

# New Jersey Herald

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Newton, N.J.

MONDAY, MAY 11, 2009

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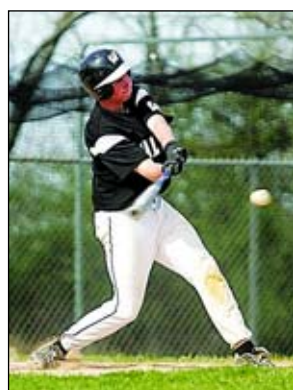
A look at working in Sussex County.

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#### ON THE WEB



Local news, sports and more, only a click away.

Monday



# Lake Hopatcong on the rise

## Still, its level is well below normal for this time of year

By **BRUCE A. SCRUTON**  
bscruton@njherald.com

**LAKE HOPATCONG** — The level of Lake Hopatcong rose by more than a half-foot the past three days.

Still, the state opened the spigot Saturday and is letting more water out of the lake than what had been flowing the past couple of weeks.

The lake's level has been down drastically. It's down from a normal mid-May amount through a combination of circumstances — a scheduled draw-down that was more than twice the norm and the second driest start to a year on record.

Just how much can be blamed on mismanagement by the Department of Environmental Protection and how much can be laid at the feet of Mother Nature is the subject of a lawsuit filed by a group of business owners around the lake who said their livelihood is at stake.

"Normally, I wouldn't be stopping by to get something from the office," said Kurt Swenson, owner of Flash Marina. "I'd be here working and so would a couple of employees."

The only activity Sunday along the docks at his business on the north end



Dave Payson, of Hackettstown, walks along a dock at San Bar Marina, on Lake Hopatcong, Sunday after realizing its water level still is too low for him to launch his boat.

of the lake was a large white goose, sunning itself, and a man juggling balls, waiting for his wife and son to return from a fishing trip in the boat they launched by hand.

Although Swenson's docks wouldn't get the full complement of boats until the end of June when summer residents have all returned, the docks still were empty.

Photo by Daniel Freel/New Jersey Herald

A sign in the door of the business carried a chart of the lake's levels the past two weeks and a notice that when the lake reached 7 feet, some craft, such as pontoon boats, could be launched, since they only require about 6 inches of water to float.

The lake's level would have to get to 7½ feet before other boats safely could be launched.

Late Sunday afternoon, the level was at about 7 feet, 1 inch, as measured by a U.S. Geological Survey gauge at the dam. The top of the dam's spillway is 9 feet, and when water flows over that, the lake is considered full.

At Woodport Marina, Mark Sudia and his son, Henry, had just returned from a fishing trip on their pontoon boat.

"We were lucky," Sudia said. "The marina just put in these floating docks and we managed to get a berth."

The new extensions at Woodport jut into the lake from the end of the non-floating wooden docks and, because they stay just above the water's level, make it easy to get into and out of a tied-up boat.

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## BRIDGING WORLDS



Photos by Amy Paterson/New Jersey Herald

Susan George, a Rotary member from Hardyston, and Marco Juri, who is visiting from Switzerland through the Rotary Foundation's Group Study Exchange program, talk about their experiences and impressions from the past week. Juri, and the other visitors from Switzerland, stayed with county residents and visited numerous local attractions.

### Rotary exchange program allows foreigners to visit county, get glimpse into American life

By **ROBERTA FUGATE**  
rfugate@njherald.com

**HARDYSTON** — They sat around the kitchen table of Susan George's Hardyston home, just like old friends, laughing and joking about the experiences they had shared the past two weeks.

The camaraderie among the trio was evident as they munched on a breakfast of croissants and birchermuesli, a combination of fresh fruit, granola and yogurt, and talked about their shopping trip to the mall, people watching in Central Park and the weather.

Two weeks ago George, a vice president at Highlands State Bank, in Vernon, had never met Rolf Neumann, 65, or Marco Juri, 25.

As a member of the Wallkill Valley Rotary Club, George opened her home to the men, who are from Switzerland, as part of the Rotary Foundation's Group Study Exchange program.

