



# The Quill

*Volume 21, Number 1*

The Official Publication of Four Seasons at Upper Freehold

**JANUARY 2025**



# The Quill

Editor, Charlene Atkinson  
[thequillfsuf@gmail.com](mailto:thequillfsuf@gmail.com)

## Editorial Board

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And FSUF Committees Chairs

## Statement of Editorial Principles

The goal of *The Quill*, the official publication of Four Seasons at Upper Freehold, is threefold:

To provide information to residents of FSUF from the Board of Trustees, committees and property management company.

To inform the residents of FSUF as to social, cultural and educational events in the Community and surrounding area.

To establish a means of communication within FSUF that fosters community spirit and goodwill among residents.

Any and all articles and opinions expressed in *The Quill* represent the viewpoint of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of FSUF. We assume no responsibility for the contents or accuracy of the same.

*The Quill* reserves the right to reject, edit or condense all submissions and will not accept any article it deems libelous, inflammatory or in bad taste.

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We disclaim all responsibility for the goods and services advertised herein.



## Good Wishes

*The Quill* would like to send Good Wishes to the following people in celebration of their birthdays or anniversaries during the months of January and February.

### Happy Birthday Wishes To

#### JANUARY

7 Melanie Satran  
13 Jeff Nath  
15 Gail Mendelsohn  
15 Beverly Walters  
16 Norma Mogul  
16 John Scanlon  
21 Diane Barnes  
25 Floyd Jacobs  
25 Cynthia Ninivaggi  
31 Jo-Ann Hoagland

#### FEBRUARY

6 Al Frascella  
9 Jerry Krams  
12 Joe Toto  
14 Sheila Rosenthal  
16 Patti Plittman  
19 Yahya Bengali  
20 Donna Levinston  
24 Sue Montgomery  
25 Bobbi Dickens  
26 Donald Collins  
27 Elliot Wiesner

### Happy Anniversary Wishes To

#### JANUARY

20 Gail and Jerry Hillman (1968)  
29 Jeff and Garie Ann Nath (1962)

#### FEBRUARY

16 Charlene and Shawn Atkinson  
24 Sakina and Yahya Bengali

If you would like to see your birthdate or anniversary included in this list, please email your information to [thequillfsuf@gmail.com](mailto:thequillfsuf@gmail.com) or drop it in *The Quill* mailbox #13 in the Clubhouse lobby.

**Additional contributors** -- Thank you for the photos--  
Jo-Ann Ennis for the Gingerbread Workshop, Janet Tarczynski for the Allentown Senior Luncheon and Joanne Ryan for the FSUF Giving Tree.

**On the cover** – Wishing all a very happy, healthy holiday season.

## November 21, 2024 Board of Trustees Open Meeting Review

*The Board wishes to remind residents that the Board Meeting Review is not the official minutes. This publication is designed to keep residents informed regarding decisions and discussions within the community. Once approved, the official minutes are posted on the community website.*

On November 21st, the Open Board meeting was called to order by President Bob Ryan. Also in attendance were Ken Stufko, Vice President, George Schlittner, Trustee and David Landy, Trustee. Jill Horowitz, Secretary, was absent. Thank you to Patty Holmes for taking the notes for this review.

Bob Ryan, President, began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **President's Opening Comments:**

Tonight, we will be focusing all our attention to the Finance Committee presentation of the 2025 FSUF budget. Before we start, let me remind you there are agendas on the rear table to help you follow the Trustees agenda. Also, we have a custom of requesting questions before we vote on any Action Item and tonight will not be any different. We will also continue with the custom of having a question-and-answer period before we end the meeting.

Most know we have a Priority Snow program for our neighbors who have medical priorities. For those not familiar with this program, plowing and shoveling priorities are placed for homeowners who may need medical attention after a storm. The BOT requests you notify our Community Manager via her email or Sylvia, our Assistant, on Monday or Thursday while she is present. Emergency personnel may also request priority plowing etc. A note for priority service must accompany your request from a medical professional or supervisor. Please, act now! Don't wait for the first snow fall.

