

State Police keep eyes on drivers

HOUR STAFF REPORTS

NORWALK — Connecticut State Police are reminding motorists to drive safely and refrain from operating their vehicles while intoxicated as troopers kick off their annual holiday safe driving effort.

Operation Stop Another Needless Tragic Accident (SANTA) is a yearly State Police effort that features roving patrols throughout the state targeting unsafe drivers.

"Our state troopers will be working to save lives and keep all of our roads and highways safe,"

said Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Commissioner Reuben F. Bradford in a news release. "Remember mixing alcohol with driving any vehicle is a dangerous combination for everyone and is illegal in Connecticut."

According to AAA's annual holiday survey, 93.3 million people in the United States are planning to drive or fly to holiday destinations during the time period from Dec. 22 to New Year's Day. About 84 million people in the United States — or roughly a quarter of Ameri-

cans — are planning to drive.

State troopers will be out en masse also, looking for speeders, seatbelt law violators, distracted drivers and intoxicated drivers.

Roving patrols began on the stretch of I-95 from New Haven to Stamford, as well as Routes 8 and 25, on Friday. The roving patrols will continue until New Year's Day.

Troopers are urging those who choose to consume alcohol during their holiday festivities to refrain from driving while intoxicated and to find a designated driver. DUI sobriety check points will be set up in

New Haven, Preston, Norwich and Killingly during Operation SANTA.

The Norwalk Police Department will also be continuing its heightened DUI patrols. The patrols, which began a week prior to Thanksgiving and will continue well into 2013, were made possible by a grant from the state Department of Transportation.

State Police investigated 178 accidents in which 23 people were injured during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. Troopers also made 27 DUI arrests during that time period.



Hour photos / Erik Trautmann

Above, Jahsai Martinfish, 9, receives a gift at the Roodner Court Christmas Party at Nathaniel Ely School Saturday. Below, Luis Gonzalez, 13, receives a gift.

Roodner Court residents attend annual party

 By STEVE KOBAK
 HOUR STAFF WRITER

NORWALK — The holiday spirit was in full effect Saturday at the annual Roodner Court children's Christmas party.

About 275 people were treated to food, music and games at the event, which took place in the gymnasium at Nathaniel Ely School, 11 Ingalls Ave.

"This is a stressful time of year, but this type of thing is good for the community," said Roodner Court resident Dawn Proud, who took her children JaeVion, 2, Jey'son, 8, and Johnnie, 9, to the holiday party.

Deirdre Davis, president of the

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Waypointe to begin next month

 By ROBERT KOCH
 HOUR STAFF WRITER

NORWALK — Construction will begin early next year on Waypointe, Stanley M. Seligson's long-planned vision to reshape West Avenue with new housing, retail and office space, according to an official with the development team.

"We'll start with site work in January and we'll be vertical in February," said Paxton B. Kinol, partner with Belpointe Capital, LLC, which partnered with Stanley M. Seligson Properties to advance the project. "Our winters have become fairly mild. It's a good time of year to start this kind of work. I would expect people to live in the first building by the end of next year."

Phase One calls for construction of 330 luxury apartments in several five-story buildings, along with 44,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space and a parking garage between Orchard and Merwin streets, and facing West Avenue.

Phase Three calls for re-vamping the former Bigelow Tea Co. warehouse at 15 Merwin St. into a 152-space parking garage and building an additional 95 apartments and retail space.

"We'll build both of those (phases) simultaneously," Kinol said.

At present, utility upgrade work is underway in advance of the site preparation work in January.

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St. Philip presents Lessons and Carols

NORWALK — St. Philip Church will present its annual Evening of Lessons and Carols — A Christmas Celebration at 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 23, at the church, 1 Father Conlon Place. The St. Philip Adult Choir, Junior Choir and orchestra will be featured in the evening of scripture and music. Admission is free and the program is open to the public. A goodwill offering will be taken to support the music ministry. A Victorian Christmas reception will follow.

Tipping fees to increase Jan. 1

NORWALK — Effective Jan. 1, 2013, the tipping fee for garbage, household waste, and bulky waste will be increased to \$85 per ton. For more information, call (203) 854-3200 or visit www.norwalkct.org. No reservations necessary.

Holiday garbage pickup

NORWALK — Garbage and Recycling normally picked up on Tuesday, Dec. 25, will be picked up on Saturday, Dec. 29. Garbage and Recycling normally picked up on Tuesday, Jan. 1, will be picked up on Saturday, Jan. 5. The Transfer Station, 61 Crescent St., will be closed on Dec. 25. It will reopen for regular business hours on Wednesday, Dec. 26. The Transfer Station will be closed on Tuesday, Jan. 1, and reopen on Wednesday, Jan. 2. For more information, call (203) 854-3200.

New Year's Eve Dance

NORWALK — On Saturday, Dec. 31, the Soulful Seventies Committee of the Brien McMahon High School will hold a New Year's Eve Dinner Dance at The Continental Manor, 112 Main Street, Norwalk, CT 06850 from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. featuring Keith Markette and DJ Juan Coon. Tickets are \$100. For tickets call Sissy Weldon (203) 866-7077, or Jimmy "Bud" Penn (203) 673-3784, or Michael "Shaft" Ross (203) 722-0799. Proceeds will benefit scholarships.

