

Sunday Herald

Established 1829

Newton, N.J. 07860 • (973) 383-1500

www.njherald.com

Published Sunday by the New Jersey Herald, Inc.
continuing
The Sussex Register, established 1813
Sussex County Independent, established 1870

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Firestorm over a fundraiser

Fundraising activities to support healthy activities for children are generally a good thing. But sometimes good intentions go awry.

Such may be the case of a pole dancing event to aid development of a skatepark in Vernon.

Pole dancing as an activity is moving toward wider acceptance as a fitness exercise, even attempting to be recognized as a sport calling on coordination, physical strength, dance and creativity. The "performance art" has been featured recently on mainstream news and entertainment programs reporting on its growing popularity and participation by women of all shapes and status including wives and mothers, even men. The U.S. Pole Dance Federation has been hosting a national competition for the past three years.

All of that may be true, but for the time being it is still pole dancing, with a stigma of an activity primarily associated with strip clubs, intended to elicit gawks and dollars from the audience.

Regardless of one's opinions on the matter, the event, including The Herald's Friday front-page story and graphic, has created a bit of a firestorm, as objectors refer to the event as immoral and lacking integrity, and the newspaper's presentation as something more properly relegated to junky tabloids.

Parents have expressed their support of raising funds to give kids a safe place to go, but aren't sure pole dancing as the means sends the right message.

The fundraiser, to be staged at a Mountain Creek night club Saturday, is being organized by the Vernon Skateboard Memorial Organization, which to date has raised about \$24,000 through other means. More specifically, and perhaps counter to those who believe the event is degrading to females, the fundraiser is the idea of two women — one of them a microbiologist and mother of two who is writing a book on pregnancy.

Though the means may be questionable, even objectionable to some, the goal is a good one. And perhaps, this event will help pole dancing be more accepted and demonstrate it's not just for strippers anymore.

ON THE WEB: READER POLL

Question

Should Gov. Chris Christie and Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno take vacations at the same time? Both were away when the blizzard struck New Jersey last week.

No. They should coordinate their vacations so one or the other is at the helm.	75.6%	627
It's fine if it can't be avoided.	10.7%	89
They should take their vacations whenever they want. It's OK if it turns out to be at the same time.	13.6%	113
Total votes		829

Comments

No, it was completely and utterly irresponsible. I don't care that the lieutenant governor was on vacation with her ill father. She knew this months in advance along with Christie. One of those two morons should have stayed behind.

There should always be one at the helm. Who was really in charge then? Never heard of such ridiculous nonsense. Times have surely changed. Just perhaps New Jersey does not need a governor or lieutenant governor doing stuff like that. All places are suppose to have a boss. I guess they make the rules as they go along. Do as I say, not as I do.

I am a Christie supporter, but his judgment in this matter leaves much to be desired. As a former administrator in a public agency, my boss and I always coordinated our personal lives to ensure that one of us was always around. We should expect as much from our governor.

What an embarrassment Christie is. He has no leadership skills, his bullying and then his weak attempt to explain himself Monday on "conservative media outlets" (AM talk and Fox news) ring shallow. Shared sacrifice, yeah right. By the way, where are the tea baggers questioning the need for a lieutenant governor who is a no show?

It's an absolute joke for the state that this bully is our leader. The same people who voted him into office are crying because the storm cleanup stunk. Well, wake up and smell the coffee. If he keeps cutting things don't expect those services to be the same. It can't happen.

Not just snow removal, but cuts in police and fire departments. Yet it will be these Christie voters that will cry like Boehner when they need one of these services and it isn't there. I say tough! Reap what you sow. You wanted this jackass, well, you got a jackass.

Let's all get real. Sometimes crap just happens and it is no one's fault! Not like Obama, who is always on some (taxpayer financed) vacation or another, and Biden, who is not there even when he is sitting in the White House. We live in a day and age where people can pick up a phone or Skype if face to face is the big deal. It is not 1911, it is 2011, and we can find ways to make things work. So people, grow up and get over yourself. What more could the man have done if he too were snowed in, in Trenton and not Florida. The man is working hard to fix the most corrupt state in the nation and to try and save us from bankruptcy.