### **Community Management:**

- The thermostat in the gym has been replaced and the heat is now working. Our vendor charged us almost \$700 to repair the damage from the old one being torn from the wall. Parts are also on order to repair the A/C unit. The air conditioning is not working until the part arrives and is replaced.
- The Ellisdale Road truck exit gate has also been repaired from someone hitting the cross bar and leaving the scene with a vehicle. There was a problem with the Optimum Wi-Fi signal.
- The rear gate (Coronet Drive) now has Butterfly working again. There was a problem with the Optimum Wi-Fi signal. Sylvia has phoned Optimum to request strengthening the Wi-Fi signal. As a reminder, when Butterfly doesn't work, your fob or HID Card will scan, and the gate will open.
- The Lobby heat has also been repaired.
- Fire Hydrant whips have arrived, and a test bracket has been ordered to ensure a correct fit. Take comfort in the fact there are old whips still on hydrants to make them visible in deep snow.
- We continue to have all types of vehicles speeding and not observing New Jersey traffic safety laws. N. J. State Police will be on site to enforce our laws.
- The Indoor Pool is currently closed. A motor has worn out and needs to be replaced. Mary, Community Manager, has requested expedited service in securing a new motor. The motor controls the level of chlorine in the water while circulating the water to quickly destroy any type of bacteria. It is unsafe for anyone to use the pool until repairs are made. The community will be notified as soon as the repair is complete, and the pool is reopened.

### **Meeting Minutes were Accepted and Approved as Follows:**

Open Board Meeting – Nov 6, 2024

Grounds Committee – November 6, 2024

– Continued on page 4

## 2025 Proposed Budget Presentation

- Dave McMullen, Treasurer, presented the proposed budget to residents. An explanation was provided regarding the NJ law requiring all HOAs to fund the reserve account yearly in an amount based on the most recent reserve study.
- It was highlighted that approximately 90% of expenses are fixed so there is not much room in the budget for cutting expenses.
- The HOA fee will increase by \$20 per quarter, an increase of 1.66%.

### Questions:

1. *Was a comparison of the gates vs. a manned gatehouse completed?* Yes, the difference was approximately \$200,000 lower to have gates.
2. *Why is the city water so far over budget if the community relies mostly on the wells?* The iron content of one of the wells is too high and therefore city water must be used to supply that particular area.
3. *Does the Grounds budget number include snow removal?* Yes
4. *Will there be communication soon from Taylor Management regarding process of payment of the dues?* Yes, early December. Residents should stop any auto payments currently set up. New coupon books will be sent out to residents who pay by check.

### Action Items were Approved as Follows:

**BOT** – Approval of the FSUF Budget for 2025

**Grounds** – General Maintenance of the Community Trees - \$349.00 (Growing Concern) Remaining balance paid via credit for not planting winter flowers.

### Committee Reports:

House & Recreation: Cheryl Fintz, Co-Chair, reported on the success of Stiletto & The Saxman performance. She mentioned two upcoming events: Dec 14<sup>th</sup> Holiday Brunch and Dec 31<sup>st</sup> New Years Eve party. The Giving Tree, benefiting students in the Upper Freehold School District, is located by the gym entrance.

Grounds: Mike Martzhal, Chairperson, reported on the process for the selection of the new 3-year landscape contract with Growing Concerns. Trees and overgrown shrubs by the Clubhouse have been cleaned up. Seventeen new trees will be planted in December. Well #8 is being refurbished and permits are being obtained. Pilot program beginning with Rutgers for trimming of tree roots on certain properties. Grounds is requesting that residents remove any ornamental items on driveways and front walkways before snow removal takes place to avoid any damage. Residents who currently have downspouts diverted to the driveway should divert them to the yard for the winter to avoid driveways becoming a sheet of ice.

ACC: If you have completed an ACC approved project at your home, please submit the Property Modification Completion Form.

Trips & Tours: Trip to Longwood Gardens is coming up. The committee will take a hiatus during the winter months.

