

Quincy residents mop after a night of flooding

The Patriot Ledger, June 5, 2012

QUINCY — Starting shortly after midnight Monday morning, houses on Armory and Lafayette streets began to flood, with water rising to at least 4 feet by morning.

Basements on both streets were pumped out throughout the day. Despite a forecast of more flooding early Tuesday morning, it was a dry and quiet night for residents of the neighborhood.

Armory Street resident Nanci Reilly said she and her husband first noticed water entering the street and backyards shortly after 11 p.m. Sunday.

“Within 15 minutes of putting everything in our basement up on lifts, the water started pouring in from the walls,” she said. “It was just gushing in.”

By morning, Reilly's basement was flooded and the water in the driveway had reached as high as her husband's thigh and nearly submerged a neighbor's car.

“I lost all my appliances: my washer, dryer, refrigerator, freezer, musical equipment, furniture,” she said. “My water heater and boiler are probably gone too.”

Reilly's basement electricity was completely cut in the early morning, and she had limited power in the rest of her house for most of the day. With her sump-pump not working, the city water department provided her with a pump.

“We've been here eight years and we've never had this happen,” she said. “We're low-lying. We're used to some water, but nothing to this level.”

"Now we're just finding our way out of it, this mess," Reilly said. "We'll be having a giveaway sale soon."

Next-door neighbor Jim Cipriano, who has lived on the corner of Armory Street and Putnam Street for over 10 years, said he has never seen the neighborhood under water.

“I've never seen it like this,” Cipriano said. “We went down to our cellar and it was just gushing through the cellar door like it was just a river, a stream, it was just non-stop. We opened the door and went outside and it was just an ocean.”

Rain and high tides from nearby Black's Creek have caused flooding on Armory Street in the past, Cipriano said, but never as serious.

Cipriano said he and his family lost approximately 90 percent of the items they had in the basement.

“We have so much money and stuff that we lost down there, and we’re still pumping,” he said.

Reilly and Cipriano said they were told that failure to close three flood gates on Black's Creek may have led to Monday's problem. All the gates were closed Monday night, Reilly said.

Although power was restored to the neighborhood on Monday, Reilly, Cipriano and other residents were still having circuits trip Wednesday morning.

Miracle for Holbrook man

Retired teacher receives New England's first total artificial heart transplant

The Patriot Ledger, June 22, 2012, front page

BOSTON – Jim Carelli was mid-sentence when he paused and swallowed hard, taking a few moments before shakily continuing to thank the doctors and family surrounding him.

“This is a long and arduous journey,” said Carelli, of Holbrook. “I could not ask for better people to travel this journey with.”

Jim Carelli Jr., 66, a retired Braintree High School teacher and track and field coach, met with reporters Thursday, as Brigham and Women's Hospital named him the first recipient of a total artificial heart in New England.

At a press conference at the hospital, doctors explained how they had replaced his heart with a completely artificial device, saving his life.

Carelli was diagnosed in 2010 with amyloidosis of the heart, a rare disease that leads to heart failure. Within two years, his health had deteriorated to the point where a transplant was necessary. But with no donors available, doctors said an artificial heart was his only option.

Carelli said the choice was clear. “I wanted to live.”

The 10-hour procedure took place on Feb. 17.

“This was the power of teamwork and the strength and courage of the individual,” said Dr. Michael Givertz, medical director of the hospital's heart transplant and mechanical circulatory support program.

“(Carelli's) a courageous, resilient man,” Dr. Givertz said.

In cardiac amyloidosis, proteins usually found in the blood end up in the heart muscle, causing it to thicken and ultimately weaken.

Dr. Gregory Couper, the surgical director of the heart transplant program, said that he had “never seen a heart this thick,” when describing Carelli's pre-surgery condition.

Fluid backup before the surgery also led to kidney problems and swelling of his legs, making it hard to walk, Carelli said.

But Carelli never gave up.

“Today I feel great, I really do,” he said, as he sat with his wife, Jane, and three doctors including Couper and Givertz.

Carelli is constantly attached to a large, blue machine, called “Big Blue,” which keeps his artificial heart pumping. He said he can hear the heart pulsing “really loud.”

Doctors had initially wanted to implant him with a smaller, portable device, but were unable to due to his kidney complications.

Carelli will remain in the hospital because of his kidney function and need for dialysis; he is currently on the organ donor waiting list for a heart and kidney transplant.

Doctors said that except for the pre-existing kidney issues, Carelli’s recovery was “complication free” so far.

Carelli thanked the doctors, nurses and other hospital staff who made the procedure possible.

“I take pride in telling people I don’t just have doctors, I have teams,” he said.

He also thanked his wife, saying, “she keeps me grounded and goes above and beyond to keep me healthy,” and his family, including his two sisters and his nieces.

Carelli, who worked for the Braintree school system for 22 years, also noted that a few of his former athletes have been supportive. He retired in 2004. He said he is a sports fan and enjoys playing golf.

Carelli said faith helped get him through the surgery.

'I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM'

Car plows into police cruiser

Weymouth woman accused of driving drunk, the wrong way on Route 24 before striking vehicles

The Patriot Ledger, June 28, 2012, page 3

RANDOLPH – MaryKathryn S. McLaughlin stood silently in Quincy District Court Wednesday as the clerk entered a not guilty plea on her behalf for allegedly driving drunk the wrong way on Route 24 and hitting four cars, including a State Police cruiser.

