

Northern Valley Press

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JUNE 20, 2011

Something to See



Join acclaimed novelist Lisa See at Books & Greetings this Friday evening.

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HAWORTH

CAUSE FOR APPLAUSE

Collaborative effort helps save a life

BY PAULINE PIERROT
CORRESPONDENT

A special occasion was celebrated at the June 14 mayor and council meeting in Haworth. Mayor John DeRienzo and council members honored members of the police department, fire department and ambulance corps for saving a life.

This past April 26, a 911 call was received concerning a man in distress, displaying possible signs of seizure activity. Sgt. Michael Gracey, Officer Justin Fox, Officer Alex Yannuzzi and Officer Johnluke Ragone of the Haworth Police Department responded immediately.

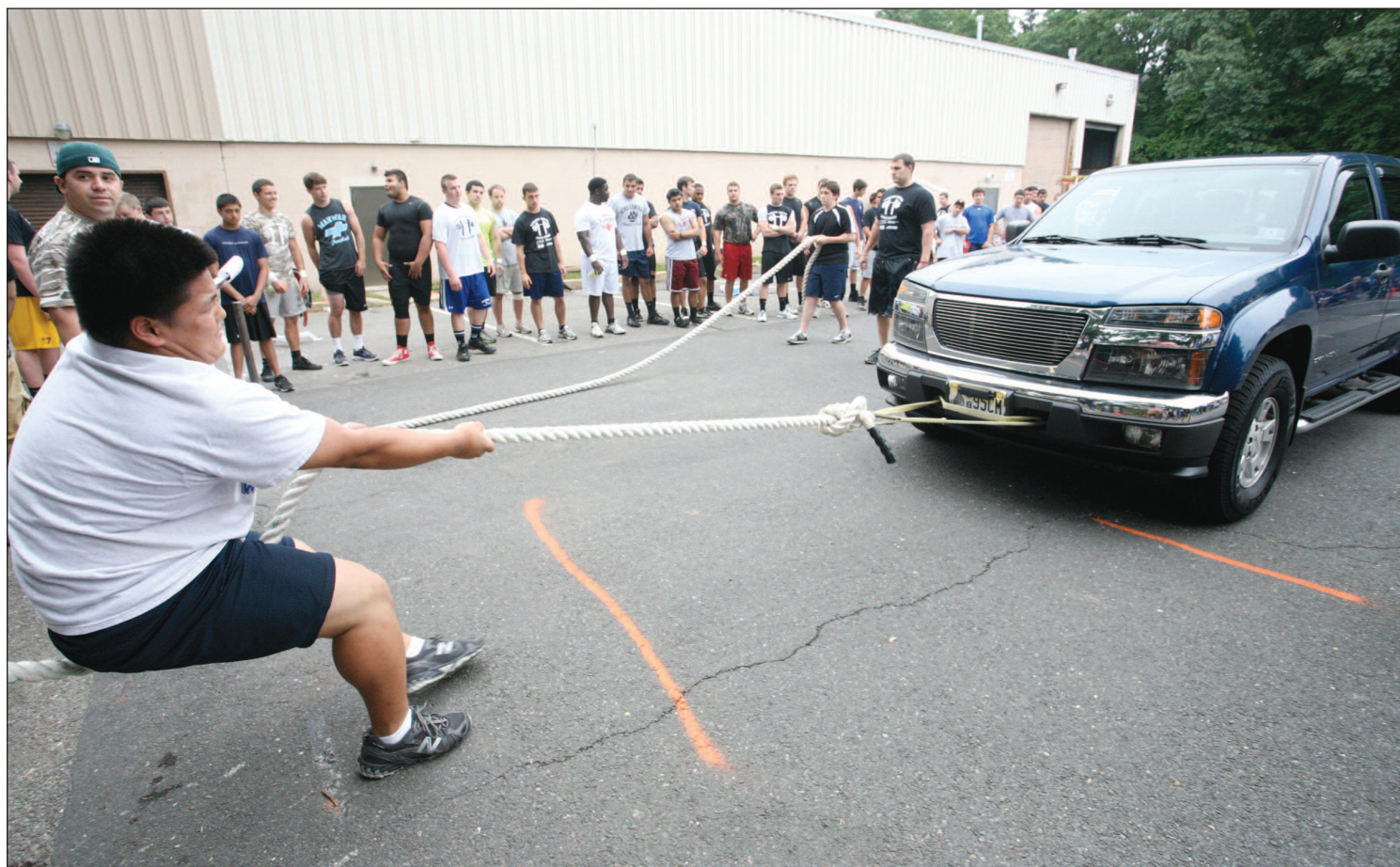
A 50-year-old man was in cardiac and respiratory arrest. CPR was performed and a defibrillator attached. The patient was

See LIFE SAVERS page 12 ▶

OLD TAPPAN

NEVER GIVE UP

Strongmen carry on LaViola's fight



Calvin Cho of Northern Valley Regional High School at Demarest incredibly uses his strength to pull a 4,500-pound GMC Pick-up Truck at the 2011 Varsity House Strongman Challenge, a fund-raiser that contributed over \$10,000 to the Michael LaViola Foundation for pediatric sarcoma research.

