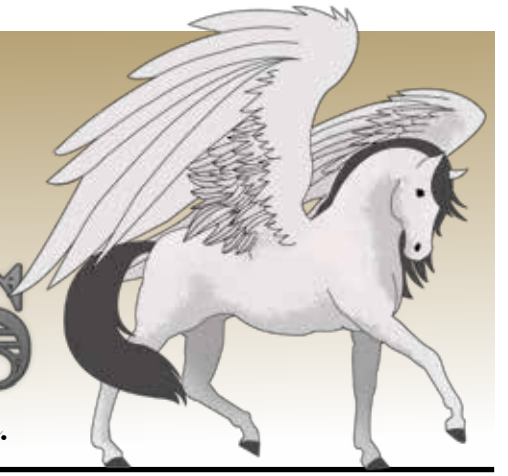




FOUR SEASONS *at Manalapan*
An Active Adult Community

PEGASUS PRESS

The Official Publication of the Four Seasons at Manalapan Homeowners Association, Inc.



VOLUME 19, NUMBER 7

www.fourseasonsatmanalapanhoa.com

JULY 2026



AMERICA 250 YEARS

1776 - 2026





TAYLOR
MANAGEMENT COMPANY

MANAGEMENT NEWS

Dear Residents,

I hope that you have all been able to get out and enjoy the nice weather that we have been experiencing. It's hard to believe it is July already! I wish you all a Happy 4th of July. I hope you are able to spend time with family and friends and celebrate. Here are a few updates and reminders that we hope you find helpful. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Management Office at any time— we are here to help!



Outdoor Pool

At this time, the outdoor pool is open and operating as normal with residents required to show their ID to enter and guests being required to show their guest passes and attend with a resident. Reservations are not required to visit the outdoor pool. One pool attendant staffed by our pool management company, Candlewood, will be present during the open hours of the pool. The pool is open daily from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. 7 days per week from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day! As a reminder, there are no lifeguards at the outdoor pool this year.

Clubhouse Hours and Reminders

Please be reminded that the Clubhouse is open 7 days per week from 5:00 a.m. to midnight.

American Lawn and Sprinkler (ALS)—Common Areas

As a reminder, if you need something addressed in the common area, you are required to submit a work order to the Management Office and we will see that it is completed. Please do not report anything directly to the landscaper, as

they are not permitted to take direction from anyone other than their supervisor and/or Management. You may submit a work order by sending us an email, completing an online e-form work order request via the community website, or by completing a hard copy of the Work Order Request Form. Please note that it can take up to two weeks for your work order to be completed, weather permitting.

Irrigation

We have a very sophisticated irrigation system throughout the common areas in the community. The system was turned on for the season in June. The system normally runs overnight; however, you may see it working in the morning or late evenings in some areas. Should you notice a problem or have a concern with the irrigation system, please submit a work order per the instructions above or contact the Management Office. Please do not contact ALS directly, as they will redirect you to the Management Office.

Planting Beds Surrounding Your Home

The planting beds surrounding your home are your responsibility and must be maintained in a weed-free presentation year-round. The Association's landscaper will not touch your beds at any time. Should you wish to change the landscaping surrounding your home, please be reminded that you must first complete an exterior modification request form and obtain prior approval before the work begins. If there are personal items such as a hose left extending beyond your planting bed, it will impact the ability of ALS to service your location fully, as they will do their best to avoid such items. Please remember to properly store all personal items back in your beds and/or patio after using them.

Should you have any questions about the community or anything listed above, please feel free to contact the Management Office at 732-786-1725.

Sincerely,

Tara Lesnick, Community Manager

Jacki Lauricella, Assistant Community Manager

Susan Schovanec, Lifestyle Director

On Behalf of the Board of Trustees

We want to reach you ...

We want to make sure all of our residents who want to receive activity e-blasts are receiving them. In order to receive e-blasts for a particular club, be sure to click "Join" under the club in the Groups section on the community website.



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.....44 Palomino Drive, Manalapan, NJ 07726-9566
Gatehouse 732-446-6478

Important Phone Numbers

Emergency phone numbers during non-business hours (5 P.M. - 8 A.M.)*

Four Seasons Common Area Emergency Hotline 888-992-9288
Fire & Rescue Manalapan Fire Dept. Emergency 911
..... 732-462-1996
Police 911
..... 732-446-4300
Electric Company JCP&L 800-662-3115
JCP&L: 1-888-LIGHTS (1-888-544-4877)
Gas Company NJ Natural Gas Co. 800-221-0051
Telephone Company Verizon 800-675-9966
Sewer Western Monmouth Utility Authority 732-446-9300
Garbage Manalapan Twp. 732-446-8404
Irrigation Management Office 732-786-1725
Water Veolia Water 877-565-1456

2026 BOT Meeting Calendar

Day / Date	Time	Location	Notes
Monday January 19 th	9:00 a.m.	Zoom	BOT & HOA
Monday February 16 th	9:00 a.m.	Zoom	
Monday March 16 th	9:00 a.m.	Zoom	
Monday April 20 th	9:00 a.m.	Zoom	
Monday May 18 th	7:00 p.m.	Hybrid	Annual Meeting & Election
Monday June 15 th	9:00 a.m.	Zoom	
Monday July 22 nd	9:00 a.m.	Zoom	
Monday August 17 th	9:00 a.m.	Zoom	
Tuesday September 22 nd	9:00 a.m.	Zoom	
Monday, October 19 th	9:00 a.m.	Zoom	
Monday November 16 th	7:00 p.m.	Hybrid	Budget Approval
Monday December 14 th	9:00 a.m.	Zoom	

All irrigation questions and work orders should be reported to the Management Office, in writing. American Lawn and Sprinkler is no longer accepting work orders directly from homeowners. The Management Office is open Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Irrigation emergencies that occur when the office is closed should be reported to the Taylor Management Emergency Hotline at 888-992-9288. Examples of irrigation emergencies are: Water is flooding in an area or roadway or the irrigation system won't shut off. All other problems or concerns should be reported to the Management Office during normal business hours.

