

The Valley PRESS

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AVON • CANTON • FARMINGTON • SIMSBURY

Band of Protection



Courtesy Photo

Members of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) recently brought the tradition of Rakshabandhan to public safety crews in Farmington. Rakshabandhan (tying a band of protection) is a sacred ritual in Hinduism memorialized as an important festival. Culturally, it is a tradition to appreciate and honor those who, as a part of their duty, protect the society and put their own life in harm's way for the greater good. A symbolic thread, Rakhi, is tied to their wrist with a wish and a prayer for their protection from harm. The sacred thread represents love and sublime sentiments. It also signifies strength of positive thoughts over all worldly means of protection. Apart from conveying the deep sense of gratitude, this festival also champions a broad vision of thinking of the entire world as one family – a core belief in Hinduism. For the last few years with the police, HSS has celebrated the tradition with veterans, police, firefighters, and other first responders in towns across U.S. and in Connecticut.

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Local political races heat up

By Ted Glanzer
Staff Writer

The presidential contest isn't the only election that holds intrigue in Connecticut.

All 36 seats in the state Senate and 151 seats in the House of Representatives are up for grabs Nov. 3, with several closely contested races in the Farmington Valley.

At stake are two-year terms of, notably, how lawmakers will steer the state through Connecticut's challenging financial, health and social issues.

After a brief shift in the balance of power in the state Senate from 2016-18, when there was an 18-18 split after years of Democratic control,

the Democrats regained the majority 23-13 by gaining five seats in the 2018 election.

That margin was winnowed to 22-14 from the special elections that resulted when various lawmakers were appointed to Gov. Ned Lamont's administration.

In the House, the Democrats also have a clear majority (91-60) over their Republican counterparts.

Farmington Valley voters will have a hand in deciding three state Senate seats (the 5th, 6th and 8th districts), and four House of Representative seats (the 16th, 17th, 19th and 21st districts).

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Valley PRESS

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Wild about animals



Jennifer Nordlund of Avon sent these photos and writes, "We occasionally find a 'Walking Stick' insect on our porch. Apparently a family of them lives nearby. This is a mid-size one, hanging out with his 'Daddy Long Leg' spider buddy. We've also seen a larger walking stick hanging out with its baby." Jay Kaplan of Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton writes, "Walking sticks or 'stick bugs,' as they are commonly known, number over 3,000 species, and are found on all continents except Antarctica. The largest stick bugs, found in the tropics, measure over two feet in length. Our species, the northern walking stick, does not approach that size. Walking sticks are not rare, but they are not often seen as their camouflage makes them difficult to find." If you have a photo of a critter that you've spotted locally, submit it for this segment to submissions@turleyct.com. Include "Wild About Animals" and the animal spotted in the subject line, as well as your town of residence. All photos will be considered for publication. Due to the high volume of submissions, we regret not every photo will be published.



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Arbitration panel upholds termination of Simsbury sergeant

By **Ted Glanzer**
Staff Writer

SIMSBURY – An arbitration panel recently upheld the termination of a Simsbury police sergeant who was accused of secretly recording conversations with superior officers.

In a 2-1 decision dated Sept. 1, the state Board of Mediation and Arbitration panel upheld the termination of Sgt. Jason Trombly, who had been employed by the Simsbury Police Department since 2008.

In a brief statement, Town Manager Maria Capriola said the town was pleased with the decision.

“We are pleased that the arbitration panel upheld

the decision of the Police Commission to discharge Mr. Trombly. We wish him the best in his future endeavors,” she said.

Attorney Jeffrey Ment, who represented Trombly in the grievance procedure, called the decision “terrible” and said he was “shocked” at the outcome.

“The idea the arbitrator believed the chief conducted a fair investigation is stretching the imagination to the furthest extent possible,” Ment said. “The chief clearly could not have possibly conducted the investigation considering he was the complainant, or the victim so to speak, investigating an issue that he was a witness to. If someone else

investigated the matter, the chief would have been a witness because he would have been the complainant.”

The case arose from an April 2019 written warning Chief of Police Nick Boulter issued Trombly for deficiencies occurring during the midnight shift, for which Trombly was the supervisor. (Trombly filed a grievance about the written warning, which was also heard by an arbitration panel in May.)

During a meeting with union representatives, who were also fellow police officers, about the discipline, Trombly said he had “recorded” a conversation he had with the administration, including one in which

Boulter had disparaged officers in the department.

Concerned about a subordinate secretly recording conversations with the chief, the union representatives brought the matter to Boulter’s attention.

Boulter began looking into the matter and interviewed Trombly, who denied making any recordings of the administration, including the chief.

During the inquiry, Trombly gave conflicting written answers from the verbal interview he had given Boulter.

Further, police officers testified that they had conversations with Trombly, who admitted having recordings of Boulter mak-

ing disparaging comments about other officers.

In addition, Trombly said he had taken notes of conversations with Boulter, which Boulter during the inquiry requested to be copied on a thumb drive. The metadata from the information turned over to Boulter, according to the arbitration decision, had been altered and was not the original document. When Boulter requested the original, Trombly insisted he had already turned it over.

In September 2019, Boulter recommended Trombly’s termination, citing “criticism and malicious gossip,” insubordination, lack of respect and truthfulness.

“It is imperative that officers are truthful and honest in their dealings with supervisors,” Boulter wrote in his investigation. “There is no position for an officer in this Department who is untruthful and dishonest.”

The Simsbury Police Commission voted to fire Trombly in November 2019.

The arbitration panel, in a 25-page decision, upheld the termination, stating, “[i]t is clear that [Trombly] was not truthful in his conversations with Chief Boulter.”

“[W]e think that the grievant’s dishonesty was substantial,” the majority

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POLITICS from page 1

The Valley Press reached out to every Republican and Democratic candidate in the Farmington Valley to hear why they're running, what they believe are the important issues facing the state, the challenges of campaigning amid the pandemic and what messages they want delivered to voters.

8th Senate District

One of the most hotly contested races in the area is between Republican incumbent Kevin Witkos and Democratic challenger Melissa Osborne.

They're certainly familiar opponents, having run against each other in 2014 and 2018, races that Witkos, who works for Eversource in

community relations and economic development, won by 27 points and 13 points, respectively.

This year, Witkos, the Republican deputy minority leader, is running for his seventh term in the Senate in a district that includes Norfolk, Hartland, Canton, Simsbury, New Hartford, Avon, Barkhamsted, Colebrook and portions of Granby, Harwinton and Torrington. A retired police officer, he previously served as a state representative as well as on the Canton Board of Education.

He says the pandemic and resulting impact it has had on the state's finances compelled him to run again, as the state needs people experienced in the budget-making process to usher Connecticut through a chal-

lenging time.

"We need experienced leadership," he said, adding the budget surplus that resulted from the 18-18 tie in the Senate will "evaporate" this year.

He says getting through the public health crisis is also paramount, noting he did not like Lamont extending his emergency powers for another five months through February 2021.

"We don't have any information he's basing it on," Witkos said. "That's very concerning to me when you have thousands of people on forced unemployment because the state is not allowing businesses to reopen. I think we need a total overhaul of that whole process."

Witkos added the Department of Labor needs

to update its computer systems to the 21st century to expedited unemployment claims.

Connecticut also needs to continue to recruit and retain high-tech businesses and be more business friendly, Witkos said.

"We need to stop the mandates on businesses," he said. "We haven't even gotten to the \$15 minimum wage and people want to pass a living wage, which is \$23 an hour. We've got to stop that. That sends the wrong signal to businesses."

"We're perfectly situated between New York and Boston. And with COVID we've seen an influx of people and I'm just waiting to see what our tax revenues are on the personal income side."

Witkos said the state doesn't need to raise taxes

and needs to continue to find efficiencies.

Other major issues are the getting a deal done for recycling and waste for the 51 towns that are served by MIRA, as well as wildlife management, particularly with bears in the Farmington Valley and Litchfield County, he said.

Witkos says he has gotten creative this year while campaigning, bifurcating the race into two elections: Oct. 2 (the day absentee ballots go out) and Nov. 3 (the date of in-person voting).

He's opened a campaign "victory" headquarters and has a mobile billboard driving home his message. He attended BLM rallies in Avon and Canton ("we need to hold bad actors in police work accountable"), though he says he has not followed

the national political scene.

He did not support the police accountability bill that passed the General Assembly in the summer, saying, among other things, it was too broad and vague, leaving open the possibility, for example, of police officers not being insured because of too many lawsuits being filed against them, regardless of the legal actions' merits.

Osborne, an attorney, said she decided to run because she sees a changing political landscape in the district. She says bluntly that Witkos no longer shares the same values the residents in the 8th District share.

