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NEW JERSEY Sunday Herald

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Everybody's Irish at Newton parade



Photo by Tracy Klimek/New Jersey Herald

A Vernon Township High School color guard member leads the marching band down Spring Street Saturday during Newton's St. Patrick's Day Parade.

By GREG WATRY
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NEWTON — Call it what you will — snow, flurries, flakes — but for Mark Hontz, master of ceremonies for Saturday's St. Patrick's Day Parade in Newton, the dashing of white from the sky was a little bit of "Irish magic."

Despite the flurries, the 12th annual parade stepped off without a hitch a little after 11:30 a.m. The sidewalks of Spring Street ran green, with attendees sporting the color. In the streets, small children

tried their feet at the Irish step-dance while traditional music played over the loudspeakers.

"There's a nice vibe here on Spring Street, notwithstanding the five inches of snow we got yesterday," Hontz said. "It's a nice crowd; it's a happy crowd; the kids are happy to be here. It's just a really nice parade put together by well-meaning folks."

The Police Pipes and Drums of Morris County led the parade with a rendition of "Amazing Grace." The group was followed by a procession

of Sussex County fire departments and first aid squads, each of which had vehicles decked out in some form of Irish garb, either shamrocks or the green, white and orange Irish flag.

"It's terrific," Dennis Harrington said of the parade. Harrington and his wife, Mary, were the parade's grand marshals. The two have been involved with the parade since its inception in 2003.

"Everybody seems to be having a great time," Mary Harrington agreed.

As the Harringtons watched the parade, a white car pulled up in front of them. Hontz announced to the crowd and Mary Harrington that a special surprise from Ireland was inside. It was Gerry Molyneaux, her brother from Dublin.

"I knew; she didn't," Dennis Harrington said of the surprise visit. Organizations represented in the parade included the Greater Newton Chamber of Commerce, Newton Medical Center, Ginnie's House, the

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Lake groups compete for grant to aid environment

By DIANA GOOVAERTS
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HOPATCONG — The Lake Hopatcong Foundation is calling for local residents to lend their support as Lake Hopatcong goes head to head with Lake George in New York state in a competition for a "Grassroots Grant" of up to \$10,000 from the BoatUS Foundation.

According to the contest webpage, The Lake Hopatcong Foundation plans to use the grant money to create a free, water-resistant guide map for the lake that includes information on invasive species, the location of pump-out stations to keep the lake free of waste, and a listing of businesses and marinas around the lake. Grant money would also be used to update the Lake Hopatcong Guide application, which is available for iPhone, iPad and Android devices.

The purpose of the map and updates is to educate visitors to the lake to help prevent the spread of "aquatic hitchhikers" and pollution, Lake Hopatcong Foundation President Jessica Murphy said.

"The idea is to keep the lake environment as healthy as possible," Murphy said, noting that the effort was organized by Lake Hopatcong Foundation grants and programs coordinator Donna Macallege-Holly.

Though eight organizations are up for the grant, the Lake Hopatcong Foundation and the Lake George Association of Lake George, N.Y., have pulled ahead as frontrunners by a wide margin. But the race is still close. As of Saturday afternoon, the Lake

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Mom reunited with sons missing since early Feb.

By JOE CARLSON
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A jubilant Sandra Hughes Dohm posted pictures on Facebook early Saturday showing her reunion with her two young sons, who had been missing for six weeks.

"Back together and heading home!" Hughes Dohm, a Roxbury resident, wrote on Facebook, a social media outlet she used extensively to make pleas for the safe return of the boys, Parker, 8, and Jaxon, 7, after they were abducted by their father, Kristopher Dohm, in violation of a custody agreement, in early February.

Kristopher Dohm, who was arrested Wednesday at the Royal Palm Inn in New Port Richey, Fla., appeared in

court Friday afternoon and waived extradition.

"We just got word that he waived extradition, and we will pick him up as soon as possible," Thomas J. McCormick, chief of detectives for the Sussex County Prosecutor's Office, said on Friday.

Dohm was charged on Feb. 10 by the prosecutor's office with second-degree interference of custody and was wanted on a charge of unlawful flight to avoid prosecution by the U.S. Marshals Service office in Newark.

His arrest and the recovery of the boys were announced Thursday.

According to a press release from the U.S. Marshals Service, Dohm was apprehended Wednesday by

officers of the U.S. Marshals Service Florida Regional Fugitive Task Force, the Pasco County Sheriff's Office and the New Port Richey Police Department at the Royal Palm Inn off U.S. Route 19 in New Port Richey, Fla.

