
TORCH RUN TIMES

Law Enforcement Torch Run News

NYSP Beats Tough Competition Hudson Valley Fire Truck Pull

Event grows in second year

The Hudson Valley Fire Truck Pull was a smashing success on October 1, as State Corrections Officers, Troopers and Sheriff's Deputies competed to pull a 45,000-pound engine for a distance of 20 feet in the fastest time. The New York State Police emerged in first place with a time of 5.47; Greenhaven Correctional Facility came in second with a time of 5.85; and the Dutchess County Sheriff's

Corrections Team came in third with a time of 5.96. The Dutchess County Sheriff's Corrections Team was last year's first place winner.

Each team consisted of 10 members and three alternates, with each member pulling 45,000 pounds. All of the teams competing raised money for the programs and athletes of Special Olympics New York. There was also a barbecue and fireworks for spectators that came to watch and cheer on the teams. ■



Highway Renamed in Honor of Art Benson, Father of LETR State Committee Member Mike Benson

On Saturday, October 1, Senator Dale M. Volker, along with members of the Western New York Legislative Delegation, announced that Route 219 will be renamed the "Erie County Veterans Memorial Highway" and the "Art Benson Memorial Highway." Art Benson is the late father of LETR state committee member Mike Benson.

In the announcement of the highway renaming, Senator William Stachowski said, "Arthur Benson was a tremendous force in advocating the U.S. Route 219 corridor as a way to improve economic development for the entire western New York region. His vision became a reality and allowed our economy to diversify and expand. We must also never forget that many of our residents are serving their country honorably throughout the world. They are at the forefront in saving lives, stabilizing regional conflicts, and protecting us from those who wish to destroy our way of life. It is my sincere hope that when motorists drive on these sections of highway, that they remember and honor both the men and women in uniform, and appreciate Arthur Benson's unwavering commitment to our region."

Mike Benson has been a long-time and active participant in New York State LETR activities, and is proud of the highway renaming in memory of his father. ■



Sometimes...

A Salute to NYSCOPBA

Written by: Jeanne Grebert

Sometimes, we all find ourselves sitting back in a chair and reflecting upon things that work or don't work in our personal and professional lives. Sometimes, I close my eyes and I think about the opportunities or challenges and those outcomes that have truly made a difference in each of our successes.

Case in point, the relationship between the Law Enforcement Torch Run and NYSCOPBA (New York State Correction Officers and Police Benevolent Association). Here are two organizations that seem to be the least likely of partners yet work together like a well oiled machine. When times are tough, the tough get going and the perfect example is NYSCOPBA. This fall as the LETR struggled with some critical issues; it was NYSCOPBA who brought to us the answers and the support that we needed to accomplish some very important tasks, critical to the success of the program as we approach 2006 and the hosting of the 25th Anniversary Law Enforcement International Torch Run Conference in Buffalo. Who among us has not had to lay it all on the line and reach out for help at some point or another?

And that is the point of my comments. Time and time again, year after year, when the LETR has had what seemed like insurmountable obstacles, its NYSCOPBA

who has come through for us when we least expect it. They understand and more importantly believe in our mission. This is not to say that many agencies and organizations aren't critical to our success but sometimes you just have to stand up and shout out to the world that someone has gone above and beyond the call of duty. In this partnership both the LETR and NYSCOPBA have faced challenging times. Even as NYSCOPBA made their way through their own obstacles, NYSCOPBA's support for the Torch Run program was unwavering. Its because of the union as a whole, it's because of people like Denny Fitzpatrick who is the ultimate in advocacy for our organization and will carry our mission to anyone who will listen and its because of a membership who has taken our cause to heart in every way they can.

Sometimes, when it's staring us right in the face – we almost go right past it. Not this time though, if I could climb up on a mountain top and shout to the world – “look at NYSCOPBA – they make a difference today and everyday.” We here at Special Olympics New York salute the partnership with NYSCOPBA. Actually, partnership is not strong enough a word for the relationship – it's more like we are soul mates. To all our friends at NYSCOPBA, words simply can't express our gratitude, but just know that sometimes, someone is sitting back in a chair knowing that without you, we'd never be the same. ■

SONY ANNOUNCES NEW HOLIDAY CARDS

*Designed by athletes and
portion of proceeds to
support New York program.*

Special Olympics has new holiday cards! Designed by Special Olympics athletes, and available at www.vistaprint.com/sony, Special Olympics holiday cards are the perfect way to



express holiday cheer while donating money to benefit Special Olympics New York (SONY). Prices start at just \$12.99 for 10 athlete designed cards.

“Special Olympics has joined with VistaPrint to offer high-quality, low-cost holiday cards designed by Special Olympic athletes,” said Rebecca M Santoli, Senior Director of Development for SONY. “The holiday card designs, available only at VistaPrint, exemplify the talent and abilities of people with intellectual disabilities. We hope you will help Special Olympic New York by purchasing Special Olympics holiday cards to send to business associates, friends and family this holiday season.”

These exclusive Special Olympics holiday cards are available only through VistaPrint. They are completely customizable, full color, printed on high-quality paper and available for a low cost. Customers can choose glossy or matte finishes and can purchase cards in quantities ranging from 10 to 20,000 cards. A portion of the proceeds from all Special Olympics cards purchased will be donated to SONY.

For more information go to www.vistaprint.com/sony ■

The 3rd LETR Volleyball tournament results are in

Written by: *Sal Gerbino*

On Saturday, September 24, 2004 the 3rd Annual LETR Volleyball Tournament was again hosted by Hot Shots indoor Beach Volleyball Center in Rochester New York. Event organizer, Sal Gerbino Jr., coordinated the day long event bringing together eight recreational teams for the morning play and twenty Intermediate B and Advanced A teams to carry play up to the finals at 11:00PM. Teams included four person teams at the recreation level and three person teams at the advanced with all playing a round robin format up to the single elimination finals.

The most exciting match of the day turned out to be the finals of the Advanced A's

where Scotty Miller, Jason Croft and Sal Gerbino Jr. closed it out with the win after going undefeated from their second game of pool play on.

Mike Goldfine and Alex Amo manned the silent auction and Torch Run apparel sales table. Two tickets to the Buffalo Bills game were donated and went for \$100 while a new high tech snowboard donated by Hot Shots raised an additional \$105. I am not sure the silent part of the auction was maintained as Goldy and Alex could be seen whispering numbers to people all day long.

Another special moment occurred when

Toni Trieste, the waitress for the restaurant at Hot Shots, donated her tips to the Special Olympics cause. Though she had already emptied her tips once at our table and could have been done for the day, she chose to work some more to round off her donation to an even \$50, every penny she had made. A special thanks to David Shaw who was Sal's right hand man and ran things when Sal was playing.

About \$1200 was raised and a commitment made by all to keep this event going and hopefully growing. ■