Statement of Editorial Principles

Submitted by the Pegasus Press Editorial Staff

The goal of the *Pegasus Press*, the official publication of the Four Seasons at Manalapan community, is threefold:

- To provide information to residents of FSM from the Board of Trustees, its committees and clubs, Taylor Management Company, and the township, when applicable
- To inform the residents of FSM as to social, cultural, and educational events in the community and surrounding area
- To establish a means of communication within FSM that fosters community spirit and goodwill among residents

All articles and opinions expressed in the *Pegasus Press* represent the viewpoint of the respective authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the FSM community or its editors. We assume no responsibility for the contents or the accuracy of the same.

Pegasus Press reserves the right to reject, edit, or condense all submissions and will not accept any article or parts of articles it deems libelous, inflammatory, plagiarized, or in bad taste.

Senior Publishing Company prints the *Pegasus Press* at no cost to the FSM Homeowners Association. The publisher—and not the editorial staff—of this publication has solicited all advertisers. We disclaim all responsibility for the goods and services advertised herein.

Architectural Control Committee When Modification Requests are Required

As described in the Public Offering Statement, the Architectural Control Committee of Four Seasons at Manalapan ensures that “the community is always maintained in a manner:

- 1) Providing for the visual harmony and soundness of repair
- 2) Avoiding activities deleterious to the aesthetic or property values of the Community.
- 3) Furthering the comfort of Members, their guests, invitees and lessees.
- 4) And promoting the general welfare and safety of the Community.”

In so doing, the Committee regulates the design, use, and maintenance of the exterior of all buildings. These items include, but are not limited to:

- Patios
- Landscaping
- Entry doors and storm doors
- Exterior lighting
- Facades
- Decks
- Walks
- Awnings
- Driveway aprons
- Drip irrigation
- Exterior paint color
- Solar panels
- Generators
- Shutters

To apply for Committee review of planned work, fill out one of the two forms (located on the first floor near the stairs or on the website). One is for generator installations, and the other is for all other modifications.

The forms indicate the deposit amounts required for various modifications and what must be attached to the forms, such as insurance forms from contractors and full size original as-built surveys. The forms also provide detailed specific requirements and limitations for various modifications. When completed, submit the forms to the management office.

From Your Board of Trustees



Steve Schrager • John Demchak • Roger Colarusso • Gail Gnesin • Jimmie Mesis

Professionally managed by Taylor Management Company

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Submitted by Gail Gnesin

In May, the Board of Trustees (BOT) had their annual HOA meeting and election in the evening of May 18, 2026, in person and via Zoom teleconferencing. Many items of interest to homeowners were discussed during the meeting. The following Trustees were in attendance: Roger Colarusso, Gail Gnesin, Liz Thornton, Steve Schrager. The following Trustee attended via Zoom: Jimmie Mesis. The following Management representatives were present: Tara Lesnick, Jacki Lauricella.

The minutes from the April 20, 2026, BOT meeting and the May 19, 2025, BOT annual HOA meeting were unanimously approved by the BOT.

Residents were advised that questions would be taken regarding topics as they were being discussed during the meeting. Residents were also asked to let Management know directly of any issues that were unique to them rather than bringing up these issues during the meeting.

The following motions were made and unanimously approved by the BOT regarding previously discussed items:

- Approving proof of notice of meeting and certification of proxies.
- Installation of sensor switches in the Clubhouse by Corbin Electric in the amount of \$1,460.00.
- Regrading of the lawn at 63 Wintergreen by American Lawn & Landscape (AL&S) in the amount \$2,456.95.
- Removal of dead trees by AL&S in the amount of \$2,207.59.
- Repairing the gate arm at the Palomino entrance by Technocality in the amount of \$843.17.
- Power washing at the Clubhouse by Redram in the amount of \$6,237.56.
- Accepting part of the Wells Fargo investment proposals as follows:
 - Reserves
 - Invest \$225K in a 3-year CD at 4.00%
 - The following recommendation was not approved as the BOT felt the Working Capital funds need to remain a liquid asset to help pay bills that are due:
 - Invest \$75K in a 9-month CD at 3.95%

Community Manager Tara Lesnick (TL) advised the following:

