The TAVI Times

Bringing Local Journalism Back to Our Community

A Community Service of The Allentown Village Initiative

August 5, 2026 - Volume VI, Issue VIII

PORCH FEST COMES TO ALLENTOWN

Music, art & history highlight TAVI250 Celebration on Sept. 12

Mark your calendar to save the afternoon of September 12th for the first event of fall (even though it will still be summer!). TAVI's "Porch Fest" will bring musicians and artists to Main Street porches from noon to 4 pm in this inaugural, free community event for Allentown as the celebration of America's 250th birthday continues.

Local musicians will be performing – and artists exhibiting – on porches along Main Street. During your porch visit, enjoy reading about the history of the house, which will be available at each site. Check in at TAVI's Welcome Table and pick up a map and schedule for the day's performances. TAVI's walking tours will also be available for self-guided strolls through town. Explore Allentown's vintage architecture, historic cemeteries and its role in the Underground Railroad. Downtown Allentown's boutique shopping and dining also promise to be highlights of the day. Stroll around town to hear live local talent, enjoy the creativity of local artists, and learn some fascinating history. Grab a bite, drink, or coffee from one of Allentown's great small businesses and take in all the energy and "happy vibes" of small-town Americana.

*ARE YOU A LOCAL ARTIST OR MUSICIAN? IF SO, WE'VE GOT A PORCH FOR **YOU**! THERE'S STILL TIME TO BE PART OF ALLENTOWN'S FIRST PORCH FEST. CONTACT MARTHA PLOSHAY AT (609) 529-4524 OR BY EMAIL AT PLOSHAY@JUNO.COM*

Porch Fest is the next event of TAVI250, a year-long celebration of America's 250th birthday, with special thanks to Allentown's Main Street homeowners who are welcoming us to their front porches! This year's mini-music festival is free because of the support of First Commerce Bank and Fulton Bank as well as a grant from Monmouth Arts, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the Monmouth County Board of Commissioners.

Plight of the Honey Bee

Bee Kind (and lay off the pesticides)

New Jersey has just suffered the worst die-off of honey bees in history. Between 2024 and 2025 beekeepers lost 62% of their hives – about 1.7 million honey bee colonies. In New Jersey the problem is worsened by all of the pesticides we use to keep our suburban lawns a lush green and our gardens in full bloom. Here in Allentown and Upper Freehold, honey bees who are hard at work on local farms are impacted by the chemicals used in neighboring housing developments. Bees visit both, and can bring back to their hives a deadly cocktail of the sprays being applied to lawns, gardens, orchards and farm fields. The impact on bees, known as Colony Collapse Disorder, has been devastating.

Recent studies done by Prof. Scott McArt, Associate Professor of Pollinator Health at Cornell University have shown that low-dose, chronic exposure can break down a bee's resistance over time and lead to its eventual death. What many people consider the perfect yard, low maintenance evergreens on mulched islands in a sea of lawn, provide no food at all for the honey bee. Because of these and other factors, the natural ability of honey bees to fight off disease organisms has been greatly diminished, allowing new diseases to take their toll. It is becoming rare to see honey bees in the garden or field unless there is a beekeeper in the area.

The New Jersey Beekeepers Association (NJBA) is a state-wide organization of backyard, sideline, and commercial beekeepers. The purpose of the organization is to foster and promote the art of beekeeping in New Jersey, educate residents of the Garden State about the state insect, the honey bee, and its vital role in agriculture, and promote public policy that nurtures and supports the honey bee. The NJBA urges New Jerseyans to be proactive with environmental practices that protect bees, including:

- Planting a pollinator garden (like the one TAVI planted in town at The Point).
- Landscaping with "pollinator friendly" plants that bloom throughout the summer and fall
- Advocating for permanent pollinator gardens in our public spaces
- Limiting or eliminating pesticides and herbicides in your garden
- Attend town meetings and contact your legislators and voice your opinion about the importance of making pollinator gardens a permanent part of our public landscape.
- Supply clean water in a birdbath, or even a shallow bowl, changing water often to avoid breeding mosquitoes and adding sticks or small stones so that visiting bees don't drown.

