

The News-Times



Riders from Northeast U.S. and Canada compete for BMX championships in Bethel. **A2**

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Death ruled accidental

Newtown teen drowned: State medical examiner called drug a 'contributing factor'



Danielle Jacobsen

By Dirk Perrefort
Staff Writer

The death of a 17-year-old Newtown girl found floating in a Monroe pond on Memorial Day weekend has been ruled an accidental drowning, according to police.

Danielle Jacobsen, 17, was found by authorities May 30 floating in 3 feet of water in

a pond near the Northbrook condominium complex in Monroe, where authorities said she had attended a party earlier that weekend.

According to Monroe Police Capt. Michael Flick, officials with the state Office of the Chief Medical Examiner listed Jacobsen's cause of death this week as accidental drowning, although dimethyltryptamine,

a drug also known as DMT, was found to be a "contributing factor," Flick said.

Flick added that after consultation with the state's attorney's office, no additional charges will be filed against Quentin Ham, 22, of Newtown, who is accused of supplying DMT, a hallucinogenic more powerful than LSD, to

See Death on A4



NEW MILFORD

Car, motorcycle fans feast at show

From muscle cars to motorcycles, participants got their fill Sunday at the big show outside Faith Church in New Milford.

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BETHEL

Cold-case murder suspect pleads not guilty

The suspect in the 1992 cold case murder of a Bethel contractor waived his probable cause hearing Tuesday at state Superior Court in Danbury and entered a plea of not guilty.

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CAMPAIGN 2010

Boughton running on empty

Danbury mayor: Brings expertise to gubernatorial race, but little money

By Ken Dixon
Staff writer

Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton may be bringing extensive experience in local government and the General Assembly to the Republican gubernatorial campaign, but he's not coming with any cash.



Boughton

Boughton calculated Tuesday that his campaign has about \$40 left after it merged with Lt. Gov. Michael Fedele's failed effort to win last week's GOP primary, taken by Greenwich millionaire Tom Foley.

Boughton, a former state **See Boughton on A5**

GROWING AGAIN



MICHAEL DUFFY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Agriventre Agway owners Dave O'Leary, left, and Brian Leonard, right, talk with Mark Paladino about moving their business into his building at 493 Danbury Road, New Milford, home of the former Mark Ford car dealership.

Agway to bloom at old Mark Ford site

By Susan Tuz
Staff Writer

NEW MILFORD — A new business deal is a win-win for the town and two longtime local business owners.

Agriventre Agway garden center owners Dave O'Leary and Brian Leonard plan to lease 12,500-square-feet of the Mark Ford car dealership from property owner Mark Paladino. The dealership, at 493 Danbury Road, closed in mid-April.

Agriventre Agway owners Dave O'Leary, left, and Brian Leonard talk about sign placement at the planned new location of their Route 7 business.

MICHAEL DUFFY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



O'Leary and Leonard lost their lease on the state-owned property at 376 Danbury Road, near New Milford High School. Knowing they had to move by fall, they began working with Economic Development Supervisor Vin Nolan to find a new location in the south end of town.

They have a second garden center here on Housatonic Avenue, near the downtown, plus one in Danbury and one in Torrington.

"It's a nice, clean property along **See Agway on A4**

NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE

Woman charged in Ridgefield man's death

NEWTOWN — Trisia Rosa Hernandez, 27, of Waterbury, was arrested and charged with negligent homicide Tuesday in the January death of Kenneth Bailin, of Ridgefield, police said.

According to police, Bailin died from serious head and leg injuries suffered when he was struck Jan. 14 by Hernandez's Pontiac Sunfire in the Hawleyville section of Newtown. Bailin, 51, was standing near his GMC pickup truck on the shoulder of Hawleyville Road when he was struck, police said. He died the next day at Danbury Hospital.

