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AVON • CANTON • FARMINGTON • SIMSBURY

Development proposal clears one hurdle

Simsbury Zoning approves site plan, Canton Planning and Zoning to hold hearing this month

By John Fitts
Staff Writer

A proposed electric vehicle showroom and related development on Route 44 along the Simsbury/Canton line is the “future of transportation,” those associated with the proposal said at a recent Simsbury Zoning Commission meeting.

The owners of 9-15 Albany Turnpike, LLC., managed by developer Mark Greenberg, are looking to develop a two-story 23,500-square-foot electric vehicle showroom with a one-story service center and charging area, along with an 8,384-square-foot foot gas station/convenience store



This rendering by Phase Zero Design shows the proposed EV showroom and service facility, which represents part of what the owners of 9-15 Albany Turnpike, LLC want to develop on the Simsbury/Canton town line. A gas station/ convenience store is also proposed, but developers say the specifics involve much more than people would typically expect.

that would include a sandwich shop, coffee shop, potentially an ice cream shop and perhaps even a fire pit area. The gas station would also be easily converted to electric vehicle charging stations.

Developers have also touted details such as a new kind of dealership, land-

scape islands, outdoor seating, multiple eateries, underground utilities and dark-sky-compliant lighting. The site would also include new concrete sidewalks and a total of 116 parking spaces.

A traffic light is also proposed on Route 44, approximately at the current eastern entrance of

Brass Lantern Road.

The site is east of the former La Trattoria Restaurant site.

Much of the 26-acre site is in Simsbury, but most of the development would be in Canton.

See EV on page 20

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Racism a public health crisis

SIMSBURY – At its meeting on Sept. 29, the Simsbury Board of Selectmen designated the SPIRIT Council as a formal town committee and unanimously endorsed a resolution declaring racism a public health crisis. **PAGE 5**

Political controversy in 8th

For the first time, the Canton League of Women Voters canceled its candidate forum - which would have been held virtually. The decision, coupled with rhetoric behind the scenes, has sparked more controversy among the candidates for the state's 8th Senate District and impacted another local race as well. **PAGE 3**

Wetlands hearing continues Nov. 5

AVON – The Avon Inland Wetlands Commission has continued a public hearing regarding a map amendment application for Blue Fox Run Golf Course. On Oct. 6 the commission opened a virtual public hearing on the application, which seeks to amend the town's wetlands map. The application contends that field work data gathered by soil scientists accurately depicts wetlands at the site. **PAGE 4**



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Wild about animals



Patty O'Keefe of Farmington sent the photo to the left and writes, "I believe this is a young bald eagle I saw drying its wings along the Canal Trail in Farmington. Just a beautiful, patriotic moment."

Jay Kaplan, director at Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton, writes, "This is indeed a juvenile bald eagle. It takes these birds 2-5 years to acquire the white head and tail of the adult. Once endangered, the bald eagle has been removed from the endangered species list, and is now nesting along major rivers and reservoirs throughout the state. A great success story."

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.



Lee Morgan of Avon sent this Praying Mantis photo. She writes, "I was watering plants and spotted this fellow who blended in so well he almost got a bath. He hung around several days moving from the planter to a nearby bush. I haven't seen too many Praying Mantis in my lifetime and felt very lucky to have him visit." Jay Kaplan, director at Roaring Brook Nature Center in Avon, writes "The European praying mantis became Connecticut's state insect in 1977. Oddly enough, this insect is not native to Connecticut, but rather, was introduced. It is native to North Africa, southern Europe and temperate regions of Asia. The larger, Chinese praying mantis has also been introduced to the northeast. The smaller, native Carolina praying mantis is found from New Jersey south, but not here in Connecticut. Enjoy these insects while you can as they will disappear with the first hard frosts. If you find a praying mantis egg case, do not bring it into the house. The warmth will cause it to hatch out much earlier than it would outdoors, and there will be nothing for the young mantids to eat, so they cannot be released."



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Candidate forum canceled amid tension in 8th District

Editor's Note: This story was updated slightly from the original print edition.

By Ted Glanzer
Staff Writer

For the first time, the Canton League of Women Voters canceled its candidate forum – which would have been held virtually – after incumbent state Sen. Kevin Witkos, R-Canton, said he would not participate in the event after raising objections with the league and his Democratic opponent, Melissa Osborne.

The league has produced a voters guide, available at <http://lwvcanton.org>, but the lack of full participation, along with the decision to cancel the forum entirely, leaves Farmington Valley voters in the 8th Senate District and the 17th House District without that traditional opportunity to see and candidates appear side by side (albeit this year virtually) and weigh their policy positions in real time.

The result has also led to increased tension in the 8th Senate District race, which was already spirited.

From in-person to virtual

Teresa Dotson, the voter services chairwoman for the league, said her organization looked at every available option before deciding to hold a virtual candidate forum over the Zoom app.

Dotson said three of the five candidates involved in the two state races – Osborne, Eleni Kavros DeGraw, the Democratic challenger for the 17th House District seat; and Leslee Hill, the Republican incumbent in the 17th House District race – responded in favor of having the virtual forum.

“Unfortunately, there was a lot of concern raised by candidates and board members about how we would preserve the integrity of that recording to make sure that the event would be kept intact and, as a whole, communicated,” Dotson said.

Witkos, a six-term incumbent, and Osborne are running against one another for the third time, with Witkos having won both of Osborne’s prior challenges in 2014 and 2018.

Hill and Kavros DeGraw faced one another in 2018, with Hill winning by less than 120 votes. In 2018, Hill pulled out of the league’s candidate forum just before the event because her mother was terminally ill. Kavros DeGraw did take part in the forum, with Hill submitting a written statement that was read by Witkos.

Further muddying the issue was a September Facebook post by Kavros DeGraw in which she, at the time, believed she was the only one of the five candidates (Independent Keith McConnell is also running) who responded in favor of the Zoom format.

A liar’

In a Sept. 18 email to Dotson obtained by The Valley Press, Witkos gave three reasons for why he would not participate in this year’s forum. First, at the last forum, he was told by the videographer rebuttals would be edited out of the video in the interests of time to make it more broadcast friendly for Nutmeg TV.

“[The videographer] refused to do that,” Witkos said. “I concur with his refusal and to me that request was totally unacceptable.”

Second, Witkos said

Osborne had “used technology to advance her campaign in a misleading way” by cutting the video from the 2018 candidate forum as well as cropping a photo from the presidential election in 2016 posted to Witkos’ Facebook page “to tell a false story.”

The final objection, Witkos said Osborne is “a liar.”

“I will not share a stage with someone that has no Integrity (sic),” Witkos wrote. “Recently she posted on social media that I or one of my campaign volunteers attempted to break into her house.”

In a telephone conversation, Witkos elaborated on technology manipulation, saying Osborne had broken the ground rules for the 2018 candidate forum by posting a video on her campaign Facebook page that contained a response from Witkos concerning the possibility of *Roe v. Wade* being overturned.

Witkos also noted an Aug. 17 post on Osborne’s Facebook page that shows Witkos holding what appears to be a hand-drawn “Trump” sign.

“My opponent has been busy this week distancing himself as fast as he can from the GOP State Party Chair who admits he knew that a Republican Congressional Candidate had a recent unresolved domestic violence incident, and from the GOP’s 8th District State Central committeeman’s most recent racist memes about Vice Presidential nominee Kamala Harris,” Osborne wrote, in part, in the post. “All that begs the question though – why hasn’t my opponent called out the one

See **FORUM** on page 18

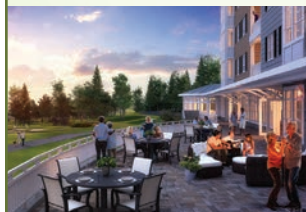
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Blue Fox Run wetlands hearing continued to Nov. 5

By John Fitts
Staff Writer

The Avon Inland Wetlands Commission has continued a public hearing regarding a map amendment application for Blue Fox Run Golf Course.

On Oct. 6 the commission opened a virtual public hearing on the application, which seeks to amend the town's wetlands map. The application contends that field work data gathered by soil scientists accurately depicts wetlands at the site.

In the spring of 2019, the commission rejected a similar proposal. At that time, The Keystone Companies, LLC, and Sunlight Construction, Inc., were seeking the change as part of an effort to construct "The Residences at Blue Fox Run," consisting of 95 single-family homes in a common interest community, as well as three single family homes along Nod Road. Later in the year the Planning and Zoning Commission rejected a zone

change request related to the plan.

During that process, the golf course stated its goal to reconfigure the course from 27 holes to 18 in an effort to save on maintenance costs and improve the course.

While a subsequently withdrawn application earlier this year still involved Keystone, the current one, brought only by Blue Fox Run and two other land-owners, includes no proposed regulated activities. Golf course managers have told The Valley Press that a wetlands decision is needed for plans to reconfigure the course on the eastern side of the Farmington River.

On Oct. 6, Michael A. Cegan, of Richter & Cegan landscape architects and Urban Designers, also told the commission, "Blue Fox has submitted this application because they are in the process of a comprehensive review of their golf course operations. Part of this data valuation includes an understanding of the full charac-

teristics of the land, its opportunities and constraints."

Those involved in the effort state that the Avon regulations are clear that field work is necessary when establishing wetlands.

"The wetlands as set out in two places in your regulations are generally shown on the map meaning the map is a general indication where the wetlands are but as your regulations say in each instance ... the precise location of wetlands and watercourses shall be determined by the commission based on the actual type of soil or character of the area," land use attorney Janet Brooks said at the hearing on behalf of the applicants.

The town's map, according to the applicant's soil scientists, is largely based on outdated information that was gathered in a manner much less precise than modern methods.

Those working on behalf of the applicant also told the commission that

the two soil scientists who conducted field work for the previous efforts, conducted additional field work and gathered a wealth of new data. Brooks also said the suggestions of the North Central District were incorporated in the latest application.

"At the end of the process it resulted in a process that the wetland delineation in the map amendment that quote 'accurately and optimally represent wetlands boundaries and soil conditions observed during the field inspection,'" Brooks said. "Those aren't my words. Those aren't our team's soils scientists' words. That's the opinion of your town consultant."

At issue, however, has been the limit of floodplain or alluvial soils – those deposited by flowing water – on the property. Soil disturbance has been affected by past agricultural use, golf course development and even changes in the river, particularly with the development of upriver dams.

"This site based on the historic research, is really a mosaic of past land uses," Bob Russo, a soil scientist with CLA Engineers, told the commission Oct. 6.

In past proceedings, the soil scientists working at the site have recommended the 100-year floodplain as a limit.

Soil scientist Michael Klein of Davison Environmental, was again used to "peer review" Russo's work noted that approach again in a letter to the commission.

"Determining the extent of the poorly drained and very poorly drained soils and watercourses at the site is straightforward. However, due to the degree of disturbance at the site, the extent of the floodplain and alluvial soils is not. After consultation with CT DEEP and Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resources Conservation Service) staff, I had previously recommended use of the elevation of the 100-year return frequency flood as a

conservative representation of the limit of floodplain and alluvial soils at the site. The Avon Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission and town staff concurred with this approach on several occasions, most recently in 2004."

Those speaking on behalf of Nod Road Preservation, Inc., the non-profit that waged a high profile "Save Nod Road" campaign when the housing development was proposed, have contended that, in an age of global warming, the 500-year flood line should be used.

Dr. Michael Klemens, a conservation biologist and former CT Siting Council member, was one of those who spoke at the contentious hearings in 2019 and he again addressed the commission Oct. 6.

"Right now, you have mixed data on alluvial soils but you do have very clear indication where the 100-year line lies and the 500-

See **BLUE FOX** on page 15



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Simsbury BOS declares racism a public health crisis

Submitted Article

At its meeting on Sept. 29, the Simsbury Board of Selectmen designated the SPIRIT Council as a formal town committee and unanimously endorsed a resolution declaring racism a public health crisis.

In the spring of 2019, more than 100 community stakeholders participated in a diversity workshop that was led by the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service. This community-driven issues identification and problem solving process was called "Site Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together." The SPIRIT

Council was formed to continue to move that work forward.

"The Council's mission is to represent the community at large and serve as Diversity Champions to help Simsbury become more inclusive," said Cheryl Cook, co-chair of the SPIRIT Council.

Co-chair Nicole Kodak added, "The Council's work is about fostering a community where all voices are welcome and every individual can live, work, learn, and play in a safe environment with meaningful and healthy relationships."

First Selectman Eric Wellman and Deputy First Selectman Sean Askham will serve as co-liaisons to

the SPIRIT Council, underlining the importance of the Council's mission and a strong commitment by the Board to support the Council's work.

"I am proud to sign my name under this resolution," Askham said. "It's a powerful statement about the kind of community we strive to be."

The resolution was reviewed by the public health professionals at the Farmington Valley Health District. By signing it, the Board of Selectmen committed to working to become an equity and justice-oriented organization. "This work starts by taking a hard look at our organization," said Wellman.