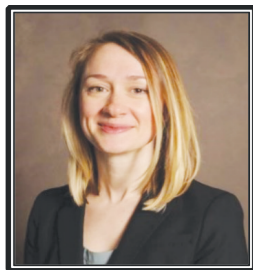
"This is not about him as person," she said. "He's a really nice guy but his votes are not what you'd expect

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Dr. Brandsdorfer is a cornea and external disease specialist who completed a fellowship at the University of Michigan Kellogg Eye Center. Dr. Brandsdorfer earned his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and did his residency at Montefiore Medical Center in New York.

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from the man you meet. The thing that caught my eye and catalyzed me is he voted against a bill that would provide emergency contraception for rape victims in hospitals. This is not a man who shares the values of the people in this district.”

She cited Witkos’ votes against a ban on allowing children under the age of 16 to possess semiautomatic weapons, a ban on bump stocks and a measure to remove firearms from someone who has recently had a domestic violence restraining order against them.

“Those votes don’t suggest he shares the values of the district that we share,” she said.

Osborne said campaigning during the pandemic has been difficult, but she also says everyone is struggling with the fallout from COVID-19.

She noted that her place of work - the court system - has been effectively closed for the past six months. Clients of hers are suffering because they are unable to resolve issues that require a

judge and they’re also experiencing economic impacts.

She only started door-knocking in September, and she said she’s surprised the number of people who are happy to see her and her fellow candidates.

To make up for the fewer number people she sees in person, she has significantly increased phone calls to voters.

She says people in the Farmington Valley as a whole are receptive and supportive of the BLM movement.

“That’s extraordinarily important that for the first time in history a civil rights movement is also coming from people who are not adversely affected,” she said. “White people are saying enough is enough. Almost as a result, it doesn’t make it a divisive campaign issue for us.”

She says she would have voted for the police accountability bill, understanding the concerns municipalities have over the potential for increased litigation.

“There are probably things that need tweaking,” she said. (The legislature convened a special session

this past week; the police accountability bill was not on the agenda). “It’s something that needs to be addressed in full session: a methodical, steadfast, deep dive into the issue.”

She said the biggest issue is with the removal of qualified immunity, noting that municipalities are the ones who hire and train and employ police officers and, therefore, are in the best position to deter bad apples from acting in bad ways.

“My opinion of the bill this summer is there is still work that needs to be done, but this was a moment in time and far greater injustices have occurred to Black and brown in people in this country than the costs of frivolous litigation, and it was a moment that could not pass us by.”

Top priorities in the state include economic recovery, which was needed before the pandemic hit, she said, as well as tackling “the behemoth that is Eversource” as well as Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, Osborne added.

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wrote. “It occurred over a number of months and included multiple conversations with Chief Boulter. It was not an isolated episode of dishonesty. Moreover he concocted a false storyline which no witness corroborated...we find that the evidence presented supports the grievant’s dishonesty and that the Town has produced a preponderance of the evidence that it had just cause to terminate the grievant.”

Ment, for his part, said Boulter’s investigation into Trombly’s conduct was inappropriate because Boulter was also a witness.

“I argued the linchpin of whether there was just cause

to terminate him is did he get a fair investigation?” Meant said. “Only from fair can you get just cause. ... If nothing else, the chief should not have conducted the investigation because the conflict of interest required the chief to be a witness in the investigation. But I was unsuccessful. Now the guy with an unblemished 11-year police career is tossed out.”

Ment said Trombly was disappointed with the decision, but said it was unlikely there would be an appeal to Superior Court, as it’s notoriously difficult to have an arbitrator’s decision overturned.

Furthermore, the people who approached the

chief about recordings were Trombly’s own union representatives.

Still, Ment did not hold back on what he thought of the decision.

“I think it was a joke,” he said. “This experience has taught me there is no such thing as justice in this system. ... Every turn when something could have went wrong [for Trombly, it went wrong for him.

“I’ve seen plenty of people who deserve to be terminated never get terminated. Then this guy, by the chief’s admission is a stellar police officer, he gets canned because the chief can’t stand the idea of someone questioning him and has the audacity to file a grievance.”

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She said Witkos has been at the Capitol for a combined 18 years and nothing “suggests he has the answers to economic recovery.”

As for Eversource, Osborne said Connecticut has one of the highest rates of electricity in the country as well as one of the poorest responses to major storms. She said she wants to take a holistic view of how energy is generated and provided in the state, something, she contended, Witkos won’t do as an employee of Eversource.

“Our district does not have a voice on energy,” she said. “We are being held hostage by a monopoly that exists with a right to profit even when it’s doing a bad job. Even during a year when

we don’t have a bad storm, we have still been voiceless in our district.”

Witkos said he takes each bill on its merits, and has contended that Osborne misrepresents his voting record.

He also waved off Osborne’s claims on energy, saying PURA sets electricity rates.

“She’s been running against me for five years,” he said. “I’m doing the job. I’m doing it well. I’ve worked harder this year than ever, which had to do with COVID and other issues. ... Melissa would rather just attack me and associate me with President Trump and Eversource energy.”

Further, Witkos said when PURA suspended a rate-hike increase over the

summer, he wrote testimony to repeal the increase.

“I always put my constituents first,” he said. “I’m one of 9,000 employees [of Eversource]. I don’t set the rates. PURA does.”

Osborne, however, said energy rates is a massive issue not just to individual consumers, but to businesses as well.

“It’s one of the biggest economic barriers to businesses and people in state,” she said. “As part-time legislators, we need to maintain jobs outside the legislature. I still will. But we need to make sure our employment outside the legislature doesn’t keep us from doing job we need to do inside the legislature.”

Osborne works as a mediator and said she has a

proven record of helping solve large, complex legal and financial problems while practicing law. She’s served as a volunteer on Simsbury’s Charter Revision Commission, Clean Energy Task Force and is currently a Zoning Alternate. She’s also served as the vice chair of the Child Welfare and Juvenile Law Committee of the Connecticut Bar Association and on the legislative subcommittee of its family law section.

“I am a qualified, competent, professional individual who has run a successful law practice,” she said. “I can help take parties who are at opposite polar ends and come together and settle cases. That’s what we need in Hartford. At end of the day, I’m not one to start the

fight, but I’m one to absolutely finish it if I have to as a litigator.”

6th Senate District

In what’s sure to be a closely watched race, incumbent Republican Genarro Bizzarro will face state Rep. Rick Lopes in a rematch of the February 2019 special election for the 6th Senate District seat that Bizzarro won 53% to Lopes’ 47%.

The 6th District covers New Britain, Berlin and a small portion of Farmington.

The 2019 special election, which was marked by low voter turnout (just over 7,315 votes were cast in that election. By comparison, 30,000 votes were cast in the 2016 presidential election) was necessitated when longtime state Sen. Terry

Gerratana vacated her seat to take a position with the Lamont administration. (This is the seat Republicans flipped to cut the majority from 23-13 to 22-14 in the Senate).

Bizzarro, an attorney, says the state is at “crossroads.”

“Now, more than ever, we need legislators who understand the challenges faced by working middle-class families, small business owners, and overburdened taxpayers,” he said. “I have been a warrior for the forgotten middle-class families of Connecticut, and I will continue to fight for them in Hartford.”

The biggest issue, according to both candi-

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POLITICS from page 6
dates is the pandemic and the resulting economic impact on the state. Bizzarro also said how the state educates its children during the pandemic is also a major issue

"COVID-19 and the economy will continue to dominate our daily lives for the foreseeable future," Bizzarro said.

"Even prior to the pandemic, Connecticut was bleeding both jobs and population, and our state's economy was flat. But now the combination of crushing long-term debt and the financial fallout from COVID-19 is projected to yield a multi-billion-dollar hole in next year's state budget. Once the November election is over, you won't

have to wait very long for the conversation in Hartford to once again turn to higher taxes and highway tolls.

"In the near term, we need to figure out a better way to handle education in the face of COVID. Education has always been the key to the American dream, but COVID is threatening to slam that door shut for so many. Teachers are understandably scared, parents are confused, and students are lost. We have to make sure that schools and families get the resources that they need so that none of our children are left behind."

Bizzarro said he would "let voters decide" the differences between his and Lopes' platforms, but that he is a proud fiscal conservative, and a "strong supporter"

of law enforcement, first responders and health care professionals.

"[I am] a big believer in the American way of life," he said. "I want a leaner, more efficient state government, and I want to put an end to the tax-and-spend mentality that has permeated the culture in Hartford for so long. My approach to the state budget is simple: spend no more than you have and borrow no more than you can afford to pay back. If we stop wasteful spending, reduce the burden on small businesses, and start keeping our promises when it comes to aiding municipalities and local school districts, we will quickly find ourselves on the road to fiscal recovery."

