

STREAK ENDS



Whippets top Bears. p.B1

WEATHER



BRIDGET MILTON

Tomorrow: Mostly sunny with high temps in the upper 40s. Details, p.A10

WESTERLY
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WESTERLY, R.I. WEDNESDAY, February 8, 2012

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'THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO'

Local woman arrested on immigration charge

Luz Maria Perez-Acevedo, who was living under the name Myrna Limon, ran a consignment shop, The Yard Sale, on Main Street in Ashaway.



CHRIS KEEGAN / The Sun

■ Pawcatuck resident has been living in U.S. illegally for years, federal authorities say.

By CHRIS KEEGAN
Sun Staff Writer

Elaine Morgan knows Myrna Limon as a hard working Mexican woman who owns a consignment store in Ashaway and a local housecleaning business. Dominic DiFazio knows Limon as a long-time area resident who has been legitimately paying taxes — and



Perez-Acevedo

Acevedo, and she's been living in the U.S. illegally since an earlier deportation in the late 1990s.

Westerly police arrested the 53-year-old Pawcatuck resident

trying to obtain U.S. residency — for years.

But federal immigration enforcement officials say Limon isn't who she says she is: Her real name is Luz Maria Perez-Acevedo, and she's been living in the U.S. illegally since an earlier deportation in the late 1990s.

Monday on a charge of reentering the country illegally, after learning that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) held a warrant for her arrest. She is the owner of The Yard Sale Antiques and Consignment in Ashaway's Village Commons, and the Myrna Limon Housecleaning Service of Westerly.

ICE spokesman Ross Feinstein said Tuesday that Perez-Acevedo was deported from the country in 1999. The former Westerly resi-

See **ARRESTED**, page A5

Hospital patient care rep chosen

■ Retired Providence physician will be paid \$300 an hour, up to \$1,500 a week, to serve as ombudsman during receivership.

By DALE P. FAULKNER
Sun Staff Writer

WESTERLY — A Providence doctor will serve as patient care and patient privacy ombudsman during The Westerly Hospital receivership process.

A Rhode Island Superior Court judge authorized the hiring of Dr. Boyd P. King to serve in the positions Tuesday. Mark Russo, the lawyer who is serving as special master in the receivership, had recommended King for the position.

King, 69, retired from practicing medicine three years ago. During his practice he was senior physician at Rhode Island Hospital and at Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island, where he also served, for a time, as chief of the hospital's Division of Nephrology, according to his curriculum vitae. His experience includes a three-year term as chairman of Rhode Island Hospital's Quality Assurance Committee and service as a member of the patient care committee at Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island.

King was affiliated with Miriam Hospital in Providence and St Joseph/Fatima Hospital. His career included time as a clinical associate professor at Brown University School of Medicine. King served as a major in the U.S. Army Medical Corps from 1970-1972 and received his medical degree from Tufts University School

See **HOSPITAL**, page A5

By the numbers



CHRISTINE CORRIGAN / The Sun

James Hathaway calls the numbers at public bingo at The Westerly Senior Citizens Center. Public bingo is held here twice a week, on Wednesdays and Sundays at 6:30 p.m. Hathaway is a volunteer who lives in Westerly. Visit thewesterlysun.com for more photos.

3 board members boycott meeting

■ Negotiations with Westerly teachers, Local 808 still in limbo after no-show meeting.

By CYNTHIA DRUMMOND
Sun Staff Writer

WESTERLY — Three members of the Westerly School Committee chose not to attend a special meeting Tuesday night in protest over assignments to labor contract negotiating subcommittees.

Assignments were made without them Tuesday, and two were named to take part in the talks.

By 6 p.m. Tuesday, members Jay Goodman, Mario Celico and Gina Fuller, who campaigned as a group during the last election, had not arrived. When they still hadn't shown up 10 minutes later, Chairman David Patten started the meeting anyway.

Goodman, Celico and Fuller have openly expressed their frustration since the committee passed a motion on Jan. 4 creating a separate subcommittee to negotiate with the teachers' union, the Westerly Teachers Association. That motion, which passed 4-3 with Goodman, Celico and Fuller voting against it, removed Goodman and Celico from a new committee but left them on the subcommittee negotiating with Local 808, which represents support staff.

Outraged by what they saw as an attempt to modify the charter the committee had passed in October 2011, Celico and Goodman resigned from the Local 808 subcommittee immediately and Jack Carson offered to step in so negotiations could continue.