I have been working in the private sector for 40-plus years and not even once did a manager and the assistant manager take vacations at the very same time. Love Christie or hate Christie, it does not matter — their combined action was irresponsible and totally wrong. The reason both cannot take vacation at the same time is so that someone can take charge in the event something goes wrong or a major decision has to be made. That is exactly what happened and there was no one there to take charge.

Hey, Cory Booker was out shoveling snow and pushing stuck vehicles. And he did it all without help from Trenton. Just like all the other towns in New Jersey.

Christie should practice what he preaches. Not have a do-as-I-say, not-as-I-do attitude.

Bears and human nature

COLUMN: GREGORY J. RUMMO

Living in bear country — which in New Jersey can mean almost anywhere in the northern part of the state — has given me a great appreciation for these beautiful animals. Last February one woke up hungry from a long winter nap and sauntered into my backyard, drawn there by the aroma of peanuts from one of several birdfeeders.

The sight of a black bear standing on its hind legs, gently working its tongue into the openings of the feeder was humorous and after watching her disappear down our street I promptly removed it to discourage her from returning. But she and three others were spotted repeatedly, roaming the neighborhood at will through the spring, summer and fall.

It is understandable why bear sightings have dropped — they have become all too common. Conventional wisdom now dictates that it is a waste of time to bother local law enforcement officials with what has become routine.

So nature finally took its course. Like the American Indians who walked these trails through the forests centuries ago, 21st-century apex predators at the top of the food chain were given the go-ahead by the courts after attempts by two animal rights groups failed and a 6-day hunt resulted in the bagging of 589 bears, a reduction in the population of about 17 percent.

Hunting is nature's way of handling over-population issues. It goes much



GREGORY J. RUMMO

deeper than any need to put meat on the table despite the fact that local butchers did see an increase in their business, cutting up bear carcasses for steaks, roasts, stew and burgers.

It's a guy thing and perhaps that explains why the majority of bear hunt protesters are women.

It became natural; indeed, a part of man's nature, when the first couple — two vegans living in a beautiful garden — rebelled against their creator: A diet of fruits, vegetables and nuts was supplanted by red meat.

Man began to hunt literally by Divine Right, having been given the title "master" and told to "Rule the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that crawl on the earth."

Writing in "Wild at Heart," John Eldredge explains, "Adventure with all its requisite danger and wildness, is a deeply spiritual longing, written into the soul of man..." It is why little boys play shoot 'em up games like "war" and "cowboys and Indians."

Eldredge continues, "(S)ociety now berates men for not being men. Boys will be boys they sigh as though if a man were to truly grow up he would forsake wilderness and wanderlust and settle down. 'Where are all the real men?' Is regular fare for talk shows and new books. You asked them to be women I want to say."

A hunter once explained to me that hunting is a complex phenomenon involving many different aspects but that watching an animal die "is never pretty." I understand what he meant. Although



A bear feasting on Rummo's birdseed.

he couldn't quite put his finger on what was so captivating about his sport and that killing a warm-blooded animal was in some ways repulsive, he felt inexplicably drawn to it nonetheless as if it were an irresistible call of the wild.

Like our Indian progenitors and those that predated them; to The First Man who clothed himself in bloody animal skins, hunting is nature calling a man to do that for which he was programmed by his maker and woe to those who would stand in his way.

(Gregory J. Rummo is a businessman and the author of "The View from the Grass Roots." E-mail Rummo at GJRummo@optonline.net)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Proud of father's efforts as county freeholder

Editor:

My father, Jeff Parrott, recently left the Sussex County freeholder board, after serving since his election in 2007. As his daughter, I have had the opportunity to meet many people who share my dad's love for Sussex County.