Lopes said Bizzarro has "an objectionable track

record" concerning policies that affect people of color (including voting against the police accountability bill that passed over the summer) and working-class residents (voting against raising the minimum wage increase to \$15 an hour).

"Over the past few months, the American people have watched as people of color were murdered by law enforcement officers," Lopes said. "Like many, I understand that this continues to happen at a much higher rate with people of color than white people and is unacceptable in our society. While I answered the call for increased oversight on law enforcement and voted in favor of the police accountability bill, my opponent did not.

"My opponent answers to a Republican party that has followed President Trump and gone further and further to the fringe of the political spectrum. ... Unlike my opponent, I am in favor of a public option, because I believe health care is a human right and that no one should be deprived of it. As a father, I cannot imagine what I'd do if one of my children got seriously ill and I had no way of getting them medical treatment. We need a health care system that puts people over corporate profit."

As for the recent social unrest, Bizzarro said politicians should be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

"I just try to remind people that anger and hate can-

not be overcome by more anger and hate. The flames of violence and lawlessness are being fanned by professional politicians on both sides whose only interest is winning another campaign," he said. "With all this turbulence roiling the sea around us, I see it as my duty to be an island of common-sense and steadfastness in what I believe and what I do as the 6th District's state senator. Where I stood yesterday is where I stand today."

Lopes said this November's election is a historic moment in time.

"As our President continues to mishandle the COVID crisis and deny the just calls for action from communities of color in response to police brutality,

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the American people are paying the ultimate price. Unfortunately, defeating Donald Trump's agenda is going to take more than just the Democrats winning back the presidency in 2020. It's going to take a full overhaul of all elected leaders that are committed to advancing his problematic policy initiatives, including my opponent, Gennaro Bizzarro.

"Never in my 17 years in public office have I witnessed a Democratic base so invigorated by our political climate, this helps us tremendously on the campaign trail. I hope to harness this energy at the polls and take back the sixth senate district for the working people of our community."

Bizzarro said it's been more difficult to connect with voters amid the pandemic, with less door knocking and campaign events.

"Fortunately, I have a pretty strong connection to

my community, and I regularly see and visit with people during the normal course of both my business and my personal life so I am able to connect with many constituents even in the absence of more traditional campaigning," he said.

Lopes has dedicated his resources and energy to mostly to making phone calls to voters.

"I have also tried to keep voters up to date by engaging more with social media, including, posting my endorsements, policy stances, and volunteer opportunities on various platforms," he said.

5th Senate District

Democratic incumbent Derek Slap is being challenged by Farmington Republican Phillip Chabot for the 5th Senate District seat, which covers West Hartford, Burlington and most of Farmington.

Slap, a vice president at a nonprofit, is finishing his

first truncated term in the Senate after defeating Farmington Republican Bill Wadsworth by 29 points in a special election in February 2019 after state Sen. Beth Bye, who won re-election in November 2018, took a position in the Lamont administration.

Slap, who served one term in state House of Representatives, said he is running for re-election because he is "committed to helping others, strengthening our state and creating a more just and fair society."

He highlighted his legislative record during his relatively short time in office.

"I've been able to pass laws to help close the gender wage gap, keep illegal, untraceable guns off our streets, and lower prescription drugs costs," Slap said. "There's more work to do and I look forward to listening to the concerns of constituents and advocating for them in Hartford."

Slap said even before

the pandemic, strengthening the state's economy was priority No. 1.

"Now, we must approach the next session with a focus on growing jobs and recovering from the pandemic," he said. "Health care costs are also a big concern, as families and businesses are suffering from increasing premiums and declining coverage. I'm also committed to ensuring we address racial inequities and truly make our society a place where all people have the opportunity to thrive. Disparities in housing, education and employments – to name a few – persist and I believe Connecticut must make progress next year and beyond."

"Finally, Connecticut has made great progress to stabilize its finances over the past few years. Our bond rating has improved, the rainy-day fund is at a record high and fiscal reforms are finally in place which better position us to address long-term

debt. We should continue to craft sustainable budgets, which make investments in critical infrastructure (transportation), protect the social safety net, and efficiently steward tax dollars."

Chabot, a restaurateur and entrepreneur, said he wants to give voters in the 5th District a choice after years of Democratic dominance in the district.

"We need to look at Connecticut with a fresh set of eyes to fix the fiscal issues while capitalizing on many of Connecticut's unique strengths," he said. "As an owner of multiple businesses, I am very fiscally conservative and believe we should be spending less. I also would like to see less burdensome mandates on small and medium businesses that make the state less competitive in many areas of business. I believe the free market is better regulation as consumers have a very powerful voice with social media more so than ever before."

Both candidates said the pandemic has affected the way they are campaigning.

Chabot said he is campaigning online and did not seek public funding because "there is too much money in elections."

Slap said the pandemic has led him to spend more time on the phone and responding to emails "and helping constituents get the assistance they need."

"Traditional phone banking and door knocking is still important but my first priority is helping families during this difficult time," he said.

Chabot said issues such as the Black Lives Matter movement and the presidential election have also affected his campaign.

"Many more people are unwilling to listen or consider my position to being a Republican than my last campaign," he said. "I do not

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agree with many stances national Republicans have taken but feel they are more in line with them than the Democratic party. I feel there should be more than two parties as most people don't really align with either party that well. Since it is a presidential election there will be more voters who only focus on the national issues and will not look into local candidates as closely as they should."

In a nod to the current political climate, Slap said people are "desperate for a return to civility in their politics and for elected leaders who understand what a pivotal time this is for not only our nation, but for Connecticut as well. This nation is dealing with a pandemic and a long overdue reckoning of racial inequality. Now is not the time for silence or to pretend that the decisions and messages coming from the White House don't matter. I share my constituents' concerns for our future but I'm also confident that we will turn empathy into action, that science will win out over

scare tactics, and that the Black Lives Matter movement will continue to strengthen our communities."

17th House District

One of the most intriguing House races is the rematch between incumbent Republican Leslee Hill and Democrat Eleni Kavros DeGraw.

Hill, an attorney, defeated Kavros DeGraw, a giving team coordinator for Foodshare, in 2018 by 119 votes out of nearly 12,500 that were cast.

The district has traditionally leaned Republican for years, but shifting demographics, social movements such as Black Lives Matter reaching the suburbs, and a re-energized Democratic Party in Avon and Canton, have made the race for the seat more competitive.

Hill, a former Canton First Selectman and Board of Education chair who is finishing her first term in the General Assembly, said there is a lot of work left to do at the state Capitol.

"After my first term in office, I have experienced

how critical it is to for our communities to have representation at the Capitol that knows first-hand how our small towns and local schools are impacted by proposed legislation that is all too often 'one size fits all,' she said. "I believe Canton and Avon should continue to have representation that understands and respects that we are a community of diverse opinions, priorities, and needs. I have experience listening to these many interests and bringing a balanced approach to decision-making."

She says the fallout from the pandemic is the No. 1 pressing issue facing the state.

"We are dealing with ongoing serious health concerns, including the extreme toll on our most vulnerable nursing home residents," she said. "We also need to address the mental health impacts from ongoing isolation, job loss, substance abuse, and domestic violence. In education, we are seeing the toll on our students, their families, and educators. Students with special needs are losing important ground as their

education plans cannot be fully implemented with remote learning. We will be dealing with the fiscal impact of COVID-19 on our state's economy for years to come.

"The virus, compounded with the implementation of \$1.9 billion in new or increased taxes, which I voted against, is having a crippling impact on the state's economy and small businesses. Challenging decisions will need to be made in the next session to help our business community recover, resurrect vital job growth, sustain a safety net for our residents in need, and also address the state's mounting budget deficits, significant long-term debt, and the state employee and teacher pension deficits."

Hill says she has five key priorities if she wins another term: "I will fight tax increases, advocate for smart, transparent budget policy to reduce spending and prioritize needs, work for local control of safe, healthy public schools; support law enforcement and first responders to help keep our

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Development hearing delayed to Oct. 21

CANTON – The Canton Planning and Zoning Commission's public hearing for a proposed multi-faceted development on the Simsbury-Canton town line has been delayed to later this month.

The proposal at 9-15 Albany Turnpike includes plans for a two-story electric vehicle showroom with a service component and public display and a gas station/store with 20 pumps, as well as an ice cream shop, coffee shop, sandwich shop, outdoor seating area and drive through components.

A site plan and special exception application filed by Solli Engineering on behalf of 9-15 Albany Turnpike, LLC, was to be the subject of a Sept. 16 hearing, as noted in the

previous edition of The Valley Press. However, town officials said some revisions in the application necessitated a new legal notice, pushing back the date.

The hearing is anticipated to take place at 7 p.m. Oct. 21.

