

Aspiring Eagle Scout taking on dog park project

By Pamela Morello
Town Times

One ambitious Middlefield teen hopes to provide residents – both those of the human and canine variety – with a fun and safe place for outdoor socializing and exercise.

Tyler Sibley, 14, is a Boy Scout in Middlefield's Troop 33 working towards the rank of Eagle Scout. Like the many who went before him, achieving that goal will mean the completion of a leadership service project, and Tyler has decided he wants to create a dog park in town.

For many people in Middlefield like the Sibleys, who have a dog named Charlie, going to a dog park means traveling to another town.

"We've been going to the dog park in Wethersfield, and we think it's wonderful," Tyler said. "It's always well-kept."

With nearly two months of planning under his belt so far, Tyler initially considered Peckham Park as the ideal location since it is centrally located in town. However, he has a list of other local open space options, including the Coginchaug Greenway on Strickland Road, the Strickland property on Cherry Hill Road, the King property on Mat-tabeseck Road, and the Coe Hill property off School Street.

"I'm open to all suggestions and will take everything into consideration," Tyler said.

He has since met with First Selectman Jon Brayshaw,



Tyler Sibley and friends

Park and Recreation director Chris Hurlbert and a couple of members of the Park and Recreation Commission to present his project proposal and ask for their support.

"I do like the idea of a dog park," Hurlbert said. "It's a great social environment for dogs and people."

Hurlbert said he has offered to be of help to Tyler in his project, and right now they are working toward finding a locale that will be right for everyone. Hurlbert has inquired with the state about using the town's open space parcels for a dog park. So far, the responses he has gotten seem favorable since a dog park would be considered "passive recreation."

"A lot of consideration and thought has to be given to this

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Local students receive DAR awards

Seniors from seven area high schools received the Good Citizens Award, recognizing those who exemplify the qualities of dependability, service, leadership and patriotism. The recipients are chosen by their schools because they best demonstrate these qualities in their homes, schools and communities. The awards were presented by the Wadsworth Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution on April 8, in the Counsel Chambers of Middletown City Hall. Opening remarks were given by Mayor Sebastian Giuliano and Fran Into, Chapter Regent, and the awards were presented by Good Citizens chairperson Deborah Shapiro.

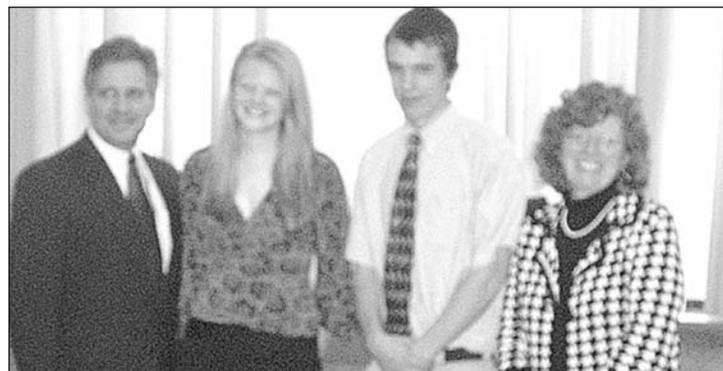
A reception for students, parents and teachers followed the awards ceremony.

Students from the seven area high schools who received the Good Citizens Award this year are: Kayla Pittman, Sadiyah Jackson, Jennifer O'Neil, Vanessa Ball (Coginchaug Regional High School), Dan Bradley (Vinal Technical High School), Joe Serrantino and Brittany Burkhart. All of the students chosen have made positive impacts on their schools and their communities, as role models in academics, school leadership and community service.

Following are the nominating statements for area students, as presented by faculty members from their schools:

Dan Bradley, Vinal Tech

Dan has displayed utmost dedication and commitment toward his education throughout high school, maintaining high



From left, Mayor Giuliano, Vanessa Ball, Dan Bradley and Deborah Shapiro, DAR Good Citizens chairman.

honor roll status. He is enrolled in Electrical Trade Technology at Vinal. Dan is an active participant in various school organizations, including National Honor Society and SkillsUSA, winning various trade competitions. Dan has also participated in school sports: track and field, cross-country and basketball (serving as co-captain). He has been active in Boy Scouts, earning the rank of Eagle Scout. Dan has also received the "Service Above Self Award." Dan is hardworking, ambitious and self-driven. He will be attending Central Connecticut State University.

Vanessa Ball, Coginchaug

Vanessa epitomizes the qualities of good citizenship: dependability, service and leadership with her involvement in, and support of, her community.

As president of the CRHS chapter of the National Honor Society, she has been the force behind our community activities and a role model for integrity and ethical principles. She also holds leadership positions as the yearbook business manager, co-president of ECO and triumvirate president in the Junior Classical League. Never one who shirks her duties, Vanessa can be found at CRHS at all hours of the day and night. Her work ethic has earned her many accolades, including the Yale Book Award, the Superintendents Award and CT C.O.L.T. Award. She also manages to maintain a rigorous academic schedule. Vanessa is a young woman with the desire and stamina to make her mark on society and to have an impact on people.

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Garden

(Continued from page 17)

garden, it teaches scientific notation and detail noticing.

