

BRIEFS

AARP group will meet Wednesday

NEWTON — The Sussex County AARP Chapter No. 44 will hold its regular monthly meeting Wednesday at Liberty Towers at 1 p.m. New members are welcome. Officers will be installed. Bingo will follow the meeting. Bring a friend.

Call 973-300-1779 for more information.

Ladies Auxiliary hosts tricky tray

SUSSEX — The Sussex Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary will hold a tricky tray Friday. There will be a variety of trays, including specials and super specials, day trips, sports tickets and gift cards. Doors open 6:30 p.m. and calling starts at 8 p.m. For information, contact Sherri at 973-343-1189.

Free legal advice available in July

NEWTON — Free 45-minute consultations with an attorney regarding a variety of legal issues are available at Project Self-Sufficiency for Sussex County residents who meet income eligibility guidelines.

The consultations are offered between 6 and 9 p.m. at the agency's main office in Newton, as well as at satellite locations in Sussex-Wantage and Hopatcong during the school year. Legal education is provided by attorneys affiliated with the Sussex County Bar Association. Upcoming appointments are available at Project Self-Sufficiency in Newton on Thursdays, July 15, 22 and 29. Project Self-Sufficiency's main office is located at 127 Mill St.

In addition to one-on-one consultations, Project Self-Sufficiency provides a variety of legal services to participants, including pro se divorce workshops, legal clinics for assistance with the preparation of family law motions, and monthly legal forums. Funding for the agency's legal services programs are provided in part by the IOLTA Fund of the Bar of New Jersey.

To schedule an appointment for a free legal consultation, call 973-940-3500.

Seniors sought for variety show

FRANKFORD — The Sussex County Department of Human Services, Division of Senior Services, is making a final call for auditions for its "USO Variety Show at the Canteen," which will take place at Senior Day at the New Jersey State Fair. Entertainers of the type that would typically perform for the troops are encouraged to audition for a spot in this show. This year's event will be held Aug. 12, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For additional information or to request an audition, contact Jan, volunteer entertainment coordinator, at 973-579-1443.

Gardener training signup available

NEWTON — Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Sussex County is accepting applications for the 2010-2011 Master Gardener training program, which begins Sept. 22 and runs through May.

The program is a horticultural education and service program administered through Cooperative Extension and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. Classes are held on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon at the Cooperative Extension office, located on Morris Turnpike. Volunteers are trained in all aspects of home horticulture, including landscape plant selection, soils, fertilizers, insect and pest management, houseplants, vegetables and turf. Each trainee is assessed a registration fee to cover class expenses and agrees to perform 100 hours of service on a Rutgers Master Gardener project.

For more information about the program or to request an application packet, contact Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Sussex County at 973-948-3040 or e-mail oleksak@aesop.rutgers.edu.

Ready, aim, fire



Ellen Bedrosian, of Tenafly, shoots a .22 caliber semi-automatic handgun during Saturday's Women's Day at the Range at Cherry Ridge Range in Highland Lakes.

Photos by Christina Tatu / New Jersey Herald

Firing range teaches women the basics

BY CHRISTINA TATU
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VERNON — I can't stand loud noises, I've never even touched a gun, and I'm a vegetarian, so I would certainly never have to go hunting.

What was I doing at a firing range?

When my editor enthusiastically suggested I go to Women's Day at the Range Saturday at the Cherry Ridge Range in Highland Lakes, I was skeptical — even apprehensive.

"It is really fun," she said. It's not that I'm against guns, I just never pictured myself as the type of girl to go shooting.

While I enjoy a nice hike, I wouldn't classify myself as the "outdoorsy" type, and I can't stress enough how much I hate loud noises.

The free annual event, sponsored by the Association of New Jersey Rifle and Pistol Clubs (ANJRPC), welcomes women (sorry, no men allowed) to learn the basics of shooting handguns, rifles and pistols from National Rifle Association-certified instructors.

I'm sure I'm not alone in my preconceived notion that a woman who enjoys shooting must be sporty, and she's probably on the tough side, because let's face it, bullets and the damage they can do are pretty intimidating, even when they are aimed at a bull's-eye.

The night before my venture into the world of firearms, I asked my boyfriend, who works as an engineer in Picatinny Arsenal's ballistics department, to describe his experience shooting a gun.

"It's about 10 times louder than fireworks," he said. "What about the kick back?" I asked.

"If you shoot a rifle, it's like this," he said as he punched me in the shoulder.

