

Letters to the Editor

Pool Members Might Have Suffered Pain From Closing of MS Facility

I was shocked and horrified to read that the mayor and council of Mountainside had the audacity to actually honor volunteers, who provide hundreds of hours of community service, with a day of appreciation at the community pool. I can only imagine the pain and suffering inflicted on pool members who will not be able to use the pool for one day this summer.

With an advanced phd degree in absurdology, I can attest to the initial signs that these pool members have been severely traumatized, which manifests itself with the need to write frivolous letters and sign petitions.

Forget about the invasion of Georgia, forget about Darfur, forget about Iraq. We, as a nation of free individuals, cannot

allow this obvious violation of our constitutional right to life, liberty and pool privileges to ever happen again. These pool members will probably require years of counseling and someone has to pay.

My newly formed organization, SWIM (Silly Whining In Mountainside), of which I am the founder, president and sole benefactor, has solicited the services of one of New Jersey's esteemed and not yet indicted law firms, Letz Grabbit and Hyde, to sue Mountainside for the severe pain and suffering that these pool members have had to endure.

Greg Cummings
Fanwood

Volunteer Appreciation Should Not Come at Expense of Pool Members

Editors Note: The following letter was sent to the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Mountainside, as well as Frank Massella, Mountainside Pool Director.

I understand that the pool is [was] scheduled to be closed on August 16 as it is designated as "Volunteer Appreciation Day." Since I, like many others, work full time and only have the opportunity of using the pool on weekends, this is not something I appreciate.

Don't get me wrong, I think it is a lovely gesture on behalf of the town to honor its volunteers, but not at the ex-

pense of the fee-paying members. As a matter of fact, I think the volunteers should have both August 16 and 17 for those who cannot come one day or the other, or if the weather doesn't cooperate. That weekend and the following one have usually been the least attended of the pool season and could handle the extra bodies, especially if the "appreciation" is spread over two days.

Please reconsider and don't bar the membership on a day we look forward to all week. Thank you.

Joan Nemick
Mountainside

Stop Bullying and Get America Strong

George Bush and John McCain talk big on defense, and their tough policies not only have made us hated throughout the world, but, just as importantly, have made us perceived as weak and no longer a force to be reckoned with. George Bush sits in China looking at gold medals as Russia thumbs its nose at a weak and

overextended United States fighting force.

When George Bush came to power, we were strong and we were respected. What has our preemptive policy done for us? We are seen as weak bullies. Let's get back to a strong America.

Dick Samuel
Scotch Plains

Kean Bill Becomes Law; Protects Local Water Resources

TRENTON — Legislation sponsored by Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean (R-21) that would assist local governments in rehabilitating and constructing wastewater treatment facilities was recently signed into law.

Senate bill 1825 authorizes the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust to provide low interest loans to local governments, public authorities or public water utilities for a portion of certain environmental infrastructure projects. The Union County Improvement Authority is one entity that is eligible for a loan through the new law.

"Well-designed and maintained wastewater facilities are vital to maintaining public health and a clean environment," stated Kean. "This legislation will help ensure New Jersey has the cleanest waterways and drinking water supplies possible."

Since 1985, the New Jersey Environmental Trust has provided more than \$1.8 billion to local government units to finance wastewater systems, sewer overflow abatement, non-point source pollution control and safe drinking water supplies. It is esti-

mated the program has reduced financing costs for municipalities and project sponsors by approximately 25 to 30 percent

"By assisting local communities with projects that have widespread importance and impact, the state is helping our neighborhoods be cleaner, safer and more affordable," Kean concluded. "High water quality is paramount for healthy living, promoting a strong tourism industry and protecting New Jersey's ecosystem."

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UNLOCKED...Caroline Stockwell of Westfield gets her locks cut for charity. Her grandmother, above, who owns a salon in Virginia, lops off 11 inches of hair for Locks of Love. The non-profit organization provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children under age 18 suffering from long-term medical hair loss.

Commerce Donates to Area Non-Profit Organizations

SCOTCH PLAINS — Commerce Bank, through the TD Charitable Foundation, recently donated \$66,250 to local organizations in Central New Jersey as part of the bank's community involvement. The funds from the TD Charitable Foundation will support the following organizations:

Center for Hope Hospice and Palliative Care in Scotch Plains provides physical, emotional and spiritual support to all individuals facing the challenges of a life-limiting illness, without regard to their ability to pay. The funds from the TD Charitable Foundation will support the Peggy Coloney's House at Hope Village, a residential hospice facility;

Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCA is dedicated to improving the quality of life of the individuals, families and communities we serve, through programs and services that build wholeness of spirit, mind and body. The funds from the TD Charitable Foundation will support We Love Our YMCA, a community outreach program;

Overlook Hospital Foundation raises funds for state-of-the-art equipment, facilities and programs to serve the needs of the greater Summit-area communities. The funds from the TD Charitable Foundation will support a stroke screening and education program;

East Brunswick Education Foundation, Inc. is an independent, non-profit organization by parents, citizens and members of the local business community to support programs designed to enhance and enrich the curriculum in the school district. The funds from the TD Charitable Foundation will support educational programs throughout the district;

Kean University Foundation, Inc. will create and maintain a solid donor base of alumni, faculty, staff, friends, corpo-

rations and foundations that are committed to the success of Kean and will help deserving students through scholarships and endowments and provide support for many innovative programs and initiatives. The funds from the TD Charitable Foundation will support a high quality, educational theatre program;

