

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam and Portland

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December 23, 2022



Season's Greetings... With an extra sidewalk planter at Cragin Memorial Library in need of decorating, Melissa Deacon of Colchester enlisted Ashley LaParre and her children Sonny and Sloan (pictured here) to help out. The planter was decorated with blue/white bows, white sticks, pinecones, plastic icicles, and a bright red bell.

Grants Helped Portland Save Millions in 2022

By Jack Lakowsky

Portland has a solid track record of getting state grants to fund local projects, and this year, the first under Republican First Selectman Ryan Curley, that momentum continued.

"We've been busy," Curley told the *Rivereast* this week, adding that, counting every grant the town earned this year, local taxpayers saved more than \$2.5 million.

Among the larger of the grants was a \$725,000 state award originally received under prior first selectperson Susan Bransfield. The project took extra time to allow for growth of its scope, upgrading more of the kitchen than originally planned.

Ryan O'Halpin, the town's recently hired public works director, said the work is projected to come in under budget, about \$480,000 as opposed to the predicted \$600,000. Also, the town is keeping money local, hiring a Portland-based contractor. Because the company saves money on transportation, the town also saves money.

O'Halpin estimated work will be done in May. He said luckily, inflationary prices haven't affected this particular project, but supply chain issues could cause delays, specifically with the new generator the senior center is looking forward to receiving.

Also getting replaced and made over are the oven hood, the center's HVAC system, several other kitchen appliances and more ADA-compliant accommodations.

While he didn't have an exact date, O'Halpin guessed a renovation of this scale hasn't been done at the century since late last century, likely the 1980's.

New to the town's roster, this will be the first major project O'Halpin helps direct.

Lynn Tracey, senior center director, said

there's a piece of the grant not yet much discussed: about \$19,000 to revamp the center's food service.

"As soon as renovations begin, we'll be working with local restaurants - I'm in the middle of texting with one right now - to have them come up with menus for us," said Tracey, saying the center hopes to serve between 15 and 18 grab-and-go restaurant-cooked meals.

"And that keeps business in Portland," Tracey added. "People can sign up and register and get a fresh meal at least once a week."

The Waverly Senior Center is also bringing back its Meals-on-Wheels program for homebound locals.

Tracey also plans more cooking programs, led by a volunteer, and talks on healthy eating and lifestyle.

"We're booking them for the latter part of '23," she said.

Tracey said normal center hours and services will go mostly unaffected by the work, but just in case she advised center users to stay updated, calling the center or checking the town's website. Construction is likely to affect programs. So, in case activities get disrupted, Tracey is planning trips to the Aqua Turf Club on St. Patrick's Day, as well as several concerts and exhibition.

Tracey said smaller, less regular programs have already been cancelled.

To stay apprised, Tracey said "stay in touch." Curley said that, along with senior center work, the town has "lots of balls in the air."

Another major grant the state Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) gave Portland totaled \$500,000 for *See Grants Helped Portland, page 25*

Officials Weigh Proceeding with Project

By Michael Sinkewicz

New details regarding Hebron's Public Works project emerged last week during a Board of Selectmen meeting, as officials weigh whether to move forward with the controversial site proposal on Kinney Road.

The selectmen still haven't made an ultimate decision on whether to send the final project proposal to referendum, but have expressed interest in launching a survey that would potentially provide insight and feedback from the community.

During their Dec. 15 meeting, Town Manager Andrew Tierney provided the board with a rough estimate on the cost of finalizing a design at 17 Kinney Rd.

Engineering firm BL Companies submitted a proposal of \$69,800 to design the buildings. Nathan L. Jacobson & Associates, who Tierney

said would be handling the bulk of the design, would cost around \$175,000.

Overall, the combined cost to complete a final design and to get a final cost for the project that would then be voted on at referendum, would cost \$244,800.

Tierney emphasized that he was waiting for a hard confirmation on some of the numbers from Nathan L. Jacobson, but would likely have a firm contract breakdown for the selectmen to review at their meeting next month.

Previous estimates for a total cost of the entire project have been in the range of \$15-20 million.

Town leaders have stressed the need for a new facility, but finding a location that satisfies the whole community has proven difficult. Mainly, Kinney Road residents have objected

to constructing the municipal project on the 88-acre property in close proximity to their homes.

As the controversy surrounding the topic seemingly grows, often displayed through public comments during board meetings or through *Rivereast* letters the editor, the town has considered ways to present accurate information and facts for citizens who remain undecided on the issue.

Even though a final design hasn't been distributed to the community, officials have speculated that some residents have already cemented their stance.

At a meeting earlier this month, Republican selectman Peter Kasper said he feels the town has "lost control of the narrative."

To that end, Tierney has reached out to DKA *See Officials Weigh Proceeding, page 24*

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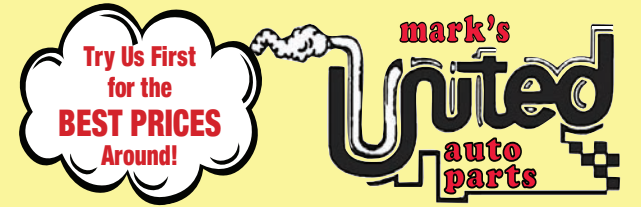
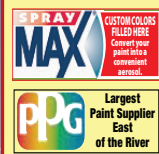
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Fresh chicken breast, lightly dipped in an egg batter sautéed with white wine, lemon juice and butter sauce

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Fresh breaded chicken cutlet, pan-fried and topped with a fresh plum tomato sauce and a layer of melted whole milk mozzarella cheese. Served with linguini

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Congregational Church News

Andover Congregational Church, UCC, located at 359 Route 6, invites all ages to worship Sundays at 10 a.m. The service also streams live on the church's Facebook page (First Congregational Church, Andover, CT). For more information, call the church office at 860-742-7696, email andoverctchurch@gmail.com or visit www.andoverctchurch.org.

Children's Church: Sunday school is provided.

Food Pantry: Mondays from 5-7 p.m. Bring your own bags. The **Foodshare Van** comes to the church every other Wednesday from 9-9:30

a.m.; next date is Jan. 4. The senior food pantry is open the opposite Wednesdays, also from 9-9:30 a.m.; next date is Dec. 28.

AA Meetings: Saturdays and Mondays, 7 p.m.

Sonshine Stampers: Thursday, 9:30 a.m.

Faith Sharing with the Movies: Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Service: Saturday, Dec. 24, 7 p.m. This will be a glow stick candle-lighting service. There will be no morning worship service on Christmas Day, Dec. 25. There will, however, be the regular Sunday service on Jan. 1.

Senior Citizen News & Notes

The following items have been updated for Andover seniors, veterans, and disabled. If you want to attend any events, call senior coordinator Cathy Palazzi 860-916-6122 to register.

Shopping Dates: Tuesdays. Willimantic: 1/3, 1/17, 1/31; Manchester: 1/10, 1/24. Masks are available on all vehicles.

Senior Luncheons: Fridays, Jan. 6 and 20. Reservations required by 1/4 for the 1/6 lunch and by 1/18 for lunch on 1/20.

Movie: Wednesday, Jan. 11, 1 p.m. Call Palazzi for a ride.

Rides to Fundraiser: The annual senior fundraiser will be Sunday, Feb. 5, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the Andover Elementary School gym, and rides are available by calling Palazzi. There will be a bake basket and raffle tables, and pizza will be available for purchase at 12:30 p.m.

Rides to Food Pantry: The bus is now available for the Food Pantry on Mondays at 5 p.m. and for the Wednesday Foodshare or food pantry – all of which take place at Andover Congregational Church.

Rides to all town events, town meetings, referendums or board meetings, and all medical appointments, are available by calling Palazzi. All seniors, veterans and disabled are welcome. If you have a caregiver, they may come with you.

New Seniors Welcome: New seniors are welcome to all events. Call Palazzi for all luncheon reservations and transportation needs. Call Judy Knox at 860-643-6824 to join Young at Heart, call Georgia O'Brien at 860-742-9947 for all trip information, and call Sue Schmidt at 860-604-1057 for all movie information.

Members Sought for EDC

The Andover Economic Development Commission is in need of new members. Contact Elaine Buchardt at 860-202-4619 or email AndoverCTEDC@gmail.com for more information.

Christmas Toy Drive

The Andover town employees are collecting toys for Andover children. New, unwrapped toys and gift cards can be dropped at the Town Office Building, 17 School Rd.

175th Committee Selling Items

All are invited to purchase T-shirts, cookbooks, ornaments or calendars from the town's 175th Committee. All money raised will support the events planned for May and June 2023.

Contact Cathy Palazzi at 860-916-6122 for more information. Items may also be purchased at Town Hall.

Senior Transportation Info

Andover Senior Transportation is available for free to all Andover seniors, all veterans, and all disabled. A caregiver may accompany any person that requires assistance or if under the age of 21.

The transportation service picks people up at their home and takes them to their medical appointment; the driver then waits for them and returns them home.

For all transportation appointments, call Cathy Palazzi at 860-916-6122.

Vendors Sought for Fundraiser

Andover seniors will hold their annual fundraiser to support the luncheon program Sunday, Feb. 5, at the Andover Elementary School (AES), 35 School Rd. If you would like to be a vendor, cost is \$20 for one table or \$30 for two tables. Bakers and other helpers are also welcome.

If interested, call Cathy Palazzi at 860-916-6122.

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Bacon Academy's basketball star Marissa Nudd scored her 1,000th career high school point as the Bobcats beat Ledyard, improving to 3-0.

Standout Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

Here are the *Rivereast* Standouts of the Week for the week of Dec. 12-18:

Marissa Nudd – Bacon Academy High School (Basketball): Nudd scored her 1,000th career high school point as the Bobcats improved to 3-0 with a 52-45 victory over Ledyard. Nudd, who has committed to play college basketball at Southern Connecticut State University, opened her senior season with a 25-point, 11-rebound performance in a 52-24 victory over East Lyme on Dec. 13. She then posted 23 points and eight rebounds in a 71-23 victory over Waterford on Dec. 16.

Spencer Rosado – Portland High School (Wrestling): Rosado, who placed third at the Class S championship in 2021, has picked up right where he left off a season ago. The senior, who wrestles at 145 lbs., defeated Jacob Guarino of Middletown in his opening match of the season as the Highlanders defeated the Blue Dragons 53-30 on Dec. 14. Rosado also swept his matches as Portland competed and won four

of five contests in the Pomperaug Duals at Pomperaug High School on Dec. 17.

Sarah West – RHAM High School (Basketball): West scored 52 points in three games as the Raptors started the season with a trio of wins last week. West, a senior, scored 24 points in a 54-41 victory over Coventry on Dec. 15. She also scored 16 points in a win over South Windsor on Dec. 16 and dumped in a dozen points in the Raptors' season opener, a victory over Maloney on Dec. 13. In the victory over Maloney, sophomore Maddy Evans canned a handful of three-pointers to lead RHAM with 19 points.

Liana Salamone – East Hampton High School (Basketball): Salamone scored 33 points as East Hampton upended Haddam-Killingworth 63-30 on Dec. 15. The sophomore point guard, who is coming off an all-state freshman campaign, opened the season with a 29-point effort in a win over Amistad on Dec. 13.

Tax-Aide Foundation Seeks Volunteers

For many years, the senior centers in Colchester, Hebron, Marlborough, Columbia, East Hampton and East Haddam have hosted the AARP Tax-Aide Program, which provides free income tax preparation services for residents of these towns and surrounding communities.

Tax-Aide is the nation's largest free volunteer tax program, offered in conjunction with the IRS.

The Tax-Aide program is looking for people

to join its volunteer team. You don't need to be an accountant or tax professional; volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds. Training and support are provided.

To volunteer, go to aarpfoundation.org/taxaidevolunteer or call 1-888-AARP-NOW (888-227-7669).

For additional information before signing up, contact your local senior center and they will connect you with a local Tax-Aide volunteer.

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*From the Editor's Desk***Observations & Ruminations**

By Mike Thompson

First off, much thanks to Josh Howard and Jack Lakowsky, who were thrust into action and edited the past two *Rivereasts* themselves. This is because I was down south, following the death of my mother.

To say it's been a terrible month would be putting it mildly. So I'm very thankful to both Josh and Jack for handling my editing responsibilities, so that I could focus on the funeral and grieving with my family.

Indeed, thanks to everyone at both the *Rivereast* and *The Glastonbury Citizen* for being so understanding and accommodating during this awful time.

* * *

One of the things that my mom took a lot of joy in is terrible puns. The sillier, the better. In recent years, she'd started sharing them on social media – and friends and family would often send her puns if they came across them. She'd in turn share them, and even though we were half a country away, I could hear her laughter in my head as I read them. How I miss that laugh already.

So, in honor of my mother, here are some particularly corny puns that, hopefully, will put a smile on your face. Or at least a groan in your voice.

What did the grape say when it got crushed? Nothing, it just let out a little wine.

Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

I had a crazy dream last night! I was swimming in an ocean of orange soda. Turns out it was just a Fanta sea.

A wife says to her husband that moose are falling from the sky. The husband says, it's reindeer.

Ladies, if he can't appreciate your fruit jokes, you need to let that mango.

12. Did you hear about the restaurant on the moon? I heard the food was good but it had no atmosphere.

Can February March? No, but April May. Need an ark to save two of every animal? I noah guy.

I don't trust stairs because they're always up to something.

Why was Dumbo sad? He felt irrelephant. A man sued an airline company after it lost his luggage. Sadly, he lost his case.

My friend drove his expensive car into a tree and found out how his Mercedes bends.

Becoming a vegetarian is one big missed steak.

I was wondering why the ball was getting bigger. Then it hit me.

Some aquatic mammals at the zoo escaped. It was otter chaos!