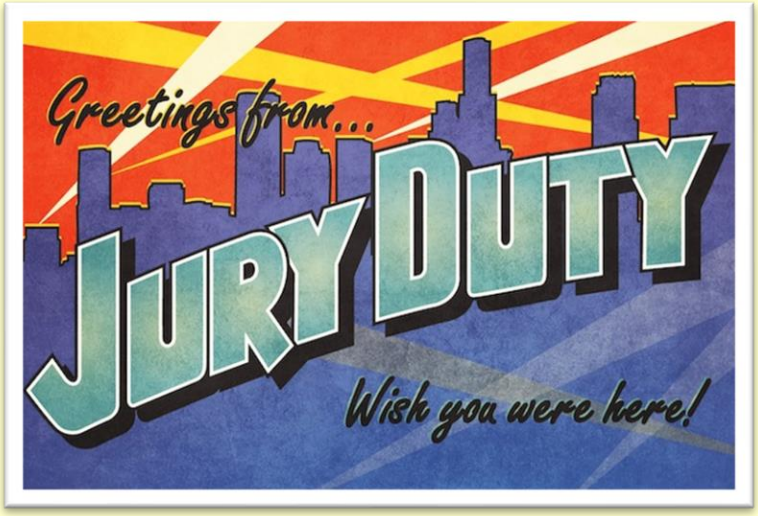
70% of U.S. commercial crops - including a great variety of fruits, vegetables and even nuts - depend on pollination by honey bees. In fact, the only major food group that is not insect-pollinated is grains such as corn, wheat and rice. In recent years, beekeepers have been hard pressed to keep up with the task. Bees prefer meadows of weedy wildflowers, and nectar-bearing trees and shrubs such as black locust, linden or basswood, tulip poplar, sumac, and others. If you are interested in planting for honey bees, visit the NJBA at https://www.njbeekeepers.org/, contact the Monmouth County Agriculture Extension Service at (732) 431-7260 or call the Monmouth County Master Gardeners Hotline at (732) 303-7614.

Serving on a Jury

Editor's Note: Following is the seventh installment in TAVI's 12-part series ("civics refresher") outlining our form of government and discussing duties that are critical to supporting it.

Relatively few of us look forward to serving on a jury. We all have our own lives to live and, for many, having to serve on a jury is an imposition to say the least. Some find it inconvenient; some, burdensome; and some, intimidating. A few find it novel, exciting, or even flattering (that they've been summoned to participate in a critical facet of our judicial process). But, when you get past all the emotional reactions to receiving a summons to serve, what should you think? If you haven't served on a jury previously, it would help to think about what you are being asked to do. If you are being summoned to serve on a Grand Jury and are ultimately selected, you will be asked to "determine whether there is enough evidence to charge someone with a crime." If you are being summoned to serve on a Petit Jury and are ultimately selected, you will be asked to "listen to all the evidence presented and render a verdict at the end of the trial." Then, you might want to think about what The Founding Fathers had in mind when they wrote the Constitution and the specific amendments that speak to the reasons we have a jury system.

The 5th amendment states that "No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury…." Presumably, it is more difficult to convince a Grand Jury to indict someone for a crime unless the evidence is compelling. That concept, in theory, limits the likelihood that someone will be charged with a crime without merit and without a level of agreement among the jurors. That is something everyone should wish for if they were to find themselves in a situation where they are accused of a crime.



The 6th amendment states that "In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense." Here, too, the goal is that an accused individual has a degree of protection against not only protracted trials, but trials where bias could become an issue in determining guilt or innocence. Again, this is something that anyone who is accused of a crime should want to be the case.

