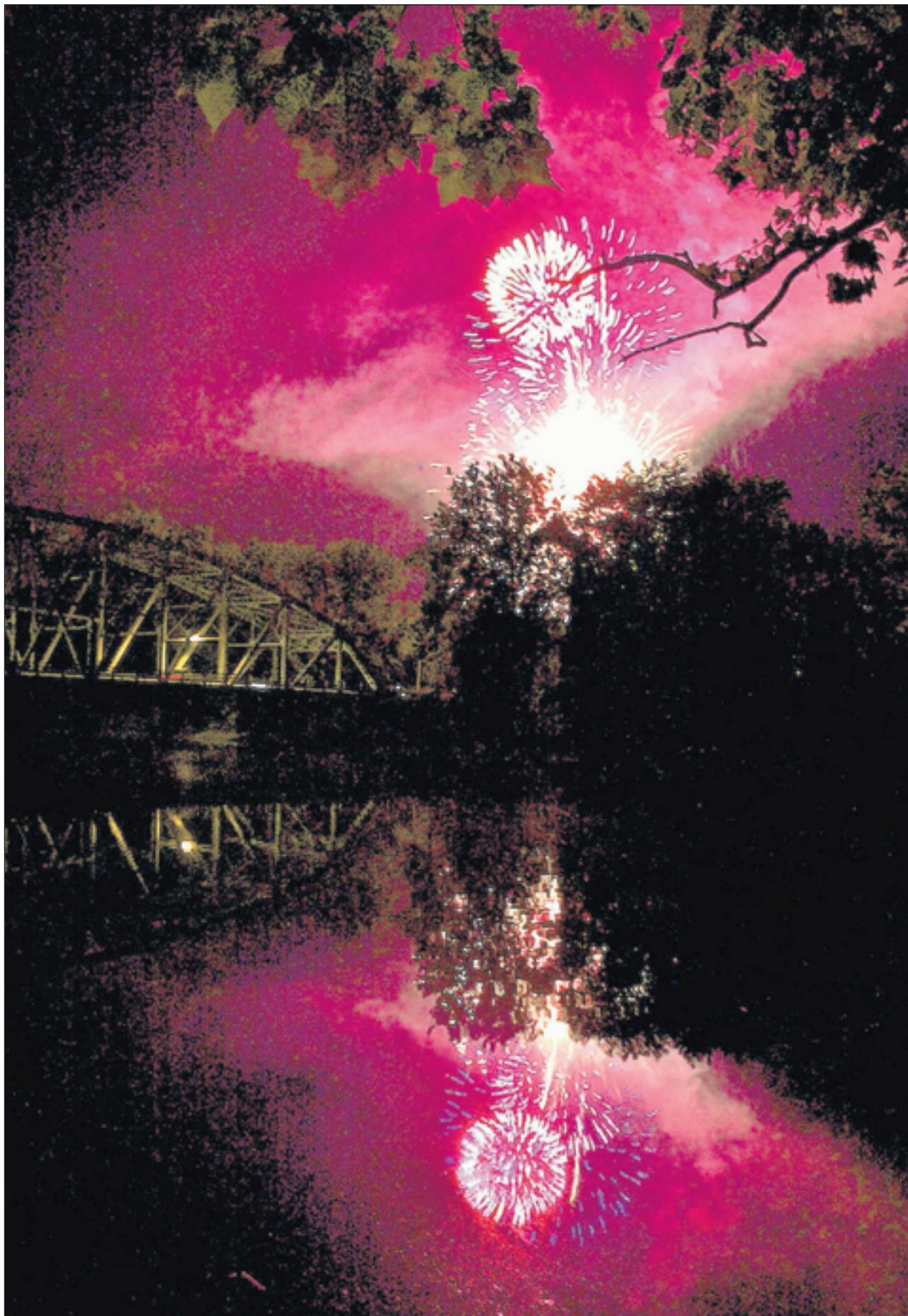


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'THE ROCKETS' RED GLARE'



TRISH HALDIN/SPECTRUM

Those viewing New Milford's Fourth of July fireworks show from Young's Field could have been inspired to think of Francis Scott Key's lyrics to The Star Spangled Banner as they witnessed colorful skies over Fort Hill Saturday in New Milford. Fireworks lit up the night over Veterans Memorial Bridge and the Housatonic River, climaxing the Fourth of July holiday celebration sponsored by the Village Center Organization. In tandem with the VCO's efforts, the New Milford Lions Club hosted a carnival at Young's Field. For more photos from Saturday's festivities, see next Friday's Greater New Milford Spectrum. For photographs of Washington's annual Fourth of July picnic and fireworks, see Spectrum Images on Page 59.