See **BOYCOTT**, page A5

Trust to buy 34 acres of Coogan Farm property for open space

By LESLIE ROVETTI
Sun Staff Writer

STONINGTON — The Trust for Public Lands, in conjunction with the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center, has reached a preliminary agreement to purchase the remaining 34 acres of the Coogan Farm property in Mystic, according to nature center Executive Director Maggie Jones.

"We hope to have some exciting news in the next few weeks," Jones told the Planning and Zoning Commission Tuesday night.

The 63-acre Coogan Farm is in

the process of being subdivided. BROM Builders of Norwich has applied to build a 245-unit senior-housing development on an 18-acre portion of the property, and 11 acres have been set aside by the property's owner, the Clara M. Coogan Trust, as open space. The 34 acres under consideration is the remainder of the property.

The 11 acres of open space will be deeded to the nature center.

If the Trust for Public Lands, a national conservation organization, can acquire the property, the

nature center will become the permanent owner and manager of the 34-acre property.

Jones, who at one time had asked the town to conserve the entire 63 acres as open space, said existing hiking trails on the property will join new ones to create an interconnecting trail system on the open space and its abutting property, including lands owned by the Denison Society and Avalonia Land Conservancy. There are also plans to create hiking trails on the senior-

See **TRUST**, page A5

HABEREK TOURS SIMILAR SENIOR HOUSING

STONINGTON — Morningside House, the company planning to run the senior-living facility proposed for the Coogan Farm property in Mystic, has a high-quality senior facility in Maryland, said First Selectman Edward Haberek Jr.

Haberek visited the Ellicott City, Md., facility last week to see the type of development being proposed for Mystic.

"It was a beautiful facility," he said.

Although Morningside House

has seven facilities — five in Maryland, one in Florida, and one in Virginia — Haberek said he chose this one to visit because the 14-year-old facility is the same size and scope as the one planned for Mystic. Also, the community demographics in Ellicott City are similar to Stonington's. While there, he met with the executive director, marketing director, and residents.

The average age for residents

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NATION
Dow moves toward high mark, nearing levels not reached since 2008. **p.A7**

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Mother blames Portsmouth police for death of her 25-year-old son.

GREAT TASTE
Chocolate bonbons can be made at home by anyone — quickly, too. **p.B4**

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Have you been spotted?
Check out this feature and much more online.

★ Arrested

from page A1

county is being held at the Bristol County House of Corrections in Massachusetts, he said.

"This is not a case of mistaken identity," Feinstein said, noting that fingerprints confirmed Limon is Perez-Acevedo.

Based on the nature of the charge, Feinstein said the U.S. Attorney's Office in Rhode Island has accepted the case for federal criminal prosecution. Such cases are heard before a U.S. District Court judge or magistrate, and are separate from ICE administrative proceedings, said U.S. Attorney spokesman Jim Martin.

Perez-Acevedo faces up to two years in jail and fines, if convicted.

According to a police report released by Westerly Police Chief Edward St. Clair, Patrolman Dana Gervasini contacted Perez-Acevedo after learning of the warrant. He asked her to come to Westerly Police Headquarters, where she was arrested and

placed into a holding cell until federal immigration officials could pick her up.

Morgan, who owns Ashaway Dry Cleaning on Main Street next to The Yard Sale, said Perez-Acevedo opened the consignment shop about 8 months ago. The store wasn't always open daily, she said.

"She was at my house on Friday night, and at a Super Bowl party at another house on Sunday," Morgan said. "I just started to get to know her."

"I'm shocked," she added. "I didn't know she was here illegally."

She described Perez-Acevedo as a friendly and outgoing woman who sent the money she earned to Mexico to help pay for her daughters' college educa-

"She still owns a home in Mexico as far as I know," Morgan said.

DiFazio, a former Westerly School Committee member and a silent investment partner in Perez-Acevedo's business, said she recently closed a consignment store in South Kingstown and moved it to Ashaway because it was closer to home.

She registered her business, The Yard Sale LLC, as a corporation last year using the name Myrna Limon, according to the Rhode Island Secretary of State's office.

"She's been here for 20 years," DiFazio said. "She's been paying income taxes for 20 years. The government has known she's been here. She's not doing anything illegally. She's been a good taxpaying resident. She pays her dues."

He criticized the government for going after immigrants who are working members of society.

