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PZC to review charter school plan

By **LOUISA OWEN SONSTROEM**
Chronicle Staff Writer

WILLIMANTIC — The old YMCA space on Main Street will soon be transformed into a brand-new charter high school, and the look and functionality of the renovated space will be the topic of a site plan review later this week.

The planning and zoning commission Thursday will hold a site plan review at 7 p.m. in Windham Town Hall to discuss the construction plans which Hartford-based nonprofit Our Piece of the Pie (OPP) hopes to execute over the next 10 months or so.

"We've got to have students in the building on the first of August," said

OPP President and Chief Executive Officer Bob Rath.

If and when the plans are approved by the PZC, either on Thursday or some later date, the building construction will begin promptly.

"It's going to start pretty promptly," Rath said. "Everything is happening at once, because it's the only way to get this project done."

Significantly for locals, plans include the restoration of both original facades for the two interconnected buildings that long served as the YMCA space.

"It's a good-looking plan," said Windham Zoning Enforcement Officer Matthew Vertefeuille, who has been working

with OPP as it prepares for the project.

The planning and zoning review will come not a moment too soon.

"Their goal is to start construction in the next 30 days," Vertefeuille said.

Path Academy, designed as a charter school for overage, under-credited high school students in the Windham region, was officially approved by the state Board of Education in June and is scheduled to open in August 2014.

It will open at 832 Main St., which was donated by the local DeVivo family to OPP in July, and which includes roughly 28,000 square feet and three above-ground stories.

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The Windham Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a site plan review Thursday for the proposed Path Academy charter school on Main Street, seen here in this architect's rendering.

ETCHED IN TIME



Names carved into tower hold secrets of the past

By **LOUISA OWEN SONSTROEM**
Chronicle Staff Writer

WILLIMANTIC — Up at the tippy-top of Windham Town Hall's clock tower, there is a clock cabinet with dark wooden boards that have been signed by too many people to count.

In fact, if you climb the steep, spiraling stairs into the tower with Mayor Ernest Eldridge, he may invite you to pick up a nail and scratch in your own initials.

Eldridge encourages this tradition, seeing it as connected to a deep human impulse.

"Some people leave their mark on the world in different ways," he said recently. "Maybe the clock tower is where they leave their mark on the world."

Signatures up in that tower vary. "Bengie + Kathy" seem to have signed in 1983, and "G. Schaisson" on March 3, 1975.

"Ray Devine" signed in 1958, it seems, and another signature would have viewers believe that "Joseph J. Ellis" signed a century ago, in 1913. "It's probably unlikely," Eldridge commented, "but it does say 1913."

During the Willimantic Victorian

Neighborhood Association's annual Victorian Days house tour event in June, Eldridge gives tours of the large old town hall building, built in the 1890s, and takes visitors up into the clock tower.

Many of those visitors have signed the tower cabinet.

"It's amazing how many people just wanted to go up there to sign their name," Eldridge said.

As in any case, there are also the rebels — instead of scratching a name into the wood, one person scratched his or her surname into paint on a frosted glass tower window.

Eldridge, an auctioneer who deals in old things on a regular basis, said he often speaks with people who find similar messages from the past in their old homes.

"We go to houses and a lot of times, we see things like that," he said.

"It is kind of a familiar thing," said local historian Bev York.

Last month, Pedro Vazquez, whose brother owns a house on Godfrey Street, told of discoveries his brother had made while replacing old kitchen cabinets.

The stripped wall included the

(Names, Page 4)



Roxanne Pandolfi photos

ABOVE LEFT: Windham Mayor Ernest Eldridge opens a clock cabinet inside the clock tower at the Windham Town Hall recently. Over the years, dozens of people have carved their names into the wooden cabinet. ABOVE: The clock from inside the tower. BELOW: Detail of some of the names carved into the wood.



Tweak in law keeps Bottom Line Party off Windham ballot

Signatures for minor-party candidates required

By **LOUISA OWEN SONSTROEM**
Chronicle Staff Writer

WINDHAM — Members of the minority Bottom Line Party in town were at a loss this morning after learning that the Secretary of the State's office in Hartford had not accepted their candidate nomination paperwork.

