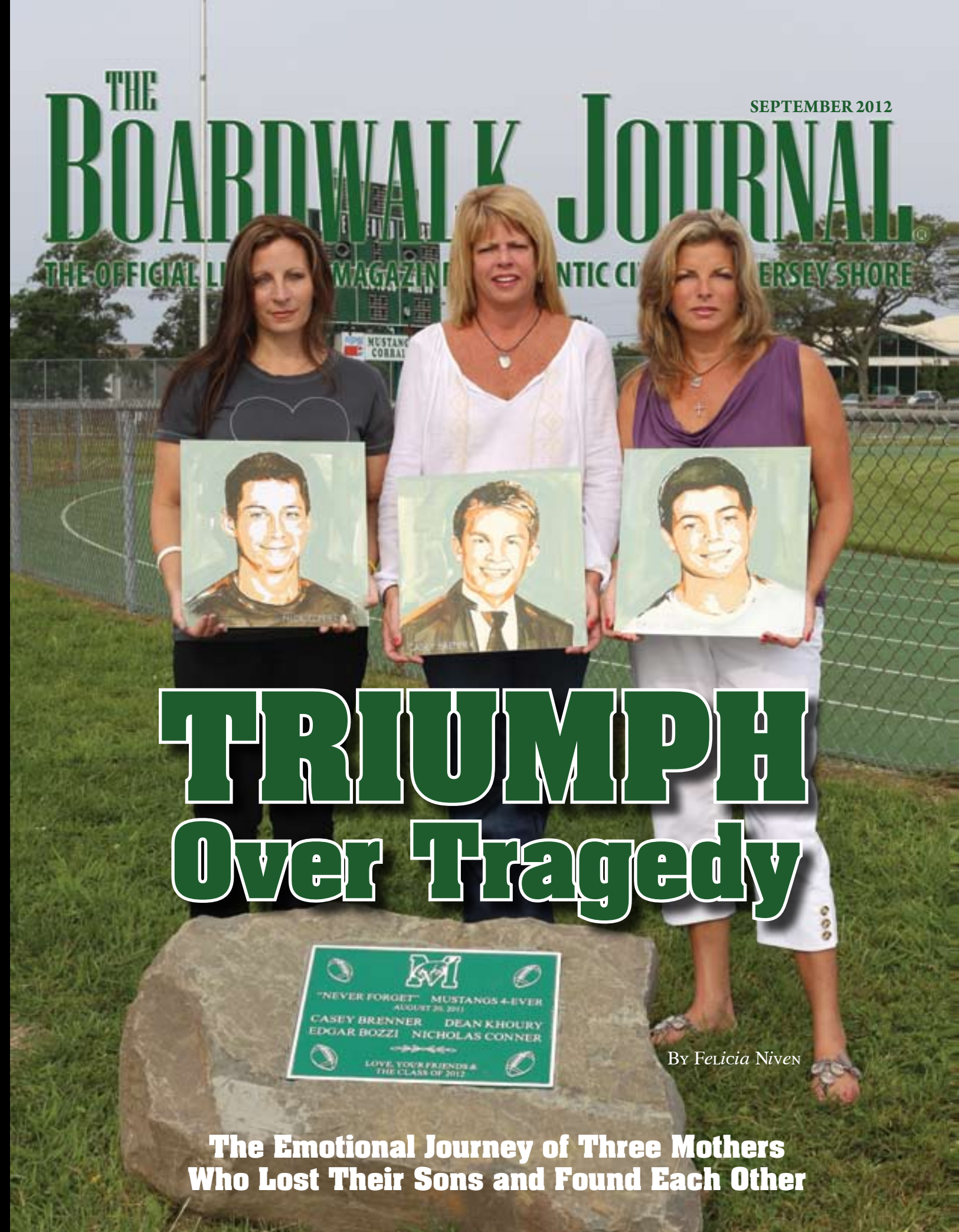


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By Felicia Niven

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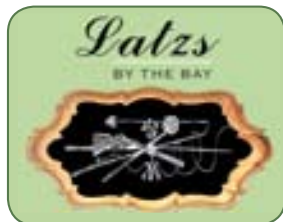
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Gone But Not Forgotten MAINLAND MUSTANGS 8-20-11 Always In Our Hearts



CASEY BRENNER



DEAN KHOURY



EDGAR BOZZI



NICHOLAS CONNER



34 TRIUMPH OVER TRAGEDY

Inside the emotional journey of three mothers who lost their sons in a tragic accident and found themselves living every parent's worst nightmare.

By Felicia Niven

Cover and story images by Tom Briglia / PhotoGraphics Photography



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62 CURTAIN CALL DAVID BRENNER: 40 YEARS OF FUNNY BUSINESS

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Like everyone else in the region, I was moved by last summer's tragic accident that took the lives of Dean Khoury, Edgar Bozzi, Casey Brenner and Nick Conner. I remember my heart sinking upon hearing the news, feeling a fraternal connection to these young men as a former Mainland Mustang football player myself. I immediately thought of their families, their mothers and fathers, their siblings and classmates, their teammates and their Coach, Bob Coffey.

I immediately wanted *The Boardwalk Journal* to do something to honor these young men and their families, but I was told by many close to me that it was simply too soon.

As the one year anniversary approached I reached out to a longtime friend named Karin Deveney, who I know is a close friend to the mothers of the four boys. I asked Karin if she would broach the subject with the mothers about participating in what I had in mind for the story and much to my satisfaction, three of them agreed.

I immediately called Felicia Niven, our go-to features writer, and Tom Briglia, our go-to photographer, and what you will read and see in this issue is the product of their amazing work.

I want to thank each of the mothers who participated in this story; Denise Gallagher, Lynn Brenner and Cristina Barrella-Meoli. I want to acknowledge the fourth mother, Modesta Bozzi, who respectfully declined our invitation. What these four women and their families have endured, and continue to endure, cannot adequately be articulated in words.

I want to acknowledge Karin Deveney for assisting us in making this story happen, as well as my assistant Shernita Demby who helped coordinate the photo-shoot.

During the course of us working on the story, I was contacted by Sue Pickens, another longtime friend of mine, who is a close friend of Cristina Barrella-Meoli, Nick Conner's mother. Sue told me that she was working on creating a website to help raise money so that Nick's family could obtain a proper memorial gravestone, something that they had not been able to do in the year since the accident. I told Sue that I would make sure that the money was raised and I am happy to say that with three phone calls to friends and colleagues, the money was raised for Nick's family in less than 48 hours.

I want to acknowledge and thank fellow attorneys Lloyd Levenson and Joe Levin for their generosity, as well as Assemblyman John F. Amodeo, Harry Hurley and the listeners of *Hurley In the Morning* who were equally as giving.

Enjoy.

Respectfully,

James J. Leonard, Jr., Esq.
President / CEO / Publisher / Editor-in-Chief



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27 S. BENSON AVE.	7/9/2012	\$525,000
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9400 ATLANTIC AVE. #503	7/26/2012	\$250,000
6 N. ADAMS AVE. #5	7/2/2012	\$250,000
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106 N. MADISON AVE. #E	7/9/2012	\$475,000
9615 MONMOUTH AVE. #D	7/12/2012	\$518,440

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15 N. BALTIMORE AVE.	7/31/2012	\$380,000
106 S. PORTLAND AVE.	7/15/2012	\$525,000
12 S. BALTIMORE AVE.	7/19/2012	\$562,000
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826 N. SURREY AVE. #826	7/27/2012	\$112,000
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the raw feed

We've all heard of the power lunch, but two high-ranking Atlantic County Republicans apparently favor brokering their deals at the breakfast table inside The Shore Diner on Tilton Road in Egg Harbor Township. The story, which was originally reported by local talk radio titan Harry Hurley on his award-winning Hurley in The Morning program on ESPN 1450 AM, put Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson and Atlantic County Republican Party Chairman Keith Davis at a table with three other men: Ocean County Republican Chairman George Gilmore, former GOP heavyweight and current insurance / media mogul Joseph Buckelew and the almost mythical George Norcross III, a man widely recognized as the most powerful Democrat in the state. So what were two ham and egggers (not in the derogatory sense, remember we are discussing a breakfast meeting) like Levinson and Davis discussing with the likes of the powerful Camden County-based Mr. Norcross and two powerhouses from Ocean County? Mum's the word, but well-placed sources say that one topic discussed was advancing efforts aimed at protecting the Atlantic City casino industry from competition, namely a proposed casino project in North Jersey at the Meadowlands...

Speaking of competition ... with rumors abound that there could be some movement within the upper echelon ranks of the Atlantic County Republican Party, many potential candidates and several would-be powerbrokers are flexing their political muscles in an effort to secure the theoretical pole position, or in this case poll position, should a vacancy arise. The names at the forefront of these discussions focus on former Assemblyman Vince Polistina and Freeholder Chairman Frank Formica, each backed by a different political godfather. Polistina, the onetime State Senate candidate is closely aligned with Sonny McCullough, the former State Senator and longtime Mayor of Egg Harbor Township, who oversees the powerful United Republican Club of Egg Harbor Township. Formica, the humble Ducktown-bred bread-baker is aligned with the aforementioned County Executive Denny Levinson. IF there is any truth to the aforementioned rumors, innuendo and speculation, look for some political jockeying in the days and weeks leading up to this year's Presidential Election ...

Boardwalk Journal cover girls Melissa Gorga and Kathy Wakile are scheduled to sneak into town on September 7th and join their castmates from Bravo TV's The Real Housewives of New Jersey as they film their much anticipated reunion show which will cap what has been an otherwise tumultuous season, with the exception of the appearance of Boardwalk Journal CEO James Leonard Jr. and The Boardwalk Journal itself, both of whom were featured prominently in an episode this season. Leonard is the longtime attorney for both the Gorgas and Wakiles and has appeared on several episodes of the hit television show. The "top-secret" reunion show taping will be a closed door affair, but those looking to spot their favorite (or not so favorite) housewife should DO AC! on the 7th & 8th, but you didn't hear that from us ...

THE INSIDER

Local News, Happenings, and Events

30th Birthday Fundraiser Brings a Little Bit of South Jersey to Philadelphia

WANT TO DO SOMETHING good and have fun at the same time? Got plans for September 14th? Join *The Boardwalk Journal's* own Danielle Davies as she, along with supporters from our area, celebrate her cousin and gunshot victim, Kevin Neary, as he turns 30 years old.

Neary was shot in the neck in a random robbery attempt as he walked back to his apartment in the Northern Liberties section of Philadelphia last November 15th, and as a result of that shooting, suffers complete paralysis as a quadriplegic.

Though physically devastated, and facing extensive medical costs for his continued care, including the need for home renovations and equipment not covered by insurance, his indomitable spirit remains intact. On September 14th, the Friends of Kevin Neary are hosting a birthday celebration and fundraiser to celebrate that spirit at none other than Citizens Bank Park's exclusive Diamond Club.

Tickets, available at <http://fokn30.eventbrite.com>, are \$40 and include dinner and parking.

But that's not all...the event will be holding a silent auction with over 100 auction items donated from across the country, including a large portion that apply to the Jersey Shore. From dining gift cards—Tomato's, Steve & Cookie's, Mama Mia's, Hula Grill, O'Donnell's Pour House, and Red Sky Café—to nightlife opportunities at Anthem, Tropicana, Boogie Nights and The Pool after Dark, the South Jersey community has extended their support to their Philadelphia neighbor. Whether it's golf—packages from Brigantine Links and Harbor Pines Golf Club, as well as lessons from Pro Cheri Rice-Cotelli—to surfing at Stacey's Surf Camp, yoga at The Zen Den, or beach photos by Becky Benson Photography, the Jersey Shore has stepped up with plenty to offer.

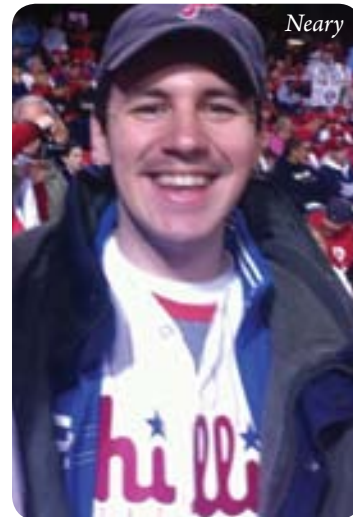
"It's a testament to community," explained Davies, of the support she's seen for her cousin outside of his own local area. "I've been floored. But really, when you hear something like this, you just want to do something. We've seen so much of that here."

From contributions from local philanthropist Roy Goldberg to handmade jewelry by local artisans Shayna B. Gross and Simply Vintage Designs, to publicity from local radio and print and gift baskets from 95.1 WAYV and 100.7 WZXL, South Jersey will be well-represented at the auction, which includes such

priceless auction items as a walk-on role to *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* and a signed Michael Vick helmet.

The Phanatic himself will be making an appearance.

Everyone seems to be doing what they can to raise the spirits of one young man, a cousin to many, but an inspiration to us all.