"This includes our policies, procedures, and all of the ways that we serve the public." The Board of Selectmen asked the Town Manager to work with her department heads to review policies and practices through an equity lens.

Tenesha Grant, vice chair of the SPIRIT Council, was part of the group that drafted the resolution. "This resolution is an important step," Grant said, "but it's just the beginning. There's a lot of important work ahead."

The Board of Selectmen expected to officially appoint members to the SPIRIT Council at its next meeting on Oct. 14.

Horvath named semifinalist in Merit Scholar Program

CANTON – Canton High School recognizes senior Katelynn Horvath for being named a semifinalist in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program. About 1.5 million juniors in more than 21,000 high schools entered the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2019 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of semifinalist, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state. "To be name as a semifinalist in this program is a tremendous honor and achievement," stated Principal DiPippo.

See more community news
on pages 7 to 17

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Andy's Center Shops to get a facelift



By John Fitts
Staff Writer

SIMSBURY – The owners of Andy's Center Shops recently received approval for a plan to revitalize the plaza in the hopes of attracting new tenants, including a drive-through restaurant and a mix of retail and office space in the former grocery store, which closed in 2012.

The modified site plan application approved Oct. 5 by the Simsbury Zoning Commission includes a new 300-square foot addition to the 76,731 square foot facility.

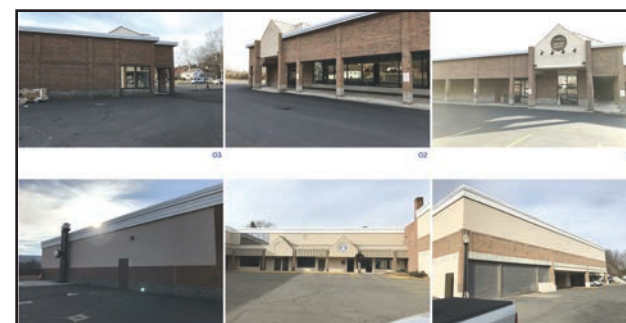
"What we're looking to do is to add a small addition to the restaurant, which would be used as a drive through," Chris Milliard of Phase Zero Design told the commission on behalf of the owner.

A common corridor area would provide access to office and retail spaces, access to the trash areas, as well as a means of egress.

Milliard reviewed some other aspects of the project, which would include a new black-and-white-themed façade, with elements such painted brick, vinyl siding and trim, new fabric awnings, metal swing gates for the loading and trash area vinyl vented soffit panels, fabric awnings, and a new barnwood cladding on



Above are renderings from Phase Zero Design showing the new look coming to Andy's Center Shops. Below are current photos. Readers can find more comparison photos at <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/zoning-commission/agenda/10052020-zoning-commission-agenda>



a retaining wall in the rear of the plaza and new exterior, goose neck, dark-sky-compliant lighting.

Also included are changes that would enhance vehicular and pedestrian movements.

The plan calls for 149 parking spaces, an addition of 5 and 12.37 percent open space, a slight increase from current conditions. There would be no change to the 3.57-acre lot size.

"It's not a lot of big change, but it should help really change the character of the plaza as a whole," said Terri-Ann P. Hahn, principal

of Simsbury Landscape Architectural Design Associates, which also worked on the project at 836 Hopmeadow St.

Owner Loren 'Andy' Andreo Jr. said the goal is to make the improvements as soon as possible. He acknowledged it's been a struggle to get a consistent tenant for the former grocery store, but feels the new plan will increase marketing potential.

"We feel that a drive-through component in the center of Simsbury would entice somebody to come here," he said.

Community News

Delayed Nursing Home week celebrated by Arden Courts, Cherry Brook Health

National Nursing Home week was originally slated to be recognized in May – during the throws of the COVID 19 pandemic.

At that time Cherry Brook Health Care Center heroes were focusing on providing care, therefore the celebration was postponed until August.

Arden Courts of Avon and Arden Courts of Farmington helped honor the hard working healthcare associates of Cherry Brook on one of the hottest days of the summer: “Thank you Cherry Brook for all you do – yesterday, today and tomorrow.”

“Cherry Brook Health Care Center would like to thank Arden Courts for their continued support and partnership through this challenging time, our staff and residents appreciate you,” stated Rebecca Stevenson, director of admissions and marketing, Cherry Brook Health Care Center.

Cherry Brook Health Care Center opened in January 1994, and is owned and operated by New Horizons, Inc. a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. As Canton’s “Resource for Recovery” Cherry Brook Health Care Center can res-

idents achieve your rehabilitative their goals. Offered are short term rehabilitation, outpatient rehabilitation and long term care.

Cherry Brook is the only health care center in Canton offering both inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services. Its highly trained therapists utilize state-of-the-art equipment and can customize a treatment plan to meet an individual personal goals. For more information about Cherry Brook Health Care Center, please contact the admissions department at (860) 693-7777 or admissions@cherrybrookhcc.com.

Arden Courts of Avon, 100 Fisher Drive, Avon and Arden Courts of Farmington, 45 South Road, Farmington are assisted living communities focused on providing memory care for individuals living with Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia. Arden Courts is part of ProMedica, a mission-based, not-for-profit integrated healthcare organization.

Driven by its mission to improve health and well-being, ProMedica has been nationally recognized for its advocacy programs and efforts to address social determinants of health.



From left to right are Audrey Smarrelli, ADNS, Cherry Brook Health Care Center; Suzanne Webster, Memory Care Advisor, Arden Courts and Rebecca Stevenson, Director of Admissions and Marketing, Cherry Brook Health Care Center

Eleni[★] Kavros DeGraw

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McLean MINUTE

The Benefits of a Senior Living Community Today and Every Day

Think about all the major plans you've made in your life: All these decisions have required planning. If the current COVID-19 pandemic has revealed anything, it's the importance of having a plan that also includes getting the most out of life, even if the unexpected happens.

One of the benefits of living in a Life Plan community like McLean is that they have the resources to develop a plan for just about any circumstance, which can help provide peace of mind and minimize any unnecessary disruption to your day-to-day life.

Planning for the unexpected.

Think about your life at home today. What would you do in the event of a major storm, power outage, or if you or your spouse became ill? Who would you call? How could mobility issues or other health conditions affect your ability to react? Do you have someone who could help with cleaning, grocery shopping or meal preparation? Senior living communities, like McLean, have supportive systems in place for dealing with a wide variety of emergencies. If you are considering a move to a senior living community, here are a few things to think about:

- A community should have strategies in place to prevent or reduce the likelihood of a hazardous event impacting their residents' daily lives.
- Their plan should include how they'll support their residents if essential services break down; how they'll provide care and services during an emergency; and how they'll communicate with staff, residents and even their families.
- This plan must also detail their procedures to manage a contagious viral outbreak, that include engaging trusted community partners and national and state healthcare resources for strategic guidance.

Researching your choices.

When looking at a community today, make sure they are following all current state mandates for COVID-19 safety. Also, learn how they are promoting a sense of community that protects those who live and work on campus and are creatively finding ways to safely ensure residents' overall well-being including offering wellness and fitness opportunities, enjoyable dining experiences and visits with loved ones.

While it's important to have a plan to keep everyone safe, another benefit of a senior living community is having the freedom to enjoy today more. Selecting a community that can help with everything from on-site medical care to safely navigating unexpected events, while offering the opportunity to live every day to the fullest, will provide you and your family members with a true sense of security. If you're considering your options and want to know how McLean's lifestyle and safety protocols can help you enjoy life more, **contact us at 860-658-3786; McLeanInspiredLiving.org.**

Farley Mac's opens with varied menu

Submitted article

SIMSBURY – The restaurant's name is Farley Mac's, but it's not an Irish pub.

The new eatery at 1616 Hopmeadow St. near the Granby line is owned by an Irishman, Kevin Farley, and it feels like a pub. His philosophy, however, is to use quality ingredients for a varied menu of comfort food.

"We're a quaint, friendly place where people came come and enjoy themselves and have good food and drink," he said. "We have something for everyone, to bring people together. There's no simpler form of entertainment."

Some menu examples are grilled cheese bites served with tomato soup; New England clam chowder; spinach salad; pulled pork sandwich; and pesto pasta. Recent special items featured Not Your Mom's Meatloaf and Tuscan Pork Chops.

In creating special menu offerings, Farley collaborates with his chef, Kevin Matthews of Granby, a Simsbury High graduate.

"I'm glad to be serving area residents," Matthews said.

In addition to a wine and beer list that includes Farley Mac's Amber Ale, made for them by Cottrell Brewing in Stonington, the bar offers a specialty cocktail menu.

Farley Mac's, located in the building formerly occupied by Thai Ocha, opened on July 30 following five months of renovation work and despite the coronavirus.

"We gutted the kitchen and redid it, painted, and built a new oak bar," he said. "No one had a clue that the pandemic would last this long so we kept going."



Above: Farley Mac's at 1616 Hopmeadow St. At right: Standing behind the new oak bar, one of the changes made at the restaurant, are Kevin Matthews, chef, and Kevin Farley, owner of Farley Mac's in Simsbury.



With seating for 28 at tables in front of the restaurant street-side, outdoor dining has been brisk and the business has been promoted through word of mouth and social media.

"We're getting a lot of support," Farley said.

Now that the weather is cooler, he is strategizing ways to optimize his indoor space, where people can feel the warmth of a fireplace featuring a wood-burning pot belly stove.

Having his own restaurant has been a longtime dream for Windsor resident Farley, 52, a married father of two school-age children. He has worked in the restaurant industry for several years, including stints at The Great American Café in Glastonbury, Coach's Sports Bar in Hartford and as a partner at Union Tavern in Windsor. More recently he was general manager at the Polish National Home of Hartford, his inspiration for including kielbasa and pierogis on the menu.

"I've done it all in the business and have a knack for knowing what a customer wants when I meet them," he said. "Owning Farley Mac's is my 45th job

in life and I plan for it to be my last."

His dream was realized via the generosity of Amy and Freddie Morris of Venice, Florida. A friend of Morris' since second grade in Windsor, Farley served as best man at their wedding in 2009 and struck up a conversation with the bride's father, Brian MacNamara, an investor who loved to help people with small business start-ups. After Mr. MacNamara passed away, daughter Amy remembered that conversation.

"I recalled how much my father wanted to pursue a business venture with Kevin," she said.

"Amy and Freddie reached out to invest and be partners with me, and Farley Mac's was born," Farley said, explaining that the Mac's part of the restaurant name derives from MacNamara.

"I'm very grateful to them and couldn't have asked for a better gift."

There's another component to the name – an image that appears between Farley and Mac's. It's an open heart with a shamrock inside, duplicating a tattoo that Amy had inked on her shoulder in memory of her dad.

Farley Mac's is open seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., with hours possibly expanding soon. Happy Hour runs from 2 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and Bloody Mary's are \$5 on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. to accompany the regular menu.

For information, call 860-325-5162, visit www.farleymacs.com or follow <https://www.facebook.com/Farley-Macs-105608327716741>, where daily specials are posted.

Community News

Good neighbors help get Tootin' Hills Train on the right track

SIMSBURY — Mark Holowesko and Sandra Berkner reside literally in the shadow of the Tootin' Hills Elementary School building, just next door on Nimrod Road. Their two children had attended the school years ago, and when the couple saw a need arise, they jumped at the chance to give a new meaning to being a good neighbor.

While walking down the street one day early this summer, Holowesko and Berkner observed that the giant wooden train, which has been a long-time fixture on the grounds of the school, was in need of refurbishing. So they gathered up some tools and got to work. Besides replacing rails and ties here and there, the train also needed a dash of branding with Tootin' Hills blue and gold colors, as suggested by current Tootin' Hills Principal

Maggie Seidel. Her predecessor, long-time principal Ron Perrault, who retired after 24 years, had seen the train at a train museum on his travels in the south. As a gift from the Tootin' Hills Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), it was packed up and shipped to Connecticut. Former Simsbury Public Schools Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds Steve Twitchell and his team installed it with some landscaping done by nutrition services worker Pam Bohnsack.

The plain wooden structure sat in its new home for many years, beloved by Tootin' Hills families but untouched, or so it was thought. While painting the smokestack on the front of the train, Berkner and Holowesko discovered that over the years, children had been filling it with sand and rocks. They came up with a

solution to prevent future mischief, capping the smokestack with a solar powered post cap light, which offered the dual benefit of being a beacon in the dark.

The refurbished train has the look of a professional job, not the work of ordinary volunteers. But Berkner and Holowesko are no ordinary volunteers. Berkner, who works full-time as a business project manager at The Hartford, is a dedicated volunteer, having been involved in a multitude of benevolent causes over the years. Especially during the pandemic, they were eager to find projects to help others. Holowesko used his talents to fix and replace any broken boards and make the train safer for children to play on, and Berkner partnered on the painting.

