

Hainesport Community Chronicle

A Bimonthly Newsletter Supporting Hainesport's Commitment to Community

Elizabeth Gallagher, Editor

Spotlight on Veterans Appreciation Day Luncheon

Elizabeth Gallagher



Those who play the popular New York Times *Connections* game might be hard pressed to identify the connections among various groups of words, like these: **Chick-fil-A, Dogs, Color Guard, Air Force or Army, Jersey Mike's, Door Prizes, Marines, or Honorees, Navy, Hainesport Dunkin', Crisis Response.** However, the connection is the same for each group: Hainesport Township's Veterans Appreciation Day Luncheon—and what a luncheon it was!

A spirit of shared community and appreciation set the stage for the luncheon, as twenty-two honorees, representing the Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy, joined their guests, local business owners, Hainesport Seniors, Hainesport Committee members, and volunteers at this well-attended event presented by the Hainesport Recreation Department. The keynote speaker, Ronald Aiello (pictured above with his wife, Judy), who served with the First Marine Scout Dog Platoon from 1964 to 1970, reminded attendees of the concepts of service, teamwork, and loyalty, as he recounted the history of the United States War Dogs Association (USDWA), a nonprofit organization he co-founded with four other Vietnam vet dog handlers. In 1966, Ron and his dog, Stormy, were among the first Marine Scout Dog Teams to be deployed to Vietnam.

During his deployment, Ron developed a deep appreciation for the service Stormy and other military dogs provided to the United States.

It was this deep appreciation that ultimately inspired Ron and four other military dog handlers, Bob Cicero, Bucky Grimm, Al Gunderson, and Bob Thompson, to create the USDWA. Some may not realize that despite the fact that military working dogs have served in every major conflict in which the U.S. has been involved, for decades these dogs were classified as merely “surplus equipment.” Consequently, after their retirement, many of these dogs were euthanized or abandoned. Fortunately, pursuant to federal legislation passed in 2000, law enforcement agencies, handlers, and the general public may adopt retired military working dogs. Since 2000, the USWDA has honored war dogs in many ways, including raising money to dedicate a memorial to war dogs in 2006, providing thousands of care packages to dog handlers serving overseas, facilitating a free prescription drug program for retired working dogs, and educating the public about the service and sacrifice of military working dogs. Thanks to Ron and the work of the USWDA many of us appreciate the invaluable services military working dogs provide to our country.



In addition to military working dogs and their handlers, many civilian working dogs and their handlers, including members of the Tri-State Canine Response Team, make significant contributions to the communities they serve. Local team members Marley and Liz, Kristin and Snickers, and Sharon and Brody (pictured left to right in the photo above) joined us at the Veterans Appreciation Day Luncheon, where they did what they do best—spread happiness. The Tri-State Canine Response Team, an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization, provides comfort, stress relief, emotional support, and crisis intervention services through the devoted efforts of two categories of teams, Caring Canine Teams and Crisis Response Teams.

In support of its mission, the organization partners with other community services providers, including schools, hospitals, health professionals, crisis screening centers, and disaster response organizations. The Tri-State Canine Response Team, originally founded in New Jersey, has grown from five teams to one hundred teams and now serves eight states. Many of those

suffering from a personal or community crisis can now gain a sense of comfort and support in their lives, thanks to the work of the Tri-State Canine Response Team.

Speaking of thanks—Our heartfelt thanks goes out to those who made the luncheon a rousing success. These generous individuals include members of BSA #22 and Scoutmaster Dan Januseski for the Color Guard presentation, Latrica Randolph of Chrstian Faith Assembly for sharing her vocal talents, William Lynch for delivering the invocation, our speakers, Ron Aiello from the USWDA, Krisitn from the Tri-State Canine Response Team, and Mike Lontoc, as well as Mayor Clauss for his welcome and introduction, the Hainesport Township Committee members, and countless volunteers. Those who generously donated flowers, food, and door prizes likewise deserve our gratitude: Oceans Vintage Florist, Hainesport Dunkin' Donuts, Lillo's Tomato Pies, Jim and Dawn Horner, Jersey Mike's, Copsetta Auto Repair Service, Sacred Heart CCD Program, and of course, our very own Hainesport Recreation Department.

