



# BOROUGH OF CLOSTER

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## MAYOR'S NEWSLETTER



September 29, 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

As we enter into the fall season, I am pleased to let you know the Borough is holding steady and keeping the number of new COVID cases low. The Council and I urge you to continue to exercise consistent practices of wearing a mask and social distancing. Alternatives for traditional events have become a new normal for all of us. Halloween is no exception. The CDC information regarding Halloween traditions during COVID-19 can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

### **Bergen County CARES Small Business Grant Programs**

The Bergen County CARES Small Business Grant Program is an economic stability measure designed to provide financial relief to small businesses negatively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and to increase overall business confidence during recovery. Deadline to apply is October 5 and funds will be distributed on a first-come, first served basis. There are several phases of this Small Business Grant Program designed to address the hardships Covid-19 has placed on small businesses in Bergen County. Electronic applications are available at [BergenCountyCARES.org](http://BergenCountyCARES.org).

### **Third Street Commuter Parking Lot**

The Borough of Closter is seeking information from its residents regarding interest in purchasing a parking permit for commuter parking in the Third St. Commuter Parking Lot. The Third St. Commuter Parking Lot is accessed from Closter Dock Road, next to the BP gas station, 484 Closter Dock Road, Closter. The commuter parking lot is limited to thirteen parking spaces. Closter Residents interested in obtaining a commuter parking permit should contact Edward Hynes, Closter Borough Administrator, at [ehynes@closternj.us](mailto:ehynes@closternj.us).

### **Closter Volunteer Fire Department**

Closter's all volunteer fire department is continuing the donation drive this month. A second letter of request will be mailed or residents and businesses can make a donation to the CFD on [www.closterfd.org/donate](http://www.closterfd.org/donate). Please consider the important work this dedicated volunteer service provides to keeping us safe and responding to us during times of need, 24/7 year round. There is no emergency call that goes unattended; from fully engaged structures on fire, smoke in the kitchen, false alarms, and more, the Closter Fire Department is always responsive. Let's respond to their call for assistance.

## **Closter Police Department**

In a continued effort to assist all of our residents, the CPD is **urging everyone to lock their vehicles**, even when cars are parked in driveways. The diligence of this practice is a strong deterrent to crime and a viable aid in protecting your property. Residents are being urged to **LOCK** vehicles, even when parked in driveways and to **REMOVE** key fobs, wallets, cell phones, handbags, iPads or any other items of value from the vehicle.. *Remember... see something, Say something!*

As the days are getting shorter and it is darker earlier, diligence is absolutely necessary for crime prevention. Interior lights, lights set on timers, outdoor motion lights, picking up newspapers from driveways and not leaving packages overnight in doorways are basic preventions for home safety.

## **Closter Food & Assistance Board**

Closter's Food & Assistance Board is celebrating one of its key volunteers. For years Annette Vasiloff has been a guiding light with the FAB. On September 23<sup>rd</sup> Annette was formally acknowledged by the Mayor and the Council for her contributions to serving our residents and exemplifying the true spirit of volunteerism. Recognizing her many contributions, the FAB Board is determined to carry on with the same degree of enthusiasm and commitment.

Protocol for COVID is keeping the pantry closed for the general food donations. *Financial donations, grocery store gift cards and restaurant gift certificates* are requested so that we can continue to meet the needs of our families who need it. Please consider restaurant give certificates as a viable donation. This type of donation not only assists our families in need, but supports our local restaurants.

Holiday - Special Donation Arrangements - can be made for specific donations for Thanksgiving or December holidays by emailing [fabofcloster@gmail.com](mailto:fabofcloster@gmail.com). The FAB will reply to your email and let you know what is needed and how this specific donation can be made. This same procedure applies to the Neighbor to Neighbor program (adopt a family and provide gifts for the holidays). Precautions for Covid are necessary so it is imperative the Special Donation Arrangements are followed.

The Annual Town Wide Garage Sale, which is usually held in October, is being postponed until the spring of 2021. So, stay tuned and keep collecting those treasures for the spring event!

If you know anyone in Closter who may be in need and is hesitant to come forward or just might not know how, please email us [fabofcloster@gmail.com](mailto:fabofcloster@gmail.com) or call (201) 784-0600, extension 429. All inquiries are received in complete confidence. Financial donations can be sent to The Closter Food Pantry (CFP), Closter Borough Hall at 295 Closter Dock Rd., Closter, NJ.

