



OUR TOWN

SERVING THE VILLAGES OF BALTIC, HANOVER AND VERSAILLES
IN THE BEAUTIFUL SHETUCKET RIVER VALLEY

INFORMATION * NEWS

VOLUME XIX
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POST 85 REPORT

At last month's meeting of American Legion Post 85, the 99-year lease the post has with the Town of Sprague was discussed. Members agreed that the lease should be maintained. Insurance coverage will be reviewed. It was noted that the town was investigating possible grants that could improve the leased land on River Street. Use of the land could generate funding for future projects. Now is a good time for all organizations in town to consider their 'wish lists' for state and federal money. The Knights of Columbus expressed interest in teaming with the post to discuss possible construction of a building on KOC land on High Street.

Preliminary plans were brought forward regarding the addition to the Sprague Memorial the names of veterans who served in the Middle East. Members volunteered to assist the Town Clerk in this process. Selective Service records in Norwich will also be reviewed in an effort to include all veterans from Sprague who served in war time. The goal of the post and the town administration is to have the Middle East plaque, and an additional Vietnam Service plaque, available for the Memorial Day ceremony on May 25. Specific veterans will also be honored at that time for their service to the town and veterans' organizations.

The Commander stated that the pursuit of utilizing the Sprague Rod and Gun club as an alternate place for meetings is still in development. The Commander will report back at the next meeting as to the status of his project. It was also noted that Post artifacts are being stored by the commander and financial officer until a permanent home has been established. The next meeting will be held on February 3 at the Sprague Senior Center at 7 p.m.

~Respectfully submitted
Thomas Coletti

UNCAS HEALTH DISTRICT RELOCATED

The Uncas Health District's main office has relocated to the Campbell Building on the Uncas on the Thames campus, 401 West Thames Street, Suite 106, Norwich. The main office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A sanitarian is also available on Wednesday evenings at the Sprague Town Hall from 5 to 6 p.m. For information about local public health activities or to schedule an appointment, visit www.uncashd.org or call (860) 823-1189.

~Patrick R. McCormack
Director of Health



TOWN HALL CLOSED FOR FUNERAL

Several offices in Town Hall were closed on Tuesday, January 20, so family and staff could attend a Mass of Christian Burial for Pearl G. Douville at St. Mary's Church, Baltic.

Mrs. Douville died Thursday, January 15, at her home. She was the mother of Barbara Silvestri, Executive Assistant to the First Selectman, Mary Chartier, Tax Collector, and Richard Douville, Acting Chairman, Charter Commission. Her brother, Al Hoffman, assists in collating Our Town.

Our condolences go to the family and many friends of Mrs. Douville. Memorial gifts may be sent to Hospice of Southeastern Connecticut, 227 Dunham Street, Norwich, CT 06360.

UNNAMED SOLDIER MAIL A NICE IDEA, BUT...

As a result of the article in last month's Our Town requesting mail for unidentified soldiers, several well-intended cards and letters were returned to their senders. Our Town has since been informed that mail to service persons must include their name and an accurate address.

Tracy A. Medling, postmaster, Hanover, reports: A local customer has mailed out a Christmas card to A Recovering American Soldier, c/o Walter Reed Hospital, Washington, DC, and it has been returned with a yellow, "undeliverable as addressed" sticker. According to the Consumer Affairs Office of the Connecticut US Postal Service, this has been the protocol for any mail addressed to a non-specified person since the anthrax scare several years ago.

Medling suggested other organizations through which correspondence can be sent. One way is through We Support You During Your Recovery, c/o the American Red Cross, PO Box 419, Savage, MD. Wounded Warrior Project is another, as is Give2theTroops, com.

Medling also reported that the USPS is not allowed to deliver articles addressed anonymously.

Our apologies to those of you who took the time to express your gratitude and concern but were unable to have your greetings read.

Anyone in town who knows a soldier who would like to receive mail, please contact the Our Town and we will include their address in upcoming editions.

Bear in mind, the Town of Sprague, the staff and volunteers associated with the Our Town are not responsible for any mail received through this liaison.

CHARTER COMMISSION SURVEY RESULTS

The Charter Commission wishes to thank everyone who participated in the survey. The survey gave a deadline of January 9. Many were not able to get the survey back to the Town Hall by that date. If you still wish to submit your survey to the Town Hall, the Charter Commission will accept them for consideration.

This article will summarize the results of the surveys that have been submitted and discuss some of the comments you wrote on the survey. A total of 69 people responded to the survey. Twenty-six percent read the charter, 23% read some of it and 46% have not read it. (The percentages may not add up to 100% because some people did not check off some items on the survey.)

Forty-four percent of respondents want a charter, 30% do not.