Also apprehended was fugitive Edward Tarras, who was wanted by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation on more than two dozen sex-related charges. Dohm and Tarras were "childhood friends," the release said.

Tarras, who was in court Thursday, according to the Associated Press, is being held without bond. His extradition status was not available.

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Photo courtesy of Sandra Hughes Dohm via Facebook

Sandra Hughes Dohm posted a Facebook photo of her reunion with sons Parker, 8, and Jaxon, 7, after they were found in Florida. The boys had been missing since were taken by their father, Kristopher Dohm, in early February.

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Investigation continuing into fatal crash in Wantage

By JOE CARLSON
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Paul Freas was a quiet gentleman who would make himself known when he felt he needed to, according to a friend.

"He was a very down to earth and nice guy," said Cindy Depue Cole, a friend of Freas for over 30 years. "He was quiet and always behind the scenes, but would let his presence be known when he felt he needed to. He wasn't always vocal, but you always knew he would be there for you behind the scenes."

Freas, 60, of Vernon, died earlier this month after a head-on motor vehicle accident on Route 639 in Wantage, police said.

Freas was pronounced dead at Morristown Medical Center at 11:59 a.m. Saturday, March 7, Sgt. Jeff Flynn, of the New Jersey State Police told the New Jersey Herald on Friday.

At about 10:23 a.m., Freas was driving north on Route 639 when a car being driven south by Ricardo Rivera, 22, of Highland Lakes, crossed over the painted line and crashed head-on into Freas' vehicle, Flynn said.

Freas was alert and conscious when state troopers were on scene and was transported to Morristown Medical Center to be treated for complaints of pain.

Freas' passenger, Martin Ryan, 64, of Phillipsburg, and Rivera were both transported to Newton Medical Center, Flynn said.

"Freas subsequently died at the hospital at 11:59 a.m.," Flynn said, adding the cause of death was still under investigation.

Rivera was given a traffic summons for an unsafe lane

change, Flynn said.

"Additional charges are pending," Flynn said. "This is still an active investigation."

Depue Cole said she worked for 20 years with Freas — who worked as an underwriters assistant at Selective Insurance for 29 years — and was also a parishioner with him at Beemerville Church for more than 10 years, where he served an elected elder.

"He was very involved and concerned regarding church matters," Depue Cole said. "He took his involvement in the church as seriously as if

it was his job at Selective."

"He was a very funny guy and would be quiet, but could then crack a joke," she added.

According to his obituary, in addition to being involved with his church, Freas was a member of the Kittatinny Masonic Lodge No. 164, F&AM and a former member of the Tall Cedars of Lebanon.

He was also an avid New York Yankees and New York Giants fan and enjoyed Penn State football games.

A lifelong resident of Sussex County, Freas grew

up and lived in Newton for 35 years, moved to Frankford in 1972 and moved to Vernon in 2007.

He was a graduate of Newton High School. A memorial service and interment was held on Saturday.

Memorial donations may be made to Beemerville Presbyterian Church, 226 County Route 519, Wantage 07461.

Joe Carlson also can be contacted on Twitter: @JoeCarlsonNJH or by phone: 973-383-1292.



Photo by Robert Hibbs/Suncoast News

Kristopher Dohm was apprehended Wednesday at the Royal Palm Inn off U.S. Route 19 in New Port Richey, Fla.

Reunited

Continued from Page A1

After they were found, Parker and Jaxon were taken into protective custody pending the arrival of family members, said Eddie Daniels, spokesman for the Pasco County Sheriff's Office.

Hughes Dohm was notified that the boys had been found shortly after midnight Thursday and took to her personal Facebook page to announce the rescue and the family's pending reunion.

"My boys have been found and they are safe! I got the news just after midnight and am heading to Florida now to be reunited with them!" she posted.

By early Thursday morning, the "Missing" poster that had long been plastered across the Help Find Parker and Jaxon Dohm Facebook page had been altered, with the word "missing" crossed out and replaced with "coming home."

Dohm's wanted poster was also altered: A large red "X"

crossed the page with "CASE RESOLVED" written on the poster.

The "wanted" poster for Tarras on the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's "Top 10 Most Wanted Fugitives" web page was also changed to read "Captured."

The rescue of the boys was the culmination of a six-week investigation that began Feb. 9 when Hughes Dohm reported to police that her sons had not been returned to her by her ex-husband, Kristopher Dohm, as per their custody agreement.

According to authorities, Kristopher Dohm told Hughes Dohm he wanted to take the boys to see his ailing father in Nevada, who was close to death, which Hughes Dohm agreed to let him do. It was later discovered that Kristopher Dohm's father was neither sick nor dying and the flight information given to Hughes Dohm was fraudulent.