- April’s financial statements were delivered to the BOT and Finance Committee (FC) when completed by Taylor Management’s (TMC) accounting team.
- There were four resales since the last BOT meeting:
 - a Captiva for \$907K
 - a Savannah for \$738K
 - a Martinique for \$860K
 - a Burnham for \$700K
- There were 10 email blasts sent since the last BOT meeting.
- The annual Clubhouse carpet cleaning is scheduled for Monday, June 8.
- Power washing was done on the rear patio, pool deck, pergolas, around the bocce courts, and the driving range.
- The Clubhouse Committee (CC) held the pool pass sticker sale. If residents were not able to make it to the sale, they may purchase stickers in the Management Office during regular business hours, Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Two new dedicated electrical outlets were installed in the kitchen for the new refrigerator and freezer. The outlets that were blocked off in the kitchen are now available for use.
- The outdoor pool and spa were prepared for opening this weekend.
 - The tank for the outdoor spa was replaced.
 - The outdoor foot rinse had a leak and has been repaired.
- The snow and ice caused the edges of some of the patio concrete in the rear of the Clubhouse to crumble. Repair work has started and will continue over the next couple of weeks. Please use caution when walking on the patio.
- A tank was replaced in the men’s room toilet. The women’s locker room handicapped shower bench was re-grouted, and a soap dispenser was repaired.
- TLP Climate Control Systems (TLP) was out to change the filters and belts in the HVAC systems.
- Fitness Lifestyles performed preventative maintenance on the Fitness Room equipment:

- A broken pulley on a weight machine was replaced.
- Two treadmills are in need of rear rollers, which will be replaced as soon as the parts arrive.

- The HOA will be reimbursed by Amazon for the cost of damages to the Palomino gate.
- Billing for the snow assessment started on May 1, 2026. The snow assessment is \$400 per home. Thank you to those who have already paid the assessment in full. If homeowners are making payments, the assessment is being billed at \$80/month for five months, May through September. As a reminder, if homeowners are set up on automatic withdrawals, the bank will not automatically take the additional \$80 per month. Each homeowner will need to set up a second automatic withdrawal for the specified period. If assistance is needed, please reach out to the Management Office.
- As a reminder, the next BOT meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 15, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom.

The Social Committee (SC), represented by Al Lassoﬀ (AL), chairperson, advised the following:

- The Memorial Day event will be held on May 25 and will feature The Nostalgix, featuring doo-wop music and dinner. The event is sold out.
- The Jersey Tenors will be performing on June 27.
- Music on the Patio will be available on July 11. Living Proof will be there. Sign-ups will be put out soon.
- There will be a pool party on July 17 with DJ Frankie. Tables will be set up on the patio and it is a BYOB.
- The Sharpe Family Singers will perform on Saturday, August 8.
- There will be a Labor Day Hoedown on September 7 with Elvis impersonator Jeff Krick, Jr., who is rated the 6th best impersonator globally.
- On September 26, Rain & Shine magician Randy Shine will perform.
- The Neil Diamond Tribute will take place on November 7. Save the date!
- Throughout the summer there will also be movies, and the committee is looking to present these on nights other than Friday.

The Trips & Tours Committee (TTC), represented by Kim Silverman (KS), chairperson, advised the following:

- Atlantic City: The trips are \$107 per person, including show tickets, transportation, \$25 for slot play, and gratuities.
 - “Sweet Caroline” on June 25
 - “Daybreak” on October 22
 - “Uptown: A Very Motown Christmas” on December 3
- New York City: The committee is working on adding some shows.

The Grounds Committee (GC), represented by TL, advised the following:

- The Breton and Pink Star basins continue to have a buildup of algae. A water test is being done to find out the phosphate levels and what additional treatment is needed.
- The waterfall at Route 33 has been turned on for the season.
- Mulching of the community trees has been completed.
- The sycamore trees in the community, primarily on Maremanna and Hartack, started to leaf out when there was a hot spell in April. Then the temperature dropped, and it burnt out the new growth. AL&S is confident that the trees will come back, but it will take some time. There is no timeframe for this as it is all dependent on nature.
- The GC is waiting for a couple of proposals to come in for crack filling the roadways. Crack filling is necessary to help preserve the life of the roads.
- The master valve project for the irrigation system is scheduled to be completed in the next couple of weeks. The master valves will help give more control over the system and help reduce the cost of water and service calls when there is a stuck valve.
- Bob Button, who was the GC chairperson, has resigned from the position. The committee is still looking for a chairperson. Anyone interested in the position or in finding out more about it, please contact the Management Office at 732-786-1725 or via email at tlesnick@taylormgt.com during regular business hours, Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

The Clubhouse Committee (CC), represented by David Sobel (DS), chairperson, advised the following:

- The pickleball courts will have extended open play hours.
- Two tennis courts will be closed for Tennis Club members' exclusive use on Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.
- The pool pass sale is complete, with a record 193 homes purchasing the stickers. Pool pass stickers are also available in the Management Office during regular business hours.
- The Men's Club is donating a defibrillator for the pickleball courts; pricing is being looked into.
- The bocce court renovation project team is reviewing proposals submitted by vendors.

The Judiciary Committee (JC), represented by TL, advised that there is nothing to report at this time.

The Architectural Control Committee (ACC), represented by David Davidowitz (DD), chairperson, advised the following:

- There were nine modifications that were approved.
- There were three requests for refunds that were approved.
- The next meeting is on Wednesday, June 3. Applications are due Monday, June 1.

The Finance Committee (FC), represented by Roger Cohen (RC), chairperson, advised the following:

- The April financials are on budget with the exception of legal bills of \$3,000 and landscape costs that are \$13,000 above contract.
- Year-to-date costs are in-line with the budget, as it is early in the season, with the exception of snow removal costing \$283,000 vs the budgeted amount of \$220,000.
- Additional expenses include \$22,000 in sidewalk repair for work rescheduled from the fall and \$38,000 for the waterfall pump. These costs are both from the Reserve account.
- The BOT and FC review with the auditor is complete. The HOA financial stability and reserves levels are OK according to the auditors.

