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IN SPORTS

Avon girls basketball

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IN THE PRESS

Athletic facility possibilities discussed

Among those at the Town Council meeting Jan. 9 were volunteers from a grass-roots community organization known as the Avon Student Athlete Park Steering Committee. Members of this group all have one belief in common: that a state-of-the-art athletic facility in Avon would be an asset to the whole community. **PAGE 7**

Healthy living

The cold temperatures in winter months and busy schedules can make it tough to make smart health choices or get resolutions going. Read our special section for tips to keep energy high, stay healthy and get in shape. **PAGE 21**



Photo by Jennifer Senofonte

Destined to be saved

Farmington Land Trust President Doug Pelham and Executive Director Tina Delaney pose on a land trust parcel on Coppermine Road. The 24 acres were donated to the trust by the Bushley sisters in 1995. This year, they donated their farmhouse to the trust as well to one day serve as the land trust offices. Mary Bushley said of the donation, which reunites the house with the land on which it sits, "The land was destined to be saved." See the story on page 6.



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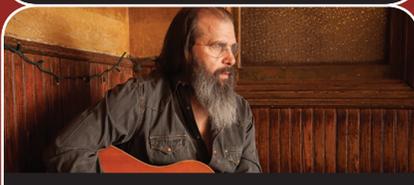
**MARSHALL CRENSHAW
AND THE BOTTLE ROCKETS**
Fri. 1/24 • 8:00 PM



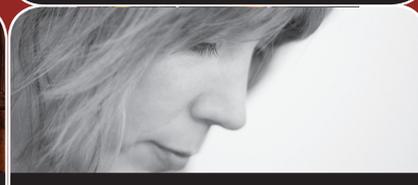
**EILEEN IVERS &
IMMIGRANT SOUL**
Fri. 1/31 • 8:00 PM



NRBQ
Sat. 2/1 • 8:00 pm



STEVE EARLE
Thu. 2/6 • 8:00 PM



BETH ORTON
w/ The Murphy Beds
Sat. 2/8 • 8:00 PM



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6:00 & 9:00 PM
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Bushley sisters donate historic farmhouse to land trust

By Jennifer Senofonte
Staff Writer

Just as Farmington Land Trust members are stewards of about 275 acres of land in town, the Bushley sisters are stewards of farmland that has been in their family for nearly 150 years.

To ensure their farmland's natural beauty and openness remains untouched for generations to come, the sisters donated 24 acres of it to the land trust in 1995 and, this year, they have donated the farmhouse to serve as the land trust's future offices. The new headquarters will be called the Wilcox-Bushley Conservation Center.

"Their mother was very committed to the land and not wanting to have it developed," said Farmington Land Trust Executive Director Tina Delaney of Mary Bushley and Ruth Bushley Childs who donated the parcel on Coppermine Road in Unionville, known as the West District Nature Preserve, to the land trust after their parents passed away. The preserve is a closed parcel owned by the land trust to protect its habitats and keep it from being developed.

"It's so wonderful right now to reunite this beautiful old farmhouse back with the land that it's

"[Everything] idyllic that you [can think of] about farm life occurred there. Even though it was very hard work, four generations of a family did it."

-Land trust Executive Director
Tina Delaney

been a part of for over 100 years," she added. "We're very grateful for that and to continue to be the stewards of the land and now the house. It's very rare these days."

Right now, the Farmington Land Trust has a small office space at 128 Garden St., however, it meets as a group at the Farmington Community Center because there isn't enough room in the current offices.

Farmington Land Trust President Doug Pelham said the trust plans to do extensive renovations to the farmhouse once it moves in. The farmhouse was presumably built in or sometime shortly after 1804, based on the deed for the land indicating its initial purchase by Isaiah Rowe that year. The Bushley sisters' grandfather purchased the house in 1869.

The land has significance to the town of Farmington as part of



Above photo by Jennifer Senofonte; right: courtesy photo

The Bushley sisters are pictured right as children on the West District Nature Preserve, pictured as it is today above. The sisters recently donated their farmhouse on that land to the Farmington Land Trust to eventually serve as its headquarters.

the original farmstead, which was 100 acres including West District School.

"Mary used to get the cattle across the road to the pastures," Delaney said, describing the farmhouse as surrounded by fields and meadows. "[Everything] idyllic that you [can think of] about farm life occurred there. Even though it was very hard work, four generations of a family did it."

In recognition of that historical value, the land trust plans to preserve as much of the space as possible while modernizing it for its offices and bringing the structure up to code.

"The fundamental structure and look of the house we certainly want to keep," Pelham said.

Delaney added that the goal is to "preserve the historic character of the house to showcase the way life used to be when Farmington was just that - a farming community."

The sisters each owned a half interest in the house prior to the sale, Pelham explained, noting that Mary Bushley lives in the house today while her sister lives on the

Connecticut shoreline. He worked with the sisters to structure a deal and finalized the paperwork as 2013 came to a close.

"We've leased the house to [Mary Bushley] and she's invited to live there as long as she wants; presumably it will be the rest of her life," Pelham said.

In the meantime, the land trust will begin a capital campaign to raise funds to renovate the farmhouse.

Mary Bushley said she was happy to donate the farmhouse to the land trust so that it, along with the farmland, will be protected forever. "I never thought about the money. If you offered me \$100 million, I wouldn't take it. I don't care," she said, adding that she and her sister agreed to save the land because they didn't want it to be developed.

"The land was destined to be saved," Bushley said.

The donation of the farmhouse

to the land trust realizes a goal set forth in a recent 10-year strategic planning effort done by the land trust with the help of Carolyn Hughes of Intent Design Group through a Hartford Foundation for Public Giving grant.

Other elements called for in the plan include modernization of record keeping, diversifying funding sources and adopting best management practices.

The land trust is a nonprofit organization and currently has 11 board members and 175 household members.

Founded in 1971, its mission is to protect open space in perpetuity through acquisition, stewardship, education and advocacy.



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