

The Star-Ledger

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TODAY: Windy, rainy and cool.
Forecast, Page 2.

7 a.m. 2 p.m. 7 p.m.
46° 49° 49°

FINAL EDITION
Friday, November 13, 2009

THE NEWSPAPER FOR NEW JERSEY

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OF DUTY AND HONOR AMID A SEA OF BLUE



MATT RAINEY/THE STAR-LEDGER

An honor guard prepares to enter the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark yesterday morning for the Annual Mass for Law Enforcement presented by the Newark Archdiocese. The Most Rev. John J. Myers, archbishop of Newark, presided over the Mass, which honored Jersey City Detective Marc Anthony DiNardo, who was slain as he tried to arrest two robbery suspects in July.

CORZINE MAKES HIS FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE SINCE THE ELECTION. PAGE 13

Monster storm puts N.J. on edge

Nor'easter could be the worst since '92

BY MARYANN SPOTO
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

Communities up and down the New Jersey coast are keeping a wary eye on high tides today as they brace for what could be the region's worst nor'easter in nearly two decades, prompting flashbacks of the 1992 storm that brought 55-mph winds and major tidal flooding to places previously thought to be cocooned.

As the remnants of Tropical Storm Ida continued churning up the Atlantic seaboard from North Carolina last night, Cape May County already had declared a state of emergency.

"This could be one of the top six storms that Cape May County has ever experienced," said Lenora Boninfante, a spokeswoman for the county.

In addition, the National Weather Service issued coastal flood warnings, along with high wind and high surf advisories, that will remain in effect from Sandy Hook to Cape May at least through this evening.

Emergency management officials feared sustained strong winds would prevent water from subsiding, making major flooding a concern with each successive high tide.

Though most coastal communities had made it through yesterday without flooding, the real challenge was going to be overnight and early this morning, when winds

[See **STORM**, Page 9]

Ida marches up the East Coast. PAGE 10

Search ends for missing fishermen. PAGE 13

Where there's smoke, there's troubling news

BY MIKE STOBBE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA — Cigarette smoking rose slightly for the first time in almost 15 years, dashing health officials' hopes that the U.S. smoking rate had moved permanently below 20 percent.

A little less than 21 percent of U.S. adults said they smoked, according to a 2008 national survey by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's up slightly from the year before, when just 19.8 percent said they were smokers. It also is the first increase in adult smoking since 1994, experts noted.

The increase was so small, it could be just a blip, so health officials and experts say smoking prevalence is flat, not rising. But they are unhappy.

"Clearly, we've hit a wall in reducing adult smoking," said Vince Willmore, spokesman for the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, a Washington, D.C.-based research and advocacy organization.

There's a general perception that smoking is a fading public health danger. Feeding that perception are indoor smoking laws, cigarette taxes and Congress' recent decision to allow the Food and Drug Administration to

[See **SMOKING**, Page 11]

Tamiflu demand has pharmacies feverishly mixing

BY ALEXI FRIEDMAN
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

Pharmacists in New Jersey and across the country are dealing with the shortage of pre-bottled liquid Tamiflu by creating their own compound for the formula using Tamiflu capsules and sweet syrup.

The outbreak of the H1N1 virus and an early seasonal flu have caused a spike in demand for the antiviral prescription medicine, said John Norton,

a spokesman for the National Community Pharmacists Association. While compounding is not an unusual practice among pharmacists, it is often done when no commercial alternative exists. Pre-bottled liquid Tamiflu has always been readily available.

"There's definitely a big increase in (requests for) the liquid Tamiflu compound," said Norton, whose group represents more than 20,000 independent pharmacies across the country, includ-

ing 650 in New Jersey.

Because a vaccine for H1N1, or swine flu, is also in short supply, "parents are running to pharmacies to get the liquid Tamiflu," he said. The formula reduces the severity of the virus and is for children or anyone else unable to swallow the adult capsules. Chain pharmacies like Walgreens and CVS also create the compound.

At Panther Valley Pharmacy in Allamuchy, Anny Chan was ready when the

H1N1 virus and seasonal flu hit. Like other pharmacists, Chan already had stocked up on the anti-viral Tamiflu capsules. Using guidelines set by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Chan has been creating the liquid formula using crushed-up capsules and cherry syrup, a process that she said takes about 20 minutes for a 10-dose bottle.

Though the winter flu season is not

[See **FLU**, Page 9]

Columbia football digs out from bottom of the pile

BY MATTHEW STANMYRE
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

Every Friday morning, Robert Buchner makes certain his uniform is washed and the wrinkles are smoothed out.

He wants to make sure everyone at school knows he's a football player.

The pride Buchner feels this year when he walks the hallways at Columbia High School in Maplewood on game day makes him shake his head. It was only last season that players would hide their uniforms under sweatshirts or when Monday morning announcements simply reminded students that another loss had been added to Columbia's painful streak.

"We'd be the butt of everyone's jokes," said Buchner, a senior offensive lineman. "It was just bad."

Columbia's losing streak hit 45 games last season. The Cougars missed the state playoffs for the 26th year in a row. The program remained among the worst in New Jersey.

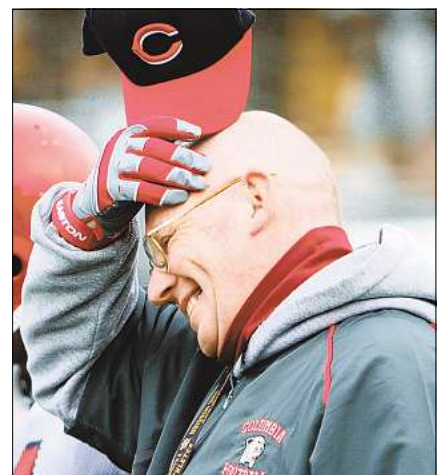
Then it all changed. Behind a new coach, a new conference and the collective will of the team, Columbia (8-1) will make its first playoff appearance since 1982, when it travels to Westfield tomorrow for a North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 game. Kickoff is 1 p.m.

It's hard to imagine a school in the playoffs more ebullient than Columbia, where a once-moribund program has restored pride to Friday nights in Maplewood and South Orange.

"The school is just crazy over it," Buchner said.

"The stands here now are packed. It's not just the

[See **COLUMBIA**, Page 9]



Coach Dave Curtin came to Columbia High School in Maplewood three seasons ago, when losing was an every-week occurrence. Now the school is competing in the playoffs.

NOAH K. MURRAY/THE STAR-LEDGER

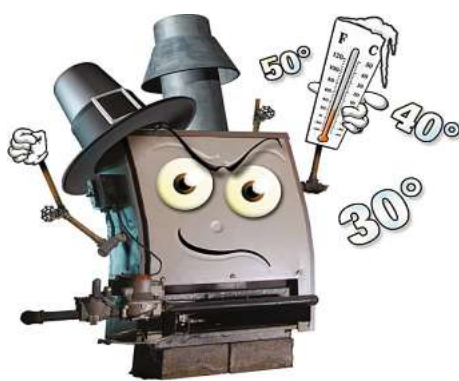


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