A motion was made to accept all the following submitted club minutes. The motion was unanimously approved by the BOT.

- Architectural Control Committee: May 13, 2026
- Finance Committee: April 23, 2026
- Grounds Committee and AL&S: May 5, 2026

- Social Committee: April 9, 2026
- Women's Club: May 18, 2026

The Election Committee, represented by Ed Fisher, chairperson, extended a thank you to the BOT and the candidates that have come out and are willing to serve the community. The two BOT members for the next three years are Jimmie Mesis and John Demchak. Ed also thanked the Election Committee members for all of their work.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the BOT opened up the meeting for all questions from the residents who were present at the virtual meeting.

The July BOT meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, July 21, 2026. All residents are welcome and encouraged to attend the BOT meetings. The monthly BOT meetings usually take place on the third Monday of the month via Zoom at 9:00 a.m. unless otherwise communicated. A Zoom link to the meeting is sent via email as part of the agenda for the upcoming meeting. Reminders about the meeting are sent approximately one week in advance of the meeting.

Please remember that the best way to obtain current information regarding community operations is by attending the monthly BOT meetings as well as through eblasts sent out to the community. In addition, detailed minutes from each BOT meeting are available on the community website within a week of the actual meeting.

Our community would not be the desirable place to live that it is without the efforts of all the residents. We have many committees and clubs whose members devote untold hours to helping preserve the aesthetics and provide the activities that we all expected when we bought homes at Four Seasons. Sincere thanks to those of you who selflessly give your time! To those of you who would like to help, please reach out to our BOT members or to our fabulous management team: Tara Lesnick (Community Manager), Jacki Lauricella (Assistant Community Manager), and Susan Schovanec (Lifestyle Director).

Neighbor Notes

If you'd like to let others in the community know about an important family event, such as a birth, graduation, death or marriage, or send get-well wishes to someone who needs them (with their permission to print), please send your announcement to Bunny Libenson at bunlen@optonline.net.



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Manalapan Township Recycling Program

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QUESTIONS

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**Garbage
Pick-Up
Monday**

DROP OFF ITEMS

The following items are not collected at the curb but are recyclable. Please drop them off at:

**The Recycling Center
207 Rt 522**

M-F 8:00 - 3:00

Sat 8:00 - 2:00

- Leaves & Brush
- Electronics
- Metals
- Car Batteries
- Button Batteries

(e.g. watches, hearing aids & cameras)

NO

- Plastic bags
- styrofoam
- Waxed paper
- Microwavable trays
- Light bulbs, windows, mirrors
- Ceramics, porcelain, plates, vases
- Plastic 6-pack holders
- Batteries
- Tires
- Paint Cans *(empty or full)*
- Household items *(e.g. toasters, cooking pots)*

**Not Accepted
For Curbside
Recycling**

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- Empty and lightly rinse all containers
- You do NOT need to tie up your newspapers if they are in a container
- Use a container with a lid to ensure that papers do not blow away
- Containers should not be larger than 50 gallons

No Need To Remove Tape, Paper clips, staples, stamps, labels, metal fasteners, rubber bands, plastic tabs, post-it notes, spiral bindings.



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Birds - Call for est.

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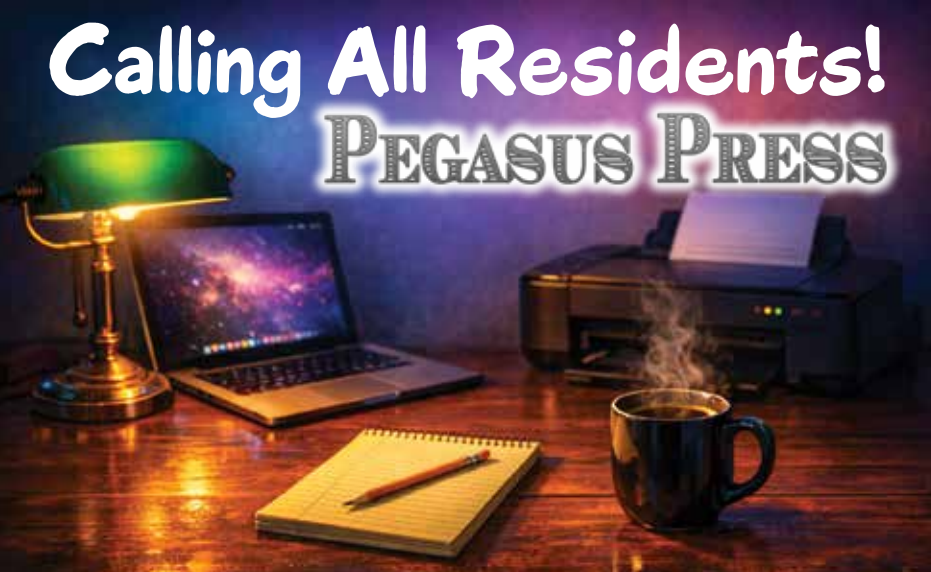


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Calling All Residents!

PEGASUS PRESS



The Pegasus Press needs your contributions, and we'd love to hear from you!