The exact agenda for that meeting will be posted on the town of Canton's web site at <http://townof-cantonct.org/agent-das-minutes-meetings> later this month. Agendas, as well as meeting packets, can be found in the drop-down menus on that page.

Those who missed the original story about the development proposal can view it at <https://www.valleypressexta.com>

- John Fitts

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communities safe for all, and continue helping my constituents manage the impact of COVID-19 on their lives and communities.”

The pandemic has curtailed some of her campaigning, “but traditional methods are still possible,” she said.

“I am focusing on getting my message out by distributing literature and meeting voters while social distancing, using social media, Zoom meetings, phone calling, and mail,” she said. “The biggest challenge due to COVID-19 is time. The legislature is usually very quiet in an election year after the regular session ends in early May, but not this year. Every day, I am helping constituents deal with state agencies, such as the Department of Labor and Department of Public Health, responding to concerns about the impacts of COVID-19 on their health, businesses, schools, and families, and getting important information out to my constituents. This work is my priority.”

Kavros DeGraw, meanwhile, said she is running because she came so close in 2018 and there is a lot of work to be done, which the pandemic exposed.

“The pandemic is a crisis and also an opportunity in a lot of ways,” she said. “It exposed so many systems are not working and how much

work we have to do to take the state and move it forward.”

She cited the antiquated unemployment system, which runs on, for tech people, the ancient coding system Cobalt, which wasn’t built to handle the deluge of claims wrought by COVID-19.

“I’m a ‘build-a-better-mousetrap’ person,” she said. “I see something and say, yes, it might be working, but how can we do it better? That would be my approach to how things run in the state. Once I’m on committees, I’ll look to make them more efficient, get rid programs that are not working and replace them with programs [that are] even better.”

Kavros DeGraw also said she wants to be an advocate for green jobs, not only for the environment, but also to attract and retain young residents.

“Connecticut used to lead nation in green jobs, and we should be doing it now,” she said, adding one way would be to forgive debt for graduates of state universities who remain in the state and work in green and tech jobs. Improving the environment is key, she said, noting all the work to make a strong economy doesn’t mean anything if the planet is uninhabitable.

“Not of it matters if we can’t live here,” she said. “With

good environmental policies and new technologies, we’ll be able to mitigate climate change and the climate crisis we find ourselves in.”

While she has done less door-knocking (done with social distancing and masks), Kavros DeGraw said she is running a spirited campaign on social media as well as through phone banking. She is also active in community projects, social media campaigns and non-profits.

Kavros DeGraw said that Hill ran as a moderate in 2018, but voted with her Republican counterparts 96% of the time.

“Many constituents found that surprising,” she said. “I don’t plan to vote entirely with my party. I am a much more common-sense gun person. We have the 2nd Amendment, which serves for people protect themselves by arming themselves. But you have to be conscious about Mrs. Hill, who voted against the ban on ghost guns. Those guns are unserialized weapons, that can be printed in someone’s basement. It makes the entire community less safe, and less safe for law enforcement.”

(Hill contends the law had issues with constitutionality and enforcement).

In addition, Kavros DeGraw said she doesn’t believe Hill shares the same view on the environment and

climate change, noting Hill voted against teaching climate change in schools.

“But I prefer to talk about what I am running for and what I am doing, not a negative campaign. There are some things she and I differ on. It is upsetting with the Republican Party. They complain there’s not a great budget, but they just propose bonding or kick the can down the road, or raiding the rainy-day fund. It’s tough to listen to that.”

Kavros DeGraw said the recent social unrest has affected the issues people bring up to her while campaigning.

“It has in terms of them bringing up different topics we didn’t talk about 2018,” she said. “Fewer people were comfortable talking about Black Lives Matter in 2018.”

But, she said, it’s a false a narrative to say if you support Black Lives Matter, you can’t support law enforcement and other first responders.

“I hope we can tear that false narrative down,” she said, adding people want good police officers who do not cause significant harm to people of color. “Regardless what you are for or against, I am grateful people are actively engaged in the discussions that affect their lives and their neighbors and friends lives.”

21st District

Democratic incumbent Mike Demicco is looking for his fifth term representing the 21st District (which is composed of most of Farmington) at the state Capitol and is squaring off against Farmington resident John Brockelman, who is running for state office for the first time.

Demicco said he is running for office with the simple notion that serving in public office “is to make peoples’ lives better.”

He says his record follows through on that credo.

“We have maintained state aid to towns and schools, protected the environment and promoted renewable energy, increased access to behavioral health and addiction services, improved accessibility for those with disabilities, increased educational opportunities and workforce development, enhanced tax exemptions for seniors, expanded insurance coverage for women, and maintained the social service safety net – all while balancing the state budget and building up the ‘rainy day’ fund to record levels,” he said.

Still, he says there is work to be done.

“I would be honored to continue representing Farmington and Unionville with compassion, fairness,

and integrity,” he said.

He said the pandemic and the ancillary challenges it poses are the No. 1 issues facing the state.

“We must ensure that our businesses, industries, schools, restaurants, health providers, police, firefighters, courts, government agencies, etc., have the resources they need to operate safely and efficiently,” he said. “At the same time, we must continue working to achieve social justice and the equal protection of every person’s rights, as well as safe and accessible voting opportunities for all. Municipal budgets, and the state budget, will be strained, and will require all of us to be thoughtful and patient in our approach to these problems. I look forward to keeping our residents informed, connected, and protected.”

A tireless doorknocker during normal campaign years, Demicco said he still has gone door-to-door while social distancing but has curtailed that some in favor of a greater social media presence, increased telephone calls and more direct mailings.

He said recent social movements such as Black Lives Matter have given rise to numerous conversations, as well as state and local concerns.

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"My approach remains the same: listening to, engaging with, and learning from my constituents," he said.

Brockelman, who is the director of sales for the Ames companies, is serving his third term on the Farmington Zoning Board of Appeals.

He said he was approached by Republican leaders to run against Demicco this year.

The pandemic has prevented him from doing as much in-person campaigning as he has while running for the ZBA, but "it's going well" running a mostly "word-of-mouth" campaign.

Brockelman cites the state budget and the budget deficit as the top concerns facing the state.

"It was ignored by our prior and current governors and it hasn't been addressed by our current state representative," Brockelman said. "We need to get realistic about spending, and on cutting spending. We do not have a revenue problem. We have a spending problem."

Brockelman said Connecticut is "antibusiness" and needs to make itself

more attractive to companies.

He cited New Jersey passing a wealth tax to close its budget as an opportunity for Connecticut to attract some businesses and residents to the state.

"We need to work a dual strategy of protecting what we have and try to get more businesses coming to the state," he said. "But it does go back to we have a huge deficit and nobody is currently addressing it."

One area worth looking at is generous compensation packages for new state employees, Brockelman said.

"Even state representatives getting things like mileage credited toward their pension, it's ridiculous," he said.

Brockelman added that he would not be a "rubber stamp" for the governor, and will "work for Farmington, not for Hartford."

He says his business background is a major strength.

"I've worked in the private sector my whole life; I haven't had a government job before," he said. "I deal with a lot of small businesses; they're the backbone of the

state and the country."

Brockelman added that, as a resident of Farmington for more than 25 years, having raised children in town and coached youth sports, and being an active member of the community, he is well-positioned to represent the town.

"One person may not make a difference, but a whole group of people can make a difference," he said. "Connecticut was slipping before the pandemic. We need some positive change for Connecticut."

19th House District

Tammy Exum is running unopposed in the 19th House District, which includes portions of West Hartford, Avon and Farmington, after winning a special election to fill the seat vacate by Derek Slap in 2019.

Exum, who has previously served on the West Hartford Board of Education, said she is running for re-election because it "is a critical time for our state."

"When we go into session in January 2021, we will have many issues to tackle, including job recovery relat-

ed to the pandemic, health care, education, and addressing systemic inequality. I believe my collaborative, empathetic, and pragmatic leadership style will be effective as I advocate for 19th District residents. In addition, I had an unconventional first term, between entering the legislative session late via a special election and the premature ending of the session due to COVID-19. I look forward to hopefully experiencing a more 'typical' second term."

She said education, the state budget and health care are the three most important issues facing Connecticut in the upcoming session.

The message she drives home to residents in her district and beyond is to vote.

"Remember, your vote is

your voice," she said. "Whether you choose to vote by absentee ballot or in-person, please make your voice heard this election by voting by Nov. 3."

16th House District

Simsbury Democrat John Hampton is running unopposed for the 16th House District seat. Hampton, a nonprofit strategist, said he's energized and looking forward to serving another two-year team in the House. It will be his fourth term.

"I love the job, I was born and raised here in Simsbury. It's been a gift and a blessing to be a voice for residents in Hartford. Now more than ever with the pandemic, the state needs good leadership."

