

Briefs

Fuel, energy bills assistance at NEON

NORWALK — NEON announces that applications for financial assistance for fuel and energy bills are now being accepted at its headquarters, 98 South Main St., for the 2009-10 Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP). The energy office will be open for applications Monday through Friday. (203) 663-7347 or (203) 899-2420.

Earthplace Nursery hosts Open House

NORWALK — Parents of prospective preschoolers are invited to attend the Earthplace Nursery School Open House today from 3:30 to 5 p.m. For more information, call (203) 227-7253, ext. 119.

Winter coat drive under way

NORWALK — The mayor's office is coordinating the second annual city-sponsored Coat Drive for Norwalk residents in collaboration with the Christian Community Action Coalition. Volunteers will be collecting winter coats, sweaters, hats, mitts and gloves, scarves, blankets, boots, baby clothes. Local churches, schools and offices and City Hall will be accepting donations. Donations may also be brought to the Norwalk Police Station on Friday, Nov. 6, after 4 p.m. Persons needing coats may come to the police station on Saturday, Nov. 7, between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. For more information, call (203) 899-2487 or (203) 854-7704.

Movie of the Month

NORWALK—The next Movie-of-the-Month screening at NCC will be on Thursday, Oct. 29, at 6:30 p.m. in the East Campus Pepsico Theatre. The Halloween double feature includes Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein along with Ed Wood's infamous "Plan 9 From Outer Space."

CCA to hold major fundraiser

NORWALK — Christian Community Action will hold its "Harvest for the Hungry" gala from 7 to 10 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 23, at Norwalk City Hall.

Tickets are \$50 and all proceeds will benefit the food pantry. Tickets may be purchased at the door or by making a check payable to Christian Community Action, 98 South Main St., Norwalk, CT 06854-3126. For more information, e-mail HarvestfortheHungry@gmail.com.

Hispanic heritage month at the library

NORWALK — The Norwalk Public Library commemorates Hispanic History Month with a special exhibition of books and original woodcuts by the world celebrated Norwalk writer/artist Antonio Frasconi. For more information call (203) 899-2780 or visit www.norwalkpubliclibrary.org

CORRECTION

Democratic candidate Steven A. Serasis credited the 'Save Cranbury Association' as the organization behind preservation of the White Barn Theatre property. A story in the Oct. 15 edition of *The Hour* incorrectly stated otherwise.

Government Today

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2009

No scheduled meetings

League includes Merrell in upcoming debate

NORWALK
By ROBERT KOCH
Hour Staff Writer

Scott P. Merrell, the Wilson Point resident running as an independent candidate, will be allowed to participate in the League of Women Voters of Norwalk Mayoral Debate at City Hall on Monday evening. "It will be Mayor

(Richard A.) Moccia, Steve Serasis and Scott Merrell," said Diane Lauricella, LOWV president. "We based that on a review of the criteria that we had used in the past in order to allow third-party candidates."

The debate, arranged by the LOWV and co-sponsored by The Hour Newspapers and the Coalition of

Norwalk Neighborhood Associations, is set for Monday, Oct. 19, at 7 p.m. in the Community Room of City Hall.

Merrell, who is facing eviction after his house was sold in the city's tax sale last summer, told *The Hour* on Thursday afternoon that he will participate in the debate.

see MERRELL, A4



Hour photo / ALEX von KLEYDORFF

Here chickie

Avery Sommerville, 2, and mother Wendy, get a look inside the chicken coop during a visit by First Steps Pre School to Ambler Farm in Wilton. The goal of programs at Ambler Farm — whether they be learning to knit or make maple syrup — is simply to learn by doing. All activities encourage engagement — whether it is with the land, with food, with animals, with history, or with other people.



Hour photo / DANIELLE ROBINSON

A man of action

The Norwalk Rotary Club honored the Rev. Lindsay Curtis Thursday night for his "many years of outstanding service to Norwalk" during the club's ninth annual Community Service Award Dinner at The Norwalk Inn & Conference Center. Curtis, the president of the NAACP, Norwalk branch, and the pastor of Grace Baptist Church, was chosen as the club's 2009 award recipient because of his work on behalf of young people and efforts to launch a charter school in South Norwalk, according to James Feigenbaum, past president of the Rotary Club. The Rev. Phyllis Y. Bolden said Curtis is a "very, very good community leader" who is caring and supportive and very involved. "You can stand up and preach all day long, but when it comes to action, what are you doing? He's an action man," Bolden said. In the above photo, Curtis smiles while speaking with Feigenbaum Thursday night's event.

Hundreds attend 'Taste for Education' fundraiser

NORWALK
By JAMES NASH
Hour Correspondent

For a charity food event featuring specialties from five restaurants and a caterer, you can't beat a venue with modern kitchens and Rachel Ray playing on 12 televisions.

Thursday night's eighth Norwalk Education Foundation "Fall Taste for Education," was hosted by Aitoro and sponsored by Pepperidge Farm.

Janet Aitoro said, "We like to support the community, and it's good for everyone."