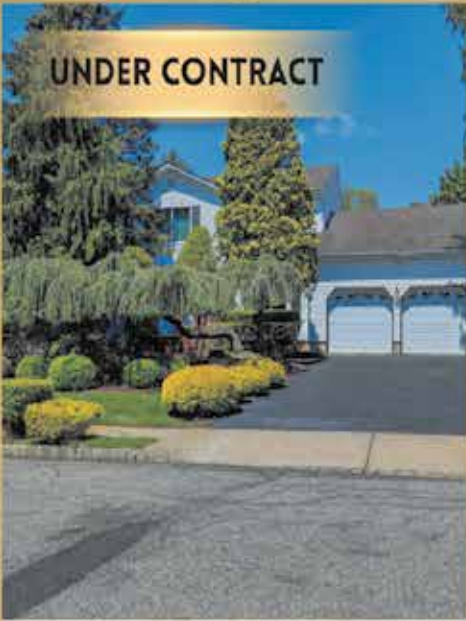
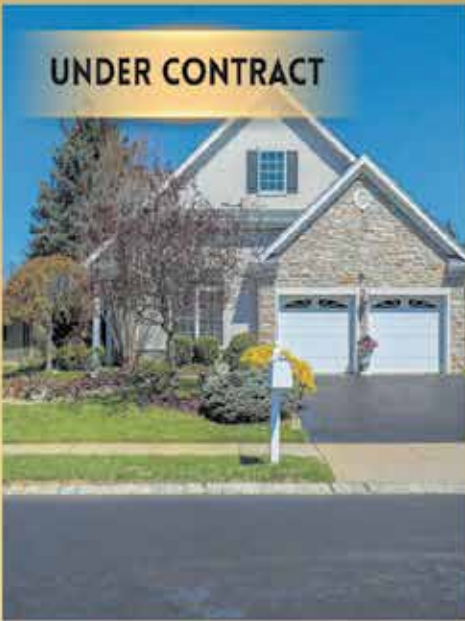
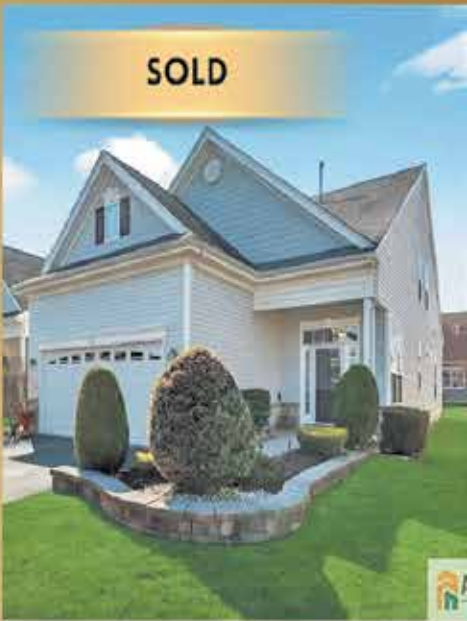
Do you have an interest in cooking, music, volunteer work, or home repair and want to share your knowledge with your community? Do you love to play sports or follow a sports team and want to offer tips on the game, an opinion on the home team, or share a related experience? Do you play canasta, Mah Jong, poker, billiards, tennis, pickleball or any other game or sport that can be found in and around our clubhouse and do you want to write about it? Would you want to write about your experiences and life at Four Seasons? Do you love poetry and want to try your hand at publishing some of your work?

Are you in a position of leadership in one of our many clubs or committees and want to provide information and updates on activities and events? Perhaps you can attract new members by submitting this information every month for publication, as some clubs and committees already do!

We invite you to submit club reports, articles, essays, short prose, or poetry directly to the Pegasus Press submission email account at fsmpegasuspress@gmail.com prior to the 8th of each month in order to be included in the next month's edition. You'll receive an auto-reply confirmation email to let you know your submission was received.

If you have any questions about submitting something to us, please contact Debra Ross at DebraERoss1@gmail.com.

Homes Are Moving with The Kimmel Home Team

UNDER CONTRACT  13 Iris Circle Manalapan	UNDER CONTRACT  17 Bingham Drive Marlboro	UNDER CONTRACT  15 Crawford Road The Village Grande, Manalapan	SOLD  8 Turret Drive Stonebridge, Monroe
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Each Offer is independently owned and operated. All information is deemed reliable, but it's not guaranteed and should be independently verified. If your home is currently listed with another broker, this is not a solicitation of the listing. We listed or participated in these listings.



WEST MONMOUTH

KELLERWILLIAMS REALTY



ads-7563

Beginner



**1ST
PLACE**

“Chinese Rose”
by Alan Zeitlin

“Crimson Bottlebrush”
by Alan Zeitlin



**2nd
PLACE**

“Blue Jacket” by Alan Zeitlin

**3rd
PLACE**



Advanced



"White on Blue"
by Jerry Deutsch



"Petals" by Jerry
Deutsch



"Orange Lily"
by Alan Bogard



Going Back to 1965 to the Present

by Debbie Weissman

We all remember our proms from junior high school. My junior high school prom party of 1965 was a very special event that we were all looking forward to.

Every Saturday night we would all listen to Cousin Brucie on 77WABC Radio and dance to the music of the wonderful ‘60s. Not only could we dance to the music, but we could also call the station and make a dedication for a song to either someone special or just anyone out there listening.