Unless Secretary of the State Denise Merrill herself pardons Windham for not heeding a procedural tweak quietly passed by the state legislature two years ago, it seems likely the Bottom Line candidates will not appear on the ballot in November.

"Myself, as the mayor, and the rest of my candidates in the Bottom Line, cannot be on the ballot," said current Windham Mayor Ernest Eldridge, who is running for re-election.

If Bottom Line candidates do not appear on the ballot, they would need to be write-in candidates, which would be a serious blow for those lesser-known candidates whose names are not attached to the Democratic and Republican major parties.

"I might have a chance of surviving, and I might have a chance of getting some write-in votes,

(Tweak, Page 4)



Roxanne Pandolfi

The hues of autumn

A garden on Willimantic's High Street boasts some colorful flowers in bloom for fall.

Order will help veterans get college credit easier

By **KEN DIXON**
Connecticut Post

HARTFORD — Gov. Dannel P. Malloy on Monday announced a new executive order to make it easier for veterans to obtain college credit for what they learned in the military.

The governor's 36th executive order since taking office in January 2011 will also expedite the process for veterans applying for occupational permits.

The state has about 250,000 veterans, plus 9,000 active-duty military personnel.

"These are people with special training, skills and education who, upon returning to civilian life, are ready, willing and more

than qualified to enter our workforce," Malloy said in a statement. "We must make it as easy as possible for these accomplished men and women to apply their skills to the goals they seek to accomplish after having served in our military so admirably."

Under the governor's order, all state agencies will revise their occupational and licensing protocols to allow military education and skills to be assessed and considered.

The Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education, which administers the state's 12 community colleges, four state universities, Charter Oak State

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BEST GAS PRICE

A-1 Main St.	3.72
Valero Main St.	3.72
Shell Main St.	3.73
XtraMart Main St.	3.74
Stop & Shop Main St.	3.75
Gulf Main St.	3.78
Gulf Jackson St.	3.78

— Gasbuddy.com

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Lotteries
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For the record

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Walktober 2013

Coming in the Chronicle Shopper September 26 and the Chronicle September 28

Obituaries

**Joan Joffe Hall
(1936-2013)**



STORRS - Joan Joffe Hall died peacefully at home last Monday night, September 16, after a 17 year battle with cancer. In her last days she was attended by her husband and sons and loving friends. Dr. Hall was the first woman hired for a tenure-track position in the English Dept. of the University of Connecticut, in 1963. She helped found the women's studies program at UConn, as well as the creative writing and film study programs. A tireless advocate of women's rights and gender equity, she was also a gifted poet. "She was brilliant, analytical, with a highly developed ironic sense I found compelling," says her long-time colleague Dr. Roger Wilkenfeld. "We began each morning by challenging each other with quotations from poems. She was terrific at this game." "From the beginning she knew that as the first woman in our Department she was going to be 'invited' to serve as the great role-model for our female students, a role she unblinkingly accepted." He was awed by "the endless stream of students who wanted her advice and counsel on literary, but also personal issues." "She was critical but she wasn't arbitrary. She was tough but she wasn't severe; she was ironic but she wasn't acidic; she was thoughtfully engaged but she wasn't overly sentimental. She was a woman for all seasons." Among the writers she helped launch are Bobbie Ann Mason, Roger Rawlings, Wally Lamb, Ann Beatie, Caragh O'Brien, and poets Jon Anderson and John Surowiecki. Countless other students have carried her influence into their lives. Her poems appear in prestigious journals and half a dozen volumes, the most recent being *In Angled Light*, published by Antrim House in 2004. Over the years she produced 21 chapbooks that are beloved

