

INTERVIEW WITH  
THE SMITHEREENS

WINTERFEST  
PREVIEW

CJAC NUTCRACKER  
EXHIBIT

# Carteret Press

**A Publication Presented by the Carteret Business Partnership**

**The Botanic**  
luxurious, scenic  
apartment building  
sells for \$87.5M

See page 8





# ANCHOR

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*The ANCHOR program is operated by the State of New Jersey, Department of the Treasury, Division of Taxation*

**November 2022**  
**Volume 20, No. 9**  
**Contents**



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*Carteret Business Partnership is a nonprofit corporation that promotes economic development, business retention and recruitment through a variety of programs and incentives.*

Follow @MyCarteret 

Dear Neighbors,  
Welcome to the Carteret Press featuring a new design worthy of our great town.

In this issue, we take a look at The Botanic, a luxury apartment building with space for two restaurants, including a rooftop bar. Original developer Forte Real Estate Development sold the property for \$87.5 million to Living Residential. New owner Gary Kassirer shares his excitement about adding a Carteret property to his impressive portfolio while sharing a vision for the borough's bright future.

Carteret Press also features an interview with Carteret favorite son Jim Babjak, guitarist of The Smithereens, who'll return once again to URSB Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center on Dec. 3 with childhood friends and fellow original band members Dennis Diken on drums and Mike Mesaros on bass, plus guest vocalists filling in for the late, great front man Pat DiNizio. It's always a treat to welcome The Smithereens home so you're going to be sure not to miss that show!

Other issue highlights include coverage of:

- A preview of Central Jersey Arts Council's Nutcracker exhibit
- A look at the new turf fields in Civic Center Park and John Street Soccer Field
- A donation of exercise equipment from RWJ Fitness & Wellness to Carteret schools.

You'll also notice business advertisements are now for sale. Ads in each issue are a great way to promote a business or event to all Carteret residents. Each issue is delivered to their homes. For more about advertising, contact the Public Information Office at 732-541-3835 or [makinb@carteret.net](mailto:makinb@carteret.net).

Enjoy the new Carteret Press!

Sincerely,

Mayor Daniel J. Reiman

**HOLIDAY  
FITNESS  
SAVINGS**



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this holiday season!**



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at  
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# ***RWJ Fitness & Wellness Donates Cardio Equipment to High School***

*Borough Helps Center Obtain Federal Funding for New State-of-the-Art Equipment*



**Above, RWJ Fitness & Wellness Center at Carteret donated more than two dozen cardio machines to Carteret High School Fitness Room with more on the way, as well as to a local nonprofit for youth. At right, RWJ Fitness & Wellness Training Assistant Manager Pedro Martinez demonstrates the new state-of-the-art elliptical, one of several Matrix machines that replaced the donated equipment.**

**CARTERET, NJ** – Both Carteret High School and RWJ Fitness & Wellness Center at Carteret have a new look these days.

The Center recently donated more than two dozen pieces of cardio equipment to the high school's fitness room, including Life Fitness treadmills, stair masters, ellipticals, stationary bikes, and recumbent bikes.

Meanwhile, the borough encouraged the Center to apply for government funding available during the pandemic. The gym used the federal funds to obtain new top-of-the-line Matrix equipment for the benefit of its members.

"I'm glad that we could help facilitate the equipment from RWJ Fitness & Wellness at Carteret to the Carteret High School Fitness Room," Mayor Daniel J. Reiman said.

"The exercise equipment will serve as an additional space for physical education classes, where students can develop a workout routine that supports their fitness goals, as well as their mental health," Carteret School Superintendent Rosa Diaz added. "This donation also will help bolster enthusiasm for wellness and physical activity, which research shows reduces

stress, anxiety and improves overall self-esteem."

RWJ Fitness & Wellness donated to the schools as part of its mission to improve the health of the Carteret community, Center co-owner Leslie Adelman said.

The habit of regular exercise at a young, impressionable age is most beneficial, Adelman said.

"We are also donating our spin bikes once our new ones arrive," she said. "Those will go to a few not-for-profit children's programs in the community, as well as a few to Carteret HS."

Adelman said RWJ Fitness & Wellness chose Matrix because of superior design and exceptional customer service.

Popular among local high school athletes, RWJ Fitness & Wellness at Carteret also will be getting new weightlifting equipment soon.

For more about Carteret schools, visit [carteretschools.org](http://carteretschools.org). More about RWJ Fitness & Wellness at Carteret is at [rwjfitnesscarteret.com](http://rwjfitnesscarteret.com). Join RWJ Fitness & Wellness at Carteret by calling 732-541-2333 or visiting the center at 60 Cooke Ave.