Our prom was going to be a memorable celebration held in the school’s gym. Weeks before, we were all talking excitedly about what to wear, who we were going with, and the special guest to play and MC the music, the iconic Cousin Brucie!

In order to get prepared for this special event, the girls wore full skirts with white blouses and spent hours doing their hair. The boys typically wore black pants and white shirts. I remember the decorations as being simple: balloons and streamers along with poster signs for the festive celebration. Yes, even refreshments were served: soda, juice, cookies, and chips, and chaperoned by parents and teachers.

The music was the heart of the night, and our special guest, Cousin Brucie, was disc jockeying the night away with music from the Beatles, the Beach Boys, Herman’s Hermits, and many more.

All the girls were google-eyeing the “Cuz,” running up to him for his autograph (which I wish I still had) and asking him for special requests. Back then, many of us went as groups, not with anyone specific, so the “Cuz” rarely made personal dedications.

Now to the present. Cousin Brucie is still the iconic DJ of today for all

of us from the ‘60s era. He rose to fame in the ‘60s and became the voice of a generation that totally embraced rock’n’roll. He had, and still has, an energetic style and a very warm personality.



He helped promote the artists of the British Invasion along with many other superstars. Not only is he known for his influence on the radio, but he also hosts many concerts and special events. He has been around for over 60 years, and he keeps on bringing the music to all of us. He is like the Energizer Bunny, but much taller.

Even today, he brings to the PNC Arts Center memories of the ‘50s, ‘60s, and sometimes beyond. He can even be known as a matchmaker of first dates, summer nights, and yes, school dances.

Yes, I mentioned the PNC Arts Center. He’s brought to that Holmdel venue the music we all remember, danced to, and romanced to. The artists he brought to Holmdel include Peter Noone and Herman’s Hermits; Tommy James and the Shondells; Gary Lewis and the Playboys; The Tokens; The Rascals; Chubby Checker; The Drifters; Bobby Rydell; Tony

Orlando, and many more.

His concerts are known for classic oldies and doo-wop music that takes us back to Palisades Park as well.

So, for many of us who attended our junior high school prom in 1965, it will always remain a cherished memory. It was a time of friendship, youth, and pure innocence. It reflected an era of simplicity, dancing to the music, good company, and memories that lasted a lifetime.

Thank you, “Cuz,” for being a part of our lives and the wonderful memories you helped make. You and our music will go on forever!

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What Goes Around Comes Around Again: Assertiveness vs. Aggressiveness: Two Halves Of The Same Coin

by Mark Tabakman

In September 2024, I devoted a column to the topic of a child finding his passion, whether that be dancing, gymnastics, soccer, or anything else. I wrote that Lily had tried dancing school, for example, and did not like it, and her parents realized that she wanted something more athletic, more energetic. As a result, they enrolled her in softball and basketball. She has participated in these activities now for a few years and has shown improvement in her skills (e.g., shooting, dribbling, hitting). One area she still needs to “develop” is being more assertive when she plays. I wonder if I mean she needs to be more aggressive, but I think that aggressiveness might just be another dimension of assertiveness. I do believe these traits are reflections of having the passion to excel at what you want to do. Then, I wonder if that is something that can be taught. Or is it something that comes naturally at some point to a child? I also wonder if there is an innate difference between girls and boys on this matter.

Lily’s team is playing “real” games, with pitching, fielders spread around, and running the bases. Her father is one of the coaches; I have also added my two cents. She seems hesitant when she plays, and we struggle to find the reason. When she bats, she has good form and makes contact but swings softly, hitting ground balls to the pitcher’s mound, not taking a good “rip.” I have told her to pretend that she is kicking down her brother’s Lego building when she swings. She smiles, says she understands but does not actualize my advice. Her father has utilized similar strategies to no avail.

When she hits the ball, she trots down to first base, not showing the urgency a player needs when they are trying to leg out a hit. Although I know she is fast, she doesn’t show it. In the field, she won’t dart for a ball hit near her; if it is hit to her, she (more often than not) catches it but doesn’t pounce on it. Her father exhorts her, urging her to “go for it,” but she does not seem to absorb it.

I watch some of the other girls on the team (all eight-year-olds) playing more aggressively, e.g., taking hard swings and running to field a ground ball. So, I ask the question—what is it about my granddaughter that makes her more hesitant? I thought it may be an aftereffect of being a child of the COVID era. In August 2025, I wrote about this phenomenon and how it affected Lily (and thousands of other kids). I noted that the pandemic created a complete alteration in how these kids grew up and that they suffered a vital interruption in their socialization process. Although there may (in 2026) be some residual effects of that lack of socialization, I do not believe that is the answer to Lily’s reticence on sports fields.

Is it a natural shyness that she still must outgrow? I know that Lily has a wide circle of friends. When we spent those five days with them a few months ago, we watched her interact with her little buddies, and I noted how outgoing she is, how funny, and how she is often at the center of the group. We have seen this outgoing nature on many other occasions. So, I sense it is not shyness.

Is it the innate difference between boys and girls? Attributing the reason to such a difference would, frankly, be a product of 1950s thinking and is too easy an answer. I watch her brother, five years old, at his karate class and his baseball clinic, running around hard, kicking the karate obstacles hard, and taking a vigorous swing. There is no need to try to draw aggressiveness out of him, but I see little boys who are hesitant and do not kick or swing a bat in attack mode. I then remember that when Lily started camp last year, she chose to take, without any pushing, the deep-water swimming test and passed it. That was a sign that she can be assertive, or aggressive, when she feels that the circumstances are right.

