

Record-Journal

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RENOVATIONS IN WALLINGFORD

Work moves into second phase at Polish National Alliance Park

By Devin Leith-Yessian
Record-Journal staff

WALLINGFORD — Renovations and upgrades at Polish National Alliance Park have entered the second phase, which will add a paved parking area adjacent to the rental hall.

The PNA lodge approved the project in 2016, with the goal of moving its current clubhouse at 15 Prince St. into the rental hall so the organization did not have to maintain two properties. The first phase, an outdoor pavilion, was completed last August. Work on the hall will begin once the parking lot, which is underway, is complete. The park is located at 171 North Plains Industrial Road.

“As we moved forward we realized it made sense to build a bar and a club at the park,” PNA President Ed Zavaski said. “... Everything’s neatly contained in one location for convenience and practicality.”

The lodge has yet to make a decision on the Prince Street building, which has been shuttered since March due to the pandemic.

Though it’s still a ways off, member John Zielinski said the lodge is excited about a new, modern clubhouse. Having one location also makes financial sense.

“You’ve got two buildings, it’s two bills,” he said.

Zavaski said the new pavilion has helped the lodge weath-

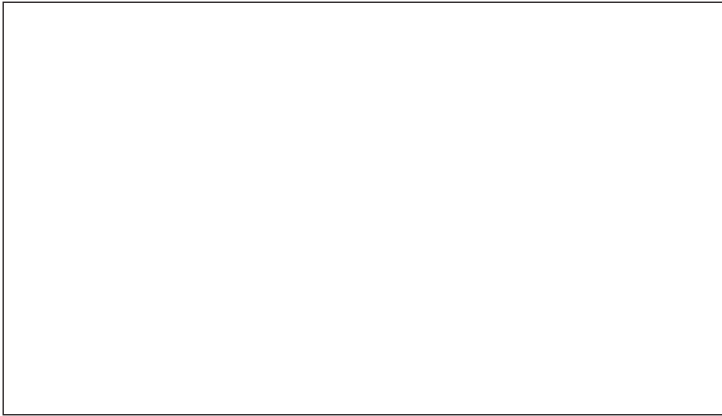


Ed Zavaski, president of the Polish National Alliance in Wallingford, stops to pose for a photo while installing a sign with John Zielinski, vice president, at PNA Park on Aug. 25. Upgrades and renovations are continuing at the park.

Photos by Dave Zajac, Record-Journal

er the pandemic while the Prince Street clubhouse and hall have been closed. The lodge has been able to hold a few meetings under the pavilion and it has generated some rental revenue.

“The pavilion has been a god-send because it lends itself to social distancing, so the rentals have continued in the pandemic,” he said. When the renovations are completed, those renting the hall will also have ac-



See PNA Park, A6 Crews continue construction of a new parking lot at PNA Park.

MERIDEN

Coalition holds rally against gun violence

By Sean Krofssik
Record-Journal staff

MERIDEN — City and state officials, along with members of the clergy and community, took to the streets to take a stand against gun violence.

City Councilor Sonya Jelks, a Democrat representing Area 1, organized the Stop the Violence rally on Saturday, gathering a coalition of fellow elected officials, clergy and others.

Following an initial gathering at City Hall, the group got into their cars and drove to the streets and neighborhoods that have been affected most by the recent rash of gun violence.

The first stop was Hobart Street. The parade of cars parked three wide while a police escort blocked both ends of the street and Jelks took to the megaphone.

“Whose streets?” Jelks asked. “Our streets,” the others responded.

Jelks then yelled “stop the violence” and the group responded, “increase the peace.”

“We are going to make sure this violence is going to stop in Meriden today...We are here united. We are fighting together,” Jelks said.

The caravan then stopped on Willow Street, Veteran Street, Olive Street, Crown Street and Cherry Street.

Meriden Mayor Kevin Scarpati and other members of the City Council attended along with state legislators Hilda

See Rally, A6

Candidate’s arrest highlights state GOP’s challenges

By Susan Haigh
Associated Press

A Republican congressional candidate’s arrest on domestic violence charges on the eve of this month’s primary election has prompted some prominent members of the Connecticut GOP to advocate for change so the party can remain relevant in this Democratic-leaning state.

Darien First Selectman Jayme Stevenson, a 2018 candidate for lieutenant governor, called on fellow Republicans to “dismantle and rebuild” the party into one that “truly values women,” after Thomas Gilmer, the GOP-endorsed candidate in the 2nd congressional district, was accused of assaulting a former girlfriend in 2017 — charges he denies. Others contend more needs to be done to attract unaffiliated voters to the fold — including opening primaries — and that party leaders must do a better job scrutinizing candidates.