Twenty-six percent want a five-member select board, 73% prefer a three-member board.

Forty-five percent would like to see a four-year term and 54% want to see it remain at two years.

The decision to Hire vs. Elect Town Clerk, Tax Collector and Treasurer was split as follows:

Town Clerk;	48% to 49%
Tax Collector:	46% to 51%
Treasurer:	42% to 51%

Minority representation: 64% preferred changing it vs. 26% who preferred to keep it the way it is today. Just a note that minority representation refers to the way that political parties are represented on Town boards and commissions.

Twenty-five percent would like the vote for the budget to be done at a Town Meeting whereas 55% want it to be voted at referendum. There were a number of people who selected "Other". These folks proposed a combination of ideas for budget vote.

Some people wrote in the survey that by adopting a Charter, the cost of government would increase. Adoption of a Charter in and of itself will not cause increased costs. Such things that would increase the cost of government would be adoption of a town manager form of government, which is not being proposed. If we were to keep the number of selectmen and terms of office as they are today, there would be no increases. Even if we increased the number of Selectmen to five, there would be only a small increase in the budget. To make the position of Town Clerk, Tax Collector and Treasurer hired positions versus elected positions does not increase the cost of the positions but would ensure that the positions would be filled by competent individuals. The budget process would still control the salaries of these positions.

Another issue that some of you brought up is accountability. There was a concern that hired positions would give voters less of a voice than elected positions. Further, that extending the term of office for the selectmen to four years would also give voters less opportunity to express their dissatisfaction.

The Charter Commission appreciates this input.

~Richard Douville
Acting Chairman
Charter Commission

CHURCH NEWS

YOUTH: GO TO THE MILL!

VERSAILLES UNITED METHODIST

Pastor Wanda Greaves invites all to join in worship on Sundays, 10:30 a.m., with Sunday School during worship. Holy Communion offered first Sunday of the month. Coffee Fellowship follows. The church is wheelchair accessible. Information: (860) 822-9439. Versailles United Methodist Church is located at 4 Church St.

In Memoriam: In memory of Bea and her Yorkies, friends of Versailles UMC who died last spring, the church is collecting canned cat and dog food, dog collars and other pet care products for the Norwich Animal Hospital. Donations may be left in the bin by the church.

Mission Project: As part of the ongoing mission of Versailles UMC, materials with which to make sleeping bags for the homeless in Norwich and surrounding towns, are being collected. Old but usable blankets, fabric and sewing supplies are welcome. Stitchers will use these items to put together sleeping bags which will be distributed where needed.

Large plastic storage bags are also welcome, as are adult socks, hand and feet warmers, personal care items, etc. These items are rolled into the sleep sacks before distribution. Items may be left at the church on Sundays, or call to make other arrangements.

BALTIC UNITED METHODIST

On the first Sunday of each month, Communion Sunday, services will be held at Lee Memorial Church, Norwich, at 9:30 a.m. All other Sunday services will be in the Baltic church at 10:30 a.m., with lay speakers from Lee Memorial and other churches.

Starting Saturday, February 7, and every other weekend Park and Rec will sponsor a Youth Night on the second floor of the Grist Mill from 6 to 9 p.m. The success of this program depends on the attendance we receive from children in town.

Youth must be a town resident, and be in grades 5 through 8. Refreshments available. Come and play— air hockey, ping pong, etc.

Hope to see you there!!!!

REGISTRAR HOURS CHANGED

Registrar hours are now Tuesdays, 9 to 11 a.m. at Town Hall, 1 Main Street, Baltic. For information, call (860) 822-3000.



OUR TOWN DEADLINE FOR MARCH IS FEBRUARY 15!
HARD COPY WILL BE PICKED UP TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17.
NO LATE COPY WILL BE ACCEPTED. PLEASE MAKE FINAL CHANGES BEFORE SUBMITTING MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION. THANK YOU!

FROM THE EDITOR: Deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month. The writer's name, address and a contact phone number must be included with each submission. Because the focus of Our Town is community events, articles, commission notes and other items of town-wide interest will take priority over personal opinions. Annual budget considerations may affect page appropriations as well.

Submissions may be e-mailed to OurTownNews@gmail.com, or mailed to Town Hall, P.O. Box 677, Baltic, CT 06330. Info: (860) 456-1082.

Sprague ~ Our Town is a free monthly publication of the Town of Sprague, serving the communities of Baltic, Hanover and Versailles. Primarily funded by the Town, support is also provided by paid advertisements. Opinions expressed in Sprague ~ Our Town are not necessarily those of town officials or the community at large, but solely reflect those of the writer. Submissions may be edited for clarity and format as necessary. Libelous or obscene materials are not permitted.

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 Quinn, come back!!! Bring friends! Feel free to volunteer!

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