With the new makeover, the train has gotten a lot of

attention since school started. Said Seidel, "So many people have told me they never noticed the train before. Our new students and kindergartners during orientation were the first to see it. Now we see lots of kids on the weekends having their pictures taken with the train."

Seidel could not be more grateful for this show of support from members of the community. She said, "On behalf of the entire Tootin' Hills Community, I would like to thank Mark and Sandra for their work to restore the train this summer. Even though their children have grown up and moved on, they still care deeply about the school and



Husband and wife team Mark Holowesko and Sandra Berkner pose next to the iconic Tootin' Hills Elementary School train, which they restored over the summer.

the kids in our community. We are excited to have the newly painted train as a focal point for our families and those just driving by. It truly looks amazing."

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Community News



Farmington Rotary hosts annual breakfast to honor first responders

On Friday, September 11, the Farmington Rotary Club held its second annual First Responders Appreciation Breakfast in recognition of the dedication and sacrifice of the town's police officers, firefighters, ambulance workers, CERT team and volunteer responders. The event was held outside under the tent at Farmington Gardens where our guests were greeted by attending Rotarians.

The Rotary Club thanks Phil Chabot at Farmington Gardens for organizing the delicious breakfast served by the Farmington Gardens staff and for the use of the beautiful and safe outside venue under the tent at the restaurant location. Thanks also to attending Farmington Rotarians for welcoming guests and assisting with the event.

The Farmington Rotary is planning to repeat this event next year to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of 9/11. Once again, this breakfast will honor Farmington's own first responders who are of great value to our town.



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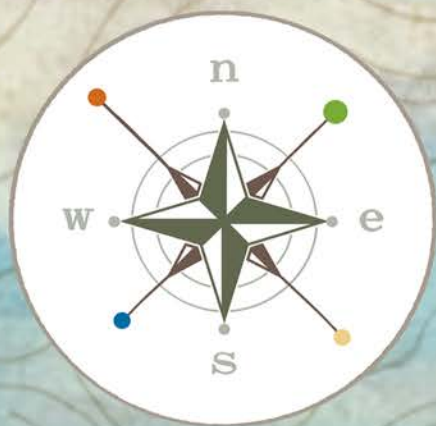
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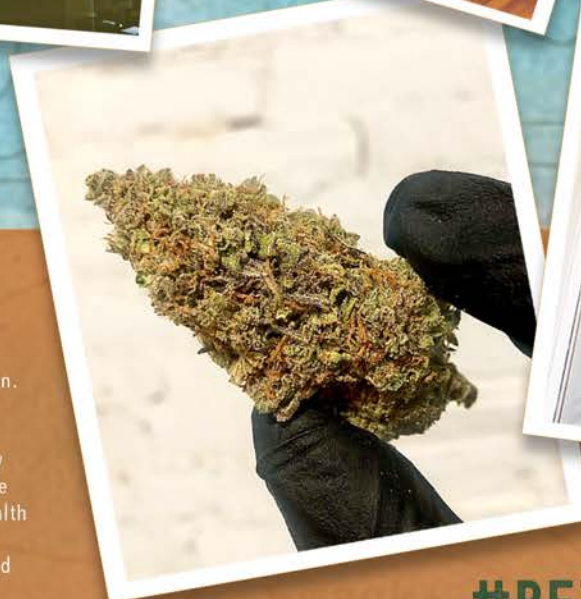


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Tanner Brown receives Lt. Richard F. Kelleher Memorial Scholarship

Tanner Brown, Simsbury High School class of 2020, received the Lieutenant Richard F. Kelleher Memorial Scholarship given by the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company.

Brown is attending the

University of New Haven where he is studying Fire Science Administration to prepare him for a career as a firefighter.

While at Simsbury High School, he was on the wrestling and rugby teams, as well as being a junior firefighter with

the Fire Company for three years. This summer he was at Tulmeadow Farm where he worked scooping ice cream and did odd jobs around the farm, including driving the farm's standard shift truck.

Brown is the son of

Michael and Stephanie Brown of the Tariffville section of Simsbury.

The Kelleher scholarship was established in 1983 and is given annually in memory of the first Simsbury firefighter to die in the line of duty.

Avon-Canton Rotary donates pencil boxes to city school

The Rotary Club of Avon-Canton recently assembled and donated 417 pencil boxes to students at the Fred D. Wish Museum School in Hartford. Under the leadership of Rotarian Phil Ferrari, a group of more than a dozen club members, gathered some \$2600 worth of jumbo crayons, regular crayons, pencils, erasers, glue sticks, small and medium scissors, markers, highlighters and pencil boxes for the project.

Ferrari said that in addition to the good fellowship of a hands-on working experience to fill the pencil boxes with appropriate materials for pre-schoolers, kindergart-

ners, and first through fifth graders, there was also a sense of accomplishment in fulfilling the Rotary motto of "Service Above Self." The Pencil Box Project is an annual work of outreach by the Avon-Canton Rotary Club.

The club normally meets weekly for breakfast on Fridays, 7:30 a.m. at the Avon Old Farms Hotel. Temporarily, during the Covid-19 Pandemic, the meetings are being held electronically via Zoom.

For further information go to the club web site: www.rotaryclubofavon-canton.org or contact club president Alicia Canning at: a.canning@comcast.net

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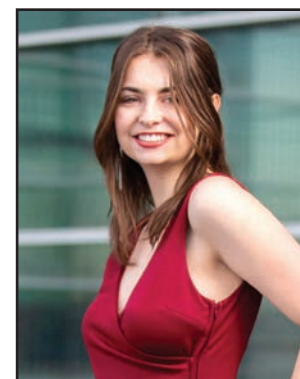
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SHS graduate joins Fulbright's worldwide community of leaders

SIMSBURY – Julie Kaplan, Simsbury High Class of 2017 and a senior at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ studying Finance and Global Politics, has been awarded the prestigious Killam Fellowship, administered by Fulbright Canada. The scholarship program allows exceptional undergraduate students to participate in a bi-national academic exchange between Canada and the United States.

Kaplan will attend the University of Prince Edward Island in the Canadian Maritimes for the 2021 spring semester where she is looking forward to studying Canadian and international business. Kaplan will research micro-finance and economic empowerment and commented, "I am honored to join the Fulbright community of leaders and researchers and looking forward to participating actively in the distinguished Fulbright alumni network in the United States, Canada and around the world."

Kaplan's interest in the world of business and



Julie Kaplan

micro-finance began when she was a sophomore in high school. "When I was 16, my father loaned me \$250 to create Kap's Closet – a clothing resale business. I woke up at dawn every Saturday morning, borrowed Dad's car and drove to the garment district in downtown Los Angeles, and purchased deeply discounted designer clothing from warehouse and factory sales. I would then resell to my 5,000+ followers online. Without this loan, I would not have been able to create a business that I am really proud of and which helped pay for my college education."

Community News

Farmington Toastmasters Club receives award

Farmington Toastmasters Club has received President's Distinguished Club recognition for the 2019-2020 Toastmasters year. This means that its members successfully developed and improved their communication and leadership skills which are so highly valued in business and the workplace.

"It's an environment that fosters growth and development and allows everyone to improve leadership and communication skills at their own pace. The Farmington Club is a place where people can safely share their most personal thoughts without judgment," said Bette McIntire, DTM.

"Achieving 10 out of 10 goals for our club's quality, in addition to so many other



member educational accomplishments, was by far one of my proudest moments of being a Toastmasters club officer," said Steve Gondek, VCS, 2019-2020 Club President.

"We are a dynamic and fun group. Toastmasters is a great place to acquire and hone speaking and presentation skills, network, and meet new friends," added Nara Venditti, DTM.

The club is currently using the Zoom videoconferencing platform for their meetings. To join them, please contact the club President, Raj Subbu, CC, ALB, and he will provide you with the necessary connection information. Raj can be reached at raj.subbu@icloud.com. For more information, visit the club's website <https://8443.toastmastersclubs.org>.

'Unite by Light'

SIMSBURY – For All Ages, the CT nonprofit organization that creates positive, collaborative experiences between the generations to reduce loneliness and isolation, improve health and well-being, and change negative views on aging, is hosting 'Unite by Light', a fully inclusive luminary event that will unite the entire Simsbury community for a single night of connection and joy.

For All Ages has designed the luminary kits so the entire family can join in this community celebration of unity. Folding boxes can be decorated by children before being filled and placed inside the paper bags. Safe,

flameless, flickering tea lights rest on top of the boxes and provide a realistic soft, warm glow.

As a special feature, each luminary kit of 10 lights includes two bags with snowflakes cut out.

Every purchase of a luminary kit sponsors a single luminary for an older adult living in town. For All Ages is providing up to 600 single luminaries free of charge to older adults at each Simsbury adult living community, Meals on Wheels recipients, and older adults living in their own homes. Connecting this event with the non-profit's Joyful Notes Project, a handmade card will accompany each single luminary. Luminary kits are

available for purchase on For All Ages' website at www.forallages.org/Unite-by-Light and will be sold in front of Fitzgerald's Foods on Oct. 24, Nov. 14, and Nov. 21 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Anyone purchasing on-line will be able to pick up their luminary kit during these times. Additional dates may be added.

All Ages is also planning the Simsbury Unity Mile, with more than 1,000 luminaries along both sides of a one-mile stretch of Hopmeadow Street.

Unite by Light will take place beginning at 5 p.m. Dec. 6 when residents of all ages light their luminaries and volunteers light up the Simsbury Unity Mile.

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Favarh launches healthy meals cafe

Submitted article

CANTON – There's a new café coming to Canton with a unique and inspirational purpose. The Canton-based nonprofit organization Favarh, serving Greater Farmington Valley residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities, just completed the commercial production kitchen and has obtained licensing. Their goal is to prepare and provide fresh, healthy, and portioned meals to the people Favarh supports living nearby.

Executive Director Stephen Morris explains how the kitchen and café became part of a larger building project, Favarh's Life Enrichment Center at 150 Commerce Drive in Canton, which began several years ago.

"We've been fortunate that Favarh's Life



Enrichment Center, which broke ground in 2013, became operational just before the pandemic hit. This wonderful new building space allows us to spread out with necessary social distancing as we reopen our day programs." The building was made possible through contributions from individuals, corporations and community organizations.

"The kitchen and café are coming online as the

final portion of this building project," Morris continues, "just in time to serve the Favarh residents moving into the new Bear Woods Apartments on Commerce Drive this fall. We know that as young people move into more independent living situations, food choices often decline. It would be terrible to help people live more independently only to see their health decline as a result of poor food choices.



Courtesy Photo

Seen here are the kitchen and exterior of the healthy meals cafe.

By providing healthy dinners, we help assure that won't happen."

The healthy meal program is part of Favarh's larger Healthy Lifestyles program which includes increasing physical activity, enhancing social relationships, and improving food choices.

Favarh plans to invite

guest chefs to help create dinner menus and prepare some of the meals. Meals will be ordered by Favarh residents using an online ordering process. As the program grows, the meals may be made available to the general public. The café space will serve as a future jobs training program for our clients.

Donors are invited to support the new café service with a \$100 contribution which covers the cost for one week of dinners and lunches for Favarh residents. Contributions can be made at favarh.org/give. Guest Chefs can learn more about volunteering by contacting Morris at smorris@favarh.org.



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Community News

Simsbury resident continues gluten-free mission

Submitted Article

Simsbury resident Abby Helman Kelly doesn't give up easily. She started Gluten-Free Connecticut in 2016, and expanded into the rest of New England two years later. With the expansion, she began organizing large-scale food expos across the region, drawing thousands of attendees. 2020 was shaping up to be a banner year, with three huge gluten-free expos on the schedule. Then COVID happened, shutting down all in-person events, everywhere.

"When quarantine began and my first expo of the year in Boston was canceled, I was so incredibly disappointed, because the Boston show was shaping up to be my biggest and best one yet," Kelly says. She

refunded all the exhibitors, and took time off to do house projects and play with her kids. "That was actually really nice, because I had been so busy with details, there wasn't time to breath."

Shortly after, when her Greenwich and Southington expos were canceled, Kelly made a decision. "It was time to get creative," she laughs.

She spent time thinking about an alternative to an in-person expo that wasn't virtual. "I figured if I'm Zoomed out, then others probably are, too. And that's when it hit me. Our audience loves to leave our expos with a big bag of gluten-free samples and coupons, so why not give them the bag anyway?" Then, the Expo To-Go was born.

Kelly secured

Rentschler Field in East Hartford for the October 24 event, and used her connections with local and national gluten-free brands and businesses to collect thousands of samples and coupons. The bags will also include educational information from non-profits, and Kelly even brought celiac-friendly restaurants Burtons Grill and Red Heat Tavern on board as sponsors, "Once I got things rolling, it just took off," she says. Her team will pack 2,000 bags total, and will sell them until they're gone.

