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Lifestyles
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Front Porch News Online Edition

Today's local Tid Bits of good news to share with family & friends
By Nancy Burns Fusaro

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Greetings dear **Front Porch** friends and gentle readers, imagine, the last week in February and time for **Mardi Gras** already! Speaking of which, get out your dancing shoes for the library's Big Easy benefit bash Saturday at the Knick. Our wonderful library needs our support, what with the renovation and capital campaign underway — especially since we're so grateful that the doors will remain open during the construction. Did you know that the library opened in 1894 thanks to industrialist- inventor **Stephen Wilcox**, who donated the land the library stands upon as well as \$25 thousand to be matched by citizens of the community? Seems citizens of this community have always jumped in when needed, just look at the many gifts already received! Washington Trust donated a hefty **\$150 thousand**, and the Roberts and Champlin Foundations and the generous **Sculco** family have added to the thousands of smaller gifts from folks like you! Meanwhile, library director **Kathryn Taylor** tells me that the "Business After Hours" Chamber of Commerce event hosted by the library last week was the last word!

It was a tad bittersweet bidding adios to **Emma Palzere-Rae** who's left the Chorus for New London and The Women's Center of Southeastern Connecticut. While I'm sad to see her go, I'm sure the women's center — whose mission is 'to strive for a violence-free society' — is overjoyed. And Emma will remain close, what with her involvement with the Emerson Theater Collaborative (etc.). Speaking of etc, they plan to present "Harriet2," in honor of Black History Month and Women's History Month, in Mystic next month, a play about the work and lives of **Harriet Tubman** and **Harriet Beecher Stowe**. For information, call 860-705-9711.

Oh! the update on the ever-popular Bradford School fundraiser, "Dancing with the Stars." The new stars have been announced at last! **Michael Chiaradio** will dance with **Mary Levowich**, **Bill Quirk** with **Susan Eldridge** (love her!), **Richard Pendola** with **Jackie Abberton** and **Chris Haase** will now be dancing with **Nick Stahl**. Next week I'll tell the judges!

Here's a great blast from the past. Last week I heard from **Gerry Holland** the musician whom I met years ago on Nantucket. Many readers will remember Gerry, who was born in Westerly (he now lives in New York with his wife, **Bonnie** and daughter **Chelsea** who's an up and coming actress and singer) and will know his family — sister, **Carol Cushman** lives in Mystic, brother **Charles** lives in Stonington, brothers **John** and **Ronald** in Westerly and another brother, the late **Robert Holland** owned Bob Holland's Café and The Irish Pineapple. Gerry says "Say hi to anyone who might remember me." How cool is he? Cool cat!

Speaking of catching up with good people, I heard from the fabulous **Ashley Neuhauser**, (WHS class of 2003) who's living in Cleveland and in her second semester at Case Western Reserve Law School. Lots of work but very interesting and, best of all, she likes it. Sister **Nicole**, meanwhile, is still loving life on the left coast. Let's hope she catches up with another rising star living in LA these days, **Caitlyn Arsenault**, (daughter of cute **Cindy** and **Bob**) who's interning with E! and People's Revolution. Caitlyn says she's loving the experience and having the time of her life. She's also making great connections! How's this for our small world department: Soon after she arrived, she met a fellow, told him she was from Rhode Island, he said he had a good friend from a really small town in RI with a name like "Western." "Could it be Westerly?" she asked. Turns out he lived with **Jeff Morrone** and knows **Jeff Pucci**. "I'm learning," says Caitlyn "that the further you go, the closer your ties remain to Westerly. And, I'm okay with that!"



Nancy Burns Fusaro



The Westerly Lions Club has started a monthly "Members Food Pantry Drive" when food items are collected from members and then given to the Bradford Johnnycake Center. Included in the 101 members who donate monthly, are the Lions above, Joe Abbott, Bill Brennan, Dickie Cofoni, Gary Latz, Michelle Pendola, Angie Smith and Dr. Jennifer Campo. The Westerly Lions members meet at Venice on Shore Road on the fourth Monday of every month.

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I'm not sure what it means exactly, but has anyone else noticed that two of our Catholic clergymen are nursing injuries? Hmmm - speedy recovery dear Fathers K and Ray!

And now, for a heartwarming story from my lovely friend **Carol Amedeo** who dropped a line from Harbour Island in the Bahamas, where she and husband **Humphrey** spend their winter vacation. Carol would like to share the following sweet story of the Harbour Island miracle.

A well-known and much-admired 92-year-old winter resident from Old Lyme, was walking his dog — Sam, a Havenese-She-tzu Terrier — to the beach last Saturday and decided to take the short cut. On his way, he slipped, fell, and was knocked unconscious. When he failed to return home, his family reported him missing and an airplane and ground search began — to no avail. On Sunday morning, all the people in all the churches on the island were asked to pray for his safety. And pray they did.

Meanwhile, **Joe and Peggy Manfredi** of Westerly, who were visiting the Amedeos, were on the beach when a man from the search team came running and yelling that he had located the missing man and needed a stretcher. Joe grabbed his beach chair and went running to the scene, followed by Peggy, who is CPR Certified, and who bravely ran through the jungle-like terrain in her bare feet. Using Joe's lounge chair as a stretcher they transported the injured man — who was amazingly alert despite being bruised and bloody — to a vehicle and then the Harbour Island Clinic. All the while his little dog never left his side. "Sam is a hero, Carol says, "and truly a miracle occurred on this small island." The man and his family, she adds, "are so very, very, thankful and grateful to all who helped in the search. We are all so thankful that a miracle occurred for this winter island resident."

Well, so are we, dear Carol, and we look forward to your safe return home. What a great story! Good work Joe and Peggy!

Well, dear friends, adios, and let's see if March comes in like a lion next week! Until then, be wise, be good, have fun and *ciao bella!*



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