Neary

ED RENDELL DOES BRIGANTINE

Former Philly Mayor and PA Governor Ed Rendell made the rounds and signed copies of his new book "A Country of Wusses" at a Democratic fundraiser at the Brigantine home of Isabella and Tony Pullella



Democratic Freeholder candidate Colin Bell, Esq. and Governor Rendell in Brigantine

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BEACH SHACK TO HOST "SHACK UP" FOR A CAUSE

Official Surfer of the Beach Shack, Dean Randazzo to Host Fun-Filled Night to benefit the Dean Randazzo Cancer Foundation

THE BEACH SHACK IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT IT HAS JOINED forces with professional surfer and local legend Dean Randazzo to "Shack Up" for a Cause at the Rusty Nail on Saturday, September 15th at 7pm.

New Jersey's most successful surfer, Dean Randazzo, a.k.a. 'The Jersey Devil', is now the official Beach Shack surfer. Dean began surfing at age eleven. He won his first competition on a surfboard consisting of more duck-tape than fiberglass. He turned professional in 1990 becoming the first surfer from New Jersey to qualify for the WCT. In 2001 Dean was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease (the same type of cancer that took the life of legendary San Diego surfer Chris O'Rourke). He thankfully managed to beat it and has since become an avid spokesperson for cancer awareness and research, forming the Dean Randazzo Cancer Foundation later that year. The Foundation is a charitable, non-profit organization with 501 (c)(3) status through the federal government and over the last 10 years has raised more than \$300,000.00 for cancer research and awareness.

In support of Dean's great cause, the Beach Shack has created a special cocktail in Dean's honor: "The Jersey Devil Nailer" described by the Shack staff as "a surfer's devil of a drink with Jagermeister, Apple Pucker, and Cranberry Juice shaken and served on the rocks in a Collins glass." The Sean Hollaran Band, who hails from Baltimore, will be playing their unique blend of Reggae, Rock & Surf during the evening. Raffle tickets benefiting the Dean Randazzo Cancer Foundation are available for purchase (\$5) for the chance to win great prizes such as a custom-made 6' Chop Suey high-performance small wave model Randazzo Beach Shack surfboard, a Hyperflex wetsuit and many others. In addition, 10% of the food proceeds from the entire day will go to the Dean Randazzo Cancer Foundation.

"Cape May has always been my favorite Jersey Shore destination for surfing hurricane waves," said Dean Randazzo. "I've had the opportunity to surf the world and it's a great feeling to be in town and be able to call the Beach Shack home when I'm in town. To see the Shack ready to support my Foundation is an even better feeling."

"With this town having a strong beach and surfer culture, Dean Randazzo embodies all that is Cape May. Eleven Beach Shack team members are also lifeguards, which goes hand-in-hand with surfing," said Sandy Montano, General Manager of the Beach Shack. "To have Dean join our Beach Shack team is truly an honor. It is a privilege to be partnering with Dean Randazzo and his Cancer Foundation."

For additional information, visit www.BeachShack.com.



Local surfing legend, Dean Randazzo



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TWO FOUNDATIONS MERGE ON ANNIVERSARY

The Brendan Borek High Tides Memorial Fund Inc., Brendan's Fund, has hosted the Brendan Borek Surf Memorial, an annual surf contest at the Jersey Shore, for over two decades. For this year's event, one family brought two foundations together to honor the life and legacy of their namesakes.

Travis Manion Foundation president Ryan Manion Borek is the sister of fallen Marine 1st Lt. Travis Manion. Ryan's brother-in-law, Brendan Borek, lost a battle with Ewing's Sarcoma, a strand of bone cancer, at age 18. Every year, Brendan's Fund hosts a weeklong series of family-oriented events to raise awareness about pediatric cancer and support for patients and their families. The surf contest in Avalon is its major fundraiser.

This year, the Travis Manion Foundation provided a grant for Operation AMPED to teach five heroes to surf. Operation AMPED's central mission is to provide wounded warriors a chance to experience the peace that comes with surfing and being in the ocean, which they achieve by teaching wounded veterans to surf.

The missions of Operation AMPED and the Travis Manion Foundation are closely aligned. After Ryan heard about Operation AMPED's mission, she reached out to them about having veterans come to the 22nd Annual Surf Memorial.

Brendan's Fund strives to assist children or young adults with cancer. With the High Tides Memorial Fund, Inc., these families are able to receive comprehensive and compassionate care with services ranging from counseling and advocacy to financial assistance.

For more information and to find out how you can help each organization, go to www.brendansfund.com and www.travismanion.com.



Brendan's mother, Lydia, at this year's surf memorial



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(Left to right) Alisa Elkis, VP of Player Development; Nation; Courtney Birmingham, Director of Advertising & Public Relations; Jennifer Fortucci, Director of Special Events; Howard Copen, Director of Revenue Optimization & Cost Containment; Aaron Gomes, Executive Vice President of Operations; Steve with Maggie of the Humane Society; Mike Tilton, Director of Slot Marketing; Joel Ballesteros (kneeling), Director of LGBT Marketing; Michael Roach, Warehouse Manager; and Chris Carmany, Storeroom Clerk



Left: Alisa Elkis, Jennifer Fortucci, and Courtney Birmingham with Nation

Right: Aaron Gomes and Joel Ballesteros with Nation & Maggie

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BRIAN DAWKINS VISITS THE TAJ

Philadelphia football great, Brian Dawkins, met and has his photo taken with hundreds of Eagles fans at Trump Taj Mahal's \$20,000 blackjack tournament. The event was hosted by ESPN Radio's (97.3 FM) afternoon personality, Mike Gill.



Brian Dawkins with Mike Gill

RETIREE RECEIVES SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Cape May County Department of Aging Supervisor, Susan Raff, received a surprise celebratory plaque from the Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders after 25 years of dedicated service to elderly citizens of the Cape. Congratulations, Susan!



Susan Raff, center, with husband Charles (left) and Cape May County Freeholder, Gerald Thorton

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1. Actress Jenny McCarthy hosted a party at The Pool After Dark. 2. Famed country singer Reba McEntire performing in Ovation Hall. 3. DJ Pauly D christens the crowd with a little champagne. 4. Famous 90's rock group, Stone Temple Pilots, performing at Revel. 5. NHL Player Justin Williams (with The Stanley Cup) hosted a party at Caesars. 6. Donny and Marie Osmond reunite and perform to a sold-out crowd in Circus Maximus Theater at Caesars. 7. E! Reality Star, Kendra Wilkinson (with her grandmother, Mary) hosted a party at The Pool After Dark at Harrah's. 8. From the first season of *The X Factor USA*, Chris Rene from Santa Cruz, CA performed his new single "Trouble" to a packed crowd at The Pool After Dark, Harrah's. 9. Fat Man Scoop takes a dive at The Pool After Dark, Harrah's.

Images by Tom Briglia / PhotoGraphics Photography

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A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN THE GYM

More women are discovering that fitness means more than group exercise classes

In the 1950s, the average middle-aged woman had a 28-inch waist, and burned about 1,000 calories a day just by doing her daily housework. Over the years, modern conveniences made those chores easier and faster to complete. As women entered the workplace, they became more sedentary, sitting behind a desk for eight hours a day. Fewer calories were burned and the waist sizes grew.

Unfortunately, many women added to those expanding waist lines with unhealthy diets. Years ago, the average woman would never consider going to "the gym." Considered a man's domain, the gym was a place of grunting, dumbbells and dubious smells. It simply wasn't ladylike to pump iron and sweat. But by the late '70s, things started to change.

Dance aerobics classes, set to music coming from portable boom boxes, starting popping up in schools and community centers. The early '80s saw the dawn of power walking and aerobic workout videos, complete with leotards and leg warmers. Women yearned for bodies that were slim and toned, and put in endless hours of cardio hoping to get them.

Since then, those down-and-dirty guy gyms have evolved into sparkling, state-of-the-art fitness centers that are inviting and appealing to all. While advancements in equipment, training and programming have been dramatic, industry experts say the greatest change is the explosion of women in the fitness arena.

"Women who initially came to the fitness center primarily to attend group exercise classes eventually began to venture out to other parts of the club," said Sam Young, President of Tilton Fitness. "They began to discover the benefits of personal training and strength exercises. As more and more women found their way to the weight rooms and strength training machines, they noticed remarkable improvements in their bodies."

WOMEN'S FITNESS TODAY

Ann Erik, personal training and group exercise director for Tilton Fitness, has witnessed an increase in female members in recent years.

"There are far more women on the workout floor now, even compared to just a few years ago. I think one of the reasons is that women are simply more educated about the benefits of exercise, especially strength training," Erik said. "The notion that weight training 'makes you bulky' has given way to a more enlightened view of how strength training plays just as important a role in overall health and fitness as cardiovascular workouts. Now instead of longing to be thin, women want to be fit and strong."

Strong, shapely, inspiring role models, like the female athletes of the summer's Olympic Games, help to underscore the link between femininity and fitness. From volleyball and soccer players, to swimmers, runners and gymnasts, they are all shining examples of how fitness and athleticism can equate to beauty. While no one expects the average woman to train at the same level as an Olympian, dramatic results can be achieved through "smart" workouts, just a few times a week.

At Tilton Fitness in Galloway, the Les Mills Body Pump group classes are always packed, mostly with women. Interestingly, more and more men are also discovering the fun, motivation and camaraderie of group fitness classes.

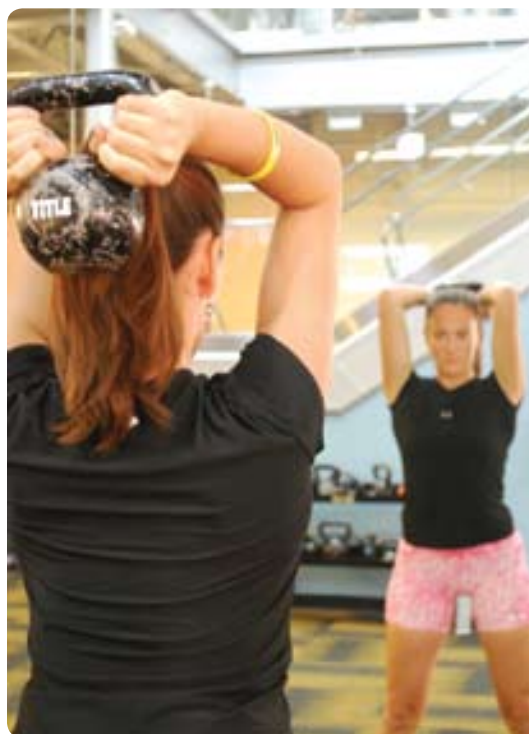
Erik also believes that an increase in the number of female personal trainers and male group fitness instructors has contributed to bridging the divide between the weight floor and group fitness.

"Women who still feel intimidated by the fitness center would be greatly helped by working with a personal trainer," Erik said. "Partnering with a trainer will help

women (and men) understand workout etiquette and familiarize themselves with the proper way to use the machines and free weights. Most importantly, a customized workout regimen can help you achieve your goals much more quickly and effectively. Another great way to start is to participate in small group training or take a group exercise class with a friend."

So what do you say, ladies? Isn't it time for a new definition of "ladylike?" To and feel your best, a women's place is definitely in the "gym."

For more information, call (609) FITNESS, or visit www.tiltonfitness.com.



Tilton Fitness member Kara Dods performs a strength training exercise using a kettlebell.

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PINKY KRAVITZ HOSTS PARADE

A Pre-Air Show Parade was hosted by Pinky Kravitz on the world famous Atlantic City Boardwalk, honoring Veterans and Military from all branches of the armed forces, setting the stage for the 10th annual Atlantic City Air Show.



Pinky Kravitz addresses parade crowd



SIMPLY FLY IN SIN CITY

Raina Tallent, the owner of Simply Fly Boutique in Northfield, attended the 2012 Magic Fashion Tradeshaw in Las Vegas, and brought a copy of *The Boardwalk Journal* along.



Raina with Jillian Kinderman (right) and former "Hills" star Whitney Port



Rear Admiral Mark H. "Buz" Buzby with his family



Colonel Alan Smith



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Lloyd D. Levenson's – "Life at the Shore"

BALANCING INTERESTS AT THE JERSEY SHORE

Few cases in recent memory have stirred as much public controversy as the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Kelo v. City of New London* eight years ago. It has always been the law in the United States that the government can take private property for a public use, provided that the property owner is paid due compensation. This is how vital infrastructure such as roads and bridges can be built, particularly in urban areas where it is normally impossible to construct something without displacing a certain number of property owners.

What made *Kelo* controversial is that the Court also sanctioned the taking of private property not just for a road or a courthouse, but to allow private enterprise to erect businesses and facilities that will revitalize an economically depressed neighborhood.

I vividly remember the outspoken denunciation of that opinion, as editorial writers speculated about "greedy developers" using the power of government to seize property from the "little guy" in order to make a fortune. Public opinion polls showed widespread opposition to the *Kelo* decision while also showing that few, if any, members of the public actually understood the decision and even fewer had read it.

The decision in *Kelo* and the entire debate over eminent domain has a particular importance in Atlantic City where we find a unique blend of elegant, first-class casino hotels and restaurants, well-established, well-maintained private homes and apartments and (still) totally rundown and blighted abandoned buildings and lots strewn with broken glass. It is obvious to any dispassionate observer that Atlantic City has made enormous strides over the last few decades, but equally obvious that we still have a ways to go.