Never trust an atom, they make up everything!

Long fairy tales have a tendency to dragon. What do you use to cut a Roman Emperor's hair? Ceasers.

My sister bet that I couldn't build a car out of spaghetti. You should've seen her face when I drove pasta.

I made a pun about the wind but it blows. Never discuss infinity with a mathematician, they can go on about it forever.

I knew a guy who collected candy canes; they were all in mint condition.

* * *

And speaking of candy canes, here's some holiday-related news you may need to know: Since Christmas is on Sunday, the *Rivereast* offices will be closed Monday, Dec. 26. However, our deadlines will remain the same. Therefore, all submitted copy – letters, press

Editor's Desk continued on page 5



Happy Hanukkah!... Colchester Cooperative Nursery School recently celebrated Hanukkah! Casey Cohen, a CCNS parent, volunteered to teach the children about the Festival of Lights.

Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum •

Christmas Joy

To the Editor:

How long does it take to unwrap a Christmas present? It took 33 years to unwrap the first Christmas gift 2,000 years ago when "God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

The Christmas story of Jesus' birth is incomplete without the rest of the story of his death, burial, and resurrection as payment for sin. Without Easter there would be no Christmas.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Peter Kushkowski
"Almost Heaven"
Portland

Thanks from Garden Club

To the Editor:

On behalf of The Portland Garden Club, I would like to thank everyone who purchased holiday cemetery boxes, white birch candles logs, and other items at our holiday sale on both Saturday, Dec. 3, and Sunday, Dec. 4. Thanks also to all who donated supplies to the activity including the club members, Phil Olson, Judy Pogmore, Richard and Judy Lane, Tom McBrien, and to the Swedish, Center, and Indian

Hill Cemeteries.

The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc. recently presented The Portland Garden Club with the prestigious "Good Deed Citation" award as a thoughtful gesture of goodwill to recognize the club's 75th anniversary celebration projects and activities that emphasized giving back to our community. Your support to our fundraisers helps make these activities possible.

A very special thanks to the Town of Portland for granting us permission to hold the sale at the Town Green and to the *Rivereast News Bulletin* for advertising the event.

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season,
Susanne Anderson, President
The Portland Garden Club

Catastrophic Contagion

To the Editor:

During October 2019, the World Economic Forum, Bill/Melinda Gates Foundation, and John Hopkins teamed up for the live role-playing exercise "Event 201," in which they pretended the world would experience a global coronavirus pandemic originating in bats. Within the exercise, the group discussed the best way to quarantine sick people, enforce lockdowns,

Bulletin Board

I got to thinking this past weekend about the Christmas spirit—or, if you prefer, the holiday spirit. You know, "peace on earth, goodwill toward men." And by "men" I mean men, women, transgenders, non-genders, cross-genders, atheists, vegetarians, NRA members, visitors from other galaxies, people who think it should be legal to marry a goat, and everybody in between. So please, no outraged letters to the editor.

For my own part, it seems to me that goodwill toward aging opinionated white men such as myself is in rather short supply these days, but I insist on remaining inclusive. The holiday spirit is for everyone, even pariahs such as myself.

At least that's what I told myself a couple of weeks ago as I clung precariously to a ladder 20 feet off the ground, praying to Jesus to have mercy while I tried to hang wreaths on our second story windows under the close scrutiny of my lovely wife.

As one of six children from a happy home, she is a dedicated disciple of the Christmas spirit, though I think she might show a little more consideration for an old Grinch who's trying to adjust a wreath a fraction of an inch up or down or sideways (according to her directives as shouted through a bullhorn) with one hand, while clinging to the ladder for dear life with the other.

I'm kidding about the bullhorn, but my acrophobic terror is quite real. Plus, I'm lazy. For reasons that are not entirely clear to me, as the holidays draw near, she also insists on lighting several dozen scented candles throughout the house in a sort of indoor simulation of a California wildfire. I don't know if this mini conflagration has some sort of religious significance or if my feet just smell worse this time of year with all the windows closed, but it does provide a certain ambiance. I'd find it more appealing if scented candles didn't cost 15 bucks apiece, but far be it from me to diminish the Christmas spirit (or my dedication to inclusiveness) by carping about corporate executives who exploit this holy season to reap unholy profits.

I also can't help but notice that the general holiday feeling doesn't seem to extend to congestion at malls and restaurants where people are routinely machine gunned in disputes over parking spaces.

It will probably come as no surprise to you that what holiday spirit we enjoy here may be in even shorter supply in certain other parts of the world. For instance, I doubt if Vladimir Putin will be dashing downstairs in his pajamas this Christmas morn hoping to find a palomino pony.

As for me, I like the holiday season, but you can definitely take this Christmas thing too far. My sister-in-law, for instance, has so many holiday knick-knacks underfoot—including a statue of an elf flying a kite, which I don't get at all—that she's going to have to rent a storage room (or a dumpster) once we all go back to hating each other after the New Year.

The fact is, not everybody gets in the spirit of the season and sometimes it's wiser not to push it. In one of the more extreme cases, I recall reading a newspaper article some years ago that reported on the demise of a stubborn young missionary who badgered a primitive tribe on a remote island off India. They kept telling him to beat it and he kept coming back until the exasperated aborigines finally killed him.

If you've ever been bothered by door-to-door solicitors, you can kind of sympathize with the tribesmen here. I don't condone murder, but clearly you can take the holiday spirit a little too far in certain circumstances—particularly when dealing with people who are concerned that you may give them measles. In any case, I don't expect that an 18-foot inflatable Santa will be rearing his jovial head in the tribe's village center any time soon. I guess the missionary's head will just have to suffice in the interim.

As for me, I just hope I can get those wreaths off the windows next month without breaking my neck. In the meantime, Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and stay out of my damn parking spot.

Jim Hallas

Rivereast Hours of Operation

The offices of the *Rivereast News Bulletin* and *Glastonbury Citizen*, located at 87 Nutmeg Lane, Glastonbury, are open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., and can be reached at 860-633-4691. The *Rivereast* can be reached any time via email at bulletin@glcitizen.com.

News copy deadline for *The Rivereast News Bulletin* is Monday at noon. Please address all letters & news articles to: *Rivereast News Bulletin*, P.O. Box 373, Glastonbury, CT 06033

Letter Writers: Due to space constraints, letter writers must limit their letters to **300 words or less. Letters must be submitted by Monday at noon.** No exceptions will be made. Email is preferred. Word or text documents are best. Letters submitted without a contact phone number will not be published nor will anonymous letters or letters submitted by someone other than the person who wrote it. We cannot guarantee all letters will be published.

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condition people to accept social distancing/masking, stifle dissent by labeling opponents “conspiracy theorists,” before eventually rolling out a vaccine. Health officials/military brass from around the world were in attendance. What a coincidence that the same people who are trying to establish the 4th Reich through the 4th Industrial Revolution would be so prescient when it comes to such matters! It’s comforting to know that the world’s largest multinationals, malthusian “philanthropists,” and the medical establishment are working so diligently to protect us from ourselves.

And now, just in time for Christmas, the same players have teamed up for another live role-playing exercise, this time deemed “Catastrophic Contagion”. The exercise predicts another lethal pandemic will soon sweep the globe, with a much higher fatality rate than CV and will be especially deadly to children. “Participants were challenged to make urgent policy decisions with limited information in the face of uncertainty. Each problem and choice had serious health, economic, and social ramifications.” Meanwhile, Boston University recently created a genetically modified coronavirus with a fatality rate of up to 80% in mice. Despite the fact that the US Senate’s report on CV-19 origins says it most likely escaped from “gain-of-function” research at the Wuhan lab, the U.S. government has lifted its moratorium on the practice. It’s not difficult to see where this sort of “scientific inquiry” may lead, nor is it hard to predict the winners and losers...it may be Christmas but this feels like Groundhog Day.

Colin McNamara – Marlborough

Paul Whelan

To the Editor:

I think I’ll try the Don Denley approach: OH MY GOD, IT SMELLS LIKE FOX NEWS IN HERE. Nah, not impressed. This is for Frank Blume from Colchester as well, just for Frank though, my *Hartford Courant* delivery has been spotty lately so I don’t know if your Paul Whelan letter was published there also.

Courtesy of snopes.com: “A military judge sitting as a special court martial convicted the appellant [Paul N. Whelan], consistent with his pleas, of attempted larceny, three specifications of dereliction of duty, making a false official statement, wrongfully using another’s social security number, and ten specifications of making and uttering checks without having sufficient funds in his account for payment... he was sentenced to 60 days’ restriction, reduction to pay grade E-4, and a bad-conduct discharge.” Also from snopes.com: “Whelan’s family, for their part, have been supportive of Griner’s release.”

Just do a search of his name and it brings up many links with this information. As for Viktor Bout, he’s been out of circulation for over a decade and the world has passed him by.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Eric Manning – Andover**

Editor’s Desk continued from page 4

releases, event listings, etc. – need to be to me by noon Tuesday, Dec. 27. The same applies the following week. We’ll be closed Monday, Jan. 2, but our deadlines will remain the same. Merry Christmas from all of us at the *Riverast News Bulletin*.
* * *

See you next week.

Hebron Holiday Gratitude

To the Editor:

During this holiday season I would like to share a note of gratitude. The continuing struggle to defend our environment and history has brought the Kinney Road neighborhood from a collection of respectful homeowners into a tight knit group of close friends. For over a year we have been supported and encouraged by a select group of residents from across Hebron, who have nothing to gain but have joined to help build a better future. And every day, more people from all corners of town are coming together to support this just cause. I would like to say thank you to everyone that has attended a meeting, sent in a letter and offered support. I will always remember the two kind women that stopped in Raymond Brook Preserve and said, “Don’t worry, everything will be fine, this will never pass.” Thank you; I hope and pray you are correct.

Special thanks to hydrogeologist Mr. William Warzecha, whose 36-year career at DEEP has earned him recognition as the leading authority on road salt contamination of ground water in Connecticut. Mr. Warzecha brings unparalleled technical knowledge to the discussion and let us know our fears are well founded. Mr. Warzecha deserves the utmost respect for his vast experience and his courage.

And finally, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the hardworking people of the Public Works department. It is beyond regrettable that the town has failed to act and improve your working conditions. Since 2013 plans have been established to build a combined maintenance and storage facility with Parks and Rec. at Burnt Hill Park. Hopefully the New Year will see this plan finally put in action.

For more information, please visit Kinney Road Matters on Facebook and #Save17.

**Sincerely,
Kevin J. Tulimieri – Amston**

None Denser

EDITOR’S NOTE: This letter was submitted in time for last week’s publication, but was inadvertently not published.

To the Editor:

Don ‘None Denser’ Denley went all-in last week to prove the nickname or ‘moniker’ I gave him is earned and spot on. To make sure *Riverast* readers heard him better this time, he used CAPITAL LETTERS for several of his angriest accusations.

“We are the HIGHEST TAXED STATE IN THE COUNTRY” Denley cried. False: We are the 7th highest ‘total tax burden’ state in the country but also the 2nd highest ‘per capita income’ state.

“We are the HIGHEST ELECTRICAL BILL” Denley cried. False: We are 5th highest.

“Lamont and his BILLIONAIRE wife . . .” Denley continues. False: The latest combined net worth data for Ned and Ann Lamont that I could find is estimated between \$90 and \$332 million. She is certainly a highly successful venture capitalist, and we all know Denley especially hates successful women. Hence his calling Nancy Pelosi a “Wicked Witch” and his celebratory “she will NO LONGER BE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE. HALLALUJA!!”

And lastly, Denley states “Lamont is still sitting on the “\$5 BILLION IN COVID MONEY that Connecticut received from the Feds.” False: Connecticut received \$1.382 billion in Covid

money. Denley’s addled mind likely conflated the \$5 billion in infrastructure money Connecticut would have gotten if the \$1 trillion infrastructure bill passed, but Republicans and Joe Manchin ended that dream.

Riverast readers well know Denley spews out whatever nonsense his rabid anti-Democratic mind conjures up. But to capitalize the fake numbers and falsehoods? He should have listened to Abe Lincoln who said “Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to ‘CAPITALIZE IT’ and remove all doubt.”

Here’s the news headline Denley tried to obfuscate – or is the PC term now ‘gaslight’? GOVERNOR LAMONT SIGNS BUDGET THAT INCLUDES THE LARGEST TAX CUT IN CONNECTICUT HISTORY. Then ‘None Denser’ would have been correct.

Edmund Smith – Andover

Citizens Disrespected

To the Editor:

Unprofessional behavior at meetings has been the norm for First Selectman Bisbikos since he entered office, but the meeting on Dec. 15 showed new levels of his disrespect for the citizens of Colchester. FS Bisbikos has regularly argued with residents during citizens comments, but during this meeting he responded to a citizen and prior employee, “That’s why I fired you!”

He publicly accused another citizen of threatening him and said he had reported her to the police. The alleged threat? She used a “boom” emoji in a text telling him he had lost her support.

First Selectman Bisbikos continued to drag us to new lows when he responded to my own citizens comment by telling us the story of how he recently met his childhood hero Sylvester Stallone and like him, “he always punches back.” He followed that up with his own Rocky

impersonation.

The hostile environment in the town hall was also exacerbated by First Selectman Bisbikos’ mother who was in attendance, loudly making snide comments about citizens who she felt were critical of her son.

The citizens of Colchester deserve better than to be confronted by the first selectman or heckled by his mother for exercising our right to free speech.

Krista Kardys – Colchester

Hebron DPW \$\$\$

To the Editor:

Hebron leadership continues with their plan to build a new DPW complex in the center of town, which potentially includes taxpayer dollars for a public relations firm intending to sell residents on this project. They feel there has been misinformation put out there and want to educate the public on the DPW project. Additional factual information was sent to the BOS for them to read, and residents can read this on Facebook #KinneyRoadMatters. The facts provided show that this proposal, including a multi-ton salt shed, violates the best management practices established by CT DEEP and the Bureau of Water Protection.

