

News Briefs

Food drive today

WILTON

The Youth Group of the Wilton Baptist Church will hold a food drive to benefit Christian Community Action of Norwalk today outside of the entrance of Stop & Shop, 5 River Road, in the Wilton Town Center. For more information, call (203) 515-5649.

Prom dress give a way today

NORWALK

The Norwalk YMCA and a group of nonprofits are joining forces to present a Prom Dress Extravaganza. Clean prom dresses will be given away to high school students from low and moderate income families living in the towns of Norwalk, New Canaan, Weston, Westport and Wilton on today from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the YMCA, 370 West Ave. For more information, call (203) 899-2487.

Forum today on the cost of energy

NORWALK

The CCAG and the AARP will host a public forum on the high cost of energy in Connecticut at 10 a.m. today at the Norwalk Senior Center, 11 Allen Road. For more information, call (203) 847-3115.

Networking social planned today

NORWALK

Anticipating a job change? Looking for new employees? A professional networking social will be held from 6:30 to 9 p.m. today at the Rowayton Arts Center, 145 Rowayton Ave. This gathering includes a wine-tasting courtesy of the Rowayton Wine Shop. The event is supported by the Rowayton United Methodist Church. For more information, call (203) 838-0049 or e-mail rum-office@rowaytonumc.org.

Hungarian-Irish dinner tonight

NORWALK

St. Ladislaus Parish on Cliff Street will hold its annual Irish-Hungarian dinner-dance beginning at 6:30 tonight in the parish hall. The event will feature homemade stuffed cabbage and corned beef with all the trimmings. The charge is \$30 per person and BYOB.

For reservations, call (203) 866-8604.

Opera comes to Norwalk

NORWALK

Two singers from New York's most famous opera stages will be singing at St. Ladislaus Church, 25 Cliff St., at 4 p.m. Sunday, March 22. The singers, who perform with the Metropolitan Opera and the New York City Opera, will sing Irish and Italian songs in an event they call "I" Squared, to bring people to the church. The cost is \$25 and all proceeds go to support the church. For more information, (203) 952-4993.

Bereavement support group to be formed

NORWALK

Mid-Fairfield Hospice will offer an eight-week bereavement support group beginning March 24 from 3 to 4:30 p.m., at the Human Services Council, 1 Park St. The program ends May 12 and is open to the public but pre-registration is required. For more information, call (203) 834-6341, ext. 275.

Norwalk Hospital holds annual Kids Fest event

NORWALK

Norwalk Hospital caregivers will hold its annual Kids Fest from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on April 5 at the Wilton High School Field House. The event is an exposition catering to parents and children. Norwalk Hospital, the co-sponsor of the event, will conduct blood pressure screenings, weights and heights, and "Ask the Doctor."

Government Today

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2009

No scheduled meetings

Back in the USSR — Exiled artists return home

NORWALK

By CHANDRA NILES FOLSOM
Hour Correspondent

When SoNo artist Gennady Shikariov, formally of St. Petersburg, Russia, was led onboard an airplane by armed Soviet guards with his wife and young son in 1979, he never thought he would return home.

But last month, he went back to receive praise for his art, 30 years after being exiled for his artistic expression.

His wife, Tatyana Mamonova — also an artist, was publishing a samizdat (Russian suppressed literature) about the underground women's movement in Russia, and Shikariov had been illustrating the publication. Both were warned by government officials to stop their activities. They did not obey those orders.

The couple's satiric paintings and drawings of mythical and other worldly characters hovering above Russian cityscapes were popular among foreign diplomats visiting the country. They were

exhibited at the Kustarney, the Gaza Cultural Center, the Nevsky Cultural Center and the Vadim Nechaev — all in Leningrad, as well as at various galleries in Moscow. But the irreverent nature of their art was not government approved and in conjunction with the samizdat, the nose thumbing of authority evidently went one step too far.