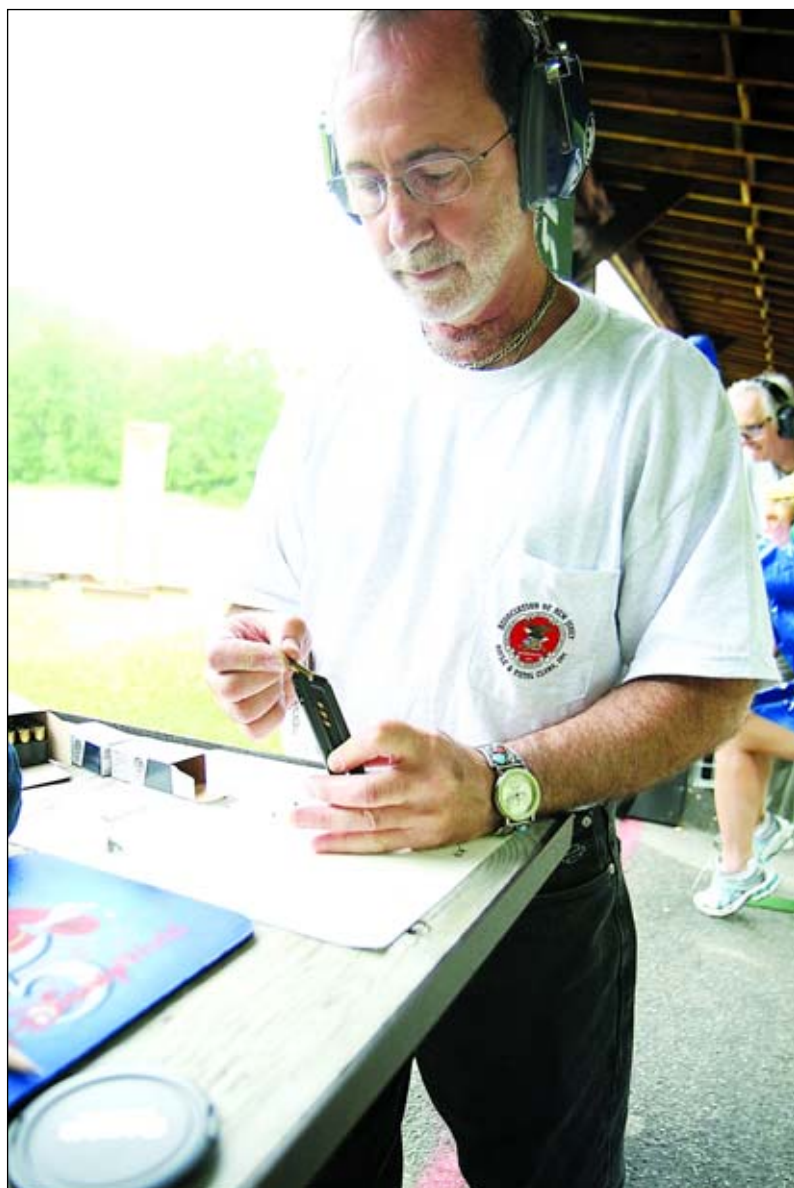
I made a mental note to stick with a handgun and see if it were possible to ask for ear plugs and ear muffs.

The day began with a 30-minute session on gun safety, led by Steve Potts, regional vice president of the National Rifle Association of America.

"It's buckets of fun," he reassured me, but added there's no clear way to describe what shooting is like.

"You have to experience it for yourself," he said.

"Great, I can't back out now," I thought. "I'm doing this for my job. I can't write a decent article about Women's Day at the Range unless I, too, fire a gun."



Instructor Joe Gennarelli shows how to load a .22 caliber semi-automatic handgun.

Franklin rifle, revolver group to host women's event

The Franklin Rifle and Revolver Association in Sussex County will sponsor a firearm safety training and basic pistol marksmanship class for women 21 and older Aug. 8 from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Equipment, facilities, ammunition, coaching and instruction are free. Call 973-827-9723 to register for limited seats. This class is provided as a community service; there is no obligation to join the club, buy a product or participate in any other activity. Sorry, no repeat students.

The large number of women there was reassuring — and no, they aren't all burly tomboys.

From the teenage girl hanging out at the mall to grandma, they were a diverse group.

About 300 participants attend each year, with another 200 turned away due to limited space, Potts

said. This year the day was expanded to host up to 500 women, but only about half showed up because of the heavy rain.