STEM: Bill Brown reported that the committee is working on a community signage project. The committee is looking into improvements for deteriorating signs and will provide a recommendation to the Board. He advised that several methods to address speeding in the community were reviewed and having the NJ State Police come in was the most sensible and cost-effective option. The committee is looking for additional volunteers.

### Special Announcements:

- Toy Drive is currently in progress to benefit clients of the Allentown Food Pantry. Volunteers are also needed at the pantry to help with the distribution of the collected toys. Contact Barbara Schuman or Rosemary Albach for information.
- Dec 15<sup>th</sup>: Hannukah Celebration and Israeli Dance Class. Contact Karen Arwas for information.

– Continued on page 5

### Questions & Answers:

1. *Is someone managing the current indoor pool repair to ensure the burned-out motor problem is fixed timely?* Yes, the Community Manager is working with the vendor.
2. *Is there a law in NJ about the direction of walking and biking on roads?* Yes, In New Jersey, pedestrians should walk on the left side of the road or its shoulder when there are no sidewalks or paths for pedestrians. This is to face approaching traffic. Bikers should ride with traffic.

### President's Closing Comments:

Board President Bob Ryan thanked Stan Horowitz for all he has done to make the ballroom A/V system upgrade happen. Reid Sound has assured us that FSUF will enjoy many enhanced features and new equipment for years to come. Once completed in early December there will be a training session for key users of the equipment.

Bob continued by sharing information in regards to the 2025 property tax assessments. A letter from Upper Freehold Township Tax Assessor follows this review.

Next meeting will be Thursday, January 23, 2025, at 2:00PM in the Ballroom. There is NO meeting in December.

- see page 8

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On Saturday December 7, ten residents gathered for the **Gingerbread House Workshop** at the Clubhouse. Guided by Jo-Ann Ennis and Karen Mauger, along with indispensable Lynda Sigtermans, who made Royal Icing for mortar (about 20 pounds of it). This year the challenge was to erect the house, then decorate. Everyone had a different vision, and every house ended up with its own personality. It is always a fun event when the ladies participating want to know what date to set aside for the next year!!! Stay tuned for that.

**Photos - Front Row:** JoAnn Enis, Mary Beth Cardillo, Jan O'Connell, Seraphine Allen, Karen Mauger.

**Back Row:** Cheryl Fintz, Diane Rothschild, Judy Rozjabek, Jane Crain, Michelle Farmington, Megan Devero.

**Missing:** Joanne Ryan, Lynda Sigtermans.



## The Allentown Senior Committee (ASC) Holiday Festival



*The Allentown Senior Committee (ASC) hosted a Holiday Festival at La Piazza in Allentown on Friday, December 15, 2024, which included holiday music, trivia, lunch and desserts. All area seniors were invited. In all, 75 seniors attended; 45 of which were from FSUF.*

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Email: [assessor@uftnj.com](mailto:assessor@uftnj.com)

November, 2024

Re: 2025 Property Assessment

Dear Property Owner,

Over the past four years, property values in Upper Freehold Township have experienced substantial growth, reflecting a steady upward trend in the real estate market. To ensure equitable tax distribution, the Township is required under P.L.2013, c.15, to reassess all properties each year at their current market value.

We are writing to inform you that your property's assessed value has increased beyond the municipality's total net value increase of **21.75%**. (Your assessment will be reflected on your post card notification, which you should have already received.) This adjustment reflects changes in the market, and while it does not imply that your assessment is inaccurate or requires an appeal, it does suggest that a tax increase is likely.

In the past, some property owners have overlooked these notices, leading to unexpected tax increases in the third-quarter billing. To help you navigate these changes, we have outlined the following key points and guidance:

**Assessment Based on Market Value:** The assessed value of your property is determined by its estimated market value. If you believe this assessed value does not accurately reflect a realistic selling price in the current market, particularly when compared to three to five comparable property sales, we recommend considering appropriate steps to address your concerns.

**Review and Appeal:** If you disagree with the assessed value shown, you may file an appeal with the Monmouth County Board of Taxation at <https://secure.njappealonline.com/prodappeals/login.aspx>.

