

Commentary

The
Southington Observer

Our Views

Guest reader history repeats itself

There is an old saying that history repeats itself. I discovered the truthfulness of this statement one day last week.

For those that have never viewed an editor's desk, picture a table with piles upon piles of paper, pictures and other objects strewn here and there.

There is such a high volume of paperwork that crosses my desk every day (and sometimes stays there) that often times it is hard to confirm that there is actually a desk underneath everything.

No matter how often I clean it, or promise myself to keep it clean, it eventually returns to its chaotic organization.

Though I typically have no issues finding what I need, from time to time items get lost in the clutter.

One such item was an invitation to participate in Derynoski Elementary School's Guest Reader Day.

I received the packet about a week and a half ago and placed it to the side to return in a day or two, once I had finished putting the paper together that week.

There is another saying, out of sight, out of mind.

The invitation would collect various other items until it became the bottom of a pile of papers.

I still knew the area of the desk



Ed Harris
Thoughts around town

where it was, but since I was not actively looking at it, it slipped my mind.

My memory was jogged a bit early last week, when I was working on a school related item.

I dug through the pile and found the invitation, silently celebrating the fact that I still had a few days to send it in (which I have since done).

This scenario is almost exactly how I was first invited to participate in Guest Reader Day.

In April 2007, a little more than a month after I became editor at the paper, I found the paperwork for the event in a bunch of papers on my desk.

It was pure luck that I had found the invitation, as it was

tucked away in a pile I was about to toss into the recycling bin.

The invitation was for the former editor, who I had replaced, but Derynoski officials were happy to have me come in his place.

And I have participated every year since.

Other perennial guest readers include School Supt. Dr. Joseph Erardi, Southington Chamber of Commerce President Art Secondo, Town Manager John Weichsel, various members of the Board of Education, Police Spokesman Sgt. Lowell Depalma and Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz.

Just prior to my second time reading, Derynoski Principal Jim Quinn noted how there were so many people that wanted to participate, that school officials decided to double up some of the readers in a classroom.

It has been that way ever since.

That year I had the opportunity to read with Central Connecticut State University Professor Olusegun Sogunro. Last year I read alongside Carissima Derynoski.

This year's Guest Reader Day is scheduled for Thursday, March 18. I am assuming that I will once again be paired with another guest reader, as the program has grown every year.

I am looking forward to it.

Lucking out in bonding

We are glad to see that Southington has been able to move forward on some much needed projects without having to wait for state bonding that now may never come.

Recently, Gov. M. Jodi Rell has looked to clear some space on the state's credit card, placing some long-awaited state funds for local projects on the chopping block.

State officials have said that Connecticut has reached its debt limit thereby requiring hundreds of millions of dollars worth of bond authorizations to be canceled.

Rell has proposed repealing more than 300 projects on the state's bonding list totaling nearly \$390 million.

Although the projects slated to be cut have gained legislative approval, no money has been allocated for the vast majority of the projects and they have been languishing in bonding limbo for years.

The governor has final approval over what projects make the agenda for state's bonding commission.

Southington has three items on the potential bonding list. Of these items, two have moved forward without the bonding and the other is in limbo.

Included in the proposed bond cancellations is a \$3.3 million grant to move a section of Mount Vernon Road. Moving the road is a necessary step before Lake Compounce can begin a \$20 million expansion of its water park.

Plans to expand the water park have been in the works for the past several years, and the grant was anticipated to be on the bonding commission's agenda for last year.

Area officials have been touting the expansion project for years as an economic development boom for the region.

Southington State Rep. Zeke Zalaski said the bonding for the project was held up because Rell believed it to be an earmark for state Senator Tom Colapietro (D-Bristol).

Lake Compounce officials are currently debating moving the road themselves, which would cut into the amount of money the park has to expand.

Southington still has a few other items on the bonding list, though the town no longer needs the money for the projects. About \$250,000 for the redevelopment of the drive-in theatre property and \$150,000 for the reconstruction of the intersection of Marion Avenue and Mount Vernon Road are still listed as bonds.

Two years ago the former Speaker of the House James Amann used money from a discretionary fund to finance the redevelopment at the drive-in. Work is currently ongoing at the property.

Plans for the drive-in call for a midget football field, a pavilion and the preservation of one of the movie screens on the site so the town can showcase movies in the future.

We have long supported the redevelopment of the drive-in property and are highly enthused that it is moving forward. It took a bit of back and forth before a final plan for the drive-in was drafted. We would have hated to see the renovations put on further hold because promised money was not followed through with.

The town went ahead on the reconstruction of Marion Avenue and Mount Vernon Road on its own, due to the critical safety hazard of the intersection. If the bonded money goes through the town recoups expenses.

This is a real big recipe for disaster

Recently I did something rather bold and dangerous: I volunteered to cook dinner a few nights each week.

Actually, I made this same offer about 10 years ago. At that time, our kids were past grammar school age, so my wife went back to work full time.

We now were leaving the house at the same time in the morning to go to work, and coming home exhausted at the same time each evening. But once we got home, our routines were slightly different. I would sit on the couch with the newspaper and call out, "So what's for dinner?"

My wife, who was not sitting on the couch with the newspaper, but rather was out in the kitchen trying to whip up something for us to eat, would reply in a quivering voice, "Oh, something I'm sure you'll enjoy, dear."

I found out afterward the reason here voice quivered was because of a Dr. Strangelove-like internal struggle she was having, as her right hand reached for a butcher's knife while her left hand restrained her right arm and reminded her that even justifiable homicide was sort of a violation of the Ten Commandments.

Back then, when I finally realized our routine was kind of unfair, I volunteered to make dinner. But when I put a can of Dinty Moore beef stew in the microwave oven for eleven minutes on high—still in the



Bill Dunn
Laugh or Death

can, unopened—we never did eat that night because we spent the whole evening pulling pieces of shrapnel from the kitchen walls.

My little faux pas (French for "dumb like a fox") got me off the hook for a while, but now the unfairness of the situation has once again, um, shall we say, come up for discussion. (A little home repair hint: spackle nicely covers up those butcher knife holes in the wall just above one's head by the couch.)

So, in the interest of fairness (and self-preservation) I have again nobly volunteered to make dinner.

The first thing I did was make a list of the various dinners I confidently know I can prepare (especially now that I understand cans must be opened first before they're put into the microwave for eleven minutes on high).

Here is the entire list:

A. Open a can of soup.

B. Call the Chinese take-out place at the top of the hill.

C. Open a can of tuna fish.

D. Call the Chinese take-out place at the bottom of the hill.

E. Open a can of baked beans.

F. Call the Chinese take-out place halfway up the hill.

G. Toast.

At first I was rather proud of myself. Seven different meals. Theoretically I could make dinner every night of the week.

And as a bonus, I pointed out to my wife, certain words she abhors are noticeably absent from my list: McDonald's, Taco Bell, and KFC.

However, for some strange reason she was not impressed. So here's the situation, folks. I need help. I need my loyal readers, all four of you, to send dinner recipes to me at this email address: bill@boomertrek.com .

I'm open for all recipe suggestions, as long as they meet certain minimum requirements: they must be really tasty, really easy to prepare, and really easy to clean up afterward.

If you send in some good stuff, I'll achieve two goals: I'll be a hero at home, and I'll be able to milk your email responses for at least two more columns. So don't be shy, send in those recipes.

Oh, and one more requirement: only recipes that do not require butcher knives, please.

Bill Dunn is a freelance writer who resides in Torrington. He can be reached via his Web site at: www.boomertrek.com.