Apparently, once you start shooting, it's addictive. When Potts asked who had never fired a gun, only a

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Bar association looks to put 'Sussex County first'

By TOM HOWELL JR.
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Pushing stereotypes aside, Sussex County lawyers are known for being pretty nice to each other.

Of course, lawyers want to be forceful advocates for their clients and be aggressive, when warranted. But they also don't want to rub colleagues the wrong way and develop a poor reputation.

While lawyers in other counties might trade barbs and use sly tactics in the courtroom, such behavior doesn't behoove a lawyer here.

After all, "you're going to see that guy at the Sussex County Fair," said John Ursin, the newly sworn president of the Sussex County Bar Association. "You're going to see him at your kid's sports events."

Officers in the bar association move up in position each year to the presidency. The other officers sworn in June 29 alongside Ursin are David Dumbroff, president-elect; Amy Gjelsvik, vice president; Nancy Reading, treasurer; and Lauren

McFadden, secretary.

Sussex County lawyers not only enjoy a congenial bar association, but are active participants in local affairs, including volunteerism at nonprofits such as Project Self-Sufficiency, DASI Inc. and Legal Services of Northwest Jersey.

Ursin said he wants to expand that community spirit into the economic side of law practice, working with local businesses to put "Sussex County first" through mutual cooperation.

The idea is straightforward: By networking through the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce and direct outreach, more local business people will turn to competent lawyers in the county instead of retaining high-priced lawyers in other parts of the state.

"We as a bar association intend to specifically approach institutions and businesses," Ursin said.

While he understands that some businesses need to use niche legal experts in New Brunswick or elsewhere, Ursin said Sussex County



lawyers can ably handle contracts and numerous other legal needs.

It's no secret that law firms have been hurting in the current economy, especially if they are not diverse enough to make up for decreased business in sectors such as real estate (not to mention lower retainers and longtime clients who suddenly can't pay).

Local lawyers would get an obvious financial boost, but the benefit is mutual, Ursin said.

According to Ursin, Sussex County lawyers often cost less because they tend to have lower overhead in their

Wantage challenges judge's tax decision

Says Neepaulin
Dam ruling based
on false information

By CHRISTINA TATU
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WANTAGE — Township officials will be back in court later this month to challenge a judge's enforced tax assessment for repair of the Lake Neepaulin Dam. The decision, they said, was based on inaccurate information.

The hearing will be before Superior Court Judge B. Theodore Bozonelis in Morristown July 23.

On May 14, Bozonelis set a precedent when he ruled township officials could not rescind their decision to co-sign a \$1 million loan application with the Friends of Lake Neepaulin, the nonprofit group that owns the dam. As required by state law, the township subsequently passed an ordinance issuing a special tax assessment to help pay back the loan.

Opponents of the special assessment have argued they should not be taxed because the lake is privately owned and is only open to members of FOLN.

The judge's decision to enforce the special assessment was the first of its kind, and Wantage officials said the information the judge used to base his decision was flawed.

Last month, the Township Committee unanimously agreed to submit a "request for reconsideration." Unlike an appeal, which would move the case to a higher court, the request asks the same judge to reconsider his position.

During the May 14 hearing, Bozonelis cited a Byram special tax assessment on behalf of the Boy Scouts of America — also a private, nonprofit organization — to fund a dam restoration loan, but Byram Township did not implement an assessment.

On Dec. 15, 2008, Byram officials agreed to act as co-applicants for a loan that would repair two dams at the Mount Alamuchy Scout Reservation, but financial reports showed the Boy Scouts were able to repay the 20-year loan on their own, Byram Councilman Scott Olson said.

State law requires a municipality back the application, should the owners be unable to repay the loan.

Because the Scouts were able to pay, a special assessment was never issued, he said.

Olson said Byram has co-signed several loan applications for privately owned dams; however, the township did not have to enact a special assessment because the owners were always able to pay.

Byram will enact a special assessment for the Forest Lake Dam, however, located in the 350-unit Forest Lakes development. Olson said the amount of the assessment has yet to be determined.

Homeowners in Forest Lake have the option of paying an annual fee, entitling them to use the lake.

The Forest Lake dam is owned by a private party; however, the township owns the road running over the dam, Olson said.

The assessment would likely be issued in "tiers," with those living closest to the lake paying more than those on the outskirts.

While some homeowners dissented the tax, the public outcry wasn't nearly as vocal the outpouring that occurred in Wantage Township, Olson said.

Wantage officials had proposed taxing 59 lakefront residents \$140

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