CASH-FLOW WOES

Rell rejects debt worries as bond panel pulls funds

By Ken Dixon
Staff Writer

HARTFORD — The normally placid State Bond Commission erupted in controversy Tuesday morning amid charges that the state is facing a major cash-flow problem because of di-

minished tax revenues and less federal support.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell sided with state Treasurer Denise Nappier and downplayed the potential danger of converting more than half a billion dollars in bond funds sold for short-term operating costs into longer-term notes.

But Republicans — led by Rep. Vincent J. Candelora, of Branford; Sen. Andrew W. Roraback, of Goshen, whose district includes New Milford and Brookfield; and House Minority Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr., of Norwalk — warned that the state is spending more than

it is taking in and could be unable to pay monthly bills of \$600 million by the middle of next year.

The controversy centered on \$580 million in short-term debt approved last year by Rell under her executive powers that Nappier

See Rell on A5

BETHEL

Suspect in cop's death appears in court



A Bethel man charged in the June hit-and-run accident that took the life of a Danbury police officer had an unrelated case continued this week pending the outcome of more serious charges.

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HEALTH

New Milford Hospital improves its images

New Milford Hospital has a new CT scanner that gives doctors very sharp images while giving patients a lower dose of radiation.

Page C1



SPORTS

The final out

Newtown 10-year-olds' baseball team concludes its trip to Florida in the Cal Ripken World Series.

Page B1

REGION

WWE death examined

The death of a 29-year-old former World Wrestling Entertainment wrestler of apparent heart failure last week has renewed attention on how Republican Senate candidate Linda McMahon's company dealt with the health of its high-priced but often steroid-fueled talent.

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WEATHER



High **81** Low **59**

Partly cloudy. Full weather report on Page A14



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From the front page



VINTI SINGH/STAFF PHOTO

Francesca Jacobsen, of Newtown, has a memorial to her daughter Danielle set up in her home. Danielle died over the Memorial Day weekend.

Death ruled accidental

Continued from A1
the girl during a party at a Stillmeadow Circle condo May 29.

Police said Jacobsen had been at the condo unit with Ham and four other young men when Ham dumped a yellow powdery substance onto the dining room table.

According to authorities, Jacobsen appeared agitated after snorting the drug and asked how long the effects would last. She then left the condo, complaining she was going to vomit, and did not return.

Flick said because the drug is so new, forensic experts are unable to determine its effects on the human body at certain levels. He added the case will be inactive, pending new information.

The girl's mother, Francesca Jacobsen, said Tuesday she "still has a lot of unanswered questions."

"It's totally unfair that just because they don't know everything about the drug, they are ruling out more charges," she said. "She (Danielle) was a water baby. She wouldn't have drowned."

Francesca Jacobsen added that while she doesn't think Ham is totally to blame for her daughter's death, she believes "something went terribly wrong and no-body helped her."

Liz Jorgenson, a counselor with Insight Counseling of Ridgefield, said the use of DMT in this area is relatively rare, although she did hear reports of limited use of the drug around the time of Jacobsen's death.

She added that, like many hallucino-

genics, it is difficult to overdose on the drug, but it can alter reality to a point that a user might believe the laws of physics no longer apply.

While the drug has several dangers, including psychotic episodes, people can also take "inordinate physical risks while under the influence."

"I once had a client who drove a quad off a cliff because he thought he could fly," Jorgenson said.

She added that among more than 400 patients last year only three or four reported using DMT.

Ham remains in custody on charges including two counts of sale of illegal drugs. His bonds total \$220,000.

He faces charges, including second-degree breach of peace and carrying a handgun without a permit, for an incident May 30, shortly after Jacobsen's body was found, when Ham attempted to commit suicide, police said.

Police said they found Ham with a handgun in the field behind CVS on Queen Street in Newtown and he was threatening to kill himself.

Police said they also found Ham's cell phone, which had a message on it for the Jacobsen family.

"It was me," the message said in part. "I am responsible for this atrocity. I gave her DMT, and therefore I am the one you must hate for this."

Contact Dirk Perrefort at dperrefort@newstimes.com or at 203-731-3358.

