

Scotch Plains Man Walks Across Country With 90 Pounds of Water

By SHANNA C. KELLY
Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — Two pairs of shoes, three days' supply of food, two water purifiers, bear mace, a propane tank and 90 pounds of water: these are among a few of the items that James Leitner is traveling with on his 3,215-mile walk across the country, a distance symbolic to how far the average person in Tanzania walks in a year to get water.

At 11 a.m. on May 17, Mr. Leitner, a 23-year-old from Scotch Plains and a 2015 graduate from the University of Delaware, embarked on the first mile of his walk from Princeton, N.J., to San Francisco, Calif., while pulling a cargo container of 90 pounds of water attached to a waist harness.

This walk is an opportunity for Mr. Leitner to raise money for the water problems in Tanzania through his GoFundMe donation site as well as to draw attention to the water insecurities here in America. Mr. Leitner's route across the country was specifically created based off these water insecurities.

"My overall goal with the cross-country trip is just to be able to make it across country safely and inform people that are following my story as well as people that I meet on the cross-country trip of just how forgotten we do take water," Mr. Leitner said.

Mr. Leitner plans to walk around 20 miles each day, which is about a marathon a day. He estimates that the trip will take about six months to complete with room for extra rest days, which represents the accumulated time that someone in Tanzania spends on average walking to get water each year.

His minimum goal is to raise \$75,000. Donation links can be found on his site Missioncleanwater.com, which Mr. Leitner will then donate to the Philadelphia Serengeti Alliance, a nonprofit that has as its objective to build wells and rebuild broken wells in Tanzania.

According to Stephen Dunne, the vice-president of the Philadelphia Serengeti Alliance, the nonprofit started off as a literacy project since a lot of their efforts related to girls and women.

"It's a struggle for them to get an education because girls typically will spend essentially half a day carrying water back and forth," said John Gummere, Philadelphia Serengeti Alliance secretary. "And so they're so exhausted they can't really succeed in school, and adult women who do this are really unable to pursue a business or a career."

According to Mr. Dunne, Mr. Leitner's goal of raising \$75,000 will enable the creation of three new wells and the repair of 15 wells. Since each well helps 300 to 500 people, 10 to 20 villages, more than 10,000 people will be helped by Mr. Leitner's cross-country trip.

Mr. Leitner's commitment to aiding the water efforts across the globe was first sparked during a final for his history class at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. The final required students to research water, food, or energy. Mr. Leitner chose to research water where he learned that one billion people in the world do not have access to clean drinking water.

He then started donating to nonprofits and fundraising until his sophomore year at the University of Delaware when he decided to start a project on his own. Mr. Leitner began to meet with professors about his project and came in contact with the Philadelphia Serengeti Alliance. Together Mr. Leitner and the nonprofit fundraised as well as created projects where Mr. Leitner had the opportunity to travel to Tanzania.

"It really made an emotional impact for me to see it actually directly affecting the community," Mr. Leitner said about his trip to Tanzania.

According to Mr. Dunne, water is the building block of life and new

breaker, a tent for shelter and has familiarized himself with early onset signs of tornadoes and extreme weather so that he can quickly seek shelter.

According to Mr. Dunne, Mr.



Courtesy of Beatrice Kimmel

READY TO WALK... James Leitner, 23, of Scotch Plains is geared up with his backpack and has cargo containers of 90 pounds of water for his 3,215-mile walk across country, a distance symbolic to how far the average person in Tanzania walks in a year to get water.

water wells can completely transform a village by providing more economic opportunities, allowing girls to go to school, and more.

After college Mr. Leitner moved to West Virginia for the rock climbing and outdoors, where he connected with the running community. He then created a goal of running a marathon a month with 45 pounds of water to symbolize the struggle that people face to get water in all the weather conditions in a year. He started his first marathon in May 2016 and completed his last one in April 2017.

