

Committee approves funds for base pier

The House Appropriations Committee has approved \$46 million to construct a new pier at the Naval Submarine Base in Groton.

Pier 31, now 33 years old, was designed to support older classes of submarines and was a significant issue in 2005 when the base was targeted for closure.

U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, who was joined by President Bush in seeking the \$46 million, said the new pier will allow the Navy to service modern attack submarines better.

The bill, which now must go before the full House of Representatives, also includes \$28 million to build a regional training center at Camp Rell in Niantic for National Guard troops across the Northeast, and \$7.2 million to expand the Connecticut Air National Guard's engine repair shop at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks.

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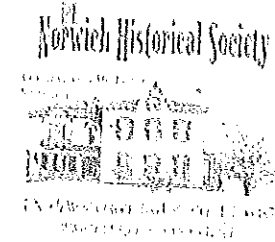
Norwich native an unsung hero in fight to end slavery in 1830s

Activist achieved many firsts among black Americans

During the 1830s, abolitionists used the postal service and publishing in their battle against slavery. This resulted in millions of pamphlets, newsletters, papers and petitions sent through the mail to Americans everywhere, voicing their cause.

Writers, editors and printing presses were paramount in these efforts. William Lloyd Garrison and David Lee Child were well-known as abolitionist publishers.

Not as well-known, but just as deserving of recognition, was a black printer in New York City — Norwich-



born David Ruggles. He operated the first black press.

He published the first periodical, *Mirror of Liberty*, by a black American.

He worked as a journalist for *Freedom's Journal*; considered the nation's first black newspaper.

Ruggles operated the nation's first black



RICHARD CURLAND

Historically speaking

bookstore. He organized the New York Committee of Vigilance to fight the kidnapping of blacks off the street to serve as slaves.

He offered legal assistance to fugitives.

He acted as an agent for an abolitionist weekly to canvass subscribers in the Mid-Atlantic states.

He was the first to establish and operate the "underground railroad," helping hundreds of fugitive slaves escape — including Frederick Douglass, who became one of the most famous Americans of the 19th century.

These activities placed Ruggles in grave danger from anti-slavery opponents. More than one brush with members of that group might have resulted in Ruggles being shipped south into slavery had it not been for his white allies in the legal profession.

See SPEAKING, B3

Business needs of e

By MICHAEL GANNON
Norwich Bulletin

NORWICH — Leo E. Butler gave Norwich business owners some sobering statistics Tuesday morning about the changing complexion of Norwich.

"Ten years ago at Norwich Free Academy, students spoke eight to 10 languages at home other than English and 14 percent were identified as students of color," said Butler, director of diversity at NFA.

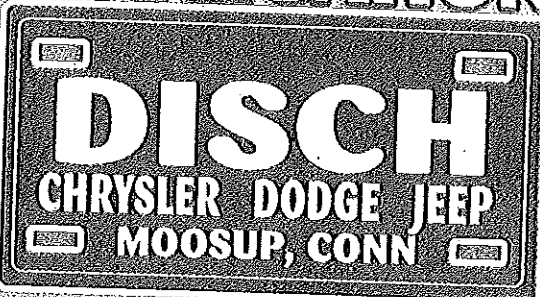
"Today, our students speak 29 languages at home," Butler said. "Hispanic, Haitian, Chinese, Russia, Bulgaria, Italy, South Africa, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran, Lebanon, Egypt — the list goes on. Thirty-six percent are of color."

Local businesses, hoping to reach out to ethnic and immigrant communities, met Tuesday at the Wauregan Ballroom for a panel discussion about successful business strategies for a diverse community, hosted by the Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce.

"Relationships are a key to success," Chamber President Andy Messier said. "You have the needs of a diverse community and what you as a business or an organization can do to meet those needs."

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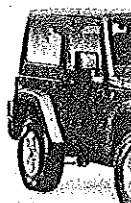
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Donald Wilson, 48, 68 Briarwood Ave., Windsor, 8 p.m., criminal trespass; court date July 11, New London Superior Court.

breach of peace, criminal trespass, criminal mischief, court date July 8, New London Superior Court.

Commissioner David Chong said Tuesday the older boy was stabbed in the thigh and was re-

Candidate plans to eliminate his own job

By JOHN P. KELLY
GateHouse News Service

DEDHAM, Mass. — Norfolk county candidate stakes campaign on dislike of county government.

Plenty of political candidates have run on a single issue. But Thomas Gorman's one-item platform might baffle some: If elected, Gorman vows to fire himself.

