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School rallies behind the team



David Lee/Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

The Germantown boys varsity basketball team at the all-school pep rally, from left to right Thomas Griffin, Brandon Jason, Larry Niebling, David Lyons, Cody Brost, Mike Wyant, Robert Queirolo, Will Wyant and Dan Thomas. Missing from the picture is Jon Diehl. The team will play in the New York State Class D boys varsity basketball semifinal game at the Glens Falls Civic Center today. See page B1 for a preview.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

DiNapoli slams ethics policy

By Francesca Olsen
Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

An audit from State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli released Thursday found that Columbia County's code of ethics needs improvement and closer monitoring, particularly regarding its financial disclosure reporting system.

The findings come as part of a larger audit titled "Ethics Oversight in New York State Municipalities" which surveyed 31 municipalities in New York for information on how their ethics policies are enforced and distributed.

The Comptroller's Office examined the county's code of ethics, conducted interviews with county employees, and evaluated "the county's current oversight structure for ethics" between

Jan. 1 and Sept. 22, 2009. A corresponding letter, addressed to former Board of Supervisors Chairman Art Baer, R-Hillsdale, stated the following:

"The code could be improved by including provisions that address recusal and misuse of municipal resources ... county officials have not directly distributed a copy of the code to each officer and employee in the county ... the county did not develop adequate procedures to monitor compliance with its code and related statutory requirements."

Columbia County's code of ethics requires a large cross-section of county employees to file an annual financial disclosure report. Elected officials,

Please see DiNapoli, page A10

HUDSON

Blanks: I won't be the scapegoat

By Jamie Larson
Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

City Youth Commissioner Daryl Blanks says that he won't be a "scapegoat" for recent problems at the Youth Center, including the arrest of maintenance employee Dwayne Scott by the FBI on March 5, in front of the center, for the alleged sexual assault of a 15-year-old girl and the creation of child pornography.

On March 9 another center employee, Jason Williams, was shot in the leg on Columbia Street during what non-police sources say was a neighborhood dispute.

"I'm not going to be the fall guy for the bad decisions of others," said Blanks, who officials expect will soon be dismissed by Mayor Richard Scalera. "I made one bad decision, it was accepting this position."

Scalera said if Blanks is removed it will not be because of the commissioner's job performance but because he feels it has become apparent that he needs to be directly involved in the personnel issues at the center.

The situation has brought calls from Scalera and Youth Committee Chairwoman Alderman Wanda Pertilla, Second Ward, for

'I'm not going to be the fall guy for the bad decisions of others. I made one bad decision, it was accepting this position.'

Youth Commissioner
Daryl Blanks

strict hiring practices that include background checks and changes in the current staffing at the Youth Department.

"I agree with (Pertilla and Scalera) that major changes need to be made in staffing and hiring," Blanks continued. "I recommend changes starting with those salaried employees, both elected and appointed, who are responsible for decision making and day to day operations of the Youth Center."

Blanks added that he's not trying to suggest that anyone should necessarily be fired but that those in charge, including Youth Director Trudy Beicht and Recreation Supervisor George Bednar who are both paid with taxpayer dollars, need to be held accountable for mistakes relating to staffing and management.

Please see Blanks, page A10

Spanish story time at John L. Edwards



David Lee/Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

In an exercise in role reversal on Thursday morning, the advanced Spanish students of Amparo Gazzera in Hudson High School made their own translations of children's books from English to Spanish. Then they read their translations to the children of the John L. Edwards Elementary School. Most of the children did not understand the words, but part of the challenge for the readers was to use gestures, expressions and "body language" to help convey the stories. Reading to Mrs. Weaver's second grade class are (l to r) Ryan Martin, Caroline Keeler and Bhuiyan Shahidul.

CRARYVILLE

Craryville man charged with fraud

By Andrew Amelinckx
Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

Police say a Craryville man fraudulently received \$18,000 in workers compensation money and is now facing 14 felonies.

Michael R. Sherman, 45, was arrested by the New York State Police in Livingston Wednesday after that agency received information on the case from the state Insurance Frauds Bureau and the Office of the Fraud Inspector General.

The investigation by those agencies has been a year in

the making, said authorities.

NYSP Sr. Investigator Gary Mazzacano, said that the two agencies shared information with them and the arrest was then made.

According to police, Sherman sustained a shoulder injury while working at an automotive garage in September 2008 and was initially awarded \$532 per week for his injury.

The investigation later revealed that Sherman continued to work at another garage

Please see Fraud, page A10



Contributed photo

Michael R. Sherman

GREENPORT

Suspect arrested in decade-old abuse case

By Andrew Amelinckx
Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

Ten years after an alleged criminal sex act, a Greenport man has been charged with the crime and is facing the possibility of 25 years in prison.

Joseph Tomaso Sr., 42, was arrested by the New York State Police Thursday in Greenport.

He was charged with first-degree criminal sex act, a class B felony, which according to the state's criminal law book, includes oral or anal sexual contact.

The alleged victim, a boy, was less than 11 years old when the crime occurred in Greenport, said police.

According to NYSP Sr. Inv. Gary Mazzacano, the victim in the case recently had contact with Tomaso, which prompted him to come forward with the information leading to the arrest.

"He's a teenager now," said Mazzacano of the young man.

Mazzacano wouldn't describe the relationship between the boy and Tomaso, citing the need to protect the victim.

Tomaso was arraigned in the Greenport Town Court by Judge Francis Abitabile and remanded to the Columbia County Jail in lieu of

Please see Abuse, page A10

TODAY'S FORECAST	High 66 Low 38 Mostly sunny.	For a complete report, see page A2
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Good morning Rick Cartwright. Thank you for subscribing to the Register-Star!



DID YOU KNOW...

A small plane crashed in LaGrange, leaving one man dead. See page A5 for more information.

GREENPORT

Twin County Science Expo to be held this weekend

By Doron Tyler Antrim
Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

The 12th annual Twin County Science Expo will be held Saturday at Columbia-Greene Community College, drawing 130 students from 10 school districts. The exhibition will take place in the college's gymnasium from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and is open to the public.

Eight panelists consisting of scientists and staff from C-GCC and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy will judge students' work.

Past projects have included displays about electricity, food, experiments and inventions.

Please see Expo, page A10



Photo courtesy of Coxsackie-Athens Central School District

A student exhibit from last year's Twin County Science Expo. This year's exhibition will be Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Columbia-Greene Community College.



- Sealy Sleepcenter Grand Opening -

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