Forms, instructions, and an Appeal Guide to the process *Understanding Property Assessment Appeals for Monmouth County* may be obtained by clicking on *User Guides* at the top of the screen

(<https://secure.njappealonline.com/prodappeals/Download.aspx>) , or through your municipal assessor.

Assessment appeals filed with the Monmouth County Board of Taxation must be filed on or before

January 15 or 45 days from the date mailed, as it appears on the front of this notice, whichever date is

later. If the assessed value exceeds \$1,000,000, you have the option of filing your appeal directly with the Tax Court at PO Box 972, Hughes Justice Complex, Trenton, New Jersey 08625. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:3-21(a)(2), all assessment appeals filed directly to the Tax Court must be filed on or before April 1 or 45 days from the date mailed as it appears on this assessment notice, whichever date is later.



**Tax Calculation:** The current year's assessment will be used to calculate your property tax bill. Please do not estimate your taxes by multiplying last year's tax rate by this year's assessed value, as this will not provide an accurate amount. Instead, we encourage you to use the Monmouth County Tax Estimator to get an estimate of your tax bill and review the top 10 most frequently asked questions to better understand the reassessment process at <https://oprs.co.monmouth.nj.us/Oprs/GoogleWithUC/TiaraSearch.aspx>.

Upper Freehold Township is committed to fair and accurate tax distribution. We understand that any increase can be challenging, but these adjustments are necessary to ensure that each property owner contributes their fair share. While no one welcomes a tax increase, being informed about these changes can help with planning and preparation. We urge you to carefully review your assessment notice and contact us if you have any questions.

Best regards,

*Donna Taylor*

Donna Taylor, CTA  
Assessor

## YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD REALTORS

VICTOR COCORLES, Realtor Associate: 609-332-2149 (I LIVE IN FSUF)  
ROSEMARY PEZZANO, Broker Associate: 609-744-4617 (20 YR. RESIDENT)

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# Grounds Committee

*By Mike Martzahl*

Winter is here! Time for your Grounds Committee to start thinking about Spring. In December we refreshed the community's Daffodil flower beds, adding more bulbs. We selected the flowers for our Spring planting: mixed colored SunPatiens for the main gate island, street side flagpole hedge and back gate. The clubhouse walkways, portico, and inside flagpole hedge will have a mix of red and white Begonias.

This fall we planted twenty-five trees throughout the community. To diversify our tree population, as a trial, we planted 5 Thuja Green Giant Arborvitae, a new species to our campus. When mature, the Green Giants will be forty - sixty feet tall, twelve - eighteen feet wide and they will grow between 2 – 4 feet per year.

The change in season is a great time to perform maintenance, we trimmed seventeen trees, mostly lower branches, and removed seven diseased trees. Completed the leaf cleanup project and winterized the irrigation and well system.

Resolved an erosion issue at the clubhouse small pond, filling in the eroded area with river rock and improved the plantings in the area. We completed a pilot program to prune the tree roots of five homes. Evaluation of the program will take time to determine if root pruning is an effective way to control the damage caused by tree growth.

Winter is here, the snow removal equipment is ready to go. As a reminder, when we get snow, we do not plow driveways that have cars parked in them. When the forecast is for snow, we recommend parking in the clubhouse parking lot. Have you removed the flower planters and other things from your driveways? We do not want to damage them in the snow removal process.

Winter is here, yes, it is a little cooler, but a nice sunny day is a great time to get out and enjoy the winter look of your community.

## TRIVIA

*Submitted by Joyce La Piana*

1. Which woman met her future husband while working as a WWII spy?
  - a. Coco Chanel
  - b. Julia Child
  - c. Agatha Christie
  - d. Jane Goodall
2. Which musician once tried to break into Graceland?
  - a. Buddy Holly
  - b. David Bowie
  - c. Jon Bon Jovi
  - d. Bruce Springsteen
3. Which number is considered unlucky in Japan because it may be pronounced "shi" which is the word for death?
  - a. Two
  - b. Four
  - c. Six
  - d. Eight
4. After Google.com, what is the most visited website in the United States?
  - a. Facebook.com
  - b. Youtube.com
  - c. Wikipedia.com
  - d. Amazon.com
5. Which popular game was banned in New York from 1942 to 1976?
  - a. Pool
  - b. Pinball
  - c. Ping Pong
  - d. Hopscotch

