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IN SPORTS

Avon remains in battle for championship

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IN THE NEWS

Groups join for 'Vigil against hate'

Area clergy, faith-based practitioners, area residents and local officials gathered recently to hold "Vigil Against Hate: Stand with Our Muslim Neighbors" at the Farmington Valley American Muslim Center. **PAGE 13**

Canton moves on with TOD funding ask

The town is hoping a state grant could help it improve safety for motorists navigating the greater Route 44, Dowd Avenue area while enhancing connections between residents, Farmington River trail users and area businesses. Final approval for town staff to submit the application was given June 21. **PAGE 13**



Photo by John Fitts

Swinging into Summer

Janet and Mike LaRusso celebrate their 33rd wedding anniversary dancing to the music of Eight to the Bar, a band they often saw while attending college at Southern Connecticut State University. The concert was held at Mills Pond Park in Canton Thursday, June 29. The band kicked off the Canton Parks and Recreation Summer Concert series. See more photos on page 5.

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Photo by John Fitts

Organizers said more than 150 people attended a recent vigil at The Farmington Valley American Muslim Center.

Standing in solidarity

Group gathers for 'Vigil Against Hate' at Farmington Valley American Muslim Center

By John Fitts
Assistant Editor

AVON – Area clergy, faith-based practitioners, area residents and local officials gathered recently to hold "Vigil Against Hate: Stand with Our Muslim Neighbors" at the Farmington Valley American Muslim Center.

"Recently, this particular group had its turn being subjected to violent attacks, terrible rhetoric, scapegoating, violence from all angles," said Terry Wolfisch Cole of Simsbury, a member of the Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation-Emek Shalom and the recently formed League of Light, which organized the event. "We

come together here tonight on their behalf. We stand side by side, shoulder to shoulder with them. We are here to tell our Muslim neighbors that they are accepted, welcomed and valued members of our community. We are here to speak out against bigotry against hatred and in favor of love. We are here to create hope."

The vigil was quickly organized after recent violent incidents, including the murder of 17-year-old Nabra Hassan in Virginia, which police describe as a potential road rage and some label a hate crime, and the Finsbury Park terror attack, during which Darren Osborne is alleged to have intentionally driven his van into

a crowd near the Finsbury Park Mosque.

Mike Smoolca, founding member of the League of Light and member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Simsbury, said those are just two events in a pattern of violence that's all too familiar.

"Over the last year especially, there seems to be an increasing darkness that's emerging. Maybe it's a darkness that was always there, but it seems so much closer to home now," he said. "That darkness is characterized by greater fear, greater greed, greater hatred, greater cruelty and greater separation, but in the midst of that

See **VIGIL** on page 16

Town contracts for Route 44 utility study

By John Fitts
Assistant Editor

CANTON – The town has hired a professional services firm to conduct a utility expansion analysis study along the Route 44 corridor.

Under the terms of the contract, which is for \$11,900, Glastonbury-based BSC Group – Connecticut, Inc. will study gaps in natural gas, public water and sewer coverage within the Canton Water Pollution Control Authority Sewershed along Albany Turnpike (Route 44).

The study will determine the current state of utilities, the cost to expand coverage where it doesn't exist, the future value and economic development potential of the area without expansion and the future value and potential if utilities were expanded.

"Basically, you're trying to do a fiscal analysis," Canton Chief Administrative Officer Robert Skinner told the Board of Selectmen. "If you pay to have the utilities put in, what is going to be the benefit of that? That's what this study will be able to tell us."

The utility picture is a complicated one, officials said.

Some major plazas, such as the Shoppes at Farmington Valley, Canton Village and the CVS plaza have full access to utilities.

Other areas such as East

Hill to Route 179 and Colonial to the Simsbury town line have virtually none. In between are numerous areas with sporadic coverage or a mix of services.

The condition affects both sides of the road, but particularly the north side of Route 44, which traditionally serves as the dividing line between the area of town with and without public utilities.