by friends and family. Her poems are spare, the wit never forced, their meaning drawn from ordinary life. The poems are "sharp and edgy, with unflinching perceptions and witty surprises flying at you," in the words of Bobbie Ann Mason. Poet Wendell Berry says of Hall's book *Romance and Capitalism at the Movies* (1985, Alice James Press) "I relish that the poems are spoken by a woman who is about to do something; tend the garden, go off to work, care for a child." Born in Brooklyn, NY, to Louis and Leah Joffe, Joan wrote her first poem at the age of four, entered Vassar College at sixteen, and received her PhD from Stanford at 21. She was married from 1959 to 1978 to James Baker Hall, with whom she had two sons. She remarried in 1980, to David Edward Morse, a writer and human rights advocate who had three sons of his own: Scott, Bob, and Eli. Married for 32 years, Hall and Morse shared a blended family totaling five sons and eight grandchildren. The couple edited each other's work avidly, read books together, and engaged in constant word play. They have been active in Storrs Friends Meeting (Quakers) for the past two decades. Joan is survived by her husband, David, who tended her until the end, and her two sons, Matthew and Michael. Matthew Hall currently teaches law at the University of Mississippi, where he is associate dean of the law school, and is married to Melissa Booth Hall; they have two children, Robert and Daniel. Michael Hall orchestrates digital marketing in San Francisco, where he lives with his wife, Lisa, and their daughter, Evie. The memorial service will be held October 5, at 11 a.m. at Storrs Friends Meeting House, 57 Hunting Lodge Rd. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the scholarship fund established in Joan's name by the AAUP when she retired from UConn and from the Union's executive board. Checks should be made to the UConn Foundation, Inc., and earmarked for "Joan Joffe Hall Scholarship Fund," and sent to the Foundation at 2390 Alumni Dr., Unit 3206, Storrs, CT 06269.

Lawrence "Larry" James Mooney

STORRS - Lawrence "Larry" James Mooney, 77, of Storrs, passed away at his home on Saturday, September 21, 2013. He was born in Greenfield, MA on August 26, 1936 the son of the late James J. and Dorothy (Atkins) Mooney. Larry was a lifelong masonry contractor from Windham Center. He went to work for a mason in Warren, MA after graduating from high school. Upon getting married and moving to Windham Center in 1959 he worked for several local masons before starting his own contracting business in 1961. His fine masonry craftsmanship is on display at many homes and businesses around eastern CT. Larry served for a time as a deacon at the Windham Center Congregational Church. He was the Scoutmaster for Cub Scout Pack 32 in Willimantic and went on to be a recruiter for the Indian Trails Council. He also coached and spent many hours working on the ball fields for the Windham Youth Organization. He was a founding member of the Boubere Hockey Team. (He was known as Gordie Boubere after Gordie Howe jokingly elbowed him at a charity event.) Larry spent the previous six years in Port Charlotte, FL where he volunteered for the Y's Men helping underprivileged youth. He enjoyed horse racing and for a time owned two thoroughbreds. He also enjoyed a friendly game of poker

or cribbage, rooting for the Boston sports teams and venturing to New England streams with his father and family on gold panning trips. He is survived by his four children, Lawrence S. Mooney and his wife Janice of Windham Center, Glenn Mooney of Willington, Laurie Keegan and her fiancé Anthony Boucher of Coventry and Brenda Kirschenbaum and her husband Howard of Windham Center; grandchildren Ashley Pereira, Greg Mooney, Janelle Mooney and Shannon Keegan; great-grandchildren Hailey and Nelson Jr.; a brother Norman Mooney of Warren, MA; several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by a grandson, James Mooney; his sisters, Blanch Hescoock and Margaret O'Donnell and a brother, Burton Mooney. His family will receive relatives and friends on Wednesday, September 25, 2013 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St., Willimantic. Graveside services will be held Thursday, September 26, 2013 at 11:00 a.m. in the Howland Cemetery, Shelburne Falls Rd., in Conway, MA. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are suggested to the American Cancer Society or the Windham Youth Organization, P.O. Box 371, Windham, CT 06280. Please visit www.potterfuneralhome.com for online memorial guest book.