The trick is in balancing the rights of property owners (and the need to recognize their legitimate fears and concerns) with the desperate need to eliminate blight and to make the City



more economically vibrant.

It is in this context that most of us have come to accept that eminent domain is one necessary tool which, if used prudently and compassionately, can bring about a better Atlantic City for everyone.

Since *Kelo* was decided, much of the heated rhetoric has cooled off considerably, as thoughtful persons on both sides of the fence have come to realize that eminent domain has an important place in alleviating blight and revitalizing neighborhoods. Just as no one wants to see an elderly widow lose her home, so too, no one wants to see abandoned buildings, with broken windows and garbage and weeds littering what used to be a lawn 20 or more years ago.

The use of the lawful powers of eminent domain under the right circumstances can mean the difference between new jobs, economic opportunity, and greater personal safety on the one hand, and unemployment, soaring crime rates, and despair on the other hand.

As CRDA Executive Director John Palmieri emphasized in a recent op-ed piece, the government cannot simply arrive and take someone's property.

The Constitution and the enabling statutes in New Jersey require that the property be purchased for a fair price, and the CRDA is legally required to assist those affected by condemnation by providing relocation benefits and services. This is precisely the sort of "compassionate" use of eminent domain of which I spoke above, that uses this governmental power to benefit the entire community, while respecting the rights of the individuals who are directly affected when their property is targeted for a taking.

My perspective, after more than three decades at the shore, is that continued progress in Atlantic City requires that eminent domain be one of the tools in the work belt of those who want to build a new and better Atlantic City. Used properly, lawfully, and compassionately, I believe it a necessary ingredient to ensure that all of Atlantic City enjoys the benefits of an economic rebirth.

Lloyd D. Levenson is Chief Executive Officer of the Atlantic City-based law firm Cooper Levenson and Chairman of the firm's Casino Law Departments in Atlantic City and Las Vegas. Mr. Levenson may be reached at (609)344-3161 or by email at ldlevenson@cooperlevenson.com.

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Cooper Levenson is involved in the community. Whether it's being acknowledged as a role model for local youth, as our partner Katherine Morris was when she received the ACCC President's Distinguished Alumni Award, spearheading a new Young Professional group to support and grow our up-and-coming business community as several of our attorneys are in the midst of, being honored for work in anti-violence efforts such as D.A.R.E., as CEO Lloyd D. Levenson was when he was given the Peacemaker Award from Love, Peace and Prosperity International, or serving as Chairman of the Greater Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce and now President of Main Street Atlantic City as COO Kenneth J. Calememo, Jr. is doing, Cooper Levenson people make time to give back.



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NICOLE MILAN-TYNER

NICOLE MILAN-TYNER IS THE CONSUMMATE PROFESSIONAL. Unfazed by change, Tyner has spent her career navigating the often treacherous waters of community healthcare, embracing multiple facets of health planning while maintaining uncharacteristic flexibility and poise. A 1989 graduate of Atlantic City High School, Tyner has contributed to our community in each of her roles, not least of which is her role as a mother.

“Being a mom is the best thing I’ve ever done,” explained Tyner of her role as mother to her three children, Chelsea, Chloe, and Nicholas. And while it’s clear that Tyner takes her job as a parent very seriously, she has managed to keep herself active in the professional world while still actively raising her children. It’s a balance she handles with finesse.

The only daughter to two school principals, expectations were high for Tyner to succeed professionally. After graduating from ACHS—during which time she met her now husband, Damon Tyner, who went to Holy Spirit—Tyner attended Rutgers University for English and Sociology before heading to the University of Delaware to get her Master’s Degree in Urban Affairs and Public Policy, with a focus on Community Health.

Though Tyner wasn’t planning to reside in Atlantic County after her May 1996 graduation, her mother’s diagnosis with breast cancer brought her home, where coincidentally, the perfect job was waiting for her.

In March, 1997, Tyner began an eight year career with the Atlantic County Division of Public Health as a health planner. It was an ideal fit, as the job was steeped in community health, Tyner’s area of expertise, and it was a position she loved.

After the 9/11 attacks, however, public health underwent significant changes, with particular emphasis being given to emergency preparedness. Prior to 9/11, there were only three people in Tyner’s unit. Post 9/11, and additional federal funding, Tyner’s unit increased to eleven people, with Tyner in a supervisory role as Unit Manager.

The changes enabled Tyner to dabble in every aspect of health care, from environmental health to substance abuse and community health, as Tyner’s health planning and education unit worked in conjunction with, in an advisory capacity, the other public health units. And while the experience also gave Tyner experience in a supervisory role, it was a position that required almost all of her time, leaving less and less for her three children. At this time, her youngest was just one year old.

So when she was approached by Sarah Griffith, then CEO of Gilda’s Club, to expand their teen program in a part-time capacity, Tyner was willing to make the move.

It was totally different than what I was doing,” explained Tyner of her role with Gilda’s Club. “I loved it there.”

Tyner’s job was to take the existing Teen Program, which consisted of three area high schools, and enlarge it. Tyner was charged with facilitating meetings at the schools with teens who were affected by cancer, either by having a relative or friend have cancer, or by having cancer themselves. “Teens are just as much in need of cancer support as

kids and adults.” And it was Tyner’s job to give them that support.

“I felt like I was seeing a direct impact... it was very hands-on,” explained Tyner. And though the job was considered part time, Tyner was visiting 8-10 high schools a month on a regular basis, as well as providing Cancer Awareness Programs and teacher in-services on an as-needed basis. All of this, while her children were growing up.

Last August, Tyner felt it was time for another change. “My children are getting older, they’re growing, and I wanted to continue to grow as a professional as well,” Tyner says of her decision to leave Gilda’s Club and begin working at Stockton College as a Program Manager. Once again, Tyner is in the position of taking on a completely new role for herself, a choice that not everyone would be comfortable with, but one in which Tyner thrives. As Program Manager for Continuing Studies, Tyner runs prep courses for LSAT, GRE, and GMAT and writes grants for training programs.

While Tyner is a savvy career woman who flourishes even when making transitions, she feels she’s found a long-term home at Stockton. Tyner’s goal was to “find a place I could envision staying until retirement, with projects I could really sink my teeth into.” Because there are so many different avenues of opportunity to explore within Stockton, Tyner believes, this could be the place.

Nicole Milan-Tyner



JIM TRAVAGLINE

AS WE NEAR THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS, ATLANTIC County will be hearing a lot more about Jim Travagline. The Republican candidate for Northfield City Council, Travagline, the father of two boys and a financial consultant with The Travagline Financial Group of Wells Fargo Advisors, is poised to make a definitive impact in the community he calls home.

Born and raised in Margate, Travagline is the son of hand surgeon Dr. Dominic Travagline, who passed away when Travagline was thirteen. Following his 1990 graduation from Holy Spirit High School, Travagline attended Gettysburg College, where he met freshman and Linwood native Toni-Lynn, his soon-to-be wife, during his senior year. The pair married six years later, in 2000, when they slowly but surely became enmeshed in their Northfield community.

The addition of children two years later further cemented them in Northfield. Travagline explained that “when you have kids and you want to do what’s best for them, you start to get involved. I feel like I can help, by being involved in their sports, school and government issues.”

As Travagline started volunteering in the community, first via local sports like junior league football and little league baseball, he continued to build up his business at The Travagline Financial Group. Originally a part of Prudential Financial Advisors, the group became part of Wachovia before finding a home with Wells Fargo in 2008 (when Wells Fargo offered Wachovia a bail-out). Toni-Lynn continued her work as an accountant at Shore Medical Center (previously Shore Memorial), where she is now a Senior Accountant. And though Travagline was civic minded and involved in the community, he wasn’t yet involved politically.

That changed in 2010, when Travagline ran for, and won a seat on the Northfield Board of Education. “I feel it’s a civic duty—when you’re in a community, you have to help out to make sure it runs well,” explained Travagline about his community involvement.

Active on the school board, Travagline is a member of several committees—facilities, negotiations, and shared services committees—as well as being the chair of the finance committee, a role that suits him considerably well considering his finance experience. And though Travagline enjoys being on the school board, and believes there is “lots of good stuff in our school district”, he understands that come November, he may have to vacate his spot there, as individuals are prohibited from holding two elected offices simultaneously.

Travagline didn’t initially intend to run for a council seat. However, when he began attending meetings of the old Northfield Republican Club, he became concerned with what he saw. Fiscally conservative, Travagline grew concerned about the ways in which the club’s City Council members opted to spend taxpayer’s money. And so, with a few other like-minded individuals—among them,

current Council members Lisa Brown and Jim O’Neill—Travagline helped form the New Northfield Republican Club.

Though Travagline planned to wait another year to run for council, he strongly believes that the city needs more effective leadership now. As a candidate—he won the Republican Primary in June—Travagline is keeping a positive campaign, focusing on what he can offer to City Council. Of utmost concern to him is financial transparency—Travagline, for his part, will be donating his salary back to the community, if he wins—as well as listening to the concerns of the citizens, retirees, and businesses in the area. Travagline is also a proponent of productivity, and is hoping his personality and leadership will be a good fit with the council. Finally, Travagline hopes to help promote the city he loves, making it more of a destination itself than as a pass through to get to the shore destinations.

While Travagline is committed to doing his civic duty, his first priority remains his family. Though he admits that they are sacrificing time spent with him now, Travagline is certain that he is doing what is best for both his town, and his family.

Jim Travagline



REBECCA LAFFERTY, ESQ.

ALTHOUGH REBECCA LAFFERTY'S FATHER IS THE WELL-respected Atlantic County attorney, Randolph Lafferty, of Youngblood, Lafferty & Sampoli, P.A., her career path was not a foregone conclusion. Although she can remember helping her father create trial exhibits in their basement during high school and participated for four years in the Mock Trial Program at her high school, Lafferty wasn't 100% sure the law was for her. The eldest child of Randolph Lafferty—she has a brother and two step-siblings—although interested in the law, wanted to be sure the calling was hers alone and not simply something she inherited.

And so, after the Linwood native graduated from Mainland Regional High School in 2000, she headed to the College of New Jersey, where she maintained a heavy science course load. She discovered, however, that the law was indeed her first love, and so Lafferty graduated with a Law and Justice degree in 2004 before heading to Widener University School of Law in Wilmington, from where she graduated in 2007.

After a clerkship for the Honorable Michael R. Connor at the New Jersey Superior Court in Atlantic County, Lafferty began the process of finding a law firm to call home. One might assume that Lafferty would head straight to her father's firm, but that wasn't the case. Instead, Lafferty headed out of the area, and began working at the Norristown firm of Kane, Pugh, Knoell, Troy & Kramer LLC, where she worked in insurance defense.

Ultimately, however, Lafferty missed the Jersey shore, so when a position did open up at Youngblood, Lafferty & Sampoli, P.A., she went for it. It is, after all, a place she had worked, in one capacity or another, since she was a teenager. "As a receptionist, a file clerk, you name it," remembered Lafferty. She also spent countless hours of her youth with her dad in court, watching him prosecute cases, something which clearly resonated with Lafferty.

Now, Lafferty spends much of her own time in court, and working with clients who rely on her sound advice and expertise. Since 2009, when Lafferty joined the firm, she has been working in bankruptcy, commercial litigation, and estate planning, where she feels strongly that she is helping people who are at the end of their ropes. "I like focusing on bankruptcy because I'm really able to help people," explained Lafferty, who added, "They often come in crying and when they leave, I can see the sense of relief on their face... they are getting a fresh start."

Lafferty focuses predominantly on Chapter 7 bankruptcies, as opposed to Chapter 13 or other less well known options. Chapter 7 bankruptcies involve a complete liquidation of non-exempt assets, allowing her clients to get to zero and start fresh, thereby climbing out of steep debt. "It can be a sticky situation," explained Lafferty, "credit card companies will often extend new lines of credit after an individual is discharged in bankruptcy court, knowing that they can't file for bankruptcy again within a certain period of time." Lafferty explained

that most of her clients aren't being irresponsible or making impulsive purchases, rather, they have lost their jobs and can't continue to make credit card payments.

In addition to the work she does at the firm, Lafferty juggles obligations outside of her full time position. As the County Coordinator for the Atlantic County Mock Trial Program, Lafferty runs the very program that she herself participated in during high school, when her father acted as her attorney coach for four years.

In addition, Lafferty applied for, and received a spot on the Atlantic County Child Placement Review Board in January. In her role, she and the board review temporary foster placements within the county. And since the board acts as an arm of the court, it is able to make recommendations to judges about cases. "Parents who have temporarily lost custody of their children can come in and tell us what they are doing to comply with their court ordered services, since they don't really get the opportunity to speak in court, and we can make recommendations based on that," explained Lafferty.

Lafferty has her work cut out for her, but, like her father, her brother (patent litigation attorney), and her stepsister (Florida attorney), law is where she is most comfortable. In their case, it seems, law really does run in the family.



Rebecca Lafferty

DAN TRACY, ESQ.

ATTORNEY DAN TRACY ALWAYS KNEW HE WANTED to go into the military. With an uncle in the Air Force, and a grandfather who served in the Navy in WWII, Tracy planned to continue the family tradition of military service. Which is why, after graduating from high school in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1995, Tracy accepted an ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) scholarship to Loyola University in Maryland, where he graduated with an accounting degree in 1999.