"Bags are being purchased by customers in New England and all over the country. We're reaching people who may never have been able to go to an expo before, for any reason, and that's so exciting and gratifying," Kelly states.



Gluten-Free New England's Expo To-Go will take place on Saturday, Oct. 24 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Rentschler Field in East Hartford.

Bags are \$20, and can be pre-purchased online to be picked up curbside on the day of the event, or shipped nationwide for a flat shipping fee.

Visit www.wickedglutenfree.com for additional information and pre-purchase details.

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In a letter to the commission, he stated, in part, "In my experience, I have not seen the 100-year FEMA flood elevation replace wetland boundary lines. In addition, I believe that this methodology weakens our profession as soil scientists. Please note that the 100-year FEMA flood elevation is subject to more frequent changes based on watershed development and climate change than are soil criteria."

That night the commission plans to further consider an intervention petition filed by Nod Road Preservation, under a state law that allows intervention as a "party" in the proceeding if the "judicial review involves conduct which has, or which is reasonably likely to have, the effect of unreasonably polluting, impairing

the applicant's proposal.

"I don't believe there are weaknesses in this evaluation. I think this is based on and extremely high amount of data collection in the field and it's based on the professional judgment and opinion of four soil scientists, all of whom have decades of experience in the field," he said.

Soil scientists on behalf of Blue Fox also contend that they dug deep enough to determine that there were no alluvial soils in the approximate 12-acre "blob"

on the town's map that was quite controversial in the 2019 application hearings.

When the commission is set to meet again Nov. 5 at 7 p.m. via Zoom, it also expects to hear from Timothy G. Welling of Welling Geoservices in Clinton Corners, N.Y., speaking on behalf of Nod Road

or destroying the public trust in the air, water or other natural resources of the state."

Attorneys for Nod Road and the applicant, however, are at odds over whether the statute applies, with Brooks arguing that there is no conduct or regulated activity proposed and the application is based on sound science. Attorneys for Nod Road Preservation contend that mapping certainly involves conduct and could lead to compromised wetlands.

Residents interested in the continued public hearing, set for 7 p.m. Nov. 5 can find the application materials at www.avonct.gov/inland-wetlands-commission.

A link to the hearing will also be posted on that site in the days prior to the meeting.



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BLUE FOX from page 4
year flood line lies," he said. "I think we all realize that the 100-year flood is no longer the 100-year flood and we are getting more frequent flooding events. So, my underlying concern is if you remap this entire area as proposed, you're actually stripping basic protection from an area that is prone to flooding. It's been demonstrated by testimony in the previous hearing that there is flooding that goes up to the road in the 500-year flood area.

"So, my question is while the map change certainly may benefit the applicant by giving them free range of the site, where is the public benefit of doing this?"

Responding to a commission question at the Oct. 6, Russo contended that there are no weaknesses in

Community Happenings

Voter registration session

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 9-19b(d), all Registrars of Voters' offices in Connecticut will hold a statewide voter registration session on October 27, 2 9:00 am to 8:00 PM.

Please call your local Registrars' office for details, especially now with COVID 19.

Consignment Sale for Latimer Lane

Latimer Lane School's All-4-Kids consignment sale will be held online through Saturday, Oct. 17. 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.llall4kids.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 through Oct. 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 check-out, 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.

Annual Oktoberfest

Canton Senior Center, 40 Dyer Ave., Canton will host its Annual Oktoberfest Friday, Oct. 23 at noon. Entertainment will be provided by Frank Billowitz from The Austrian Boys Band. On entry, please follow the posted signage and be on the lookout for volunteers to assist with parking for this tailgating event. Feel free to bring lawn chairs and follow all social distancing protocols. Please make sure to wear a face-mask. This year, the Canton Lions Club will be serving Bratwurst, Sauerkraut, Pretzels, Hot Dogs, and a dessert. Cost for admittance is \$5. Call 860-693-5811 to reserve a spot.

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.avonctlibrary.info or call the library at 860.673.9712, ext 4.

Simsbury's VFW and American Legion announce two events

SIMSBURY – Simsbury's Metacomet Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1926 and



American Legion Tomalonis Hall Post 84 announce two events for Veterans Day, Wednesday, Nov. 11 at 11 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. All military veterans, their families and the public are invited to attend both events. 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 a.m.

Later that day, at 3:30 p.m, the public is invited back to the Simsbury Veterans Memorial for an outdoor event, following state guidelines. Opening remarks will be made by Eric Wellman, First Selectman, Town of Simsbury. The National Anthem will be sung by a soloist from Simsbury High School. Musical selections will be played by Simsbury's Talcott Mountain Highlanders a bagpipe and drum band. Their leader, Jim Feeney, will provide a brief talk about the role of bagpipers in conflicts of the past. Keynote speaker will be Leesa Philippon, US Army Veteran, Gold & Blue Star Mother and Communication/Outreach Coordinator for Resilience Grows Here, a veteran initiative of the Farmington Valley Health District. As a

Gold Star mother, she will speak on behalf of her son's brother and sisters in arms and as a veteran herself.

Featured this year will be the setting of a POW-MIA Table to honor those who have served in America's Armed Forces, especially those missing in action (MIAs) and those held as prisoner of war (POWs.) The ceremony to represent the everlasting concern the survivors have for the missing was started at the end of the Vietnam War.

There will be no raindate. Masks will be required of all and social distancing seating will be available on Eaglewood Lane for those who need it. For more information about the Metacomet VFW Post 1926, visit: www.vfw1926.org

Fall continuing education

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?Program-ID=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.

Artist auctions painting to benefit Interval House



Sunflowers in a Glass Vase, 20"x16", oil on canvas by Connecticut artist Kate Emery

FARMINGTON – To raise awareness and funds for Interval House during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Farmington-based fine artist Kate Emery is auctioning her original oil painting, Sunflowers in a Glass Vase, to benefit Connecticut's largest agency dedicated to ending domestic violence. Bids will be accepted online at KateEmery.com/auctions through 8 p.m. Oct. 30.

The 20x16-inch original still life painting, with its hopeful and harmonious shades of yellow and teal, will brighten the winning bidder's home or office space, while the funds raised will uplift individuals moving out of and on from abusive home environments. Emery will donate 75 percent of the price realized for the painting, valued at \$650, to Interval House (intervalhousect.org). The Hartford-based organization offers immediate and compassionate support to about 4,500 victims of domestic violence each year in 24 cities and towns – all at no charge.

Tunxis open house

Tunxis Community College will hold a Virtual Open House Nov. 10 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. All are welcome to learn more about the college, view photos of campus, and get information about degree programs, financial aid, and transfer opportunities. Sessions will also include PACT — CT's free community college program, top tips for college success, and the High School Partnership Program. Participants must register in advance at tunxis.edu/open-house. All sessions will be repeated more than once to offer multiple opportunities to attend presentations. Spring registration opens to prospective students in mid-October. Spring semester starts on Jan. 22. For small group (student and guest) tours of campus with social distancing, email tx-admissions@tunxis.edu.

Community News

Canton Volunteer Fire and EMS Department, community observe 'Light the Night for Fallen Firefighters'

Between Sept. 27 and Oct. 4, the Town of Canton Volunteer Fire and EMS Department participated in a nationwide observance known as, 'Light the Night for Fallen Firefighters' which honored the 82 firefighters, across the nation, who paid the ultimate price with their lives in 2019.

Since 1992, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation has honored the brave men and women who died in the line of duty, with a series of public events at their Memorial Park in Emmitsburg, MD. With the COVID 19 pandemic impacting their traditional public activities, the Foundation instead created 'Light the

Night for Fallen Firefighters,' a weeklong initiative designed to be shared across the county with all fire service members, their families and communities. It was a simple enough idea: replace one exterior white light bulb with a red one in remembrance.

In Canton, Chief of Department Bruce Lockwood took to social media and invited the community to join in this observance of commitment, dedication and sacrifice – because every Canton Firefighter, EMT and Fire Police member knows that their next call could be their last call.

And, the community responded. Not only were the Department's three fire

stations lite up with red bulbs, but many members, residents, businesses and community organizations participated as well, illuminated their structures in bright red as a gesture of solidarity and respect for Canton's Firefighters, EMTs and Fire Police, as well as the fallen firefighters across the nation.

Area fire departments in Avon, Burlington, New Hartford and Simsbury also encouraged their communities to join them in this important national observance.

On the final day of the event, Canton also asked houses of worship in Town to join the Foundation's 'Bells



Across America for Fallen Firefighters' initiative. Traditionally when a firefighter dies in the line of duty, a

bell is rung to remember their commitment and sacrifice. So on Oct. 4, churches throughout Town participated by

ringing their bells, sharing prayers and music to honor all fallen firefighters and their families everywhere.

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FORUM

from page 3

person responsible for creating an environment in which Republicans think that this is acceptable behavior? He's called out racist tropes by a local party official, but what about Trump?"

Witkos said Osborne had cropped out the person he was taking the photo with, a man with intellectual disabilities who drew the sign, and that Witkos was merely posing with the man. The photo, Witkos says, was therefore taken out of context for political purposes.

"That's so disingenuous and so wrong on so many levels," Witkos said in a telephone interview.

Further, he said he would not debate with someone who "has no integrity."

"I said she's compared me to Harvey Weinstein," Witkos said, referring to the disgraced film mogul who has been accused of and convicted of multiple sexual assaults. "She's accused me of breaking into her house. These things are just outrageous and outlandish allegations."

Witkos said he's taken part in the league's voter guide, which is composed of

an opening statement of 75 words along with answers to four questions, all of which also could not be more than 75 words apiece.

"I said I'm sorry it's come to this, but that's only way I can know my answers cannot be misconstrued," Witkos, who works for Eversource Energy as a community liaison, said. "I'm always willing to stand up for whatever I voted on for whatever issue; I'm not hiding anything," he said. "I'm not going to go where Melissa has. Her whole campaign has been a smear tactic. She's running against Eversource and President Trump. That's her whole campaign. I'm talking about what I want to do in the future and what I've accomplished in the past. I guess when you're the challenger and you're desperate you'll say anything to get people riled up."

Osborne: Witkos 'ludicrous'

Up until the candidate forum issue, Osborne has said she believed Witkos to be "a nice guy" but that they had significant differences of opinion on policy issues.

She said in a telephone interview that she takes it back.

Tensions in campaign not limited to one event

The circumstances surrounding the forum aren't the only times the 8th Senate District campaign has taken a negative turn, according to Democratic challenger Melissa Osborne.

Recently, someone hung a sex toy on one of Osborne's campaign signs on Bushy Hill in Simsbury.

In addition, Osborne says she has been trolled on social media with profane comments and memes, as well as neighbor, who is a supporter of Republican incumbent Sen. Kevin Witkos, taking a video of Osborne covering a Witkos campaign sign

that was on her property.

"They want me to feel violated and vulnerable by being sexually threatening," Osborne said. "I'm repelled by it."

Osborne says in years past when these types of situations arose (she's also run against Witkos in 2014 and 2018), she has reached out to Witkos and he has responded by telling supporters to tone it down.

She said she has not reached out to Witkos this year because she doesn't believe he'll do anything about it.

"I don't think it would be successful given he recently put in writing that

I'm a liar and have no integrity," she said. "He's not interested in running a clean campaign. ... It has turned from a robust campaign about issues into gutter politics with misogynistic and potentially dangerous overtones."

She said the mudslinging and trolling goes beyond what people expect from Simsbury politicians.

"[The Republicans'] silence is complicity of what their supporters are doing to me," she said.

Witkos, for his part, said he hadn't heard of the sex toy incident before a reporter brought it to his attention.

"I don't condone, in any way, negative or inflammatory behavior," he said. "I'm running a positive campaign showing what I will do for the voters."

Witkos said it's possible his supporters, as a result of Osborne "constantly attacking" him, feel the need to defend him and that their actions are "in response to something she did."

He said he's focusing on issues and doing what he can "to fix Connecticut."

"To me, Melissa is all about politics, not policy," he said.

— Ted Glazer

"His behavior in the last month has been abhorrent," she said. "Kevin Witkos has never faced a real, challenging political campaign in his life. What he is objecting to is having to defend his own record. He is objecting to his own words, not in a manipulated fashion, but in live video being posted in a place that voters can actually see what he says and what he thinks."

Specifically, Osborne said the video posted on her campaign Facebook page was not manipulated, but merely was a portion of the 2018 candidate forum in which Witkos said there was a lot of "hysteria" around the possibility of Roe v. Wade being overturned.

Osborne said neither she nor anyone from her campaign took the video.

She says she received it from another campaign and, believing she may have misconstrued the ground rules, posted that portion of the video to her Facebook page.

"There was video posted by another candidate and I did reshare that," she said. "But it had been adopted and had the imprimatur of that candidate's campaign including logo and all those things. Perhaps I misunderstood since it was being used by another candidate. I didn't receive any objection from Kevin at the time. He didn't ask me to take it down."