Victor Valentin

WILLIMANTIC - Victor Valentin, owner of Vic's Bait and Tackle and dedicated Marine, passed away on Friday, September 20th at 69 years old at Regency Heights of Windham. Born September 4, 1944 in Santurce, Puerto Rico, he leaves behind his wife of 26 years, Brenda MacGibbon Valentin; daughter, Wanda and two granddaughters, as well as four stepchildren, Robert Suarez of Niantic, Patti Saouzka, Edna Suarez and Anna Booshka of New London; 13 extra special

grandchildren; three sisters-in-law; lots of good friends and family in Puerto Rico and Florida. Potter Funeral Home is in charge. In addition, the family would like to give thanks to Dr. Shooks and staff of Windham Hospital and Dial-A-Ride as well as an extra special thank you to Regency Heights and all of the staff that helped so much, especially the 3rd wing who cared for Victor in his last few weeks of life. Thank you so much.

Militants 'holding out' in Kenya mall

Reuters

NAIROBI — Somalia's al Shabaab Islamist group said today its militants were still holed up in a Kenyan shopping mall they attacked at the weekend and there were "countless dead bodies," raising fears the death toll could be higher than 62. Kenyan security forces were searching for the al-Qaida-linked attackers who are believed by Western sources to include Americans and possibly a British woman who may be the widow of a suicide bomber who took part in an attack in London in 2005. Al Shabaab rejected suggestions that foreigners were involved. Sporadic bursts of gunfire and an explosion marked the fourth day since the militants stormed into the Westgate center in Nairobi during a busy Saturday lunchtime, spraying bullets and lobbing grenades. Helicopters buzzed over the complex, which is popular with foreigners and prosperous Kenyans. Al Shabaab says it launched the attack in pursuit of demands that Kenya withdraw troops from Somalia, where they

have battled the Islamist group. President Uhuru Kenyatta has vowed to stay the course there. The attack has come at a time when several violent Islamist groups from Mali to Algeria, Nigeria to Kenya — tapping into local grievances but all espousing an anti-Western, anti-Christian creed — are striking at state authority and international interests. "There are still gunmen in the building," said an intelligence officer, who asked not to be named, speaking near the mall, which is surrounded by troops. Asked if there were still hostages, he said: "We are not sure yet." As Kenyan authorities asserted that the end of the siege was "very near," al Shabaab said its militants were still holding out in the Westgate center and their hostages were still alive. "There are countless number of dead bodies still scattered inside the mall, and the Mujahideen (fighters) are still holding their ground #Westgate," the group said on its Twitter feed. "The hostages who were being held by the Mujahideen inside

#Westgate are still alive, looking quite disconcerted but, nevertheless, alive." It described its fighters as "unruffled and strolling around the mall in such staccato manner." People who earlier helped remove bodies from the mall said they believed there were still many lying there yet to be removed, suggesting that the death toll could rise. The Kenyan military said its forces were carrying out "mop up operations" in the building. The Interior Ministry earlier said security forces were in control of the mall and that all the hostages had been released. A trickle of survivors left Monday, but the fate of those still missing was unclear. It was also unclear how many of the militants had been killed or captured. The government said Monday three had died and a television report today said "six of the remaining attackers" were killed. There has been no clear official tally. An army spokesman said 11 soldiers had been admitted to hospital, and of that number three

died. Images from closed-circuit television inside the mall during the attack, published in a Kenyan newspaper today, showed two militants, casually dressed and wearing ammunition belts. One held an assault rifle. Al Shabaab confirmed that the two men were part of the group that attacked Westgate. Kenyan Foreign Minister Amina Mohamed told "PBS Newshour" that "two or three Americans" and a British woman were among the militants. She said the Americans were "young men, about between maybe 18 and 19" years old. She said they were of Somali or Arab origin and had lived in "in Minnesota and one other place." Al Shabaab, which said it had been in communication with its members in the mall, dismissed the minister's comments. "Those who describe the attackers as Americans and British are people who do not know what is going on in Westgate building," al Shabaab's media office told Reuters.

PZC to review charter school plan

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The school will provide up to 200 coverage, under-credited Windham and area students with academic and developmental supports aimed to graduate the students from high school and propel them toward post-secondary education or workplace success. OPP already runs other programs, including Opportunity High School in Hartford, which provides similar supports to young people ages 14 to 24. The organization had previously been hoping to establish the school in the old cinema building at Jillson Square, but when OPP learned of the YMCA building opportunity, it perceived that property as a better option.

