us; the fact that individuals are buried beneath roadways that adjoin a local historic cemetery; and the fact that TAVI has had its 1st amendment rights infringed. All of these things were done at the hands of one or another local government. So, yes, we are political in that sense. But it always has been, and always will be, for the good of the Allentown and Upper Freehold communities that we try our best to serve.

While trying to educate the public about the concerns raised above and attempting to address those concerns to the extent that we are able, we have supported our local small businesses, houses of worship, and civic organizations, sponsored arts and culture events and talks on local history, and provided local students with Alice Wikoff's *Sketchbook of Historic Allentown* and with our own annual William Augustus Newell Award for outstanding service to our community. We've also published *TAVI's Guide to Fun, Learning, & Adventure in Historic Allentown & Upper Freehold, NJ* for the benefit of local residents and to encourage tourism to our broader community. All for free.

We were glad to read about all of the good things that have happened in Allentown in 2024 and all of the parties that have contributed to those successes and accomplishments. We heartily congratulate everyone involved! TAVI, however, was not mentioned. As this new year unfolds, in the spirit of community-mindedness, and in opposition to the penchant for pettiness, we would ask that our local government officials (as well as those on a larger stage) try to discern the difference between disagreement and antagonism and seek to encourage, rather than discourage, collaboration for the benefit of our community.

The Allentown Village Initiative (TAVI)

President – Martha Ploshay

Vice President – Annette DeFalco

Treasurer – Alan DeFalco

Secretary – Jackie Bossart

Trustee/TAVI Times Editor – Mike McCormick

Trustees – Alice Wikoff, Jeff Ploshay, Debbi McCormick, David Bossart

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