**Professor: Make parks smoke-free**

Finch supports proposal under consideration by Bridgeport’s Parks Commission, City Council

By Brian Lockhart

BRIDGEPORT — Cigarette butts and discarded packaging filled the frozen bags spread out on the dining room table.

“Just the sight of so much smokers’ debris might be enough to convince some to kick the nicotine habit,” Lockhart said. “But if I’m going to get rid of these,” said Anna Price, who has her Sacred Heart University students recently collected the litter from a handful of city parks.

But Price needs the bags in the coming months as evidence. She hopes to convince city officials to join New York and Boston in adopting a smoking ban in public parks.

The assistant professor of health and fitness education had suddenly lining up support for a proposed public health initiative by the Parks Commission and City Council Mayor Bill Finch, as帕克 said.

“We have focused on making Bridgeport a cleaner, greener city that promotes healthy lifestyles,” Finch said in a statement. “I support the efforts...in pushing for a ban on smoking in the city’s parks, a place for health, recreation and enjoyment.”

Price moved to Bridgeport three years ago for the job at H.U. Much of her research has focused on inflammation and park use, she said; smokers hurt others enjoyment of parks and beaches.

“I’m a regular runner...and I’ve noticed from personal experience that all I run through clouds of smoke or cigarette packs and butts on the ground,” Price said.

Since H.U. encourages professors to expand their lessons beyond the classroom, she said devoting her students in campaigning for a smoking ban in Bridgeport to be a way to give them hands-on advocacy experience.

New York City banned smoking in public parks in 2016, and Boston followed this year.

Connecticut’s Department of Public Health has an initiative encouraging “tobacco-free outdoor spaces.”

“Tobacco use is the single most avoidable cause of death in our community,” said Finch. “We need to adopt anti-smoking ordinances in our parks, including New London, Groton and Ellington.”

**Butt out**

With Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch’s support, Sacred Heart University professor wants to ban smoking in city parks to:

- Protect the public from second-hand smoke.
- Protect children from being influenced to smoke.
- Eliminate litter from the parks.

**Tobacco-free outdoor spaces**

- New York City permits smoking on sidewalks and parking lots outside of parks.
- Several municipalities in Connecticut have adopted anti-smoking ordinances in their parks, including New London, Groton and Ellington.

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BRIDGEPORT — Cigarette butts and discarded packaging filled the frozen bags spread out on the dining room table.

“I’m trying to get rid of these,” said Anna Price, Sacred Heart University student who collected cigarette packs and trash from Bridgeport parks.

By Peggy McCarthy

CONN. HEALTH I-TEAM WRITER

Five Vietnam War veterans filed a federal lawsuit Monday, charging they have been denied benefits and suffered stigma...due to behaviors connected with that illness. Vietnam Veterans of America and its Connecticut State Council, and the New Haven-based National Veterans Council for Legal Redress are also plaintiffs in the suit. They are being represented by...that denied them medical benefits,” Blumenthal said. “The height of outrage is to put our men and women in uniform at

**Parole proposed for convicts imprisoned since their teens**

By Ken Ditson

HARTFORD — As many as 160 state inmates serving long prison terms could see new pathways to parole under a bill that acknowledges immature teenage brains can make life-changing criminal mistakes.

But surviving families of crime victims warned Monday that violent offenders, no matter how young, should be expected to pay their debts to society.

Under legislation mandated by the
Finch backs smoking ban in city parks

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

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Veterans with PTSD sue for benefits

"Why is it so difficult for someone wounded in battle to get the care they need when congressmen, who are supposed to be watching out for our soldiers, are getting the best of everything?"-- Joe Spaulding, left, an outreach worker for Access Health CT, helps Crystal Fassler, of New Milford, with the process of signing up for health care at Danbury Library on Monday.

Metro-North chief submits 100-day improvement plan

New York City permits smoking on sidewalks outside of parks and also in the parking lots of parks properties.

Metro-North ChiefSubmit 100-Day Improvement Plan

Steve Trapper, a retired state senator, said he has spoken to Price and Support her effort.

"If we force people who have a habit that is not in the best interest of society to be removed, so be it," Trapper, who runs a counseling firm, said. "If a person has a problem with smoking, they need to be helped move on from it.'"