NEF President Lauren

Rosato said the trans-hemispheric culinary delights and on-site cooking services provided by Little Tokyo; Coromandel; Via Sforza Trattoria; Brasitas; Brewhouse; and Festivities - The Art of Celebrating were all donated.

"Everything is donated — the food, the venue," Rosato said. "It's a very cost-effective event."

Mayor Richard A. Moccia and his wife Barbara browsed auction item brochures that included UConn basketball tickets, a hot air balloon ride, a four-day weekend at a Myrtle Beach condo and a

week in Vermont.

Moccia thanked Rosato for the work NEF does: "The NEF does so much for the community. They work very closely with the board of education and the city."

Founded in 1998, the non-profit NEF advocates for quality education. Backed by foundations, corporations and hundreds of individual contributors, the NEF provides resources, programs and funds for innovative classroom learning, after-school programs, and teacher peer training. So-named "teacher-to-teacher" programs cover sci-

see FUNDRAISER, A4



AP photo

Senate Banking Committee Chairman Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., center, accompanied by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nev., right, and Senate Finance Committee Chairman Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., speak to reporters about health care reform legislation Thursday.

Dodd: Health care reform must happen

WASHINGTON
By KATERINA VOUTSINA
Hour Washington Correspondent

Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., expressed satisfaction Wednesday with the Senate Finance Committee's approval of a health-care reform bill.

"We have to get this done," Dodd told reporters during his weekly conference call. He emphasized that passing a health-care reform bill will be "signifi-

see DODD, A4

Hempstead leads candidates in fundraising money for Council seat

NORWALK
By ROBERT KOCH
Hour Staff Writer

Republican Douglas E. Hempstead leads Common Council candidates in fundraising in advance of the city's municipal elections Nov. 3, having raised \$3,685 so far this year.

Several Democrats rounded out the list of top fundraisers in an election year that otherwise isn't causing campaign donors to reach for their check-books.

"I'm probably running about half of what we

see CAMPAIGN, A4

Mayoral race heats up in Stamford

STAMFORD
By CHASE WRIGHT
Hour Staff Writer

A debate between Stamford's prospective mayors got heated on Thursday when the topic turned to the difference between the two candidates.

Some stood, others sat, but all looked on as Republican Michael Pavia

and Democrat David Martin took shots at each other's credibility during a debate held in the conference room of the Stamford Plaza Hotel on Summer Street.

"Me and Mr. Martin both want what's best for Stamford," Pavia began. "With that said, I think the difference is a matter of style. I am very proactive, hands-on, hard-working,

get the job done ... David Martin doesn't have that style."

An owner of a Stamford-based real estate managing and construction business, Pavia said his career requires he respond immediately when unforeseen challenges arise.

"I've been trained in everything I've done

see DEBATE, A4

Alliance calls for neighborhood tree liaisons

NORWALK
Staff Report

Norwalk is looking for volunteer tree liaisons to oversee the growth of the woody greenery in most of the city's neighborhoods. Only four of the city's 18 neighborhood associations have active liaisons now.

One of them, Nick Overall in the Eastern Norwalk Neighborhood Association, was recognized last May as Norwalk's first Tree Advocate of the Year.

The others are Mike Mushak of the Golden Hill Association, Gay Macleod of the Western Norwalk Association and Diane Witkowsky of the Spring Hill/Hospital Area Neighborhood Association.

The tree liaisons are trained to identify the sites in their neighborhoods for improving the streetscape. They develop plans for plantings, help neighbors to select the appropriate species of trees, report illegal cutting and coordinate with the utility companies the tree trimming near power lines.

They are given staking kits to mark planting sites and an 85-page illustrated guidebook listing 35 species of trees and 15 popular shrubs. The book is a scientific and practical how-to compendium of facts, figures and photos assembled by the City of Norwalk, the Norwalk Tree Alliance and the Norwalk Tree Advisory Committee.

About 20,000 of the trees inside Norwalk's perimeter are on city-owned land, the remainder on private property.

The Norwalk Tree Alliance headed by Dave Tracy and the Tree Advisory Committee headed by Don Nelson are also members of the city's active arboreal partnership. In recognition of its work to restore the urban forest, Norwalk has been designated by the U.S. Arbor Day Foundation as "Tree City USA" for the fifth consecutive year, one of 15 communities in Connecticut to achieve the designation.

Anyone interested in volunteering to become a tree liaison can obtain additional information by contacting Tree Warden Hal Alvord or Deputy Tree Warden Paul Sotnik at (203) 854-7791.

Debate

From A3

throughout my public career and my private career to respond as efficiently and as immediately as I can without any down time because time is of the essence," he said.

Martin, a co-owner of a Darien-based management consulting firm, said his job requires the same immediate response to satisfy the needs of Fortune 500 clients.

"I think the real difference is dedication," Martin said. "In the brief time my opponent was on the Board of Representatives, he says he's a hard-worker, yet he missed nearly 50 percent of his meetings ... I don't think that sounds like dedicated commitment."