“It’s not the first time that we have had issues where

candidates were not properly vetted and issues were not properly addressed when they materialized,” said Tim Herbst, a former Trumbull First selectman and another 2018 gubernatorial candidate.

Former Greenwich First Selectman Peter Tesei, a member of the Republican State Central Committee, said it has become clear “there’s an inadequacy of vetting” candidates seeking party endorsements and a clear process is needed.

“These are not people who have previously served in any office,” he said. “They haven’t had any public exposure.”

Republicans are already at a disadvantage. Democrats currently control Connecticut’s five U.S. House seats and two U.S. Senate seats. The state’s last congressional Republican was former U.S. Rep. Chris Shays, who lost the traditionally Republican 4th congressional district to Jim Himes in 2008.

See GOP, A6

New owners plan to preserve a tradition at Les’ Dairy Bar

By Bailey Wright
Record-Journal staff

MERIDEN — Amanda and Francis Hamilton are excited to keep a 60-year tradition alive as the new owners of Les’ Dairy Bar.

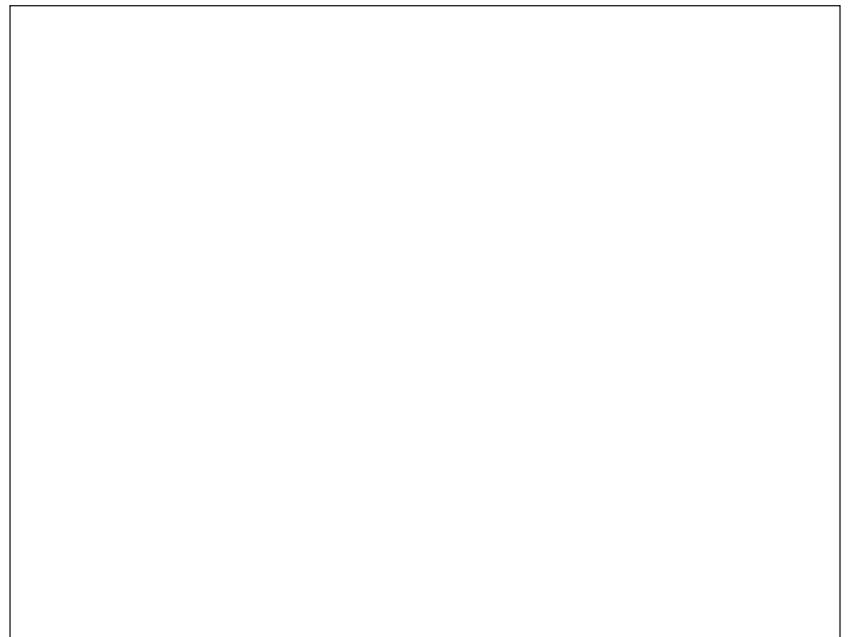
“I know we want to do our very best to keep up the reputation that Deb (DiGiandomenico) has built,” Amanda Hamilton said. “We want to keep things the same as much as we can and hopefully improve upon the stuff that she has been doing so well.”

The couple recently settled into a new home in Middlefield with their 1-year-old daughter, after living 10 years in Queens, New York. The two met in acting school in Hollywood and have both worked in the food industry, but the ice cream business is new to them.

Francis Hamilton lived in Meriden until he was about 5 and his family moved to Wallingford and eventually beyond. Amanda Hamilton grew up in California.

The Hamiltons moved to Connecticut to be with family when the pandemic started.

They heard Les’ was for sale and were convinced by Francis Hamilton’s father that it could be a good move for them. His father, a Meriden resident and Les’ customer decades



Amanda Hamilton and her husband, Francis, are the new owners of Les’ Dairy Bar on East Main Street in Meriden. The Hamiltons are excited to keep Les’ Dairy Bar’s 60-year tradition alive.

Dave Zajac, Record-Journal

ago, is also part of the business.

“We were just really excited about the idea and looking for something that we could have a passion for and that we would be happy with and the pieces kind of fell together at the right time,” Francis Hamilton said. “There’s a community built around here, we’re really happy to get ingratiated in that. That’s one of

the other things we’re most excited about...”

Current owner Debra DiGiandomenico, who has owned the shop for 38 years, felt comfortable handing over the business to the Hamiltons. She didn’t want to sell to someone who would tear down the

See Les’, A7

NATION



Democrats accuse Trump of stoking violence.

A8

BASEBALL



Yanks complete doubleheader sweep of Mets.

B1

BUSINESS



With early harvest underway, fires threaten wine country.

B6

High 75
Low 60
Weather: A2

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