Like every candidate, Hampton said the biggest challenge facing the state is the state budget, which is billions of dollars in the red. In addition, he said he would continue to advocate on behalf of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as senior residents, as well as being a steward for the environment.

Despite running unopposed, Hampton said he is "not taking anything for granted," staying as visible as possible given the restrictions of holding events and knocking on doors.

"We're taking smart safer approach to the campaign," he said. "I am grateful that perhaps being unopposed shows I've delivered for the district and worked in a bipartisan manner. ... I don't

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When Your Estate Plan Needs Changing

As you go through life you need to change your estate plan to account for the changes in your age, your wealth, your health, and your marital and family status.

An unmarried young adult without a spouse or children or much money can get by with a power of attorney, living will and HIPAA form so that parents, or siblings or other trusted person can handle financial affairs and medical decisions if that young adult has an unlikely incapacitating illness.

When that young person gets married and has children, a will and trust is advisable in case of the unlikely event of both spouses dying in an accident. That way the young couple can specify in their wills who will be the physical guardians for their young children. The person you want to raise the children with love and care may be different from the one you want to wisely handle money.

As people enter middle age, and their children have grown into adults, the concern shifts toward themselves. In case a parent acquires a serious medical condition, it is absolutely necessary to have a power of attorney, living will, and perhaps a revocable trust so assets can be handled if both spouses are alive, but one is incapacitated. In addition, they may have accumulated more wealth (what's left after paying for the children's education) and may want to allocate some to children and some to their spouse in case of death. It all depends on the amount of assets and the health of both spouses.

When aging into their 60's and 70's and older, health risks increase, and that is the time to do serious planning in case one spouse is at risk of needing long term care. In that case estate planning should include a power of attorney that will allow transfers between the spouses, so that if one does need care, the assets can be transferred to the healthy spouse and protected. There is no five year wait for the transfers between spouses. The power of attorney should have terms, that allow IRA's to be transferred by a court order to the healthy spouse, without paying income tax, and then get state or federal programs to help pay for long term care at home or in a skilled nursing facility. This age group may also need a will with a trust inside it that will substantially protect the assets if the healthy spouse should die before a sick spouse who needs care.

Moving into their later years, people have higher risks of needing long term care, so it is vitally important for them to consider irrevocable trusts, together with wills, power of attorney and living wills, so that assets can be protected in case dementia, or physical illness, or a fall results in a need for care. These stages of life do require different strategies and different estate plans. Those plans must be done before sudden incapacity or death prevents future planning.

A dramatic example is a couple who both ended up in a nursing home, never to leave. The family knew the husband had cancer and would die soon. Fortunately, he was of sound mind and a special will with a trust inside it was done. They had several hundred thousand dollars of life's saving. The husband did the will with the trust inside it and he died about a month later. His wife lived for many more years, but she could then qualify for Medicaid and only had to pay one third of the trust income to the nursing home. The other two thirds of income and all of the trust assets went to the children. That was only possible because the couple still had their wits about them, and the husband could sign the will. If he couldn't, it would have been too late.

As life goes on, and children and grandchildren come, wealth increases and health issues become more likely, so it is important to revisit estate plans and do what will serve you and your family the best.

Attorney Stephen O. Allaire and Attorney Halley C. Allaire are partners in the law firm of Allaire Elder Law, members of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, Inc., with offices at 271 Farmington Avenue, Bristol, (860) 259-1500, or on the web at www.allaireelderlaw.com. If you have a question, send a written note to either Attorney at Allaire Elder Law, LLC, 271 Farmington Avenue, Bristol, CT 06010, and they may use your question in a future column.

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Community News

Collinsville Bank celebrates its Farmington location

With much excitement and weathering some unforeseen delays, Collinsville Bank, once known as Collinsville Savings Society, opened its doors for the very first time in Farmington Feb. 27 after servicing the communities of Collinsville, Canton and neighboring towns for over 167 years.

The move brought experience in retail and commercial banking as well as consumer and commercial lending, cash management services and impeccable customer service.

For three weeks the bank was welcomed by new and existing customers into the community as it waited to celebrate a Grand Opening in March.

Unfortunately, Collinsville Bank would need to close its doors for more than three months due to the pandemic. The bank was not alone as the nation came to a halt. Though our doors were closed, we continued to service customers using all resources that we could in delivering the service that Collinsville Bank is so noted for with little to no disruption to their everyday banking needs.

On Wednesday Sept. 9, the bank finally made its presence in Farmington official with a very small and intimate gathering for our Ribbon Cutting. It gave us great pleasure to have amongst our guests, representation from three local non-profit organizations that are instrumental



Members of the board of directors, from left are Kathleen Byko, Donna Spescia, Everett Newell, Gary Roman, Raimie Weber, Charles Joseph, Jr. and Elisabeth Kandrysawtz.

to the Farmington community. The representatives each were presented with a check in the amount of \$1,000. These organizations were The Farmington Land Trust, The Farmington Community Chest and Services for the Elderly of Farmington.

Today the doors are opened and employees are welcoming new neighbors in Farmington and surrounding towns to visit as they try to get used to our new normal by installing social distancing markers, and the wearing of masks.

Visit the bank in Post Office Square, 186 Main St., Farmington, CT 06032 or at www.collinsvillebank.com.



Courtesy Photo

All-4-Kids: Going online but still going all out

By Colleen Knapp

WEATOGUE – Every spring and fall for over 20 years, local families in the know have flocked to Latimer Lane School for the All-4-Kids consignment sale. This fall feels a little (or a lot) different for everyone, and now more than ever, families may be looking to get the most for their money. Fans of the sale

will be happy to know that, after a spring hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic, All-4-Kids is back. From Sunday, Oct. 11 to Saturday, October 17, the sale will be held in an online pop-up store, offering customers a safe and convenient shopping experience. For pennies on the dollar, shoppers will find new and gently used brand-name clothing (newborn to size 16, plus

maternity), shoes, toys, books, sporting goods and more, all while supporting the school PTO's largest fundraiser. Normally occurring over the course of a single day, the new online sale gives shoppers an entire week to snag the season's best finds from the safety and comfort of home. For a \$5.00 donation, customers can enjoy the Early Bird Presale on Sunday, October 11. On

Saturday, October 17, items will sell for half-price. Buyers may pick up their purchases via a contactless drive-through at the Latimer Lane School on Sunday, October 25, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Sale volunteers will be masked and gloved for customers' safety.

For more information visit www.lalall4kids.com. Like us on FB at <https://www.facebook.com/>

Community News



Photograph by James Baldis

Matt Pierce-Bristol is placing red lights in front of Main station for "Light the Night for Fallen Firefighters." The lights will be on at all Simsbury fire stations from dusk to dawn for a week beginning Sunday, Sept. 27.

'Light the Night for Fallen Firefighters'

Simsbury's six fire stations and the Frank Bradley Memorial will be illuminated with red lights for a week for "Light the Night for Fallen Firefighters," beginning Sunday, September 27, as a part of National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend.

The official national tribute to those firefighters who died in the line of duty during the previous year is sponsored by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

"The Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company and Simsbury Fire District are proud to join the local communities and the nation in remembering those firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty. We also take time to remember our own Simsbury volunteer, Lt. Richard Kelleher, who died while fighting a fire at the Knights of Columbus Hall on November 6, 1981," said Fire Chief James Baldis.

Simsbury's only line-of-duty death occurred when Kelleher died fighting a structure fire at the Knights of Columbus Hall, on the north side of the St. Mary's Church property on Hopmeadow St. The fire started just after midnight. According to an article in the Hartford Courant, Kelleher was on the second floor of the building

pulling hoses when the fire grew enough for Fire Chief Charles Behrens to order the evacuation of the building. Kelleher was one of the 11 firefighters to leave the building. He collapsed outside and was pronounced dead at John Dempsey Hospital. He was 37 years old. The fire company's annual scholarship was established in 1983 in his honor.

The Frank Bradley Memorial is named after the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company's first member to die. Frank Bradley was one of 17 men who volunteered to form the Fire Company in 1944 when Ensign-Bickford Industries notified the town they no longer had the resources to provide fire protection. Just seven days after its founding, Frank Bradley and his family went to the circus. Bradley and his wife, Helen, died in the Hartford circus fire. Their two young daughters survived and were raised by Dr. Owen Murphy.

The fire stations which will be illuminated are Main station, 871 Hopmeadow St; West Simsbury station, 235 Farms Village Road; Bushy Hill station, 345 Bushy Hill Road; Weatogue station, 251 Hopmeadow St; Firetown station, 344 Firetown Road; and Tariffville station, 7 Church St. The Frank Bradley Memorial is in front of the Main station.

