

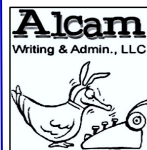


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"More of the Best of the Valley"

December 1, 2016

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Month without vehicle showcases lack of transit options for disabled

By Ralph Villers

It has been a long month without transportation, so it is a relief to see my now uninjured Grand Caravan wheelchair van parked securely in the driveway.

I now have a means to get out and about after the accident on Nov. 3. A friend transported the van from the body shop where it languished in East Granby* to our Ansonia home. Thus ends 28 days without any ability to get around the Valley and the resultant lack of independence.

Why? Well, there are very few options for persons who are mobility limited.

I am not here to complain about Valley Transit District - I like them, and used their service once during the month to attend a business meeting.



The Grand Caravan now looks as good as it did in 2010

However, all travel must occur between 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. That's it. That is all the funding VTD gets from the state, five-days of service in a seven-day week.

Forget about wheelchair accessible taxi service in the Valley either. I don't know much about Valley Cab other than they do not have wheelchair accessible cabs (and that *in 2011 they were opposed to the DOT granting permits* for two taxi operators to purchase additional wheelchair cabs).

I'm not here to praise or vilify any transit operators who could not transport myself. The para-transit operator is only funded to allow for transit for a five-day week, the local taxi operator is too undercapitalized to purchase new wheelchair cabs.

Thus, home was the place to be for four weeks. Now that I have my vehicle back, and the body work looks much better, I'll do my best to avoid any and all embankments in the future...



* - *Why was the van being repaired 60 miles away?* The van has a number of specialized systems and the company that modified my van, Advanced Wheels of Technology, is in East Granby, so I asked Allstate if I could use a body shop up there so the adaptive equipment could be repaired if needed. The insurer agreed and it was sent up there on a flatbed to be repaired. And all the adaptive equipment (specialized steering, ramp) was checked and works as designed. Thanks to Allstate, Advanced Auto Body and Advanced Wheels for getting me back on the road...

Ansonia Rod and Gun Club donates to area nonprofits

By Patricia Villers

ANSONIA - The scene: Tidmarsh's Bake Shop a few days before Thanksgiving. The reason: Check presentations.

Members of the Ansonia Rod and Gun Club gave early holiday gifts to eight Valley nonprofit organizations at an event at the Westfield Avenue bakery. President Art Davies and Treasurer Horace Behrle were there to represent the club.

As Behrle said, “We donate to organizations throughout the year.” He said the presentation was held at the bakery because Roy Tidmarsh, who died in January, was always helpful to the club. And Behrle said he wanted to make sure Valley residents realize the bake shop is still open for business.

The group donated \$1,000 each to the following:

TEAM, Inc., the Griffin Hospital Center for Cancer Care 5K Walk/Run, Greater Valley Salvation Army, Ansonia Animal Shelter, BHcare, Redwing Pond House Preschool in Ansonia, Kathleen Samela Food Pantry at Christ Church in Ansonia, Holy Rosary Church Knights of Columbus Council 10537, also of Ansonia.

Truth be told my camera battery died while I was there, so I didn't get a photo.

Please click [here](#) for a photo and story by my friends, New Haven Register photographer Peter Hvizdak, and correspondent Jean Falbo-Sosnovich.

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Party at Salvation Army in Ansonia mixes faith, fun

By Patricia Villers

ANSONIA - I did the Can Can recently. But it's not what you think.

As a member of the Advisory Board of the Greater Valley Salvation Army, I attended a recent Can Can party at the Corps' building at 26 Lester St.

The party was held as part of the Salvation Army's Women's Ministries. It was hosted by three ladies from Salvation Army headquarters in Hartford and Major Dora Garcia of the Valley Corps.

The Salvation Army officers who attended were Major Carol Duperree, Major Limarsi Marzan, and Captain Amy Merchant.

The party participants - mostly residents of the Valley - donned fancy hats, feather boas, beads, and more for the party.



Duperree, Marzan and Merchant, encouraged them to sing, clap, participate in several games, and basically enjoy themselves.

Can-stacking using only one hand was one of the games of skill that was played. I didn't do too well at it, but games of skill have never been my forte.



Canned goods for the needy were also collected.

According to information on a Salvation Army Facebook page, The Women's Ministries' Mission

"is to provide opportunity to win women for Christ, and assist in their spiritual growth, nurturing and awareness of the needs of the family, the community, the nation and the world."



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