

Rediscovering freedom with retrofitted van, 'chauffeur'

By Ralph Villers

Everything in life changes - it's just the way it goes.

When I wrote about my desire to ultimately drive from my wheelchair in the Valley-Voice newsletter ([Jan. 23, 2018, P.2](#)) I dreamed of riding into the Grand Caravan, locking my wheelchair down behind the steering wheel and going on my merry way.

Then reality intruded, as it too often does.

I'm no longer hoping to drive from a wheelchair. Despite dreaming of driving, riding on the passenger side is where I'll be.

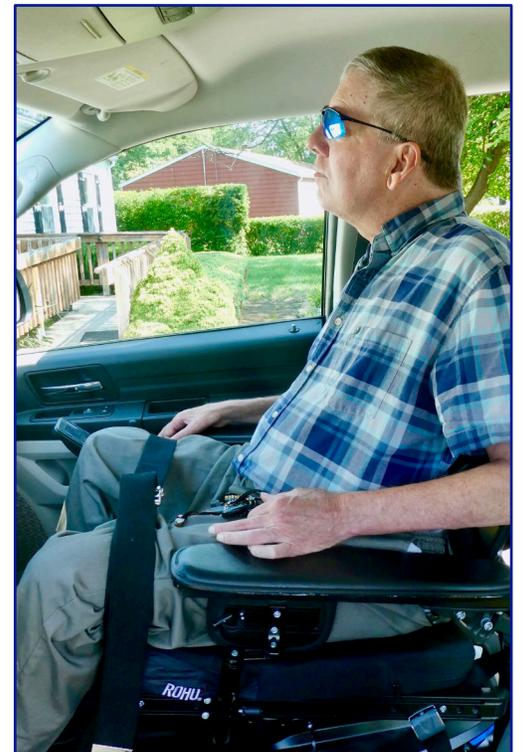
To paraphrase Kenny Rogers, I need to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em and know when to roll away...

One may wonder about the change in circumstances. I've not surrendered my driver's license nor have I had any moving violations. The practical reasons are twofold:

- I can't drive from the new Permobil F3 wheelchair since it is much taller and my sight lines are impaired. The newer converted minivans (mine is a 2008) have 2-4 inches more headroom to better fit a wheelchair.
- A true modified van that would allow me to drive (with controls **similar to this**) would cost \$65,000 and up - no third party will fund it and nor do we have the means to purchase.

Thus, having my wife Patti drive me instead allows for better and likely safer mobility, albeit with lesser convenience. So the **E-Z Lock docking system** has been installed on the right side.

Article continues on Page 4





Ansonia officials, residents celebrate reopening of Abe Stone Park

By Patricia Villers

Photos by Patricia Villers, City of Ansonia

ANSONIA - For those of a certain age Saturday's celebration of the reopening of Abe Stone Park/ Colony Pond brought back fond memories.

Mayor David S. Casseti, a lifelong resident who grew up swimming and playing sports at the park, is one of them. He said the newly refurbished area on Colony Street "has never looked better and it has never offered as many recreational activities."

Casseti expressed his gratitude to local businesses and utility companies whose donations to the Ansonia Beautification Fund covered the \$17,000 project.

Kids of all ages participated in volleyball, basketball, soccer, and other activities despite Saturday's oppressive heat.



Article continues on P.3



Ansonia officials, residents celebrate reopening of Abe Stone Park



Continued from Page 2

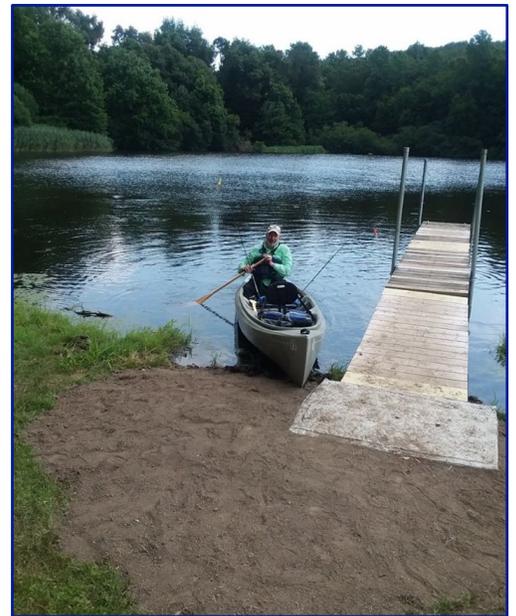
People hiked a new trail that encircles Colony Pond and enjoyed free hot dogs served at the reopened Snack Shack.

City natives Allan and Lois Brozek of Oxford were on hand for the festivities.

“I’m here because my great-uncle was Abe Stone,” Lois Brozek said with a smile. “And this is just what he would have wanted.”

Allan Brozek said when he was young he and his friends enjoying swimming and playing at the park.

George and Lee-Ann’s Pool Party Band kicked off the celebration with a rendition of Chicago’s 1972 hit, “Saturday in the Park.” The three-person band consisted of Lee-Ann Lovelace, Glen Masso and Mark Fusco.



Rediscovering freedom with retrofitted van, 'chauffeur'

Continued from Page 1

What benefits are there in my change of plans?

- Being able to more easily participate in several volunteer endeavors. They include being chairman of the Ansonia Cultural Commission, treasurer of the Valley Arts Council, and serving on the Advisory Board of the Greater Valley Salvation Army in Ansonia.
- Patti and I are building our Valley-Voice CT e-publishing business and need a greater advertising presence. We need to improve our advertising presence and sell in person.



So another chapter of my life's story begins.

And I am ready to accept whatever challenges come my way.



Celebrate Shelton to present final Downtown Sounds event of summer

CELEBRATE SHELTON
Presents

SPONSORED BY **LIBERTY BANK** AN EVENT TO BENEFIT **BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF THE LOWER NAUGATUCK VALLEY**

FRIDAYS 5 TO 9PM
RAIN DATE AUGUST 9TH
VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK, SHELTON

Downtown Sounds
Summer Concerts

JULY 19TH
KIDS HOUR W. MAD SCIENCE:
THE ROCKET SHOW
THE SPLIT COILS
THE SLAM ALLEN BAND

JULY 26TH
KIDS HOUR W. BRINGTHEHOOPLA
BABY DYNAMITE
THE ALPACA GNOMES

AUGUST 2ND
KIDS HOUR W. HANDS ON DRUMMIN
JEN DURKIN & THE BUSINESS
THE BIG TAKEOVER

WWW.CELEBRATESHELTON.COM

f o t e