NHS Rockaways holiday party a community effort

 By MATT COYNE
 HOUR STAFF WRITER

NORWALK — A busload of Norwalk High School students made their way to the Rockaways last weekend, set to bring holiday cheer to children displaced by Hurricane Sandy.

The students, along with staff were driven by a First Student bus driver who volunteered his time, to the still-reeling community of Roxbury, just East of Breezy Point. The group did crafts and had their faces painted with the children from Breezy Point Elementary School.

They sang songs and handed out gifts donated from various community groups.

"It was packed wall to wall with people who had lost everything and little kids and the walls were stacked floor to ceiling with gifts from the Montauk Fire Department and Norwalk people," said Pat O'Shaughnessy, a Norwalk high history teacher. "(There were) two Christmas trees. All of our kids had elf hats on. It was wild. It was like Christmas on steroids."

The event, which brought some members of the Roxbury community together for the first time since

the storm, was weeks in the making, with groups from all over Norwalk contributing.

It started shortly after the story. O'Shaughnessy and a friend, John Montagnese went to distribute food and clothing to people displaced by the storm.

"It was chaos, total chaos," he said.

O'Shaughnessy went down multiple times, and his group, which became known as the Breezy Brigade, grew to include members of the Norwalk High School faculty.

"The first couple of times we

went down, we set up the parishes with clothing and other things in a donation center," said Ted Welsh, another Norwalk high teacher. "It was a mess, there was no organization to it. We sort of brought order to that. Then we started looking around for ways for the kids to get involved. We had some conversations with some of the kids down there."

That way was the holiday party. Two weeks ago, Norwalk high students and staff went down to clean up the Mayor's Committee

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Community News

community@thehour.com

Fire department highlights 'gifts of safety'

This year, the Norwalk Fire Department has assembled a list of gift ideas for the holidays to help keep your family and friends prepared. The past few years have seen a number of severe storms, such as Sandy and Irene. Emergencies can happen at any moment and these gifts can serve as a great

starting point to ensure that your friends and family have an emergency communications plan, a disaster supply kit, and stay informed about emergencies in their area.

Some gifts of safety include:

- Disaster kits for homes, offices and autos (first aid kits; food, water and prescription medications for 72 hours).
- NOAA weather radios with extra batteries. The Fire Department has 2

models of multipurpose am/fm/ NOAA radios, with flashlight and cell phone charger. Contact 203-854-0238.

- Enrollment in a CPR or first-aid class.

- Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

- Fire extinguishers
- Foldable ladders for second-story escape in a fire.

- Car kits (emergency flares, shovels, ice scrapers, flashlights and fluorescent distress flags).

Checking it twice

Hour photo / Alex von Kleydorff

Five-year-old Camyrn Czarnacki gives her list to Santa personally at the Wilton Holiday walk on a recent Friday night.



Roodner hosts annual party

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Roodner Court Tenants Association, said the tenants association collaborated with Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now, the Norwalk Police Department, the Norwalk Housing Authority, Toys

for Tots, Children's Connection and the Recreation and Parks Department to make the holiday celebration possible.

Roodner Court residents said the food, fun and family at the festivities

added to the list of reasons why they enjoy their homes.

"I love Roodner Court like I love Jesus," Proud said.

While the children waited in anticipation for their gifts, Marques Single-

ton, 7, killed time by drawing in a coloring book and playing with his friends James Daniels Jr., 7, Trevon Daniels, 6, Nyasia Martin-Fish, 6, and Jahsai Martin-Fish, 7.

Regina Russell took her 8-year-old son Anthony

"Pooda" Davis III to the event. Anthony said he was hoping to get a basketball at the event, because someone stole his old basketball. Russell said the event was well organized and a nice gesture.

"I enjoyed myself," she

said.

Julius Sinclair, 6, said he looked forward to getting a gift at the holiday celebration, and he wanted to a toy motorcycle. He said he likes motorcycles, because they can do "all kinds of tricks."

Gun control talk overdue

By JESSE WASHINGTON
AP NATIONAL WRITER

For years, voices have cried in the urban wilderness: We need to talk about gun control.

Yet the guns blazed on.

It took a small-town slaughter for gun control to become a political priority. Now, decades' worth of big-city arguments against easy access to guns are finally being heard, because an unstable young man invaded an elementary school in Newtown, Conn., with a military-style assault rifle and 30-bullet magazines. Twenty young children and six adults were slain.

President Barack Obama called the tragedy a "wake-up call." Vice President Joe Biden met Thursday with Obama's cabinet and law-enforcement officers from around the country to launch a task force on reducing gun violence. Lawmakers who have long resisted gun control are saying something must be done.

Such action is energizing those who have sought to reduce urban gun violence. Donations are up in some places; other leaders have been working overtime due to this unprecedented moment.