And though Tracy owed the government four years in the army upon his graduation, he was able to postpone his service until after he completed Rutgers School of Law in Camden. Upon his graduation in 2002, and after passing the NJ State Bar Exam, Tracy began his military career in the JAG Corps (Judge Advocate General Corps).

Stationed in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, the home of the Fort Leavenworth Military Prison, Tracy began his law and military careers simultaneously. During his first two years serving in the JAG Corps, Tracy worked as a prosecutor for the military—as one of only two attorneys at the U.S. military's only maximum security prison—while also serving as an advisor to the warden, or Commandant, of the prison, advising on a variety of legal issues.

During his final two years of service, Tracy's assignment was as a Trial Defense Attorney, where he advocated for soldier clients. It was in this capacity that Tracy had the honor, and responsibility, of defending his fellow service men and women in trials against his employer, The United States Army.

As the defense attorney at nearly 50 courts-martial, appellate, and administrative hearings, including six homicides, Tracy "got used to representing people who weren't necessarily bad but who made bad choices... representing soldiers whose lives had changed, (many times) due to post-traumatic stress disorder".

Tracy recalls one of his favorite clients, a Green Beret who received a Silver Star for Bravery in battle. "It was very rewarding... we got the charges dropped... it was a privilege to represent him," Tracy explained. Tracy continued that it was a privilege to represent his fellow service men and women because whatever had happened, he knew that at one point, going into the military, they were usually good, heroic, and honorable people.

The same can be said for his clients now. Though no longer in active service, Tracy continues to work as an attorney in the private sector. An attorney for one of Atlantic County's leading litigation firms, Goldenberg, Mackler, Sayegh, Mintz, Pfeffer, Bonchi & Gill, Tracy specializes in civil litigation with an emphasis on workers' compensation. Tracy, once again, is helping the honorable of our country, from firefighters to police officers who have been injured in the line of duty. "I've moved from the front lines of our country to the front lines of our economy," joked Tracy.

Named Outstanding Young Lawyer last year by the bar association, and named as a Rising Star by *New Jersey Super Lawyers*

Magazine this year, Tracy is clearly excelling in the private sector as much as he did in the armed forces.

When asked why Tracy didn't stay in the service, after what seemed to be a satisfying career there, Tracy explained that he and his wife, Sabrina Tracy, thought that a civilian life would be better for raising a family. Now with two young sons, Tracy and his family have settled down in Egg Harbor Township. And though Tracy is a Wilmington native, he has deep ties to this community.

"My dad grew up in Margate and was a lifeguard in Atlantic City all during my childhood, so I spent every summer here," explained Tracy. And besides the fact that Tracy himself spent summers as an AC lifeguard, his ties actually run much deeper. "My family first came to Atlantic City in the 1800's," Tracy explained, adding, "They owned the Hygeia Pool, which was the largest indoor pool at the time, on Rhode Island Avenue."

Though his family ties run deep in Atlantic County, Tracy isn't just here for the history, but for the sense of community the area inspires. With two young sons and a booming career, he is doing his best to contribute to that feeling.



Dan Tracy

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TRIUMPH Over Tragedy

BY FELICIA NIVEN

If you want the very definition of grace under pressure, look no further than the four women who have lived this past year in a fishbowl, every detail of their shattered lives on display. The rare strength that they exhibit, and the beauty that they still find in living, is an example to us all.



Images by Tom Briglia / PhotoGraphics Photography



The custom memorial golf cart in memory of Casey, Dean, Edgar and Nick which was donated by Car Toyz in Pleasantville



Cristina Barrella-Meoli and her son, Nicholas

The day dawned brightly enough on Saturday, August 20, 2011. Beachgoers headed to the Jersey shore to catch some final rays before the end of the season. A caravan of Mainland Regional High School (MRHS) coaches and players headed to Old Country Buffet in Mays Landing to celebrate another annual ritual, the breakfast following the last football practice of summer. Among them, traveling the Garden State Parkway that fateful day, was a 2002 Ford Explorer that would never reach its destination. There is speculation that if it had been raining, perhaps there wouldn't have been the amount of shore traffic backed up at that pivotal exit. Or maybe there could have been a better sight line for the turn, so that drivers could prepare. But as these things happen, there was little to no warning. At 11:45 a.m., the vehicle screeched to a halt, overturning several times near exit 38A southbound, in an instant changing lives forever.

OUR OWN 9-11

Within half an hour of the accident, MRHS principal Mark Marrone got the call from Athletic Director Mike Gatley. Both Marrone and Gatley were new to their positions, as were two others on the MRHS Administrative team: Assistant Principals Kevin Burns and Javhan O'Neal. It would be a heck of an initiation. "There was no clear indication of what was happening," said Marrone. "We simply knew there was a serious accident involving our students," he said. So he put the wheels in motion, notifying Superintendent Tom Baruffi and the rest of the administration. The natural gathering place was Coach Bob Coffey's house in Linwood—where the response was so great that local police had to block off the street to vehicular traffic. Marrone had actually planned another activity for that day. He was going to get engaged to girlfriend Kerrie Donovan. But there was no time for that



Lynn Brenner and her son, Casey

now. He cancelled his dinner and got down to work, talking to parents and players, heading down to the hospital with Burns and O'Neal to receive the news.

As the news trickled in, hope would turn to shock and disbelief. Four lives would be lost forever: Dean Khoury, age 15, Casey Brenner, age 17, Nicholas Conner, age 16, and Edgar Bozzi, age 17. Four others would experience the narrow escape—and the survivor's guilt that will haunt them—Alex Denafó, Jacob Smith, Kyle Beattie and Kenneth Randall.

To say that August 20th became the community's own "9-11" is no understatement. It was a time when the world stopped turning for four families, and so many more who were affected by the tragedy. It was also a time that would ultimately bring the community together in a way that had never happened before.

But no one could know that yet; the accident still seemed so surreal. A Facebook page attempted to start the dialogue that very night. Titled, "R.I.P. Mainland HS Boys. Gone But Never Forgotten," it generated more than 30,000 members by the following Monday.

But at 11 p.m. that night, Mark Marrone wasn't on Facebook. He was making his way wearily over to Kerrie Donovan. He presented her with the ring, saying, "Please say yes. I need something good to happen today."

A BLUR OF ACTIVITY

Denise Gallagher, Dean's mom, doesn't remember details or even how she got to the candlelight vigil that took place the next night at Mainland. "It was a complete blur," she said. "I remember going into the weight room at the beginning with the other families [who had lost their



Denise Gallagher and her son, Dean

Three days before they began to bury the boys, families and friends came together at the 30th Street beach in Longport. “That was their beach,” said Lynn. Max and Hayden Boskovich had organized a “paddle out,” a surfer’s tribute to honor the boys. Cristina and Modesta weren’t ready to be there but Lynn and Denise “got there somehow in the blur.”

The two women sat front and center in the lifeboat, holding photos of their sons, surrounded by family and friends wading in the water. A green and white surfboard, sporting the boys’ initials and numbers, was carried in: CB 20, DK 67, EB 34, NC 47.

The paddle-out was repeated this year, slightly earlier than the year anniversary, to allow the kids heading to college to participate before they left. This year, Cristina joined the others.

“Did you look at the pictures?” asked Lynn. “Last year, they were all so sad. There was no smiling. This year, every kid is smiling.”

She seemed energized by that fact. It also was one of the tributes that stood out to her, and the others agreed.

“The lifeguards stayed,” added Denise. “They’re off at 5 p.m. but they volunteered their time. Even Longport Chief Adams, who was in Texas at the time, sent his daughter to make sure that we didn’t need anything. People have been so incredibly wonderful.”

“The art teacher and several students created a mural to hang on the press box during football season,” said Lynn. “We pretty much stand together underneath it during the games.”

There was a tribute at the Phillies game on August 23, 2011, where 45,000 fans rose from their seats for a moment of silence. The boys’ names appeared on the scoreboard with the Mainland logo. Casey Brenner had planned to attend the game, so friends “tweeted” Phillies shortstop Jimmy Rollins who arranged for the tribute.

Then, the Oceanside Wellness and Sport gym in Egg Harbor Township created a scholarship fund to keep the boys’ memories alive, and help other athletes. Working with the Wish Upon a Hero Foundation, they raised a record amount due to enthusiastic community support.

The Under Armour “Finding Undeniable” challenge was another positive cause where the community could funnel their energy. The boys were highlighted in the school’s submissions.

“Our athletic director Mike Gatley suggested that we enroll in the challenge,” said Mark Marrone. Under Armour was offering \$140,000 in athletic gear over two years and \$40,000 in shirts and shorts to help the entire school. “We created QR codes, did the video, participated in all of the calls. This wasn’t about athletics. It was about a sense of community and school spirit, a way to bring people together in the wake of a tragedy.”

“This was a time when we didn’t know what to do,” said Denise. “This was a place to put our energy. People voted for us all around the country.”

“People were looking at this community, looking at the Phoenix rising from the ashes,” said Cristina. “I just kept on thinking, we need this. We need to win this.”

“They fixed it,” said Denise with a smile. “The boys fixed it.”

FINDING STRENGTH

From park benches with the boys’ names to a rock that the football players now touch for good luck, the tributes continue.

“To me, the decals are the thing that still just hits you in the face,” said Denise. “It’s very sweet but at the same time, my kid’s initials are on that car, and that really sucks. It just sucks.”

Lynn and Cristina nodded. “I’m always looking to see whose car it is,” said Lynn. “And half the time, I don’t know them. So this has really



sons]. We got to talk to the boys—the whole football team—for the first time since the accident. We started talking and that helped them to open up. We said we’re going to get through this together, because we’re family. That was the moment I remember. It was huge.”

Perched at the dining room table in Denise Gallagher’s home were Lynn Brenner, Casey’s mom, and Cristina Barrella-Meoli, Nick’s mom. The three women had chosen to wait a few days past the year anniversary so that, as Lynn put it, “we wouldn’t have such sad eyes.” (Even after a year, not everyone was ready to talk; Edgar’s mom, Modesta Bozzi, declined the interview.)

Not wanting to relive the funerals (they attended them all), the mothers said simply that what stood out was the community response—and the sea of uniforms.

“Football players from all around came in uniform,” said Denise. “Mainland. Oakcrest. Gami. Teams we didn’t even know.”

A year before, Denise was sitting at another funeral of a teen taken before his time. Sixteen-year-old Dale Krause was killed in an ATV accident in September 2010. “I remember sitting at that funeral, thinking, how is she doing this?” said Denise. “Then, a year later, we were all doing it.”

THE TRIBUTES

Almost immediately after the accident, the tributes began. There were bracelets with the boys’ initials, pins with their photos, car decals, and gatherings. It started early and didn’t stop.

touched so many people.”

It’s become a common part of these women’s lives—people reaching out to them, supporting them, dropping off food or offering hugs.

“The only reason we made it out of the house is because all of the people helped us,” said Cristina. “All these tributes moved us. We had to keep going.”

“I had no choice because of Ryan,” Lynn said of her younger son, Casey’s brother. “Ryan played football and he didn’t skip a beat. He didn’t miss a practice, a meeting. That forced me to get out, too.”

“So did my daughter,” chimed in Cristina about 12-year-old Gianna. “She was busier than ever; she does cheerleading, softball, basketball. Her friends came and swooped her up. They didn’t give her a choice.”

“All of us kept going because we had to,” said Denise, “We each have other kids who needed us and we needed them.” She looked at the other moms and added, “and we had each other. We’ll text each other before we get out of bed to say, what are we doing today?”

Spirituality also played a part. “I’m born-again Christian and so I’m very spiritual,” said Cristina. “I’ve prayed for other people, so I know others are praying for us because I can’t do it right now. I’m so weak. I know that’s where my strength is coming from.”

“I am very religious, church every Sunday,” said Denise. “As funny as it sounds, I was never angry, but at the same time, church is where I got most emotional. I would be at Saint Gianna’s and

everyone was staring—in a concerned way, not in a bad way. But I felt as if I was upsetting other people. So I actually found reasons a couple of times not to go to church.”

“I did a lot of church surfing,” acknowledged Lynn, “for the same reason.”

“I find myself not so much praying to God anymore but praying to Dean,” said Denise. “I talk to him constantly. I think I always will. That’s how we’ll communicate from now on, other than their crazy signs.”

THE SIGNS

Sometimes life turns on a dime. Maybe that’s why Denise has been finding dimes—everywhere. “I’ll clean the room and then turn around and there’s another dime,” she said. “Where are all the dimes coming from?”

Then there are the ladybugs. “I couldn’t tell you how many ladybug sightings there have been,” Denise added, sporting a ladybug ring.

“You see the signs everywhere,” said Cristina, who notices Nick’s number 47 frequently. “When I went to Florida, I stayed on 47th Street,” she said. “I was at the casino, and my room number was 4726. The car parked in front of us had a 47 [in its license plate], too.”

“My son Shaun was in the casino this summer, and he called me,” said Lynn, “to tell me he played Casey’s number. He put \$20 on 20 and won \$300.”

