

Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Farmhouse: Bad deal all around

The pending demolition of a pre-Revolutionary War Tiverton farmhouse should serve as exhibit A on why solar farms, which by and large are a good thing for us all, are earning themselves a tainted reputation.

Credit lack of imagination and stubbornness on the part of both town and solar developer for the fact that, barring some eleventh-hour burst of common sense, a part of Tiverton history will come tumbling down.

This is a simple house (most of its era were) in an out-of-the-way location that isn't on the A-list of protected Tiverton structures. But neither is it some crumbling wreck, long-ago stripped of anything of authenticity and value.

The Wingover farmhouse is in good shape and blessed with period structural details — particularly the hand-hewn exposed posts and beams — that are remarkably well preserved. It is an intact representation of Tiverton's farming past and more — the house was once home to Herb Cavaca, Tiverton fisherman turned rumrunner extraordinaire aboard his sloop Mary A, and boats Cachalot, Tramp et al.

With good reason, the town's Comprehensive Plan makes preserving such good old houses, along with the town's historic character, a top priority.

The sad thing is that saving this house (and the old stone walls) ought to have been no big deal. The property is plenty big enough to fit solar panels and farmhouse, while the mixed-use problem (dual uses, solar and residential, on a single lot) scarcely seems insurmountable. Had the will been there, a simple subdivision might have resolved that one.

Developer Ameresco now has the apparent right to do as it pleases with both house and stone walls. But realizing by now how deeply many in Tiverton care about what happens to this farmhouse, the company also has an opportunity for good will.

Rather than pick up its demolition permit and wait for the clock to wind down, developer and town, perhaps with help from a group like Preserve RI (which has offered assistance) could resolve to find a happier course. If all involved are serious and open to a bit of give and take, the task should be neither as daunting nor time consuming as some have made it out to be.

That house has stood there the better part of three centuries. Solar farms have a stated lifespan of around two decades.

Tiverton and Ameresco should be capable of better than that tradeoff.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

This veteran grateful for a most delicious dinner

To the editor:

The young and enterprising Mike Napolitano, owner/operator of Macrays Restaurant at 115 Stafford Road, Tiverton, read the newspaper article about my military service, written by the most talented writer, Jan Wenzel.

Impressed as a grateful citizen of our great country, he prepared and delivered to the home of my wife Lois and myself a roast beef dinner, complete with clam

chowder, mashed potatoes, vegetables and two kinds of cake dessert. It not only was a remarkable response by Mike, it was the best roast beef dinner I have ever had in my life.

A great neighbor — I understand that when Mike heard of a tragic chartered bus accident of adults returning from a visit to La Salette Shrine, he immediately went to his restaurant and prepared and delivered hot soup to

the seriously injured victims.

So thanks, admiration and gratitude to Mike and his folks at Macrays Restaurant.

Sincerely

Frank Marshall
Tiverton

Editor's note: The story told of Mr. Marshall's experiences in the Ardennes Forest during the Battle of the Bulge, 75 years ago.

State should not promote killing of animals by children

To the editor:

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM), in partnership with The Light Foundation, is offering a Youth Wild Turkey Hunt in Rhode Island this spring and it is open to youths ages 12 to 15.

The Rhode Island Department of Wildlife should exist to benefit all citizens, but they have become decidedly pro-hunter in practice.

The promotion by a state agency sends the message to children that it is acceptable and even fun to kill and maim other living beings. However, killing non-human animals desensitizes children to the suffering of other creatures.

Encouraging young children to hunt communicates to them that they have the right to exercise their power over others violently simply because they have the weapons to do so.

One must ask the question:

What does the witnessing an animal take its last breath do for a child?

We should be encouraging children of all ages to behave compassionately toward animals not to glorify killing defenseless animals.

There is an inconsistency in our message to children. We have educators teaching and conveying compassion in our schools while we have a state agency encouraging children as young as 12 years old to kill animals.

Having a juvenile pick up a weapon and aim it at another living being and fire must deaden a piece of a young person's heart.

In addition, the experts will tell you that the prefrontal cortex, which plays a role in impulse control, is still immature and can develop an impulse control disorder in which a person has trouble controlling emotions or behaviors.

We don't want our children watching violent movies or playing violent games, yet we are willing to look the other way when the state sanctions the killing of animals by 12-year-old children.

When we allow children to participate in the killing of animals, are we really attempting the desensitizing a child to violence because it happened in the field and not in our streets?

Do we take our children to a slaughterhouse to subject them to that experience?

How do we justify the lack of compassion, lack of remorse or empathy, by intentionally harming animals for sport?

One doesn't have to be an animal-rights activist to find a problem with a state agency promoting 12-year-old children participating in the killing of animals.

Dennis Tabella
Director, Defenders
of Animals, Inc.

THS students learned about substance abuse during DC trip

To the editor:

In the first week of February, 13 students from the Tiverton Prevention Coalition took a trip to Washington DC to attend the 30th annual CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) Forum.

"CADCA's National Leadership Forum is a four-day conference packed with multiple adult and youth-oriented opportunities to learn the latest strategies to fight substance misuse and hear from nationally-known experts and policymakers ...more than 2,700

participants represent community anti-drug coalitions, government leaders, youth, addiction treatment professionals, researchers, educators, law enforcement professionals, youth and faith-based leaders."

There is one day during the conference that is dedicated to talking with state senators on Capitol Hill. Students from THS were able to speak with Senator Whitehouse, Senator Reed, and Representative Cicillini; talking to them about policies to prevent vaping and how to focus on stop-

ping it altogether, rather than just punishment for those who get caught in schools.

It was overall a great experience and the coalition plans to take the same trip next year. This trip would not have happened if it wasn't for the Tiverton Prevention Coalition and their amazing local sponsors: Helgers Oil, Famous Pizza, Viti Mercedes-Benz, Herren Project, Ocean-Pointe Insurance and Envy Gymnastics.

Ava Erickson
Tiverton High School senior

WHERE TO WRITE:

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