# The Bristol Press

**2012 New England Newspaper of the Year** | Friday, December 13, 2013 | BristolPress.com | $1.00

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF CENTRAL CONNECTICUT


# Searching for $40M

## Renaissance still seeking funds for downtown

**By STEVE COLLINS**
STAFF WRITER

BRISTOL — The Long Island-based firm tasked with revitalizing downtown is still searching for the financing it needs to begin the $40 million first phase of its ambitious Depot Square plan that promises to transform the city center.

The president of Renaissance Downtowns, Don Monti, said it will be a few weeks "before we get back to rolling our sleeve up" because of the traditional slowdown around the holidays.

But, he said, he hopes to be able to report progress in coming up with "the whole capital stack" by mid-January.

City officials who met with Renaissance for two hours Thursday in an occasionally heated closed-door

**See RENAISSANCE, Page 3**

Kevin Bartram | Staff

Renaissance Downtowns at Bristol is working to find financing for the $40 million first phase of Depot Square.

## Winter stroll in the park

Kevin Bartram | Staff

A woman takes a walk on a cold day along the snow-covered wooden boardwalk at Rockwell Park in Bristol Thursday.

## Lion's Low Vision Center reopens

**By JUSTIN MUSZYNSKI**
STAFF WRITER

BRISTOL — Bristol Hospital and the Lion's Club celebrated the grand reopening of the Lion's Low Vision Center Monday after it had closed briefly for renovations.

The center, which has been around for about five years, provides people who suffer from severe vision loss with the tools and lifestyle advice to help them lead a normal life.

"We have a lot of programs that make people better, but this is one that makes people's lives better that isn't offered everywhere," said Kurt Barwis, president and CEO of Bristol Hospital and Health Care Group Inc. at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. "This wouldn't be possible without the great partnership that we have with the Lion's Club."

Some of the improvements to the vision center include painting, new carpeting and better lighting.

"This is going to be a great asset to us," said Steven Diagle, president of Lion's Low Vision Center board of directors. "We missed it in the short time that it was gone."

> "This is going to be a great asset to us."
>
> **STEVEN DAIGLE**
> President of Lion's Low Vision Center board of directors

Ways that the center can assist those with low vision vary greatly. It can be anywhere from a device that magnifies books or magazines onto a screen to a system that uses raised bumps to signify different heat levels on an oven. The LLVC also offers home visits to accommodate all of its patients.

"I once brought one of the magnifying devices to a woman who had a stack of Christmas cards next to her that she was just waiting to read," said Everett Lyons, past president of the LLVC board of directors. "We can't cure low vision unfortunately, but we're here to help you cope with it."

**See LION'S, Page 6**

**WEATHER | PAGE 17**

**28**

**STATE**

Steven Sametz

## 'Child's Requiem' inspired by Newtown

**PAGE 9**

# Arraignment postponed in CCSU lockdown case

By LISA BACKUS
STAFF WRITER

NEW BRITAIN — The arraignment for the man accused of causing a lockdown and massive police search at Central Connecticut State University last month has again been postponed at the request of his attorney.

David Kyem, 21, of Newington, is facing breach of peace and criminal trespass charges after he turned up on campus where he was a student Nov. 4 dressed in full regalia as the "Snake Eyes" character from G. I. Joe including a sword and a "prop gun" much like the action figure and character in movies and comics.

Law enforcement officials from eight agencies including the FBI and the federal Department of Homeland Security responded to the school after several people called to report that the man dressed like a commando with a tactical vest, knee pads and what appeared to be real weapons was running through campus.

Kyem, a senior at the school, came out of his dorm room peacefully a few hours later. He told CCSU police that he had a friend drop him off at an Army supply store on the Berlin Turnpike the week before to buy components for a Halloween costume as "Snake Eyes."

Kyem spent $300 on the costume buying a tactical vest, a "prop gun," a real sword with a dull blade, a mask with goggles usually used to play paintball, knee pads, jump boots and camouflage pants, according to a statement he gave to police.

He used the costume Halloween night and then at some parties at the University of Connecticut over the following weekend before spending the night at a friend's house in New Britain. The next day, Kyem said he decided to wear the entire costume rather than carry it as he made his way back to campus Nov. 4.

He was spotted by several people who called New Britain police after he got off a city bus on Stanley Street and headed to his dorm room at James Hall on campus. Kyem said a short while later he heard an odd alarm and learned the campus was on lockdown.