Denise bought her first 50-50 ticket at a Mainland football game, and it happened to end with 67, Dean's number. "I knew I had to buy that ticket," she said. "And I've never won a 50-50 in my life, but I won that one."

For Lynn, it's butterflies and cardinals that are Casey's sign. Then there was that time in the Tilton Market parking lot.

"It was sunny when I pulled into the lot," she said. "The radio was on, playing one of Casey's favorite songs, Knee Deep by the Zac Brown Band. I thought I'd listen to the first little bit, but then I turned the car off so I could get to my shopping. Well, as soon as I did, it poured so hard I couldn't get out. I couldn't even push the door open. Then the song stopped and guess what? The rain stopped, too."

"I don't believe in coincidences any more," said Cristina. The others nodded.

THE NEW NORMAL

Even now, when the phone rings in the car, Cristina cringes, expecting bad news. "But I try not to do it, to set an example for Gianna that she should worry."

"Do you think you're more cautious now than you were before?" questions Lynn.

"Well, we all used to warn our kids not to do this or that," Denise replies thoughtfully. "But now we know it actually can happen. It did happen. And I do believe people have changed their lives because of that."

"They're riding the bike path with their kids and they're thanking us," said Cristina. "They're spending more quality time with them because they know what could happen."

But in the "new normal," the boys' absence is tangible. Thanksgiving was the first big holiday that the families had to "get through."

"We always had both sides of the family here for Thanksgiving," said Denise, "but I know that I wasn't up for it. Thank goodness for Terry and Dave Castellini. They included all of us at their home."

"It was really difficult for me that first holiday," acknowledged Cristina. "We sat down and he was missing. It wasn't good. We will be changing that."

For Lynn, the holidays were a blur. "I can't even remember what we did," she acknowledged.

Both Cristina and Denise hosted Open Houses for Christmas. That's when Mike Bell brought over portraits of the boys.

"We surrounded ourselves with family," said Cristina. "All the kids came over, too."

Mother's Day was equally hard. "Before Dean died, Peyton, his best friend, brought me flowers on Mother's Day," said Denise. "This year, he showed up with his own mother because he needed her that day."

The one-year anniversary was yet another difficult milestone. The mothers were invited to an early mass and then to breakfast with the



football players at the school. After that, they went their separate ways.

"People try to empathize with us," said Denise, "and I say—very respectfully—that if you haven't lost a child, you don't really understand. That's why I chose to spend the rest of the day with Lynn. We sat at the dock, talked and relaxed for a couple of hours. It was peaceful."

"My house was not peaceful," said Cristina. "I had my head on my aunt's lap like I was a little baby. There was a houseful of people and they didn't know what to do either. I just wound up going upstairs to bed."

"Drew, my oldest, got on Facebook and told everyone, 'get outside.' This is not what they would want," said Denise. "It took a 20-year-old to show us what we should be doing."

"Ryan also has a great sense of humor," said Lynn. "He teased us about taking Casey's flowers and giving them to his girlfriend. The kids are helping to keep us moving ahead."

As for the community at large, the mothers remain eternally grateful for the support. "This is the reason we agreed to be interviewed for the article," said Denise. "We've been taking and taking, and we need to say thank you."

"They say it takes a village to raise a child," said Lynn. "Well, it takes a town to bury them. That's what has happened here. We've done it together."

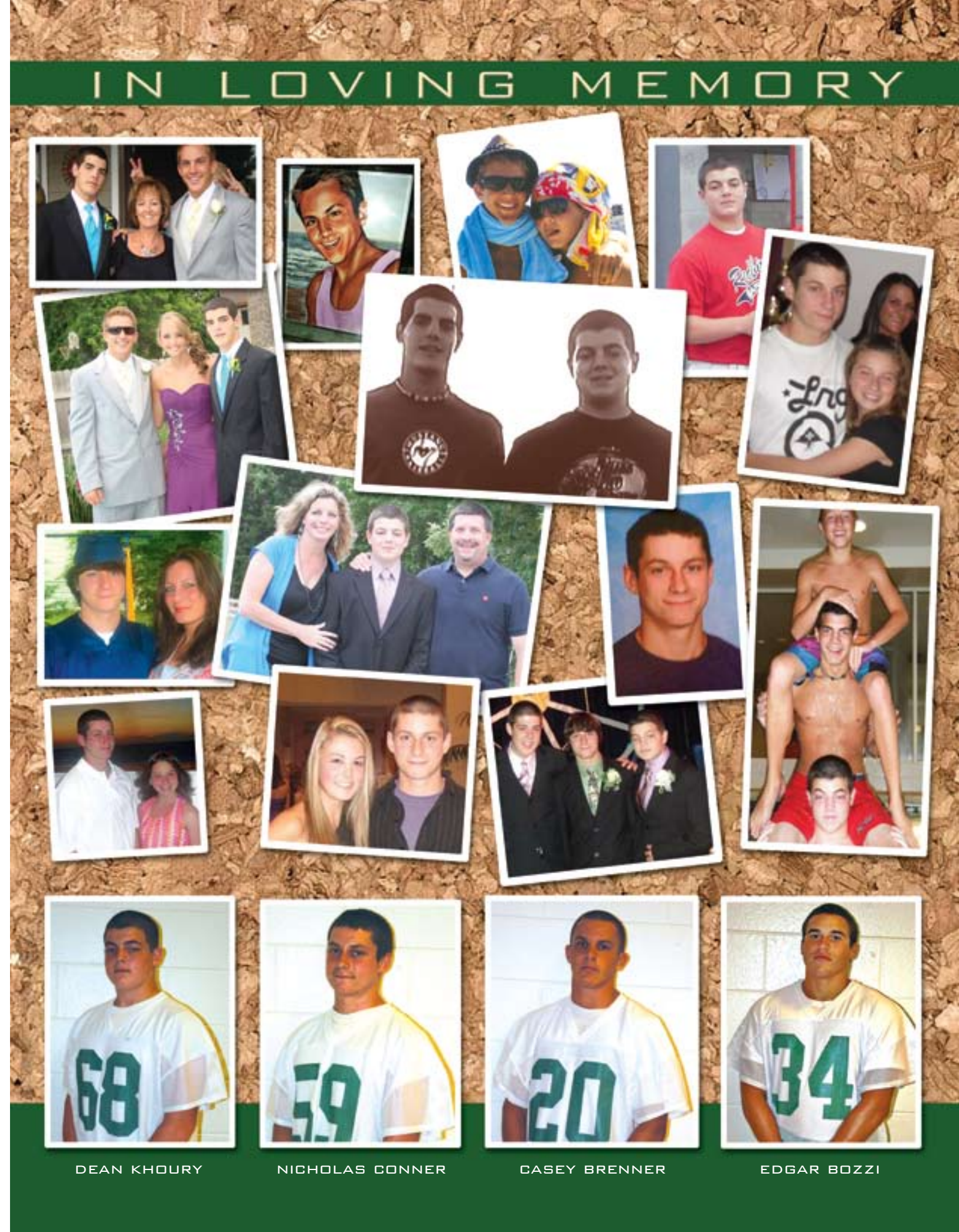
Mr. Marrone at Mainland concurs. "After the students left school in June, a number of administrators said same thing. We went into the year like a marathon, organizing tributes, making sure students had access to grief counseling. We didn't realize how incredible this effort was in terms of community. In so many ways it was a catalyst for the community coming together. We believe we are responsible to each other and it shows."

As for what the future holds, the moms have a request.

"Please don't stop talking about our boys," said Denise. "We love hearing their names. We want to keep their memories alive."

In the meantime, they'll work on the next chapter in their lives.

"They would want us to live. No doubt," said Denise as the others nodded in agreement. "They would want us to be happy."



DEAN KHOURY

NICHOLAS CONNER

CASEY BRENNER

EDGAR BOZZI

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Mitch Winehouse: How the Death of His Daughter, Amy, Has Inspired Him to Help Others Fight Addiction

By MICHELLE DAWN MOONEY

BEFORE YOU READ THIS ARTICLE, I want you to do me a favor and look at the time. Now fast-forward 60 minutes. During the course of that time, in any given hour, on any given day, 286 people worldwide will die from alcohol-related causes. In the 3pm hour of July 23rd, 2011, Grammy award-winning singer Amy Winehouse was one of them.

While shockingly tragic, Amy's death came as no surprise to many who had watched the London-born musician fight a very public battle with both drugs and alcohol since the release of her mega-hit album "Back to Black" in 2006. Many were quick to criticize the 27-year-old's roller coaster recovery attempts over the years, following the belief that people can only blame themselves for becoming an addict. Interestingly enough, it was Amy herself who shared that same sentiment.

"She was actually quite scathing about people who were into drugs," Amy's father, Mitch Winehouse, tells me. "She was quite unsympathetic... and then it happened to her. I remember that she went out with a friend and this young girl who was clearly a user came up to her and Amy was kind of shocked by what she was. Amy said to me that she didn't want to end up like that. The thing was, she already was like that. The difference was Amy had money and she wasn't begging on the streets."

Amy's denial was representative of so many who fall victim to drug and alcohol dependence, the numbers of which are astounding. In the United States alone, an estimated 22.1 million people over the age of 12 were dependent or abusing alcohol and or illicit drugs in 2010, according to a US Department of Health and Human Services report. Locally, more than one in 10 people in the Garden State need treatment for alcohol and drug abuse.



One way that health officials are hoping to bring awareness to the issue is through September's National Recovery Month. Since its inception more than two decades ago, it has evolved to become a key instrument to promote education and encourage people to follow the road to recovery. As Amy's father knows however, it's a road that is often paved with pain and lined with detours along the way.

"People forget, (Amy) got herself clean from drugs," Winehouse says. "She was clean for nearly three years and she was moving towards abstinence with drinking as well. For the last six weeks of her life, five weeks and five days were spent clean... the last two days obviously, she drank an enormous amount, but that is the typical pattern for somebody who's moving towards abstinence."

Toxicology reports did find that there were no illegal drugs in Amy's system at the time of her death, which a London coroner ruled to be a result of accidental alcohol poisoning. Questions began to circulate about what could have been done to save her and what can be done in the future to prevent someone else from finding a similar fate. While the answers may come too late to save his daughter, Winehouse believes they can be found.

"It all boils down to education... the more young people that we're able to deliver the cautionary tales to about alcohol, smoking, cannabis, marijuana, legal highs. There is still going to be a percentage of young people who are going to move down that road anyway," Winehouse says. "I think the war will never be won. I think the best thing that we will be able to do is to reduce the numbers of people who are suffering with this terrible disease, and I think we're going to do it as well, I really think we're going to do it."

Determined to see that Amy did not die in vain, Mitch and Amy's mom, Janis, launched The Amy Winehouse Foundation, which launched in the UK on September 14th, 2011, what would have been Amy's 28th birthday. The organization was designed to help provide treatment for those battling addictions, and support a number of charitable ventures, namely with disadvantaged youth.

"Setting up Amy's foundation has kept us all going," says Winehouse. "The thought...we're able to help young disadvantaged people in the UK and in the very near future in the US. That's what keeps us going... obviously, it

would be much better if Amy was here but she's not, and these are the circumstances we find ourselves in. It's very difficult, but that's what keeps us motivated."

Here in the United States, the mission will focus more on empowering young people through music therapy and music education.

"We're going to be working with a New Orleans Jazz Orchestra, which has two wonderful projects...one weekend music education program and the other, a summer school education program. What we want to do is... we want to create some after school music programs in Amy's name. We're also going... in September... to the Brooklyn Conservatory to see if we can be of any help there as well... helping kids who are disadvantaged pay for tuition fees. So, hopefully we will and they would be our first projects in the US. We're very excited about our first forays in America."

Winehouse says choosing to have the foundation focus primarily on young people was easy, as he says he was constantly reminded of her passion for babies and little children, especially those in need.

"The one thing that she actually articulated to me was when we watched Katrina in 2005, and this was just before Amy was starting even, so she never had any money really... and she said 'Dad, if there was only something we could do to help these poor children.' That's what stuck in mind. So, this was Amy's passion, babies, little children and what we've done, we've moved it forward to young people as well. Amy couldn't bear the thought of anybody being in trouble."

For those fighting addiction, however, Winehouse knows that trouble comes with the territory, with many abusers finding themselves in and out of prison, mostly for minor drug-related offenses. The issue on how to handle these offenders has been a source of controversy both in the UK and here in America. Interestingly enough, there is a unique similarity on schools of thought that is shared by New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and government officials in the British community of Brighton. While Christie recently signed off on legislation supporting a state-wide mandatory drug court program for offenders with substance abuse issues, there is a similar pilot program going on in Brighton. Thirty offenders with records of non-violent crime like burglarizing, fraud, and minor theft, related to their drug habits, are also not being sent to prison, but rehab.

"They're putting them into residential rehab and what they're finding is, in that local community, in that pilot community, is crime has

literally diminished, because the majority of crime is drug related as we know. So, because those people are not being sent to prison, they're being counseled, they're being given therapy, they're being moved away from drugs, they're being helped with work. Instead of them going to prison and being a drain on resources they're actually starting to go back to work and they're starting to contribute to the community."

