

LOCAL BRIEFS

Lakeland Bank sponsors triathlon

OAK RIDGE — Lakeland Bank will sponsor the first Pass It Along Triathlon to be held Saturday, July 31, at Lake Mohawk Country Club. The event includes a mile swim, 10.8-mile bike ride and a 3.1-mile run. Proceeds from the event benefit the Pass It Along program. Registration forms are available at www.passitalong.org.

Pass It Along is at the forefront of educating and providing leadership skills to youth through the concept of selfless service in northern New Jersey. Pass It Along engages youth about pressing needs in their communities, providing a forum to create solutions and take action. Pass It Along allows youth to develop an ethic for service and volunteerism that becomes a fundamental part of their lives forever.

"We are so proud to be involved with this organization that helps youths identify their gifts and in turn 'pass it along' through partnerships with adult mentors," stated Thomas J. Shara, president and CEO of Lakeland Bank.

Anyone wishing to participate in the triathlon can find registration forms at www.passitalong.org.

Paper shred event slated Saturday

NEWTON — Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice, 99 Sparta Ave., will host a paper shred event Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon. The cost is \$6 for a paper/legal size storage box.

There will also be a donation container for Drive4Books. Donate books, CDs, DVDs, audio and video tapes and video games, and a portion of the proceeds will benefit the hospice. The donation container is located on the right side of the admissions building, and will be there year-round.

For more information, call 973-383-0115.

Vernon VFW plans lobster dinner

VERNON — VFW Post 8441, on Route 94, will host a lobster dinner Friday, July 16, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. The cost is \$12.95 per dinner, which includes lobster and corn. Dinners need to be ordered no later than Monday. Call 973-764-9380 to place an order.

Dingman Fire Dept. sets breakfast

DINGMAN TWP., Pa. — The Dingman Township Volunteer Fire Department, 680 Log Tavern Road, is holding a breakfast Sunday from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. The cost is \$6 for adults and \$3 for children ages 3-12. Kids under 3 eat free. For more information, call 570-686-3696.

Gallery names artists of month

BLAIRSTOWN — Painter Roberto Céspedes and jeweler Erin Meyers are artists of the month at Gallery 23. The work of both artists will be featured in the gallery's windows throughout July. The public is invited to a reception in their honor July 24 from noon to 4 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

Céspedes was born in Costa Rica. He began painting as a child. He attended a technical and art high school and worked at various companies and galleries in Costa Rica. He worked for Fabrica de Carretas Joaquin Chaverry, where he learned how to paint colorful designs such as orchids, animals and birds on ox-carts. In 1996, Céspedes moved to the United States where he continues painting in oils and acrylics. His paintings include seascapes, country landscapes, old barns and old mills, and wildlife.

Meyers studied fine arts at Bennington College in Vermont, and received her degree in art education at Vermont College. Her jewelry is made of blown glass beads and sterling silver. In addition to creating jewelry, Meyers paints and works in stained glass and ceramics. She lives in Branchville with her husband and two sons.

Gallery 23, an artist co-op, is located at 23 Main St., Blairstown. The hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday noon to 4 p.m. For more information, call 908-362-6865, or visit www.Gallery23.net.

Ultimate remembrance of friend

By PHILLIP MOLNAR
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HAMPTON — When Greg Karakos lost his long fight with cancer at 18 years old, his friends and classmates gathered to give the recent Kittatinny Regional High School graduate a solemn goodbye with a candlelight vigil in the parking lot of his alma mater.

Now a year after his death, his friends are honoring his memory in a different way — playing ultimate Frisbee.

Karakos was a player of the unique sport, often referred to as just "ultimate" to avoid the Frisbee trademark, and his friends are using a memorial match to raise money for

charity.

"I wanted to remember his life more than anything," said Karakos' friend, Nicole Taylor, who is helping organize the ultimate match for this weekend.

Taylor first met Karakos in middle school when they both worked the stage crew on a play. "I was like who's that kid over there in a neck brace?" Taylor recalled as her first impression.

Eventually, the pair became close friends, with Taylor impressed with Karakos' strength and energy. Taylor said she could never have acted the same way if she was "in his shoes." Karakos was active in mock trial, recreationally played basketball and

golf, and was an enthusiast of Ford Mustangs during his busy high school career.