Updates will be available at [Carteret.net](http://Carteret.net) or by following @MyCarteret on social media.

**Mayor Dan Reiman's**  
*Annual*

**Christmas Tree**  
**& HOLIDAY** *Lighting*  
**FESTIVAL**

**Friday, December 2nd**  
**6:00-9:00pm at Carteret Park**  
**Tree Lighting at 7:00pm**

**LIVE HOLIDAY MUSIC! PICTURES WITH SANTA! COCOA!  
COOKIES! HOT PRETZELS! HORSE AND BUGGY RIDES!**



*Menorah  
Lighting*

**Sunday, December 18, 2022**

**5:30 p.m.**

**at Borough Hall**

**61 Cooke Avenue**

**(Hanukkah begins December 18 and ends December 26)**

# **CJAC Celebrates ‘The Nutcracker’ with winter holiday exhibit**

*Resident’s collection will run from Thanksgiving Weekend to year’s end at Blazing Star Cultural Arts Center*



**A feature exhibit of unique, hand-crafted and painted Nutcrackers will be on display after Thanksgiving through the new year at Central Jersey Arts Council’s Blazing Star Cultural Arts Center in Carteret. The display is the collection of longtime Carteret resident Sandie Barth.**

**CARTERET, NJ** – Central Jersey Arts Council will feature a Winter Exhibit of more than 240 unique and individually hand-painted Nutcrackers. Sandie Barth, a borough resident for more than 30 years, fell in love with Tchaikovsky’s classic Christmas ballet at the age of 18. She soon started collecting nutcrackers inspired by the holiday favorite, finding each piece intriguing and bringing a sense of the inspiring season.

As years went by, her collection grew culled from travels throughout the U.S., as well as Germany and Dubai. With each journey, Barth would add a new nutcracker to her collection.

“Friends and family started to take notice, and in their travels, would pick up a piece to gift to me,” she explained. “They would say when they would spot a

nutcracker, it would make them think of me. Such a sweet and loving gesture.”

Mayor Daniel J. Reiman suggested the exhibit is “a wonderful way to soak up the season.”

The Nutcracker’s unique beauty brings a sense of joy and holiday spirit, he said.

“Central Jersey Arts Council is excited to be able to share Sandie Barth’s love of the Nutcrackers and share this feature display with the community,” the Mayor said.

The Winter Exhibit will be up from Thanksgiving weekend through December. Hours will be 4 to 7 p.m. Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays, and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sundays. An open house will be 7 p.m. Dec. 16 that will share all that CJAC makes available to the community. Visit [centraljerseyartscouncil.com](http://centraljerseyartscouncil.com).

# Going

## **The Botanic So**



*Mayor Daniel J. Reiman looks upon the Carteret waterfront from the rooftop of The Botanic, a luxury apartment building with two restaurant spaces, one of which includes rooftop dining. Forte Real Estate Development recently sold the 242-unit property for \$87.5 million to Living Residential.*

**T**he Botanic, a 242-unit luxury apartment building leasing while completing construction in downtown Carteret with 10,000 square feet of restaurant space, including a rooftop eatery, plus dazzling outdoor amenities, has sold for \$87.5 million.

The 1.72-acre site at 36 Washington Avenue was sold to New Jersey developer/property manager Living Residential by original developer Forte Real Estate Development in Middlesex.

“The Botanic is one of our largest and most luxurious mixed-used projects in town, and we are all very happy with the final product,” Mayor Daniel J. Reiman said. “Carteret has experienced more than \$2 billion in private investment during the past 20 years in addition to \$250 million in public improvements. With the marina complete and the ferry project starting construction soon, Living Residential is getting in on the ground floor for what will be an exciting future of development and revitalization.”

Living Residential CEO Gary Kassirer said he was so impressed with the botanical nature of the property’s 30,000 square feet of outdoor space, he was inspired to change the building’s name from Washington Lofts to The Botanic. Outdoor amenities include a 15,000-square-foot rooftop terrace, multiple courtyards, gardens, fire pits, planters with river birch trees, and atmospheric lighting.

The site’s proximity to the New Jersey Turnpike, Newark Airport, Manhattan, and next-door neighbor, URSB Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center, also delighted Living Residential, but what impressed most was the Mayor’s dedicated vision for the town, Kassirer said.

“It’s in close proximity to Manhattan and Jersey’s busiest, largest interstates,” he said. “Now you have the ferry providing a 40-minute direct commute to Manhattan from the property and being just eight minutes from Newark Airport is an unbelievable location for anybody that either wants to work in the city or live a suburban lifestyle conveniently located with a variety of nearby travel options.