HIT-AND-RUN ACCIDENT

Unrelated case continued for man charged in cop's death

By Dirk Perrefort
Staff Writer

DANBURY — A Bethel man charged in the hit-and-run accident that took the life of a veteran city police officer in June had an unrelated case continued this week, pending the outcome of the more serious charges.

James O'Neill, 47, faces charges including misconduct with a vehicle and evading responsibility for an accident along Route 7 in New Milford where he allegedly hit Officer Donald Hassiak, 41, who was riding his bicycle to work.

Hassiak was found lying on the side of Route 7 near the New Milford-Brookfield line about 10:30 p.m. June 3. He was taken by ambulance to Danbury Hospital, where he was pronounced dead from his injuries.

O'Neill, who has numerous convictions on his record, many of them motor vehicle cases, is also charged with a hit-and-run in Bethel that occurred about a week before the accident that took Hassiak's life.

In the Bethel incident, O'Neill's charges include evading responsibility. His car allegedly hit another vehicle along Route 58, and he left the scene.

O'Neill appeared in court Tuesday

on the Bethel charges, but the case was postponed pending the outcome of charges related to Hassiak's death, according to his public defender in Danbury, David Navatny.

O'Neill, who was on probation at the time of both accidents, pleaded not guilty in both cases.

The Bethel man, who was living in a van near a construction site off Route 58, is currently serving a seven-month prison sentence for an incident in Danbury in May 2008. His charges then included interfering with police.

According to court records, a city police officer at the time observed a black Chevy El Camino driving at a high rate of speed along West Street. The driver of the vehicle, whom the officer later identified as O'Neill, ditched the car on Abbott Avenue and fled on foot.

O'Neill pleaded guilty under the Alford Doctrine to the interfering charge May 10.

Court records say O'Neill has an outstanding arrest warrant from Florida on a reckless driving charge in which alcohol was a factor.

O'Neill is expected to appear in court again in the Bethel matter Sept. 13. He is due to appear Sept. 14 in state Superior Court in Litchfield on the New Milford case.

POLICE REPORT

Danbury man charged in attempted sex assault

DANBURY — A Danbury man was charged with breach of peace, unlawful restraint and criminal attempt to commit sexual assault after a woman reported being attacked on Stevens Street, police said.

Guillermo Erazo, 29, of West Wooster Street, was charged after a woman told police he approached her as she was walking up Stevens Street. The woman told police Erazo asked if she spoke Portuguese, and when she said she did not, he grabbed her right wrist, twisted her arm and said "Sexo, sexo," police said.

Police said the woman reported noticing that his pants were open and his belt was unbuckled, and said he tried to force her into some bushes along the road. Police said she called them from a cell phone when Erazo walked away after he was

unable to force her into the bushes.

Police said Erazo smelled of alcohol and was unsteady on his feet when they arrived, and his zipper was down and his belt was unbuckled.

Erazo was being held on \$5,000 bond.

Agway to bloom at Mark Ford site

Continued from A1
Route 7," O'Leary said Tuesday about the Mark Ford site. "A lot of businesses are opening along this end of town, and we wanted to stay to the south. We're taking the main back area (of the Mark Ford building) that was the repair shop."

The new location, to open in mid-September, will have an 8,000-square-foot showroom and outdoor display. The focus

will be on pet care, home and garden products and other Agway merchandise.

Agriventre Agway will continue to offer nursery plants and indoor plants, as well as landscaping service. A pet grooming service will be added.

"I call this a 'two-for,'" said Nolan. "We've got a major property that will stay active, and we retain a very good, longstanding business that does a lot for the community."

Paladino said Agriventre Agway will be a "great tenant for the location," and he plans to find a second tenant to share the 26,000-square-foot building.

"This is a very good match," Paladino said. "I think the exposure will be

great for Dave and Brian, and they will ... benefit another business locating here with the traffic they will generate."

Contact Susan Tuz at stuz@newstimes.com or 860-355-7322.

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