During his time as a freeholder, my dad worked on the budget committee and served as director this past year. Many people have asked me what a freeholder is. I looked it up and found out that it's an old English word for a kind of taxpayer. That is a good description too, because the freeholder board is made up of regular taxpayers who spend some of their time overseeing the management of their county.

Some of the areas that were especially close to my dad's heart were his involvement with the Child Advocacy Center and Social Services. He also served as the board's liaison with the County Clerk's Office, Engineering and Planning, and the Health Department. He worked with freeholders from other counties and made trips to Trenton when necessary to fight for Sussex County.

My dad has been involved in public service all my life. He was the first graduate of High Point High School to serve on their board of education. When he was president, High Point was designated as a "Blue Ribbon School." He was mayor of Wantage when I first recall people calling him a "fiscal conservative." Although I did not understand it at the time, it was something he always taught my brothers and me. You cannot spend what you do not have and you must evaluate whether or not it is a "want" or a "need."

The program he is most proud of is "Champions For Charity." The freeholder board became aware that many families in Sussex County were going hungry because of inadequate supplies at the county food pantry. Over a family dinner, my dad spoke to my mom, brothers and me about an idea he had where high school students could have a friendly food drive competition between themselves. Within two weeks, my dad was speaking in front of the Pope John High School students at an assembly promoting "Champions For Charity" and the food drive. After countless phone calls and meetings, all other Sussex County high schools committed to participate. Last year over 95,000 pounds of food for the Sussex County Food Pantry was collected at no cost to taxpayers. My parents are committed to keeping this program going in an effort to keep pace with the lost jobs and tough circumstances many in the county face since the economic problems began a couple years ago.

As he leaves the freeholder board, I want to say how proud I am of him and I believe he has made a difference in the lives of so many people throughout Sussex County. He is an inspiring role model and I hope one day I can give back to my community the way my dad has taught me.

Carley Parrott
Wantage

Drifting away from compassionate care

Editor:

A few weeks ago, your Letters to the Editor column narrated a situation where a young man recently discharged from the county jail stopped by the welfare center — from which organization, I

do not recall — and asked for warm clothing as he was in shorts that winter day, and wearing no socks. The woman who wrote the article said while she also waited for service, the young man asked the office attendant for clothing and help. But since her supervisor was not in, she told the young man to return on Monday. If my memory serves me correctly, this was a Friday and neither the welfare office nor the woman who wrote the article, as well as others in the waiting room, also did not offer any help.

Is this a true story of how our local citizens at the welfare office treat destitute people "if the supervisor is not in"? Was everyone too busy or too tied up with their own situations to offer the young lad any help?

I called the sheriff's office later that day and they advised me that when they release an individual it is usually into someone's care with the clothes and care for the weather. Apparently, that person who is charged with the care of that person did not fulfill his obligation.

Is this scenario typical, true, exaggerated, or one that fell through the cracks? And, could it be we and perhaps other counties have drifted from compassionate care.

Bill Steckowich
Stillwater

Congress needs to tackle unemployment

Editor:

Speaker John Boehner took over the House of Representatives Wednesday. He promised that he will see to it that from now on Congress will reflect the concerns of the people.

Really? Then why is his first act an attempt to repeal of health care reform?

A December Bloomberg News poll shows that fewer than one in 10 Americans think that repealing health care reform should be Congress' first priority. On the other hand more than half of us say that tackling unemployment is its most important task. Why is Boehner ignoring the fact that repealing health care reform is not a pressing concern to a vast majority of us?

So much for addressing our real priorities. Most of us agree that Congress needs to tackle unemployment. Let's get on with it — and not with another tax cut for the rich. We tried that for 10 years and it didn't work.

Who are the people whose concerns Boehner will address? Is it us, or is it a powerful minority of special interests that Boehner hopes will keep him in power?