The property also boasts an indoor bus shelter with a stop that is a short ride to the Rahway train station with direct rail service in and out of Manhattan all day. Carteret has everything they need.

“It’s just a beautiful town with a great, great mayor who has an unbelievable



# Green

## ells for \$87.5M



**The property's many outdoor features, particularly on the breathtaking rooftop, inspired new owner Living Residential to change the name of 36 Washington Ave. to The Botanic.**

vision," Kassirer continued. "I would say he has the most amazing devotion and dedication to see that vision through. It's something that's very inspiring, something I want to be part of, and something that people in the state and the tristate area should take note of because Carteret is becoming the epicenter for the live, work, eat, play lifestyle with a community that is vibrant and most attractive."

Living Residential owns and operates several other properties throughout the state and is most excited about this addition to their portfolio.

"Although I've been passing Carteret my entire life on the Turnpike, I never thought more of Carteret than a small borough with warehouses, industrial properties and businesses," Kassirer said. "I never thought of it as a vibrant residential area. I was blown away by the forthcoming plans. When we went to contract, I wasn't aware that there was a planned ferry yet. The borough announced that soon after, and it confirmed what I suspected: Carteret is

on the verge of becoming the next Hoboken and even greater than Hoboken." Living Residential intends to fully lease the property during the next six to 12 months and hold it long term.

The value of the 10,000-square-foot retail component is around \$6 million, he said, marking an \$81 million investment in the residential at \$334,000 per unit.

"That's an extremely attractive basis for class A fully amenitized property in New Jersey by any metric," Kassirer said. "From an economic perspective, it's very attractive, and considering the future that holds for Carteret, this is exciting and something we very much look forward to being a part of."

As for Living Residential's vision for The Botanic, Alfredo's Pizzeria, a long-time successful Carteret establishment, will move in November across Washington Avenue from its current location to its new 2,500-square-foot home.

The development company is working with a number of prospects for the other 7,500-square-foot restaurant space, which will include a rooftop dining area

with panoramic views of the New York City skyline, Arthur Kill, and Watchung Mountains. The prospective restaurateur will be someone who is willing to come alongside the long-term vision for the borough, Kassirer said.

"On this corner, we're right across the street from the performing arts center, so this is going to be a main spot for Carteret," he said. "Whoever comes in really has to understand that this is going to be at the center of all the action in Carteret. The vibe, the atmosphere, the cuisine is going to come from the commitment of Carteret to what the town needs."

The Botanic amenities also include a resident lounge, indoor parking garage and a discounted membership to RWJ Fitness & Wellness Center just one block away.

The membership to a state-of-the-art gym coupled with The Botanic's outdoor space should attract renters, Kassirer said.

"It's something we're proud to be able to provide," he said.

The Botanic's grand-opening celebration and ribbon cutting with Mayor Reiman will be announced soon. For more, visit [livethebotanic.com](http://livethebotanic.com).

# CPAC Artist Spotlight

## *Carteret Favorite Sons Head Home for the*



*Carteret favorite sons and New Jersey Hall of Famers The Smithereens will return home for a Dec. 3 repeat performance at URSB Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center, which they opened last year at the world-class venue's gala.*

**T**he following is a chat with co-founding The Smithereens guitarist Jim Babjak to preview his upcoming homecoming appearance on Dec. 3 at URSB Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center with fellow Carteret favorite sons and New Jersey Hall of Famers, drummer Dennis Diken and bassist Mike Mesaros.

### **Why and how is Carteret important to The Smithereens?**

Carteret is where we learned how to play our instruments and get serious about becoming professional musicians. It was a great town to grow up in. Having blue-collar work ethics is how we were raised.

### **How has the town changed since you grew up here, and why do you think that is?**

Change is necessary with the times. It can never be like it was in the 1960s. Even back then, some of the buildings were over 100 years old. It's just

impossible to renovate them. Mayor Dan has been doing a great job moving the town forward with all the improvements by the river and especially with the new Carteret Performing Arts and Events Center.

### **What do you like most about CPAC?**

It has a state-of-the-art sound system, and there's plenty of parking, which is a problem in a lot of other towns.

### **Would The Smithereens like to play CPAC every year?**

It's always nice to come home and see old friends and new friends. So, yes, I would love it!

### **Who will be singing with The Smithereens this year at CPAC?**

Marshall Crenshaw is singing with us. There might be some surprises.