The property consists of two distinct but interconnected buildings that are both hidden behind a single 1962-era YMCA façade. "OPP is) going back to the original double façade, so it's going to look like two buildings," Vertefeuille said. Although the group had at one time expressed some concern about cost for the façade renovation, Vertefeuille said OPP then found a way to make it work. "They heard loud and clear that this was something we were interested in," he said. Indeed, said Windham Mayor Ernest Eldridge, that area of downtown Main Street is in need of some revitalization, and a new-old façade will be a boon for the

town. "That centered section (of Main Street) has always been kind of a sore spot," he said, "and I think it will tie everything together. I'm really looking forward to that." Eldridge hopes the Path Academy renovation will inspire owners of other buildings in that area "to say, 'Gee, we can do better, too.'" The site plan review Thursday will enable planning and zoning commissioners to ask questions and provide feedback on OPP's site plan. Vertefeuille said considerations will include "everything from where they're going to have garbage, where they're going to drop off students, where they're going

to park cars, the lighting, landscaping. ... It will include all the drawings." As it is not a public hearing, there will likely be no opportunity for citizen comment. During the meeting, commissioners can request changes to the site plan. "I've got some questions and concerns and that will all come out at the meeting on Thursday, but I don't see anything that will hold the process up," Vertefeuille said. "I'll be happy to see one less vacant building on Main Street." *To view OPP's renderings of the proposed work, visit the code enforcement office at Windham Town Hall, 979 Main St., Willimantic.*

Names carved into tower hold secrets of the past

(Continued from Page 1)

names and ages of two couples who seem to have married on July 1, 1966, and signed their names there. An old liquor bottle was also found, signed to say, "We made it — Roger + Rudy." The wall has since been covered over again, but Vazquez was left wondering. "I am curious as to what it means, 'We made it,'" Vazquez wrote to *the Chronicle*. According to Eldridge, Vazquez's lingering curiosity was not unusual. "A lot of people have a very hard time painting it over, they really do," he said. As mayor over the last four

years, Eldridge himself has had the opportunity to sign his name on unfinished portions of the now-opened Charles H. Barrows STEM Academy and Windham Community Memorial Hospital Family Health Center. "The last beam, before they cover it up, is a tradition," Eldridge said. York said other common discoveries are old newspapers stuffed into walls as insulation against the wind, beer bottles, coins and more. She herself lives in a reproduction house built by herself and her husband, so there are no mysteries left by others. In 1982, when they were building the structure, though, York said, "We found a 1982 penny and

put a penny in the mortar of the fireplace." As their children grew, York and her husband, like so many other parents, scratched pencil marks on a door to track their growth. As a historian, York reflected on the human impulse to leave a mark, and to be fascinated by the marks others have left before. "I guess it's the stories that make our lives special," she said. "It's kind of like when people do genealogy and they're collecting birth dates and death dates and marriage dates and how many kids, they're only doing facts and dates ... but they're not doing the stories." Hiding inside the walls of old houses, though, is "the special stuff — the stories of the real

people who lived in a place," York said. Coming down out of the clock tower, Eldridge tried to recall whether there might be other signed portions of the old tower hall building. He stopped in an old council chamber where a group of children once painted several wall murals in the late 1960s or early 1970s. Asked whether town hall might also contain some bathroom graffiti — a less-condoned species of mark-making — Eldridge ducked into a courtroom bathroom to check but then came out and said there was none. "Those kinds of messages we don't need," he said.

Tweak in law keeps Bottom Line off Windham ballot

(Continued from Page 1)

but it changes the whole complexion of the campaign," Eldridge said this morning. "There's just no way that many of our candidates ... especially many of those who are running for the first time ... are going to have any recognition at all," he said. The Bottom Line Party submitted its endorsement to the town clerk's office properly and on schedule, said Town Clerk Patricia Spruance this morning. The clerk's office then forwarded that paperwork on to the Secretary of the State's office, which needed the paperwork by Sept. 4. Just Monday, Spruance received an e-mail from the state indicating there were discrepancies in the paperwork. As it turned out, the paperwork did not include signatures

along with candidates' names, addresses and desired positions, and although these signatures had not been required in the past for minor parties' endorsement paperwork, they were now required according to a public act that went into effect in July 2011, Spruance said. The signatures are not required for major party candidates — only minor party candidates must include signatures along with the other information. "That was never talked about, that was never highlighted," said Spruance, who explained the only mention from the state regarding this change was two years ago, buried in a nine-page document. "If it's a big deal, put it in bold letters," she said. "Send us an e-mail that's in red. As town clerks, yes, we cover elections, but look at all of the other stuff we cover. You're (the Secretary of the