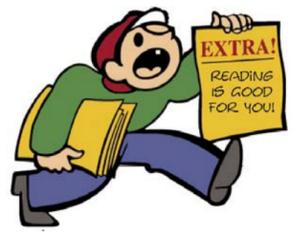
To train for the marathons, Mr. Leitner followed a typical marathon routine with a few adjustments, which consisted of three shorter runs at a faster pace during the week, increasing from five miles each week, and one longer run on the weekend. The other two weekdays he held the five gallons of water above his head for as long as possible and the second weekend day was a run with the water to get accustomed to the weight.

This training, as well as his outdoor trips and rock climbing in West Virginia, helped him prepare for his trip across country.

"My main goal was just to get comfortable in nature," Mr. Leitner said. "As much as it is physical, most of it is mental, and that's a big emotional roller coaster that I'm extremely excited for."

Additionally, Mr. Leitner prepared for the trip by looking at all the camp grounds along the way that he can stop at. He plans to utilize these camp grounds as well as his University of Delaware alumnae community, national and state forests, public lands and apps such as "Couchsurfing Travel App" for places to sleep.

As far as weather conditions go, Mr. Leitner has rain gear, a Wind-



Christina M. Hinke for The Westfield Leader and The Times

905 APARTMENTS... Above is an architectural drawing of the 905 multi-family housing that is proposed at 750 Walnut Avenue in Cranford by Hartz Mountain Industries LLC. Hartz is seeking to rezone the commercial space and naming the 30.5-acre parcel an area in need of redevelopment. They are to be heard Wednesday, June 7 by the Cranford Planning Board. Hartz is proposing a two-phase build out of the apartments, that would also include two pools, two clubhouses, parking, new driveways, and a new traffic light at Walnut and Behner Place. Market rate units would be a mix of one- and two-bedroom apartments, and affordable housing units would be a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments, with the plan estimating to add 1,846 people to the population.

Lance Bill to Crack Down On Junk Drugs Advances

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Leonard Lance (R-7th) has secured passage of his legislation, H.R. 2376, the Drug Diversion and Counterfeit Crackdown Act, through the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee as an amendment to the FDA Reauthorization Act. The legislation cracks down on counterfeit drugs entering the United States.

According to the Congressman, many American patients are buying and using bogus drugs disguised as reputable brands and today's effort will increase the penalties for counterfeiters.

"Counterfeit drugs are flooding into the United States and too many Americans are falling victim to knock-offs that have infiltrated the U.S. supply chain. These counterfeit drugs contain harmful ingredients and incor-

rect or expired active ingredients," Mr. Lance said. "Cancer patients think they are taking the correct chemotherapy medicine, but these fraudsters instead give the unsuspecting patient 50 percent of the real treatment. These criminals take the risk knowing the punishment is a minor offense in our criminal code. That needs to change. We need to strengthen the system and protect patients."

In the United States, for a new drug to reach the market it must proceed through a rigorous vetting process through the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Once approved, these therapies are then marketed in U.S. Counterfeiters mimic these drugs with knock-off medications often created in third-world countries — well outside the scrutiny of the FDA and involving a host of poorly produced ingredients. The Lance bill would close loopholes in the law, stiffen penalties for counterfeiters and discourages this market from growing.

Aging Services Kiosk Coming to Area

REGION — Union County residents seeking information about services for seniors age 60 and older can attend any of six Aging Services Kiosk (ASK) events in April to speak with experienced staff from the county's Department of Human Services, Division on Aging.

The June dates and locations will be: Thursday, June 15, Westfield Community Center, 558 West Broad Street, Westfield, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Monday, June 19, Mountainside Municipal Building, 1385 Route 22 East Mountainside, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.; and Wednesday, June 21, Fanwood Public Library, 5 Forest Road, Fanwood, 10 a.m. to noon.

Garwood Rocks! Sunday From 10-5

GARWOOD — The fourth annual Garwood Rocks! street fair, hosted by the Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce (GWACC), will take place this Sunday, June 4, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (rain or shine) in downtown Garwood. Center Street will be closed to traffic from South Avenue to Unami Park.