The only way to ensure that this system works as it was intended is to motivate potential jurors to participate and adhere to the fundamental dictates and principles of the process. So, the next time you receive a summons in the mail to serve on a jury, try putting yourself in the place of the accused and think how much better it is that we have the system that we do, the occasional miscarriages of justice notwithstanding, than that we live under a system where these safeguards don't exist or, worse, where systemic corruption and bias are the order of the day.

Sources: Jury Service: What to Expect When Answering the Call. uscourts.gov.
General Jury Information. njcourts.gov.

TAVI250
A celebration of America's 250th Birthday

Friends Preserve Old Yellow Meeting House

By Johncarlos Rivera

What is so special about the Upper Freehold meeting house that just happens to be both "old" and "yellow"? It's that our community's *Old Yellow Meeting House* also has some very special and dedicated "friends" who work to ensure that it will continue to be preserved into its third century.

The story of the Old Yellow Meeting House goes back to 1720 when the land on which it sits was donated to the Baptist church by Thomas and Rachel Salter for the construction of a house of worship and cemetery. The current meeting house took the place of the previous church after it burned down in 1737. It is said to be the oldest Baptist meeting house in New Jersey and the third oldest in the United States. The surviving parsonage was constructed in 1830, and since 1977 the Meeting House, the parsonage, and cemetery have been restored with the help of the nonprofit Friends of the Old Yellow Meeting House.

The Board of the Friends of the Old Yellow Meeting House is served by Ann Van Hise as President, Nancy Tindall as Vice-President and Suzanne Valpreda as Secretary. "When I moved to Allentown, history easily gets into your system because it surrounds you" said John Fabiano, historian and treasurer of Friends of the Old Yellow Meeting House. He said the purpose of the organization is to preserve and care for the Meeting House by making improvements when and where it's needed most.

Nowadays, the church is not used for worship services, but the grounds are accessible to the public and the Meeting House is open to events or special arrangements. The Parsonage is not accessible to the public and is privately occupied. However, on June 14, there was a rare chance for the public to view the inside of the parsonage along with a performance by Charlie Zahm at the Meeting House. "It was wonderful, everybody was in good spirits" Fabiano said about the event. "Recently, we've become more program oriented, which is good for us. It gives us a lot of exposure and hopefully will increase our memberships."

There are still plans ahead for the Old Yellow Meeting house like the Weekend of Living History on September 26 and 27. This event will feature reenactments of Spencer's Additional Continental Regiment in the American Revolutionary War and premier Monmouth historian Michael Adelberg is going to speak about the "Tory Insurrection" in Upper Freehold in 1776.

With almost 300 years of religious, architectural, and community history preserved, the Meeting House is a permanent reminder of New Jersey's colonial past. Future generations will be able to enjoy this special piece of America's history thanks to its meticulous restoration by the Friends of the Old Yellow Meeting House. The Old Yellow Meeting House is located at 72 Meetinghouse Road, Cream Ridge, NJ 08514. For more information visit the Friends online at https://www.oymh.org/

Allentown Garden Club Ready for Fall Growth --

The Allentown Garden Club is looking forward to a new season of speakers, activities and events. Meetings are 7 pm on the second Thursday of every month at Allentown United Methodist Church, 23 Church Street. The first meeting after "summer hiatus" on September 10th will welcome back Carl Hesselein from Pleasant Run Nursery to discuss "under-utilized plants." All are always welcome!

Seniors Thriving in Allentown, looking for help from Upper Freehold

By Ryan Conway

Ever since development for Four Seasons at Upper Freehold finished up 22 years ago, the senior community has grown in Allentown and Upper Freehold. Four Seasons at Upper Freehold is a community exclusively for residents of 55 and older. Its 387 homes are meant to be a reserved, relaxing community for seniors in western Monmouth County. While the complex has an Allentown mailing address, the area is really in the middle of Upper Freehold, which means that homeowners pay property taxes to Upper Freehold, not Allentown.