# Ramblings

By Rosemary Albach

For some reason January's Ramblings is always a challenge for me. Is it because my mind is not ready for "next year" since I'm still counting how many of us will be gathered around the Thanksgiving table or how many more Christmas gifts I need to buy, (too many), wrap and or mail to my out-of-town family members? And I understand as I'm writing, the reader is two months into the future, but isn't that always the case? Each month the column is written well in advance of its being read. I don't seem to have a problem with the other eleven months. I guess I should begin by wishing everyone a Happy New Year filled with good health, good friends and good times.

To solve my problem, I took the easy way out. I went to the Merriam-Webster site to learn the most looked up word for 2024. That wasn't as easy as I thought. Merriam-Webster is still listing the word for 2023. So on to the Cambridge Dictionary and learned their most looked up word is "manifest"; it beat out the word "brat". Why would they be the most looked up

words? What are people thinking? But then I found a better word in the Oxford Dictionary, and I love it. "Brain rot", meaning the deterioration of an intellectual state as a result of trivial material gathered online. That sounds like something we could all be suffering from. "Demure" is the Dictionary.com word of the year. The strange thing is not one of these words has a meaning that most folks in our age group would understand. For example, "demure" no longer means modest or shy for the younger set. The stranger thing is that my almost 16-year-old twin granddaughters knew and understood what I was talking about (when I brought up the subject of "demure") while my son, their father didn't have a clue. The poor out of touch fellow.

My other favorite place to go when I don't know how else I can fill a page is the Pastore Color Institute to learn the top color choices for the coming year. Well, the top color choices that are going to "honor your personal style" in 2025 are: Crocus (a light purple), Lime Cream (very light green), Limpet Shell (I have no idea as to that color), and White Grape (which I guess is a shade or white or is it more grape colored?) All I can say is none of these colors appeared in my box of crayola crayons.



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# Allentown Food Pantry FSUF Holiday Donations

By Rosemary Albach



Christmas comes early to the residents of FSUF. When the word goes out that toys are being collected for the children of the clients of the Allentown Food Pantry, Santa and Mrs. Claus go shopping.

I could not begin to count the number of toys and games, not to mention the stuffed animals, books, puzzles, gloves, hats and scarves that were donated by our very, very generous residents. Let's just say that

Santa's sleigh could not hold the amount of toy filled bags that Doug Tombari's pick-up truck and our two fully packed vehicles did. Thank you, Doug, for volunteering your time and truck. And thank you to Santa's Helpers who helped distribute the toys at the Food Pantry.

Many of you have thanked us for doing this, but the thanks go to you. Your generosity and thoughtfulness made the difference to so many. You eased the burden on parents and brought joy to the children, demonstrating the true meaning of the Season.



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## Longwood Gardens



On December 6, a group of residents went to **Longwood Gardens with Trips and Tours**. We had lunch in a delightful Italian restaurant about ten minutes from the Gardens. The whole place was beautifully decorated for the Holiday Season. Indoors, we saw many Christmas trees with multicolor lights, seasonal planting, as well as the usual displays of orchids, bromeliads and cacti. When it

became dark, the lights on all the outside trees were breathtaking! The outdoor fountain lights danced to the sounds of beautiful music. All in all, a very enjoyable day was had by all!



**Group Photo:** Anthony and Christine Bukowski, Barbara Schuman, Tina Davison, Jan O'Connell, Jane Crain, Kate Williamson, Mickey and Dan Letinski, Rina Peller, Susan Preston, Jim and Margaret Molnar, Kevin and Mary Kinckle, Patty Holmes, Paul Brown, Yasmin Reyes and George Flanner.

## WELCOME COMMITTEE AMBASSADORS

If you have questions about the Community or the surrounding area, we are here to help.