What is there to do? Perhaps nothing. Although she wants to play and shows ability, both in softball and basketball, it may take Lily a little longer to become assertive in a team sport environment. And that’s fine. Some traits cannot be taught; they are components of someone’s personality, and they manifest themselves when the time is right. For example, someone who is artistic (like Lily), who has an innate talent of any kind, can be trained on technique, but the spark that generates the *desire* to paint cannot be artificially instilled. Mozart started playing piano at age three and was composing by age five. His father taught him technique, but that child had the genius within him. Maybe this is her personality, and that *is* the answer. Maybe it is as simple as that—it will come to her, or rather, come *out* of her.

I look at the world that she will grow up into. Being assertive, going after what you want, with single-mindedness, is essential in the frenetic, hyper-goal-oriented society Lily will take her place in. In my heart, I know she will find her way in that world and will succeed mightily, because she will look inside herself to find the willpower to go after what she wants. Her parents and grandparents will cultivate and encourage those characteristics that form the essence of her personality—her being. And that will come to her naturally, in her own time.

And she won’t have to smash her brother’s carefully constructed Lego building to succeed...

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The Contractor

by JoAnn Abraham

I’ve worked with a slew of contractors over the years. Some have been better than others. Most have been so terrific that I have happily passed their contact information along to friends. There is one, however, whose phone number I have never shared. Let’s call him Mr. P.

I was working in the local high school at the time, and all my colleagues used Mr. P. for all sorts of projects—from fixing a garage door to painting their houses. Mr. P. could do it all.

We’d just gone through a wicked winter, one in which it seemed to snow every week and the temperature lingered in the single digits. When the snow finally melted, it was clear that the concrete walkway leading up to the house and the patio off the dining room had not liked the weather any more than we had. It more closely resembles a jagged, ragged ice flow. Since it was hazardous, it needed to be replaced, quickly.

I called Mr. P., who gave me a reasonable estimate in terms of both dollars and timing. He said he’d have his boys there over the weekend. When he mentioned his boys, he wasn’t speaking metaphorically. He had six huge sons, all of whom were on the high school football team. They were strong and tall as opposed to their father, who was of average height and as wide as a cattail. For all I know, they might have taken after their mother, but she had long ago left the scene.

As promised, Mr. P. and sons arrived early Saturday morning, and the boys set to work shattering the slab remnants and hauling them to the truck. No electrical or power tools for this bunch. They used their muscles, which were huge. Dad’s job was to keep them all moving according to his metronome.

By about 5 they were basically finished. The sorry slabs had been replaced by freshly sculpted concrete. The boys were exhausted, leaning against the truck, eager to get home, when Mr. P. knocked on my door. He wanted me to inspect the job before I paid him.

He said the front walk was dry enough to walk on, so I opened the screen. Or tried to. It got about a quarter of the way there when it got stuck. On the new concrete. Which had been carefully pitched at an angle so water wouldn’t run into the house. Except it was about half an inch too high.

Mr. P. called one of his sons, who was by his side in a flash. Mr. P. merely pointed at the stuck door.

The young man began, “Dad, I thought…”

Mr. P. cut him off. “Son, I don’t pay you to think. I pay you to do.”

The offending walk was removed and replaced before dark.

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Libel and Slander and SLAPPS, Oh My!

by Steve Resnick

I apologize for paraphrasing one of Dorothy’s iconic phrases in the “Wizard of Oz” as the title for this article. I concede the original, “Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My!” sounds much better than “Libel and Slander and SLAPPS, Oh My!” but I thought misquoting Dorothy and her three companions made a better beginning and might draw in some of the readers already discouraged by the length of this piece. Anyway, thanks for reading this first paragraph.

Libel and slander are civil wrongs. In law, civil wrongs are called torts. There are two kinds of torts, intentional and unintentional. Negligence is an unintentional tort. Just about every other tort I have come across is an intentional tort, such as defamation, assault, trespass, or interference with business relationships. We are not talking about crimes here, you understand. Crimes are criminal wrongs, of which some are also torts, like trespass or assault. The difference between crimes and torts is that crimes are prosecuted by the government and involve fines and jail as punishment. The victim of a crime is called the complaining witness. The government is the plaintiff in a criminal case.

In a civil tort case, whether it be a negligence case or an intentional tort, a person who believes himself to be the victim of a civil wrong can bring an action for damages, can sue the person believed to be responsible for causing the harm. In a civil case, the person suing is the plaintiff prosecuting the case. The terms “Libel” and “Slander” are frequently used interchangeably. That is because they are both subsections of the tort of defamation. But they are not the same.

Libel is written defamation, while slander is spoken defamation, both alleged to be harming a person’s reputation. Defamation occurs when a false statement is made to a third party that damages a person’s reputation. For the claim of defamation to become a successful lawsuit, the defamatory statements must lower the claimant’s reputation. The victim must be named or otherwise identifiable in the written or oral remarks and heard by, or written to, at least one other person besides the claimant and the alleged defamer. In some libel and slander cases, other people may be included as defendants even though they did not originate the slander or libel but merely because they repeated the allegedly false statements.

