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# They might be Giants fans, but home is in S.J.

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Sunday, December 9, 2007

By CHUCK DARROW  
Courier-Post Staff  
SHAMONG

It's a scene that will be repeated throughout South Jersey this afternoon: fans, proudly adorned in their heroes' colors, will gather at bars from Mantua to Medford to watch the television broadcast of the Eagles-New York Giants game at Lincoln Financial Field.

It'll be no different at the Pic-A-Lilli Inn, the venerable, woody tavern on Route 206 on the edge of the Pine Barrens. No different, that is, save for one significant detail: Many of those watching the contest on the Pic's giant, wall-blocking screen will be garbed not in the midnight green of the Birds, but in the blue-and-white worn by the hated "Jints."

And no, these loyal, if misguided, souls don't have a death wish. They'll merely be exercising their freedom to choose membership in The South Jersey Wrecking Crew, the collective name of their loosely knit group of

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SCOTT ANDERSON/Courier-Post  
Football fans (from left) Stephanie and Joel Olivero of Maple Shade and Herbie Brower of Vincentown watch a Giants-Dolphins game in October at the Pic-A-Lilli Inn in Shamong.

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South Jersey-based Giants-lovers.

The Wrecking Crew -- the moniker is a tip of the helmet to the team's "Big Blue Wrecking Crew" nickname -- was founded two years ago by former Shamong Mayor Colin Cumming. He's an Elizabeth native whose passion for the Giants didn't dim when his job as a computer technician took him to Burlington County.



"One day, I was sitting at my friend's house and we started talking about getting some people together for Giants' games," recalled Cumming, 48, as he waited for last Sunday's Giants-Chicago Bears game to begin.



Cumming's first move was to create a Web site ([www.southjerseywreckingcrew.com](http://www.southjerseywreckingcrew.com)). But meeting in cyberspace wasn't satisfying enough. Cumming wanted a communal spot where he and like-minded fans could gather to celebrate or commiserate.

"So I went to Pic-A-Lilli and said, 'If I plug your restaurant, will you guarantee us a TV?' They did, and it took off."

Bar owner Bonnie Schneider, 34, went Cumming one better: She allowed him to post a sign soliciting Giants loyalists.

This season, Cumming said, an average of 15 to 20 people show up at Pic-A-Lilli, more when the game can only be seen on satellite TV, rather than on broadcast or cable networks.

For Giants fans -- most of them appear to be Central and North Jersey transplants like Cumming -- Sundays at Pic-A-Lilli offer the opportunity to feel a little less isolated in a region where dedication to the local pro football franchise borders on the religious.

Typical of The Wrecking Crew's members are Mark and Kay Descoteau of Tabernacle. Longtime Giants loyalists from Mercer County, they found it somewhat hard to cope with the nonstop Eaglesmania stoked primarily by the region's sports-talk radio outlets.

"Philly stations are kind of annoying," said Mark Descoteau, a 51-year-old pest-control business manager. "Before the season starts, the Eagles are winning the Super Bowl."

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SCOTT ANDERSON/Courier-Post  
New York Giants fans gather at the Pic-A-Lilli Inn in Shamong.



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But things got better for the couple after fate brought them to the Wrecking Crew.

"We happened to come in here one day and saw the sign behind the bar," Mark Descoteau explained. "We got to know the guys. It's a good night out."

Being able to share his passion for the Giants keeps Randy Balcom returning to Pic-A-Lilli.

"I saw it on the Internet and couldn't believe (they gathered) so close to me," said Balcom, a 52-year-old IT specialist who originally hails from Jamestown, N.Y., but now resides in Marlton.

The Wrecking Crew has certainly helped make Sundays a lot brighter for Pic bartender Lauren Wojno, 27, of Marlton. "I was brought up rooting for the Giants. Both my parents are Giants fans," she said. "It's great there's a local bar out in the woods supporting the Giants."

Given Eagles fans' fabled animosity toward partisans of other NFL teams, bar owner Schneider appeared to risk turning her bar into a war zone when she welcomed Cumming and his minions. But so far that hasn't been the case.

"People don't like seeing the sign," she admitted. "There's comments. But no one's ever had a bar brawl over it."

While there's certainly some friction between the two groups, the prevailing attitude among Pic-A-Lilli's Eagles-rooting patrons seems to be more pity than scorn.

"We don't understand why all these Giants fans are here, but they can do whatever they want to do," said Jeff Wilson, a 45-year-old house mover from Pitman.

Another Eagles fan who displayed a live-and-let-live philosophy is Shannon Kendzior, a 30-year-old athletic trainer.

"Let them root for who they want to root for, and let us root for who we want to root for," she reasoned.

"It's just nice to go be able to go somewhere where (different fans) can get along."

Reach Chuck Darrow at (856) 486-2442 or [cdarrow@courierpostonline.com](mailto:cdarrow@courierpostonline.com)

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The Eagles aren't the only team who've had a bad season this year. Some have worse records than the Eagles as well. Bad season, yes.... Losers? NO!

Posted by: **it'sallgood** on Sun Dec 09, 2007 10:38 am



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Can you say losers?

Posted by: **Buffy** on Sun Dec 09, 2007 5:28 am

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