Horton Boulevard was intended to draw businesses to the center of Hebron with the hope of growing the local economy.

A new DPW facility placed at 17 Kinney Rd. will be counterproductive to town growth.

Where is the town’s Plan B?

There has been discussion around the original 2014 proposal that included the DPW in the Burnt Hill Park location. We’ve been told that due to the completed construction at the park there is no longer enough room there now for the DPW or even a portion of it.

Has the town considered relocating a soccer

See Letters, page 6

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★ *Letters cont. from page 5*

field or two to the center of town? This would help draw residents and visiting teams in and if done correctly could preserve the historical value of this land while helping to lessen any environmental impact.

The BOS is considering a public survey for input from all Hebron residents and not just those in the immediate Kinney Road area. Although it may be costly, if this survey is organized and worded correctly, including the final cost for construction and the impact on taxpayers today and over the next 10 years, the survey may be a worthwhile investment. #Save17

Greg Shortell – Amston

Helping Hands

To the Editor:

We would like to thank the East Hampton Food Bank and Foodshare for all that they do for the seniors in town. This helps us so much.

**Happy Holidays to all,
Shelley Grendzinski**

**Tenant Commissioner for
Chatham Acres and Bellwood Court**

Dangerous and Untruthful

To the Editor:

This newspaper is guilty of publishing a dangerous but untruthful opinion letter, without immediately providing accurate information. Among other baseless claims, a 12/16/22 op-ed letter stated that masks “offer close to zero protection” against infectious disease. If believed and people stop wearing masks, financial loss, debility, and death can follow.

There continues to be over 350 US deaths from COVID daily. In addition, an average of 36,000 people die from influenza every year. And RSV causes 1 out of every 50 deaths in children ... but that’s only death. Losses incurred from infectious diseases are even greater when financial and health impairment are factored in. Hospitalizations, death and other consequences from these infectious diseases peak between now and late winter. The best protection from these infectious diseases and the resulting complications, is to receive every qualified vaccine available (including the bivalent

COVID booster, available since September) and to appropriately mask.

The truth is, proper masking does significantly decrease the spread of multiple infectious diseases. When properly worn, surgical masks quadruple the length of time it takes for COVID to be transmitted. N95 masks work even better, increasing the length of time for COVID to be transmitted by a factor of 100! Since without a mask COVID is transmitted within 15 minutes, it would instead take one hour with surgical masks, and 25 hours with N95 masks. That’s a huge difference in risk reduction!

The worst-case scenario is when unfettered and deadly statements like last week’s letter are published, and the public reads, then believes them. When your paper chooses to print dangerous notions about infection control like this, the readers should immediately be referred to the wealth of factual information provided by the Centers for Disease Control, including the fact that when properly worn, masks save lives.

Dan Mussen – Colchester

Johnsonville

To the Editor:

“It’s coming on Christmas and they’re cutting down trees. They’re putting up reindeer and singing songs of joy and peace.” -Joni Mitchell

This time of year can be joyous for some and melancholy for others. I always have mixed feelings, especially when pulling holiday ornaments out of dusty boxes. But generally, I get a good chuckle. About 25 years ago, as a newlywed, I took my brother and mother to Moodus to visit Johnsonville. We lived nearby and often walked or drove through to admire the eccentric little American streetscape enhanced by a man named Ray Schmitt. Ray had deep pockets, an interesting brief case and a good eye for old buildings, which he purchased and moved to this tiny street. At Christmastime he opened the village up to the public. With family and friends we went through all the structures, visiting the well clad mannequins hard at work. The livery was great and it was here that Ray stabled several handsome life-sized plastic horses that ate nothing and made not a sound.

There was a working post office and, from a live teller, we purchased Victorian post cards

with stamps and had them posted to family members right on the spot. We also purchased unusual Christmas ornaments. One of our favorites was pine cones on strings that still ornate several Christmas trees.

Ahhh those were fun times. My Mom and brother got a kick out of it, laughing and talking to the mannequins, then meeting the grand master himself, the illustrious, Ray Schmitt.

A New York musician recently stated that “The United States lost its sense of humor after 9/11,” and I fear they are right. Maybe we will find it in our stockings this year, instead of coal. #save17

Jean Tulumieri – Amston

Mocking Nicknames

To the Editor:

Ed Kozlowski habitually uses mocking nicknames for myself and others. He’s done it for a long time with impunity. So I recently returned the favor and this greatly upsets him. He critiques my purposeful spelling and weeps that I insulted his deceased father. If the Colchester T.Ed ‘Unibomber’ Kozlowski will cease using monikers, then so will I. Otherwise he needs to put his big boy pants on by himself and stop petitioning his dad to come help him out.

Another Trumpaholic, Don ‘None Denser’ Denley, again CAPITALIZING his angry outbursts, went off last week about Biden bringing Brittany Griner home and leaving Paul Whelan behind. Denley is livid, noting that Griner is an LGBT, Black athlete vs. Whelan, a white ex-Marine. Racist dog whistles are a staple Denleyism. Also called Griner unpatriotic for not standing for the National Anthem and assumed an ex-Marine was pure patriot. He and Fox News conveniently leave out that Paul Whelan was court-martialed and given a ‘bad conduct discharge’ for larceny and other offenses, among other issues like misrepresenting former employments.

If Denley and Fox News ever sober up with facts, they might address why they had no issues when Trump as president did nothing for two years to free Whelan, who was imprisoned on Trumps watch. If Denley ever accessed reputable news outlets, he would never have sarcastically written “I wonder if Joe and Dr. Jill

will be sending the Whelan Family a Christmas Card.” That’s because Paul’s twin brother David Whelan, and the rest of the Whelan family, say Biden is putting in the negotiating effort that Trump never did. It’s Trump that left Paul Whelan behind and Biden who is trying to clean up his mess.

Lastly, I filled up my car with \$2.79 gas last week. Let’s Go Brandon!

Edmund Smith – Andover

Colchester Senior Center

To the Editor:

It is true that seniors get lonely and that our lives would greatly benefit from having a new decent senior center to go to every day to continue to have lunch, hang out with other seniors, have activities, medical clinics, help with tax prep, etc., etc.

The present building is dilapidated and musty smelling. And yet the wonderful staff comes to work each day with a positive attitude because they care about the seniors in the community. The staff and seniors deserve a better environment.

We pay a lot of taxes here in Colchester and those taxes help provide only the best in facilities and education for our youth by keeping our schools in top shape and current. And we are happy to do it for our youth. Don’t the senior citizens of Colchester deserve the same?

Just a thought for those who are not yet seniors: time goes by so quickly and before you know it you too will be a senior. Let’s get this new Senior Center built for the seniors of today and you future seniors.

Sandy Planeta – Colchester

Inflation Reduction Act

To the Editor:

The Inflation Reduction Act delivers for American families, advances the most aggressive action on climate change in American history, and grows the economy from the bottom up and middle out. Jobs are coming back to the U.S. from China. Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS Act, efforts to address production supply chain issues are bringing new jobs and manufacturing facilities to the U.S. Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, seniors on Medicare who use insulin won’t be charged more than \$35 for a month’s supply starting New Year’s Day. Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, out-of-pocket expenses for prescription drug prices will be capped at no more than \$2,000 a year for Medicare recipients. Medicare will finally have the power to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices.

Also in the act, Democrats passed the largest climate initiative in years and not a single Republican voted for it.

Annie Steinbrecher – Marlborough

Weather Terms

To the Editor:

Would you buy a newspaper because of a flashy headline on the front page? Bold text and words that grip your attention? Or online? In media success is now measured in “hits” not newspaper sales with the exception of the good old *Riverast*, accurate and reliable. But the media is doing its best at grabbing us whichever way they can.

Take these two terms when talking about the weather: “Wind chill” and “Heat index.”

Wind chill is simply the effect the wind combined with temperature has and our perception thereof. The lower the temperature or the greater the wind speed equals the greater difference between the actual temperature and how we perceive the temperature. The media calls this “Real feel.” The term makes the actual temperature seem more extreme, which is not the case in reality. Psychologically we brace more for the extreme and immediately upon hearing the “wind chill” temperature, the situation spins from a normal to a dire situation.

The same is true for “Heat Index.” That is where a higher relative humidity combined with temperature makes us feel uncomfortable. When the “heat index” is high, our bodies have more trouble dissipating sweat. It has less a place to evaporate so it clings to our bodies longer. Thus the discomfort.

The media has gotten into not just mentioning these two terms in both winter and summer but preying on us with these two terms. Bending us around their little finger. Pay attention to the temperature for sure. Both very low and the very high can have health implications.

Both of the mentioned terms have been over-used to grab our attention. This is another case where the media has seized the opportunity to make both extreme seasons, winter and summer, more extreme.

Alison Walck – East Hampton

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PZC Approves New Boat Repair Facility

By Jack Lakowsky

Last week the Portland Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously approved construction of a new 24,000-sq. ft. boat repair facility at the Birdon property on Riverview Street.

Frank Borawski, engineer, said the company, which opened its Portland site in September, needs the facility to service large vessels. The company was recently awarded a nearly \$2 billion contract by the U.S. Coast Guard, according to a Birdon press release.

Birdon, a military contractor, said the agreement is locked in for eight years.

The building will have a large crane, the engineer said, adding the company was approved for a height ordinance variance from the zoning appeals board.

The blue building is rectangular, with the long end facing the arc of Riverview, according to draft designs, and will have strong sound mitigation.

The project is subject to further town review, and the planning board asked developers to beautify the site a bit more with plantings.

On its website, Birdon said it's committed to delivery for the USCG and is proud that over 98% of its suppliers are U.S. companies.

Birdon said it is building on its experience and expertise in leading program management, design, manufacture and support of the USCG and U.S. Army watercraft programs, by teaming with select partners. Bollinger Shipyards (Bollinger) and Incat Crowther will be key subcontractors to Birdon and share Birdon's com-

mitment to delivering for the USCG.

The entire delivery team will work under Birdon's integrated, standardized leadership model.

Birdon has a long history building vessels for the USCG, delivering 174 vessels in the last three decades alone.

Birdon said it has established a successful track record with the U.S. Coast Guard during the last three years through existing contracts.

"We are confident that we represent a low risk, high-performing, and long-term partner for the Coast Guard," said Birdon CEO Jamie Bruce. "Birdon [looks] forward to continuing our successful relationship with the Coast Guard for years to come."

Driving down Riverview Street is now a little like heading into the grounds of an international defense contractor.

The narrow road passes modest homes and lines of trees and brush before opening into broad parking lots occupied by trailer-anchored pleasure boats of various sizes. Beyond those are marina buildings on the 31 acres Birdon America acquired along the Connecticut River this past spring.

The company is the U.S. arm of Australian-based Birdon Group. It paid roughly \$5.2 million for the Riverside Marina, Yankee Boat Yard and Marina and smaller adjacent properties.

Birdon bought the marinas for the east coast portion of its 10-year contract to refurbish most of the U.S. Coast Guard's fleet of 47-foot-long

rescue boats.

Birdon has invested another \$2 million in sundry building repairs and equipment upgrades, said Birdon America President Robert Scott.

Among other things, that includes purchase of a new travel lift, due to arrive in February, that will allow the company to pluck boats — up to 85 feet in length and 120,000 pounds — out of the river.

That will help the company fulfill its Coast Guard contract. It will also allow it to expand into a broader section of the private market.

Birdon said it plans to spend up to \$5.5 million constructing a 25,000-square-foot production building within the next two years. That's crucial to meeting deadlines on its Coast Guard contract and sets the company up for additional future contracts.

"Ultimately, we wanted to find a place where we could invest and it would be a long-term play for us in terms of investing and being part of a community," Scott said.

"Connecticut's got a lot to offer," said Anne Evans, who is working as a strategic advisor to

Birdon. "These folks came to the right place for that reason between the workforce development support, the great supply chain and the innovation that goes on here. This is a state that has things up in the sky and underwater. And there's no place else in the world that does that. So, they can make anything these guys want."

Birdon has so far hired 37 staff to work on the Coast Guard contract in Portland, with plans to increase to 65 employees by the end of 2023, Scott said. And there could be more to come, depending on responses to additional contract bids Birdon is now pursuing.

Portland First Selectmen Ryan Curley said he was already impressed by ongoing property beautification, and the company's growth plans.

"Ever since they arrived, they have been a wonderful partner with the town," Curley said. "Every time I've been down there, there's been additional changes, improvements and new employees. They are really hiring some highly skilled positions."

Curley said he hopes to see the company continue to grow its presence and employee rolls in Portland.

Senior Center News & Notes

The Waverly Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave., is open Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., and Friday, 9 a.m.-noon. For more information or to register, call 860-342-6760.

Food Bank Donations: People donating for Portland Food Bank are asked to not leave Food Bank donations at the senior center unless the food bank is open. The food bank is open Mondays and Thursdays from 9 a.m.-noon. Also, the senior center does not need any donations directed toward the center; please only leave donations for the food bank, and only during food bank hours.

Next Week's Programs: **Monday:** Senior Center closed for Christmas holiday. **Tuesday:** Bears on a Journey, 9:30-11 a.m. — making fleece teddy bears for cancer patients; donations are sought of light fleece, one yard or more for making teddy bears for cancer patients throughout Connecticut. If you would like to donate, call 860-342-0809; Watercolor Lessons return Jan. 17 from 9:30 a.m.-noon (to register, email bivenne@yahoo.com); Stretch & Flex: 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; Coupons for Troops, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; setback, 1 p.m.; Dulcimer class, 6 p.m. **Wednesday:** Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; SyncoCize Exercise, 10:30-11:30 a.m.; Social Duplicate Bridge, 12:30-4 p.m., multi-

purpose room; Tai Chi Qigong, 1 p.m. **Thursday:** 9 a.m., Syncosize Balance and Core, Knit & Stitch; 11:30 a.m., Stretch & Flex, Mahjong, 12:30 p.m.; Scrabble, 1 p.m. **Friday:** Senior center closed for New Year's holiday.