In its contract with the town, BSC states it will review current gaps in service through mapping, outreach and site visits. To determine economic potential, it plans to review town codes and zoning, topography, environmental factors and market studies.

The information will be turned over to the town's assessor so potential tax revenue can be estimated.

The company will also perform unit cost estimates for utility expansion. Additionally, the firm said it will also provide a summary comparison for the growth versus cost expansion analysis and look at areas of critical mass to develop a list of recommendations.

The issue has been a long-standing concern at the Canton Chamber of Commerce.

The lack of utilities on many properties has limited potential economic and residential activity in many ways, according to

See **STUDY** on page 17

Canton moves forward with TOD funding request

By John Fitts
Assistant Editor

CANTON – The town is hoping a state grant could help it improve safety for motorists navigating the greater Route 44, Dowd Avenue area while enhancing connections between residents, Farmington River trail users and area businesses.

The majority of Board of Selectmen members had previously endorsed the idea of applying for a Responsible Growth Transit Oriented Development Grant, administered by the state Office of Policy and Management, and at its June 21 meeting, gave the final approval for town staff to submit the application.

The town is seeking just shy of \$2 million.

The grant application draws on previous studies of the area including a 2000 Capitol Region Council of Governments-sponsored Route 44 Corridor study, the 2014 Canton Plan of Conservation and Development, the 2015 Canton Village Design District proposal and a 2016 Road Safety Audit, funded by the state Department of Transportation.

The most glaring issue in the area is the problematic intersection at Route 44 and Dowd Avenue. According to the town's application, in a three-year period, there were 42 accidents on Route

See **TOD** on page 17

Healing Meals Community Project celebrates growth



Courtesy photo

Volunteers pose in the new Healing Meals Community Project kitchen at The North House in Avon. Read about the organization's growth and resulting move on page 15.

darkness, if we pay attention ... we can notice light emerging."

Smoolca said he was, however, encouraged by the response and attendance at the event.

"As we share each other's candles, the light becomes even brighter and that light emerges to dispel that darkness and we become the league of light," he said.

The league is an informal group that plans to continue to meet and will likely hold more events or public efforts in the fall.

The vigil was its first event and it featured both faith-based, and layperson perspectives.

Prayers were offered by Dr. Khamis Abu-Hasaballah, president of the Farmington Valley American Muslim Center; Meryl Lancaster, chaplain, director of outreach West Avon Congregational Church and president



Photos by John Filts

Above: Terry Wolfisch Cole of Simsbury, a member of the Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation-Emek Shalom; Right: People of various faiths attended the vigil; Below right: The Rev. Bo Gak Sunim, a Buddhist monk, offers a chant about letting go.



of the Citizens for Quality Sickle Cell Care; Miranda Moeller, Director of Ministry with Children, Youth and Families First Church of Christ, Congregational, 1652; and the Rev. Woody Eddins, pastor of Simsbury United Methodist Church.

Chants came from The Rev. Bo Gak Sunim, a Buddhist monk in Korean Zen tradition at the Dae Yen Sa Buddhist Temple in New Hartford and Rabbis

Rebekah Goldman Mag of Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation-Emek Shalom and Debra Cantor of B'nai Tikvah-Shalom.

Additionally, comments were offered by Smoolca and state Rep. John Hampton.

Interspersed between each speaker were words from Cole, focused on ways to be "an ally."

Speakers focused on the idea of standing up for

one other, understanding differences and getting to know people of all belief systems, cultures and traditions.

Hampton referenced several thoughts, including the old adage of "think globally, act locally."

"That's what we're really called upon to do today now more than ever in the world and in this country and in this state," he said.

"We're not going to let anger, or fear, or hate, or differences divide us."

Moeller talked about an experience in which she got a chance to hear Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa speak and the philosophy of "I am because we are, we are because I am."

"I think sometimes in this world, we forget that we belong to each other," she said. "Sometimes that takes effort and it takes work and it takes listening to one another."

Closing out the program was a final prayer

from Eddins.

"Hate is the illegitimate offspring of fear," he said, adding that reaching out and learning from each other was the way to overcome it.