The first action taken by the government was to shut down their art exhibits and cart the canvases away to the Kremlin. But new canvases were painted, and the two began showing them publicly at their St. Petersburg (then named Leningrad) apartment. The handmade samizdats kept being churned out as well, with copies smuggled out of the country by visiting diplomats.

The Soviet government countered by seizing the couple's apartment and threatened them with the Gulag (the government agency that administered the penal labor camps) in Siberia. Family members were also threatened but, again, the warnings fell on deaf

ears.

Then, on a frigid winter morning, KGB agents arrived unannounced, dragged the couple and their son Phillipe out of bed, and hauled them off to meet their fate. The date was Dec. 10 — Mamonova's birthday and, ironically, International Human Rights Day. The storyline was too juicy for the foreign media to resist — they arrived in clusters and gathered outside of the government building where the trio was being held before their scheduled deportation to Siberia.

The Kremlin went into lockdown mode.

However, Moscow had just been named as the site for the 1980 Summer Olympic games and General Secretary Brezhnev didn't want any bad press ruining it. Furthermore, because the Soviet newspapers had labeled Mamonova "the most dangerous woman in the USSR," Brezhnev was concerned she might be able to organize prisoners in the Gulag

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Contributed photo
The cover on Tatyana Mamonova's book "Women and Russia."



Hour photo / ALEX von KLEYDORFF

Picking up what others throw down

Fifth-graders from the Columbus Magnet School's Young Astronauts Program perform community service Friday by picking up trash at Calf Pasture Beach. Here, Mackenzie Lea, Harper Gande and Isabelle Weiss use bags and grabbers provided by the city's Department of Public Works.

Wilton teacher charged with domestic violence after wife loses part of finger

NORWALK

By STEVE KOBAK
Hour Staff Writer

Police said a Wilton middle school teacher was arrested in Norwalk on March 11 on domestic violence charges, after his wife ended up with a partially severed ring finger during a physical altercation.

Brett Sullivan, 46, of 36 Stonecrop Road, was charged with second-degree assault and three

counts of risk of injury to a minor. Sullivan teaches math at Middlebrook Middle School.

Sullivan was arraigned in court on March 12 and given a protective order. He is free on \$10,000 bond and is scheduled to appear in court again on April 24.

Police said Sullivan pushed and shoved his wife during a heated argument in front of his three children.

At the end of the fight, Sullivan allegedly slammed a door on his wife's finger and part of the finger

was amputated from the impact, police said. It is unclear from police reports if Sullivan intentionally caught his wife's finger in the door.

Sullivan was arrested later that night at Norwalk Hospital.

Sgt. Andre Velez, a spokesman for the Norwalk Police Department, declined to release details about the argument.

Wilton Schools Superintendent Gary Richards did not return calls for comment.

Lights out



Hour photo / ERIK TRAUTMANN

Field of dreams

The old field lights at Calf Pasture Beach are coming down and being replaced for the beginning of softball season on May 1.

Stamford residents want education, arts protected

STAMFORD

By CHASE WRIGHT
Hour Staff Writer

Stamford taxpayers gathered at Turn of River Middle School earlier in the week for their one chance to publicly weigh in on the mayor's budget. For the 100-plus residents who gathered in the school's auditorium, and the 32 who spoke for them, the consensus was largely in favor of the arts, education and cuts to discretionary spending.

Members of the Board of Representative's Fiscal Committee and the board of finance sat together on stage and listened to the concerns of the constituents they represent, who were allowed two minutes to air what was on their mind.

"When I want to live in a community with a high quality of life,

I pay for it," said Marjorie Shyavitz, who noted she would gladly pay Mayor Dannel Malloy's proposed 6.77 percent tax increase for quality services. "But without good schools, all quality of life decreases. I ask you, please do not cut the (board of education's) budget."

Education related expenses make up 56 percent of the overall budget for fiscal year 2009-10. Data compiled by the city's Office of Policy and Management indicate

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A Chuckle . . .

Son, if you really want something in this life, you have to work for it. Now quiet! They're about to announce the lottery numbers.

■ Homer Simpson