Blood Pressure Clinic: 10:30-11:30 a.m. on the first Monday of each month (unless the first Monday is a holiday; then the clinic is the following week).

Free Hearing Screenings: The second Tuesday of each month at 11 a.m., with Virginia Dulos of "All Ears" in Portland. No registration is necessary.

Medical Rides: The center provides seniors and disabled with rides to the doctor. Cost is \$5/person round trip. Two-week notice requested. Masks required.

Cans-4-A-Cause: Drop off washed cans and bottles in a bin in the rear parking lot of the center. For details or to volunteer, email Jeff Myjak at myjakjeff@gmail.com.

Volunteer Drivers Sought for Meals-on-Wheels: The senior center is currently recruiting volunteer drivers to help deliver meals to the homebound Monday-Thursday. The delivery usually takes about an hour. For full details, call Alexis at 860-342-6761.

Trinity Episcopal Church News

Trinity Episcopal Church, located at 345 Main St., invites the community to celebrate each week.

Bible Study starts at 8:30 a.m. each Sunday. Worship is at 9:30 a.m. Sunday School is in session and held during the service. Children ages 4-12 are welcome to attend Church School.

All who are vaccinated may remove their masks. All who are not fully vaccinated are asked to wear their masks.

The church is open for prayer and meditation on Fridays from 2-4 p.m., and there will also be a gathering in the church office at the same time, for Anglican Prayer beading. No prior beading experience is required. All are welcome.

Christmas Services: Saturday, Dec. 24:

Christmas Family Service & Paper Bag Pageant at 5 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 25: Christmas Morning Service at 10 a.m.; Saturday, Dec. 31: New Year's Eve Zoom service at 11:45 p.m.; see the church website for details.

Check out more information, the church's calendar of events, donate, or listen to past sermons at www.trinitychurchportlandct.org. If you have any other prayer requests to lift up, email the church office at trinitychurchportlandct@gmail.com.

For more information or to make an appointment with the Rev. Darryl Burke, email trinitychurchportlandct@gmail.com or call 860-342-0458.

YFS News & Notes

Portland Youth & Family Services has announced the following pieces of news. For more information, visit www.portlandct.org/youth-services or the YFS Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PortlandCTYouth, or contact Jesse Revicki at jrevicki@portlandct.org, or 860-342-6758. To receive email updates about YFS programs and events, sign up at eepurl.com/h5m35f.

Drop-In & Draw: Tuesday, Jan. 10, from 1:30-4:30pm in the Buck-Foreman Community Center, 265 Main St. Come when you want, stay as long as you want.

Drop-In & Draw Meet-Up: Friday, Jan. 20, 10:30-11:30 a.m., at BFCC. There will be a seasonal craft for kids home with their parents and caregivers to come in and work on.

Prevention & Wellness Council: Wednesday, Jan. 25, 6:30-7:30 p.m., in the Buck-Foreman Community Center, 265 Main St. Help YFS work as a community on youth substance use prevention, positive mental health, and be-

coming a recovery-friendly community. If interested in joining, contact Revicki or just show up.

Youth Listening Circle: Postponed until January. YFS is looking for students in middle and high school that are interested in having a discussion on race, culture, diversity, equity and more. Call or email Revicki to sign up.

LGBTQ+ Support Groups & Meet-Ups: YFS said it hopes these groups will start in January. Watch for more information.

Little Hikers: This group is hibernating for the next couple of months and will start up again in April.



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United Methodist Church News

Portland United Methodist Church, located at 381 Main St., holds in-person worship Sundays at 9 a.m. All are invited. Masks required for those not fully vaccinated. Pastor is the Rev. Judith Johnson-Siebold.

A Fourth Sunday weekly Communion service at 1 p.m. replaces the regular 9 a.m. service on those Sundays.

Republicans Seek Volunteers

The Portland Republican Town Committee is seeking individuals to serve their community as members of one of the town's various boards and commissions. In addition, the committee is seeking individuals who are interested in running for local elective positions.

If interested, email GOPPortlandCT@gmail.com or call Tim Lavoy at 860-212-3114.

The Portland RTC holds its regular meetings on the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at 7 Waverly Ave. Republicans interested in public service or in learning more about becoming a member of the RTC are welcome to attend.

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PHS Football Star Headed to UConn

By Josh Howard

Teddy Williams, a 2022 graduate of Portland High School, has committed to play football for The University of Connecticut starting next fall.

Only a year ago, joining the Huskies football program seemed like a long shot for Williams.

Despite being a finalist for the Walter Camp Connecticut Player of the Year in 2021, Williams said he didn't receive many college offers to continue his career on the gridiron, calling the recruitment process "pretty slow."

All that changed after Williams opted to do a post-graduate season at Salisbury School, a private college-preparatory boarding school. This allowed him to experience a new lifestyle and showcase his football talents against the best of the best this past fall.

"I thought my body could mature more and I can become more independent in a place before I go to college," Williams said of his decision to go to Salisbury.

Just like he did in high school, Williams played both sides of the ball at Salisbury and made an immediate impact by catching a touchdown in his first game with the Crimson Knight.

Williams said the experience in Salisbury helped him as both a player and a person, adding, "It just helped me become more independent. Managing my time is where it helped me the most."

While attending a summer camp, Williams began to talk with the coaches from UConn more frequently before the official offer came through to join a Huskies program that plays their home games at Rentschler Field in East Hartford.

Williams will be joining a team that won six games this fall and earned an appearance in the Myrtle Beach Bowl under the guidance of first-year head coach Jim Mora, a former coach in the National Football League.

Williams said that playing at UConn is a "dream come true" and wants to be an inspiration to local athletes that may have been overlooked.

"A lot of kids think that since they play at a small school they can't get recruited by bigger schools and can't play [Division I], but I like having that feeling that I'm an example that you can do at it as long as you work at it," added Williams.

Williams' ascent from a wide-eyed high school freshman to a Division I athlete has been rather remarkable.

Cromwell/Portland head coach Randell Bennett remembered seeing Williams for the first time in 2018 and admitted that he didn't immediately envision that Williams would one day be playing for the state's largest collegiate football program.

"He was really short and had a little baby fat on him, and I couldn't see it," recalled Bennett. "But he actually scored two varsity touchdowns that year."

As a sophomore, Williams started to show flashes of the player that he would become, starting alongside All-State linebacker Owen Brunk as the Panthers battled through a 2-7 regular season with a young roster.

Then COVID-19 shut down high school football locally in 2020.

Williams made the most of the cancellation, becoming a beast in the weight room, working with Bennett, Brunk, and former University of Penn State football standout Jarvis Miller during the long layoff.

The time in the gym paid big dividends as Williams returned to the field to post a senior season that earned him the nickname "Teddy Ballgame."

Williams served as the team's main receiving threat, scoring 30 touchdowns and gaining nearly 2,000 all-purpose yards with 1,396 of those yards coming through the air.

He was equally dominant on defense, racking up 110 tackles, including 16 tackles for loss. He also forced and recovered six fumbles and intercepted four passes for a stacked defense that allowed less than eight points per game.

Following a 10-0 regular season, Williams took his game to another level in the playoffs, scoring nine touchdowns in three playoff games as the Panthers polished off a perfect season (13-0) with a state championship victory over Bloomfield on Dec. 11, 2021.

Bennett observed that Williams plays football like he was playing a video game, adding, "He's always attacking, always going for a strip, always going for an interception, always going for a fumble."

"His motor is just so ridiculous; it's like he's not real. He plays all over the field and never gets tired," added Bennett. "He pushes himself to the limit every time. Only the special guys have that type of drive."

Williams said that having Bennett as his coach helped him improve both in his physique and his intelligence on the field, saying, "Coach Bennett really opened my eyes. He has a really good football IQ and he shares it with everyone. He is good at sharing his knowledge."

After wrapping up his post-grad season at Salisbury, Williams came back to be on the local sidelines for the Cromwell/Portland team that made the state semifinals this season. Bennett said that Williams was one of the team's biggest supporters during the team's playoff push.

Bennett and Williams have remained close since the state championship last fall, continu-



Teddy Williams, a 2022 Portland High School graduate, will continue his football journey with the Huskies of UConn.

ing to train together.

"It's exciting to be still working together. To go on this journey together has been a really cool experience," added Bennett, who played collegiately at Grambling State in Louisiana. "He's done things the right way and now he's reaping those benefits."

Portland's hometown football hero now be-

gins to craft the next chapter of his football story.

Williams said he was originally recruited to play slot receiver at UConn, but added that he is "willing to do whatever the team needs"

"I like playing both offense and defense, so it doesn't matter where I play," stated Williams. "I just want to be able to play."

Winter Soccer Registration

Portland Soccer Club's winter soccer registration is open through Thursday, Jan. 5. Sign up at clubs.bluesombrero.com/portlandsoccerclub. The season will run Jan. 7-March 11.

The club is offering two indoor soccer experiences this winter. They are:

U6-U8: Birth year 2015-17. Cost is \$40. Players will participate in one-hour Futsal sessions on Saturdays (at 1 or 2 p.m.) at Gildersleeve School.

U9-U14 Indoor Soccer and Futsal: Birth

year 2008-2014. Cost is \$50. Players will participate in one-hour sessions of either futsal on Saturday (Gildersleeve School), or indoor soccer on Sunday (Oakwood indoor soccer facility in Glastonbury, field number 3), or both in some weeks. Times for futsal on Saturdays are 2 p.m., 3 p.m. or 4 p.m. Times for Sunday indoor soccer are 4 or 5 p.m.

Futsal is a fast-paced, passing- and foot-skill-oriented game. Dedicated futsal Goals and a heavier ball are used.

Zion Lutheran Church News

Zion Lutheran Church, located at 183 William St., offers in-person worship Sundays at 9 a.m. Masks are optional.

A recording of the service is posted to YouTube on Mondays by 9 a.m. Bulletins for the service are posted each week at zionlutheranportland.org.

Sunday School meets the first and third Sunday of the month at 10:15 a.m., following worship. Ages 3 to 16 are welcome.

Adult Bible study takes place on the second and fourth Sunday of the month, following worship at 10:15 a.m. The focus is on season two of the television series *The Chosen*. Anyone may join at any time. Call the church for details.

Christmas Eve service will begin at 5 p.m. on Dec. 24, and Christmas Day worship will begin

at 9 a.m. on Dec. 25.

The community is welcome to participate in any or all worship services and special events. For more information about any church activities, or if in need of pastoral assistance, call 860-342-2860, email zion.lutheran@snet.net, or visit zionlutheranportland.org. Sara Stall-Ryan is Pastor.

Watch Elf, Have Maple Spaghetti

St. Mary Youth Group in Portland invites teens in grades 7-12 to come Saturday, Jan. 7, at 6 p.m., to watch *Elf* and try some of his favorite foods.

If you always wanted to try spaghetti with maple syrup, this is the place to be. For those less sugar inclined, there will also be marinara sauce. Since elves try to stick to the four main food groups of candy, candy canes, candy corn and syrup, there will also be plenty of those to enjoy.

The movie will be shown in the Parish Hall at the Church of St. Mary on 51 Freestone Ave. Teens and their families are also welcome to come for the Teen Mass at 5 p.m.

Registration is not required but welcome. For more information, contact Sandy Franco at 860-395-8498 or SFranco@comcast.net.

Holiday Book Store

The Friends of the Portland Library Holiday Book Store is open through the end of the month in the Second-Hand Prose Book sale area at the Portland Library during regular library hours.

The sale features a variety of used books, puzzles, children's books, holiday books, games and DVDs.

All proceeds benefit programs funded by the Friends, including the library's DVD collection, Museum Pass Program and a variety of children's, family and adult programs held throughout the year.

Visit www.friendsofportlandlibraryct.org for more information or email questions to friendsoftheportlandlibrary@gmail.com.

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Members of the Portland River-Valley Garden Club decorated wreaths for the holidays.

Decking the Halls in Portland

Members of the Portland River-Valley Garden Club gathered at The Hemlock Grange Wednesday, Nov. 30 evening to create wreaths for various town buildings for the holiday season. Wreaths were hand crafted with a variety of evergreen materials harvested from members' gardens and the local area. The wreaths are now decorating the Portland Post Office, Town Hall and Senior Center.

One wreath was created specifically for donation to the Portland Historical Society Festival of Wreaths fundraiser. Club members also used fresh greens to fill the planters at the intersection of Main Street and Route 66. To learn more about The Portland River-Valley Garden Club please visit portland-river-valley-garden-club.blogspot.com

Parks and Rec. News & Notes

Parks and Recreation is offering the following. To register or for full program descriptions, visit portland.recdesk.com. For more information, call 860-342-6757 or email adionne@portlandct.org.

Adult Drop-In Programs: Volleyball: Wednesdays at Gildersleeve School. Non-competitive play is 5-6:30 p.m., and competitive play is 6:30-8 p.m.

Men's Drop-In Basketball: Tuesdays, 7:30-9 p.m., at Portland Middle School. Watch for details on Women's Drop-In Basketball, coming soon.

Beginners' Yoga: Wednesdays through Jan. 4, 5-6 p.m., at Buck Foreman Community Center. Fee: \$65 for residents, \$75 for non-residents.

