



© 2023 Two River Times LLC

THE TWO RIVER TIMES

tworivertimes.com

VOLUME 34 NUMBER 8

THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 14 - 20, 2023

ONE DOLLAR



PATRICK OLIVERO

Swimming River Park, one of the county's newest, offers great views and thanks to donations in memory of longtime open space advocate Judith Stanley Coleman, visitors have seating from which to enjoy the scenery. For more photos and information about the dedication event, see page 4.

Two River Area's First Warming Center for Women Opens in Red Bank

By Sunayana Prabhu

RED BANK – Early Monday morning a sign went up outside 90 Maple St., quietly establishing a chapter in the borough's history: The Heartwarming Center. Est. 2023.

The center, a community effort organized by the First Baptist Church at 84 Maple St., is the first and only women's warming center in the Two River area. Last year, many women

without permanent shelter were turned away from the available male-only centers. Right now, the warming center cannot provide shelter for children, but organizers hope that will change in the future.

While the Heartwarming Center opened in early

Continued on Page 6

A Life Well-Lived: Joan Ellis Writes Her Memoir

By Eileen Moon

When former Two River Times film critic Joan Ellis enrolled in a memoir writing class at Project Write Now (PWN) in Red Bank a few years ago, she took a step that would ultimately lead to some life-altering, multigenerational friendships and a published book.

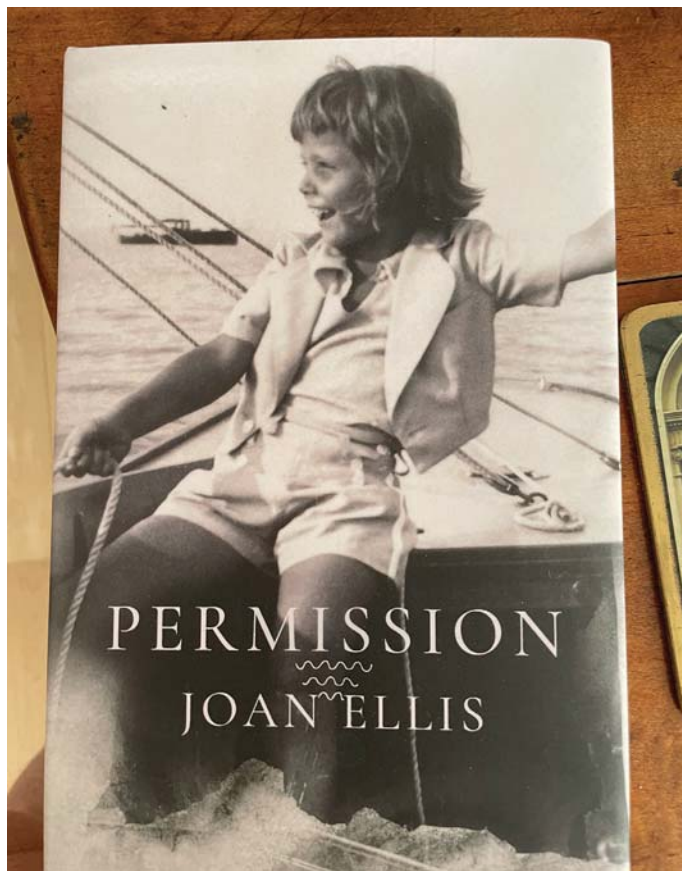
Ellis' book, titled "Permission," is dedicated to her children, Kevin, Corson and Laura, and her nine "millennial" grandchildren, with a special nod to her granddaughter Willa, "who, when she was very young," Ellis writes, "asked me, 'Gram, did you have a life before you knew me?'"

The book is her answer.

Ellis was a little apprehensive on the day she took her first memoir class at Project Write Now. Though she'd been writing and publishing movie reviews for decades, she wasn't accustomed to writing anything longer than 500 words.

Her instructor at PWN, Allison Tevald, was a little apprehensive, too.

At 86, Ellis was many decades older than the other students and Tevald re-



COURTESY JOAN ELLIS

Joan Ellis, the former movie reviewer for The Two River Times for 30 years, recently released a memoir.

members wondering how she would fit in.

"Joan walked in wearing plain slacks, sensible shoes, a bright blue

sweater and a huge smile," Tevald wrote in her introduction to Ellis's memoir. "This could go so many ways, I thought... I wanted

to see what would happen."

If anyone assumed Ellis's grandmotherly appearance was evidence of a quiet, uneventful life, they were soon disabused of that notion. Ellis quickly became a class favorite, captivating her fellow writers with the wit and intellect that had served her well through a lifetime of adventures.

Born in New York City in 1931, her first home was a cottage on her grandmother's property on Navesink River Road. Ellis's great-grandfather, Franklin Murphy, a Civil War veteran, served as governor of New Jersey from 1902 until 1905. His daughter Helen would become Ellis's imperious grandmother who, having been denied her own opportunity to go to college by her father, paid Ellis's tuition at Vassar.

Ellis's grandfather taught her to sail, letting her take the tiller as a very small child.

"I remember those days on the river, (being) alone

Continued on Page 12

Harm Reduction Mobile Unit Active and Serving

By Stephen Appezato

RED BANK – A groundbreaking mobile care unit is up and running, offering harm reduction services to those in need across Monmouth County.