"These are honest, tax paying citizens," he said. "She's been doing everything by the book. The

government doesn't have anything better to do. They should start going after the ones who are not paying their taxes. I'm not sure why they're bothering the honest ones."

DiFazio said Perez-Acevedo had filed for U.S. residency, and was previously married to Charlie Groccia, a Westerly resident, for several years. She helped organize a dance for high school seniors at the Westerly Armory as part of her youngest daughter's senior class project, he said.

Limon appeared in an October 2009 Community page feature in The Sun that highlighted her work as a volunteer. She said she moved to the U.S. in the mid-1990s, after visiting friends in the Westerly area, and later became a volunteer with South County Habitat for Humanity and the organization's ReStore in Charlestown, which sells donated construction items to raise money for Habitat home building projects.

Last September, a District Court judge ordered Perez-Aceve-

do to pay court costs, after Westerly police arrested her on a charge of driving with a suspended license. Stonington police arrested her in January of this year on an unrelated warrant.

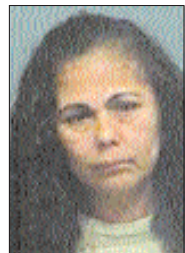
DiFazio said an immigration attorney is in the process of trying to get Perez-Acevedo released on bail, but didn't know where she was being held Tuesday afternoon.

"I think honestly it's an identity mix up but who knows what's going on," he said. "She had a tax ID number and a driver's license. She cleaned many peoples' houses in town."

DiFazio said The Yard Sale would be open for business today and through the end of the week, and would not close. Perez-Acevedo's friends and family would help to run the shop, he said.

"It's a good, profitable business and we want to keep that going," DiFazio said. "We're going to be adding used tools on consignment soon."

ckeeagan@thewesterlysun.com



Perez-Acevedo's mug shot

★ Boycott

from page A1

Anxious to resolve the matter and end the bickering, Patten told the three committee members who attended Tuesday evening that he would simply appoint the subcommittee members.

"Mr. Celico and I met," Patten said. "We were not able to come to an agreement on the way things would be set up. It's my prerogative to assign people to work on these subcommittees. I think the most important thing is we get the WTA going and continue the good work on Local 808."

Patten then appointed Goodman to work with Carson on the Local 808 subcommittee. He also appointed himself, Celico and James Murano to the subcommittee negotiating with the WTA.

"I think one of the strengths of this committee is that we have diversity of thought," Patten said. "My goal is to have that diversity of thought on the subcommittees as well."

Carson then made a motion to create the subcommittee to negotiate with the WTA. Carson, Patten, Murano and Patricia Hartford voted in favor. The meeting was over in just half an hour.

Patten must now ask Goodman and Celico if they are willing to serve on the two subcommittees and one or both men could refuse.

"They can decline, but I hope they don't, because I think it's important to have the diversity of thought on these negotiating subcommittees," Patten said.

Asked why he thought the three members had



JILL CONNOR / The Sun

Westerly School Committee members, seen at the Feb. 1 meeting, include, from left, Jay Goodman, Gina Fuller, Chairman David Patten, Mario Celico, Jack Carson and James Murano. Goodman, Fuller and Celico boycotted Tuesday's meeting.

'They don't like the rules, so they change them.'

Westerly School Committee member Mario Celico

'Is it a protest that they don't like the way things are going? Maybe there was some coincidence, but I doubt it. I don't know.'

School Committee Chairman David Patten

not come to the meeting, Patten was realistic.

"Is it a protest that they don't like the way things are going? Maybe there was some coincidence, but I doubt it. I don't know," he said.

Celico, reached after the meeting, said he did not attend because he felt that a public forum should have been on the meeting agenda.

"The last time we had a

meeting that the public was not allowed, the committee discussed it, and we agreed that everybody should comment," he said. "They don't like the rules, so they change them."

Fuller had her own reasons for not attending.

"It was apparent to me that the members of the committee were not going to honor the consensus we had come to at our last [Feb. 1] meeting," she said.

"My issue with this is it still goes back to the meeting on Jan. 4 where they moved to change that charter. I don't believe the School Committee had the authority to amend that charter."

Goodman's reasons for not attending the meeting, sent in an email Tuesday night, were similar to those cited by Celico and Fuller.

"I did not attend the

School Committee tonight because the single agenda item for this special meeting did not reflect the agreement that was reached in executive session at the previous meeting."