## **MacBain Farm**

*Calling all Closter artists and would-be artists!* Bring your masks, folding chairs and art supplies to immerse yourselves in the beauty of the MacBain Farm Park on Hickory Lane (just below Anderson Avenue) for a guided session of plein air painting, hosted by the Closter Environmental Commission. You may wish to bring a camera to capture the scene in case you haven't completed the painting to your satisfaction. For social distancing and ample help from your tutor, you must register. Each two hour session will be from 10-12 on October 1<sup>st</sup>, October 6<sup>th</sup> and October 8<sup>th</sup>. There is no charge, and you may attend one, two or all three sessions. There will be no more than six participants for each tutor, and no more than 2 groups. Social distancing and masks will be required. Participants will need to sign a Covid-19 liability waiver. To register for this event, or have questions answered, please email [envcomm@closternj.us](mailto:envcomm@closternj.us). Kindly provide your name and a daytime telephone contact.

## Closter Shade Tree Commission

Congratulations Closter... The Shade Tree Commission is pleased to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> year of recognition as a Tree City USA community! The Tree City USA program provides direction, assistance and national recognition for your community. To learn more about Tree City USA, visit [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org)

The STC is gearing up for another busy season, starting with its fall tree planting. Shade trees will be planted throughout the Borough, including the trees for the student winners of the Borough's 1<sup>st</sup> Arbor Day Poster Contest. Held last spring, the contest asked Hillside Elementary School students to create a poster that showed why they thought "*Trees Are Worth It*". In addition to receiving a certificate of recognition and having their work featured on the Borough's website, the students will have a shade tree planted on their street.

Beginning later this year, the Commission will oversee its annual maintenance pruning program of the street trees which is completed yearly by voting district. This year Voting District 4 and, if feasible, the downtown business district will be pruned. A friendly reminder to all property owners ~ trees in the Borough's right-of-way may not be planted, pruned or removed without the express permission of the Borough. If you have questions, please feel free to contact the STC at [shadetree@closter.nj](mailto:shadetree@closter.nj) or visit the Borough's website.

## Closter Public Library

Closter's Public Library is committed to providing the best materials, programs, classes and information to enhance cultural, recreational and educational interests. Covid-19 has changed the operating hours, but it hasn't changed the vast assortment of materials available to card holders! The library has initiated a new self-checkout system. The meeScan is an app that you can download and use for contactless checkout of materials. meeScan can be used to charge out material. The app is available from the App Store and the Google Play store.

The library's "inside browsing" hours are Monday and Friday 2-4, Wednesday 2-4 and 5-7; Tuesday and Thursday 10-12 and Saturday 12-2. Returns are only being accepted in the book drop located outside the auditorium door. If the book drop is full, please don't put anything into it, wait a day. Items will be quarantined for at least 72 hours before coming off of your library card.

Closter's Library continues to hold numerous offerings through Zoom and the list of offerings is quite extensive! Please visit the website, [www.closterpubliclibrary.org](http://www.closterpubliclibrary.org), for a complete schedule of classes, book clubs and programs.

## COVID-19

We must all preserve in our commitment to keep the curve flat and exercise the proven practice of social distancing and wearing face coverings, especially in any public venues. These are the proven tools to control a rebound of the virus and allow a continued emergence "new-norm" activities. The Governor's Executive Order states **face coverings must be worn in all retail operations and outdoor areas where social distancing of 6' cannot be maintained**. I urge you to instill a sense of flexibility into daily routines while navigating the "new- norms" created by the Covid-19 situation.

The Covid 19 guidelines for Halloween can be found on the CDC's website, [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html). Many traditional Halloween activities can be high-risk for spreading viruses. There are several safer, alternative ways to participate in Halloween. Please take a moment to review these important recommendations to keep your families safe while enjoying a holiday.

- (1) **SOCIAL DISTANCING & FACE COVERINGS** – It is *imperative* the practice of social distancing and wearing face coverings any time in a public setting be practiced.

- (2) We are asking all of our residents to continue to reach out to neighbors, particularly our elderly neighbors, to see if they are in need of assistance. The Task Force has a list of residents willing to offer assistance by running errands or grocery shopping for those who may not be able to get to the store.
- (3) Testing sites are now open to all residents. Details and information on how and where to be tested are available on the Borough's website under Covid-19.
- (4) The Closter Borough Hall building remains closed to the public. The Lewis St. Lobby has convenient drop boxes for several departments. There is a silver, wall mounted mailbox for Tax Payments. (This box is only for Tax Payments and donations to the Food Pantry). The Construction Office, Zoning/Planning Boards and Board of Health have their own drop boxes in the lobby.
- (5) The Borough's website, [www.closternj.us](http://www.closternj.us), has an array of Forms and Applications which can be downloaded, completed and returned to the Borough for review and processing applications.

The Borough is moving forward in many positive directions. The Mayor's/OEM Task Force meets regularly to assess the situation. Follow the Borough's website ([www.closternj.us](http://www.closternj.us)) for current information on Closter's response during the Covid-19 pandemic. Cooperation, patience and tolerance are needed from all of us as we remain strong and diligent.

All the best,



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Mayor

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