The moment also is causing some to reflect on the sudden change of heart. Why now? Why weren't we moved to act by the killing of so many other children, albeit one by one, in urban areas?

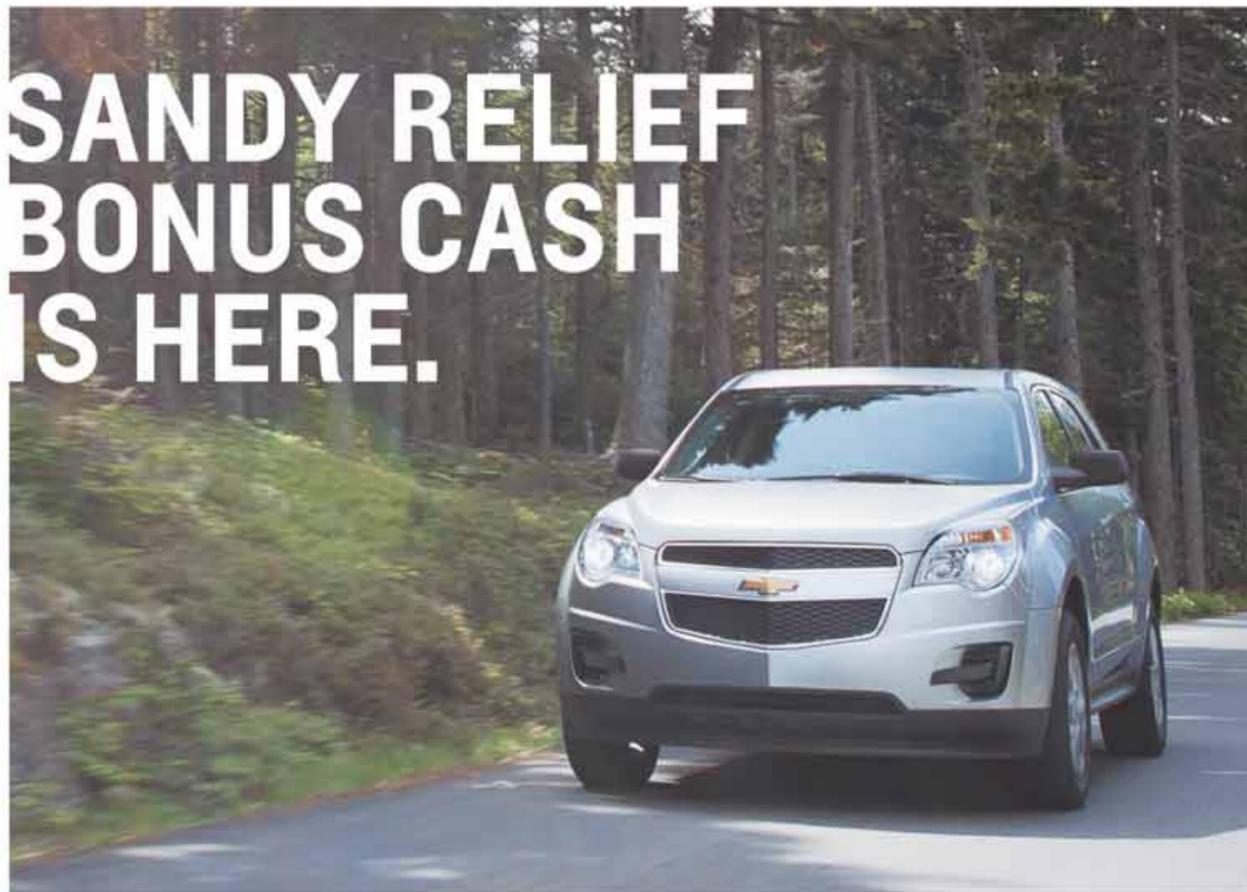
Certainly, Newtown is a special case, 6- and 7-year-olds riddled with bullets inside the sanctuary of a classroom. Even in a nation rife with violence, where there have been three other mass slayings since July and millions enjoy virtual killing via video games, the nature of this tragedy is shocking.

But still: "There's a lot of talk now about we have to protect our children. We have to protect all of our children, not just the ones living in the suburbs," said Tammerlin Drummond, a columnist for the Oakland Tribune.

In her column Monday, Drummond wrote about 7-year-old Heaven Sutton of Chicago, who was standing next to her mother selling candy when she was killed in the crossfire of a gang shootout. Also in Chicago, which has been plagued by a recent spike in gun violence: 6-year-old Aaliyah Shell was caught in a drive-by while standing on her front porch; and 13-year-old Tyquan Tyler was killed when a someone in a car shot into a group of youths outside a party.

Wrote Drummond: "It has taken the murders of 20 babies and six adults in an upper-middle class neighborhood in Connecticut to achieve what thousands of gun fatalities in urban communities all over this country could not."

So again: What took so long? The answers are complicated by many factors: resignation to urban violence, even among some of those who live there; the assumption that cities are dangerous and small towns safe; the idea that some urban victims place themselves in harm's way.



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FOR QUALIFIED LESSEES

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24 MONTHS **\$1,600** DUE AT SIGNING³

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