Business Buzz

Jennifer Koutsouris, Technical and Administrative Assistant

Over the past few years, Christina Lestician, Owner of Vintage Oceans Florist, has been incredibly generous to Hainesport Township with all of her various donations of floral arrangements, from the Memorial Day Ceremony flowers to the Veterans Luncheon floral arrangements and more.

Christina has been a floral designer for over 20 years. It is a true passion of hers, and this passion is reflected in her unique design and ability to capture the essence of her customers' vision. Christina, who started her journey as a designer at the Ft. Dix Flower Shop, was fortunate to have been taught the fundamentals of design by two very good designers that recognized her natural ability. They helped Christina to develop confidence in her work and create her own style, which she believes has become the trademark of her work: vintage and whimsical with a touch of romance. When Christina left Ft. Dix, she worked at various shops, arranged wedding flowers from her home, and then in 2021, opened the Vintage Oceans Florist storefront in Hainesport. She states, "It is a true blessing to be here in Hainesport, and I appreciate each and every customer I create flower pieces for."

This holiday season be sure to see **Christina at Vintage Oceans Florist** for your floral arrangements!

Hawks Highlights

Maddie Minero, Sixth Grade Student, Hainesport Township School

Alex Fisher, Assistant Principal, Hainesport Township School

Hainesport Township School has a few exciting announcements for the month of December! Jump into the Christmas spirit with the drama club, which will be performing a winter play, *The Reindeer Solution*, on December 14th, from 7:00 - 8:30 PM in the school cafeteria. Admission is free. A special thanks goes out to Mrs. Stanley and Mrs. Deer, who have worked extremely hard to put on these performances and inspire our young actors and actresses in the drama club! For those who are interested in other holiday events, Hainesport's PTO will be holding a Breakfast With Santa + Holiday Shop in the cafeteria on Saturday December 9th, from 6:00 AM - Noon. This is a great event and opportunity to meet Mr. and Mrs. Claus, enjoy breakfast, and purchase gifts for your loved ones.



Last, we would like to congratulate our very own Ms. Courtney Quinn, who recently received the *Library Assistant Award* from the *NJ Association of School Librarians*. (Pictured above, left to right: Vice President of the Board of Education, Mr. Larry Brandolph; Library/Media Teacher, Ms. Tricina Beebe; **Ms. Courtney Quinn**, Ms. Quinn's mother, Mrs. Sheila Quinn, and Superintendent, Mr. Joe Corn) Ms. Quinn routinely displays her dedication, talents, and hard work and has no doubt earned this special award. We thank her for the hard work and support she has demonstrated in our school library throughout the years! Congratulations, Ms. Quinn!

Profiles of Success at RVRHS

Vicki Bersch

Did you happen to watch the 6 ABC Thanksgiving Day Parade on November 23rd at 9:00 AM? If so, you saw the RV Dance Team perform. Congratulations to our outstanding dance team!

RV students involved in other areas of the arts were also hard at work this semester. RV's in-house theater company, "Red Devil Dramatics" (RDD), opened their season with *She Kills Monsters*. The play featured Hainesport alumni, including Isabella Breining, Chloe Swanson, Sarah Swanson, and William Zakroff. The popular new play uses the classic role-playing game "Dungeons and Dragons" as a platform for retro 90's teenagers to work through life trauma, self-identity, family acceptance and bully cheerleaders with wings and horns. The play was well received by students, staff, and community members.

Stay tuned for RDD's next production, *Little Shop of Horrors*, which opens on April 17, 2024!

Casey's Corner

Donna Casey, Recreation Director

Admit it--You're listening to 101.1, singing along, and getting into the holiday spirit. Consider sharing some of that spirit by joining us on **Friday, December 8th for the annual Tree Lighting Event at the Municipal Park pavilion**. Festivities begin at 5:30 PM and include dance performances, light refreshments, surprises and...drum roll, please: the New Jersey State Police and members of the Hainesport Volunteer Fire Company and Emergency Squad will escort into the complex antique cars in which very special passengers will be riding--Santa, Mrs. Claus, Elsa, and Rudolph! Amidst all the excitement, don't forget to bring an unwrapped toy for the fire company's collection of gifts for the "Toys for Tots" program.

And for those of you who have been waiting for a new opportunity to celebrate the season as a community, Hainesport Township will hold its first ever **Menorah Lighting Ceremony on Thursday, December 7th, at 6:00 PM, at Hainesport Municipal Park**. Rabbi Mendel Menegl and Rabbi Lazer Mangel of Chabad Lubavitch of Camden County - Cherry Hill will lead the thirty-minute ceremony, and following the ceremony, guests can enjoy latkes, donuts, chocolate gelt, and hot cider.

