

Evarts lasting love for local youth

Larry Evarts has started a nonprofit corporation so youth with disabilities can play sports.

By MIKE BAILEY

Messenger Post Staff

Larry Evarts has been told he's crazy.

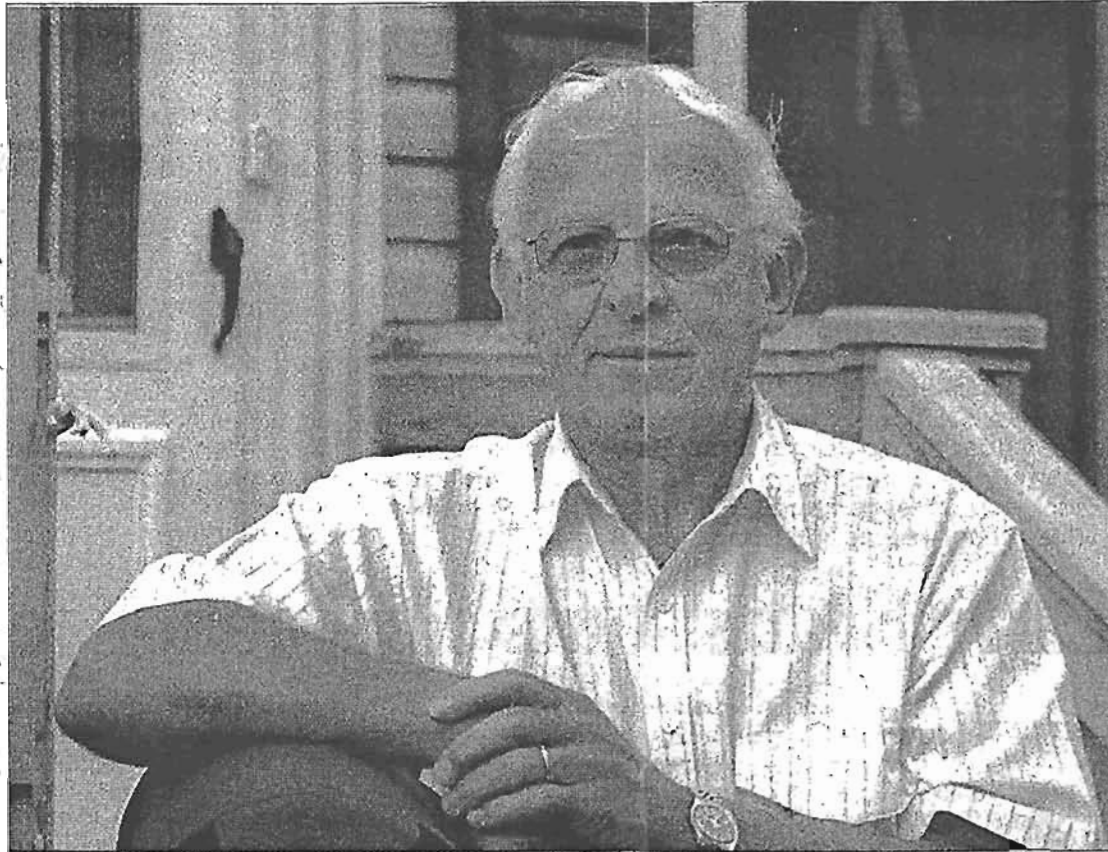
People have let him know that the project he is about to embark on is way too big and that there is no way he can handle it.

These people don't know Larry Evarts very well.

The Greece resident has always enjoyed sports. Growing up in Naples on a farm near Bristol Mountain, Evarts played several sports in high school and excelled at soccer. Most of his five children and 11 grandchildren were also into sports and he always supported them in their activities.

If that wasn't enough to keep the retired Eastman Kodak Co. worker busy, he ventured into several outside-the-family-projects, including starting the Greece Buccaneers Soccer Program in 1984, as well as acting as director for other soccer programs, like New York State West Youth Soccer, Soccer Start, and Top Soccer.

But it was his involvement with Top Soccer, a soccer pro-



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BAILEY

Greece's Larry Evarts has started a nonprofit corporation that is designed to give youth with disabilities more opportunities to play sports.

Sonia Evarts worked at BOCES for 27 years and he often helped out with some of the programs that she ran. He found it satisfying, and decided to do more.

"We have always wanted to help kids meet their needs," Larry Evarts said. "That includes all kids. They all

As Top Soccer grew, Evarts saw the need for expansion. More children were signing up but the program wasn't big enough to hold them.

This is where his big idea comes in.

Evarts decided to step down as director of Top Soccer and start his own corporation, Special Needs Sports Corp. The

soccer, but golf, basketball, volleyball, bowling and a long list of other sports that they may be interested in.

On top of this undertaking, Evarts also decided, after seeing a piece on ESPN about a college that had a basketball team for students with disabilities, that he would open his corporation up to adults as

for me to handle," he said. "I think we will be just fine."

More than 90 children have participated in the Top Soccer program in the last six years, and Evarts hopes to increase that starting this year with the addition of more sports and the adult program.

In March of this year, Evarts, who is president and treasurer, chose his wife to be his secretary, his good friend Mike Maloni to be vice president, and his daughter-in-law Brenda Evarts to be second vice president. Doug Miller, formerly of the Rochester Rhinos, will serve as a consultant.

"I have surrounded myself with great people who all have a lot to offer," he said. "Mike owns his own business and has a great business sense. Brenda works at the University of Rochester and does grant writing and my wife has many years experience at BOCES. We are all very excited."

The way he envisions it, SNSC will have three sessions - fall, winter and summer - with the fall session getting under way in two weeks. The fall session will offer golf and soccer with the possibility of tennis. The following seasons will offer many other sports, chosen mostly by the level of interest of the children.

The youth division will be for kids ages 4-19. That will be broken down into two categories for ages 4-6 and 7-19. The adult division will be for

► **EVARTS**, from page 14B

ages 19 and up.

The sports will be instructional in nature with the possibility of live games as well. The program is open to all children and adults with dis-

abilities in Monroe County or beyond. While the sites for many of the activities may be in Greece, Evarts is still looking into permanent places to host all the sports.

And since the corporation is a nonprofit, Evarts will also need help in other ways. He

received \$1,000 from Greece Rotary to help with expenses and has received donated golf clubs, golf balls and basketballs.

He has figured the price for each participant to be \$27 for the seven-week program which will include a jersey

with the company logo, insurance and awards at the season-ending picnic.

Volunteers will also be needed to coach the different sports.

"This is all about the kids," Evarts said. "This is not about the board or making money. We don't even get a stipend. We are

just trying to give them the opportunities that they deserve.

Anyone interested in helping with the SNSC can contact Evarts at (585) 865-9320.

Mike Bailey can be reached at (585) 247-9200, Ext. 308, or a mbailey@mpnewspapers.com