Jan Bliefernich  
6 Mayflower  
609-468-4927 (cell)

Patti Cocorles  
59 Minuteman  
609-332-2162 (cell)

Geri Lucadamo  
22 Betsy Ross  
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## New Quill Editor

by Patricia McCarthy



Effective January 1 *The Quill* has a new editor, Charlene Atkinson. Charlene has been contributing articles since 2023 and officially joined the Committee this year. Previously, she had volunteered for the House and Recreation Committee.

Charlene and her husband Shawn moved into FSUF in August 2021. Charlene was a Quality Assurance professional in the pharmaceutical industry until her recent retirement. She currently continues to consult. Charlene and Shawn are devoted NY Yankee fans and likes to travel all over the country for games and often add on trips to national parks and local attractions.

I will be staying on *The Quill* Committee to provide technical support as needed. I've thoroughly enjoyed working with the Committee and *The Quill* contributors for the past three years. I want to thank the Committee and the contributors for all their support. They have been making *The Quill* successful for so many years. I thank Charlene for stepping up and taking on her new role. I

know she will do a tremendous job.

Please keep those articles and photos coming. You can reach Charlene through *The Quill* email address at thequillfsuf@gmail.com.

## Quotes for Thought

by Linda Mullaney

"The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written."

"Your life does not get better by chance; it gets better by change."

Whatever you must do today...do it with the confidence of a 4 year old in a Batman cape.

A recent study has shown that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than the men who mention it.

Perkatory: The anguished, prolonged period waiting for a fresh pot of coffee.

To the ladies who gracefully walk around in heels all day, I admire you.

To the women who fall over their own feet in flip flops.... you are my soul sisters.



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## Neighborhood News

By Barbara Schuman

On December 22, Noah Schiff was awarded his Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering, with Honors, at the mid-year graduation of Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. The degree was Summa Cum Laude! Noah is the grandson of Barbara Schuman and the son of Wendy and Jonathan Schiff of Potomac, Maryland. Needless to say, Grandma, his parents and siblings, Mason and Avery could not be more proud of this exceptional young man. He will remain at Cornell until June, when he expects to earn a Master's Degree. All in 4 years! Congratulations!

Send me all the happy news of YOUR family to share with friends and neighbors.

bschuman@verizon.net or 609-208-2116

## Needles Work

by Rosemary Albach



The internet is full of free patterns for both knitted and crocheted projects. This sweater was knitted from a free pattern found on Tin Can Knits. It is the Harvest Cardigan. This cardigan is knitted seamlessly from the top down. The pattern provides a sizing table that lists finished garment measurements and the

associated yarn yardage required for nineteen different sizes – child to large adult. Yarn weight, suggested needle sizes, notions and gauge are clearly spelled out. The seven-page pattern can be easily downloaded into PDF form. It includes illustrations and easy to follow directions for even the novice knitter. Here's the link <https://tincanknits.com/pattern/harvest>.

Happy knitting!

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# Father Time Needs an Adjustment

by Gail Hillman

When we were early learners, we were taught to understand,  
That to tell time we had to decipher between the hour and the minute hands.  
As times began to change, clocks and watches were replaced,  
With digital clocks shining brightly displaying a luminous face.  
No matter what form, societies depend upon this device,  
To make daily lives run smoothly and be perfectly precise.  
However, something mystifying has happened to Good Old Father Time,  
He has not been reasonable lately and is completely out of line!  
As time has passed, he seems to be running a marathon.  
Each hour, each minute, each second seems to be a bygone.  
Time is passing too quickly; a day is not a day, and a year is not a year.  
A day seems like a minute and a year moves in forward gear.  
Father time needs an adjustment; perhaps Neuriva and Balance of Nature will do,  
He must be realigned, for he has set the world askew.  
Hopefully with this regimen, Father Time will keep the right pace;  
He needs to understand that life is not a race.  
Hopefully, he'll read and "poof" time will be reset,  
And not zoom ahead at the speed of a warp jet.

*The New Year has gifted us with new moments, hours, and precious days to spend.  
Enjoy each moment and allow all of your dreams and happiness to transcend.*

***Happy New Year 2025***

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## The FSUF Giving Tree:

On December 11, 2024, the FSUF House and Recreation Committee delivered 72 gifts to the Newell School. The gifts were distributed to the UFRSD children from Preschool through High School on Wednesday December 18, 2024.