The Sussex County Prosecutor's Office said law enforcement officers followed every lead they had. Prior to being found on Thursday, the

last reported sighting of the boys and their father was in the Fort McHenry Tunnel in Baltimore on Feb. 6.

Kristopher Dohm's vehicle, a Nissan Pathfinder, was spotted by police who were searching surveillance footage of the tunnel, McCormick said on Friday.

In an effort to spread the word regarding her missing sons, Hughes Dohm took to social media with a Facebook page that has more than 13,000 "likes" and the @ParkandJax2 Twitter account, which has more than 500 followers.

She also went on HLN's "Nancy Grace" show to plead for anyone with information to call authorities.

Just 90 minutes after her second appearance on the show Wednesday, police in Florida apprehended Dohm and Tarras.

According to a report from NJ.com, Dohm, the boys and Tarras were located after authorities triangulated their location from a phone registered to Tarras.

Tarras, according to the U.S. Marshals Service, was

wanted in Tennessee on charges of one count of rape, two counts of sexual battery, 19 counts of especially aggravated sexual exploitation of a minor and one count of sexual exploitation of a minor over 100 times. While out on bail on Aug. 15, 2014, he cut off his tracking bracelet and fled from Tennessee, authorities said.

According to McCormick, it is believed both Dohm and Tarras had learned that authorities were coming for them and were going to attempt to leave the motel without the boys when they were apprehended.

When police went to arrest Dohm, one of the boys said, "Please don't take my father away. I love him," a witness told Bay News 9 in Florida.

Though Hughes Dohm has been reunited with her sons, McCormick said he did not know when they would return home.

Joe Carlson also can be contacted on Twitter: @JoeCarlsonNJH or by phone: 973-383-1292.

Lake

Continued from Page A1

Hopatcong Foundation had slipped behind the Lake George Association, with 14,544 votes to the latter's 14,572. The Kandiyohi County AIS Task Force of Willmar, Minn., was a distant third with 1,044 votes.

The project proposed by the Lake George Association would include the creation of "an interactive computer program to teach boaters how to inspect their boat for invasive species and a video showing boaters what to expect when they arrive at an inspection station," as well as related print materials to help prevent the spread of the spiny water flea.

"We're in this final group with the final selection, and after the first day or two the Lake George Association and the Lake Hopatcong Foundation had really surged forward," said Murphy, who noted that the 130-year-old Lake George Association has been instrumental in guiding the fledgling Lake Hopatcong Foundation.

"We have a good relationship with Lake George, but it has resulted in both of us really pushing it. The two of us have been neck and neck, with us leading and them leading, then us leading."

Though the race could go either way without a runaway boost of votes, Murphy said she's in awe of the support

the foundation has received so far.

"I'm just amazed at the response we've gotten from the community," she said. "Every day, I'm just inundated by the groups that are sharing this link with their followers and friends. It feels like there's a lot more riding on this than just winning for the foundation. It's really turned out to be a real community-building exercise that's coming out of this, and that's been really inspiring and makes us want to win for everybody."

The public is permitted to vote once per day, Murphy said. Voting is slated to end at 11:59 p.m. Tuesday.

No matter which group snags the most votes, Murphy said she knows the environment will be the real winner.

"We definitely want to beat them, but I think at the end of the day we're similar groups, so it's a friendly competition that's all about making our lakes healthier," Murphy said.

The BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water is a nonprofit organization that promotes safe, clean and responsible boating by providing educational outreach to boaters and support to partner organizations.

For more information or to vote, visit <http://www.boatus.org/grants/vote.asp>.

Diana Goovaerts also can be contacted on Twitter: @DiaGoovaertsNJH or by phone: 973-383-1194.



Photo by Marie Dirle/New Jersey Herald

Firefighters respond to an electrical fire at St. Joseph Church in Newton on Saturday.

Fire at Newton church extinguished

NEWTON — The Newton Fire Department quickly extinguished a small electrical fire in St. Joseph Church on Halsted Street Saturday evening after a

fixture in the chapel overheated, officials said.

An alarm requesting apparatus to respond to reports of smoke and flames went out at 6:05 p.m., Chief Jason Miller said. The fire was swiftly put out, but did cause some charring to the upper part of the rafters near the left rear exit door before power to the building was shut off, Miller said.

An electrician was called and was on scene by 6:30 p.m. to assess the issue.

The Rev. Brian Sullivan said Saturday evening that he was unsure if Mass would go on as scheduled today.

The church can be reached by phone at 973-383-1985.

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