Pavia served a brief stint on the Board of Representatives for the 18th District before leaving to dedicate more time to his business following the untimely death of his partner.

"I've seen mailers that have gone out that accuse me as a quitter because I left the Board of Representatives," Pavia said, holding up on such flyer that featured a Pavia impersonator with his back turned to the reader. "It was a decision I made and if that was the wrong decision, so be it, but I need to set the record straight ... Mike Pavia is not a quitter."

Dodd

From A3

cant for 100 percent of the American people."

With support from Republican Sen. Olympia Snowe of Maine, the finance committee approved Tuesday a \$829-billion, 10-year health care bill. That bill now must be merged with a bill that Dodd shepherded through the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee earlier this summer.

"It has been literally three months since we completed our work on July 15," Dodd said. "It was the longest mark-up in the history of that committee."

Later on Wednesday afternoon, Dodd met with Max Baucus, chairman of the Finance Committee, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and White House officials to discuss merging the two bills. Dodd said he cannot predict what the final Senate bill will look like. Once the Senate bill is passed it will have to be reconciled with the House bill. Currently, there are three House bills that must be merged into one.

Discussing the fact that the finance committee bill does not contain a public option, Dodd said he is "a huge advocate" of a government-run plan because he thinks that it would help reduce costs.

"Those costs cannot continue to escalate," Dodd said. "We are watching too many people being unemployed in our state and when you lose your job, you lose your health care."

He said 28,000 people in Connecticut have lost health care during the last year. Dodd also noted the debate over health care does not focus any more on whether there should be a public option.

"The question is which one works the best," he said.

Dodd said Snowe, who was the only Republican to vote for the finance committee bill, is for a public option with a trigger that would bring in a public option if there was not competi-

Campaign donations down

From A3

raised two years ago. I've seen a lot of checks being half of what they were," said Hempstead, who attributes the drop off in donations to the tough economy. "I'm very humbled that people will send me anything."

Hempstead, a District D Republican now running for an at-large seat, earlier this week described this year's municipal elections as "one of the quieter election cycles."

"A lot of people are focused on the national issues going on between the health care, the Afghanistan war, the economy as a whole," he said. "At the same time, I'm not feeling a groundswell of 'We need a big change.'"

Fifteen council seats

are up for grabs.

The majority of the 28 candidates — Democrats and Republicans alike — declared that they intend to raise and spend no more than \$1,000. A number of Republican candidates reported they are relying on the Norwalk Republican Town Committee for funding, according to finance disclosure statements filed with the Town Clerk's Office.

The numbers reflect fundraising through Sept. 30.

Among the at-large candidates who have raised more than \$1,000, Hempstead reported \$3,685. Democrat Anna K. Duleep reported \$1,771. Democrat Michael K. Geake reported \$1,372. Democrat Amanda M. Brown raised \$310,

according to the finance disclosure statements.

Democrats led the pack among candidates running for in-district council seats. District E Democrats Nora K. King and Christopher Potts raised \$1,685 and \$1,023, respectively. District A Democrats Erik T. Anderson and David Jaeger Jr. reported \$1,150 and \$224, respectively, according to their treasurers.

The Norwalk Republican Town Committee has raised \$11,993 and had \$3,273 leftover as of Sept. 30. The Norwalk Democratic Town and City Committee raised \$10,817 and had \$6,481 on hand at the close of the filing period, according to campaign finance disclosure statements filed with the Town Clerk's Office.

Merrell in next mayoral debate

From A3

Unlike in past mayoral debates held by the LOWV, the candidates will not be given time for opening statements. Lauricella said the new

format will allow for more questions to be put to the candidates.

Jean Rabinov of the League of Women Voters of Bridgeport Area will moderate the debate, Lauricella said.

After the mayoral debate, In-District Council Debates will follow at City Hall. Serasis and Moccia, meanwhile, will face each other at The Norwalk Inn & Conference Center.

Fundraiser

From A3

ence and technology.

"I have to say, not one of our programs is more important than the others," Rosato said, noting that most of NEF's financial support goes to teacher training.

More than 200 showed up to sample the kitchen delicacies as well

as desserts prepared by Norwalk middle school students who expanded on their Family Consumer Science classes through field trips to culinary lessons at Norwalk Community College.

"Last year we raised \$12,000," Rosato said. "We hope to do the same or better this year."

Flu clinics under way in Conn.

OLD SAYBROOK Associated Press

The first doses of the swine flu vaccine are being administered in Connecticut.

About six clinics are being held this week, a number that's expected to grow as the state receives more shipments of the H1N1 vaccine.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell visited a clinic at the Old Saybrook Middle School on Thursday. About 375 children, ranging in age from two to four-years old, had registered to receive an intranasal

dose of the swine flu vaccine.

Ultimately, the state expects about 1.8 million doses will be administered. That figure includes the double doses that children under 10 must receive.

The state Department of Public Health says Connecticut has already received more than 83,000 doses of intranasal and injectable flu vaccines.

Dr. Robert Galvin, the agency's commissioner, says he hopes the vaccine will help blunt the impact of the flu pandemic.

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