But some Four Seasons residents are hoping for more support from Upper Freehold. Barbara Schuman, a Four Seasons resident and Chair of its Trips and Tours Committee, feels that the Upper Freehold government doesn't show much interest in providing for seniors who live in the complex, which is disappointing, given what they pay in property taxes.

While some Four Seasons residents feel let down in what they receive from Upper Freehold, they feel the borough of Allentown is the exact opposite. Allentown's Senior Citizen Committee consists of seniors from Allentown as well as some Four Seasons residents. The committee received a $1,000 budget from the borough to help plan special events for seniors, such as pizza parties, yoga sessions, and other occasions. These events aren't just for Allentown residents – they're also open to those in Upper Freehold and the surrounding area.

Steve Satran, another Four Seasons resident, is a member of Allentown's Senior Citizen Committee. He believes that the active elder community is mutually benefitting them and the rest of the borough. "I think the Four Seasons community interacts quite well with Allentown borough," Satran said. "I think that we've been very well received by the borough."

Schuman also praised Allentown's Senior Citizen Committee, and once attended an Upper Freehold Township Committee meeting to tell the committee what Allentown did for its seniors. She even suggested that Upper Freehold could allot some funds to Allentown's Senior Citizen Committee. "They have a small budget from Allentown and I said I think that it would behoove the Upper Freehold council to put a little in our budget to help out on that because they do serve and welcome a large number of our residents."

Schuman also believes that the other residents of Allentown get along with the Four Seasons community, though she doesn't think it started out that way. But she thinks the taxes that Four Seasons seniors have paid in have helped fortify the town, such as with respect to school finances. "When our community was being built, the people of Allentown were not happy to see us right where we are outside of town because they were sure we would hold down education bills," Schuman said. "But I think over the years, they have seen that we are a positive force."

Marge's Deli, Rick's Saddle Shop, Roost Still Open Despite Bridge, Detour Problems

Even if you haven't yet experienced the Route 539 detour, by now you've heard that the bridge south of the Cream Ridge Golf Course and north of Route 539's intersection with Burlington Path Road was washed out by a recent storm. The closure has been characterized as "indefinite" while the bridge is reconstructed. Unfortunately, this closure makes it a bit more challenging to navigate the area, and is having a significant impact on local small businesses. Marge's Deli, Rick's Saddle Shop and the popular "Roost" restaurant are all within the detour area and need our help to weather this potentially long-term storm. All three businesses are still open, but might not be by the time the bridge is rebuilt, if we don't continue to patronize them. Take a few extra minutes to support our friends and neighbors who depend on their small businesses to support their families. Here's your roadmap to getting there while Route 539 is closed –

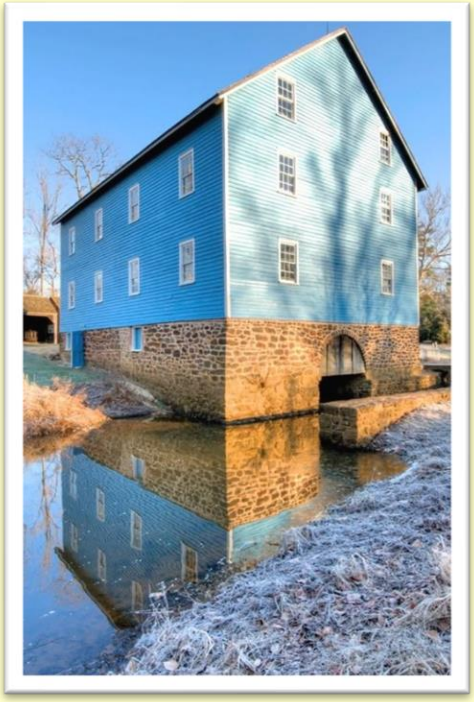
Marge's Deli – From the south, carefully go around the "Road Closed" sign to reach Marge's, which is about 300 feet up from the sign on your left (and south of the closed bridge). From the north, take 539 south and make a right onto Walnford Road. At the end of Walnford Road, make a left onto Holmes Mill Road, go about 1.5 miles and make a left onto Burlington Path Road, which will bring you back out to the corner of Burlington Path Road and Route 539. From there you can go around the "Road Closed" sign to reach Marge's, which is open Monday through Friday from 5 a.m. to 3 p.m. On Saturday, Marge's opens at 6 a.m. and closes at 3 p.m. They're closed on Sunday's. Call ahead at (609) 758-8431.