Kids' Blast After School Program: Mondays-Fridays, 3-6 p.m., at Brownstone Intermediate School, for grades K-6. Cost to attend is \$18 a day. There are currently openings for January, purchase a Kids' Blast membership on the Parks and Rec. website, email adionne@portlandct.org or call 860-342-6757.

Portland Library News & Notes

Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave., has announced the following events. Registration required for all programs unless noted. For more info, to register, and for full program descriptions, visit www.portlandlibraryct.org or call 860-342-6770. The library is also on Facebook and Instagram.

Hours: Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Masks are optional.

Holiday Closings: The library will be closed Saturday, Dec. 24, through Monday, Dec. 26, and will also be closed Saturday, Dec. 31, through Monday, Jan. 2.

Mobile Library App: The Library Connection Mobile Library app will allow you to find materials and may reserve them for future pick-up when you are notified. And at the library, you can check out books and many items, except DVDs, two ways: use the Meescan station located in the adult area near the entrance or use the mobile app. There are some items that will need staff intervention, such as items on hold for another reader.

Youth Programs: Drop-In Playdates: Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m., Dec. 20 and 21, for ages birth through 5 and their caregivers. This will be an hour of socialization and open play with story room toys. No registration is required.

Save the Date – Read & Recycle: Saturday, Jan. 14, from 10 a.m.-noon. All are welcome to bring in gently used books, DVDs, CDs and puzzles.

Meet and Greet with the Snow Sisters: Tuesday, Dec. 27, 11 a.m. Calling all fans of Elsa and Anna! The Snow Sisters will visit the library for a morning of songs, games, crafts and photo opportunities. Space is limited.

Winter Reading Challenge: Smitten with Mittens: Monday, Jan. 9 through Friday, March 3. This year's theme is inspired by Jan Brett's picture book version of the classic folk tale "The Mitten." Visit the library on or after Jan. 9 and get a mitten to color and hang on our bulletin board. Each time you check out materials in January and February (up to once per day), the library will add a new winter animal to your mitten. Once you've added all eight animals from the story, you will have completed the challenge and will win a small prize.

Special Events: Save the Dates: Wednesday, Jan. 25: Mitten PJ Storytime and Activities; Saturday, Feb. 4: Take Your Child to the Library Day; Friday, Feb. 10: Family Fort Night

and Nocturnal Animal Hunt; Tuesday, Feb. 21: Readers' Theater: *The Mitten*; Saturday, Feb. 25: Wildlife in Winter program from White Memorial Conservation Center.

Winter Storytimes: Registration required. The schedule is: Preschool Storytime, Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m., Jan. 10-Feb. 28; Storytime for Toddlers and Tots: Mother Goose on the Loose, Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. or 11:15 a.m., Jan. 11-March 1.

Tinkerlab: Thursdays at 3:30 p.m., Jan. 12, 19, 26, for grades K-8. Practice your engineering and coding skills. No registration required.

Family Craft Night: Mitten People: Wednesday, Jan. 18, 6:30 p.m. This activity has steps that are appropriate for all ages, but a parent or guardian must be with children to help with supervision. Space is limited.

The Mitten: PJ Storytime and Activity Night: Wednesday, Jan. 25, 6:30 p.m. An evening of fun based on Jan Brett's book *The Mitten*. There will be crafts and activities, hot cocoa, and a visit with a special guest from the story.

Teen Programs: Teen Advisory Group Meeting: Monday, Jan. 9, 3:30 p.m. Teens are invited to share their thoughts on what they'd like to see the library offer in terms of programs, materials and more, while having some snacks. Teens will earn community service hours for each meeting they attend.

Celebrate National Pie Day: Monday, Jan. 23, 3:30 p.m. Make a hedgehog book craft and help celebrate National Pie Day. Taste-test different kinds of pies and vote on your favorites.

Teen Lock-In: Friday, Jan. 27, 6-9 p.m., for students in grades six and up. After the library closes for the night, there will be food, games and surprises. Space is extremely limited.

Adult Programs: Mitten Tree: Bring in mittens and gloves for children or adults to be distributed by the Portland Food Bank.

Book Discussions: 1st Thursday Night Book Club: Jan. 5, 6:30 p.m., *Klara & the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro will be discussed. **T.A.B. (Talk About Books):** Tuesday, Jan. 10, 1 p.m., *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan will be discussed. **Mystery Lovers Book Club:** *Razorblade Tears* by S.A. Cosby will be discussed.

Wednesday Movie: Jan. 11, 1 p.m. *Jerry & Marge Go Large* will be shown.

Taxes, Retirement Oh My!: Tuesday, Jan. 17, 6 p.m. In this USA Financial presentation, learn how taxes can change the outcome of your retirement. Registration requested.



Cub Scout Pack 2 of Portland recently held its Blue and Gold Ceremony, to honor six Cub Scouts earning the Arrow of Light and crossing the bridge to become Boy Scouts. Pictured from left are the Scouts, Noah Sterry, Anthony Quiles, Orson Felter, Gabriel Ngunjiri, Samuel Hess and Zackary Robare, with Cubmaster James Felter and Treasurer Denise Leavy in the front.

Scouts Receive Highest Rank

Cub Scout Pack 2 of Portland held its Blue and Gold Ceremony on Dec. 15 at Zion Lutheran Church, to honor six Cub Scouts earning the Arrow of Light and crossing the bridge to become Boy Scouts.

This year's recipients are: Orson Felter, son of James and Melissa Felter; Samuel Hess, son of Christopher and Jessica Hess; Gabriel Ngunjiri, son of Judy Njoroge; Anthony Quiles, son of Miguel Quiles and Sandra LeClaire; Zackary Robare, son of Todd Robare and Denise Leavy; and Noah Sterry, son of John and Joyce Sterry, Scout partnered by Barbara Helming.

First Selectman and Troop 2 Eagle Scout

Ryan Curley spoke to the Scouts about citizenship and commitment to their community.

Also at the ceremony, Pack 2 recognized Denise Leavy for volunteering as the treasurer for three years. Pack 2 also recognized the contributions of retiring den leader and Cubmaster James Felter (Eagle Scout '92 – Troop 99 Lancaster, Pa.), who volunteered as a den leader from the Lion through Arrow of Light ranks for these scouts. For the last four years, Felter volunteered as Pack 2's Cubmaster while also guiding the pack through difficult COVID-19 challenges.

Brownstone Arts Show and Sale

A holiday show and sale sponsored by Brownstone Arts is being held in Owen's Emporium at 283 Main St. through Dec. 24. Among the items displayed and offered as holiday gifts are paintings, drawings, photographs, felt-worked scarves and table runners, jewelry, and pottery.

The event marks the 15th anniversary of Brownstone Arts, a group founded in 2007 to support, promote and encourage the arts in Portland and surrounding towns. The public

is invited to join the artists and their friends as they celebrate this anniversary year. There will be wine and munchies, musical entertainment by singer-songwriter Cathy Kreger, and a cake to be shared.

Owen's Emporium's hours for the duration of the show will be: Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (hours are 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Dec. 24). The Emporium will be closed Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday.

First Congregational Church News

The First Congregational Church of Portland, located at 554 Main St., is a member of the United Church of Christ. The church is an "open and affirming" congregation, welcoming everyone. Facial mask-wearing is optional. The building is accessible. The worship service is livestreamed as well as available for later viewing on the church's YouTube channel; search on YouTube for First Church of Portland CT.

On Dec. 24, there will be Christmas Eve services at 4 p.m. and 10 p.m. Both services include lessons and carols, and the offering will benefit the Portland Fuel Bank. There will be a 10-minute prelude at each service, at 3:50 p.m. and 9:50 p.m., respectively. The 4 p.m. service will feature special guest musicians In CaFlootes, and the 10 p.m. service will feature the choir and special guest musicians Wild Notes.

There is no Sunday morning worship service taking place at the church on Dec. 25. First

Congregational Church has been invited to join the congregation at Zion Lutheran Church at 183 William St. in Portland for their Christmas Day service at 9 a.m.

First Church Nursery School offers a program for 3-year-olds on Tuesday and Thursday, and one for 4-year-olds on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Contact Amy Jahnke at 860-342-1111 or 1stchurchnurseryschool@gmail.com for more information.

The church emails a weekly newsletter, *The Weekly Word*. To join church mailing lists (both email and regular mail), email first.church.pct@sbcglobal.net or call 860-342-3244. For more info, look for the church on Facebook at The First Congregational Church of Portland, or visit www.firstchurchportlandct.org. Those who wish to follow the church on Facebook may do so at The First Congregational Church of Portland, CT.

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Pandemic Aged Teenage Brains 3 Years: Study

By Jack Lakowsky

In his email to the community this week, East Hampton schools superintendent Paul Smith spread the word about a recent study that concluded “the stress of pandemic lockdowns prematurely aged the brains of teenagers” by three years.

The accelerated brain aging was similar to studies of youth who’ve been through “chronic stress and adversity.”

Smith normally shares informative articles in his updates but this week, unusually, he said this week’s was an article worth reading. The degradation of young people’s mental health has been widely reported over the past year, with emphasis on the pandemic’s damage.

The study, published last week in *Biological Psychiatry: Global Open Science*, was the first to compare scans of the physical structures of teenagers’ brains from before and after the pandemic started, and to document significant differences, said Ian Gotlib, lead author on the paper and a psychology professor at Stanford University.

Researchers knew teens had higher “levels of depression, anxiety and fearfulness” than “be-

fore the pandemic. But we knew nothing about the effects on their brains,” said Gotlib, director of the Stanford Neurodevelopment, Affect, and Psychopathology Laboratory.

“We thought there might be effects similar to what you would find with early adversity; we just didn’t realize how strong they’d be,” he added.

Smith included his own summary, saying premature aging of children’s brains isn’t a positive development.

Before the pandemic, it was observed in cases of chronic childhood stress, trauma, abuse and neglect, Smith wrote.

These adverse childhood experiences not only make people more vulnerable to depression, anxiety, addiction and other mental illnesses, they can raise the risk of cancer, diabetes, heart disease and other long-term negative outcomes, the article states.

By comparing MRI scans of a group of 128 children, half taken before and half at the end of the first year of the pandemic, the researchers found growth in the hippocampus and amygdala, brain areas that respectively control access to

some memories and help regulate fear.

Researchers also evaluated mental health symptoms reported by the matched pairs. They found more severe symptoms of anxiety, depression and internalizing problems in the group that had experienced the pandemic.

“The takeaway for me is that there are serious issues with mental health and kids around the pandemic,” Gotlib said. “Just because the shutdown ended doesn’t mean we’re fine.”

Prior research has found dramatically higher levels of anxiety, depression, suicidality and other mental illnesses in adolescents since the onset of the pandemic.

The current study has important implications for other studies of adolescent brains, said Jason Chein, professor of psychology and neuroscience and the director of the Temple University Brain Research & Imaging Center.

“It has both methodological implications and potentially societally relevant implications,” Chein said. Broad conclusions about develop-

ment can’t yet be drawn, Chein said.

And for society, the implications are that teenagers and young adults may need long-term, ongoing mental health and other support because this cohort may not be as advanced as expected based on just their chronological age. He cautioned, however, against making broad interpretations based on the changes the researchers observed.

“It’s pretty interesting that they observed this change,” he said

“But I’m reluctant to then jump to the conclusion that what it signals to us is that somehow we’ve advanced the maturation of the brains of kids.”

Smith said he’ll share these findings – along with the proposed 2023-24 town budget – at the Superintendent’s Advisory Council Thursday, Jan. 19, at 9 a.m., at Town Hall.

The first meeting on next year’s budget is Monday, Jan. 9, at 6:30 p.m., at Town Hall.

Congregational Church News & Notes

The Congregational Church of East Hampton, UCC, located at 59 Main St., is open for in-person services with the Rev. Amie McCarthy every Sunday at 10 a.m. All services can also be accessed via Zoom by going to cc-eh.org. There are Advent readings and a candle-lighting every Sunday celebrating the Advent season.

Church school classes meet every Sunday. The Yarners meet every Thursday from 10:30 a.m.-noon in the Fellowship Hall. All knitters

and crocheters are welcome.

Christmas Eve Candle-Lighting Service: Saturday, Dec. 24, at 7 p.m., in the sanctuary.

Christmas Day: There is no in-church Sunday service, but one is available on the church website.

For more information about CCEH and its activities, visit cc-eh.org or call the church office at 860-267-4959 during office hours: Tuesday-Friday, 8 a.m.-noon.

Senior Center News & Notes

East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., is open. Registration required for all programs unless noted; register at myactivecenter.com or by contacting the center at 860-267-4426 or seniorcenter@easthamptonct.gov. Senior center hours are Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Masks are encouraged, but not required. Visit the senior center online at www.easthamptonct.gov/east-hampton-senior-center.

Lunches: Served at the center Monday through Friday, to ages 60 and up. Call the center to reserve a meal or sign up online. Reservations for the next day’s meal are due by 11 a.m. the day before. Meals are free, though a \$3 donation is requested.

Weekly Activities: **Quilting Group:** Mondays, 9 a.m. **Mexican Train Dominoes:** Mondays, 9:30 a.m. **Setback:** Mondays, 1 p.m., and Thursdays, 1:15 p.m. **Bible Study:** Tuesdays, 1 p.m. **Bingo:** Tuesdays, 1-2 p.m., in person and via Zoom. **Tap Dance:** Thursdays, 11:15-11:45 a.m.; **Game Day:** Fridays, 10 a.m.-noon – space will be available and open to Mahjongg, cribbage, Mexican Train and setback players. Registration required. **Textile Group:** Fridays, 1 p.m.

Writing Our Lives to Open Our Hearts: There are two groups; one meets Thursdays, 10-11 a.m., and one meets every other Thursday, 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. The group will meet outdoors, weather permitting; otherwise it will be indoors or via Zoom.