Despite his vigorous schedule, Karakos had a painful, cancerous tumor at the back of his neck. The tumor limited his ability to play most sports and sometimes required him to wear a neck brace.

When Taylor started playing ultimate their freshman year, Karakos jumped on board.

Although there are several variations of the non-contact sport, ultimate typically involves teams passing a flying disc from player to player until scoring points by reaching the opposing end of a field. Players may not run while holding the disc.

The sport was a perfect fit for Karakos who started playing pick-up games at Hampton field.

U l t i m a t e allegedly began in the Garden State in 1968 at Columbia High School in Maplewood, according to USA Ultimate, the country's governing body for the sport. During the next four decades, the popularity



KARAKOS
Cancer victim
honored by friends

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COOL JOB ON A HOT DAY



ABOVE: Rick Hoer Jr., left, and Chris Johnstone from Lakeside Construction had the coolest job at the site of a bridge rehab project on Route 565 in Frankford Tuesday afternoon. The pair built scaffolding under the bridge so a crane can be hooked to old beams to lift them out.

RIGHT: Bobby Rauf from Lakeside Construction smiles despite the heat as he clears concrete from a bridge on 565 in Frankford. The contractors, who will be working on the project until the end of July, will battle the heat all week as they work to replace bridge beams and put on a new deck.

Photos by Amy Paterson/New Jersey Herald



Man creates baseball cards inspired by his talks with father

By KATIE BRENZEL
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Gary Cieradkowski, 39, and his father, Gary Sr., shared a passion for the obscure. Though living at opposite ends of the country — the son in Long Beach, Calif., and the father in Ogdensburg — they spoke on the phone nearly every day, swapping baseball trivia and aiming to stump each other with a new baseball player or a morsel of hidden history.

They'd wait eagerly for lunch breaks at work to call the other with a guaranteed gem, something strange that the other wouldn't know, often only to have the other rattle facts as if common knowledge, causing the other to hang up in defeat. It was a friendly rivalry that bridged the physical distance, bringing father and son closer than when they'd lived under the same roof in Ogdensburg for 15 years.

When Gary Cieradkowski Sr. died in September, Cieradkowski lost more than a father.

"He'd ceased being my father and became my friend," he said.

With no one to share his love for baseball history, Cieradkowski created a blog entitled the "The Infinite Baseball Card Set" (infinitecardset.blogspot.com). Once a week, he posts on the blog a baseball card that he designed and illustrated featuring a little-known player.

The site was a side-project to his full-time design company, Cieradkowski Design, which has tackled projects such as the environmental and print graphics for Oriole Park at Camden Yards, the design for the music department of Barnes & Noble and the repackaging of the Folgers Coffee can. Cieradkowski said he originally had no intention of selling the cards.

"All of a sudden I didn't have someone to talk about baseball with," he

said. "I missed my father, so I wanted to find an outlet for our conversations."

What began as a way to cope with the loss of his father, however, turned into conversations with several strangers with a similar interest in the unsung names of America's "favorite pastime." After receiving numerous requests to manufacture the cards, the first set of 20 was released in May. Many of the cards feature players who have never had their own card, though Hall of Famers aren't absent from the set and site, including famous faces such as George "Babe" Ruth and Ted Williams.

One of his major interests are the Negro League players prominent prior to desegregation of the Major Leagues, as many African-American players predated Jackie Robinson were unable to attain similar fame. Cieradkowski's grandfather told him stories of such players when he was young, and he's been fascinated by these players ever since. He honors many of these players with his cards, providing deserved recognition that wasn't granted at the time.

"I've always had a soft spot for players like that," he said.

In many cases, it is the desire to uncover history surrounding certain players that attracts Cieradkowski. For example, he created a card for Fidel Castro after discovering the popular rumor that Castro could've played for the Washington Senators was not only false, but Castro couldn't even make his college baseball team. While many cards are intended to promote players, in Castro's case, the card was meant to reveal a portion of history that had been severely misconstrued.

"Baseball has a history behind it that other sports just don't have," he said. "There's more characters than any other sport."