Rick's Saddle Shop – From the south, you can just make it to Rick's at the corner of Burlington Path Road and 539. From the north, follow the same detour directions as those given to get to Marge's Deli. Rick's is open Monday through Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and on Sunday's from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Reach them by phone at (609) 758-7267 or online at https://saddlesource.com/

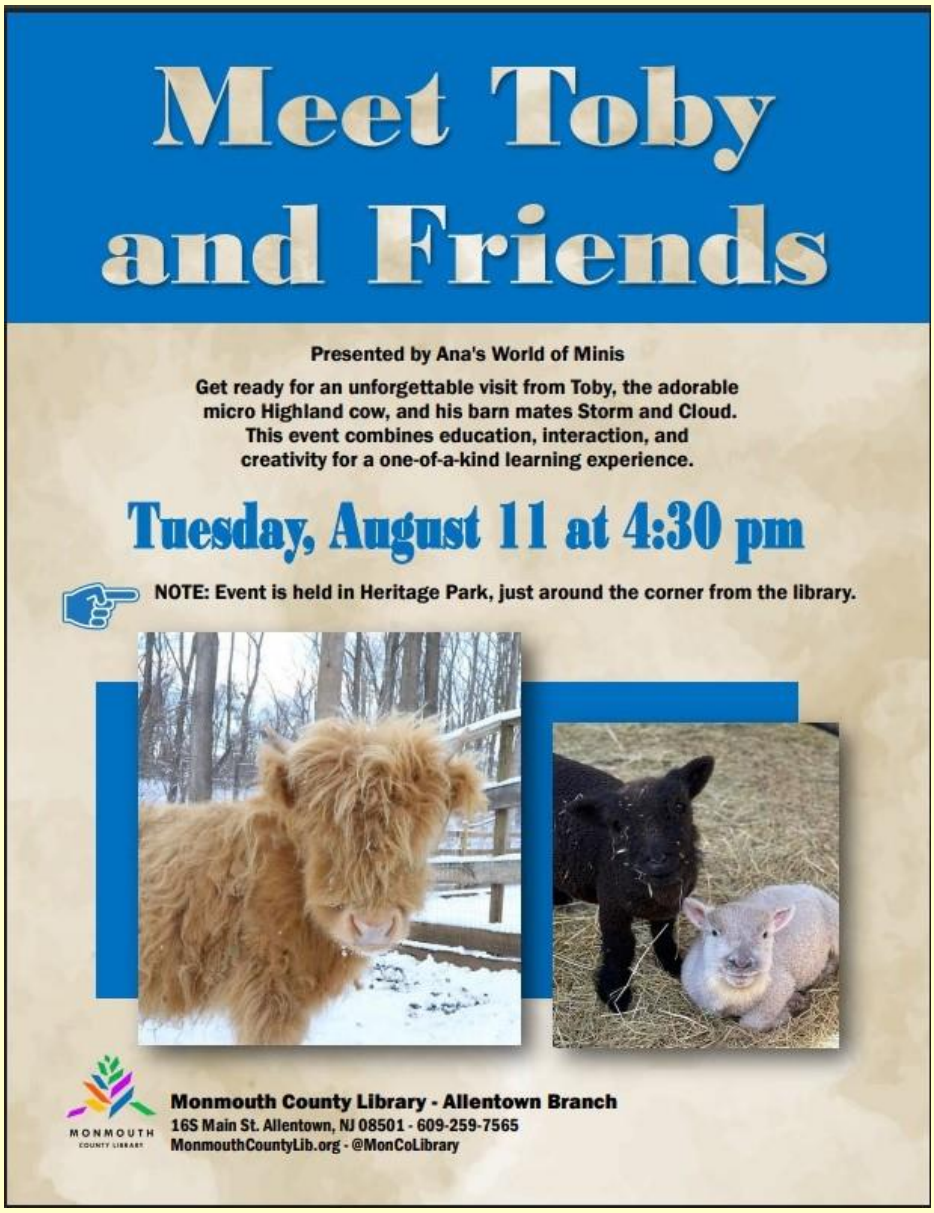
The Roost – From the south, starting at Rick's Saddle Shop and turn right onto Burlington Path Road. Turn left onto Harvey Road and follow it to the end. Turn left onto Davis Station Road and continue until you arrive at The Roost. If you're coming from Allentown, Robbinsville, or Hamilton, starting at Allentown High School, head south on Allentown-Davis Station Road. Continue past Cream Ridge Winery and follow the road to the traffic circle. Take the first exit, and you'll see The Roost on your first right. The Roost is open Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to midnight, Sunday from 11 a.m. and Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Call (609) 208-2500 and visit online at https://theroostrestaurant.com/