Alli Heide, a math interventionist and the coordinator of the UFRSD Community Connections Group, expressed her appreciation of our community's generosity as follows: *"Wow! We are humbled and beyond excited at the outpouring of support from the Four Seasons Community! I can't thank you enough for your partnership (and amazing organization)!"*

*Submitted by: Joanne Ryan. Co-Chairman House and Recreation.*



# Spotlight: Julio Ramos

By Charlene Atkinson



A well-known familiar and friendly face in the Four Seasons Upper Freehold Clubhouse is Julio Ramos, the FSUF Handyman. Seventeen years ago, Julio immigrated from Guatemala to join his father in the United States. Since arriving in the New Jersey, he has worked in the restaurant, roofing, landscaping, and handyman businesses. Prior to FSUF, Julio worked as a Handyman at another adult community before finally finding his

“work home” with us. Julio and his family, including Partner, Diana and their two children Diego, 8 years old, and Matthew, 2 years old reside in Hamilton.

Julio has been employed by Planned Building Services since 2012 (12 years), 10 of which he has worked at FSUF conducting janitorial and custodial services. His day begins at 8 AM when he opens the FSUF Clubhouse for the day. First, he ensures the entrance, lobby and business offices are cleaned and refreshed. He then moves onto the Fitness Center, Rest Rooms, Kitchen, Multipurpose Room, Crafts Room, Reading Room, and Billiards Room, Sports Lounge, and Ballroom where he makes certain the spaces are clean and in order from the previous day’s activities. Julio confers with the Management Office for the upcoming day/evening’s events to prep and set up. These include parties, meetings and activities such as the BOT Meetings, Committee Meetings, Book Club, exercise and dance classes and others, too many to list. Committee Chairs and Event Organizers often reach out to Julio about specific needs for their meeting or event, i.e., placement of tables and chairs. Julio ensures the janitorial closet is well stocked with supplies for the Clubhouse.

## Path to US Citizenship

To achieve United States citizenship, one would need to be a permanent resident of the United States for 5 years, have a naturalization interview and pass the English and Civics Tests. The English Test is where one must demonstrate an understanding of the English

language specific to the ability to read, write and speak basic English. The Civics Test is in an oral format in which the applicant must answer a random 10 questions from a list of 100 possible questions; 6 of which must be answered correctly. Once accomplished, the applicant receives his date for the swearing ceremony in becoming an official US citizen.

## Congratulations!

Julio has successfully concluded the naturalization process in becoming a United States citizen and was sworn in on December 5, 2024. *Congratulations* to Julio and his family for this wonderful accomplishment! We appreciate having Julio in this role and are pleased he is part of the FSUF story. FSUF sends a heartfelt “thank you” to Julio for his commitment, dedication and professional demeanor that he brings to FSUF each and every day. We are lucky to have him.

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# Craft Corner

## Twinkle, Twinkle Little.....

### Snowflake

by Gail Hillman



Within a blink, January has shown its frosty face. Most of us are not prepared for the cold winter months ahead. However, to brighten up this frigid season, it's always fun to add a bit of sparkle. The sparkle of these handmade snowflakes will not make you cold; instead they will put a smile on your face as well as on the faces of all who visit your home. Shake up those old glitter containers and let's get started.

#### Materials:

- Clothespins – regular and small
- White Paint
- Paintbrush
- Glitter – silver and teal
- Glue
- Scissors
- Twine or Ribbon
- Plastic Snowflakes (optional if you'd like to add them to the center of your snowflakes)



#### Directions:

Begin by twisting the clothespins. That will loosen the wire up. Now, remove all of the wires. Once this is done, begin gluing the clothespins together as shown in the picture below.



Do this for the small and large clothespins. Once the glue is dry, paint the snowflakes with the white paint. (You can use any color you desire.) Paint the front and back of each snowflake. When the paint has dried, spread glue on the face of each snowflake. Following this, sprinkle glitter on each snowflake. Use different colors for each size snowflake.