Emergency responders defend lake procedure

Millstone residents pose questions in Lerse drowning

By Susan Tuz
Staff Writer

Fire Chief James Galbraith Jr. strongly defends the actions taken in New Milford by him and his Water Witch Hose Co. No. 2 volunteers at the scene of a June 26 drowning in Candlewood Lake.

A guest at Millstone Beach the day Ursula Lerse, 85, drowned thinks the volunteer fire department personnel did not deploy into the water rapidly enough.

The guest, Laura Kuskey of Portland, sent a critical e-mail to New Milford Mayor Pat Murphy, Fire Marshal Karen Facey, Police Chief Colin McCormack, other town officials and The Greater New Milford Spectrum.

In it, Ms. Kuskey claims emergency responders asked routine questions while residents of the beach community who were on the beach at the time were the ones actually in the wa-

ter attempting a rescue.

"To our relief, volunteer fire department vehicles started to arrive within 10 minutes of our 911 call. We expected them to run into the water... but incredulously, they did not even remove their shoes or leave the sand," Ms. Kuskey wrote in an e-mail regarding the incident.

Fire Chief Galbraith was startled Tuesday to hear the claims.

He said Ms. Kuskey's "facts are way off" and noted the volunteer fire company is "not a dive team."

"I was the first arriving on the scene and was there within six minutes of the call," Chief Galbraith said. "An EMS arrived moments before me.

"I asked who was missing and was told an 85-year-old woman," the fire chief related. "I asked where she went down, and no one knew. I was facing a swimming area some

See Responders on 54

Police maintain their focus in New Milford

By Nanci G. Hutson
Staff Writer

Uncertainty in the New Milford Police Department precipitated by an unprecedented number of retirements this past month might not be visible to anyone outside the station.

Officers are still pulling cars over for speeding or driving while under the influence. Officers are still at the ready for the post haste calls to car crashes, neighborhood burglaries and drownings.

Detectives are still busy solving crimes, such as

See Police on 55

State \$ to help library's cause

By Susan Tuz
and Dirk Perrefort
Staff Writers

Boosters of the planned Sherman Library received happy news this week.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell announced Monday \$500,000 in state money would be made available for the facility's expansion.

The governor said the money, expected to be approved when the state Bond Commission meets Tuesday, July 13, would be paired with a previous \$500,000 state grant awarded in 2005.

The cumulative \$1 million Library Construction Grant will help the Sherman Library Association

"It's very, very exciting... it's answered prayers."

Clay Cope, Sherman Library Building Committee chairman

more than double the library's space.

The total \$3.2 million project will add 7,300 square-feet of space.

"The current library is simply bursting at the seams," Gov. Rell said. "There is no room for meetings. It is crowded and — a cardinal sin for libraries — it is noisy. The need for more room is clear."

The library expansion

has been on the table since before 2001 when Building Committee chairman Clay Cope joined the Board of Trustees.

In 1999, the board had evaluated what was needed to meet the future needs of the community. Library director Millie Loeb had a vision of what the library could be when she took her position in 1997.

"This is the best news I could get," Mrs. Loeb said Monday. "It means we can move forward with the project. The new facility will provide space for children's programing, quiet reading, and a wonderful, new programing room inside the present barn."

Mr. Cope concurred. "It's very, very exciting," he said. "It's answered prayers. Governor Rell's appreciation of the importance of a library in a small town and State Sen. Michael McLachlan's dedication to this community worked together to make this happen. We are blessed."

Sen. McLachlan attended the Sherman Library's volunteers' brunch three weeks ago, Mr. Cope said.

On seeing the library's needs and hearing what the expansion will provide for the community, the legislator most likely went back and spoke to the governor, renewing her interest in the project, Mr.

See State on 55



COURTESY OF JAY DOYLE

'Killing time'

Mother Nature created a situation this week for local clock repairman Jay Doyle that he'd never before encountered. It seems the extreme heat softened a hand of a clock on his back patio, sending the ill-fated hand plummeting in a wayward fashion to the bottom of the clock. "The present heat wave has killed time, so to speak," quipped Mr. Doyle, who reported temps were over 100 at the time of the clock hand's demise. "The hand gave up the ghost," he said, comparing the image to one of artist Salvador Dalí's famous works. "I repair clocks," concluded Mr. Doyle, "so this really gave us a good giggle."

HEADING TO HIGH SCHOOL

Area middle schools send "graduates" off to the next step.

Schools — 510-11

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Friendship and camaraderie reigned at Freedom Run.

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KEEPING FIT AT ANY AGE

From staying healthy to property rights, it's all about seniors.

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