Please drive safely and slowly through the detours!

Historic Walnford Gristmill Grinds Again



Visit Historic Walnford in Upper Freehold during August for a unique demonstration of its gristmill in action. Built in 1873 by Richard Waln, a Quaker abolitionist, the mill was used to turn corn and wheat grown on local farms into usable meal and flour. The mill is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is part of a 36-acre Monmouth County Park site that includes the Waln family homestead, corn crib and carriage house. Definitely worth a visit on a summer afternoon! The 15-minute demonstrations are free. The historic house is also open free of charge. Walnford is located at 62 Walnford Road, Upper Freehold, NJ 08501. The demonstration schedule is:
August 8 & 9, 12:30, 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30 p.m.
August 15 & 16, 2, 3, 4, and 5 p.m.
August 29 & 30, 12:30, 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30 p.m.
Visit online at
https://www.monmouthcountyparks.com/page.aspx?Id=2541



"A Little Dirt, A Lotta Love"

Lavender Farm Opens in Upper Freehold

Perhaps you've noticed a change in one of the Reed Sod Farm fields this year in the form of neatly manicured rows of lavender plants. The new crop is the handiwork of Laura Reed, proprietor of "Lavender Peace Farm" located at 100 Route 526, Allentown, NJ 08501. The Farm offers a wide range of lavender varieties and handcrafted artisanal products. Visit her online at https://www.facebook.com/p/ Lavender-Peace-Farm-61558083964687/ or call (609) 690-0088

PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

LOCATED IN ALLENTOWN, NJ

JOIN US FOR AN IN-PERSON SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS OF NEURODIVERGENT KIDDOS!

MONTHLY MEETINGS

6:30PM-8PM

CHECK WEBSITE FOR DATES AND LINK TO RSVP

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION INCLUDE: ADHD, ASD, ANXIETY, DYSLEXIA, SENSORY ISSUES, AUDITORY PROCESSING, EXECUTIVE FUNCTION CHALLENGES, LEARNING DISABILITIES, ETC

MOST MEETINGS FEATURE A TOPIC & SPECIAL GUEST FOLLOWED BY OPEN DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS? EMAIL: PONKSOFNJ@GMAIL.COM

Parents Of Neurodivergent Kiddos Support
WWW.PONKSOFNJ.COM

"I think I shall never see anything as lovely as a tree"

It's not too late to sign up to receive a free tree for your yard from TAVI's "25 for 250" Tree Program. As part of TAVI250, celebrating America's 250th birthday, TAVI is giving away 25 trees to Allentown and Upper Freehold homeowners. Tree varieties include tulip poplar, red maple and sweet gum. Each tree is between 2 and 4 feet tall and is ready to be planted in your yard this fall. Tree distribution will take place in early October; Planting assistance is available. With minimal care, the trees will grow to provide shade and beauty to your property. Visit https://www.allentownvinj.org/tavi250-trees.html to sign up for your tree today and with a gift that will serve our community for generations to come!

