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## Flooded streets, abandoned cars and a wild night for police

By DAVID POLAKIEWICZ  
EDITOR

It was a wild night weatherwise for the Watchung Hills police departments as the remnants of Hurricane Ida pounded the area during the evening of Wednesday, Sept. 1, dumping large amounts of rain and causing flash flooding.

Abandoned cars lined roads as some motorists braved rising waters and tried unsuccessfully to forge through. One clung to a tree before being rescued by Warren firefighters. By late morning today, Thursday, Sept. 2, flooding had subsided in Watchung and Warren Township and police there were dealing mainly with a cleanup.

It was a different story in Long Hill Township, as numerous areas remained flooded into the weekend. The Stirling Street Fair scheduled for Sunday was cancelled.

Long Hill police even took a direct hit. By 6 a.m., Thursday, flood water had risen so high in the department's Mercer Street headquarters that officers were forced to evacuate. By week's end, police had relocated to temporary

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>> PHOTOS ONLINE

For more photos from Hurricane Ida, please see Page 14..



Long Hill Township police dealt with stranded cars during last week's storm, like this one near the intersection of Main Avenue and Valley Road.

## Stirling business owners feel storm's impact

By NICOLE ZANCHELLI  
STAFF WRITER

**LONG HILL TWP.** – Hurricane Ida's onslaught of flooding turned downtown Stirling into a standing lake.

On Saturday, Sept. 4, store owners on Main Avenue were just starting to part the sea and get back to business following the storm's pounding of the area three nights earlier.

While the river of water on Main Avenue had significantly receded since the day after the storm, many parking lots, sidewalks and store entrances remained flooded.

Cinder Blocks and plywood stacked the doorways of several businesses to act as a blockade against the rising waters.

Those efforts proved useless for the gluten-free bakery Two Fields Bakeshop, which still had nearly three inches of water pooled at its entrance. The bakeshop remained closed on Saturday.

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## LEGACY OF JIMMY STRAINE LIVES ON 20 YEARS AFTER 9/11

By NICOLE ZANCHELLI  
STAFF WRITER

**WARREN TWP.** – He was known as the great connector, the glue that held friendships together.

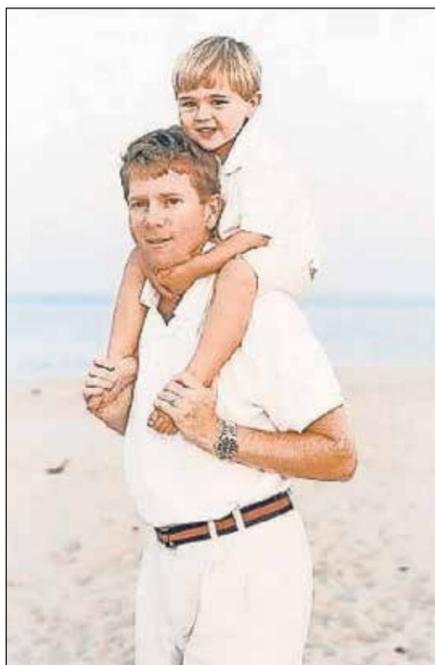
Kind, genuine, loyal, humble, funny – the list goes on to describe the former Warren resident Jimmy Straine, yet doesn't seem to come close to describing the positive aura he has left behind with those who knew him.

Straine was killed in the Sept. 11, 2001 attack while working at Cantor Fitzgerald in the World Trade Center. He was 36 years old. At the time of his death, Straine, his wife and children were living in Oceanport. He was a 1983 graduate of Watchung Hills Regional High School.

Straine is survived by his wife, Trish and his two sons, Finn and Charlie. Straine's youngest son, Charlie was born just six days before he was killed.

"He was just an amazing, beautiful soul," said Tom

PLEASE SEE LEGACY, PAGE 11



Jimmy Straine with his son, Finn. Jimmy Straine, a former Warren Township resident who was killed in the 9/11 World Trade Center attack, is remembered fondly by friends who have held an annual golf tournament in his honor.

## Warren to audit affordable housing fee collections

By DAVID POLAKIEWICZ  
EDITOR

**WARREN TWP.** – Seeking to find out why residential builders were undercharged on affordable housing fees, the Township Committee is poised to hire an outside auditor.

A resolution hiring Mount Arlington-based Nisivoccia to conduct the review may be on the committee's agenda as soon as its next meeting on Thursday, Sept. 23. Nisivoccia has emerged as the front-run-



JOLANTA MAZIARZ

ner for the job after several firms were approached recently.

The committee is trying to determine why residential builders were apparently charged 1 percent of the assessed value of their projects, as opposed to the 1.5 percent mandated in a township ordinance.

Collected fees are placed

in the township's affordable housing trust fund. The municipality has been collecting them since 1994. Under state guidelines, the fee amount has risen over time from its original .5 percent level to 1.5 percent.

The township can use the trust fund for affordable housing-related costs. That includes preparation of affordable housing plans, a unit rehab program or litigation costs such as payments to a

PLEASE SEE AUDIT, PAGE 11

>> HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PREVIEW INSIDE



**High School Football 2021**, a special 64-page section focusing on the upcoming season, is included in this issue. The section is filled with stories, written by sports writers with New Jersey Hills Media Group, publishers of this newspaper. You'll find in-depth stories on each team in the company's circulation area (28 in all), schedules, photos and more. The section can also be found online at [echoes-sentinel.com](http://echoes-sentinel.com).

You may need to double-tap the link if you are on a mobile device. You can find the section by scrolling down to the "Special Sections" on the home page.

We hope you enjoy the section.



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