In fact, if voters elect Gorman to the Norfolk County commission, he said his sole mission will be to dismantle Norfolk County government altogether. He calls it a "nonessential bureaucracy" that costs taxpayers millions of dollars a year.

Gorman, 52, a Republican from Dedham who works as a real estate broker and freelance golf writer, ran a low-budget campaign on the same platform in 2006. The outcome: "I got clobbered, trounced," he wrote afterward in an op-ed in *The Patriot Ledger*, in which he vowed to keep pursuing his goal.

This time, Gorman said, he is confident his cause will attract wider support given the economic downturn, which has left cities

and towns hunting for savings and homeowners more critical of how their tax dollars are spent.

Gorman argues control of county operations — including the Registry of Deeds, sheriff's office and county jails — should be transferred to the state, allowing for the county administration in Dedham to be dissolved.

None of Gorman's three political rivals will be jumping onto his handwagon anytime soon.

"I don't buy it," said Michael Walsh, a Westwood lawyer and independent running for one of the two open commission seats.

He said Gorman's argument that the county's 28 cities and towns get next to nothing in return for the money they contribute annually — \$4.5 million last year — goes too far.

"I wouldn't say people aren't getting anything for their money; I'd say they're just not getting enough," said Walsh, a first-time political candidate in favor of strengthening financial management at the county level.

Both commissioners whose terms are set to expire, John Gillis of Quincy and Francis O'Brien of

Dedham, are seeking re-election. The third commissioner, Peter Collins of Milton, is halfway through his term after defeating Gorman by a 66-to-34 percent margin in 2006.

Most county governments, financially in turmoil, were abolished in the late 1990s and the state assumed control of their operations. Norfolk, Plymouth, Bristol, Dukes and Nantucket counties are the only ones left.

Norfolk County Director Dan Matthews said the county government here is on comparatively solid footing financially. The \$35 million operation, with a work force of roughly 600, managed to keep its budget balanced this year despite rising energy and health care costs, he said.

Matthews defended the level of service, saying the county makes its traffic and engineering division available to municipalities, organizes bulk purchases to cut costs for towns, and coordinates partnerships and resource-sharing for regional projects.

"We try to deliver regional services that are cost-effective, and we think we do a pretty good job," Matthews said.

Speaking: An unmarked grave

FROM B1

David Ruggles Jr. was born on Bean Hill in Norwich in 1810, the oldest of seven children of free black parents.

His father was a respected blacksmith, and his mother was involved in catering.

Ruggles was educated at religious charity schools in Norwich, and at 17, he headed for New York, where he became a mariner; then a grocery shop owner.

He became active in the growing anti-slavery movement in New York.

Ruggles developed a friendship with Frederick Douglass, reflected by the fact that Douglass, in his darkest moments, was brought to Ruggles' print shop for protection and support.

Ruggles sheltered the fugitive, and in time, Douglass was married in the shop to Anna Murray.

The marriage ceremony was performed by a former-fugitive-turned-minister.

A few years later, Douglass became one of America's most well-known abolitionist orators.

By the time he was 28, Ruggles' health had deteriorated because of the intense energy he dispensed on anti-slavery issues and activities. He was almost blind and suffered from stomach disorders.

His personal finances had been depleted to support the cause, and at times, he was homeless.

Ruggles joined a radical commune in Northampton, Mass. Looking for a cure for his ailments, he became a doctor of hydrotherapy, a water cure sweeping the country at the time.

He established the first water-cure hospital in the nation, contin-

uing his writing on abolition and articles in water-cure journals.

Ruggles died Dec. 18, 1849 from a severe stomach infection while in Florence, Mass. He was 38.

His family traveled there to retrieve the body.

He was buried in the family plot in the Yantic Cemetery. It is believed he is in an unmarked grave.

The history subcommittee of the 350th Norwich anniversary committee is working hard to gain recognition for Ruggles.

It hopes it will succeed in adding Ruggles' role as an important abolitionist to a part of the Connecticut Freedom Trail in time for the town's anniversary next year.

"Fame is the perfume of heroic deeds."

—Socrates

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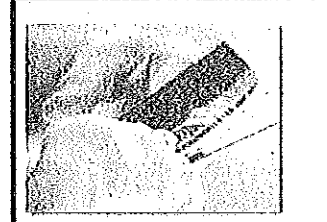
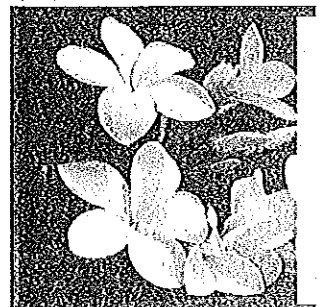
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