We need backpacks, clothing, and school supplies for over 1,500 local kids in need!

Contact Mary Beth Drew for child's name, size, and instructions for the organization of the items!
609.954.8705 or 5drews@optonline.net

GOT TREASURES? SELL THEM AT

ALLENTOWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

COMMUNITY FLEA MARKET

SATURDAY
SEPT 19TH

9:00 AM -
2:00 PM

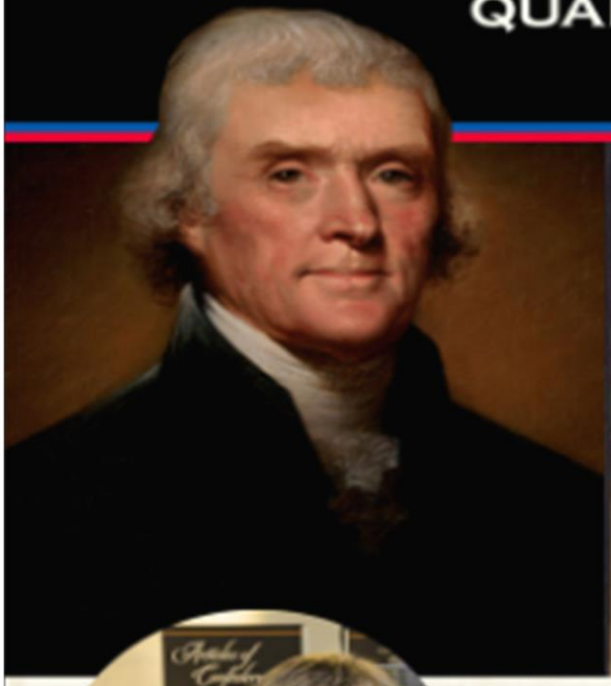
23 CHURCH STREET, ALLENTOWN, NJ

RESERVE A 10 X 10 SPACE FOR $20, BRING YOUR OWN TABLE,
USE THE GROUND SPACE OR SELL OUT OF THE BACK OF YOUR CAR

CONTACT DENISE ERB @ DENISEERB50@GMAIL.COM
FOR MORE INFO OR TO RESERVE YOUR SPACE

PROCEEDS FROM THE RENTAL SPACE
BENEFIT THE YOUTH PROGRAM AT UMC

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S COMPLICATED QUAKER RELATIONSHIPS: WORK & SLAVERY



TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 15
AT 6:30 PM

PRESENTED BY:

SUE KOZEL
LOCAL HISTORIAN

Explore Thomas Jefferson's vision of liberty, equality, and individual rights, the experiences of the people he enslaved, and the role Quakers played in supporting his household.

Registration required.

Monmouth County Library - Allentown Branch
16 S. Main Street, Allentown, NJ 08501 • 609-259-7565
MonmouthCountyLib.org • @MonCoLibrary

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 from 10:15 - 10:45 am

FAMILY STORYTIME - All ages welcome! (with parent/caregiver)
Share stories, sing songs, and make memories!
Thursdays from 11:45 am - 12:15 pm

SENSORY STATIONS - Ages 6 months - 4 years (with parent/caregiver)
Learn, grow, and be curious! Drop-in and child-led;
stay for the full hour or just a little bit.
Every Monday from 2:00 - 3:00 pm

