Ten years ago, Clifton, a city of more than 80,000 residents, had no community theater, no outlet for actors and actresses beyond its public schools. That changed in July 2005 when a group of thespians—Mark Peterson, John Traier, Kathleen Kellaigh and Barbara Novak—became founders of the Theater League of Clifton (TLC).

With a fundraiser in Peterson’s backyard in Sept. 2005, the seed was planted to introduce Clifton’s new community theater company. TLC’s inaugural show was an original production written by Kirk Woodward entitled, Waiting for Christmas. More shows followed in the architecturally beautiful but cramped auditorium at Clifton School 3 on Washington Ave. and dozens were produced there.

The primary mission of TLC is to cultivate the arts and entertainment by connecting residents through theater. The second mandate is to nurture emerging talent and TLC does that by awarding scholarships to CHS seniors pursuing an education in the performing arts. To date, 21 scholarships have been awarded and the fund has been gifted by Mary and Frank Mazzarisi to commemorate the passing of their daughter JoAnna Martin.

In the spring of 2012, TLC moved to its current home at Clifton’s Theresa Aprea Theater, a spacious 500 seat venue which allows more elaborate productions and sets, ensemble casts and costumes, such as last year’s production of Fiddler on the Roof.

TLC also stages murder mystery dinner theaters at local restaurants in the winter. Planning is now underway for the Broadway classic, South Pacific. This epic musical romance by James A. Michener centers on a group of American sailors and Navy nurses stationed in the South Pacific during World War II. Dates are May 8, 9, 10 and 15, 16 and 17 and it is staged at the Theresa Aprea Theater at ‘The Learning Center, 199 Scoles Ave., Clifton.

Reflecting on the proudest moments of the past decade, Peterson emphasizes the camaraderie of theater life. “The support that we have received from our community, audiences, actors and all the talented people behind the scenes helped establish TLC. As I reflect back to when we started, I thought then about the movie, A Field of Dreams. The message of that movie was ‘build it and they will come.’ Our audiences have been coming back year after year and making our July 2005 dream a reality.”

For tickets or to volunteer, audition, help out or learn more about TLC, leave a message at 973-928-7668 or go to theaterleagueofclifton.com.
The Right-Size Flower Garden is a program with gardening expert Kerry Ann Mendez who explains how low-maintenance design tricks will help cut your garden chores in half. The program is at 1 pm on April 12 in the Carriage House Visitor Center at the New Jersey State Botanical Garden (NJBG) in Ringwood. Seating will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. A $5 donation is requested. Butterfly Gardening with Native Plants is the theme of the April 26, 10 am talk by Don Torino of the Bergen County Audubon Society. He will explain which native plants will invite birds and butterflies into your green space. This free event is also presented in the Carriage House. NJBG volunteer docents also offer guided group tours of both Skylands Manor and the Botanical Garden year-round. Call 973-962-9534 for fees and info. Regular Skylands Manor tours begin on April 12.

Two walking tours of Long Pond Ironworks in West Milford are offered on April 11, at noon and 2 pm. Docents will explain how the residents and industry of Long Pond contributed to the American Revolution, Civil War and the industrial development of New Jersey. Tours last about two hours and follow a circular route through the historic village. Conducted rain or shine, attendees should wear clothing and footwear appropriate for the woods. A donation of $3 for adults and $1 for children is suggested. Tours begin at the Visitor Center/Old Country Store on Rt. 511, West Milford. The historical value of Long Pond Ironworks is paralleled only by its natural beauty. The forests that were once cut to make charcoal for the furnaces have returned, and the river that was once diverted into the hydropower systems again cascades over ancient rock formations. For info, call 973-657-1688 or write to info@longpondironworks.org.

Workers’ Memorial Day is set aside by the nation’s unions to draw attention to the occupational health and safety of workers in the US. While the actual date is April 28, the American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark will observe the event on April 25, at 1 pm. Irwin Nack, past president of the American Federation of Teachers Local Union 1796, AFL-CIO, will present Why has Immigration Policy been so Controversial?: Yesterday & Today and lead a discussion. He will be followed by Bennett Muraskin who will talk about Jewish Progressivism and Labor. The day will conclude with a candlelight vigil. The Botto House, at 83 Norwood St., Haledon, was the meeting place for over 20,000 silk mill workers during the historic 1913 Paterson Silk Strike. For more details, go to labormuseum.net, call 973-595-7953 or email labormuseum@aol.com.

Year 360, an exhibition of sculptures and drawings by Barbara Wallace in celebration of Women’s History Month, remains on view in the PCCC Broadway Gallery at Memorial Dr., Paterson, through April 17. See this free exhibit Monday through Friday, 9 am to 9 pm and on Sat. until 5 pm. For info, call 973-684-5448, write to jhaw@pccc.edu or go to pccc.edu/art/gallery.

At left, the relief sculpture by Barbara Wallace entitled “Earth Animation,” is made of recycled paper, wire, and acrylic paint.
Rachel Wiley and Peter Thabit Jones will read their poems on April 11 as part of the Distinguished Poets Series at PCCC. The reading is at 1 pm at the historic Hamilton Club Building, 32 Church St., downtown Paterson. The program is free; an open reading follows. Poetry workshops, conducted by Wiley and Jones are 10 am to noon at the same location. Pre-registration required; workshop fee $20. Park in the PCCC lot on College Blvd., between Memorial Dr. and Church St. Call 973-684-6555 or visit pccc.edu/poetry.