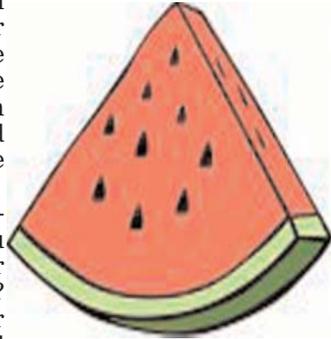
Cooking: It's a lot easier to get your kids to eat peas when they have grown them. Have your kids pick a recipe that includes one of their garden ingredients and get in the kitchen!

Make something! Did you choose lavender for your garden? Make a sachet or an eye pillow. Did you grow cooking herbs? Make some herbed cooking oil for grandma's birthday gift. Pressed flowers can make gorgeous gift cards or shadow boxes or even potpourri. Go on-line or to the library to look for craft ideas and get creative.

Read: There are so many good books for kids about gardening and seeds that its hard

not to write a whole separate article about them, but here are a few to get you started:

Kid's Garden by Avery Hart and Paul Mantell. This guide will give you tons of information about how to get started and tons of fun activities to try with the kids.



Pumpkin Circle by George Levenson and Shmuel Thaler. The book shows the whole life cycle of a plant from seed to pumpkin and back to seeds, with gorgeous illustrations. This one is a must read.

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett and Tasha Tudor. For older kids, I have to recommend this classic about the importance of a garden in the lives of a young girl and a sickly boy.

Now you have the basics. It's a perfect time to get started on your very own family garden. Have fun, get dirty and don't forget the sun block!

Dogs

(Continued from page 11)

to make sure it is safe for all concerned, both the dogs and people," Hurlbert said.

There's still a long road ahead for Tyler and the dog park. After a location is decided, the project will likely have to go before several town boards, including the Planning and Zoning Commission, Conservation Commission, Park and Recreation Commission and possibly Inland Wetlands, for approval. Hurlbert said it will probably go to a town meeting for a vote as well.

Modeling the dog park after the one in Wethersfield and others he has visited, Tyler's design includes two separate fenced-in sections – one that will be for larger dogs, and the other for smaller breed dogs or puppies. He also envisions the park having trees and benches. Clean-up will be quick and easy

with a bag dispenser provided and trash cans throughout.

Soon Tyler plans to start a "list of support" and hopes town officials and the community will back him in his endeavor to provide residents and their dogs a fun place to gather. "It's a good way for dog owners to socialize, and the dogs get ex-



ercise," Tyler said.

Once the project is approved, Tyler will solicit donations of money, supplies and time, from businesses, local organizations and residents. He also plans to look into grants, like one through Purina, that supports dog-friendly spaces nationwide.

Tyler is also looking for volunteers to help run the dog

park after it is completed. The volunteers will form an organization, likely in conjunction with Park and Recreation, to raise money for the continued maintenance of it. Tyler hopes the town will contribute to the park by mowing the grass and collecting the trash.

Tyler joined the Cub Scouts in first grade and has worked his way up the ranks of the Boy Scouts. His Eagle Scout project must be completed by the time he is 18. In that time, he must have earned a total of 21 required merit badges (he has five to go) in addition to his service project.

Being in the Boy Scouts has taught him to take responsibility and be a leader, Tyler said.

To show your support, volunteer or make a donation, contact Tyler Sibley at TLouis93@myway.com or call (860) 349-1954, or contact the Park and Recreation office at (860) 349-7122 or middlefield-pr@aol.com.

And for some 'kitchen gardening' ...

Gardeners, serve a "dirt" cake for dessert! The Old Farmer's Almanac for Kids, Volume 2, gives step-by-step instructions on how to prepare and present this delicious, fun treat.

Dirt Cake

Cake:

- 1 package (1 pound 2 ounces) Oreo cookies
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) margarine
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup confectioner's sugar
- 3-1/2 cups milk
- 2 packages (3.4 ounces each) instant vanilla pudding mix
- 12 ounces Cool Whip or similar topping (not whipped cream)

Presentation:

- A clean, new, 8-inch, plastic flowerpot
 - Wax paper
 - Gummy worms, to mix in and for decoration
 - Aluminum foil
 - Plastic flowers and a clean, new, gardening tool
- Crush the Oreo cookies by hand or in a food processor or blender. Set the crumbs aside.

Put the margarine, cream cheese, and sugar into a large bowl. With a spoon or electric beater, mix these ingredients until they are blended and creamy.

In a separate bowl, add the milk, pudding, and dessert topping. Mix these ingredients until they are blended. Add this mixture to the large bowl.

Stir everything together. Mix in gummy worms if you wish.

Line the bottom of the flowerpot with the dessert topping lid or wax paper.

Add enough crushed cookies to make a 1-inch layer. Add a 1-inch layer of pudding mixture. Continue making layers, ending with crushed cookies.

Decorate the pot with plastic flowers (wrap the stems in aluminum foil before planting), gummy worms, and a gardening tool. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours.

To eat, remove flowers and serve with the tool.

Put the pot back into the refrigerator after serving, if there is any "dirt" left over.

For more fun facts and projects on astronomy, pets, health, nature, sports, and weather, as well as a companion activity guide, go to Almanac4kids.com.

The preceding excerpt is from *The Old Farmer's Almanac for Kids, Volume 2*, on sale wherever books and magazines are sold.

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