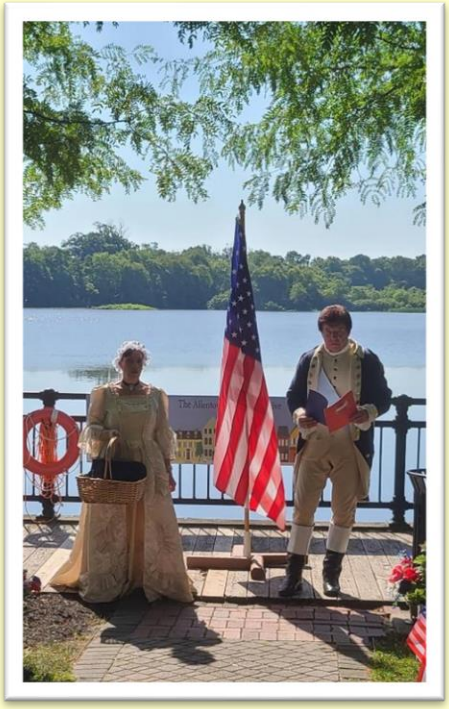
GETTING CRAFTY - Ages 3 and up (with parent/caregiver)
Come make a craft after school at the library!
Thursdays from 4:15 - 4:45 pm
August 6 - Creating Collages!
August 13 - Paper Tissue Cherry Blossoms!
August 20 - Sailboat!
No craft on August 27. See Special Event below!

LEGO® CLUB - Ages 5 and up (with parent/caregiver)
Get creative and free-build with LEGO® bricks
Tuesday, August 25 from 4:30 - 5:30 pm

SPECIAL EVENTS
Anna's World of Minis - All ages welcome
Meet Toby the Highland Cow and his barn mates Storm and Cloud!
Tuesday, August 11 from 4:30 - 5:30 pm
NOTE: Event will take place at Heritage Park

Read to a Dog - All ages welcome (with parent/caregiver)
Practice your reading skills with a therapy dog!
Tuesday, August 18 from 4:30 - 5:30 pm

The Lizard Guy! - All ages welcome (with parent/caregiver)
Bringing the zoo to the library!
Learn about and interact with various types of reptiles!
Thursday, August 27 from 4:30 - 5:30 pm



Celebrating a Great Nation

Annual reading of Declaration of Independence brings community together

Over 150 people gathered in Sensi Park early July 4th morning to publicly read the Declaration of Independence in TAVI's annual celebration of America's birthday. The crowd was joined by George and Martha Washington, with the General arriving by boat across Conine's Pond. In addition to hearing the words of the Declaration, the program reminded us of the great sacrifices made by many of the signers, patriots who put their lives – and in many instances, those of their families as well – on the line to support American independence.

Above, Martha and George Washington address the crowd in Sensi Park; Right: Allentown and Upper Freehold celebrating America's Semiquincentennial in Sensi Park on july 4th with TAVI's Annual Proclamation of the Declaration of Independence

The TAVI Times – *The return of local journalism to our community*

The TAVI Times exists to report local stories you are not likely to see elsewhere. Please send us your local news as well as information about the events and activities which make Allentown and Upper Freehold a great place to live. News, events and activities are free -- TAVI is a small band of volunteers which happily serves our community free of charge. If you are a small business owner, please consider supporting TAVI's many community service projects by purchasing ad space in this monthly publication, now reaching over 3,000 households in the Allentown-Upper Freehold area.

Contact Mike McCormick at ***mccormicknj@aol.com*** for more information.

The Allentown Village Initiative (TAVI)

President – Martha Ploshay Vice President – Mike McCormick

Treasurer – Alan DeFalco Secretary – Jacqueline Bossart

Trustees – Jeff Ploshay, Debbi McCormick, David Bossart, Kevin Jean-Louis, Denise Erb

Trustee Emeritus – Alice Wikoff

Donations are always gratefully accepted

https://www.allentownvinj.org/donate.html

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