"It's been great being a host," she said. "The experience made me realize that although there are a lot of differences between us, there are also a lot of similarities. We have all had a lot of good experiences."

The exchange program is a cultural and vocational exchange opportunity for business people and professionals between the ages of 25 and 40 who are beginning their careers.

The program provides travel grants for teams to exchange visits with different countries. For four to six weeks, participants exchange ideas as they experience the host country's culture and institutions, observe how their professions are practiced in other countries and develop personal and professional



Marco Juri and Rolf Neumann, visitors from Switzerland through the Rotary Foundation's Group Study Exchange program, made birchermuesli, a traditional Swiss food, for their last breakfast during their stay in Hardyston. It is made with fresh fruit, yogurt and granola.

relationships.

Barbara Miller, area coordinator for the group study exchange committee of the Wallkill Valley Rotary Club, said the exchange program also is an opportunity to develop friendships and to help spread peace, one person at a time.

"If you develop friendships with people, it is much more difficult to go to war with them," she said.

In a typical four-week visit, applicants participate in a series of vocational visits, club presentations, formal visits and social events. They also attend district conferences, take cultural and site tours and can spend free time with their host families.

Having been to the United States several times prior for business and vacation, Neumann was asked to be the team leader of the group which included Carlo Mathys, Pascal Ruedin, Katja Ruttimann and Andrea Schulte.

"The purpose of the exchange program is to bring young people to other countries to see how other people in different parts of the world are living," Neumann said.

This was Juri's first trip to the United States.

"I found the trip to be very good," he said. "It was not the typical trip just visiting tourist locations, we

See **EXCHANGE**, Page **A5**

## Health care groups offer \$2T savings

### Reportedly pledge to slow rate increases

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Barack Obama's plan to provide medical insurance for all Americans took a big step toward becoming reality Sunday after leaders of the health care industry offered \$2 trillion in spending reductions over 10 years to help pay for the program.

Hospitals, insurance companies, drug makers and doctors planned to tell Obama today they'll voluntarily slow their rate increases in coming years in a move that government economists said would create breathing room to help provide health insurance to an estimated 50 million Americans who now go without it.

With this move, Obama picks up key private-sector allies that fought former President Bill Clinton's effort to overhaul health care. Although the offer from the industry groups doesn't resolve thorny details of a new health care system, it does offer the prospect of freeing a large chunk of money to help pay for coverage. It puts the private-sector groups in a good position to influence the bill Congress is writing.

Six major groups plan to deliver a letter to Obama and pledge to cut the growth rate for health care by 1.5 percentage points each year, senior administration officials said Sunday. They spoke on the condition of anonymity in order to sketch the offer before full details are revealed at a White House event scheduled for today.

Obama has offered an outline for overhauling the health care system, and he wants Congress to work out the details and pass legislation this year. His plan would build on the current system in which employers, government and individuals share responsibility for paying the cost and care is delivered privately. The government would play a stronger role by subsidizing coverage for many more people and spelling out stronger consumer protections.

"We cannot continue down the same dangerous road we've been traveling for so many years, with costs that are out of control, because reform is not a luxury that can be postponed, but a necessity that cannot wait," Obama said in prepared remarks released Sunday. "That is why these groups are voluntarily coming together to make an unprecedented commitment."

The industry groups are trying to get on the administration bandwagon for expanded coverage now in the hope they can steer Congress away from legislation that would restrict their profitability in future years.

Insurers, for example, want to avoid the creation of a government health plan that would directly compete with them to enroll middle-class workers and their families. Drug makers worry that in the future, new medications might have to pass a cost-benefit test before they can win approval. And hospitals and doctors are concerned the government could dictate what they get paid to care for any patient, not only the elderly and the poor.

Obama has courted industry and provider groups, inviting their representatives to the White House. There's a sense among some of the groups that now may be the best time to act before public opinion, fueled by anger over costs, turns against them.

It's unclear whether the proposed savings will prove decisive in pushing a health care overhaul through Congress. There's no detail on how the savings pledge would be enforced.