New Year’s Celebration: Friday, Dec. 30, 12:30 p.m. All are invited to come for a bite to eat, camaraderie, and to celebrate the New Year with friends. Sign up by 12/20.

p.m. and Saturdays at 9 a.m., with Erin Day of Ten Summit Yoga. Cost is a \$10 drop-in fee. Register at tensummitst@gmail.com.

Mahjong: Mondays at 11:30 a.m. All players welcome.

Nimble Knitters: Thursdays at 1 p.m.

Historic Photos on Display: The pictures are of Cobalt, East Hampton and Middle Haddam.

Middle Haddam Public Library News

Middle Haddam Public Library, 2 Knowles Rd., Middle Haddam, has announced the following. To register or more information on any program, email middlehaddamlibrary@gmail.com, visit middlehaddamlibrary.com or call 860-267-9093.

Library Hours: Monday and Thursday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; Tuesday and Friday, 3-6 p.m. Masks are optional.

Yoga: Mondays at 9 a.m., Tuesdays at 7

Haddam Neck Covenant Church News

Haddam Neck Covenant Church, located at 17 Haddam Neck Rd. in East Hampton, invites all to its family Christmas Eve service at 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 24. Celebrate the birth of Jesus with scripture and Christmas Carols. There will be no service Sunday, Dec. 25.

Puppet Ministry: Each Sunday, the Church’s Puppet Ministry features Digger the Dog and some of his friends from Farmer M’s Red Barn to help explain the meaning of the message topic.

Kids Church: Music and hands-on interactive activities are offered for kids in the Fellow-

ship Hall during the worship service. All are welcome.

Bible Study: Adult Bible Study is held each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. in the Chapel. The study traces God’s covenant with his people.

Zoom Bible Study: Held every Thursday from 7 to 8 p.m. The study looks at various ways to approach Bible reading to enhance the ability to hear what God says.

Office Info: The office can be reached at 860-267-2336; hours are Monday-Friday, 12:30-4:30 p.m. The church website is at www.hncovenantchurch.org.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church News

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church holds live in-person services Sundays at 10:45 a.m. All are welcome. Enter via the front door and ushers will assist you. The church is located at 1 East High St.

There is also a livestream link at the church’s Facebook page, www.facebook.com/BethlehemEH.

Epoch Arts Winter Classes

Epoch Arts is offering a variety of artistic classes for preschool through 12th grade.

Sign up for classes like improv theater, ceramics, polymer clay and art, or sign up to perform in an original two-act play. Classes begin Jan. 9, run for eight weeks, and are held at 27 Skinner St.

For more information, visit www.epocharts.org.





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Residents Sought for EHACC

The East Hampton Arts & Culture Commission (EHACC) is accepting applications from East Hampton residents to serve on the commission.

The commission meets the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Joseph N. Goff House Museum, 2 Barton Hill Rd., and help support and promote arts and culture in East Hampton.

Applications to serve on the commission are available in the town manager’s office at Town Hall, 1 Community Drive.

For more information on EHACC, visit www.artsforeasthamptonct.org or email arts@easthamptonct.org.

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Artwork on Display... The December show at Town Hall features watercolors of Elizabeth Sennett. There are florals and still-life paintings.

Church Seeks Singers

The Second Congregational Church in Middle Haddam is calling for local singers interested in joining a small choir. Ability to read music is a plus.

The choir would participate in services twice a month at 9:30 a.m.; the service lasts approximately one hour. Rehearsals would be after church on Sunday.

An organizational meeting will be held in January at the church, which is located at 52 Middle Haddam Rd. (Route 151), in Middle Haddam.

To inquire, email Toni Leland at tonileland@gmail.com.

Parks and Rec. News & Notes

East Hampton Parks and Recreation has announced the following pieces of news. For more information, call 860-267-7300 or visit easthamptonct.myrec.com.

Girls Volleyball Clinic: Wednesdays, Jan. 4-25, 6:45-8 p.m., at the East Hampton Middle School gym, for grades 6-8. Cost is \$125.

American Red Cross Babysitting Course: Friday, Jan. 20, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., at the Town Hall community room. Cost is \$100.

Wolf Pack Game: Friday, Jan. 20, 7 p.m. Lower-level seats are \$20 per ticket.

Donations Sought for Concert Series

All are invited to make a tax-deductible donation to the 2023 Joseph N. Goff House Gazebo Concert Series.

Donation levels include Maestro Sponsor - \$250; Soprano Sponsor - \$150; Alto Sponsor - \$75; Tenor Sponsor - \$50; Bass Sponsor - \$25; or any amount you wish to contribute. Donations help pay for the musical entertainment and publicity for the concerts, which will be held Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. at the Center School gazebo during the summer of 2023.

Tax-deductible checks, made payable to The Joseph N. Goff House Inc., can be mailed to: The Joseph N. Goff House Inc., P.O. Box 337, East Hampton, CT 06424. Tax ID is 06-1494507.

Call 860-918-4400 or 860-993-5311 for more information.

Taxes Due

Taxes for the second installment of real estate, personal property, and supplemental motor vehicles are due and payable on Jan. 1. The last day on which to pay without penalty is Feb. 1.

The supplemental motor vehicle tax bills were mailed Dec 9. There is not an additional mailing for the second installment of real estate and personal property bills.

Make checks payable to: Town of East Hampton. Payment can be made at Town Hall, 1 Community Drive. Hours of collection: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Tuesday, 8 a.m.-6:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Payments may also be mailed to: Collector of Revenue, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424. People can also pay online by visiting www.easthamptonct.gov.



A Cheer-ful Donation... All donations collected from the East Hampton Hawks Football and Cheerleading home games in the month of October were presented to the Pszynski family at Paul's & Sandy's, Too for the Sandy Pszynski Breast Cancer Foundation. The Hawks are proud to continue their annual donation to support this local organization and are very thankful to all those who donated. Pictured from left are, front row, Brylie Pinney, Emily Johnson, Aubrey Phillips, Ashley Phillips; middle row, Brody Pinney, Ryan Riley, Ava Riley, David Johnson, Blake Hebler; back row, sisters Karen Clark and Jill Kelley, Danielle Riley, Walker Hebler.

EHACC Accepting Grant Applications

The East Hampton Arts & Culture Commission is accepting applications from East Hampton High School juniors and seniors for \$200 grants to support an annual East Hampton High School capstone project.

Deadline to apply is Feb. 1, 2023. Applications are available at www.artsforeasthamptonct.org and can be submitted to arts@easthamptonct.org or can be mailed/dropped off at the town manager's office at the East Hampton Town Hall, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424.

EHMS Volleyball Registration

Student/athletes in seventh or eighth grade who are interested in playing for the boys or girls volleyball teams can register at FamilyID.com. Students must have a physical within a 13-month period in order to participate.

The deadline for registration is on Monday, Jan. 30. For more information, call East Hampton Middle School athletic director Michael Mercaldi at 860-463-6837.

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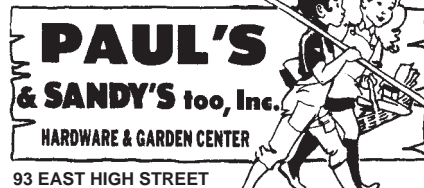
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Bowling Buds... The East Hampton Senior Fall Bowling League recently wrapped up. The new Senior Winter Bowling League will start Wednesday, Jan. 11, from 2-4 p.m., at Kickback N' Bowl, 9 Bear Swamp Rd. The league is open to everyone age 55 and up, from all the *Rivereast* towns. For more information, contact Jack Anderson at 860-882-3752 or jackande52@aol.com.

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Haddam Neck Congregational Church will hold a traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service Saturday, Dec. 24, at 5 p.m., in the church sanctuary, 401 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck.

The service will feature traditional Christmas Bible readings and carols. All are welcome. The church will not hold services on Sunday, Dec. 25, Christmas Day.

Hats for Honduras

The East Hampton Yarners are sending 204 neonatal and newborn homemade hats to Honduras.

The Yarners have completed and distributed hundreds of prayer shawls, afghans, chemo caps, hats, scarves, mittens, dishcloths, and more to hospice, hospitals, food banks, cancer centers, and neonatal clinics.

All knitters and crocheters are welcome to join the Yarners each Thursday from 10:30 a.m.-noon at the Congregational Church of East Hampton, 59 Main St. Members bring their own projects as well as items for others. For more information email Judy Hoffhine at jhoffhine@gmail.com.



Clear Those Basins... This catch-basin or storm drain on a street near Lake Potopaug is almost completely clogged by leaves that can lead to flooding and algae growth. The Lake-Smart Committee said it is important for residents to remove leaves that can be blown into the streets and clog the drains. Leaves that enter town waterways add to the phosphates of the lake and contribute to the growth of algae, the committee said. *Marty Podskoch photo.*

Christ Episcopal Church News

Christ Episcopal Church, 66 Middle Haddam Rd., Middle Haddam, holds in-person and Zoom services at 10 a.m. each Sunday. All are welcome. To connect electronically, go to www.christchurchmiddlehaddam.com for directions.

Christmas Pageant: The church offers many thanks to all who helped and participated in the Dec. 18 service, especially Nevaeh and Brennen Van Cott and Gavin, Pdraig, and Kael Lynch.

Christmas Services: The Christmas Eve service will be at 4 p.m. Christmas Day worship is at 10 a.m. The Rev. Joanne Neel-Richard will lead both services

Coffee Hour: Hosts are still needed. See the sign-up sheet in the parish kitchen.

For more information or if in need of assistance, call the church office at 860-267-0287 or Donna Hryb, senior warden, at 860-633-0472.

East Hampton Library News & Notes

East Hampton Public Library, 105 Main St, has announced the following. Registration required unless noted; to register, or for full program descriptions, call 860-267-6621 or visit us at easthamptonpubliclibrary.org, or on Facebook at facebook.com/EastHamptonLibrary

Library Hours: The library is open Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. **Holiday Hours:** The library will be open from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 24, and will be closed Monday, Dec. 26.

Children Programs: Toddler Time: Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. for children ages 18 months to 3 years, Stories & Songs: Wednesdays at 11:15 a.m. for ages 3-5 years, Mindful Movements: Mondays at 10:30 a.m. Held in the library community room. For ages 18 months and up; siblings welcome, Baby Rhyme Time: Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. For children ages 0-18 months and their caregivers. Held in the library community room.

Special Stories & Songs and Sweets!: Wednesday Jan. 11, 10:30 a.m., for ages 18 months to 5 years. Share cupcake-themed stories then decorate our own to eat.

Cupcake Decorating: Wednesday, Jan. 11, 4-5 p.m., for grades K-5. Drop in after school to decorate (and eat!) a cupcake while you grab some books.

Teen Programs: Winter Break Breakfast: Thursday, Dec. 29, 11 a.m., for grades 6-12. Enjoy breakfast treats and a chill space to wrap up your winter break. Play Switch games, craft with the teen librarian, or just visit with friends.

Keep Calm and Relax On: Saturday, Jan. 14, 2-3 p.m. Drop in for a relaxing craft.

Family Program: New Year's at Noon: Friday, Dec. 30, 10:30 a.m. Celebrate the new year at the library with an all-ages show by magician Ed Popielarczyk. Stick around to make a confetti popper craft and for the big balloon drop at noon. Registration encouraged but not required.

Adult Programs: Cookbook Club: Tuesday, Jan. 3, 6:30 p.m. The theme will be announced soon.

Chatham Historical Society Cabin Fever Series: Saturday, Jan. 7, 1 p.m. On select Saturdays through winter, enjoy the return of the Cabin Fever series, presented by Chatham Historical Society.

Libraryyoga with Amie!: Tuesday, Jan. 10, 6:30 p.m. Join Amie Meacham at the library for all-levels yoga. Registration is required and space is limited.

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Land Trust Events

Colchester Land Trust has announced the following events – one for CLT members and one for non-members.

Winter Backpacking Introduction: Sunday, Jan. 8, noon, at Devils Hopyard State Park. For members only. Meet near the covered bridge. Get an introduction to cold weather backpacking. The CLT will discuss filtering water, pitching a tent, and cooking. If you have a backpack or any gear, bring it along. Space is limited to 15 people; RSVP to Russ at russmoore314@gmail.com. The length is about three miles, and the CLT said the terrain is difficult. Hiking poles and boot spikes are recommended if icy. Dress appropriately for the

weather and bring backpacking gear such as backpack, stove, food, snacks and water, but no equipment is necessary.

Pancake Breakfast and Timber Framing Overview: Sunday, Feb. 12, 10 a.m., at 23 Lee Court. Members and non-members welcome; cost is \$5 for non-members. Park in cul-de-sac and walk down driveway. Meet inside barn. All are invited to this pancake breakfast in a traditional timber frame barn on the property of board members Russ and Natalie Moore. Kids welcome. Space is limited to 30 people; RSVP to Natalie at natsamoore@gmail.com by Feb. 5. The barn is unheated, so folks should dress for the weather. Warm drinks will be served.

Senior Center News & Notes

Colchester Senior Center, 95 Norwich Ave., has announced the following. For full descriptions, call 860-537-3911, email csc@colchesterct.gov, or visit www.colchesterct.gov.seniorcenter.

Monday, Dec. 26: Closed for Christmas holiday.

Tuesday, Dec. 27: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10 a.m., Stitch & Fix; 10:30 a.m., Book Club; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1:30 p.m., Bingo; 7 p.m., SCBC meeting (via Zoom).

Wednesday, Dec. 28: 9 a.m., Making Memories Program, Walking Group meet-up at the Air Line Trail in Amston; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Sit & Be Fit.

Thursday, Dec. 29: 9 a.m., Exercise with Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling; 11 a.m., Yoga; noon, Chair Massage; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes; 1 p.m., Knit & Crochet.

