

Editorial: Thumbs up, thumbs down

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Thumbs up to Westport Police Officer Ned Batlin, who received the United States Attorney's Community Policing Award. The 16-year veteran was recognized for his efforts to develop stronger bonds between the community and the department. Among other accomplishments, Batlin was instrumental in creating the Westport Youth Commission, which has run multiple events to bring police officers and the youth of the community together in a positive atmosphere.

Thumbs up to Fairfield University and the Kennedy Center, a longtime provider of support individuals with disabilities, for their collaboration in bringing young people, high school students, on the autism spectrum to the university for exposure to campus life. The interaction also gives students in the university's Graduate School of Education experience working with young adults with special needs. The program is called Transition Opportunities for Post-secondary Success (TOPS) and

Thumbs up to Thumbs up to plentiful rain this year, which is leading to a crop of Christmas trees as full and green as they ought to be for holiday decorating. Last year a summer drought led to the loss of trees for many growers and some still are seeing the lingering effects. While Christmas trees are a tradition for many families, they also are an industry with nearly 4,000 acres of farmland that contribute about \$10 million annually to the state's economy.

Thumbs down to the uptick in carbon monoxide poisonings as colder weather prods people to turn on their heat or find alternate ways to keep warm. If furnaces are faulty, then carbon monoxide gas can build up indoors. Because the gas resulting from the burning of fossil fuels is colorless and odorless, people may not immediately recognize the source of symptoms, such as headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting and other flu-like symptoms. As of mid-November, the state poison control center had received 266 calls about carbon monoxide exposure. One simple act can help detect excessive levels of the gas — install a carbon monoxide detector (about the size of a smoke detector) in your home.

Thumbs up to the donors whose generosity saved the wrestling program at Bridgeport's Warren Harding High School. Forced into budget cuts, the school district eliminated funding for the program in 2016. In collaboration with Adversity to Prosperity, a local nonprofit, the team reached out to community leaders and organizations for help and raised just under \$19,000 to keep the program running. Thumbs up as well to Bridgeport Police Det. Jeremy Kelly, who ran a three-day "Save Harding Wrestling Camp," wrestling coach Eddie Santiago and Tyrone Elliott, a Harding coach and president of Adversity to Prosperity. The team will have a 2017-18 season. For information on how to help other under-funded Bridgeport high school teams, check

www.AdversityToProsperity.org.

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