"Earlier this week I asked that Mr. Patten either correct the agenda or cancel this meeting. When he refused, it became clear that the majority intended to simply push through

the WTA Contract Negotiations Subcommittee charter we had previously tabled, ignoring the agreement we had reached in a 90-minute executive session.

"I also did not attend to protest the fact that this was done at a meeting that did not allow for public comment."

Meanwhile, those most affected by the fate of the subcommittee meetings, the members of the WTA and Local 808, repeated what they have said since the controversy began. Local 808 members want their contract talks to continue, and the teachers, whose contract expired June 30, 2011, are anxious to get theirs started.

Donna Chapman, a teacher's assistant, sat with other anxious 808 members, watching the meeting.

"Just waiting for a negotiating team that will sit with us," she said. "We have been working since July 3 without a contract. I think they need to put their politics aside and resolve this once and for all."

WTA President Donna Allinson and WTA chief negotiator Brendan Murphy arrived to find the meeting had already ended.

"I think it's too bad it had to be like this, because it would've been fine if it had been the way it was at the beginning," Murphy said.

"It's too bad they had to come to a crossroad on something that would've been fine either way. I'm optimistic we're going to work something out, as long as we keep the kids as our number one priority and we don't worry about other stuff."

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★ Hospital

from page A1

of Medicine in 1968.

In his order establishing the receivership, Rhode Island Superior Court Associate Justice Brian Stern asked for the appointment of a patient care ombudsman and a privacy ombudsman. Russo, whose appointment as special master was approved by

Stern, asked the judge to combine the two positions saying they were closely related and that combining the posts would be a cost savings measure.

Stern wrote in his order that a patient care ombudsman would monitor the quality of patient care and represent the interests of the hospital's patients during the receivership.

An ombudsman deals with issues and complaints from patients.

In his role as both patient care and privacy ombudsman, King is also to serve as a member of the receivership's Standing Stakeholders Committee and will assist the Standing Regulatory and Public Protection Committee, as requested.

Stern also established the privacy ombudsman position to protect patient information as the hospital is subject to the scrutiny of potential buyers and part-

ners as well as state regulatory agencies.

According to Russo's petition to the court requesting King's appointment, King has agreed to be compensated with no more than \$10,000 for the first forty hours of his work. After that he will bill at a rate of \$300 per hour with a cap of \$1,500 per week.

King declined comment for this story saying he wished to meet with Westerly Hospital officials and speak with Russo before discussing his appoint-

ment in the receivership case.

The hospital voluntarily filed for receivership protection in December after sustaining annual financial losses for two decades. Hospital managers and board members said the process, akin to federal bankruptcy protection, was the hospital's best

chance at survival and protecting its assets. Under receivership, Russo is restructuring the hospital's debt. He has said he hopes to start the process of formally marketing the institution to potential buyers or partners later this month.

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★ Trust

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housing development.

The preserved open space would be "a wonderful asset to the town," Jones said.

Jones was speaking at the public hearing for Mystic Senior Living, the proposed

development. The hearing was closed Tuesday night, and due to the late hour, commissioners said they would deliberate on the application at a future meeting. State law gives the commission 65 days to make a decision on the application.

said, as well as a mobile eye-care unit for residents who need glasses.

The company, Morningside House, is growing and has good financial backing, Haberek said. If the Mystic facility is built, it will be the company's first foray into New England.

"I think it will be a great addition to the area here," he said. "It definitely confirmed for me that impressiveness of the organization and the facility."

— Leslie Rovetti

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From The Chef
Valentine's Day is around the corner! What better way to say "I love you" than by surprising your significant other with a delicious meal, prepared by you at home!! And McQuade's Marketplace has the perfect recipe!!

<p>Valentine Pan Seared Scallops</p> <p>8 Local Stonington Sea scallops</p> <p>1 TBL. unsalted butter</p> <p>1 TBL. vegetable oil</p> <p>Kosher Salt</p> <p>(Serves 2)</p>	<p>Heat a non-stick sauté pan on high heat. Add butter, oil until melted and almost smoking. Lightly salt the scallops and place in the pan, flat side down, sautéing for 2 minutes. Don't overcrowd the pan, or move them! This will produce a flavorful brown crust. Turn scallops over, and sauté for 1 additional minute. Done!</p> <p>Serve the scallops over a bed of baby spinach, pouring the pan sauce over the dish. Melt more butter, if desired. Garnish with grape tomatoes and a lemon wedge. Add a baked potato, and dinner is served!!</p> <p>McQuade's has it all!!</p>
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