Morristown Neighborhood House Association, Inc. is a non-profit agency that provides a broad range of community, childcare and other services for children and their families from every socio-economic, ethnic and religious background in the Morristown area. The funds from the TD Charitable Foundation will support a youth summer camp that provides educationally stimulating and fun activities;

East Hanover Education Foundation raises money for the school district through event and corporate fundraising and acquires certain products that the school district needs. The funds from the TD Charitable Foundation will support the construction of a new playground, new gym floor at two local schools and the installation of Smart Boards, an interactive whiteboard, throughout the entire district;

Lupus Foundation of New Jersey Chapter, Inc. is leading the efforts to find a cure for lupus and help people who are affected by the disease. The funds from the TD Charitable Foundation will support the annual Walk for Lupus event.

And Somerset Hills Learning Institute is a world leader in research and autism treatment that employs a curriculum proven to teach children the functional skills they need to succeed at home, at play, at school and in the workforce. The funds from the TD Charitable Foundation will support general operating costs.

Soccer Is Viewed As a Way Out of Poverty By Some Brazilians

I would like to thank the communities of Scotch Plains, Fanwood and Westfield for making my high school senior project, the "American Cleats For Brazilian Feet" Drive, a complete success. The goal was to collect 250 pairs of used soccer cleats for poor Brazilian children. A total of 375 pairs of cleats and 330 pieces of sports apparel were distributed in Brazil July 9-21 by the B-FUT Institute of Brazilian Futbol and the Westfield Women's U19 Club Soccer Team, the Central Jersey Stars with Coach Keith Hertell.

The inspiration for this project came from a trip to Brazil with my varsity soccer team. Our team brought along used soccer jerseys to give to the disadvantaged children after a game. Some of these children owned only one or two outfits of clothing. I was so overwhelmed by their gratitude when they received the used team shirts that I actually gave them the sweatshirt off my back. I realized they needed "the equipment" (cleats) far more than the shirts.

Soccer is viewed as a way out of poverty by some Brazilians. As a varsity soccer player, I know a team sport develops more than a strong body. It develops superior inter-personal skills and a strong work ethic, which are vital to success in business and in life. The drive was successfully advertised in an e-mail letter campaign to the soccer associations, coaches and players of Scotch Plains-Fanwood and Westfield, through insertions in school newsletters in the entire Scotch Plains-Fanwood (SP-F) school system, in news releases to all local newspapers and on the local television station, Channel 34.

The SP-F schools, the townships of Scotch Plains and of Fanwood and the Union County Police all provided outdoor billboard signs to remind the community where and when to contribute. Five local sporting goods stores were extremely generous. Given the present economic climate, many of the sports-oriented businesses I solicited refused to make a contribution.

Included in the aforementioned totals were new cleats donated by The Sports Authority in Springfield (nine pairs), The Westfield Leader Store (seven pairs and three soccer balls), and Modell's in Watchung (three). Jako USA, the German sportswear manufacturer in the Somerville area, donated 17 team jerseys (enough for a whole team), 10 warm-up jackets, six pairs of warm up pants, seven

pairs of shorts and one pair of socks.

The largest donation of all came from The Soccer Post in Scotch Plains with 76 soccer jerseys, 43 pairs of shorts (enough for two complete teams) and 31 pairs of socks. Amazing! I collected \$1,760 toward the shipping, including \$500 from the Scotch Plains Police Department for soccer balls, and a \$500 contribution for socks and shipping from the Wetherell Family of San Diego, Calif.

Shipping costs were drastically reduced because the Central Jersey Stars Soccer Team volunteered to carry 15 newly purchased suitcases laden with donations through the airports and customs. The suitcases were left in Brazil as an "extra gift" to the Brazilian families. Every part of our donation counted! B-FUT Institute of Brazilian Futbol agreed to distribute the cleats to the impoverished children. B-FUT's mission is to promote and educate through the worldwide language of the game of futbol (soccer). Eduardo Paulo of Westfield, who is the trainer for the CJ Stars, kindly translated my letters and helped coordinate the distribution in Brazil.

The CJ Stars and B-FUT gave out most of the donations after a soccer clinic they ran for the children and after soccer games. It was extremely important to me to be able to put a "face" on our donation and make a strong American-Brazilian connection. By all accounts, the distribution was a completely touching experience for both the Americans and the Brazilians. The Brazilian children were grateful and joyful at the same time. B-FUT President, Thadeu Goncalves, wrote in a letter that for these impoverished children, this drive "fulfilled a dream to have a pair of cleats to play the game they love so much."

The balance of our donation went to the towns where I played in Brazil and to a new B-FUT project that serves the most destitute children in the region. There was one last donation made. Twenty-seven pairs of baseball cleats were collected at this drive. They were contributed to Brett Johnson of Westfield, who is running a project to donate baseball equipment to the Jackie Robinson Baseball League in Jersey City.

This was truly a community effort. We made a difference! Thank you all for your help.

Alyssa Straniero
Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School
Class of 2008

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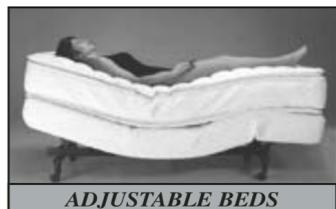
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