Calling all gingerbread house fans! We will gather at the **Kenneth Street Community Center on Saturday, December 9th, from Noon to 3:00 PM for our annual Gingerbread House Contest**. This year's theme is "**Whoville.**" Contestants, please note that gingerbread houses must be dropped off at the Kenneth Street Community Center on Friday, December 8th

between 5:30 and 7:00 PM. More fun is in store during our event, including a train show, courtesy of the Bozarth family. Once you've had a chance to check out the gingerbread houses and train show, head on over to the Hainesport Firehouse to enjoy Story Time, performances by the Harbor Baptist Academy Choir and Edge Dance Company, face painting, crafts, and refreshments. Consistent with the spirit of Christmas and community, proceeds from the sale of hot dogs will be donated to the St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank. And last, but not least, round out your Saturday afternoon with a firetruck ride!

For those who wish to decorate houses on a grander scale, consider entering Hainesport Township's **Holiday House Decorating Contest, beginning December 14th.** This year's theme is **"Hainesport's Christmas Vacation,"** and judging will run between December 16th through December 18th. Winners will be announced on December 18th.

After we ring in 2024, don't forget to join us for the first **Preschool Story Time of the new year, on January 19th, from 10:00 - 11:00 AM, at the Kenneth Street Community Center.**

Last but not least, it's time to start previewing some of the wonderful events our **100th Anniversary Committee** has planned for 2024. Mark your calendars now for **Hainesport's 100th Anniversary Fashion Show, which will take place on Sunday, March 3, 2024, from 1:00 - 4:00 PM, at The Bradford.** The fashion show, which supports the funding of various free 100th Anniversary events, will highlight the last 100 years of fashion. The show will also offer opportunities to win door prizes and to participate in basket and 50-50 raffles (cash only), so bring your favorite teacup, don your fanciest hat, and join us on March 3, 2024! Tickets for this much-anticipated event are \$40 per guest.

Neighbor Notes:

Angel in Residence, Ginger Thielman

Loretta Brown

George Bailey may have Clarence in Bedford Falls, but our soldiers have Ginger Thielman right here in Hainesport. Allow me to introduce you to your neighbor of thirty years and my friend, Ginger Thielman. As a member of "Soldiers Angels," Ginger sends soldiers hundreds of cards and letters and "adopts" numerous soldiers, so that they know that they are supported and appreciated. She supplies her charges with care packages, often without ever meeting or hearing from them.

Along with active soldiers, Ginger possesses a soft spot for our local veterans. Upon learning that our local postman, Victor, had served in Iraq, Ginger put the word out country-wide to her angel network. On a sunny Tuesday in June 2023, Ginger presented Victor with a box filled with gratitude and support. The cards represented all fifty states and one even arrived from

Germany! Victor was pleasantly surprised. Here's to the heroes on both sides of the uniform!

If you are interested in joining Ginger and other angels who support our troops, please visit the "Soldiers' Angels" website: www.soldiersangels.org

Holiday Houseplants are Easy

Paula Uhland



Artificial plants often add a festive touch to the holidays, but nothing beats the natural beauty of holiday houseplants. Holiday house plants are easy to care for and enjoy. Most only need weekly watering and less light than outdoor plants. The house plants we buy in grocery stores and garden centers are usually hardy in a typical home environment. A saucer under the plant is recommended to hold any excess water. Most plants come with care instructions on the ID tag. If you want more information about the plant, scan the QR code on the tag.

The most popular plant during the holidays is the Poinsettia. Its green leaves and red bracts are very colorful. Weekly watering will keep the plant going through the holidays. Cyclamen, kalanchoe and flowering cactus are also popular. Remember, however, that some of these plants may be toxic to humans and pets.

Another popular holiday houseplant is the easy-to-grow Amaryllis (pictured above). They are usually sold as bulbs in a small pot, but be sure to start them early. If the plant already has buds, it will take two weeks or less to bloom. If signs of growth are just starting, however, it may

take six weeks or more for their beautiful large flowers to appear. Please note that as stunning as Amaryllis are, their bulbs may be toxic to humans and animals.

Happy Holidays from the Hainesport Township Environmental Commission!