**The Smithereens recently released 'The Lost Album' on L.A.-based Sunset Blvd. Records, but the original idea back in 1993 was for the**

# ht: The Smithereens

## Holidays with Special Dec. 3 Performance



The Smithereens' 2007 Christmas album, "Christmas with The Smithereens," pictured above, has been reissued on green vinyl by L.A.-based Sunset Blvd. Records, which also recently released the band's "The Lost Album," an unreleased LP recorded in 1993. Guitarist Jim Babjak also has released a Christmas single, "It's Love on Christmas Day" backed with "Christmas Eve, Without Your Love." He's pictured at left as a Carteret youth with his younger brother, Willy.

**band to release it own their label after parting ways with Capitol Records. Why didn't that happen back in 1993, and why did it take another 29 years for it to come out?**

We were then signed to a contract with RCA Records in 1994, and it was only for one album. By the time we recorded another album, we had already written new songs and as an artist, you always want to use your most current songs. After our lead singer Pat DiNizio died, I was listening to some of my archived cassettes and realized that our fans would love to hear these songs.

**What do you like most about 'The Lost Album' and why?**

For me, it's a time capsule. Songs that were frozen in time and forgotten now have a new life.

**Do remember what it was like producing yourselves for the first time, and are there any lessons from that you still utilize today?**

We always had a hand in producing our recordings, even when we had a producer. Everyone in the band has good musical sensibilities. We always had a good balance in the studio knowing when to be serious and when to let loose. We would always eat together, have some laughs, talk about everything and anything, and then get down to business to make a record. It was natural for us. Still is.

**In releasing it, how much was the album**

**changed since you first recorded it?**

It is untouched from where we left it in 1993. The original master tapes were destroyed in a fire, and all we had was a DAT cassette mix that we remastered.

**Are The Smithereens writing new songs, and if so, will you be releasing them?**

We are currently writing new songs with Marshall Crenshaw and Robin Wilson. Hopefully, we will be able to record in 2023 and release a brand new record. We still have a lot of music in us.

**What else are you and the other members of The Smithereens up to outside of the band?**

Dennis Diken has a radio show every Wednesday called 'Denny's Den' on WFMU's Rock 'n' Soul radio stream (Rocknsoulradio.org) 2-4 p.m.

**Is there anything I didn't ask on which you would like to comment?**

There are two new Christmas releases available. One is an album that we recorded in 2007 which has been out of print for a long time but is now available on green-colored vinyl and on CD. I'm also releasing a solo Christmas 45 called, 'It's Love on Christmas Day.' They are available from our website at [officialsmithereens.com](http://officialsmithereens.com).

For me, Christmas has always been a time of peace and reflection. And in this time of COVID-19 and divisiveness, my song's message couldn't be more simple: 'It's love, we need it every day.'

# UPCOMING SHOWS



**DEC. 3 | 8 PM**  
**THE SMITHEREENS**



**DEC. 9 | 8 PM**  
**BLOOD SWEAT & TEARS**



**DEC. 10 | 8 PM**  
**TOP OF THE WORLD: A CARPENTERS TRIBUTE**



**DEC. 11 | 11 AM**  
**BRUNCH & PHOTOS WITH SANTA**



**DEC. 16 | 7:30 PM**  
**DOUBLE VISION: THE FOREIGNER EXPERIENCE & SEPARATE WAYS**



**DEC. 17 | 8 PM**  
**SCOT BRUCE'S BLUE SUEDE CHRISTMAS**



**JAN. 21 | 8 PM**  
**JOHN CAFFERTY & THE BEAVER BROWN BAND**



**FEB. 4 | 8 PM**  
**FACE 2 FACE: ELTON JOHN & BILLY JOEL TRIBUTE**



**APR. 1 | 8 PM**  
**BROADWAY'S ROCK OF AGES BAND**



**APR. 22 | 8 PM**  
**KISS THE SKY TRIBUTE TO JIMI HENDRIX**



**MAY 19 | 8 PM**  
**MR. SPEED: A NIGHT OF KISS**



**JUNE 3**  
**THE CAKE CON**



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*Dates are subject to change.*

Additional acts to be announced online at:  
[carteretpac.com](http://carteretpac.com) or [@carteretpac](https://twitter.com/carteretpac) on social media

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CARTERET, NJ 07008  
BOX OFFICE: 877-849-2722



# ***Jimmy Da Barber aims to build a stylish brand***



**Carteret-raised veteran stylist Jimmy Salado has returned to Carteret with Jimmy Da Barber, a barber shop and botique at 47 Washington Ave.**

**C**arteret-raised stylist Jimmy Salado has been caring for hair for 30-plus years.

The former manager at Washington Cutters left his hometown for a while to expand his Major League Barber Apparel brand, but having had success with that, he's returned home to take over the spot at 147 Washington Ave. with Jimmy Da Barber, a shop that specializes in haircuts, beard trimming and fades.