She says she believes Witkos' response to the Roe v. Wade issue is it's "a completely valid thing for voters to see

"What is the purpose of engaging in a debate if not to educate the voters on how the two candidates might address the issue?" she said. "If he is upset with his performance that's on him, not me."

Osborne says Witkos is using what amounts to a tempest in a teapot as a pretext from having to answer for his voting record as well as his employment at Eversource.

"Kevin Witkos objects to voters seeing his real answers and responses to issues critically important to people: guns, reproductive health care, economy," she said. "I get why he doesn't want people to see how he performed that night because once people see how Kevin Witkos votes, they vote against him."

She said the forum is important because it enables voters to see candidates think on their feet, process information quickly and advocate for and defend their positions. Osborne said that's what legislators do.

"That is the job," she said. "I think it's a very big deal."

As for the Facebook photo, Osborne is blunt.

"So, does he deny that he supports the president?" she asked. "That's the real issue here. The issue is not whether I or anyone on my team cut out the picture of the other young man who is not a public figure and I don't think it's appropriate to repost that person. But it's clear Kevin is with somebody in that picture and Kevin is

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FORUM from page 18

choosing to hold a Trump sign and from that moment forward Kevin has refused to make any comment about whether he supports the president or his policies. I think that is an issue for people in this campaign."

The claim that she said Witkos or someone from his campaign broke into her house?

"Ludicrous," she said. "I don't know why he thinks that."

Osborne says she has had physical threats against her in the past made on Facebook, and someone did try to break into her home in 2018, but she did not make a public statement about it. She reported the incident to the police department.

"In no way did I tie it to Kevin," she said. "I didn't go on Facebook and go, 'Oh my goodness, someone tried to break into my house, it must have been Kevin.' That's ridiculous."

"Up until this situation right now, I thought Kevin Witkos was a good and decent human being, with whom I simply had divergent policy differences. His reaction here is just desperate." (Witkos responded by providing a screenshot of a Facebook conversation Osborne's campaign account had with a Witkos supporter

in which the post said, in part, "To my knowledge, my supporters don't drive by his house or try to break in. That is your candidate sir and your people and what they do to me." Witkos, a former Canton police officer, said he had conversations with Simsbury police and Osborne had not reported any break-ins to them. Osborne responded that she had, indeed, filed a police report, but that it was under a different name. Osborne has also provided a copy of that report to The Valley Press.)

No 17th District forum

The end result is that not only will Witkos and Osborne not have a forum or debate (Osborne has challenged Witkos to debate for months, with no response), but Hill and Kavros DeGraw also will not have one as well.

Adding to the confusion was an email Kavros DeGraw received from Dotson.

Kavros DeGraw says the email she received from Dotson said, "Let me just say you were the only one with positive feedback and willingness to participate via Zoom."

"I took that to mean it was only me who wanted to do it," she said, adding she subsequently conferred with Osborne who said she was also willing to have the Zoom debate.

Kavros DeGraw said in 2018 it was difficult not having Hill at the forum (though understandably as Hill was with her ill mother) and even more difficult not having one this year.

"I was looking forward to this debate because I think it was critical that, as ... we heard on calls with voters, 'I want to see them debate and then I'll make my decision.' It's very difficult to get across policy ideas in 75 words or less to pretty meaty questions that they gave us."

Hill said she raised some concerns over the possibility of the Zoom forum (mainly security concerns and how the video would be used), but ultimately signed off on it.

"I trust the league to do the right thing," Hill said. "I never said, 'No I won't do this.' I sent back the signed agreement to proceed. A few days after that, after a discussion among the league, they decided not to go forward. I filled out answers to the voter guide and sent them in."

Hill said she was disappointed in not participating in the forum this year, but she questioned how much of an impact it would have.

"It's nice to see candidates live on the stage, and people appreciate that," she said. "But the attendance at the live event has gone down. You look in the audience and

the people who are there are there to support a particular candidate or are family members."

Hill added the advent of social media and other campaign tools enable candidates to get their messages out.

Kavros DeGraw, however, disagreed, particularly in a race that was as close as the 17th District in 2018.

"Obviously I think there are many factors that go into determining the outcome of an election," she said. "And for me I feel bad for the voters because if you are running for office, if you hold an office, you are responsible to your constituents who are your voters."

Furthermore, Kavros DeGraw said in-person attendance was only part of the opportunity for people to see the forum. It's also broadcast on Nutmeg TV and a link is provided by the league to view online.

"It is a big deal because I can tell you from firsthand experience of talking to hundreds of voters on the phone and knocking doors and meeting people where they are even when considering the pandemic, people are waiting for this debate.

Period. Just period. People wait for this debate," she said. "Even when the absentee ballot voting and the numbers being off the charts this is an opportunity for them to defend their records and for us to share our vision for the future."

The league's reaction

All four candidates in the state races at issue took pains to say they do not want to call the Canton League of Women Voters into question, as it's an organization composed of volunteers who work hard to register and provide nonpartisan information to voters.

Dotson, the league's voter services chairwoman, said the league felt most comfortable sending out the questionnaires due to the pandemic and the concerns raised by Witkos over the use of video.

"We are dedicated to fairness, to nonpartisanship and voter education," she said. Those are our primary goals and responsibilities."

She said four out of the five candidates submitted answers to the questionnaires, with Osborne not sending in a response.

"I have not heard from

her," Dotson said of Osborne. "She chose not to respond for whatever reason, which is unfortunate. I am not really a social media person; I am not a fan of social media. I think people say things and post things they wouldn't necessarily say to another person. Some things posted about the league have been mean and hurtful. I've lived in C all my life. My number has not changed in 40 years same exact phone number. If anyone had a question about the process the decision or factors, they certainly could have called. Unfortunately their choice was not to call. Their choice was to post to social media."

Dotson appeared to agree with Witkos concerning Osborne's use of video that was not taken by the league of the last forum.

"The bottom line is four of the same people from 2018 signed an agreement they would not video or distribute any part of a video of the forum," she said. "The only thing was they could distribute the complete official video that was produced. Someone did not follow the rules."

See **FORUM** on page 20

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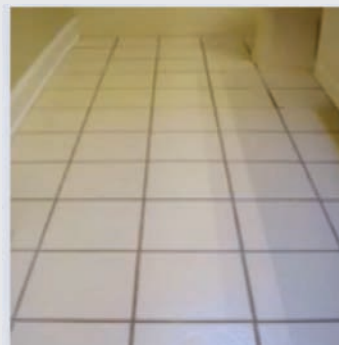
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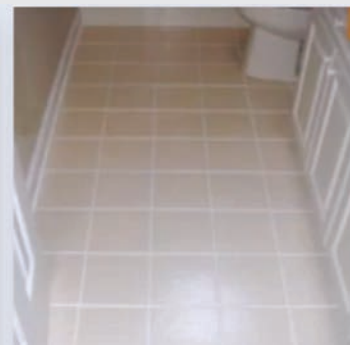
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FORUM from page 19

"Given we asked them to sign an agreement in 2018 and someone did not follow the rules, at that time we had more control over what was happening, or at least we thought we did," Dotson said. "To transition to a format with less control over that could be manipulated, recorded, sliced and diced, that was the area of concern."

"Only one of the candidate's website is a videotape from someone in the audience. As far as I know that is still on website as of [today]."

Further, Dotson said she spoke with Kavros DeGraw of the wording of her email.

"I take responsibility for a quick response and using the response 'and' - and

meant to say thank you for your positive feedback and agreeing to participate," she said, adding she was thanking Kavros DeGraw for her positive feedback. "She was the only one with no concerns and positive feedback through the entire process."

Osborne said she is not the only candidate who posted video of the last forum, providing as evidence a Facebook post of another campaign page that shows a video from the 2018 event. In addition, Osborne said she had a conversation with Carlene Rhea, president of the Canton League of Women Voters, saying she would not answer the questionnaire because it wasn't an adequate substitute for the forum and it was merely playing to Witkos' desires.

EV from page 1

The Simsbury Zoning Commission approved the site plan Oct. 5. Earlier that evening the Simsbury Design Review Board also gave a favorable recommendation.

The Canton Planning and Zoning Commission is due to consider site plan and special exception applications Oct. 21. Developers also have to work with the state Department of Transportation and are proposing a traffic signal at the eastern entrance to Brass Lantern Road, which formerly provided access to the now-closed La Trattoria restaurant, a neighboring site.

The development would involve much more than what people might perceive, according to Kevin Solli,

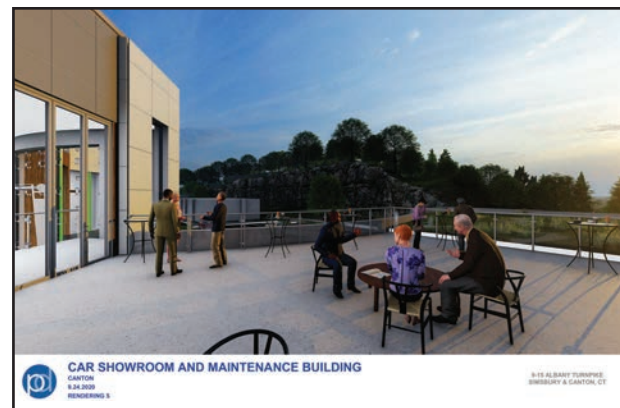
founder and principal engineer of Solli Engineering.

Manufacturers of electric vehicles are already excited about the concept of a showroom that would host as many as four companies and demonstrate the availability of vehicles from smaller manufacturers, displaying them to the public. The showroom would offer electric vehicle models people could try, order and have delivered to their homes.

The service area would be one level in the rear of the showroom. The plan also shows charging stations.

Solli said there's also great interest among EV manufacturers, some of which aren't household names.

"There's a tremendous amount of interest for this



A rendering of the terrace at the proposed EV building.

type of product which, again, I think is a really a benefit to the town of Simsbury and surrounding areas because this really is kind of a prototype for something that is more than your standard auto showroom," Solli said.

The facility would also include a rooftop patio that could be used for gatherings and more, he added.

"The views from this roof patio are really going to be quite something," said Solli, who also complimented the local firm that designed the electric vehicle showroom.

"I personally think that the team at Phase Zero did a fantastic job pulling together

See **EV** on page 21

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EV from page 20

a really interesting concept here,” he said. “And again, we’re excited because this will really serve to be a prototype for something that we think is going to be a great addition to not only these communities but really is a benefit to the state and the region as a whole anywhere where we can provide these opportunities to get people into kind of a more renewable form of transportation. ... We’re really excited. ... It was a fun one to be a part of on the design side because it really is focused on ... the future of transportation, trying to be nimble and agile and create a product and a project that can be getting away from fossil fuels with that focus on sustainability.”

And the other part of the development would further the concept he said, by including gas pumps can easily be converted to rapid-speed EV charging stations.

"The gas station itself is being designed to accommodate and to be able to adapt to the future trends that we see happening with automobiles," Solli said.

He also said the food-service components at that part of the development could dovetail with those shopping or charging

Above is the general site layout for the proposed development.

EVs. Aspects such as the eateries and nice seating areas would appeal to those clients as well as community groups, such as local sports teams, he said.

While Solli said the development will highlight the rock face at the site, he

acknowledged the project would take a fair amount of earth removal and blasting, one concern brought up by some Simsbury commissioners.

The approval would allow blasting six days a week with reduced hours

on Saturdays and no work to be done on Sundays and holidays.