Winehouse says he's totally on point with Christie's logic on mandated drug courts, adding that it's the drug dealers who should be locked up and not their customers. Still, it's one thing to be forced into rehab by the courts and another to want to go willingly. Amy herself echoed the all too familiar rebellion by many addicts as she sang, "They tried to make me go to rehab but I said no," in her breakout hit "Rehab". While the fight is not always easy, Winehouse hopes the foundation that now bears Amy's name will encourage more addicts to seek recovery by treating them in a loving way.

"Nobody goes out and one morning wakes up and says, 'you know what, today I fancy being a drug addict or an alcoholic.' Nobody chooses to go down that road. If they don't want to go you can't force them to do it because it won't have any affect," Winehouse says. "If they want to go into residential rehab you've got a 60 percent chance that they will be clean a year after they come out. We will help them with work, we'll get them a job that will now be contributing to the economy rather than taking away from the community."

Amy's connection to the community is one of the things that Winehouse is most proud of. With his best selling book, "Amy, My Daughter", author proceeds from which benefit the foundation, he says he's given the opportunity to show a different side of the tormented singer whose talents even he admits, were often overshadowed by her lifestyle.

"I didn't really know how good she was until she passed away. It's unbelievable because I was so close to her, running after and shouting at her I didn't realize how brilliant she was and now I'm beginning to realize that. So, I want to remember her wonderful voice and her wonderful music but also for the great human being that she was... and for all of the great things that she's going to do in the future. Because the story's not over, is it?"

For more information visit www.amywinehousefoundation.org



Amy Winehouse



Mitch and Amy Winehouse in 2006

CHRIS CALVI: LINWOOD'S IRONMAN

BY KELLY NICOLE TJOUMAKARIS

As the Olympics were coming to a close on Saturday, August 11th, some of the world's best athletes, absent from London, were competing in swimming, biking and running events in the presence of the Big Apple, rather than Big Ben. One locally-born athlete proved his own athletic aptitude in these events, which spanned from New Jersey to New York City, thus reflecting his own geographic journey through life. This tale of two states, and one triathlon, regards thirty year old, Linwood born, Christopher Calvi, who lives on the Upper East Side and works in the city as well. He completed the NYC Ironman in 15 hours, 57 minutes and 39 seconds. And that was with little preparation and modest training sessions during his lunch hour.

Modest himself, Chris refuses to call himself a competitor as he just joins these triathlons for fun, not to win. He started swimming when he was six years old and has not ceased stroke since. He swam the butterfly and freestyle at Mainland Regional High School under the coaching of John Rakowski and Brian Booth. As a former lifeguard in Margate, when Chris returns to his family's house in Linwood, he continues to visit Margate beach for an ocean swim. Given this experience, the least important training for him was the swimming.

Five years ago Chris began running and three years ago, while he lived in Los Angeles, when his mountain bike was fortuitously stolen thus giving him the chance to purchase a road bike, he began biking and on none-other than the Santa Monica bike path running along the beach. The triathlon requirement equation was complete.

The first triathlon he competed in was three years ago—it was the starting block of more to come. When opportunity did a literal knocking on Chris' door and psyche, he could not resist. Chris loves a challenge; he loves setting a goal and trying to achieve it. And right here in his backyard—New York, New York, the most populated city in our country—was to be the triathlon of iron proportions where his past and present merged into one, and where the Hudson River runs through it.

For a race that involves a 2.4 mile swim through the Hudson River, a 112 mile bike ride on the Palisades Parkway and a 26.2 mile run through Riverside Park, his training regimen was limited; Chris and his wife Katie had a baby boy, Clark, this year. His daily lunch became Spin class and treadmill workouts and he would bike to work when possible. Missing from his diet were long bike rides and he felt it on race day as, "the last 40 miles of the bike

portion were punishing."

This partly cloudy, yet still torrid day in August was the first full Ironman triathlon he attempted. The Hudson River swim, which was making its own splash in the media with a sewage spill, was a walk, or swim rather, in the park for him and he navigated it with the same spirit as Henry Hudson 400 years ago.

Calvi's favorite part of the race, and a part that had to have him feeling like a champion in an epic poem, was running over the George Washington Bridge. A bridge described by Le Corbusier in *When the Cathedrals Were White* as, "The most beautiful bridge in the world...[a] seat of grace in the disordered city." While suspended on said "seat", Calvi was excited that he was almost in NYC and thinking that only 17 miles remained before him.

To get through the running portion, our athlete's strategy was to take one step at a time and not allow himself to focus on the whole ordeal. Just blocks from his home, he was able to sprint the last two miles, though all the marathon goo and gel was making its own dash. Despite the revolt of the goo and gels he was forced to ingest all day, he felt great, and as his momentum came to a close, he was moved by the collective emphatic cheering at the finish line and was greeted by an iron-clad embrace from wife, Katie, despite his sweaty Hudson River veneer.

What resonated with Chris most was the camaraderie and support of fellow participants in a race where each athlete strives to qualify for the namesake of the competition. Ironman has a strict no headphone policy leaving every athlete to his/her own body and thoughts, ironically prompting most of the athletes to support each other. Among the providers of supportive score was one individual, Hector Picard, the first double arm amputee to finish an Ironman U.S. Championship, who in a poetic move said to many of his fellow athletes that day, including Chris... "Keep it up."



Chris Calvi, moments after crossing the finish line

BWJ

DOUBLE the Tumble

BY KELLY NICOLE TJOUMAKARIS

In the wake of the Olympics, while divers, swimmers and gymnasts are still tumbling around in our heads and their medals still retain dazzle, Gianna and Samantha Rando, sisters from Absecon separated by one sole year, have been basking in their own glory and in the luster of their own gold medals—bestowed on them in synchronized fashion by a first place win in the bars event at the 2012 United States Association of Independent Gymnastic Clubs, Inc. (USAIGC) National International championship. The Competition, held this past June in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, preceded the Olympics by weeks. Both girls finished first in the nation for uneven bars with the same exact score of 9.475 in each age group, filling mom, dad and coach with pride and tears. Gianna also received a bronze on beam and floor events, adorning her with three total medals and second place overall.

Cut from the same acrobatic gene pool, Gianna and Samantha are third generation gymnasts. Gianna, the eldest at eleven years old, frequented Blake's Gymnastics, in Northfield, while somersaulting in her mother's belly. Her mother, Keri Rando, taught preschool gymnastics at Blake's and continued to bring her daughter to the classes after she was born. As soon as her daughter was potty trained, at the early age of 18 months, she was allowed to join the preschool gymnastic class. By 2 ½ years, Gianna was in a preschool gymnastics show, prompting her sister—who was 18 months old—to get the tumble bug and both have continued in the family business since. Always at Blake's and with mom coaching them and immediately seeing their natural talent, they began competing at level 3. Their father, Sammy Rando, still impressed says, "They were so advanced at it they blew through all levels."

It is uncommon for two sisters to be so good at one sport. The siblings have incredible talent and there is terrific balance in the pair; they support and inspire each other while feeding off each other; if one does a trick and nails it the other one wants to do it too. Dad compares Samantha to Nastia Liukin because she will work at it and work at it until she perfects it. He compares Gianna to Shawn Johnson, "Gianna just gets it." Shawn Johnson once shared, "We always say at our gym, if you lose the nerves, you lose the sport." These girls have profound nerve and sport and this is just their warm up.

This past year the girls trained for 17 hours a week or more, five days a week. Their coach, Becky Winn, a level 10 gymnast who also trained at Blake's for 15 years, loves the sport and loves coaching them. She has been coaching the girls for 4 and 5 years of the 8 she has coached at Blake's and says, "The Rando sisters are the most dedicated and talented and could go to the Olympics if they wanted to." This year Gianna and Samantha will move up a level to 9, which will increase training sessions to 20-22 hours a week for five days a week.

Samantha has innate drive and dreams of going to the Olympics. Gianna is a natural talent. The brand of natural that frustrates you because, "there is more talent in her little pinky than in all of the rest of us," says her mom, "but she has always been quite humble." Gianna, in fact, is supportive of her sister's Olympic size dream the same way

Gianna and Sami Rando



Samantha "Sami" Rando



Gabby Douglas' sister was an integral part in her rise to the Olympics; Gabby's sister Arielle Hawkins, her biggest advocate, relentlessly lobbied their mom to enroll the "flying squirrel" into gymnastics program after program and was an integral part in convincing her to allow her to go away for the Olympic training. Ironically, Samantha's hero in the 2012 Summer Olympics was Gabby Douglas. Gabby may be Samantha's favorite but when asked her feeling about her sister she boasts, "I think that Gianna is amazing at what she does and she should never quit."

The sister gymnasts impress each other and their impression of each other reflects that. Though Gianna's hero is Jordyn Wieber, she says of her sister, "I think that Samantha is insanely talented because she actually tries to do well at what she does...I was so proud of us [for both winning first place in bars], it felt great. My sister and I worked our butts off to win."

"Alley oop," sister gymnasts, we are rooting for you.

BWJ

The Original NJ Fresh Seafood Fest

FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS, the NJ Fresh Seafood Festival was held as a community endeavor, bringing together people from across Atlantic City, from the private sector to the public sector and everyone in between. Originally started as a joint collaboration between the Jaycees, the Atlantic City Convention Bureau, and the Charter Boat Association, the inaugural event served a two-fold purpose: To raise awareness of the Atlantic City coastal environment and to provide the Jaycees with a signature fundraiser that would help them keep their pledge of \$50,000 for a dialysis unit at Atlantic City Medical Center. That first year, the crowds were so unexpectedly large that they ran out of food by 1:30.

From there, the event grew to include the NJ Department of Agriculture as well as corporate sponsorship and went from a one day to two day festival. For seventeen years, the festival, a 501c3, was a summer highlight that garnered upwards of 40,000 people to Gardner's Basin each year. However, once development started in Gardner's Basin—reducing the parking opportunities—and corporate sponsorship was pulled due to banking buyouts and different policies from incoming banks, the NJ Fresh Seafood Festival was discontinued, much to the disappointment of the Atlantic City Community.

Bob Ruffalo, one of the spearheads of the NJ Fresh Seafood Festival, remembers, "Part of what made it work so well was that everyone worked so well together, there was no animosity...the entire city supported it...most people thought it was a city event, and it was, because we didn't pay for the city services...the city worked with us."

In between then and now, there was an attempt to revive the Seafood Festival by a Hammonton resident, according to Ruffalo. That event is in no way tied to the one planned for this September, and all sides agree that it was a dismal event all-around.

And while we've heard back from some readers that the Seafood Festival should stay in Gardner's Basin, Bob Ruffalo only wishes the festival, and those participating in it, lots of luck. "I wish them all the luck in the world...I'll be there."

The Boardwalk Journal asked its readers, "WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE SEAFOOD FESTIVAL MOVING FROM GARDNER'S BASIN TO BADER FIELD?"

"Back to the Basin! That's where it belongs! Seafood = water, the fishing boats, etc. Not in an old airport." – Gina Reynolds

"Either should be nice! Even though Gardner's Basin has a more feel of being around the ocean!" – Barbara Marsh

"For many years, we regularly attended the Seafood Festival and we were really very sad to see it go. However, it was revived at Bader Field one year not too long ago and that was a real disappointment. It was poorly run...Bader Field just didn't offer the charm that Gardner's Basin always did. I would not mind at all if this year's attempt is considered "bigger," in hopes that it will actually be better." – Kim Heyman

Save the Date: SEPTEMBER 14TH MARKS THE NEXT BIG ATLANTIC CITY FESTIVAL

BY DANIELLE DAVIES

WHAT DO SEAFOOD AND TRIATHLONS HAVE IN common with Atlantic City? Both will be making a huge splash with the highly anticipated return of The Atlantic City Seafood Festival as well as The Second Annual Atlantic City International Triathlon, held concurrently the weekend of September 15th.

Each event has, in the past, stood on its own. The fact that they are working in conjunction with one another this year only brings more excitement, and lots of visitors, to both events.

A fan-favorite in Atlantic City that's been sorely missed for several years, the Seafood Festival was formerly held, for over a decade, in the Gardner's Basin section of Atlantic City. It was, according to various sources, a fantastic festival, complete with seafood, crafts and entertainment in the quaint and nostalgic Gardner's Basin area.

Jon Henderson, owner and producer of Good Time Tricycle, the event company that manages The Atlantic City Beer and Music Festival as well as The Atlantic City Tattoo Expo, has plans to bring it back.

"We're not representing the seafood restaurants in our own front door," explained Henderson of his hope to reintroduce the festival to the city. After meeting with city officials over a year ago, Henderson kept a close eye on the music festivals being held at Bader Field (Dave Matthews, Metallica, and PHISH all had music festivals there within the past year) and watched them blow up into huge successes. Their success sealed the deal to use Bader Field as the festival venue.

"We want to produce a large footprint here," Henderson said of Bader Field. "We are using a huge chunk of Bader Field," and unlike in Gardner's Basin, there aren't any local businesses that would be unfairly affected by the onslaught of festival-goers.

Henderson hopes to highlight the culinary aspect of Atlantic City, featuring cooking demonstrations by some of the area's best known chefs, a chowder cook-off, (accessible for a \$5 donation to the NJ Food Bank, the charitable partner of the festival), and of course, a lineup of restaurants that will have your mouth watering. From Phillips Seafood and Fin to Jay's Crab Shack and Spanky's BBQ Grill, there is enough variety to suit every palate.

