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Looking Back at 2009 , Part IV

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Vernon, Ellington, Tolland — posted 01/05/2010

The fall brought fears of the “ second wave” of the H 1 N 1 virus , coinciding with the “ regular ” flu season . Connecticut Department of Public Health held a conference for municipal leaders in Hartford .

Town officials and emergency personnel from across the state were all in attendance , and the DPH's Michael Purcaro (also Vernon's OEM Director) , the Deputy Incident Commander for H 1 N 1 , was emcee for the event . Purcaro said school officials have met with the local health district office and information was being distributed about recognizing the higher severity flu , as well as precautions if a large number of students contract the virus .

“ If we're seeing high transmissivity and high severity , you might look at strategies such as social-distancing – moving desks apart in the classroom , ” he said .

Bickering among Vernon Town Council members made headlines , particularly at the Sept . 15 meeting . Mayor Jason McCoy was accused of leaving council requests off of the agenda .

“ I submitted an item for this agenda , ... followed procedure that all of us voted on right after the election , and the item did not appear on the agenda , ” said Councilwoman Marie Herbst .

Councilman Michael Winkler followed suit , and claimed he , too , had been denied a similar request , and said that since the Republican mayor has a Republican council majority , anything can be declared “ out of order . ”

In an attempt to pacify , Councilman Mark Etre presented a document he wrote a year prior about how “ we should be acting as a town , and not as individuals . ”

“ The politics of partisanship , and the resulting inaction and excuses , paralyze decision-making , and the big issues of the day are not being addressed , ” Etre said . McCoy called Etre's comments “ correct . ”

Following that meeting , McCoy said filed items are left off the agenda if they are out of order , or sometimes delayed because the request calls for information that is not yet available .

The Tolland County Chamber of Commerce marked its new year by naming Coventry Town Manager John Elsesser as its new president , replacing Steve Sutton . Sutton said the year was difficult for local businesses because of the economy , but that new ways to reach customers have reaped benefits .

“ A new Web site was designed , ” he said , “ to both receive and disseminate information about the Chamber . We've offered members a new vehicle by which they can advertise their products and services .

Elsesser was confident about the future , and encouraged members to continue to branch out .

“ I want to urge members to reach out to non-members and tell a personal story of how belonging to the Chamber is worthwhile , ” Elsesser said .

Tolland dedicated 123 acres of open space , dubbing it the “ Schindler / Schmidt Conservation Area , ” in late October . The area includes many hiking trails , and brings the town's total to more than 1 , 000 acres of open space .

“ We've enjoyed it [the land] and are glad everyone else can enjoy it now , ” said Al Schindler , who sold the land , along with his sister Rhoda Schmidt , to the town in 2007 .

In November , Ellington High School's Opening Knight players tackled yet another sophisticated script - “ Marvin's Room . ” The black comedy was described by student director Amber Krasinski as being about how each character finds out that true love is selfless . “ That's the theme of the play , ” she said .

Dozens of family , friends , and town officials , including Gov . M . Jodi Rell , came to the swearing in of Mayor Jason McCoy , who successfully ran for reelection against Democrat Michele Arn .

“ I was reminded , as I got to the office , to swear him in , and not swear at him , ” the governor joked . ”

The Tolland High School boys' soccer team capped an undefeated yearby capturing the Class M state title . Senior Mike Jacques , who was sidelined for a good portion of the yearwith a knee injury , took two passes from fellow senior Dan Sheridan to win the game 2-1 . Jacques said he and Sheridan are a good combination on the field . “ We create good chances , ” he said . “ That's what we did today , and we scored . ”

“ This is a good feeling , ” Coach Jim Leahy said , after the win . “ These kids deserve this . They're a great bunch of soccer players and an even better bunch of kids . ”