There is also slander per se and libel per se. These are statements that are considered so inappropriate that just proving they were said (or written) and “published” to a third party is enough to justify the imposition of damages without the submission of proof of the harm caused. Two examples of per se libel and slander are claiming the victim is an embezzler or has a sexually transmitted disease.

Instead of delving further into this area, I’m going to briefly focus on how the defendant with the big mouth or itchy fingers on the computer keyboard defends himself when he is subjected to a lawsuit for defamation. Regarding the victim with itchy fingers or a big mouth, I recall writing in this very monthly newspaper that, “even a fish wouldn’t get caught if it kept its mouth shut.” And I have counseled many clients angry about something and want to let the world know about it: “Don’t send out the angry letter until the next day, after you have calmed down and re-read it. Think about what you will say about it when, a year later, you are on the witness stand under oath.” And the immortal words, attributed to Honest Abe: “I’ve often regretted opening my mouth, I’ve never regretted keeping it shut.”

Anyway, the absolute best defense to a lawsuit for defamation, whether it be oral or written, is showing that the defamatory statement is true. Next best is convincing the jury that the libelous words were a mere opinion, not asserted as fact. In other words, an absence of malice, an innocent mistake. Finally, establishing a privilege related to the “publishing” of the remarks may be a bar to recovery. In fact, if the remarks were made in a judicial proceeding or in a legislative session or other government activity, they are absolutely privileged and cannot be used by the victim to recover damages. If proven that they were said in a government proceeding, the libel or slander complaint will be dismissed.

And then there is limited or qualified privilege. If newspapers or online platforms, employers, or others are sued, they can claim to have limited or qualified privilege if they did not originally publish the content themselves but are reporting it or providing it in a business context, such as an employment

record requested by a prospective employer of the victim. Proving there was no actual malice in providing the documents or repeating the words spoken will justify a jury concluding there was a qualified privilege and finding for the defendant.

A discussion of the third component of the title, “Libel and Slander and SLAPPS, Oh My,” is now upon us. SLAPP is an acronym that stands for “Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation,” also called “Intimidation Lawsuits.” These civil actions are designed to censor, intimidate, and silence critics of the plaintiff. The idea is to proactively file a suit against someone, forcing them to do what the plaintiff wants or spend time and money defending themselves until they drop their public opposition to whatever the plaintiff is doing or seeking.

SLAPP lawsuits have been around since the early 1800s but have never received much attention. According to the Ohio ACLU, “Perhaps the earliest SLAPP suit in our country’s history arose in 1802 in *Harris v. Huntington*. This case involved five Shaftsbury, Vermont, citizens who petitioned the state legislature against reappointing Harris as a county justice of the peace, claiming he was a ‘quarreling, fighting, and Sabbath-breaking member of society...[with] a wicked heart.’ Harris brought suit against the citizens for libel and sought \$5,000 in damages. Although expressing some concerns about the truthfulness of the citizens, the court upheld their right to petition and dismissed the case. Numerous similar cases filed throughout the 1800s met a similar fate.” But beginning in the 1980s, and increasingly common in the last 20 years, SLAPP suits have become a popular way of silencing critics. They have always been viewed as a violation of the First Amendment right of free speech, but unfortunately, exercising that right to free speech could be costly. Litigation is expensive.

In 2023, New Jersey and about thirty other states passed legislation aimed at curtailing SLAPP suits. Called the Uniform Public Expression Protection Act, the new law enables a defendant being harassed or silenced for the exercise of free speech to get the lawsuit stayed and then dismissed within about 3 months, with minimal expense. And that expense could be passed on to the SLAPP suit plaintiff.

In 50 years of practice, I have had only one case involving a SLAPP suit. About 15 years ago, I was hired by the parents of a co-ed who was the victim of a SLAPP suit. I was told that she had filed a written complaint with her college alleging that another student had sexually abused her. She did not seek counsel or legal advice, other than from her girlfriends, and the morning after the incident, she went to the office of the college dean and filed her complaint. Thereafter, the boy she accused was served by the school with a copy of her complaint and told there would be a hearing to review the allegation and seek a “remedy.” He told his father about it. The father, a litigious New York attorney, immediately filed a 10-million-dollar libel suit against my client. My client and her parents were stunned and became hysterical. They were working people and didn’t have even one million dollars.

It was at that point that I was retained to manage the case. I called the boy’s father and identified myself as the co-ed’s lawyer. He started right in demanding that the complaint to the school be withdrawn because his son had a bright future, and this “stain” on his record would hurt him. I told him we wouldn’t do that, and considering his SLAPP lawsuit, I was going to accompany her to the municipal police department and file a criminal complaint against his son for the sexual abuse described in the complaint she filed with the school. He could now expect to have his son arrested, with attendant local publicity. I suggested he consider how bad the “stain” on his son’s reputation would be if that happened. After some more bluster, he seemed to relent. I gave him 48 hours to withdraw the libel suit, with prejudice. (In addition to its other meanings, “prejudice” is used as a fancy lawyer term meaning no backsies; you can’t reinstate the lawsuit.) He did what I asked and withdrew his lawsuit. The complaint she had made to the school continued to be reviewed until the boy transferred to another school to avoid disciplinary action. That satisfied my client and her parents. Case closed with a happy client, her relieved parents, and a disgruntled boy and his father.



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