Solli said blasting is highly regulated and would be done with all the required technical surveys, inspections, reports, condition documentation, seis-

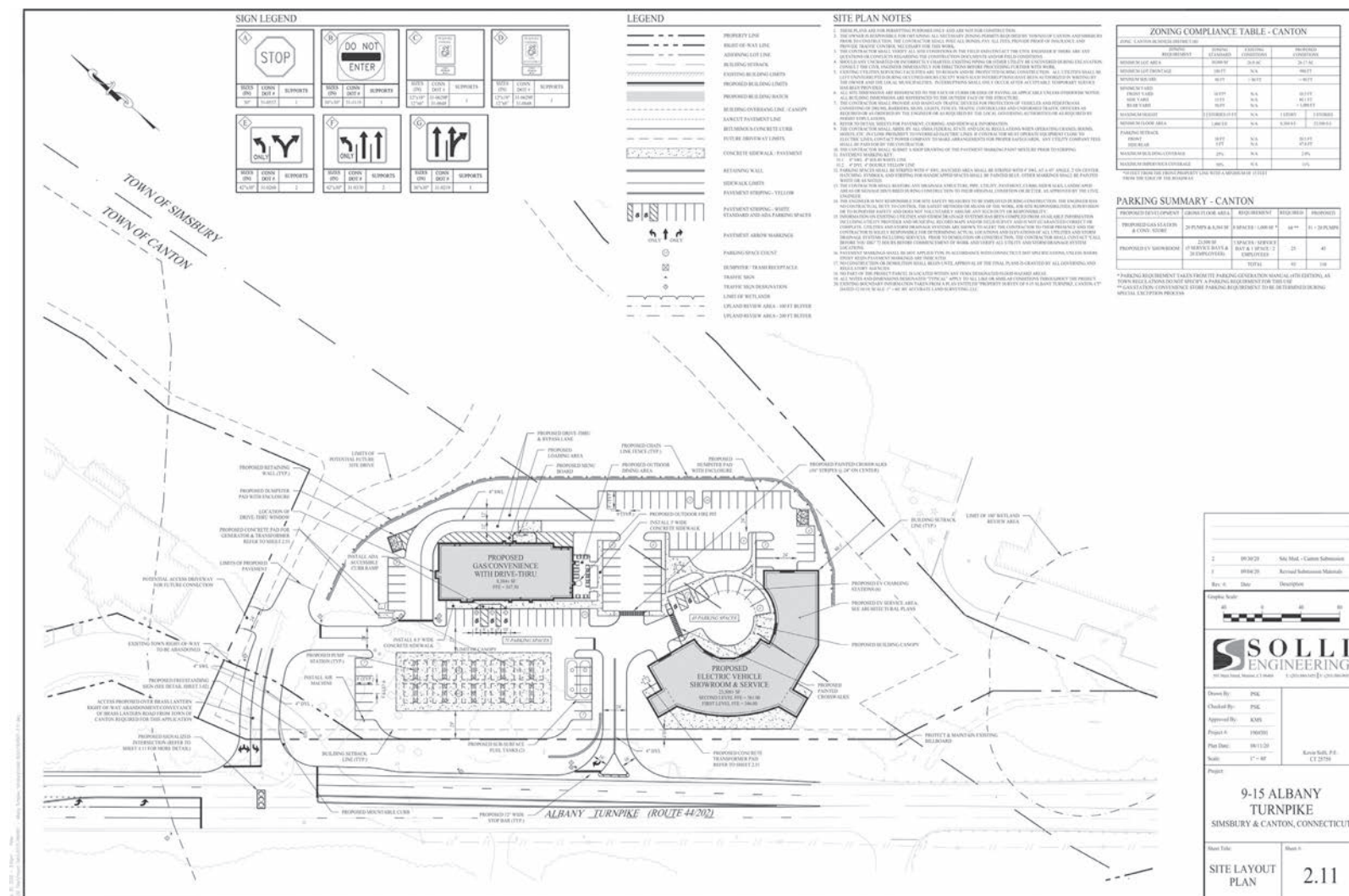
mograph installation, and approvals. He also said the potential hours for blasting were spaced out to minimize disruption.

Still, Commissioner Donna L. Beinstein, while praising the project overall, was concerned for area res-

idents in terms of noise and at least one commissioner expressed concern that things can sometimes go wrong despite the high level of regulation.

A couple of Simsbury

See **EV** on page 22



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EV from page 21

commissioners also pressed Solli on the amount of material that would be excavated. The figure was being refined since the site plan had been slightly revised since it was first submitted in Canton (which resulted in a delay of Canton's hearing), he said, adding that it would be approximately 80,000 yards of material.

He also said part of the "knob" in front of the former La Trattoria site would be removed and the developers are looking for the town of Canton to convey the Brass Lantern Road right away to the property owners.

Commissioner Bruce Elliott, who voted in favor of the site plan, expressed a few reservations, including the idea of the gas station overall, but acknowledged that part would be in Canton.

He said, "I'm willing to support this proposal although I wish it wasn't another gas station, but that's for the people of Canton to wrestle with."

The Simsbury commission unanimously approved the plan and several members complimented the

design. Commissioner Michael Doyle said, as an EV owner, he was excited about the idea.

Canton's commission is set to host a hearing on the project Oct. 21

Already there has been some public feedback to the commission. In an email, resident Tim Kendzia wrote in part, "This site is currently a big component of the town's character for me. Driving past the mall of Simsbury, and all the shops of Avon, this site is a natural break dividing the towns. The rock ledge, over 100,000 cubic yards, is a significant barrier. Combined with the vegetation here, it buffers road noise and serves as a great visual divide, highlighting the town's rural character. Removing this ridge and developing the land would irreversibly impact our town's character, and for that reason I oppose this development."

The project does fall into an area that was long identified as having commercial potential and the commission has included in a mixed-use design village district, a fact that develop-

ers touted in the application.

On Oct. 5, Solli told members of Canton's Conservation Commission that the development team realizes the importance of the ridge.

"One of the biggest components of the site is the rock face, the traprock, that is exposed along the project frontage so when we were charged at looking at how to redevelop this property, we knew and recognized that this was an important resource for the town of Canton," he said. "We wanted to try and preserve as much of that as possible and enhance the resource and build it into the design of our project."

But Canton Conservation Commission members, who will forward an advisory opinion to the Canton Planning and Zoning Commission, noted that planning documents speak to the value of traprock for habitat as well as visuals.

"I'll make a motion the commission write a letter to Planning and Zoning expressing the fact that we are impressed as to what



This rendering shows another view of the proposed EV building as designed by Phase Zero Design.

went into developing this proposal," chairman Jay Kaplan said. "We think it's quite stunning and impressive and that there's nothing like it in the Farmington Valley ... or perhaps the state. However, we do have reservations about the demolition of a portion of the traprock ridge, which is considered a critical habitat and that is a concern we have."

According to testimony to the Conservation Commission, owners are looking to eventually put residential development on

other portions of the property and potentially an additional 20-acre parcel, which also generated some unease among commission members.

When it comes to the current commercial proposal, it is also at least possible that the Canton Planning and Zoning Commission might choose to seek some outside opinions before making a decision.

Neil Pade, director of planning and community development, in staff comments to the commission has noted it might want to seek outside opinions such as an engineering review for stormwater management and a North Central Conservation District review of sediment control plan, excavation and grading plans at the site.

Traffic is another area in which Pade noted the commission could request a review.

In addressing the Simsbury commission, Solli said the study conformed to all standards and, in part, involved analyzing of 11 intersections along the Route 44 corridor, documented existing conditions and volumes and used trip generation to estimate future traffic with and without the project. "I think what we've been

able to demonstrate is that the project will retain acceptable service levels throughout the corridor," he said, adding that the traffic issue will receive and additional layer of review through the state Department of Transportation.

If all goes well, the hope is to start the project by mid 2021, Solli said during the Simsbury meeting. While he acknowledged the project would be phased with the gas station likely first, he said the EV showroom being looked as a model that will be replicated throughout the state.

In the days before the Oct. 21 meeting in Canton, residents can log on to <http://townofcantonct.org/agendas-minutes-meetings> and pick the planning and zoning commission under the drop down menus. There, viewers can look at both the agenda and an agenda packet, the latter of which will contain more information.

One can also look further at the documents on the Simsbury Zoning page <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/zoning-commission>

From there look for 10-5 agendas on the right-hand column. That link includes pdf files related to the project.



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Community/Opinion

Reminder: On Nov. 1, "Change Your Clock, Change Your Batteries®"

Every fall, the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company and Energizer work to remind people of the simple, life-saving habit of changing and testing the batteries in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors when setting the clocks back for daylight saving time.

The National Fire Protection Association reports that 71% of smoke alarms which failed to operate had missing, disconnected or dead batteries. This reinforces how important it is to take this

time each year to check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. We would like to remind you of the importance of batteries not only in smoke alarms, but also the full range of devices that help keep us safe, secure and comfortable in our homes.

Home safety and security has evolved beyond smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Many families rely on other home devices connected to the Internet or their smartphones, also known as the Internet of Things,

to enhance safety and security. Partnering with retailers and fire stations across the country, Energizer wants to remind you to change your batteries in all of your connected home devices when you change your clocks back for Daylight Saving Time.

Follow the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SimsburyFire> to get tips and information about home and fire safety during October.

Kavros DeGraw committed to communities

To the Editor:

Eleni Kavros DeGraw will bring her knowledge and commitment to the community to serve District 17. As a cofounder of ForwardCT and 100 Women Who Can-Farmington Valley, Eleni envisioned, organized and facilitated community groups to coalesce around issues we

care about; equality, protecting our environment, gun violence, and supporting our most vulnerable. Throughout the pandemic, Eleni stepped up to provide timely information, and created a network of support for small businesses.

The decisions that await the next State Legislature will be critical to resume economic growth and edu-

cate our children and workforce, all while protecting public health. That is why I am supporting Eleni Kavros DeGraw for state representative. She will bring her passion and ability to work hard for all of and solve these most challenging issues.

Robin C. Schwartz
Avon

Editor's Note: Please note this was the last Valley Press edition before the election. We apologize for any inconvenience.



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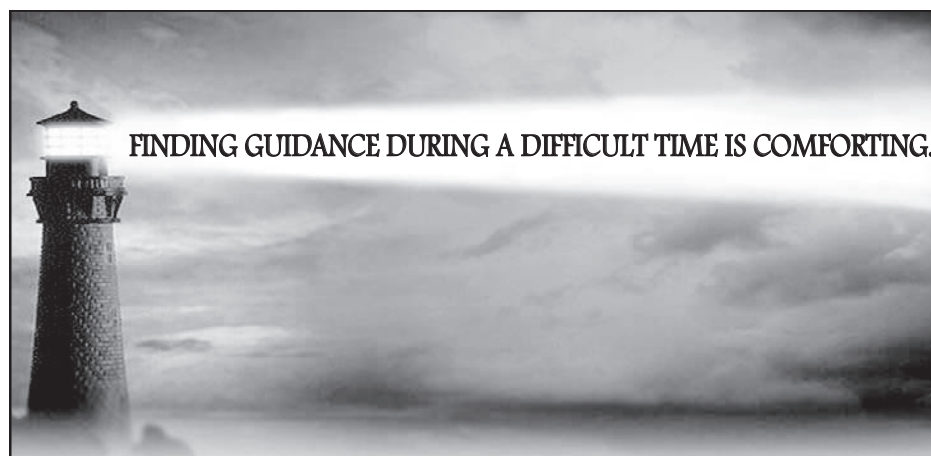
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Opinion

Kavros DeGraw is committed to central issues

To the Editor:

I write to express my strong support for Eleni Kavros Degraw to be our next state representative.

Eleni's campaign focuses on her commitment to the economy, the environment, education, and equity – the central issues that face our community, our state, and the nation at this critical juncture in our history. As someone who has gotten to know Eleni per-

sonally, I can say with confidence that she is a person of excellent character, with a deep commitment to the people of our area, and who has used her enormous energy to meet the present moment, from providing aid to those displaced by Covid to embracing the Black Lives Matter movement and using her platform to amplify calls for racial justice. She is an open and accessible person who, I am sure, will be avail-

able to all of us so that we feel truly represented in Hartford.

The residents of Canton and Avon deserve a representative like Eleni Kavros Degraw, an independent, energetic, and accessible legislator who is committed to her constituents and our values. I will vote for her with pride and encourage others to do the same.

*Michael Vogel
North Canton*

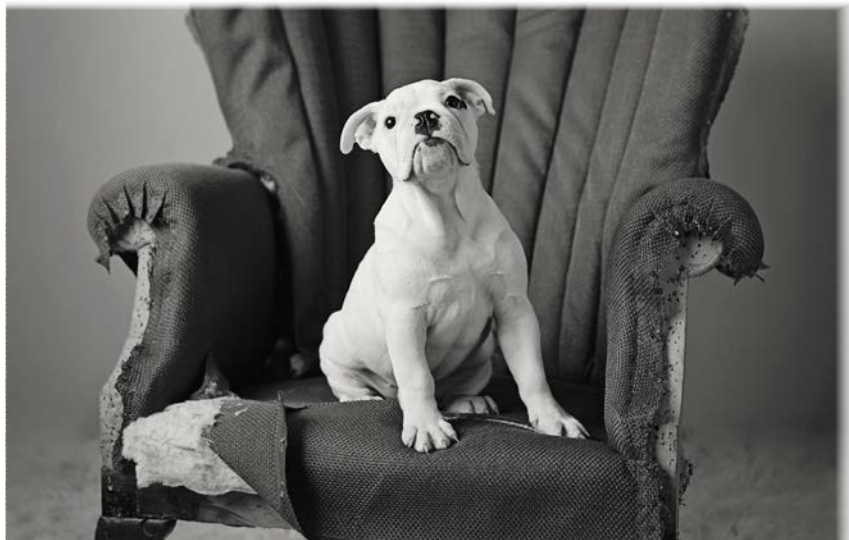
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The 17th District is fortunate to have Hill

To the Editor:

The residents of West Avon and Canton have been fortunate to have Leslee Hill as our state representative for the 17th District for the past two years. Her prior experience as Board of Education Chair and First Selectman for Canton has quickly made her a highly respected voice in Hartford. She knows full well what the concerns and issues are for the communities of Avon and Canton. She makes full use of her legal expertise and level-headed approach as she represents our community. Leslee has been highly responsive to her constituents, she listens attends meeting, offers suggestions, and gets answers.