Music at the Mission present versatile jazz guitarists Frank Vignola and Vinny Raniolo on April 25 at 8 pm. The duo will take the audience on a whirlwind tour of musical history... Bach, Mozart and Beethoven will be freely mixed with Ellington and Waller, blended with Gershwin and Carmichael, peppered with Bob Marley, Sting and Lennon/McCartney and spiked with Rodrigo and Lecuona. Music at the Mission is at 1452 Union Valley Rd., West Milford, at the West Milford Presbyterian Church. Tickets are available at musicatthemission.org.

Suzanne Vega brings her eclectic folk-inspired music to the Ringwood Public Library on April 19 at 2 pm. Another in the New Legacy concert series, this is a rare opportunity to see the internationally touring songwriter and singer up close in the intimate library venue. Tickets for all New Legacy concerts are available during regular hours at the library, 30 Cannici Dr., Ringwood, by calling 973-962-6256 or at ringwoodlibrary.org.

Mista B and the Boyz headline an April 11 R&B show at La Neves Restaurant, Haledon. Led by vocalist and Paterson resident Bernard Hill, Mista B mixes original music with classic covers by groups ranging from The Manhattans to Harold Melvin’s Blue Notes. Doors open at 6:45 pm for a buffet and DJ with the stage show at 9:30 pm. Advance tickets are $60, or $65 at the door. For tickets, call 973-766-4019.

Amy Helm and The Handsome Strangers plus Yarn perform April 10 at 8 pm at the OnStage Café at Shea Center for Performing Arts on the campus of William Paterson University in Wayne. Helm is the daughter of music legend Levon Helm and wields a powerful voice as she sings traditional gospel, blues standards or her own heartfelt compositions. The Grammy-nominated roots band, Yarn, will open the evening. Tickets are $55 for the onstage seat with dinner, dessert buffet and open beer-and-wine bar begins at 6:30 pm. Show only tickets are $30. Go to wppresents.org for more details and a complete list of this and other events at WPU.

The 2015 Clifton High School Fine Art Show, *Juxtaposed*, at the Clifton Arts Center, celebrates diversity in art, as represented by various styles, concepts, media, subject matter and design by select students. Teacher and coordinator Katherine Karcz said the theme similarly recognizes the diversity in culture, language and religion found in Clifton, the 11th largest municipality in the state, and the school (with over 3,300 pupils) has the largest student body in a single facility amongst high schools in New Jersey. The exhibit can be viewed April 8 to 25, with a reception for the artists open to the public on April 15, from 6 to 8 pm. Suggested donation is $3. For more info, go to cliftonnj.org or call 973-472-5499.

**The Harmony Singers of Wayne,** a professionally directed, mixed-voice, multi-generational community chorus, is now in its 50th season. Rehearsals have begun for May’s Anniversary Concert. The group meets from 7:30 to 9:30 pm on Tuesday evenings at the Wayne Civic Center on Hamburg Turnpike. Soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices are invited to attend a few rehearsals without obligation to see if voice, time commitment and Harmony singers are a fit. Details at harmonysingersnj.org.

The Passaic County Historical Society’s campaign to restore its collection of 27 original works by Paterson sculptor Gaetano Federici is getting closer to fruition. At a recent assembly held at the Academy of Health Science (HARP), Paterson art teacher Kathy Benevento made a donation to the project in the name of her HARP students. A Paterson teacher since 1999, she felt the project presented a means through which students could learn about their history and engage in their community. “After the presentation,” she explained, a student remarked: ‘Wow, I walk past that statue every day.’ Learn more about the Gaetano Federici Restoration and Exhibition project at lambertcastle.org/federici.html or call 973-247-0085.
Apply for the 2015 Youth Performance Festival presented by the Ringwood Friends of Music on May 17 at 3, 5 and 7 pm. This event is an opportunity for young musicians to share their music in a non-competitive environment. Soloists and ensembles, both instrumental and vocal, are invited to apply. Ages: 6 to 22 for instrumentalists, 10 to 22 for vocalists. Deadline is April 15. Email ringwoodfriendsofmusic@gmail.com for information and application form or call 973-224-4323.

Auditions for the musical Titanic are on April 7 and 8, 7:30 to 9:30 pm and April 12, 7 to 9 pm. Presented by St. Catherine’s Performing Arts Guild, the play (staged on July 24, 25, 26, 31 and Aug. 1 and 2) as well as the auditions, are at St. Catherine of Bologna’s Parish Center, 112 Erskine Rd., Ringwood. Roles are open and unpaid for ages 7 and up. Bring a resume, a headshot and prepare 16 to 32 bars of a traditional musical theatre song that best represents your voice and shows your range (bring sheet music in the proper key). Call director Diana Roth-Fili at 201-739-3450 with any questions.

Enjoy free admission to the 11th Annual Passaic County Film Festival on April 25 at 10 am at the Fabian 8 Theater in historic downtown Paterson. Films, 10 minutes in length or less, were produced by students and independent filmmakers who live, attend school, or work in Passaic County. The films were judged by members of the Passaic County Film Commission in February. One grand prize will be named as the best film of the festival with other awards given by category. The North Jersey Federal Credit Union (NJFCU) will present $1,000 to one film maker selected by NJFCU representatives. That film maker will also work with the NJFCU to create a 30-second commercial promoting the Credit Union. The Festival is funded, in part, by the PCCHC, the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders, Bascom Corporation, investorsBank, Wells Fargo, ROSS International, and the PCCC Foundation. Details, call 973-569-4720 or film@passaiccountynj.org.

The Global Economy & New Jersey Workers seminar at the American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark in Haledon offers a March 18 teachers’ workshop and a living history motorcoach tour of nearby labor and immigrant heritage sites on May 13. Open to the general public, educators can receive a Professional Development Certificate. Registration is $65 for members and $75 non-members, which includes lunches, materials and the bus tour. Each event also sold separately. Call 973-595-7953 or email labormuseum@aol.com.