Michael G. Busche
Sparta

Some statements that don't make any sense

Editor:

According to John McDonough's alarmist warning concerning a supposed one world master plan, published Jan. 2, the principal reason that the Third Reich never occupied Norway was that its citizens were armed. This argument is factually wrong. Rather than advancing a revisionist denial of the April 8, 1940, invasion of Norway and the successful occupation of that country, more likely, McDonough actually had in mind Sweden or Switzerland.

Admittedly, the Swedes, like the Swiss, were a moderately well-armed populace, that fact had nothing to do with there being no invasion of neutral Sweden. There would have been simply no economic, military or strategic advantages

to Germany from an invasion of Sweden. A similar conclusion would apply to Switzerland.

While the Norway/Sweden/Switzerland armed citizenry example was incidental to his broader arguments, it does demonstrate indifference to the accuracy and coherence of his supposed facts. This is a common trait of conspiracy theorists, as well as of polemicists. McDonough provides ample evidence that he is both.

Although McDonough regards it to be "debatable" whether Obama was born in the United States, he asserts flatly that "Obama without question is a Marxist, as he is following the Karl Marx manifesto plan." Like many readers, I am at a loss concerning what this is intended to mean. Neither the "Communist Manifesto," nor any other of Marx's own works can be regarded as a "plan" in any concrete sense. Certainly, McDonough offers nothing demonstrating specifics as to how Obama is "following the Karl Marx manifesto plan" or any other Marxist dogma apart from the implication that Obama, as a tool of one-world financial robber barons, is out to get our guns, raise our taxes, devalue our currency through operation of the Federal Reserve, and generally enslave all of humanity. None of these objectives is inherently Marxian.

Apparently, McDonough is merely asserting his First Amendment rights without regard to whether it makes any sense to anyone else. That may be very satisfying to him, but is not likely very effective in convincing others

Robert H. Sapp
Sparta

Life in real world is no laughing matter

Editor:

While I struggle to read Tina Dupuy's columns in your paper, without a barf bag handy (Is that satire or comedy? Not really sure!), her column on Jan. 3 educating the ignorant masses on the difference between satire, comedy and news was particularly nauseating.

If I remember correctly, my high school English teachers did a fine job of defining satire by leading us to literary works like Sinclair Lewis's "Arrowsmith" or George Orwell's "Animal Farm," but of course, that was way back in the '60s, before lame TV shows defined the meaning of everything.

I think my teachers would tell Miss Dupuy that she has satire mixed up with lampooning ... a written attack, ridiculing a person, group or institution, which is what this generation of so called satirists/comedians have down pat!

And while I think slapstick is alive and well — just look at the stooges in Washington — I'm in no way mixed up as to the different forms of comedy. I, along with the rest of the uneducated masses, am forced to live in the real world and we all know, today that is no laughing matter!

Brenda Rauch
Wantage

Submitting letters

Letters to the Editor may be mailed to New Jersey Herald, P.O. Box 10, Newton, N.J. 07860; faxed to (973) 383-8477, or e-mailed to letters@njherald.com. Letters must include name, address and daytime telephone number.

Other voices

Excerpts from recent editorials, compiled by The Associated Press:

(Jan. 4) The New York Times on prosecuting insider trading:

As of today, seven people have been charged in an insider-trading investigation focused on investors and consultants connected to Primary Global Research, an expert-network firm. The

cases, brought by Preet Bharara, the United States attorney in Manhattan, paint a disturbing picture of how some hedge funds have used this company to illegally procure information and distort the workings of a healthy financial market ...

A decade ago, the Securities and Exchange Commission barred publicly traded companies from dis-

closing information selectively to favored investors. That regulation led to the growth of expert-network firms, with some providing access not only to outside experts but to employees of publicly traded companies with inside information.

Insider trading has always been hard to prove, and this middleman approach makes it even harder — providing

plausible deniability to clients. A winning prosecution depends on establishing not only who knew what and when but also who knew that a tip came from a source breaching a duty of confidentiality. ...

In the past, the government relied mainly on whistle blowers to warn them of insider-trading abuses, and

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