



Members of the Meriden Lions Club and other volunteers stand around local author Laura Van Wormer, who is seen sitting in a wheel chair. Van Wormer was seriously injured in a wrong-way crash on Route 15 in June. The Lions Club decided to help out by cleaning her lawn on Sunday afternoon. Front row - Pat Carbone Jr., Laura Van Wormer, Jack Clancy, Don Rochette. Back row - Jim Moran Jr., Mike Zakrzewski, Pat Carbone Sr., Paul Frasco, Dave Lohman, Gary Belanger, Jim Bartolotta and Gary Boudrea. | Courtesy of Mike Zakrzewski

## **Lions Club cleans yard of prominent local author injured in wrong-way crash**

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By Andrew Ragali Record-Journal staff

MERIDEN — Members of the Meriden Lions Club converged on the home of prominent author and city resident Laura Van Wormer with rakes, chainsaws and leaf blowers Sunday afternoon to help the writer – recovering from a serious car crash in June – with lawn cleanup.

Mike Zakrzewski, the club’s third vice president, said they went to Van Wormer’s home on Allen Avenue Sunday to do what they do best and “serve the community.”

Under the leadership of Meriden Lions Club President Jim Moran Jr., several members cleaned up Van Wormer’s yard “with chainsaws, rakes, leaf blowers, pruners, shovels and raw manpower,” Zakrzewski said. “The large damaged tree limbs hanging over into the lawn were cut off, and hauled away.”

Van Wormer, 59, has spent months rehabbing after a wrong-way driver collided with her car June 14 on Route 15 in Hamden. She suffered 13 broken ribs, a bilateral collar fracture, a sternum fracture, a broken knee, laceration to her liver and collapsed lungs. Van Wormer faces more surgeries and months of physical and occupational therapy. She is temporarily wheelchair bound. The driver of the car that struck Van Wormer has not been charged.

A best-selling author and literary agent, Van Wormer was on her way to LaGuardia International Airport in New York to meet with author James Spada in Los Angeles to discuss an autobiography of actress Donna Mills. She also planned to visit with actress Betty White, another book client.

Though she was in a wheelchair, Van Wormer came outside to personally thank Moran and members of the Lions Club. Moran gave her a friendship banner and a special “get well” certificate from the club.

Van Wormer has been involved in several of the city’s arts programs and foundations in the past. In an interview earlier this year, she told the Record-Journal that she planned to become even more active in the Meriden community.

“It’s a jewel that’s still here, it’s just wonderful,” she said of the city. “For an educated person there is a lot here. New York doesn’t need me, Meriden does.”

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