And though the event is based around seafood, that's definitely not all it has to offer. As one of the only truly family friendly events around, the Seafood Festival will have an area reserved for kite-flying, amusements, face painting, a petting zoo, pony rides, and sand sculpture. In addition, eight bands will be playing throughout the two-day event, and a tasting tent featuring the beer and wines of New Jersey will be available for tastings.

It's a two day festival made even more appealing with the addition of the 2nd Annual Atlantic City International



Triathlon held as a concurrent event.

The AC Triathlon is the brainchild of Delmo Sports owner, Stephe Del Monte, who has managed the Wildwood Triathlon for nine consecutive years. Last year, the inaugural year of the AC Triathlon, Delmo had slightly upwards of 300 participants. This year, Del Monte has more than tripled that number, with the count, at the time of interview, at 978 competitors. That's a growth explosion in an industry that usually sees only a 2-5% growth from year one to year two in endurance events.

Why the huge increase? According to Del Monte and Delmo Sports, which was recognized as the Event Producer of the Month by Active. Com, it's the philosophy behind the event that has helped to make it great. "We listen to our athletes and listen to the people of Atlantic City, and we implement their suggestions. We are going to make this great or die trying," added Del Monte. "And you can feel that coming through. I want to admit my mistakes and be candid about fixing them. If you give them less than your all, they will know it."

The goal of Del Monte, in addition to listening to his participants, is to give them a first class event at a good price, with first class finishers' medals, an amazing post-race meal, and a unique course: biking on the AC Expressway, swimming in the bay, and running on the oldest boardwalk in the country.

Del Monte also credits the success of this race with the city of Atlantic City, for so thoroughly embracing the event, and even strangely enough, the down economy, explaining that a slower economy makes people more likely to invest in new and bold ideas, like shutting down the expressway.

The participant limit caps off at around 1200, and Del Monte is likely to get that. As an added incentive, he's included a High Roller Program—aptly named for its host town—in which participants who get their friends involved earn Event benefits, like complimentary entry and VIP tents in a tiered program depending upon how many participants are recruited.

Tying the two events together will be the triathlon awards ceremony, which will take place on the Main Stage inside the Seafood Festival.

Proponents of Atlantic City couldn't be happier about the upcoming festival weekend. Shannon Wray, Director of Marketing/Promotions Equity Communications, offered, "For years, people have been talking about bringing it back! Locals want events like this. Events that they own in the shoulder season that promote locally caught shellfish, showcase local businesses and restaurants; and celebrate local flair. Both 95.1 WAYV and 100.7 WZXL are proud to sponsor both the AC Seafood Festival and International Triathlon. These two events utilize and showcase some of the best features of the city and position Atlantic City as a well-rounded resort."

Jeff Guaracino, Chief Strategy and Communications Officer of the Atlantic City Alliance added, "The Atlantic City Alliance looks forward to a full calendar of fall and winter events. People travel for passions like food and competitions. These events and others give many reasons for visitors to come again and again to Do AC."

Whatever your reasons for visiting Atlantic City this September, whether it's for the casinos, the shopping, the dining or a post-summer beach day, stop by the Atlantic City Seafood Festival... it promises to be an event worth your time.



Contestants from the First Annual Atlantic City International Triathlon

AC's Got Game

And it's not just in the casinos. Atlantic City—home to casinos, beaches, a world-class boardwalk, shopping and entertainment—is starting to represent something else entirely, particularly to endurance sports participants. Atlantic City is gaining traction and becoming a city known for its endurance events.

Consider this. The Atlantic City Marathon, the third oldest marathon in the country, is considered a fun, small to mid-sized race that also counts as a qualifier for The Boston Marathon. Now in its 54th year, the event takes place on October 20th, and boasts a whole race series, including a half marathon, a 10K, a 5K and a Kids Run.

The April Fools 7K and 11K were introduced to Atlantic City in 2011 as part of the AC Marathon Series. Run along a scenic route, the entire race is filled with costumed participants, live entertainment, and as a finale—complementary beer!

Add to these the 2nd Annual Atlantic City International Triathlon and Atlantic City is now home to three high-caliber endurance races, making it a destination for athletes worldwide.

With endurance sports participants come their families and supporters, bringing to AC a whole new class of visitors, reaching the ever elusive 'not here for the casinos' tourism population. With all Atlantic City has—coastal beauty, tons of lodging and dining options, and all the amenities a resort town has to offer—it's a wonder no one thought of this sooner.

ATLANTIC CITY INTERNATIONAL TRIATHLON RACE DETAILS:

International Race consists of a 1 mile bay swim, a 20 mile bike on the Expressway, and a 10K run on the Boardwalk.

The Sprint Race consists of a ¼ mile swim, 10 mile bike and a 5K run. The race begins at 7am on Saturday, September 15th.

A relay option is available for each race, and registration can be found at actriathlon.com.

The Best is Yet To Come

Growing Pains To Be Expected For Revel

BY MIKE EPPS, ESQ.

I have long said, to anyone who would listen, that if Atlantic City is going to be successful going forward, the question to be answered is “why do I want to come to Atlantic City between October and April?” We know that our greatest natural asset, the beach, is not the best draw in the middle of winter. The answer seems to be a full resort experience. Something you can’t get anywhere else at any time. A one of a kind experience. Revel seems to be endeavoring to answer that question by creating a unique experience that one would want to have regardless of the calendar.

I anticipated the summer of 2012 with excitement and anticipation and viewed it as “Revel summer.” The pessimists saw summer 2012 as Atlantic City’s last best chance to reclaim its place in the upper echelon of casino gaming jurisdictions. So far, after the first four months of Revel’s operation, the mood of many observers and commentators seems grim.

Construction of Revel originally began just before the economic downturn in late 2007. Revel was then and is now, an aggressive and bold endeavor in the Atlantic City market. It is the largest casino hotel ever built in Atlantic City and the most expensive.

It seems that Revel’s operational model is designed to take the road heretofore never traveled in Atlantic City. Revel has billed itself as a “true resort” which offers, among its amenities, a casino. Revel has a first class spa, an indoor/outdoor pool some six stories above the Boardwalk overlooking the beach. Revel has unique restaurants, a hip trendy nightclub, and a concert venue which has continued the established trend of booking the hottest and most popular acts. However Revel also has a large physical plant which carries a huge debt load.

I believe that Revel has adopted a model which will become the new normal in Atlantic City. Up and down the boardwalk and throughout town it is clear that the new thrust is to give the Atlantic City guest a full experience. Just down the boardwalk for example, Resorts has partnered with Jimmy Buffett for a Margaritaville themed attraction, and have partnered with Mohegan Sun to manage its property. The Margaritaville attraction is clearly designed to attract people to the resort so that while they are there, maybe they will gamble.

As gaming continues to spread throughout the United States, with more and more states seeking the additional tax revenue that legalized gaming seems to offer, Atlantic City has to continue to find ways to distinguish itself. Revel is the newest distinguishing feature.

As might be expected, the blogosphere is all abuzz about Revel’s performance so far. Many are writing off the company as a failure and predicting eminent doom. My feeling is that maybe all of this reaction may be premature. It may be too soon to sound the death



knell. Revel is an infant in the market. Given the current economic circumstances, I don’t know that it is reasonable to expect the infant company to be leading the pack after four months. Revel enters the market when there is unprecedented regional competition with full scale gaming, national economic uncertainty, and in the midst of the largest earnings slump in the Atlantic City gaming market’s history.

Another monumental challenge that Revel faced was opening during the historically busy Memorial Day weekend. Revel opened “softly” during April and May but made the Memorial Day weekend its official opening weekend. However, I wonder whether the preceding two months were enough time to train staff and work out the “bugs” before all eyes would be on the new kid. I believe the best is yet to come for Revel. The retail spaces at Revel are not fully developed yet. The unique beach experience did not have the benefit of a full summer. Changes are anticipated at the Garden Pier area.

During the first few months of operation, Revel has been in the middle of the pack with respect to gaming revenue. The New Jersey division of gaming enforcement recently released the second quarter gross operating profit statistics for the Atlantic City casinos. A review of the report suggests that during the second quarter of this year Revel experienced an operating loss of \$35 million. Moreover, *The Associated Press* recently reported that the Wall Street ratings agencies Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s have lowered their ratings of Revel, indicating that the company’s recent performance creates doubt about their ability to meet its financial obligations. At the same time, however, Revel is currently in the process of securing an additional \$100 million in credit commitments. Revel’s management has also indicated that they are making adjustments. While the new kid on the block has certainly shown some growing pains, I do not believe that it is time to write Revel off as a failed experiment. I believe that brighter days lay ahead for the Southeast Inlet with Revel as the anchor.



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The Clubs You Need In Your Golf Bag

BY JIM SCHAFFER JR.

I CAN LOOK INTO A STUDENT'S OR PLAYER'S bag and see if he is maximizing his 14 clubs. I am 47-years-old and find myself competing all the time against people half my age. I beat them by carrying the correct equipment in my bag.

First of all, I carry a 4 and 5 hybrid in my bag. You are doing a disservice as an amateur carrying a 3, 4, and 5 iron with a swing speed under a hundred. I can't hit a 5 iron consistently 175 yards anymore, but I am very consistent hitting my 5 hybrid 185-190 yards higher and softer. The 4 and 5 hybrid have easily replaced the 3, 4, and 5 irons.

Second, I carry a gap wedge (50 to 52 degrees). Too many golfers carry a 60 degree lob wedge which they do not hit with consistency. Most pitching wedges are 46 degrees. If your sand wedge is 56 degrees, you have a gap in your clubs that is hard to overcome. Add the gap or approach wedge and think about a 54 degree sand wedge and a 58 degree lob wedge if you have room in the bag. I do!

Lastly, the rules on C.O.R. for drivers do not apply to fairway woods. Have you noticed the pros using 3 woods a great deal more? 3 woods travel close to as far as drivers, but much straighter. I carry two 3 woods, one off the tee and one off the deck. Don't take the driver out of the bag and eliminate the wedge or long irons you aren't using. Come see me at McCullough's Emerald Links to dial your bag in perfectly for you!

Coaches' Corner Cape-Atlantic League Football Top Ten

By Coaches Jim Schafer Sr. and Jim Schafer Jr.

It's the start of another year of South Jersey high school football. *The Boardwalk Journal* will expand to take a look at our area's best and feature the players and coaches that make it happen in all the fall sports. *The Boardwalk Journal* will also be expanding their local sports coverage in the months to come. *Let the debate begin!*

- ST. JOSEPH'S HIGH SCHOOL**
The undefeated champ until they are knocked off the mountain top!
- HAMMONTON HIGH SCHOOL**
The Battle of Hammonton may be the Battle for No. 1 in our poll!
- HOLY SPIRIT HIGH SCHOOL**
Recruiting by private schools has extended to coaches. That won't stop the Spartans and their new triple option.
- OAKCREST HIGH SCHOOL**
Chuck Smith's remarkable transformation of the Falcons into a perennial power continues.
- MILLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL**
The best defensive line in South Jersey helps overcome the loss of last year's great backfield.
- ATLANTIC CITY HIGH SCHOOL**
Thomas Kelly refuses to lose and his players follow his lead.
- MAINLAND REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL**
Mainland is more than ready to honor the memory of the fallen from last year's tragedy. Watch for the Stangs to get on a roll in the 2nd half of the season.
- ABSEGAMI HIGH SCHOOL**
The talent is there, it's a matter of gelling at the right time. Could be a player at the end of the year.
- EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL**
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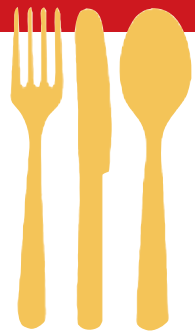
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“Although the skills aren’t hard to learn, finding the happiness and finding the satisfaction and finding fulfillment in continuously serving somebody else something good to eat, is what makes a really good restaurant.

– Mario Batali

JOHNNY’S Cafe

John and Joanne Liccio never intended to open one of the most successful restaurants in Margate. Yet with the opening of Johnny’s Café and Martini Bar in 2007, they have done just that.

When the Liccio’s went in to business here in South Jersey, they planned to build upon the foundation John Liccio had as a pastry chef. Having years of experience in the pastry business, from Litto’s Bakery and Isgro’s Bakery in The Italian Market section of Philadelphia, to his own bakery, Lucia’s, in Washington Township, John Liccio had more than twenty years in desserts behind his original Ventnor enterprise, Cookie’s and Cream, which opened in 2005.

As an ice cream and pastry shop at 7303 Ventnor Avenue in Ventnor, Cookie’s and Cream was a big hit. Yet the seasonal ebb and flow of customers inspired John Liccio, in 2006, to try his hand at something new...breakfast. Dinner followed shortly afterwards, and by the end of 2006, the Liccio’s closed down for a month to renovate.

Re-opened in February 2007 as Johnny’s Café & Martini Bar, the Liccio’s quickly built up such a loyal following that they were forced

to expand into their current location at 9407 Ventnor Avenue in Margate in December 2008. With two dining rooms in the restaurant, Johnny’s Café & Martini Bar has plenty of space, but it fills up quickly. Open seven days a week, year round, Johnny’s offers breakfast, lunch, and dinner menus as well as a wide range of fun martinis (think Cherry Cheesecake and Lemon Basil martinis), entertainment, and a pianist every night.