State's office) supposed to be our representatives that give us all the stuff to cover elections properly." Spruance said she will continue to appeal to Hartford, especially considering that candidates' signatures were submitted at the same time on separate elections enforcement paperwork for campaign financing. If no relief is provided, though, and the Bottom Line is unable to secure the votes of 1 percent of voters this November, the party will lose its certification as a minor party in town. "These candidates really did the right thing in good faith," Spruance said. "We're all being penalized over a law that's sort of buried." Mark Doyle, chairman of the

Bottom Line Party, said the culpability for neglecting to realize signatures were needed could be placed on anyone. However, he said, the new law seems to be "a way of squashing the minor parties and not allowing full representation." Eldridge agreed. "If something was this important, wouldn't you think that Denise Merrill or someone would have had a conference saying this is important?" he asked. "I think the minor parties are getting some foothold in some of the towns, and the other, major parties, just don't care for it." No one from the Secretary of the State's office could be reached this morning to provide comment.

Order will help veterans get college credit easier

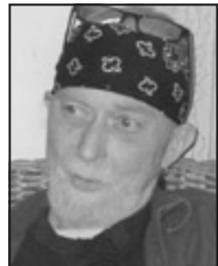
(Continued from Page 1)

College and the University of Connecticut, were ordered to simplify the process for converting military education toward college credit through the evaluation of service transcripts. In reaction, state Sen. Carlo Leone, D-Stamford, co-chairman of the legislative Veterans' Affairs Committee, said the governor's order comes a week after a new legislative task force began work toward aiding veterans in transitioning to the civilian workforce. "Discipline and instruction in the U.S. military is among the best in the world, and it is a shame that the exemplary skills our service members gain are often overlooked or underutilized," Leone said in a separate statement. Areas of license review include heating and cooling, mechanics, emergency medical services, human resources, aviation, pharmaceuticals and other skilled trades. **Quake kills at least 30 in Pakistan** **Reuters** QUETTA, Pakistan — A powerful earthquake hit a remote, impoverished part of western Pakistan today, killing at least 30 people and destroying scores of mud houses in a thinly populated area, officials and residents said. Tremors were felt as far away as

the Indian capital of New Delhi, hundreds of miles to the east, where buildings shook. The U.S. Geological Survey said a 7.8-magnitude quake had struck 145 miles southeast of Dalbandin in Pakistan's earthquake-prone province of Baluchistan, which borders Iran.

Obituaries

Scott Lawrence Rhodes



POMFRET CENTER - Scott Lawrence Rhodes born in Miami, Florida, passed away after a long and courageous battle with cancer at the home of his Uncle Bill and Aunt Kathy Chapell in Brooksville, Florida on September 12, 2013 surrounded by loved ones. He leaves his mother, Virginia Racicot; brother Doug Racicot and

wife Linda; stepbrothers Marc Kelley and wife Lois, Craig Kelley and wife Carol; nieces Jackie Rhodes and Casey Kelley; nephews Ryan and Aiden Racicot, Raymond and Peter Vollrath, Dakota Rhodes and Devon Kelley, as well as a special friend, Wendy Cates. He is predeceased by stepfather, Bill Kelley; sister Rhonda Rhodes and niece Annalise Kelley. There will be a Celebration of Life on Saturday, September 28th at Jonathan's Pub at River Plaza, 75 Bridge Street, Willimantic, Connecticut from 1 to 5 p.m. Anyone wishing to make a donation, please make it payable to Windham Hospital Foundation for Oncology at WCMH, 112 Mansfield Ave., Willimantic, CT 06226.