Leslee Hill was a strong voice for our towns when discussion of highly disruptive school regionalization was being proposed by many in Hartford. While Leslee recog-

nized and encouraged the schools in the Farmington Valley to work cohesively together and share many services. The regionalization of districts is a conversation among local school boards and not dictated by the Connecticut General Assembly.

Leslee has fought hard against the tax and spend policies so prevalent in Hartford. She has voted against increasing taxes and fought hard against the grocery tax, successfully stopping it from going through.

Leslee continues to support our first responders. Her priority is to keep our neighborhoods safe. She has supported new laws that are aimed at providing greater mental health services to first responders. She supports law enforcement, firefighters and those who respond to community emergencies. She has been endorsed by the CT State

Police Union, and the CT Fraternal Order of Police. Leslee has provided meaningful and informative communication with her constituents. Throughout the Covid crisis, she kept her community informed, and advocated on their behalf for services and issues that they were facing.

When I think about the person that I want representing me in the legislature, I look for a person, that is confident, considerate, rational, well balanced, approachable, thorough in their research of a bill, able to stand behind their decisions, get answers and results for their constituents, as well as share like-minded values. The clear choice for me is Leslee Hill. Join me in supporting the candidate that will bring your voice to Hartford.

*Heather Maguire
Avon Town Council Chair*

Osborne, Hayes will ensure safe access for women

To the Editor:

I am writing today in support of Melissa Osborne for State Senate District 8 and Jahana Hayes for Congress District 5. Electing these strong supporters of women's healthcare is crucial as the recent loss of a balanced Supreme Court places these rights in immediate jeopardy. It is imperative that the United States does not move to restrict women's healthcare even as historically conservative countries expand these same rights. Consider how Ireland voted in 2019 to expand these rights following the case of Savita Halappanavar, a dentist in Ireland who started to miscarry with inevitable fetal demise. Her partial miscarriage state led to bacterial infection and ultimately her death 48 hours after the miscarriage completed. Her doctors were aware of the risk but unable to help due to presence of a fetal heartbeat, telling her husband "Ireland was a Catholic country" and

termination was illegal. This tragic loss galvanized a country to change laws allowing for reproductive health care.

This extreme stance on reproductive healthcare is also found in the United States. Last year Ohio introduced a bill regarding ectopic pregnancy which occurs if an embryo accidentally implants in the fallopian tube, leading to rupture, loss of the fetus and potential for mother to bleed to death. Knowing this, politicians in Ohio presented a bill finding doctors "guilty of abortion murder" if they do not achieve the medically impossible goal of reimplanting the fetus in the uterus.

Extreme stances on reproductive healthcare are also a local concern.

In the past Connecticut state senators voted against a bill allowing access to emergency contraception (Plan B) even in cases of rape. This is personal to me as a physician in the Farmington Valley who cares for teenagers who have been raped, because it is imperative that they main-

tain the right to not become pregnant by rape. To be clear, Plan B is a variation of the common oral contraceptive pill used daily by women to prevent pregnancy as they work through business, graduate, law or medical school, climb the corporate ladder or chose to space child birth for optimal development.

The good news is that access to contraception is the common ground in the reproductive health care argument. States like Colorado have provided an excellent example – through providing free or low-cost contraception the Colorado has decreased the rate of abortion by 41% among 20-24 year old women from 2009 to 2016.

It is essential to elect candidates who will ensure safe and easy access to reproductive healthcare. November 3rd, vote for Melissa Osborne for State Senate District 8 and re-elect Jahana Hayes to District 5 in Congress.

*Meredith Barrows, MD
Simsbury*

Opinion

Demicco has promoted legislation that works, and protects those who need it most

To the Editor:

In these troubling times of a critical, deadly pandemic and long-standing racial iniquities, I find myself longing for leadership that fulfills many levels of need. The best leaders are those who, with a base of competency, are able to elicit infor-

mation from experts that fill in the gaps and who have the wherewithal to correctly identify and assess those gaps, both in self and in policy. The leader who promises expertise in all areas, or determines those areas without constituent input, then asks for blind faith is not a leader for me.

I asked my 20-year-old son which candidates he thought I was thinking of. He furrowed his brows, as if to say, "Not that one...nope, not that one either.," then brightened and said "Mike!"

While he hasn't always voted for bills I feel strongly towards, Mike Demicco has

always taken a critical look at content and overall impact, voting on this basis rather than voting for poorly written bills with good intentions. As such, as our State Representative, he's been able to promote legislation that works for us and protects those who need it the most. Through his work in the

Public Health Committee, he has been able to preserve essential services for the elderly, to ensure accessibility to behavioral health and addiction services, and is active in promoting bills that bolster health strategies in crisis as well as non-crisis times.

For these reasons, and

many others, I'm voting for Mike to continue representing Farmington and Unionville in the General Assembly, and I encourage those also in his district to join me in that vote.

Kay Higgins
Farmington

Osborne will be our advocate

To the Editor:

I write to offer my enthusiastic support for Melissa Osborne, the Democratic candidate for State Senate in the 8th District. Melissa is a knowledgeable, dedicated fighter for women's rights, affordable health care, sensible gun laws, and an economy that works for all of us.

Melissa's background as a family court lawyer means she has a deep understanding of the dangers women face in abusive relationships, and in particular the importance of getting guns out of the hands of their abusers. She would vote in favor of removing guns from those against whom a court has issued a Temporary Restraining Order in a family violence situation.

I know we can trust Melissa to be an advocate for us in Hartford, because I have seen the combination of compassion and tenacity she brings to advocating for her clients as an attorney. Importantly, Melissa is also an experienced mediator, an important skill for bringing different groups to the table to pass legislation that improves our lives.

Please cast your vote for Melissa Osborne for State Senate.

Sarah Faulkner
Collinsville

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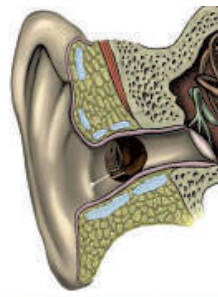
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Elder Security

by Stephen O. Allaire
and Halley C. Allaire



Planning for Elder Care

Benjamin Franklin had a quote "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." In life in general, preparation is a key to success, and no more so than when it involves the care to keep your elderly loved ones safe and in the best living situation possible. That preparation is all the more critical with the increased problems and restrictions brought on by our national health crisis.

First, it is necessary to discuss with your parents their financial situation, including banks, investment assets, income and health insurance and possibly long-term care insurance. If a crisis comes about this can save invaluable time in reacting promptly and effectively to handle the assets, especially if government benefits such as VA Aid and Attendance, or Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, including Medicaid, could be obtained.

Second, it cannot be said more strongly that the one key document required is a durable power of attorney that will allow either parent, and their trusted children, to access and handle the financial assets. For most married couples, all assets can be protected if one spouse needs care. But those assets would have to be put into the healthy spouses' name, and that is where the power of attorney is needed if the sick spouse cannot sign.

Third, schedule an appointment with an experienced elder law attorney so that a full review can be done and actions discussed, and healthcare proxies named with a health care directive (often called a living will) and wills and, if appropriate, trusts created. The federal and state rules are often complicated and ever changing, so any accurate and up to date advice is vital. With the legal and financial tools in place, you can help your parents use the assistance programs available to get them needed help at home and hopefully stay out of institutional care.

Taking precautions for an emergency, such as a fall, can keep a medical event from escalating into a long term care problem. That might include an emergency fall monitor, including newer models that can detect a fall and automatically call a child or the emergency response system.

It is also important for families to discuss who could best provide help if supervision or care is needed for an elderly parent. Can family realistically give supervision or care, or is non-medical home care needed by home care providers? If the signs are there that supervision or actual care is needed, it pays to learn what options are available, where they can be obtained, and then how can the care be paid for. There is no one size fits all answer, but having a good idea of what care may be needed for your loved one, where you can get it and how you can afford it are vital. Being forced to spend more time alone without socialization is really tough, but one small silver lining is that it may afford some extra time to gather data, think of elder care alternatives, and put in place an idea of what could be done for care, do the necessary legal documents, and have peace of mind that preparation will help weather that storm, if it comes.

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.allaireelder-law.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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Opinion

Hill stands up for her district

To the Editor:

As a resident and a member of the Avon Board of Education, I am thrilled that we have Leslee Hill representing us in Hartford and she has my continued support.

Leslee has a strong understanding of the needs of our public schools. She has the experience as a parent, but she also served on the Canton Board of Education, served as Canton's First Selectman, and is currently serving on the General Assembly's Education Committee.

When the Governor and his party at the State proposed plans to force the regionalization of our schools, she continually opposed such plans. She understands that the school districts in the Farmington Valley already work cohesively together and share many services, lowering per student cost. Removing that local control by forcing districts to merge may ruin existing relationships and could negatively

impact the student experience.

In addition, as a resident I have been greatly concerned as I watch the Governor push \$1.9 billion in taxes; everything including digital downloads, safety apparel, and dry cleaning are some of the items that are more expensive because of the massive tax increases put in place by the Governor and the majority party in Hartford. Leslee fought against the implementation of the grocery tax, which would have been debilitating for the hardworking families and residents of Avon. In the end, she STOPPED that tax from going through. I am glad we have a State Representative that will stand up to the Governor and his one-party rule.

Therefore, I fully support Leslee Hill's re-election to represent ALL residents of the 17th district!

*Jeffrey Fleischman
Avon Board of Education –
Secretary*

Simsbury benefits from Hampton's dedication

To the Editor:

As a current student at Simsbury High School, I am just one of many members of the Simsbury community who has benefitted directly from State Representative John Hampton's value of democracy.

Fostering an environment where all can thrive is always Representative Hampton's top priority. He constantly makes it clear that he cares deeply about seeking the opinions of every person he represents in Simsbury. Representative Hampton has worked tirelessly to advocate for the concerns of our senior citizens by representing them on the Aging Committee, and by promoting programs to make a real difference in the lives of many who have chosen Simsbury as a

place they want to grow old.

Through his work on the Children's Committee and his leadership in assisting families with disabilities Representative Hampton has made it clear this town is a safe place for all. He helps ensure that we can continue to be proud of our state and our town.

All citizens of Simsbury benefit from Representative Hampton's lasting dedication to the specific needs of every member of the community. Even though he is running unopposed this term, be sure to show your gratitude and support for John Hampton and all he has done for Simsbury by showing up to the polls and casting your vote for him this November.

*Sofia Hanna
Simsbury*

Mike Demicco is my choice

To the Editor:

Mike Demicco gets my vote on Nov. 3 for CT State Representative for the 21 st District. I have known and supported Mike since he was first elected in 2012, and he has always been the kind of non-partisan politician we need in Hartford – especially during these current challenging times. He's someone who is well informed and researched on the issues we face, and regardless of party he is open to new ideas and suggestions from all sides on how we move forward together. Mike understands fiscal responsibility and how hard we work for our tax dollars which to him must be spent wisely and fairly.

He's also approachable

and available when his constituents have questions or need assistance. Mike always supports the businesses, non-profits, and special events in town, and understands the importance of bringing people together to do what's right for our community and our state. If you ask around, or have the opportunity to meet with Mike, you know he's always worked to strengthen the values and importance we place on our schools, seniors, industry, and quality of life. That's why I encourage you to vote for Mike in the upcoming election. It's an investment in our future we can all feel good about.

*Tim LeBouthillier
Unionville*

Kavros DeGraw will be a strong, effective leader

To the Editor:

I am writing to support Eleni Kavros DeGraw to be our representative for the 17th District serving Canton and Avon. I have had the opportunity to get to know Eleni over the past several years. From the first time I met her I was immediately impressed by her strong work ethic and her way of doing the homework needed on important issues. She is open minded and looks at all aspects of problems and is a great consensus builder.

As we fast forwarded to 2020 I have been most impressed by her response to the COVID-19 crisis that has affected us all. Eleni has been a tireless worker for Foodshare and helped families that have been threatened by hunger and lost wages. She worked to help keep local restaurants open by launching the Facebook group Takeout-Avon/Canton/Simsbury to provide needed publicity to

struggling small businesses. She helped people find resources for mental health and wellness as the pandemic strained families and isolated individuals. Eleni advocated for health care workers and other essential workers in the front lines. She has worked hard to identify resources for seniors and other vulnerable members of our communities. She provided regular, comprehensive updates on COVID related issues to help people navigate through this difficult time.

Eleni's tireless efforts during this crisis have reinforced what I already knew. She will be a strong and effective leader in the legislature for our towns. If you still haven't made up your mind who to vote for in the 17th District I encourage you to look at Eleni's website at TeamEleni.com and to learn more about this remarkable person.