Johnny’s menu is extensive. Breakfast includes standard fare like omelets, breakfast sandwiches, pancakes and waffles, but almost everything as a non-traditional alternative. From a lump crab, Swiss cheese and hollandaise omelet to orange marmalade and cream cheese French toast, Johnny’s isn’t afraid to experiment.

Lunch is no different. Full of healthy salads and sandwich options, as well as a few platters, Johnny’s offers up several mouth-watering options. Sandwich selections include the filet mignon cheesesteak with gorgonzola cheese and a spicy spread as well as the portabella mushroom sandwich with fresh mozzarella cheese with pesto mayonnaise. Salad options include Classic Caesar, a wedge salad, and a grilled salmon salad.



And while breakfast and lunch at Johnny’s are popular, it is the dinner menu that truly shines. The menu leans heavily toward Italian fare but has enough variety to suit a variety of tastes. House specials recommended by Johnny himself are the Trip Tails...three lobster tails stuffed with crabmeat and served with smoked bacon creamed corn (\$39.95), Seafood Pescatore...calamari, lobster, shrimp, scallops, mussels and crab served over spaghetti with a choice of red, white, or Diablo sauce (\$34.95), Cold Lobster Platter... 1/2 lobster cooked and served chilled with jumbo shrimp and colossal crabmeat served with mango salsa (\$33.95), Pan Seared Chilean Sea Bass served over sweet mashed potatoes with a balsamic reduction (\$36.95) and the 15 ounce Grilled Veal Chop topped with Chorizo sauce (\$42.95).

From its humble beginnings as an ice cream and pastry shop to the full scale dining destination that Johnny’s Café and Martini Bar has become, customers are happy. Johnny’s patron, Stacey Tucker, said, “This beach café has friendly, attentive staff, pleasing ambience, an inventive menu and stimulating food.” The best part? They’re not done yet...Johnny’s has some changes coming up soon...be sure to stay tuned...

Anthony's Out to Lunch

HULA RESTAURANT AND SAUCE COMPANY



By Anthony Previti

You ever just been in a rut? Tired, bored, or just feel like things weren't going your way lately? Well that's exactly how I felt. Summer was winding down, and I was determined to hit the beach to literally brighten my day, when the storm clouds rolled in. So there I was staring out the window and realizing that I wouldn't need that sun tan lotion today. I looked over at my wife and said, "Forget it, we're going to Ocean City anyway." And it all seemed to get better from there...

As we crossed the bridge, the rain slowed to a halt and for a second, I thought I saw a ray of sunshine. We stepped up on the boardwalk determined to find something to eat for lunch when instantly, I ran into my buddy Charlie (the unofficial Mayor of Ocean City). Charlie and his girlfriend Debbie were already on their way to the **Hula Restaurant and Sauce Co.** and he asked us to join them. Sure, why not...

I had never been to the **Hula Restaurant and Sauce Co.** We walked down the boardwalk past 9th Street, turned the corner and followed the line of palm trees, and there it was. You can't miss the cool Hawaiian-themed restaurant with indoor/outdoor seating right on the boardwalk. Charlie introduced me to Chef Dave Rihl, who has owned and operated the restaurant since 2000 after returning from the North Shore of Oahu. Chef Rihl believes in serving only the freshest seafood and said that he has a list of daily specials that changes depending on what he buys each day. Charlie then proceeded to order some of his favorites for us to sample, (and

by some, I mean enough food for a party of 10 people).

As I eagerly waited for the smorgasbord to commence, the clouds began to pass, and a large dish of Fire Cracker Shrimp was set down right in front of me. The jumbo shrimp were fried crispy and glazed with a sweet and spicy sauce. I have had many versions of these, but this stood out as one of my favorites. Then, a bowl of New England clam chowder followed and was perfectly seasoned and contained soft, tender clams and potatoes. In just a few minutes, I had completely forgotten about ever wanting to go to the beach.

As I spooned out the last of the soup, a beautiful Salmon Teriyaki came to the table. The fresh salmon was expertly grilled and glazed with a house made, sweet teriyaki sauce. It looked so good I almost didn't want to eat it, (and that lasted about 5 seconds until I started devouring it). The salmon was unreal. And I mean this as no exaggeration. I love salmon and this is one of the best salmon dishes I have ever had. I had a bite of the salmon, a little salad with the secret Hula Dressing, and some buttery rice. Pure happiness.

Other amazing plates included the Shrimp Scampi with a heaping portion of shrimp bathed in a made-to-order wine and garlic butter sauce. The grilled Ahi Plate with fresh grilled tuna filet hand cut each morning and topped with a basil, lemon, and butter sauce. And just when I thought the food couldn't have gotten any better, Chef Rihl personally delivered his favorite special of the day, the Thai BBQ Scallops. The scallops were

the size of giant marshmallows and were just caught off the coast of Cape May *that morning!* The massive mound of succulent scallops was cooked and coated in a sweet, yet spicy barbecue sauce. It not only brought them to another level, but transported me to another world.

Chef Dave Rihl is doing something so different from everyone else in Ocean City. While everyone loves your standard boardwalk fare, the **Hula Restaurant and Sauce Co.** really stands out as a truly unique dining experience. I'm not sure if it was the palm trees or the fantastic food, but by the time I finished that last scallop, I didn't care about the weather, the beach, or much of anything else. Life just seemed better. If the end of the summer blues have got you down, Chef Dave Rihl's cooking just may be the remedy you need...



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TONY'S TIP:
Can't get enough of those homemade Hula Sauces? Well you can buy bottles of them to go at the restaurant or even order them from their website. They offer the Hula Salad Dressing, Teriyaki, and a BBQ sauce for you to bring that island flavor home to the family.

Anthony Previti is a criminal defense attorney who appears frequently in Atlantic County Superior Court and he loves food. If you would like your restaurant featured, please send an email to: OutToLunch@boardwalkjournal.com.

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Atlantic City... A Place We Call Home



ATLANTIC AVENUE 1875 - 1900

By Ken Calemmo and Kristine Kodytek

Last month we chronicled the beginning of Atlantic City. More specifically, we focused on the heart of Atlantic City, Atlantic Avenue. In this edition, we'll continue our trip down (and around) Atlantic Avenue between the years 1875 and 1900.

In 1875, the budding popularity of Atlantic City as a resort destination led officials to begin planning a second railroad line from Camden, NJ to Atlantic City. This track, known as the Narrow Gauge Line, was built in just 90 days and was completed on July 7, 1877.

On the corner across from the Narrow Gauge Line was Kuehnle's Hotel/Hall, which became the center of business and politics around this time.

In 1878, the U.S. Life Saving Service organized a life-saving station at the Absecon Lighthouse under the direction of Keeper Purnell Brown. The Life Saving Service was the first formal federal government involvement in sea rescues. New Jersey Representative William A. Newell was the strongest advocate for establishing these unmanned saving stations along the New Jersey coast. This organization would later become a part of the United States Coast Guard.

Meanwhile, on the corner of Michigan and

Atlantic Avenues, the first gas plant was completed and the same company would later start the first electric company to provide the city with streetlights.

In 1878, Dr. Albert D. Cuskaden ran the city's principal drugstore on the southwest corner of Atlantic and Michigan Avenues.

The First National Bank of Atlantic City was opened on in 1881. In July of 1882, the first use of electricity, a streetlight in front of the aforementioned Kuehnle's Hotel/Hall was illuminated on the corner of Atlantic and South Carolina Avenues.

The Atlantic City Beach Patrol began serving bathers in August of 1881. In 1883, as Atlantic City's first school opened on Texas Avenue.

In 1887, William Hayday owned a successful hardware store on Atlantic Avenue and would later begin the tradition of rolling chairs on the Boardwalk.

The first electric trolley cars in New Jersey began running on Atlantic Avenue from the Inlet to Kentucky Avenue in 1889. By 1896, Atlantic City promoters were advertising that these electric cars would carry you from one end of the city to the other for only 5 cents!

During the summer of 1896, the first air-conditioned theater debuted in Atlantic City.

In 1891, William Somers built an "observational roundabout" on the Boardwalk. This design/attraction would later be perfected by George Washington Gale Ferris, and fittingly named the "Ferris Wheel."

In 1898, the Atlantic City Hospital opened its doors and the Atlantic City Library followed shortly after in January 1900. The census of 1900 reported that there were over 27,000 residents in Atlantic City, up from just 250 permanent residents, 45 years before.

To Be Continued...

ken_calemmo@cooperlevenson.com



DAVID BRENNER: 40 YEARS OF FUNNY

IT HAD BEEN GOING ON 60 YEARS, BUT DAVID BRENNER remembered the moment in vivid detail, and he told the story like it happened yesterday, not nearly 60 years ago.

Brenner and his West Philadelphia posse had arrived in Atlantic City and checked into the lodging of choice for a bunch of teenaged boys: The Underwood Hotel. (For the uninitiated, that's the polite way of saying "under the Boardwalk.")

"We would wrap ourselves in newspaper to stay warm, and laying on that cold sand was bad enough," he recalled. "But then some idiot would kick sand through the cracks of the Boardwalk and get it all over you."

But sometimes, a little more than sand would come spilling down from between the boards.

"Sometimes, someone would drop a dime or a quarter, and that would be a whole day's food," he said.

Long before David Brenner became a headline comedian and decades before he signed a million-dollar contract with the former Sands Hotel & Casino, he had Atlantic City beach sand in his shoes.

No, he wasn't born here, but he might as well have been. Although he grew up poor in west and south Philadelphia, he always managed to get himself down to Atlantic City in the summer.

The whole idea behind hanging out in Atlantic City was to meet girls, of course. The trick was to make the girls think they were young men of wealth and means, not a bunch of guys who barely had two nickels to rub together.

Brenner and his buds, though, developed a system. They may have been sleeping under the Boardwalk, but they were going to create the illusion that they were staying at one of the best joints in town.

"We'd get up in the morning, get dressed, crawl out (from under the boards) and go down to the avenue entrance to the Chelsea Hotel," he said, and that's the old Chelsea he's referring to, not the new one.

They'd try and slip unnoticed into the Chelsea. If they were successful, they used the men's room to wash up, brush their teeth, comb their hair and then change into something approaching clean clothes.

The next step was all in the timing. Timing was everything with this illusion.

"We'd wait until just the right time and come walking out of the Chelsea Hotel slowly, like we belonged there, and we're all cleaned up, and people would go 'Man, look at those guys, they must have money,'" said Brenner, who headlined in August at the Atlantic Club casino.

Years later, after he'd become a major comedy star and set the record for most guest appearances with Johnny Carson on "The Tonight Show," Brenner did what every self-respecting son-of-the-beach would do.

He bought his parents a summer home in Ventnor. "They loved coming down here as much as I did, maybe more," he recalls.

As much as he hates to admit it, Brenner—who's always been reluctant to reveal his age—acknowledges that he's achieved elder-

statesman status in comedy. Wikipedia lists him as 76, and he points out that there aren't many comedians out there who are still working in their mid-70s. He likes to think he paved the way for many of today's most successful stand-ups.

Perhaps the key to his survival in the comedy business for 40 years was being part of the Atlantic City casino class of 1978. Brenner was one of the first acts to play Atlantic City's first casino, along with Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme, who opened the casino, and Bill Cosby and Don Rickles, who followed them into the first casino showroom on the Boardwalk.

Brenner, who's always looking for jokes, said playing Atlantic City's first gambling hall was the fountain of youth, because nearly all of the acts that played the first casino, Resorts International, 34 years ago, are still around today.

"If you played Resorts in '78, you'd still be here in 2012. It was in the contract," Brenner said with a big laugh.

Many entertainers were reluctant to play Atlantic City in the beginning, Brenner said. They didn't know what to expect or whether Atlantic City would measure up to Las Vegas, the casino city where the acts were accustomed to playing and being treated in a certain way.

"I got a lot of criticism (from other acts) because I was playing Atlantic City," he recalled. "I said to them that you have to understand that ... I spent my whole life (coming to) Atlantic City. ... (And) the one thing I know about Atlantic City, New York, and Philadelphia is that's where the gamblers are. It's that simple. I knew it would be okay. And it was."

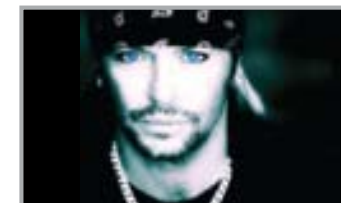
David Spatz is the host and co-producer of the Emmy Award-winning entertainment series Curtain Call with David Spatz on WMGM-TV NBC40 Saturdays at 6 p.m. He is also a host and co-producer of the weekly entertainment program Curtain Call - The Radio Show Sunday from 3-5 p.m. on News Talk 1400 WOND. David contributes daily entertainment reports, news and special programming for Longport Media's five radio stations. He is a weekly columnist for The Courier-Post in Cherry Hill, N.J. and Atlantic City Weekly. Email David at curtaincalltv@comcast.net



David Brenner



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