Before constructing a card, the artist studies several headshots and body shots of the player, rather than copying directly from a single photograph. Extensive research about each player is done for the description appearing on the back of every card, often taking significantly longer than the actual illustration, he said. The cards aren't numbered, giving owners the ability to organize and shuffle them to their liking, without being restricted by a designated order.

Though the idea for the cards derived from conversations with his father, the inspiration for the project dates back to his childhood. As a child he was interested in turn-of-the-century baseball cards, which were hand-drawn, contrasting drastically with the cards popular today, that often contain photographs and holographics. Because he couldn't afford official baseball cards when he was younger, Cieradkowski said that "being an artist," he drew his own.

His mother, Patricia, of Ogdensburg, said her husband and son began their quest to "stump each other" with arcane baseball trivia once her son left for college in 1988. Her son didn't visit home often because he traveled constantly—eventually settling in Long Beach four years ago—but the two did attend a few Skyhawks games together. Their relationship, however, developed largely over the phone.

"They were on the phone constantly," she said. "They had an unbelievable relationship."

Though she treasures a signed Cal Ripken ball given to her by her son, Patricia Cieradkowski said she isn't much of a baseball fan. "That was something the two of them shared," she said.

The second set of the series will like-

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Car runs into Montague store

By PHILLIP MOLNAR
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MONTAGUE — When Patricia Singer, 45, opened her Amish furniture store nearly one year ago, she hoped it would be packed with customers, especially during the July 4 weekend. But, she also hoped that those same customers would leave their cars outside.

At 3 a.m. on Saturday, July 3, a Montague driver failed to

stop at the corner of Clove Road and Route 206, slamming his car through the Cracker Hill Farms store, according to Singer.

The car took a large chunk of her inventory, mostly pine, cedar, and oak furniture. Further, the car pushed into the next room, damaging more furniture and knocking out a chunk of the store's blue wall.

"Luckily, the store was closed," said Singer, noting

that no one was hurt. Singer shares the 1918 farm house with two attorneys, a psychologist, and a tenant on the third floor.

One particularly difficult pill to swallow is that Singer was "going up" for the July 4 weekend in the days leading up to the crash hoping to sell American flags and other antique Americana items. "We had to turn so many people away," she said of the aftermath of the crash.



Submitted Photo

The Cracker Hill Farms store in Montague was run into by a car Saturday.

Wawa sues county Planning Board

By SETH AUGENSTEIN
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ANDOVER TOWNSHIP — The Wawa corporation of convenience stores is suing the Sussex County Planning Board, claiming its delay in approving a State Route 206 location is a needless wait for unspecified approvals from the state's Department of Environmental Protection.

The gas station-plus-store at the corner of Route 206 and County Route 603 has been a public proposal for several years. Last summer, Andover Township's local land use authorities issued the final site plan approval for the application. The county had already done so in 2007.

"For almost three years, Wawa has been trying to satisfy the County Planning Board Engineering and Planning staff that the Wawa project has met and satisfied all the conditions of said approval, and that the project was now unconditionally approved by the Sussex County Planning Board," the lawsuit alleges.

However, the county's earlier approval was subject to conditions — namely, that of necessary, but unspecified, DEP "permits."

Whether "permits" also include all "approvals" could be an issue for the courts. In a 2007 memo, the county planning and engineering department maintained that it was "deferring" to the DEP on all water and environmental issues, including stormwater management.

Environmental concerns were raised at the county level. Testimony from public hearings held that the site is the location of karst aquifers and limestone formations — although Wawa's experts denied such geologic formations exist underneath the site. (The United States Geological Survey website claims karst formations "are an important ground-water resource and are highly vulnerable to contamination.")

But after the final local approvals in 2009, Wawa followed up with the county late last year — with county officials even reportedly corresponding with the DEP for all further waivers and variances for the project, but to no avail, the lawsuit says.

"The (board) has refused and continues to refuse to either confirm that the Wawa application for development of the property has satisfied all the conditions of approval, or that it has not," the lawsuit alleges, saying two DEP permits were already issued in December 2007.

County officials either declined comment, or were unavailable Tuesday. Wawa's lawyer was also unavailable.

Wawa Inc., headquartered in Wawa, Pa., operates a chain of about 570 convenience stores in five states: New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.