Local youth continues to raise funds for penguins

SIMSBURY — Fourth-grader Lucas Raymond has participated in 5Ks since he was five years old and he isn't letting the pandemic slow his efforts to run for the benefit of penguins.

Like most other major events, Mystic Aquarium's Run, Walk or Waddle for the Penguins was modified for 2020, but Raymond participated virtually for a cause he believes in.

"The African Penguins are endangered so I want to help them," said Raymond, a resident of Simsbury and student at Squadron Line.

On his fundraising page, he elaborated, "Mystic Aquarium is helping the penguins through research and sends people to Africa to help keep their habitat down there safe for the wild penguins. They also help care for penguins that might be injured or sick. Please help me raise money so Mystic Aquarium can keep helping the penguins survive."

Lucas has family that lives near the aquarium and the trips there have helped propel a dream to be a marine



Lucas Raymond completes the 2020 5K with his brother Andrew.

biologist. He especially loves penguins and has participated in this race for the past few years.

Of course, it's normally a festive affair that incorporates aquarium activities, but on the bright side, Lucas has surpassed the \$550 he raised last year.

He recently completed a "virtual," but very real 5K — with a time of 34:10 — with his 16-year-old brother Andrew, also an avid runner and member of the Simsbury High School Cross Country team.

In addition, Lucas has been collecting returnable cans and selling homemade penguin shaped dog biscuits, with ingredients

donated by Cake Gypsy, to help the effort.

"My husband [Mark] and I have always tried to encourage our kids to give back and help others whenever possible, even the feathered ones, so we are proud of Lucas," said his mom Denise Raymond. "He has found a wonderful cause that he is passionate about and I love watching him come up with the ideas of how he can raise money to help and then putting them into action."

The public can also help the effort through Oct. 10 via <https://runsignup.com/lucasraymond9>

— John Fitts



Lucas Raymond during a past visit to Mystic Aquarium.



Lucas Raymond runs in the 2019 event.



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Community Happenings

Consignment Sale at Latimer Lane School

Latimer Lane School's All-4-Kids consignment sale will be held online from Sunday, October 11 to Saturday, Oct. 17. Shop the Early Bird Presale on Oct. 11 for a \$5.00 donation. Items will be half-price on Saturday, Oct. 17. Contactless drive-through pickup at Latimer Lane School on Sunday, Oct. 25, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information visit www.lall4kids.com.

Pumpkin Patch at Avon Memorial UM Church



The pumpkins have arrived. Memorial United Methodist Church of Avon is hosting their 16th annual Pumpkin Patch Oct. 1-31 daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pumpkins of all sizes are available. Pricing according to size. Pumpkins are arranged in a large area to allow for careful social distancing while visiting

and shopping with your family or friends. For checkout, plexiglass shields separate customers from volunteer staff. Please wear your masks while at the Patch. And don't forget to pick up a loaf or two of our famous fresh baked pumpkin breads with a variety of special ingredients. Proceeds benefit the church's ministries and missions. 867 West Avon Road, Avon.

AFPL Children's Room opening

AFPL's Children's Room is now taking appointments! Call 860-673-9712 x211 to schedule your 20 minute browsing appointment. Bring your physical library card. Wear your mask. Follow social distancing guidelines. Toys and seating are not available. This appointment is for browsing and check-outs only! We request that each appointment be limited to 3 visitors.

Online holiday cooking classes

The Avon Free Public Library will be presenting an online cooking class called Healthy Holiday Cooking on Saturday, Nov. 14 at 2 p.m.

In this class, you will learn ways to make some of our traditional meals lighter.

Presented by Colin McCullough teaches private and public cooking classes throughout New England and will share his experience and recipes with people who want to incorporate more whole-food, plant-based meals for health, compassion and the environment. Colin is the author of "The Healthy Vegan Cookbook" and most recently "Smoothies That Taste Like Dessert."

Other programs in this series:

Saturday, Jan. 16 at 2:00 p.m.: Healthy and Delicious Soups

Thursday, Feb. 11 at 6:30 p.m.: Healthy and Decadent Desserts

Note: Registration required. This program will be presented online through Zoom. Please register and a Zoom link will be sent to you before the event. For more information or to register, please visit www.avonctl-library.info or call the library at 860.673.9712, ext 4.

Selected Avon Library Programs:

For information and registration links, visit <https://www.avonctl-library.info/events/> Most programs require preregistration

Pre-register and Zoom link will be sent to you before the event.

- Monday, Oct. 5 at 7 p.m. via Zoom: Marco Polo: the Silk Road & China: the UN in Action

- Tuesday, Oct. 6 at 1 p.m. via Zoom: White-tailed Deer in Connecticut.

- Friday, October 9 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom: Hoots, Screeches and Eerie Eyes-Owls in our Midst!

Fall continuing education calendar

Farmington Continuing Education is committed to keeping everyone Active, Engaged and ready to master new Skills during this pandemic. Our fall 2020 catalog has been released and is full of many fun and educational enrichment class offerings for adults, youth and families. Classes include conversational English, fitness, languages, arts/crafts, financial, career development, SAT Prep, drivers Ed, teen writing, cursive writing, sign language and more.

If you are not ready to join back to in-person classes, there are plenty of offerings available online. Also available are Adult Basic Education classes for high school completion (GED, CDP, NEDP), Citizenship and ESL (daytime & evening). These classes are for residents of Farmington, Unionville, Burlington, Harwinton, Canton, Collinsville, Avon. Register ONLINE at www.fpsct.org/fce or call 860-404-0290.

Halloween in Simsbury

The Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center and Town of Simsbury invite you to celebrate Halloween at the Spooktacular Drive-Thru Celebration on Oct. 18. Pre-registration is required and available to Simsbury residents only. Register at:

https://simsburyct.myrec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=28861#activities

Attendees may register for one of three available groups. You will register for a time slot during registration. Families will collect treats during the

Drive-Thru which will start on Iron Horse Blvd and end at Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center where there will be food trucks, entertainment and activities for the family! Please bring blankets/chairs for seating in socially distant circles on the field.

Attendees are encouraged to dress up and decorate their cars for a chance to win a prize for most creative.

Blood drives

Red Cross blood donors have new opportunity to help patients fighting COVID-19

Donors needed this fall to maintain blood supply amid ongoing pandemic

Plasma from whole blood donations made through the American Red Cross that test positive for COVID-19 antibodies may now help current coronavirus patients in need of convalescent plasma transfusions. The Red Cross encourages eligible individuals to schedule an appointment, download the free Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo



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Canton department seeking sponsors for families in need

Canton Senior & Social Services is hosting its annual Holiday Gift Giving program and is looking for sponsors who would be willing to give a little extra to families in need during the holidays. Past sponsors have included local churches, businesses, individuals, families, and community organizations.

This Holiday season will be particularly challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, we are asking that all donations to the program be made in the form of gift cards. Donations will be accepted until Friday Dec. 11, and can be mailed to our office at 40 Dyer Ave. or left in our Dropbox affixed to the

outside wall just outside the Senior & Social Services double glass doors entrance. Please know that any and all donations will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in being sponsored or sponsoring a family, contact the office at 860-693-5811 by Friday, Dec. 4.

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Community Happenings

device.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities:

Avon:

Oct. 2, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Valley Community Baptist Church, 590 West Avon Road Farmington;

Oct. 10, 6:30 to 11:30 a.m., American Red Cross Blood Services, 209 Farmington Ave

Oct. 14, 12:30 to 5:30 p.m., American Red Cross Blood Services, 209 Farmington Ave

Oct. 14, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., American Red Cross Blood Services, 209 Farmington Ave.

Oct. 7, 12:30 to 5:30 p.m., American Red Cross Blood Services, 209 Farmington Ave

Oct. 7, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., American Red Cross Blood Services, 209 Farmington Ave.

Understanding your Medicare benefits

and options

This informational presentation is intended for folks who are new to the Medicare Program, who are collecting Social Security Disability and now eligible for Medicare, or for individuals who are about to turn 65 years of age.

Presented by NAMI Connecticut, the North Central Area Agency on Aging, The seminar will be held Thursday, October 1 at 5 p.m. Call 860.479.NAMI (6264) to register.

Simsbury's VFW and American Legion announce early plans for Veterans Day

Simsbury's Metacomet Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1926 and American Legion Post 84 announce the events

for Veterans Day, Wednesday, Nov. 11 at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. All military veterans, their families and the public are warmly invited to attend. Due to Covid 19 restrictions, these events are altered from previous years in order to accommodate social distancing and state rules for outside gatherings.

Veterans Day, formerly known as Armistice Day, was founded in honor of the signing of the agreement to end the fighting along the western front during WWI. The signing of the agreement occurred in Paris on November 11, 1918 at 11:00 a.m. Traditionally Veterans Day is a time to thank current veterans and remember those who have gone before as patriots for our freedom. Therefore, the public is invited to the

Simsbury Veterans Memorial, at the entrance to the Simsbury Library, for a moment of silence at exactly 11:00 a.m.