Friday, Dec. 30: No Sit & Be Fit, Choral Group or Yoga today; 10 a.m., New Year's Brunch 'n Bash; 10:30 a.m., TVCCA Meal Contest Drawing; senior center closes at noon

today.

Upcoming Programs: Create a New Year Vision Board: Wednesday, Jan. 4, 1:30 p.m. These poster-sized visuals contain all kinds of images and text that represent something you're trying to accomplish. Come create a personalized vision board to guide you into the New Year. This program is free, but registration is required.

Hearing Screenings: Friday, Jan. 6, 10:30 a.m. Dr. Matthew Cross from the HearUSA of Glastonbury can check your hearing or clean your hearing devices. Schedule your free hearing screening by calling the senior center at 860-537-3911.

Creative Life Review Journaling Class: This class will take place the second and fourth Wednesday of each month starting Jan. 11 at 1:30 p.m. In this class, discuss the benefits of journaling, creating a journaling practice, and ways to journal. Write about your lives using various brainstorming and prompts. This is a free class; supplies will be provided, preregistration is required.

Ahavath Achim News

Congregation Ahavath Achim, 84 Lebanon Ave., has announced the following schedule:

Tuesday, Aggadath class from the Talmud, 6 p.m.; Talmud class, 6:30 p.m.; Kabbalah class, 8 p.m., on Zoom and in person; Friday night service, 6:30 p.m., hybrid in-person and on Zoom; Shabbat morning service, 10 a.m., hybrid in-person and via Zoom.

There are daily Facebook Live classes on Ken Alter's Facebook page.

For more information, call 860-537-2809. Office hours are: Wednesday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; and Friday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.



Remember, Honor, Teach... On Saturday, Dec. 17, the local Wreaths Across America event was held at Westchester Cemetery. All had the opportunity to follow Wreaths Across America's mission: Remember fallen U.S. veterans, Honor those who serve, and Teach the children the value of freedom. Pictured are Pack 109 Cubmaster Aaron Berta, Pack 109 den leader Becky Berta, Troop 109 Assistant Scoutmaster Bob Friberg, and Scouts Drew Martin, Delaney Berta, Bryce Berta and Cody Friberg.

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Senior Center Hearing Delayed

By Michael Sinkewicz

A court hearing that may ultimately decide the future of the Colchester's new senior center project was rescheduled to Dec. 28, further complicating the project's timeline as the window to finalize a construction contract diminishes.

Earlier this month, Republican selectman Jason LaChapelle and Republican Town Committee Chairman Taras Rudko sought an order of mandamus that would compel the town to follow the conditions outlined in a town referendum question, which approved the construction of a new building.

They also sought an injunction that would prevent the town from entering a construction contract that would exceed \$9.5 million – the amount listed in the referendum question.

During a remote hearing at New London Superior Court on Tuesday, the town was summoned to justify why a temporarily injunction should not be issued, which would provide further clarity on whether the project could continue forward.

However, Judge Karen Goodrow granted a contingency motion from the plaintiffs, which, in effect, pushed the hearing to next week.

The decision came after two of the town's lawyers, Matthew Ritter and Glenn Rybacki, filed a motion to quash the subpoenas that called for their testimony and to produce certain documents.

Donald Brown, the attorney for both LaChapelle and Rudko, expressed during the hearing that he did not have sufficient time to review the motions or the documents that were subpoenaed.

On Wednesday morning, First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos called the development a "delay

tactic." He stated that a significant number of documents were requested from the town last Friday, and that after scrambling to collect everything, the required information was turned over the attorneys.

"I'm not losing any sleep over the contingency," he said. "We feel confident that we find ourselves in a very strong position."

LaChapelle told the *Rivereast* that if any "games" were being played, it was on the town's part.

"This is money out of my pocket," he stated. "I don't want to drag this out."

With the hearing rescheduled, there is added pressure to secure a construction contract.

The apparent low bid by BRD Builders LLC is set to expire on Jan 11. If a contract is not agreed to by both parties' lawyers and reviewed by the state before that date, the town would be forced to restart the bid process.

Last month, Senior Center Building Committee Chairman Tony Tarnowski informed the boards of selectmen and finance that there was a shortfall in the construction budget of the project.

When the bid opening began on Oct. 13, BRD Builders LLC's bid was \$8.9 million.

After \$370,000 in alternates to the bid were accepted, the final construction cost came in at just over \$8.6 million, leaving a \$976,030 shortfall. The total cost of the project, the plaintiffs have argued, would exceed \$10 million and therefore violate the result of the referendum.

In court, LaChapelle and Rudko will be seeking answers for two main questions.

The first asked, "Does the town of Colchester have the legal authority to ignore or circumvent

the results of the referendum put to the voters on November 16, 2021, as required by town charter?"

At the referendum – where residents voted in favor of constructing a new senior center at referendum by a 1,421-851 tally – the question posed to them was: "Shall the town of Colchester appropriate and authorize the board of selectmen to expend a sum not to exceed \$9,500,000 for costs related to the design and construction of a new senior center and authorize the issuance of bonds and notes to finance the portion of the appropriation not defrayed from grants?"

The second question LaChapelle and Rudko will be asking is whether the town is "permitted to expend" in excess of \$9.5 million "in designing and constructing a senior center based upon the language of the referendum and the referendum having passed?"

Those issues will be debated during a virtual hearing next week.

Tarnowski has consistently stated that it will be challenging to negotiate a final contract as time continues to lapse.

This week, he told the *Rivereast* that his committee is "on hold until this is settled."

Tarnowski added that he's unsure if there will be sufficient time to secure a final contract with BRD Builders, even if the town receives a favorable outcome in court.

"If we get a decision next week, it's a tight timeline," he said. "So, I don't know."

Tarnowski confirmed that he's communicated with the builder, and the bid is still available. Sometimes, he said, a builder will agree to extend the period to finalize a contract.

Once a contract is secured, value engineering can often decrease the overall cost of a project, as well. However, that process cannot officially begin until the deal is signed.

"We've told the judge that time is of the essence," he said. "We can't negotiate until we have a contract in place."

A Board of Selectmen Controversy?

Ahead of the Board of Selectmen meeting on Dec. 15, Bisbikos made a surprise announcement that a potential vote regarding a building contract would take place at the meeting.

Earlier that morning, selectman Rosemary Coyle sent an email to the board, stating that a motion would be added to that night's agenda.

The proposed motion, which was identical to a motion passed by the Senior Center Building Committee earlier this month, was to "enter into a contract with BRD Builders, LLC for \$8,625,000 to provide for the construction of the Senior Center as described in plans and specifications as prepared by Silver/Petrucci & Associates, and in accordance with bid docu-

ments." Following that revelation, LaChapelle and Rudko filed another motion for a temporary injunction.

"The Court set the matter for a hearing on December 20, 2022, and the Town has elected to pursue this matter at the 11th hour in an effort to avoid the judicial determination and attempt to circumvent/render these proceedings moot," the motion read.

The order called for the town "to cease and desist from seeking approval to and/or attempting to enter into any contracts reasonably related to the design or build a Senior Center which exceed \$9.5 million."

Judge Steven Jacobs granted the motion later that day before the selectmen meeting, stating that the town cannot enter a contract exceeding that amount or take "any action in connection with that proposed project until the completion of the hearing," which has now been postponed.

Bisbikos, during a phone call this week, stated that after conversations with the town attorneys, the potential motion was vetted and within the town's right.

He said that through adjustments, the town has "in front of us a potential contract less than \$9.5 million." The new amount, he said, was around \$9.3 million.

"The recommendation was that we could make a motion to begin contract negotiations," Bisbikos said.

He added that the town was still going to wait and see what happened during the Dec. 20 hearing.

"I was never going to sign a contract before we had legal clarity," he stated.

Coyle told the *Rivereast* that she proposed the motion, which was ultimately removed from the agenda following the injunction, because it would help begin the contract negotiation process as the town faces a looming deadline.

"I was simply doing what you should do as a [Senior Center Building Committee] liaison," she said. "I was just doing my job."

She explained that earlier in the month, as the litigation was just beginning, the town attorneys suggested holding off on taking any action regarding the motion. Then, last week, the attorneys recommended making the motion at their meeting.

LaChapelle stated his own opinion, which is that the board was "attempting to render the hearing moot."

"The motion was to enter in a contract for a certain amount," he said, adding that the language didn't include anything about "negotiations."

He also emphasized that as of now, there is not a physical contract to review that shows a cost under \$9.5 million.

As far as how that number was reached, Tarnowski stated that some budget lines were adjusted, included the amounts for furniture, fixtures and equipment.

He confirmed that the most recent proposal was "under the \$9.5 million amount."

Bisbikos stated that due to this number, there's "nothing stopping us from moving forward."

While time is expiring to sign a contract, the first selectman said, "We'll get it done."

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New Year's Day 5K

The Youth First Coalition and Colchester Youth and Social Services announce the 18th annual New Year's Day 5K Resolution Run. The 2023 5K Resolution Run takes place at Colchester Town Hall at 10 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023. Registration and bib pick-up begins at 8:30 a.m.

Pre-registration is \$25 and same-day Registration is \$30. The first 150 people registered will receive a race T-shirt. Register at tinyurl.com/38a8rver.


Proceeds benefit youth scholarships and youth center upgrades.

For more information, contact Charity Benedict at Colchester Youth and Social Services at 860-537-7255 or cbenedict@colchesterct.gov.

Christian Life Chapel News

Christian Life Chapel, located at 392 S. Main St., holds worship in person at 10 a.m. Sundays. Follow the church on Facebook for the livestream.

For more information, call Pastor Don Rivers – the church's bi-vocational pastor, who also serves as president for "Racing with Jesus, Inc." – at 860-398-9119 or visit christianlifechapel.org.



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Bacon All-Stars... Five Bacon Academy football players recently earned Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) All-Star Awards. Pictured from left are Zach Perrault, Brady Gould, Aidan Fritz, Jack Holmes and Kevin Claffey. Claffey (defensive line), Fritz (safety), and Gould (linebacker) were named to the All-ECC First-Team. Holmes won the conference's Sportsmanship Award and Perrault was named a Scholar Athlete.

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RE4-15-22



Gingerbread Fun!... The four-year-old class at Colchester Cooperative Nursery School had a sweet time making gingerbread houses last week. CCNS wants to thank the Stop & Shop in Colchester for donating the frosting.



Wishing you a Merry Christmas from our family to yours!



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Upcoming Senior Center Trips

The Colchester Senior Center is planning the following trip. Reservations should be made in person at the senior center, 95 Norwich Ave. Trips are available to senior center members and adult guests over the age of 18, and are on a first-come, first-served basis; space is limited. Call the senior center at 860-537-3911 for more information.

Canadian/New England Cruise: May 12-20, 2023. Sail the St. Lawrence River and Northern Atlantic while visiting ports in Canada and New England. Arrive in Montreal by deluxe motor coach, then set sail with stops in Quebec City, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Sydney and Halifax, Nova Scotia, Bar Harbor, and Boston. Includes overnight accommodation in Montreal, a three-hour tour

of Montreal, dinner, all meals on board, daily activities, nightly entertainment, casino, and deluxe motor coach back to CT from Boston. Prices start at \$1899 per person for twin. Final payment is due Jan 28. You must have a valid passport. Call or visit the senior center for more information or call Friendship Tours directly at 860-243-1630 or 800-243-1630.

Spain & Portugal: Costa Del Sol to the Portuguese Riviera: Oct. 14-25, 2023. Taste some of the delicacies of this southern Spanish region. Includes 10 breakfasts, two lunches and four dinners. Cost is \$5,029 per person for double, if booked before March 15, 2023. You can come into the senior center to register in person or register online at gateway.gocollette.com/link/1102385.

Colchester Federated Church News

Colchester Federated Church is an Open and Affirming church located at 60 Main St. Pastor is the Rev. Lauren Lorincz Ostrout. The church office is open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. The office can be reached at 860-537-5189 or cfc06415@gmail.com.

Worship services are Sundays at 9 a.m.; masks are optional. For those wishing to worship from home, the service will be broadcast via Facebook Live each Sunday at 9 a.m. Worship videos are at www.colchesterfederated-church.org under the Worship & Sermons tab. Updated information is also on the church's Facebook page.

Christmas Eve Services: Dec. 24: 5 p.m., Family Service; 9 p.m., Lessons & Carols.

Christmas Day: There will be no in-person worship service on Christmas Day, Sunday,

Dec. 25. A virtual message will be shared on the church's Facebook page.

Sunday School: Sunday School is held during worship from September through June. Children in grades pre-K through 8 are welcome. The nursery is located just off the sanctuary. Visit the church website to register youth for Sunday School.

Twelve-Step Meetings: AA meets in the church library Monday-Wednesday and Friday at noon and Thursday at 10 a.m., and at 7:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. On Saturdays at 9:30 a.m., Al-Anon meets in the Jerusalem Room and AA meets in the Stage Room.

Boy Scout Troop 72: Meetings are held in the Stage Room every Monday at 7 p.m.

Westchester Church News

Westchester Congregational Church, 98 Cemetery Rd., holds worship Sundays at 10 a.m. The services are also available on Zoom; visit westchesterconchurch.org for login information. Sunday School meets during the worship service.

Christmas Schedule: Saturday, Dec. 24, at 4 p.m.: The church's candlelight Christmas Eve service; **Sunday, Dec. 25, at 10 a.m.:** Christmas Carol service.

Meetings: The church hosts several groups

meeting weekly: Al-Anon, Wednesdays at 7 p.m.; AA, Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Scout BSA Troop 109, Tuesdays at 7 p.m.; and Cub Scout Pack 109, one Thursday per month at 6 p.m.

