



SPORTS

Chariho's Zegarzewski named to Journal's All-State first team. p.9



THE SUN

HAPPENINGS
■ Welcome Spring Concert
■ K of C Monthly Breakfast
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WEATHER
Today: Shower, some sun; high of 53. Details, p.2

WESTERLY, R.I. SUNDAY, April 18, 2010

HOME DELIVERY \$4.75 PER WEEK \$1.50

'Survivor: Africa' star to chip in for Chikumbuso project

By LESLIE ROVETTI
Sun Staff Writer

N. STONINGTON — Reality-TV star and AIDS activist Ethan Zohn will be coming to North Stonington on May 6 to kick off Wheeler High School's 24-hour run-a-thon to benefit Chikumbuso Women and Orphan's Project in Zambia.

Sabrina Buehler, a town resident and school employee who is active in the Chikumbuso club, contacted Zohn on the off-chance that he would come to town. He doesn't normally speak to high school students, Buehler said, but he is making an exception to come to

Wheeler. "For him to come and speak here is a really big deal," she said.

Zohn, winner of "Survivor: Africa" and a former professional soccer player, is coming to support Chikumbuso because it intersects with his own charity, Grassroot Soccer, which uses soccer

to educate African children about HIV.

Within the Chikumbuso project



Zohn

is a girls' Grassroot Soccer team that plays in donated Wheeler Middle School uniforms. Their field is a dirt lot near their school, and the Chikumbuso club's goal is to raise money for a well to improve the field. The work would benefit not just the Grassroot Soccer team but also the entire community of Ng'ombe, a slum outside of the city of Lusaka, where the Chikumbuso project is located.

Buehler said Zohn will first be at an intimate meet-and-greet at Jonathan Edwards Winery, and will then speak to students and others about HIV prevention.

"He'll be a true inspiration of

what you can do with your life to help others," Buehler noted.

The Chikumbuso Women and Orphan's Project was started five years ago by a North Stonington summer resident, Linda Wilkinson. The Wheeler High School club formed shortly after to help raise funds for the organization, which assists women and children whose lives have been devastated by the AIDS epidemic in Africa.

Zohn will be at Jonathan Edwards Winery, 74 Chester Main Road, on Thursday, May 6, at 5:30 p.m. A limited number of tickets are available for \$25, and are available at the winery or by calling (860)

535-0202 Wednesday through Sunday.

Afterward, the public is invited to hear Zohn speak at Wheeler Gymnasium, 297 Norwich Westerly Road (Route 2) at 7 p.m. Admission is free, with a suggested donation of \$5 for adults, \$2 for students. All proceeds will benefit Chikumbuso.

Wheeler High's 24-hour run-a-thon to benefit Chikumbuso will begin on Friday, May 7 at 3 p.m.

Visit www.chikumbuso.com for more information on the Chikumbuso Women and Orphan's Project. Visit www.grassrootsoccer.org for more information on Grassroot Soccer.

ON GUARD ONCE MORE

Longtime lifeguard Sam Fusaro returns to the Ocean House

By LESLIE ROVETTI
Sun Staff Writer

IT'S BEEN 45 YEARS, BUT SAM FUSARO'S summer job just turned into a full-time gig.

Fusaro, who has spent more than half of his summers watching over the beach and its bathers at the former Ocean House, will return to the recreated resort this spring as the new beach manager.

"To me, it was never really a second thought," said Daniel Hostettler, the Ocean House's president and manag-



ing director. "He's such a legend."

After graduating from Westerly High School in 1966, Fusaro applied to the Ocean House for a summer job.

"I got hired and never left. It was such a great place," he said.