Garwood is revving up to celebrate spring in style with a car show, an all-day live stage featuring numerous bands, entertainment, vendors, festival food and a KidZone. Strolling entertainment and stilt walkers will entertain festival goers. Many artisans and craftspeople will be displaying paintings, pottery, photography, handmade jewelry, furniture plus many other unique items. The KidZone, with rides and activities along with a petting zoo and pony rides, will be operating all day.

Also included will be a car show featuring over 200 automobiles hosted by Hot Rod Mike Productions. Beginning at South Avenue live musical entertainment and a Beer and Wine garden, sponsored by Lee Frankel of Garwood's own The Crossroads, will be featured.

On the Crossroad stage, The Valencia School of Music will kick it off at 10 a.m. followed by the RMC RockShop Band at 11:30 a.m. Next up will be the Barry Blues Band at 1 p.m. At 2:30 p.m. the sounds of New Jersey's Own Hoi Polloi followed by The Benjamins at 4 p.m.

The Union County Police Department will be distributing free bicycle helmets on a first-come first-serve basis to attendees along with literature on bicycle and child-seat safety. There will also be a sign-up sheet to possibly win a free car seat for later pickup. The Union County Sheriff's Office Identification Unit will also be in attendance, creating free digital "wanted" posters and with literature and a sign up process to have fingerprints and/or photo IDs taken for children.

The GWACC booth will be giving away three pop-up hammocks.

Admission is free to Garwood Rocks! Please note that pets, skateboarding, and roller blading are prohibited in the Garwood Rocks! area.

For further information, please contact the GWACC at (908) 233-3021, or visit the website www.gwaccnj.com and look for Street Fairs.

Summer Hours Begin At Town Hall

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Township of Scotch Plains has announced its summer hours took effect May 25 at Town Hall. The summer schedule is as follows: Monday to Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to noon. These hours are effective through Labor Day, September 4.



WINNING GARDEN... The Garden Club of Westfield congratulates the April winner of the Garden of the Month. Pictured above, this garden belongs to Arline Monaco of 415 Colonial Avenue. The spring flowers, many yellow and purple pansies, with splashes of other spring flowers — azaleas, geraniums, hydrangeas and barberry bushes in reds and pinks — add pops of color. Mrs. Monaco has always been a "gardener's gardener" and changes her display with the seasons.

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1827 East Second Street
Scotch Plains, NJ 07076
(908) 322-7000
www.bramnicklaw.com



Pharmacy News

by Mitul P. Patel, PharmD., RPh.
Pharmacy Manager

TOPICAL CREAMS FOR JOINT PAIN

Arthritis sufferers often rely on oral "non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs" (NSAIDs) to reduce inflammation and joint pain. As effective as such medications as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil); naproxen (Aleve); celecoxib (Celebrex); and aspirin may be in these respects, these NSAIDs may also increase the risk of cardiovascular disorders and gastric irritation/bleeding. With these potential side effects in mind, arthritis sufferers may want to try the topical NSAID diclofenac (Voltaren, Pennsaid). These topical medications may exert as strong a pain-relieving effect as oral NSAIDs while being safer. Voltaren gel 1% has been approved by the FDA for treatment of osteoarthritis of the knee and hand, while Pennsaid liquid has been approved for knee arthritis. These medications

act directly on the affected areas. Although arthritis creams are OTC products, you still need to use them properly. Follow the package directions and wash your hands before and after you apply the cream. Never touch your eyes or mucus membranes when you have arthritis cream on your hands. Please call or visit for more information. We are a full-service pharmacy that does compounding and veterinarian compounding on site. As a family owned business, we pride ourselves in giving our customers our best service; we offer free prescription delivery for maximum convenience.

HINT: Topical NSAIDs are most effective for mild to severe osteoarthritis in joints that are close to the skin's surface, such as the hands and knees.

Fanwood Pharmacy

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Please email your questions to: Mit@FanwoodPharmacy.com or visit our website at: www.FanwoodPharmacy.com