Later that day, at 4 p.m., the public is invited to the front lawn of the Simsbury Library for an outdoor event, following state guidelines, with speakers, color guard, music and tributes. The VFW and American Legion strongly encourage families to attend, as the event is being held after school hours. There will be no rain date. Masks will be required of all and social distancing seating of up to 100 will be available.

For more information about the Metacomet VFW Post 1926, visit: www.vfw1926.org

Fall Festival

Brookdale Gables Farmington and Home Helpers of The Farmington Valley are holding a Fall Festival on Tues., Oct. 6, 4 to

6:30 p.m. at Brookdale Gables Farmington, 20 Devonwood Dr., Farmington. Enjoy networking, vendor booths, food, beverages, music and raffles.



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Hartford HealthCare Center for Healthy Aging webinars

The following programs are among those offered by Hartford HealthCare Center for Healthy Aging. To register and learn of more offerings call 1-855-442-4373 or go online to HartfordHealthCare.org/VirtualClasses.

Participants will receive an email with instructions on joining.

- "Understanding Lymphedema," Tuesday, Oct. 6, 10 to 11 a.m. To register, call 1-855-442-4373 or go online to HartfordHealthCare.org/webinars.

- Five-part virtual Healthy Brain Series. Tuesdays, Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27 and Nov. 3, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Topics will include: Session 1: Challenge your mind daily - Activities to keep your mind sharp; Session 2: Feeding the brain - The importance of diet and hydration; Session 3: Benefits of a purposeful life - Finding meaningful engagement as you age; Session 4: Good sleep and brain power: The importance of sleep and your brain; Session 5: The Blue Zones: Lessons for living longer from the people who've

lived the longest.

- "Making the Most of Your Telemedicine Visit," Wednesday, Oct. 7 at 10:30 a.m. Presenter Lillian Swan, transitional care nurse, Hartford HealthCare Center for Healthy Aging.

- "Understanding Sepsis," Wednesday, Oct. 7 at 10 a.m.

- "Advantages of Assisted Living for Those with Memory Loss," Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2 to 3 p.m.

- Five-week series Thursdays, Oct. 8 to Nov. 5, 6 to 7:30 p.m. Topics will include: Session 1: Overview of Dementia; Session 2: Basics of Good Communication and Understanding Behaviors; Session 3: Safety in the Environment and How to Structure a Day with Activities; Session 4: Taking Care of the Caregiver and Care Options; and Session 5: Overview of Community Resources that May be Helpful.

- "Balance and Exercise from the YMCA," Thursday, Oct. 15, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

- Focused Awareness Meditation webinar, Monday, Oct. 19 at 3 p.m.

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■ Opinion

Jahana Hayes is one who will fight for us all

To the Editor,

There is no such thing as just the sniffles or a slight cough these days. Allergies turn into a sense of unease, a head cold or stomach bug into gut wrenching anxiety. With children in daycare and school, every decision turns in to an ethical quandary.

Running around getting 2 negative rapid COVID tests in 4 days for different sets of symptoms, and then 2 days later the entire family in pediatric urgent care for the regular COVID test - and a diagnosis of Bronchitis for me.

So far everyone else has clear lungs...and now we wait, and wait, and wait. 2 days has felt like an eternity, and it could be up to 7-10 for results!?!? We are lucky my husband can try to work from home in the chaos, and that my employer is a leader in supporting employees, our customers, and our communities during this pandemic. Many are not so lucky and their jobs would be at risk.

Every single person working in these health centers has been kind and caring, while

putting their life at risk with a smile on their face. They keep pushing on as people say the flu kills more people, masks infringe on personal rights, ensuring health care for all is "communism."

More than 200,000 Americans have died, and countless will suffer from complications that haven't even been discovered. I wonder how my country has become so uncaring, so selfish, so unkind.

As we sit here waiting, I am angry that our "leadership" has failed us so gravely. Instead of prioritizing the health and safety of our country - ensuring accessible, fast, reliable testing; ensuring proper safety protections for all; encouraging us to view small sacrifices for the common good as our patriotic duty - they lie, they destroy the integrity of our institutions, and they burn the foundational principles of our republic to the ground.

They paint anyone fighting for what is basic human decency - pandemic protocols to protect us based on the most recent science;

access to health care; sick leave and living wages; protecting the air we breathe, water we drink, food we eat; the right to be treated equitably even if you are not a white, Christian, heterosexual male - as "radical socialist snowflakes."

Regardless of your politics, faith, and background, I simply can't comprehend why these are not basic principles each one of us should support. It is up to us, the people, to stop allowing politicians and the media to turn our lives into a winner take all game.

I ask that you take a deep look into each candidate at the local and federal level. Look beyond a single issue and determine who will fight for us.

Jahana Hayes, our congresswoman for the 5th district, currently battling COVID, is one of our leaders that has all of our backs.

Vote by mail or on Nov. 3 because your life, and the lives of all of us, depend on it.

*Liz Humphrey
Simsbury*

Fortunate to have Kavros DeGraw as a candidate

To the Editor,

We are very fortunate to have Eleni Kavros DeGraw as a member of our community and a candidate for CT State House District #17 serving Avon and Canton. In the years that I've known her, she has been a strong advocate for seniors, our children and our community.

While many take for granted the benefits of living in our community, Eleni has been very active looking out for our schools, for those less fortunate, and the small businesses that make up our vibrant community. Her co-founding of ForwardCT has allowed people to support efforts to reduce poverty, advocate for improved healthcare, support education and save the environment. I've volunteered my time and made donations because I believe that we all have responsibility to support these important actions. She has encouraged our active participation.

I'm a retired senior citizen who has served as a teacher, principal and superintendent in schools around Connecticut. I know that schools, through taxation by the town and state, cannot fully support our teachers and students without the dedication of community volunteers and advocates. Eleni has been at the forefront in helping to upgrade technology in our schools, providing loans to teachers for specific projects and helping less fortunate students achieve success through donations of clothing and school supplies. She understands that educating all of our children is a fundamental responsibility of each of us whether we be single people, parents, or senior citizens.

I am very concerned about healthcare services and prescription drug costs in this country. We are the only democratic country without universal healthcare and the only country with runaway prescription costs. I've seen the effects on pre-existing conditions limitations on family members and the way it changes their life choices in jobs that

have a medical coverage. Eleni is a strong advocate for finding a solution to this terrible problem and I know that she will be a strong voice in the legislature for changes.

I see poverty all around us here in profound ways among families and our elderly. Foodshare has been a blessing for the many who are suffering through this pandemic with lost jobs or ill health. Eleni has been very outspoken to the needs of the poor through Foodshare and I know she will make it a priority if she's elected. We cannot continue to have such disparity between the wealthy and the poor in this town, in this state or this country.

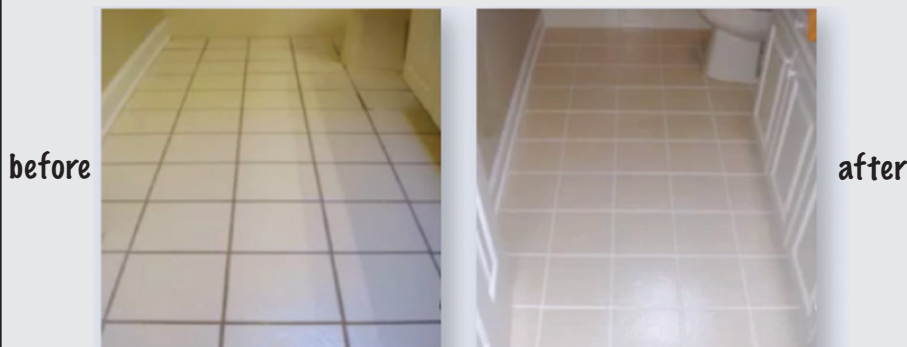
I enthusiastically support the candidacy of Eleni Kavros DeGraw for the CT State House District #17. I hope you will join her and moving this state in a positive direction for ourselves, our children and our community.

*Paula Schwartz
Avon*



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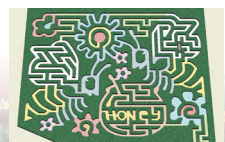


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Opinion

A Millennial's trust in Eleni Kavros DeGraw to rebuild Connecticut's economy

To the Editor:

I'm Audrey Rossignol, a 23-year-old lifelong resident of Avon and I'm living through my second recession. I love Connecticut. I chose to attend college in Connecticut and to start my career here when I graduated a little over a year ago. In order for a millennial like me to stay and start planting roots here, Connecticut needs to tackle this economic recession the way we've tackled the COVID-19 pandemic – by being the Nation's leading state.