"[When] we overcome our fear the hate is still-born. It is replaced by love," he said. "We will disagree ... but we will disagree and work together to overcome our differences and to share the goodness of life."

After the vigil, Abu-Hasaballah said the Muslim center has been welcomed with open arms but added that he understands the fear that some people have when they hear news about extremists, accusations that it defines all of Muslim faith and generalizations from the media.

"Ignorance breeds fear and fear breeds hatred and hatred breeds violence," he said. "We cannot change all of Connecticut, but we can change people's hearts and attitudes by education."



"I don't really blame them," he said of those who are fearful. "If someone kept barraging me with these negative messages about a community I never met I'd probably have the same attitude."

The solution, he said, was getting to know those of the Muslim faith.

The League of Light is an informal group of about 10 people that have met, mostly during potluck dinners, over the past several months.

"We're really trying to represent all faiths in the community and come together to show we're more similar than we are different," said Reem Nouh, Simsbury resident and member of The Farmington Valley American Muslim Center.

While the program was the first of the group's events, it plans to announce further initiatives in the fall.

Members of the league, including Alan Maislen of West Hartford, were bolstered by the response of the vigil. The effort began in a political climate, that even affected kids on the bus and at school, he said.

"The things that help kids feel better about the world is when they see grownups doing something positive about it," he said. "We landed on the name the League of Light because that's what we're trying to bring is a little light to the darkness. The minute we put out the word about this vigil, so many people jump in raised their hand and said we want to be a part of this. It just shows there are people who refuse to hate."

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TOWN OF FARMINGTON TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given that the Town Plan and Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing Monday, July 17, 2017 at the Town Hall Council Chambers, 1 Monteth Drive, Farmington, at 7:00 p.m. on the following application:

Robert Adorno application for special permit to raise poultry (up to 10) at residence located at 369 Ivy Drive, R12 zone.

At this hearing interested persons may be heard and written communications received. Copies of the proposals are on file in the Planning Department, located in the Town Hall, Farmington, CT.

Dated at Farmington, Connecticut, this 29th day of June, 2017.

Donald W. Doeg, Secretary

LEGAL NOTICE NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS TOWN OF SIMSBURY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO ALL PERSONS LIABLE FOR PAYMENT OF PROPERTY TAXES AND SEWER USE CHARGES TO THE TOWN OF SIMSBURY AND SIMSBURY FIRE DISTRICT ON THE GRAND LIST OF OCTOBER 1, 2016, THAT SAID TAX IS DUE AND PAYABLE JULY 1, 2017.

TOWN TAXES FOR REAL ESTATE AND PERSONAL PROPERTY (OTHER THAN AUTOMOBILES) OVER THE AMOUNT OF \$100.00 MAY BE PAID IN TWO INSTALLMENTS: ONE HALF DURING JULY 2017 AND THE OTHER HALF DURING JANUARY 2018. ALL TAXES DUE ON AUTOMOBILES ARE PAYABLE IN FULL IN JULY 2017. SEWER USE CHARGES ARE ALSO DUE AND PAYABLE IN FULL IN JULY 2017.

IF THE TAX DUE IS NOT PAID ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 1, 2017, INTEREST WILL BE CHARGED FROM THE DUE DATE, JULY 1ST, AT THE RATE OF 1 1/2 PER CENT PER MONTH UNTIL PAID. SUBJECT TO A MINIMUM INTEREST CHARGE OF \$2.00 ON BOTH TOWN TAX AND THE SIMSBURY FIRE DISTRICT TAX IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 12-146 OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES AND PUBLIC ACT 80-468.

PAYMENTS MAY BE MAILED OR PAID AT THE TAX COLLECTOR'S OFFICE, WHICH IS OPEN MONDAY 8:30 A.M. TO 7:00 P.M. TUESDAY THRU THURSDAY 8:30 A.M. TO 4:30 P.M. FRIDAY 8:30 A.M. TO 1:00 P.M.

COLLEEN O'CONNOR
TAX COLLECTOR