"I came home because I saw there was a need for a real barbershop," Salado said. "Barbering culture is dead in this town as far as I can see. There's only two other barbershops, and they each have only one employee. You can't really cater to the town with one barber in the shop, so I'm back to take over the town."

Salado and his staff aim to make sure their customers enjoy getting a haircut and/or beard trim.

The former owner of the Who's Next? Barbershop in Carteret, Salado said he gets an equal amount of enjoyment seeing people walk out his door looking

and feeling different.

"I'm creating a brand rather than a barbershop," he said. "Jimmy Da Barber is more than just a shop. We also sell apparel and cologne."

Other apparel lines Jimmy Da Barber sells included Carteret-based Piece by Scoob. He also sells baked goods made by Kristen's Kitchen of Central Jersey. Salado said he hopes to open similar barber boutiques in Florida, California and North Carolina.

"I'm from this town, so one hand washes the other," he said. "I like to partner with other small businesses in town to help them."

Jimmy Da Barber is open from 10 a.m. daily to 7 p.m. weekdays, 5 p.m. Saturdays, and 3 p.m. Sundays. For an appointment, call 732-366-2925.

For more information about Jimmy Da Barber, visit the shop's Instagram @jimmydabarber23. For more information about Major League Barber Apparel, click [originalmajorleaguebarber.com](http://originalmajorleaguebarber.com).



**FOR CURRENT 2ND - 4TH GRADERS**

**SESSION 2: DECEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 31**

**TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS - TIME: 6 P.M. - 8 P.M.**

A large orange basketball with black lines is centered in the background. Overlaid on it is the text 'CARTERET RECREATION DEPT BASKETBALL' in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below this, a yellow banner contains the text 'FREE CLINIC' in red, bold, sans-serif font.

**CARTERET RECREATION DEPT  
BASKETBALL  
FREE CLINIC**



**ST. ELIAS GYM**



Enter via Romanowski St. & High St. behind RWJ Wellness Center

Participants must submit updated physical evaluation from Doctor.

All registrations can be submitted to [recdept@carteret.net](mailto:recdept@carteret.net)

**WWW.CARTERET.NET  
RECDEPT@CARTERET.NET**

# ***Carteret awards \$757G contract to update more synthetic turf fields***



**The Borough recently approved \$756,517 for three more synthetic turf fields. Two will be in Civic Center Park and the other will be at John Street Soccer Field.**

**CARTERET, NJ** – Mayor Daniel J. Reiman recently announced that the Borough approved another \$756,517 in synthetic turf fields for its parks, bringing the total to more than \$1.7 million during the past two years.

The fields being updated are Knights of Columbus Field and a utility field at Civic Center Park and John Street Soccer Field. All will be installed by Georgia-based Shaw Sports Turf, who installed other turf fields at Civic Center and Bishop Andrews parks.

“Sports and outdoor recreation are extremely important as they have such a positive and rewarding impact on youth,” Mayor Daniel J. Reiman said. “We want to ensure the athleticism and fitness of our youth by providing them with the best opportunities we can, including new synthetic turf fields on which they can excel.”

The new fields follow turf replacement in April at Veterans Baseball Field and Mustillo Softball Field at

Civic Center Park after damage from Hurricane Ida. Those fields cost \$525,000, most of which was covered by FEMA and state funds.

Prior to that, new synthetic turf fields were installed at Bishop Andrews Park, which also recently was improved with soil remediation, new trees, walkways, benches, basketball courts. The fields, which cost \$468,463 are used for baseball, softball and soccer.

Shaw Sports Turf has worked with professional sports teams, including Tampa Devil Rays, Miami Marlins, Baltimore Ravens, and Cincinnati Bengals.

“Shaw Sports Turf has proven to be a reliable vendor so we are looking forward to working with them again,” Mayor Reiman said.

The projects are expected to start soon and will be completed by spring. For more about Carteret sports fields and parks, visit [Carteret.net/parks/](http://Carteret.net/parks/). Updates will be available at [Carteret.net](http://Carteret.net) or by following @MyCarteret on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Carteret High School Band Parents Association

Presents

# Shop til you Drop

Holiday Shopping & Fundraiser Event

**December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022**

**10:00am to 3:00pm**

Carteret High School

199 Washington Ave., Carteret, NJ

Free Admission and Convenient Parking

Tricky Tray

Compliments of our Vendors and Crafters

*(Winners do not need to be present)*



Food Court by Carteret High School Band Parents Association