Avon and Canton deserve to have trustworthy representation in the state legislature to rebuild our economy. That's why I'm all in for supporting Eleni Kavros DeGraw

for State Representative of the 17th district. I've known Eleni for five years now and I can say with confidence that she is the embodiment of the kind of problem-solving leader that Connecticut needs. Eleni's plans to restore Connecticut's prosperous economy could not be more spot on.

Eleni acknowledges that our economic recovery depends on protecting public health and helping individuals maintain employment or obtain the skills they need to enter the workforce.

Eleni plans on supporting private-public partnerships with educational institutions to strengthen our school-to-workforce pipeline. And, as the wife of a small business

owner, she understands the need to cut red tape and improve infrastructure so it's easier for business owners to start and stay in Connecticut. Investing in Connecticut's residents and small businesses is the key to our short and longterm recovery.

Furthermore, Eleni will be supporting legislation to alleviate student debt for students that attend our universities and stay in Connecticut to work. I can't emphasize how crucial this legislation would be to my generation and the next generation of Avon and Canton graduates to attend college.

I also love that Eleni supports extending the social security, pension, and annuity state income tax exemption. I

know I'd like to stay in Connecticut for the long haul, it's relieving to know that when my parents retire they will be exempt from state income taxes. That factor alone has allowed so many parents and grandparents stay in Connecticut after they retire because it financially benefits them more than surrounding states.

Eleni Kavros DeGraw has a plan to alleviate the financial burdens of another recession on working families, seniors, students, and young adults like me. That's why I'm voting for Eleni on November 3rd. I hope you will do the same.

Audrey Rossignol
Avon

Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters to the editor. We ask that readers only submit one per issue and keep the length at 500 words or less.

You are welcome to respond to previous letters, or voice disapproval with a stance, vote or policy, as long as the letter refrains from personal attacks.

However, with just one more Valley Press prior to the November election, political letters for the Oct. 16 edition should focus on support for a candidate, since there would no chance, in this format, for someone to respond to a newly raised issue.

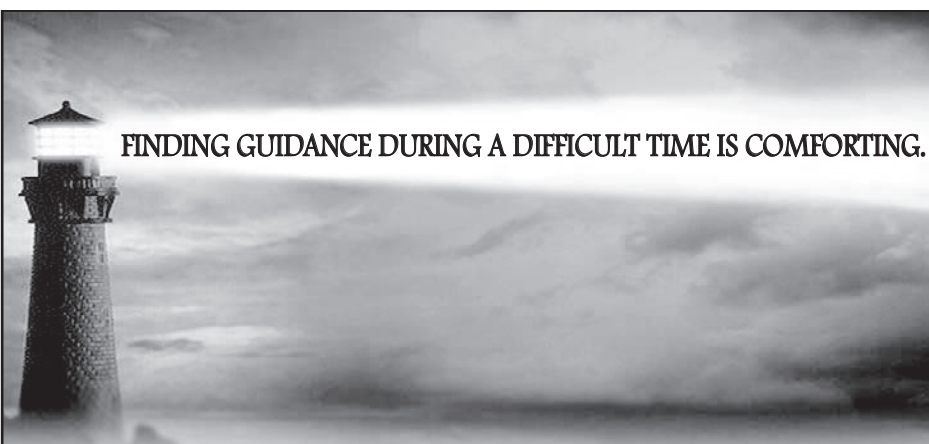
Letters for that edition should be submitted by Oct. 8.

We also will not print letters that contain racist, sexist or other forms of offensive language.

Due to space limitations, letters should also retain a local focus. While we understand that area residents are passionate about the presidential race, for example, we just can't devote the space to those opinions.

As long as letters meet our policies, we do not edit them for content, allowing your words to be your own. Other than minor typos, if we feel something needs to be changed, we will contact you.

Letters can be submitted to jfitts@turleyct.com. Thank you.



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Opinion

National Fire Prevention Month

Avoid distracted cooking by serving up fire safety

In 1925, President Calvin Coolidge signed a proclamation to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, which burned from October 8-10, 1871. While Fire Prevention Week runs from October 4-10, 2020, many Fire Departments take the opportunity to offer special health and fire safety programming throughout the month of October.

Dispatches: There was a request for a hot cup of tea and some conversation from a visiting daughter. Instead of turning on the stove top, however, the oven knob was turned to the right. Short of storage space, the oven had been used to store plastic containers, which quickly ignited.

Breakfast was still cooking on the stove when these Canton residents rushed out the door. Little did they know that the sirens, heard wailing through traffic minutes later, were fire apparatus responding to their home.

A forgotten potato, cooking for too long a time in the microwave oven, dried out and carbonized then filled the home with smoke.

In Response: More people are cooking at home, versus visiting/take-out from a restaurant, due to the COVID 19 pandemic. And, the majority of house fires begin in the kitchen, with distracted cooking being the leading cause.

These are easily preventable emergencies if you remember some basic safety precautions.

• Children Require Special Attention. Create a safety zone, of at least three feet, around the cooking area, where children are not

Valuing Life at a Moment's Notice....

Thoughts on Community Safety by
Chief of Department Bruce Lockwood
Town of Canton Volunteer Fire and EMS Department

permitted. And, Never hold a child while you cook.

• Don't Drink Alcohol or Medicate While You Cook. Young adults, aged 20 to 34, are at the highest risk of non-fatal cooking injury. It's best to order take-out when you're tired or under the influence.

• Home-Wear is Here to Stay. Be careful when cooking while wearing casual, loose fitting clothing. Short/tightly rolled up sleeves can prevent You from catching on fire.

• Ring. Buzz. Ping. Zoom. If the phone rings; if someone's at the door with another delivery from Amazon; if the Zoom call meeting is waiting on you, whatever has gotten your attention anew, take a moment to shut off your stove before responding.

• Purchase & Learn to Use a Kitchen Fire Extinguisher. There are extinguishers specially designed for kitchen grease, oil and fat fires. The purpose is not to fight the fire, but to slow it down enough to give everyone time to get out.

• Smoke Alarms Save Lives. Working smoke alarms, installed outside every bedroom and on every level of the home, alert occupants to a fire in the early stage. This lifesaving heads-up can cut your risk of dying in half.

• Oven Mitt on Fire? Keep

any items that could catch fire: wooden utensils, plastic food packaging, cloth or paper dish towels, etc., away from the heat source on the stove top.

• Grease Fire? If possible, slide a metal lid over the burning pan or pot. Turn off the stove and do not remove the lid until the pot or pan has cooled down completely.

• Oven Fire? Shut the heat off. Do not open the oven door.

Today, your home has become the virtual headquarters for children's education; employer meetings; and/or experimenting with the newest recipe for banana bread. However, firefighting is not one of these DIY responsibilities. So, don't ever hesitate to call Canton's Volunteer Fire and EMS Department, after you have quickly and safely evacuated.

Canton's Volunteer Firefighters, EMTs and Fire Police are trained to handle kitchen and all other types of fire, smoke, medical and hazardous emergencies. Prevention, however, is key to life safety in our community. That's where you can help keep us, you and your family healthy and protected throughout the year.

*Yours in safety,
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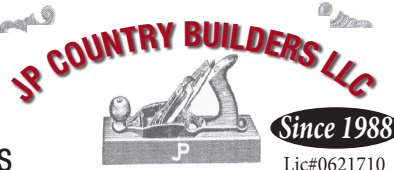
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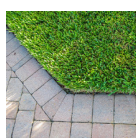
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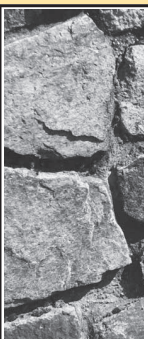
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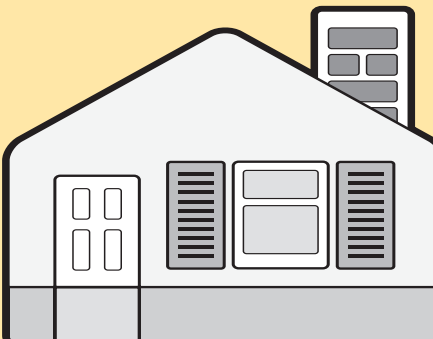
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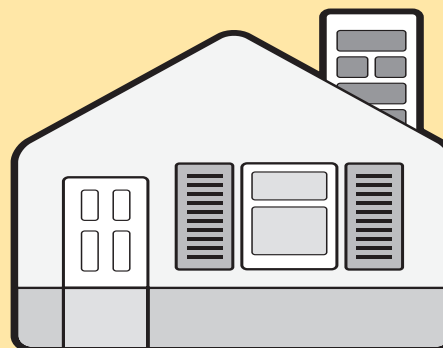
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