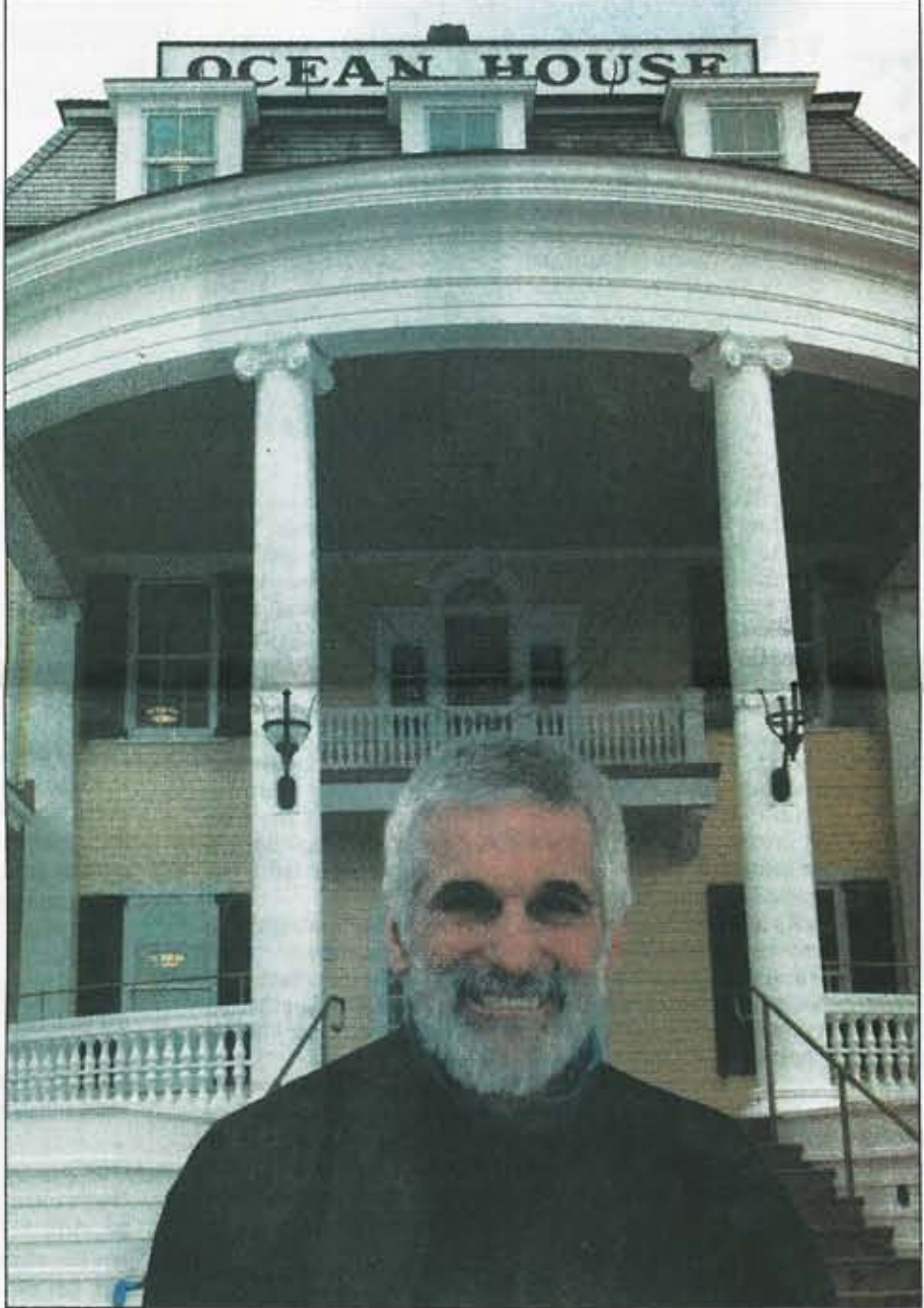
Fusaro, 61, said he did a variety of things during the autumns, winters, and springs while he worked summers at the beach. First there was college; other years he worked in ski resorts up north, or he headed west. He learned carpentry skills, he tended bar, he found myriad productive ways to pass the time until he could return to the beach.

"You'd go away, and it was always great to come home," he said. "It's about the prettiest place in town."

Other than the few summers he lived on Cape Cod, he worked at the Ocean House every summer between 1966 and 2001, when he left for good.

"It wasn't fun at that point," he said.

Rita Horan, a secretary at the Ocean House when Fusaro first started working there, said she was pleased to hear he would be returning.



CHRISTINE CORRIGAN / The Sun

Sam Fusaro, 61, has been associated with the Ocean House since he started a summer job there in 1966. Just like the building, he is starting anew this spring.

"He was a very nice young boy," she recalled. "He turned into a very nice young man."

Horan recalled that Fusaro was first hired to assist the lifeguard. When

Fusaro returns this summer, he will be overseeing the beach operations.

Although Fusaro will definitely be a year-round employee, Hostettler said

Contract proposed for police command

■ Three-year deal for Westerly Police Department's top brass set to be reviewed on Monday by councilors.

By EMILY DUPUIS
Sun Staff Writer

WESTERLY — The town manager is looking to lock in the police department's retirement-bound top brass for three years, under a proposed contract set to be unveiled Monday.

Covering the police chief, captain and three lieutenants, the proposal includes pay raise, 401(k) plan and life insurance incentives. The town would, in turn, retain the senior officers — described by Town Manager Steven Hartford as "key personnel" — through June 30, 2013.

"I think it can only contribute to an improved morale in the department," he said.

Hartford plans to outline the proposal to town councilors at a workshop on Monday, and they could make a decision the following week.

Under the offer, Chief Edward A. Mello, Capt. Edward St. Clair and Lts. Shawn Lacey, Michael Turano and Stano Trombino would receive 2-percent pay raises the first two years and a 5-percent raise the third. The increases are performance based.

"If they leave early, they forfeit that opportunity," Hartford said of a third-year, 3-percent bonus.

The town would also pay 12.5 percent into a newly created 401(k) retirement plan and increase life insurance coverage from \$30,000 to \$50,000. The officers would continue to pay 11 percent annually into the department's pension fund.

Hartford said the town would see savings by reducing payments for unused sick time from 50 percent to 33.3 percent of time accrued. The number of paid holidays

See FUSARO, page 7

See POLICE, page 5



CHRISTINE CORRIGAN / The Sun

Sam Fusaro stands on a dune behind the Ocean House. It's a location he's quite familiar with, having patrolled the beach for the resort most summers between 1966 and 2001. Fusaro will return as the recreated version of the Ocean House opens, taking a role as the new beach manager.

