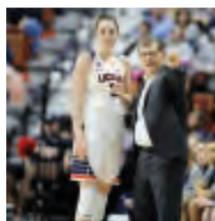




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MIDDLETOWN

RAILWAY BLUES



CASSANDRA DAY — THE MIDDLETOWN PRESS

Rusting old railroad cars sit idle along the Providence & Worcester Railroad tracks on River Road high above the banks of the Connecticut River in Middletown in striking contrast to the blue morning sky. The line operates between Middletown and New Haven.

MIDDLEFIELD

Volunteer brings personal touch to visits with pup

By Scott Whipple
Special to the Press

MIDDLEFIELD » Ten years ago, when Annette Olma faced a life-threatening illness, she came to understand the value of a positive peaceful experience for both the patient and the patient's family.

After she regained her health, Olma, 57, decided to become a hospice volunteer with Masonicare. Though the word "hospice" is often spoken quietly, according to Olma, a Middlefield resident, hospice volunteers can make a positive difference in end-of-life care.

Olma provides hospice through Masonicare to patients in Mid-

dletown, Portland and Wallingford. Her team of volunteers covers Central Connecticut — from Middletown to New Haven and the Route 9 corridor.

Jolan Szollosi, the Masonicare staff coordinator who trained Olma, praises the dedication and compassion of volunteers like Olma.

"Training covers various end-of-life topics, such as the physical aspects of death and dying, communication and family dynamics at the end of life," Szollosi said. Topics are presented by different staff members. The training program takes three weeks; classes are held in the evenings. Volun-

VOLUNTEER » PAGE 2



Middlefield resident Annette Olma and her 10-year-old German Shepherd mix Cola are a hospice pet therapy team that have been bringing joy to patients for over six years.
COURTESY PHOTO

CONNECTICUT

Lawsuit questions emergency care

Seymour woman died during surgery

By Lisa Chedekel
Conn. Health I-Team Writer

In surgery, when something goes wrong, minutes become hours.

Minutes are the focus of a lawsuit filed by the family of a 29-year-old Seymour nurse who died in February 2015 after undergoing minor elective sinus surgery at the North Haven Surgery Center. The suit alleges that the center waited as long as 29 minutes to call an ambulance after Katherine O'Donnell's blood pressure and pulse fell to critical levels on the operating table — and that doctors continued to proceed with surgery, even as their efforts to resuscitate her failed.

The case raises questions about how well equipped freestanding surgical centers are to handle emergencies, and what sanctions they face for alleged lapses in care. The lawsuit alleges that the center and Fairfield Anesthesia Associates, LLC, which handled anesthesia in the case, failed to properly respond by stopping the surgery immediately and calling a "Code Blue" emergency when O'Donnell's blood pressure and oxygen levels plummeted.

Records show the state Department of Pub-

LAWSUIT » PAGE 2

PORTLAND

\$32.8M budget plan on table

Mill rate would rise by .4 percent

By Jeff Mill
jmill@middletownpress.com

PORTLAND » First Selectwoman Susan S. Bransfield is presenting a proposed budget for 2016-17 that calls for the hiring of a 12th police officer.

That officer would be hired in January, meaning the town would only have to pay for half of his or her salary in the coming year's budget.

Bransfield outlined her proposed \$32.76 million budget to reporters on Thursday. She had distributed the plan to the Board of Selectmen earlier last week.

BUDGET » PAGE 2

CONNECTICUT

Malloy slashes hospital payments

After paying only a portion of what was promised to hospitals, Gov. Malloy is suspending future payments. **PAGE A5**



CONNECTICUT

UConn union withdraws contract

The Democrat-controlled General Assembly is off the hook: It doesn't have to vote on a labor contract. **PAGE A5**

STATE

'More sustainable food options'

What started as a way to save meat at home so it could be sent to soldiers abroad is making a comeback. **PAGE A6**

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