*Bill Volovski
Canton*

■ Opinion

Kavros DeGraw knows how to solve problems

To the Editor:

I am proud to endorse Eleni Kavros DeGraw for Canton and Avon's Connecticut State House District #17.

Eleni Kavros DeGraw has been supporting Canton residents for as long as I have known her. She can be found helping those with employment issues, housing challenges, food insecurity and with strategies to help navigate our government during this Covid-19 crisis. On her large Facebook network, she has promoted local businesses, especially restaurants, by highlighting individual take-out restaurants, and curbside pick-up businesses. She strongly supports teachers and the school systems. She personally delivers groceries to seniors and works at food banks. As a non-legislator, she is fielding phone calls for help before being elected!

During this pandemic she has published an amazing, weekly newsletter. It con-

tained Covid facts, guidelines, and government and health information. Eleni builds collaboratively. She had a HUGE force working for her election to CT's House, because people believe in her capacity to do good.

Eleni is an unbelievably hard worker and a dedicated friend to many. You can find Eleni at Canton and Avon activities, such as the Sunday Farmer's Markets, masked and observing social distancing.

The volunteer projects she created from scratch are huge and impactful. She Co-created Forward CT and 100 Women who can.

She has been endorsed by Avon and Canton Democrats, Working Families Party, National Association of Social Workers, the Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association of CT, NARAL, Moms Demand Action, CT Young Dems, Planned Parenthood, the CT League of Conservation Voters, CT Against Gun Violence, and

the honor roll of the CEA.

. Examples of why they support her:

- Eleni believes in inclusive, and equitable government and values a diverse economy.
- She tries to bring people along from where they are. We are not a monolithic society.

- She supports fair and equitable policies.

- Eleni works to register voters and increase absentee ballots.

With Eleni, I feel hopeful. She is aspirational and inspirational. We need this especially now. Hope gets us to a plan. We need a local DEMOCRAT in position to listen and share with government in Hartford.

Eleni is a proven problem solver, when it matters most! With all she is doing now, can you imagine how we will all benefit from Eleni's dedication and expertise once she is actually elected to the House?!

*Gail Deutsch
Canton*

Demicco is truly striving to make a difference

To the Editor:

Another election is upon us, empowering us as constituents to cast a vote that affects our community and our lives. As a woman, a mother of four kids, and a daughter with aging parents, I take this vote seriously. I am casting my vote for Mike Demicco, for State Representative. Mike Demicco is a very easy candidate to support. If all politicians worked and behaved like Mike, our country would be in a far better state. He is not in this for the accolades; he is truly striving to make a difference, and his record shows that.

He has knocked on thousands of doors in Farmington and Unionville since August (later than usual due to the COVID pandemic), and even though he knows he has our votes as both a Democratic and Republican household, he still knocks on ours.

I follow elections very simply. I look at the facts, at the records, and at the people and their character. Luckily, Mike makes it easy for us because there are so many positives, easily uncovered. Mike Demicco represents all of us. He works tirelessly for our schools, for women, for families, for seniors, and for our special needs community.

He works to maintain funding for our schools, and has secured state grant dollars for the Westwoods School playground and the high school turf field. He looks after our children's safety by securing millions of dollars for our school security infrastructure and our school technology

upgrades. He has supported legislation for women to protect our health benefits, to ensure pregnant women have access to health care, and to require that insurance companies cover all forms of

mammograms. He has worked for our seniors, to restore funding for the Medicare Savings Program, and by phasing out the income tax on social security and pension benefits.

During this year's legislative session, Mike ensured that we will be able to vote safely this fall, made utility companies accountable to us ratepayers, strengthened the equal protection of everyone's rights, and extended telehealth and behavioral health insurance coverage.

Who do you want to represent the needs of you and your family? We trust Mike Demicco. You should too. This fall, we will vote to return Mike to the General Assembly. We have full confidence that he will continue to fight for the well-being of our entire community.

*Monique Daragjati Bannon
Unionville*

Demicco is a dedicated public servant

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter in strong support for the re-election of our State Representative Mike Demicco for District 21 in Farmington.

Mike is a dedicated public servant who works tirelessly for our town. He has represented Farmington and Unionville well at the state Capitol. Among his many accomplishments has been his support of increasing the Rainy-Day Fund to its highest level. This forward-thinking action helps us enormously in this unprecedented health and economic crisis we find ourselves.

Covid-19 has impacted our families, schools, businesses and healthcare. Mike has relied on science and medical experts in making the best decisions for us at the state legislature. People who need information or state help have no better advocate than Mike. He listens patiently, gets all the facts, and then works to help those needing assistance. Making education safe for our children, helping our town's business community get back on their feet, and keeping our residents, especially those in nursing or assisted living communities and their staff, safe is a top priority for Mike.

Having had the honor to serve our town as Farmington's State Representative for 16 years, I know what it takes to do the job well. Mike has exemplified the model of a great State Representative. From his empathy, compassion, and hard work, to the proven results he has delivered to Farmington and Unionville, Mike deserves our support for re-election.

Please join me in voting for Mike Demicco for State Representative on November 3rd.

*Demetrios Giannaros, PhD
Farmington*

Kavros DeGraw is there for the community

To the Editor:

Local candidates arrive daily. In my mailbox. On a flyer. Asking for my vote.

Eleni Kavros DeGraw shows up every day. In the community. Through social media outreach. Asking what people and local businesses need.

There's Eleni, boots on the ground at Rentschler Field, distributing groceries via FoodShare to those hurt by Covid-19 and the economic slowdown. I've seen her post with pride the work this organization does to provide supplemental food to struggling local Connecticut families.

There's Eleni on Facebook, the creator of a group to support local restaurants and keep mom & pop shops open. I've seen her personally

remind the more than 6,000 community members of that page to come together with kindness, support and positivity.

There's Eleni, guiding 100 Women Who Can, the Farmington Valley group she co-founded that has raised and distributed over \$200k in just three years for Hartford county non-profits.

I see what Eleni does despite not yet being our locally elected leader, falling a mere 97 votes shy in 2018. She does it because it matters. She does it because that's just who she is.

If she does all of that before she even has the obligations as an elected representative of her community, imagine what she can do once she's formally in the role.

Eleni Kavros DeGraw was

meant for public service because serving the public is what she does.

That's the type of representative I want. The type that shows up not because she's required to, but because she believes in the power of our community. The type that leads with that same kindness, support and positivity.

I see Eleni everywhere. Others I see only on a flyer in my mailbox.

Community leaders show up and are seen throughout their community. It's why I'll show up at the polls on November 3rd to cast my vote for Eleni Kavros DeGraw for State representative of the 17th district of CT.

*Valerie Gordon
Avon*

■ Opinion

Hill is passionate about her district

To the Editor:

I am writing to support Leslee Hill for the 17th House District of Connecticut. As a member of the Canton Board of Education, I have worked with Leslee for many years during her tenure as Canton BOE Chairwoman, Canton First Selectwoman and most recently in her current role as state representative of the 17th District. Leslee is passionate about her town and district. She wants them to have fair representation in Hartford and to present their views when negotiating legislation. She understands the diverse makeup of the 17th district and listens to her constituents when deter-

mining how she will vote. As an attorney, Leslee understands the law, knows good legislation and a good legislative process when she sees and experiences it.

Leslee first hand understands the impact of state legislation on our towns, its impact to town budgets, its impact to the quality of our town schools. She understands that a one size fits all approach from Hartford isn't necessarily what is best for Canton and Avon. Therefore, Leslee has my vote on November 3rd. I hope you will join me in support for Leslee.

*Julie Ausere
Chair, Canton Board of Education*

Family forwards letter praising Avon Recreation and Parks

Dear Ruth Checko (Director of Recreation and Parks, Avon):

I would like to thank you and your staff at Sycamore Hills Pool, Scott and his young lifeguards.

We are facing a year, 2020, of restrictions, cancellations and challenges that have tested our patience and changed many of our norms. When this occurred, we look to leadership to understand the situation, concerns of staff and customers, identify changes needed to provide

necessary general safety, and then effectively communicate and communicate the new norm.

The changes at the pool addressed multiple methods to achieve social distancing, when and where masks are required for our safety, and their consistent reinforcement allowed all of us to have an enjoyable summer season.

*Thank you,
Art, Julie & Chad Marquardt*

Hayes takes a thoughtful approach

To the editor:

I am writing in support of re-electing U.S. Representative Jahana Hayes. In one short term, Ms. Hayes has elevated the office of U.S. Representative with her insight and ability to articulate the issues we face.

Ms. Hayes does not look for easy answers nor does she provide knee-jerk responses. Hers is a thoughtful, well rounded approach with a clear explanation of her vote every time. That's a challenge when considering the momentous issues before this

Congress. She has risen to that challenge throughout her first term in Washington.

As an elected official myself, I look to consistent, perceptive and principled leaders like Jahana, and I treasure their insights. Constituents of Connecticut's Fifth Congressional District are well served by Ms. Hayes.

I heartily support her re-election and urge readers of the Valley Press to do the same.

*Robert Bessel
Canton*

Kavros DeGraw is a proven leader

Dear Editor:

I know there are many local residents who can share stories of how Eleni Kavros DeGraw has answered their calls for help.

Whether it's connecting them with unemployment or immigration resources, coordinating grocery assistance when they are facing lost income due to any number of personal crises, or organizing projects that lift up our community, Eleni has not stopped leading just because she was ninety-seven votes short in the last election. In fact, she hasn't stopped leading projects, initiatives, and organizations since I first met her more than fifteen years ago.

Eleni Kavros DeGraw has the uncanny ability to read or listen to a piece of information, synthesize a complicated set of facts, process those facts in out-of-the-box ways, and then solidify an outcome that makes sense on multiple levels. She developed these skills as an English major with minors in criminal justice and technical writing at her

beloved James Madison University, and honed them as the Associate Publisher of Military Medical Technology magazine. Most recently, Eleni has combined her lifelong commitment to addressing food insecurity with her problem-solving acumen in her development position at Foodshare.

With constituents and colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Eleni will be open, honest, authentic, and thoughtful. She will give out her cell phone number, like she always has, and she'll mean it when she says, "Call me if you need me, and I'll do my very best to help you." She will bring passion, grit, and grace to her work, and will work tirelessly on behalf of ALL of the people of District 17.

For these reasons and so many more, Eleni will be a truly gifted legislator. I hope you will join me in voting for Eleni Kavros DeGraw this November 3rd.

*Carrie Firestone
Avon*

Demicco is a true public servant

To the Editor:

We are asking all our friends and neighbors in Farmington and Unionville to vote for Mike Demicco this fall.

Mike is a true public servant, in every sense of the term. As our current State Representative in the Connecticut General Assembly, and previously as a member of the Farmington Town Council, Mike has made every effort to listen to the concerns of the public, and to act on those concerns. Mike attends countless meetings and events around town, answers emails and phone calls, and knocks on thousands of doors at election time, all in an effort to hear and understand what our residents have to say.

On the Town Council, Mike's thoughtful and balanced approach to government brought us reasonable budgets, great schools for our kids, and property tax relief for our senior citizens.

In the state legislature, Mike has brought home millions of dollars in state aid for Farmington, secured grants for numerous projects around town, protected water and electricity ratepayers from excessive charges, continued to pay down our pension liabilities, and protected services for our most vulnerable residents.

As Connecticut struggles to recover from the devastating effects of Covid-19, we are confident that Mike's continued thoughtful and patient leadership will result in good decisions for our economy, our schools, and our public health and safety.

We are proud to support a hardworking, honest, and humble public servant in this year's election. Please join us in voting for Mike Demicco for re-election as our State Representative this year.

*Carole and John Donagher
Farmington*

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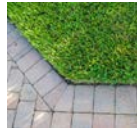
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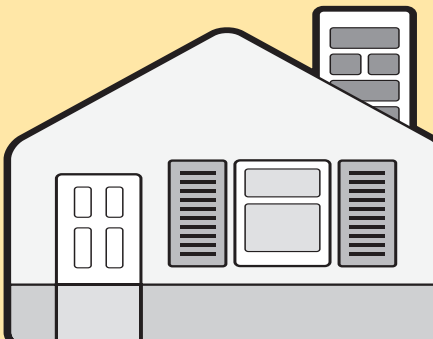
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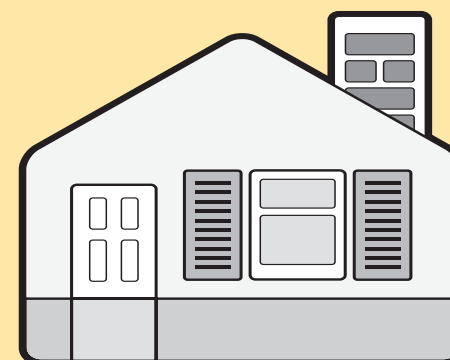


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