You can use them as wall hangings, add them to wreaths, or use them as ornaments. I hope this project makes you *“shine with pride”* when it is completed.

#### Please Consider Writing for The Quill

Tell us about: a vacation you took; a hobby you enjoy; your latest adventure; books you have read; or interesting information you have learned. Articles are due into The Quill's mailbox: [thequillfuf@gmail.com](mailto:thequillfuf@gmail.com) by the 15th of the prior month.

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## French Onion Soup

Here's a simple French Onion Soup recipe that's rich, flavorful, and easy to make!

### Ingredients:

- 4 large yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon sugar (optional, to help caramelize the onions)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 4 cups beef broth (or vegetable broth for a vegetarian version)
- 1/2 cup dry white wine (optional)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves (or 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme)
- Baguette slices, toasted
- 1 1/2 cups grated Gruyère cheese (or Swiss cheese)

### Instructions:

1. **Caramelize the onions:** In a large pot, heat the butter and olive oil over medium heat. Add the sliced onions, sugar, and salt. Stir occasionally and cook for about 25-30 minutes, until the onions are deep golden brown and caramelized. Lower the heat if needed to prevent burning.
2. **Add wine and broth:** Once the onions are caramelized, add the wine (if using) and let it simmer for 3-4 minutes until slightly reduced. Pour in the beef broth, add the bay leaf and thyme, and season with pepper. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and let the soup simmer uncovered for 20-30 minutes.
3. **Toast the baguette:** While the soup is simmering, preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Place the baguette slices on a baking sheet and toast them in the oven for about 10 minutes until crispy.
4. **Assemble the soup:** Once the soup is ready, remove the bay leaf. Ladle the soup into oven-safe bowls, place a toasted baguette slice on top of each bowl, and generously sprinkle with grated Gruyère cheese.

5. **Broil the soup:** Place the bowls under the broiler for 2-3 minutes, until the cheese is melted and bubbly. Watch closely to avoid burning.
6. **Serve:** Carefully remove the bowls from the oven, let them cool slightly, and enjoy your homemade French Onion Soup!

### Tips:

- Caramelizing the onions properly is key to getting the rich flavor.
- You can adjust the thickness of the soup by adding more or less broth.

*Enjoy!*



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## Trivia Answers

### 1. JULIA CHILD

At the onset of WWII, Julia Child joined the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner to the CIA. Following the war she married Paul Child, whom she had met while working for the OSS in India. In 1948, while in Paris for Paul's work, she began to take cooking lessons at one of the most prestigious culinary schools in the world, Le Cordon Bleu. She would go on to revolutionize American cuisine through her French cooking school, award-winning cookbook and world-renowned television programs.

### 2. BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

26-year-old Bruce Springsteen decided to pay a 3 a.m. visit to Graceland in April 1976 after performing a show in Memphis. He drove to Graceland, jumped the fence, climbed over a wall and ran to the front door. Elvis wasn't home and Springsteen was led away by security.

### 3. FOUR

Certain numbers are considered lucky or unlucky in Japan. It's important to know these numbers, because if you don't, you could be accidentally telling someone you'd like them to suffer a slow, agonizing death. The

number 4 is one of those numbers. It is pronounced "shi" and is the Japanese word for death. Just as some American buildings don't have a 13th floor, Japanese apartments, hotels and hospitals also avoid using the number 4. In fact, it is not even possible to get a vehicle license plate that has the number 4 on it.

### 4. YOUTUBE.COM

After searching, apparently our second favorite thing to do online is watch videos. YouTube.co is the second most visited website in the U.S. right behind its parent company, Google. It receives on average 22 billion monthly visits, hosts more than 5 billion videos, with over 500 hours of new content added to the website every minute.

### 5. PINBALL

It may be hard to believe, but not long ago, pinball was seen as a menace to society and banned in many American cities. Churches and school boards argued that it contributed to juvenile delinquency, crime and a decline in morality. Pinball was driven under-ground until the ban was finally overturned in the 1970s.

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