Prevention Resource Network's (PRN) mobile Harm Reduction Center is now traveling among eight local municipalities – Red Bank, Eatontown, Keansburg, Keyport, Long Branch, Asbury Park, Brick and Toms River – delivering effective care and treatment for people who use substances.

Those staffing the unit offer trauma-informed care, working to understand a patient's needs and life experiences and acknowledge their history of trauma while giving support without stigma.

The mobile unit allows those who use substances to access naloxone – a life-saving drug that counters opioid overdoses – sterile syringes, wound treatment and other supplies without judgment. Additionally, the

unit assists with the safe disposal of used syringes and offers guidance for drug use treatment and support for "essential needs."

Shannon Preston, director of HIV community services at the VNA Health Group said the mobile unit is a "significant step forward towards compassionate, effective support and enhanced quality of life for individuals living with drug-related challenges."

According to the state Attorney General's office, from Jan. 1 to Aug. 31, there were 1,790 suspected overdose deaths in New Jersey; 151 of these deaths occurred in Monmouth County. A little over 10,000 Naloxone doses were administered in that same timeframe statewide.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control attributes nearly 1 million deaths to drug overdoses over the past 21 years nationally,

Continued on Page 11

SHINING STARS ELEVATE ASBURY PARK THEATER SCENE

By Regina Molaro

Actress Sally Struthers and singer Carter Calvert used their star power to brighten some of the dark days of December during a recent performance of "Always... Patsy Cline" by the Asbury Park Theater Company (APTCo).

As a new theater company that emerged right before the pandemic, APTCo has yet to land a permanent space of its own. The show, which ran from Dec. 1-10,

was held at Palaia Theater at the Jersey Shore Arts Center in Ocean Grove.

"By hosting us, Jersey Shore Arts Center helped us achieve our goal of bringing professional-level theater to the area," said Bob Angelini, managing director of APTCo.

Struthers and Calvert shared the stage as they've done many times before. Struthers – the Emmy and Golden Globe-winning TV,

film and Broadway talent fondly remembered for her role as Gloria in "All in the Family" – played Louise Seger, a Texas woman who befriended Cline early in the country artist's career.

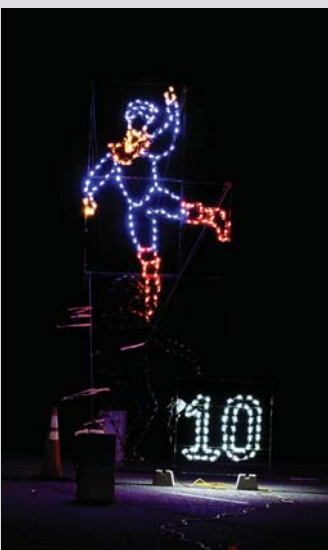
A fan of Cline since she was a child, Calvert sang "Crazy" and "I Fall to Pieces," among other hits. Her accomplishments include a Tony Award nomination for "It Ain't Nothin' but the Blues" on Broadway, play-

ing Grizabella in "Cats" and a European tour of "Smokey Joe's Café."

"No one does Patsy better than Carter. She and Sally are both perfect for these roles," said William Whitefield, producing artistic director, APTCo.

Produced by Angelini and Whitefield with associate producer Serena Soffer,

Continued on Page 2



INSIDE

Business 24
 Classified 31-34
 Education 22-23
 Lifestyle 19-21
 Obituaries 30
 People 26-27
 Sports 28-29



Swimming River Park Gets Judith Stanley Coleman Memorial Seating Area

Photos by Patrick Olivero



MIDDLETOWN – One of the county’s newest parks now has plentiful seating, dedicated to the Monmouth Conservation Foundation’s (MCF) co-founder, Judith Stanley Coleman, who died in 2010, also served as the nonprofit land trust’s president for over 30 years. The seating area is part of the 18-acre Swimming River Park which opened in May on waterfront property previously home to Chris’ Landing and Chris’ Deli & Liquor in the River Plaza section of Middletown.

The MCF hosted the dedication ceremony Dec. 9 for the new seating area, funded by donations to MCF in memory of Stanley Coleman. County and state dignitaries attended the event, emceed by MCF executive director William Kastning and MCF trustee emeritus Mary Tassini.

In addition to her work with MCF, Stanley Coleman also served as past chairman of the Middletown Planning Board and was instrumental in putting Middletown’s then-proposed Open Space Tax question on the voting ballot in 1999. She then became a member of the Middletown Open Space Committee upon its inception.

Speaking at the event were County Commissioner Ross Licitra, liaison to the Monmouth County Park System; former state Sen. Jennifer Beck; former Holmdel Mayor Larry Fink; Monmouth County Commissioner Director Thomas Arnone; and County Commissioner Lillian Burry.

Two of Stanley Coleman’s four daughters, Catherine Niederer and Andrea Huber, were also in attendance.



NEW JERSEY'S #1 LARGEST VOLVO FACILITY

OVER 500 NEW & PRE-OWNED VOLVOS TO CHOOSE FROM!



5 STAR GOOGLE REVIEWS

VOLVO CARS MANASQUAN

2415 Highway 35 • Manasquan, NJ 08736



(732) 528-7500 | VolvoCarsManasquan.com