★ Fusaro

from page 1

Fusaro's off-season role hadn't been ironed out yet. Bartending was one possibility, he said, or some other position in customer service.

"He kind of lends himself to a kind of front-of-house role," Hostettler said.

If enthusiasm is a quality needed in front-of-house jobs, then Hostettler is dead on. Fusaro's eagerness to return to the Ocean House was evident after speaking with him for only a few minutes.

"I want to help them out as long as I can there," he said. "Whatever they need me to do, I'll pitch in."

He was also enthusiastic about the quality of the new hotel.

"The new owners really appreciate what they have," Fusaro said. "Everything's going to be top shelf, number one. ... They want it to be better than it ever was."

That's a high standard for Fusaro, who remembers the glory days of the old Ocean House. He also has some indelible memories of his own experiences, such as the elderly women whom he would escort down to the water's edge and then wait there until they were ready to return to their beach chair.

There was also a hurricane, which he and other employees rode out on the hotel's sun porch. At one point during the storm, he said about six or seven of them took a walk on the beach under the night sky. He recalled they all held hands and stayed out of the water, which had reached the dune line, and it was scary.

He also remembers the rescues, or as he calls them, assists. Over the years, he estimated he assisted about 250 swimmers who struggled in the water for one reason or another.

'It was just a treat to interact with so many people.'

Sam Fusaro, reflecting on his many years as a lifeguard at the Ocean House said.

Those assists were also recalled by his former employer.

"He rescued a lot of people on that beach," said Steve Brankert, the third generation of Brankerts to own and run the Ocean House. "I think it's a great thing that he's coming back."

Brankert also recalled how friendly Fusaro was,

and how comfortable he made the hotel's guests feel.

A true people person, Fusaro said one of the things he liked about his job was talking to the hotel patrons and swimmers.

"It was just a treat to interact with so many people," he said.

Because of his longevity, he was able to watch families grow up, and he was there when little children he may have taught how to swim returned to the beach with their own children in tow.

Returning to the Ocean House makes him feel 18 again, he said, "and that's a good feeling."

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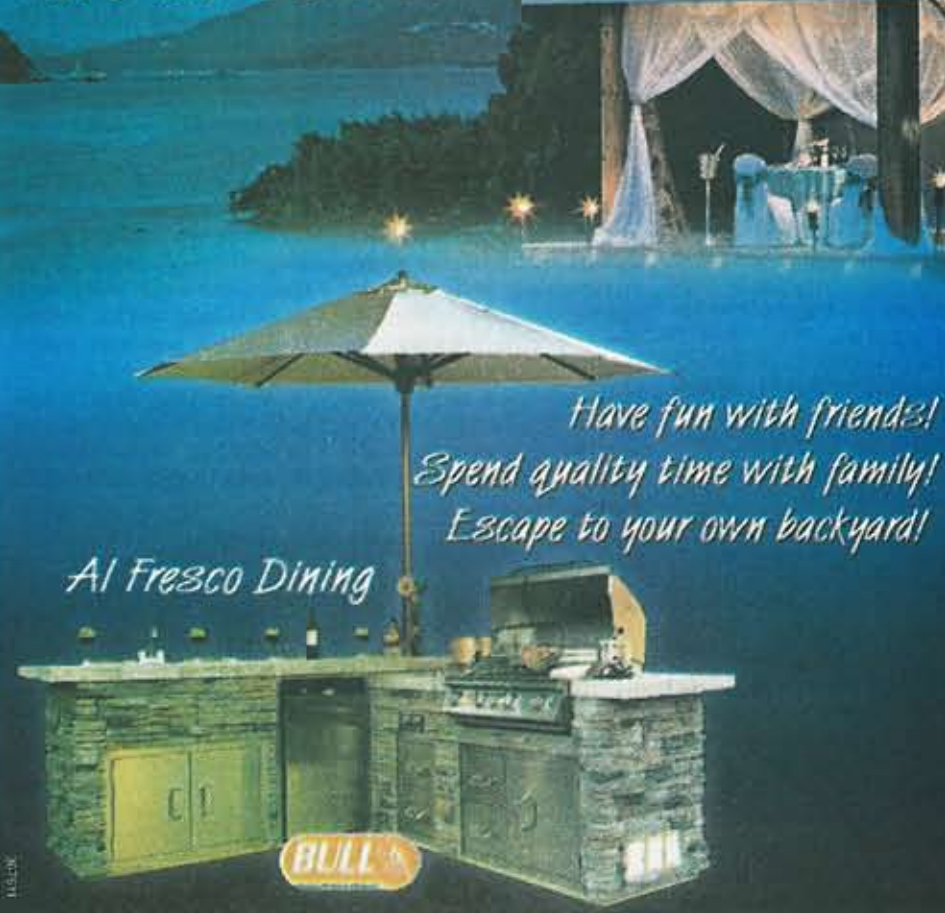
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