The 25-year-old Weymouth woman was charged with driving the wrong way on a state highway, negligent operation of a motor vehicle and operating under the influence of liquor.

McLaughlin, wearing a dark blue “Take me home” Red Sox top and shorts, stood behind attorney Kenneth DiFazio for her short appearance. She will hire her own lawyer for her court proceedings.

She was released on \$1,500 cash bail.

Her next court appearance will be on Aug. 28.

According to police, the 34 Pierce Court resident was driving drunk when her gray Nissan Murano plowed into a State Police cruiser and three other vehicles while she was traveling north in the southbound lanes of Route 24 in Randolph at 1:20 a.m. Wednesday.

McLaughlin told police she was driving from Wellesley to her Weymouth home and that she drank two beers while watching a Red Sox game.

According to the police report, McLaughlin told officers, “I haven’t been going the wrong way for that long. I got on in Randolph.”

She was described in the report as having “bloodshot” and “glassy” eyes at the scene, and was quoted as saying to officers, “Listen I’m nervous, I don’t know where I am right now.”

McLaughlin failed five field sobriety tests and refused a Breathalyzer test.

She was taken to Milton Hospital for evaluation and held overnight at the Milton State Police barracks.

The trooper, who had been attempting to deploy stop sticks to puncture McLaughlin’s tires when the crash occurred, was not injured, State Police spokesman David Procopio said.

Two occupants of two other vehicles involved in the crash suffered minor injuries.

The crash was one of two on Wednesday morning involving State Police cruisers that left three people injured, the Procopio said.

In a second crash, a trooper was injured at 2:45 a.m. Wednesday when his cruiser was struck by a vehicle on the Massachusetts Turnpike in Newton.

The trooper was working a paid detail in a construction zone on the westbound side of the turnpike when the cruiser was struck from behind by a Toyota RAV4.

The Toyota flipped over, and the driver, Peter Okarma, 30, of Reading, was freed from the wreckage by Newton firefighters and taken to Beth Israel Hospital in Boston.

He remained in the hospital as of Wednesday afternoon, and will be later arraigned on charges of drunken driving, entering a restricted zone and operating to endanger.

The trooper, whose name was not released, was taken to Massachusetts General Hospital with minor injuries and released.

Their day in the sun

Vets from VA Hospital in Brockton among those at annual fishing event

The Patriot Ledger, July 19, 2012, page 6

Under a large white tent filled with war veterans, a sole couple stood off to the side, just a few steps from where a large poster hung commemorating their fallen son.

“They say these soldiers who get killed in action will never be forgotten, and that’s true,” said Joan Gutowski.

Joan is the mother of Army Spc. Steven Gutowski, 24, a 2005 Plymouth North High School graduate who was killed in Afghanistan on Sept. 28, 2011. He was honored on Wednesday as part of Harvey’s Salt Water Fishing Club’s 56th Annual Disabled Vet’s Day Fishing Outing at Quincy Yacht Club in Houghs Neck.

Gutowski said it “was unbelievably amazing” when event organizers invited her and her husband, Edward, to attend the fishing trip in honor of their son.

“We know how special (the event) is to a lot of these vets,” she said. “For some of them its their one day a year to get out.”

More than 225 disabled veterans from six local hospitals and two disabled veterans organizations, including Chelsea Soldier’s Home and the Veterans Administration Hospital in Brockton, hit the seas on 25 lobster boats manned and provided by local men from the Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association.

The three-hour fishing trip was followed by a lunch and entertainment, including a DJ.

“It’s nice to get out,” said Charles Minasian, 88, a World War II veteran. “I haven’t been on a boat since the Navy.”

The event is always a highlight for Coast Guard and Vietnam War veteran James Smith, who was attending for the fifth time.

“I love that they do this,” he said. “In my opinion, the only people who don’t like it are the people who have never done it.”

More than 100 volunteers joined the fisherman in taking the day off to help the veterans. The event is sponsored by local individuals, unions, businesses and Quincy Mayor Thomas Koch.

Charlie Murphy, a Houghs Neck resident who has volunteered at the event for more than 15 years, said it was great to give back to the veterans.

“They look so happy to have a day in the sun, whether they catch anything or not,” he said.

UPDATE: Search on for woman who robbed Marshfield bank

The suspect in Thursday's bank robbery at Sovereign Bank in Marshfield is pictured above. The woman is believed to be white, 5 feet, 3 inches, with dirty blonde hair. Police are still searching for the suspect.

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MARSHFIELD — Police are looking for a woman who robbed the Sovereign Bank at 880 Plain St. in Marshfield at about 11:40 a.m. Thursday.

Marshfield police arrived at the bank at 11:43 a.m. and blocked the front door while an officer entered through the back.

The bank robber was described as a white woman with freckles, about 5-feet, 4-inches tall, in her late 20s and wearing jeans, white sneakers, a black zip-up track jacket and a tan baseball cap over dirty blonde hair. She reportedly left the scene in a vehicle headed east on Plain Street, police said.

At about 12:15 p.m., State Police told Marshfield police that they found a black zip-up jacket on the on-ramp to Route 3.