It gradually dawned on him that he may have been the reason police with dogs were searching the dorm, but by that point was unsure what to do, he said.

He stowed the various parts of his costume in his dorm room but didn't contact police, the statement said. "I didn't know what to do, or if I should call 911, or just stay in my room," Kyem said.

He came out with his hands up after being called by a police sergeant who instructed him to surrender peacefully. By that point the campus had been on lockdown for three hours and anxious parents were crowded with the press looking at dozens of law enforcement vehicles including command posts and armored cars parked near James Hall. New Britain police, one of several departments that responded, estimated the department spent close to $13,000 dealing with the incident.

He was charged with breach of peace and was arrested a second time the next day on a charge of criminal trespass after he showed up on campus after being told to stay away until he had met with school authorities.

He was also expelled from the school.

Since Nov. 4, officials at Yale University and University of New Haven have also had to lockdown portions of their campuses after reports of a possible gunman on campus. One man was arrested in the UNH case after he was found with an illegal assault-style firearm and nearly 3,000 rounds of ammunition.

Kyem has been free on bond since his arrest. His case was continued in late November until Wednesday when it was continued a second time. He is now scheduled to be arraigned in New Britain Superior Court Jan. 16. His attorney Robert Britt did not return phone calls Wednesday.

David Kyem in a surveillance image in an elevator in James Hall at Central Connecticut State University.

*Lisa Backus can be reached at (860) 225-4601, ext. 306 or lbackus@newbritainherald.com*

# Agency disintegration sends Bristol south

BRISTOL — The seven-town Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency is disintegrating.

Forced by the state to sign up with other agencies, the municipalities involved are breaking up, with four joining the Capitol Regional Council of Governments, two joining a Waterbury-based agency and one hitching its fortunes to the Litchfield Hills agency.

Bristol and Plymouth have agreed to go with the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley, figuring they'll do better in the smaller agency than they would as part of one based in Hartford.

"We'd be the small fish in the pond" by going with the much larger Hartford agency, said city Councilor Henri Martin.

Mayor Ken Cockayne said he worried that Hartford would swallow up Bristol and the city would "never get anything out of there" in terms of road projects and other services.

Going with the Waterbury agency, he said, "is the best move for Bristol."

But New Britain, Berlin, Southington and Plainville opted to hitch themselves to the Hartford council instead, a move that officials said makes sense because of the connections along Interstate 84, Route 9 and the busway that's under construction between the Hardware City and Hartford.

Burlington is signing on with the Northwest Hills Council of Governments.

The director of the Bristol-based CCRPA, Carl Stephani, said it's too bad the existing agency can't continue after Dec. 31, 2014.

"It's unfortunate to lose this agency because I think we had a pretty unusually effective program for bringing other peoples' money into this region," he said.

He said the agency hauled in millions of dollars for the region for everything from bus service to intersection fixes. It worked on flood control, transportation and a host of planning issues.

Stephani said, though, that the General Assembly wanted to consolidate the 14 regional planning agencies down to eight so nobody had any choice except to pick where to go.

"It's like the explosion of a volcano or something and people have to make adjustments"," he said.

Stephani said he thought Bristol made the right move.

"If you've got a lion in your neighborhood," he said, "you want to be in touch but you don't necessarily want to be sleeping in his den."

City Councilor Calvin Brown said he's sure it will all work out well.

"I know we can all work together," he said.

*Steve Collins can be reached at (860) 584-0501, ext. 7254, or at scollins@bristolpress.com.*

# Lion's Club celebrates grand reopening of vision center

Continued from Page 1

The center also offers advice that can enhance a person's lifestyle by simply informing them of devices that are out there that can be used, such as a talking watch or a calculator that's about five times larger than the average one. Reasons why one would develop low vision differ. Certain conditions known to cause it include glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, cataracts and others.

"There's a lot of people that are excited about us reopening," said Elizabeth Warner, director of rehab services.

Patients that use the center are treated by an occupational therapist with advanced certification in vision therapy.

The LLVC is located within Bristol Hospital's Rehab Dynamics Building at 975 Farmington Ave.

*Justin Muszynski can be reached at (860) 584-0501, ext. 7250, or jmuszynski@bristolpress.com.*

Kevin Bartram | Staff

Bristol Hospital President and CEO Kurt Barwis