BY TOM CLANCEY
OF NORTHERN VALLEY PRESS

Michael LaViola was a well-known young man growing up in Old Tappan. He played high school football, volunteered for the borough's fire department and made

PHOTO BY MURRAY BASS

ROUGH RIDE

The borough council of Harrington Park will be addressing some problem roads.

See page 6

countless friends with his positive attitude and kind nature.

But when he was stricken by a rare form of pediatric sarcoma during his senior year of high school, Michael's family and the collective community as a whole would have to

deal with the hurt of losing one of Old Tappan's most beloved native sons.

On June 11, The Michael LaViola Foundation and Varsity House Gym of Old Tappan hosted the 2011 Strongman Challenge, a

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Back in time...

The Hitching Post was once a popular hangout in Norwood.

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LaViola: 2011 Strongman Challenge

FROM PAGE 1

third-year event that has blossomed into the foundation's pri-

mary fund-raiser of the year. treat the rare tumors, and recently reported some trials have showed hopeful results with partial responses to synovial sarcoma.

that we may always continue to fund those yearly scholarships and continually donate money for continued research, so that maybe

year's event bigger and better than ever."

You can visit the website

www.michaellaviolafoundation.org to learn more about the foundation's mission.



Photo courtesy Joe Riggio

The owners of Varsity House Gym in Old Tappan present a \$10,000 check to Mary, Katie and Michael LaViola.

mary fund-raiser of the year.

Over 50 contestants competed in astounding events, performing feats of strength and helping to raise over \$10,000 in Michael LaViola's memory.

In the time that has passed since LaViola's untimely death in February of 2008 at 20 years old, the foundation his parents Mary and Michael and sister Katie helped establish has bestowed funds for ongoing research at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md., a place where Michael himself received treatment.

In Maryland, Dr. Melinda S. Merchant is part of a team of researchers carrying on studies related to the treatment of synovial sarcoma, the same form of cancer that affected Michael LaViola. Merchant provides updates to the LaViolas in Old Tappan of her ongoing research pertaining to the use of T Cells to

"Over the past years, I have seen more reasons to be hopeful about the possibility of effective treatment for synovial sarcoma. Your foundation has helped us to continue moving forward toward this goal," Merchant recently wrote to Mary LaViola. She signed that note, "With honor for Michael."

The donations raised at the Strongman Challenge will help fund continued research, as well as helping to provide for the two annual \$1,500 scholarships the foundation offers to two graduating seniors of Old Tappan High School.

In a letter to supporters, Mary and Katie LaViola thanked all the participants and contributors who helped organize the recent event. The foundation also accepts donations throughout the year, they said.

"We are always accepting donations for the foundation so

one day we may cure or keep in remission those who currently suffer with this horrible form of cancer like Michael did," the letter read.

The 2011 Strongman Challenge was extremely successful and raised nearly double the funds that last year's event did, said Michael LaViola Sr. Varsity House Gym, a unique local business with sophisticated training methods for speed, strength, power and performance, has already said they want to help organize the event again next year, said its owner, Coach Joe Riggio.

"This year's Strongman Challenge was a huge success! Together we had over 50 contestants who competed to help raise over \$10,000 for the Michael LaViola Foundation," said Riggio, "thanks to help from all our sponsors, the LaViolas, and all the athletes who helped make this



Photo by Murray Bass

Pace University's Arvin Rai hoists the 185-pound steel log above his head in the college division of the overhead press.



Photo by Murray Bass

Iyi Okunlola of St. Lawrence College flips a 550-pound tractor tire in the college division.

OLD TAPPAN

Results of the 2011 Strongman Challenge

A strongman challenge is a unique event, summoning athletes to perform awesome feats of strength. In the third annual Varsity House Strongman Challenge, athletes in three groups (eighth and ninth grade, high school and college/professional athletes) competed in four events.

In the overhead press, athletes had to press three unique implements over their heads as many times in one minute as possible. High school athletes were challenged with a 150-pound axle bar while college/pro athletes used a

185-pound steel log.

A second event, the Tractor Tire Flip, had athletes flipping 350-pound and 450-pound tires as many times as possible.

If that sounds crazy, the next event was called the Death Medley, in which high school athletes did three events including a 215-pound sled drag and a 75-pound keg carry.

Finally, contestants competed in the Truck/Sled Pull. Check back to this week's front cover for a photo of that one!

When all was said and done, Varsity House Gym honored three

winners from 50 contestants in the three age groups. According to Coach Joe Riggio, owner of Varsity House Gym, the winners of the 2011 challenge are as follows:

- Rocky Giovinazzo of Northern Valley High School in Old Tappan won in the Junior Varsity division (eighth/ninth grades);
- Andrew Trumbetti, a Northern Valley Demarest freshman who competed up, won in the Varsity division (10th/11th/12th grades);
- Jordan Migliore, of the University at Albany-SUNY, won the College/Pro division.

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