Outreach: The church has a white wooden Blessings Box in the lower parking lot with non-perishable food items and other useful items. Anyone in need or who wishes to donate may stop by and take or leave a few items.

For more information, email westconchurch@gmail.com or call 860-267-6711.

Parks and Rec Holiday Activities

Colchester Parks and Recreation, located at 127 Norwich Ave. (Town Hall), has announced several holiday-related items of interest. For more information, call 860-537-7297 or visit www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department.

Home and Business Holiday Display: Folks can print their free map and view all of the Colchester holiday decorations. Maps are available at www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department or online at www.facebook.com/colchesterparksandrec. Vote for your favorite home and business decorations online. Voting runs through Dec. 31.

Colchester Holiday Ornament: Ornaments will be available in the Parks and Rec. office throughout December. Cost is \$6 per ornament.

Gingerbread House Contest: Gingerbread houses will be displayed throughout Town Hall through Dec. 22. All visitors to Town Hall are encouraged to vote for their favorite one. Each gingerbread house will be awarded a superlative award ribbon. The "Community Favorite" will be awarded to the gingerbread house with the most votes. There is no cost to enter the contest.

Ukrainian Catholic Church News

All are invited to worship each week at St. Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, 178 Linwood Ave. The church offers Eastern Rite Divine services. Church doors are open for Divine Liturgy on Saturdays at 4 p.m. and Sundays at 9 a.m.; the Sunday service is bilingual.

For more information, call the church at 860-537-2069.

Honor Roll

The following Colchester residents made the Saint Bernard School honor roll for the first quarter of the 2022-23 school year:

Honors with Distinction

Grade 10: Evan Clark; **Grade 11:** John Paul Peck; **Grade 12:** Yuang (Peter) Gu.

High Honors

Grade 8: Brevin Gonzales; **Grade 11:** Marguerite Brady; **Grade 12:** Daniel O'Brien, Alexander Rowllins.

Abundant Life Church News & Notes

Abundant Life Church, a Christ-follower church that believes salvation through Jesus Christ, is located at 85 Skinner Rd. For more information, call 860-537-3082 or visit AbundantL.com.

Sunday Services: Sunday School is at 9:30 a.m. and the main service is at 10:30 a.m. There is also Children's Church available for ages 4-11. All are welcome. The main service is also broadcast live each week on Facebook. Visit www.facebook.com/groups/abundantlifeCT or look for the church on Facebook. For more information, call the church.

Power of Prayer: If in need of prayer, call the church to be placed on the prayer list. You may also ask about the various days and times the prayer groups meet and come at that time.

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Senior Center News & Notes

Russell Mercier Senior Center has announced the following. For more information and full program descriptions, and to register, call the senior center at 860-228-1700. Pre-registration is required for all programs. The senior center newsletter is online at tinyurl.com/3xfm862d. For information on various other weekly classes, meetings and activities, contact the senior center or look to the senior newsletter.

Holiday Closings: The senior center will be closed Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 26 and 27, and Monday, Jan. 2.

All-Levels Yoga: Mondays, Jan. 9-Feb. 27, 10:15-11:15 a.m. Fee is five classes for \$15, or \$5 per class to drop in. Chairs may be used to meet all abilities. Bring a yoga mat if you will not be using a chair.

Movie Monday: Monday, Jan. 9, 12:45 p.m. *The Lost City*, starring Sandra Bullock, Channing Tatum and Daniel Radcliffe, will be shown. Lunch of hot dog, baked beans and coleslaw will be served beforehand at noon (lunch cost is \$3 due Friday, Jan. 6, at noon). To sign-up for the movie or lunch and a movie, call the center.

Technology Assistance: Tuesday, Jan. 10, 10-11:30 a.m. Stop in for assistance with any of your devices (such as smartphones, iPads and laptop computers). Pre-registration is preferred.

Free Lunch and Learn: Wednesday, Jan. 11, noon, sponsored by Marlborough Health Center. The topic will be on fall prevention. Lunch will be turkey or tuna on a hard roll with lettuce and tomato, chips, bottled water and a cookie. You must pre-register with the senior center and provide your sandwich choice by 2 p.m. Monday, Jan. 9.

Bus Trip – Lunch to Roberto’s Log Cabin in Lebanon: Friday, Jan. 20, leaving at noon. Cost is \$5 for transportation; lunch is on your own. To register, call the senior center.

AARP Driver Course: Tuesday, Jan. 24, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., in-person at the center. You need

to arrive by 8:50 a.m. and bring something to write with. AARP members cost \$20, and non-members cost \$25; fee is payable to the instructor day of class. Register ASAP. Auto insurance discounts may be available. To register, call the senior center. Note: Coffee will be available in the morning, but no food is served, so if you may need something to nosh on, feel free to bring it with you.

Grocery Shopping Trips: To Stop and Shop Fridays, Jan. 6 and 27; to Walmart in North Windham Fridays, Jan. 13 and Feb. 3; and to Big Y Jan. 20 and Feb. 10. Pre-registration for each trip is required by the prior Wednesday at 10 a.m. To sign up, call the senior center.

Energy Assistance Winter Heating Program: The senior center is taking applications for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP), which is designed to help offset winter heating costs. If a household’s primary heating costs are included in rent, the household may also apply for assistance. To make an appointment, call the center.

Community Café: Onsite meals take place Monday-Thursday at noon. Reservations due by 10 a.m. the day before the meal, and by 10 a.m. Friday for Monday’s lunch. Requested donation is \$3. Reservations required; call the center to register. For the full month’s menu, check the newsletter, the website, or at the senior center.

Senior Transportation: Offered to ages 60 and up and all adult disabled individuals, for medical care, personal needs care, grocery shopping, or other pre-approved needs. Transportation available Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., and Friday, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Appointments must be scheduled a minimum of 24 hours in advance, but 48 hours is recommended – and required for new riders. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call the center.

Got an Air Line Trail Tale?

Do you have special memories of your experience on Hebron’s portion of the Air Line Trail? If so, you’re invited to email your short “Tale of the Trail” for possible publishing on the Air Line Trail 12-town website, now being created by CTCRD (Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development) through funding from the state.

Memories can include discoveries of unique trail sections; special moments with

family and friends; meeting fellow trail users; celebrations or commemorations on the trail; experiences with nature; enjoyment of different modes of travel (horse treks, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, wheelchair, biking, walking and more) – any reason the Air Line Trail is special to you.

Email your short tale to jdavies@ctcrd.org, with the subject line “Trail Tales – Hebron,” by Wednesday, Jan. 4.

Church of the Holy Family News

The Church of The Holy Family, 185 Church St. (Route 85), celebrates weekend Masses Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 9:30 a.m.; and weekday Masses Tuesday at 7 p.m. and Thursday at 6:30 a.m. Visit holyfamilyhebron.org for more information. The church office can be reached at 860-228-0096.

Church Collecting for Homeless Shelter: The church collects items for the Windham Region No Freeze Hospitality Center, which provides assistance to homeless adults. Greatest needs: disposable masks; men’s and women’s insulated waterproof gloves; disinfectant spray; air freshener; paper towels; toilet tissue; men’s

M.L.,XL sweatshirts, sweatpants, hoodies, thermal shirts, T-shirts, and boxer briefs (always needed); heavy knit, fleece or faux-fur lined hats; women’s briefs (sizes 6-10); sturdy adult backpacks (new or used in good condition); \$15 Stop & Shop gift cards for gas to assist people living in their cars (supply is low). Note: Call to arrange pick-up of gift cards. Place donations of goods in the designated collection box next to the church’s Cry Room. Place large quantities of donations in the Cry Room. For more information, call Monica or John McKerracher at 860-228-4211.

Parks and Recreation News

Hebron Parks and Recreation is offering the following programs. For full program descriptions and to register, visit hebronct.recdesk.com or call 860-530-1281.

WINS For Life Youth Basketball Clinic – Offensive Skills: Wednesday, Dec. 28, at Hebron Elementary School. Cost is \$30. Session A1, for boys and girls in grades 3-5, is 8:45-10:15 a.m., and session B1, for boys and girls in grades 6-8, is 10:30 a.m.-noon. To register, visit www.wins4life.com.

Winter Classic Basketball Camp: Thursdays, Jan. 5-Feb. 2, after school until 5 p.m., for grades four and five. Held at Hebron Elementary School. There will be activities, drills and games. Cost is \$100.

Babysitters Training: Saturday, Jan. 7, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., at Douglas Library, for ages 11-17. Cost is \$80. This one-day course is intended to teach age-appropriate skills necessary to care

for children of all ages using concepts focusing on safety and prevention. A two-year certificate is awarded after completion of class and test.

Home Alone Safety for Kids: Thursday, Jan. 26, 5-6:30 p.m., at Gilead Hill School. Cost is \$45. This interactive course for boys and girls ages 8-13 will cover safety concerns parents have when their children are by themselves. Each student will receive a workbook that covers house key safety, indoor and outdoor (including kitchen) safety, gun safety, fires, gas leaks, first aid kit essentials and phone, door, and internet safety. Pre-registration is required.

Karate: In the style of Goju ru, made famous by the *Karate Kid* film series. Six-week sessions re held Mondays and Wednesdays at Gilead Hill School. Cost is \$85 per session. Ages 5-11 are 5-5:50 p.m., and ages 12 and up are 6-7 p.m. Call Parks and Rec. for more info.

Church of Hope News & Notes

Hebron Church of Hope, 1 Main St., holds worship Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Church of Hope is a biblically-driven Christ-centered church.

Worship is in person and via livestream on the church website. For more information, and the guidelines for in-person worship, visit www.hebronchurchofhope.org.

The church office is closed until further notice. Pastor Jordan Brown can meet by appointment; use the church website to set up a time.

For more information about Hebron Church of Hope, visit the website or look for the church on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

Car Seat Installations

The Hebron Fire Department offers free infant and child installation/safety checks by a licensed safety technician at Station 1, 44 Main St. To schedule an appointment, call 860-228-3022 ext. 162.

Transfer Station Holiday Hours

The Hebron Transfer Station holiday hours are as follows:

Christmas Eve, Saturday, Dec. 24: closing at 2 p.m.; Christmas Day, Sunday, Dec. 25: closed; New Year’s Eve, Saturday, Dec. 31: closing at 2 p.m.; New Year’s Day, Sunday, Jan. 1: closed.

Library Association Seeks New Members

The Douglas Library of Hebron Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit private organization established to support the library, is looking for new members.

This volunteer advocacy group provides support to the Douglas Library Board of Trustees. The Association exists as a requirement of the Charles J. Douglas Trust which provides a source of funding for library business each year. The association designates five members to serve on the Library Board of Trustees.

Members must be residents of Hebron as well as be 18 years of age or older. The association meets twice a year.

For more information, call the library director at 860-228-9312 ext. 316.



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BOS Seeks Influence in School Guard Process

By Jack Lakowsky

Though fronting just 10% of the cost, the Marlborough Board of Selectmen wants a say in any changes made to the incoming armed school resource officer (SRO) at Marlborough Elementary School.

Superintendent of Schools Holly Hageman told the Marlborough school board that both it and the selectboard must agree on changes made to the guard's job description or work duties.

The selectboard, in a 3-1 vote earlier this month, said the town would pay for 10% of the guard's cost, with the vast majority on the school's tab. The SRO's estimated cost is \$104,000 for a full school year.

Despite footing most of the bill – Hageman dismissed the idea that it constitutes cost-sharing – the superintendent said she's "very pleased we'll have an SRO."

School board chair Wes Skorski previously told the *Rivereast* he's also happy to see the guard process moving. (Skorski was absent from the Dec. 15 school board meeting).

Hageman said the local constable chief is confident "several people out there are certified

for an interested in the position."

Discussing the selectboard's influence, school board member Sue Stolfi asked what would happen if the school board voted against the proposed agreement with the town.

Hageman said then the school simply wouldn't get the guard.

"There isn't room for negotiation," said Hageman, explaining that because the town feels "many many" parents voiced support for adding an armed guard to MES grounds, they'll also support the necessary jump in the school system's upcoming 2023-24 budget.

Hageman said she'll say clearly the guard is a major driver in any increase. But in the end, she added, "the budget still has to pass with voters."

The town's plan is something of an outlier, according to information Hageman provided.

Reading a survey the state conducted, Hageman learned in a sample of around 60 school districts, a majority of school guards are funded by their towns, with 12 funded totally by the district itself and fewer than five splitting the cost.

Selectman Betty O'Brien, who originally

wanted the school to pay the whole bill, said if those 12 are doing it "then it must be working out really well, I assume." O'Brien said she wanted the school to pay because the town has significant incoming costs.

O'Brien said, "I really believe the people will pass your [the school board's] budget." O'Brien also said she would like to send the question to the Board of Finance and "let them move things around" if they wanted, an idea Bourbeau quickly iced.

Selectman Joe Asklar advocated for a 50/50 split with the school, saying public safety is very much a duty of the town's, that the cost will come out of taxpayer pockets regardless of where the item's listed, adding the board was "debating a null point."

When O'Brien asked Hageman if she was happy with the decision, Hageman said she was

"just glad we have an SRO."

Board members also questioned language on the SRO's role in disciplining students.

Board member Angela Colantonio said she was confused by the agreement's language on response to student misbehavior, a "graduated" response that ends in "reaching out to the SRO."

Colantonio said the SRO should not be used for student discipline, that she "hears things happen" in other districts about teachers jumping to an SRO when students do things they shouldn't.

Hageman said the SRO in certain situations can "assist" and intervene with students and teachers.

Hageman attempted to allay worries, saying officers are clear about "what the job is and what it isn't."

Congregational Church News & Notes

Sunday worship services at Marlborough Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, located at 35 S. Main St., are at 10 a.m. Childcare for infants and toddlers is provided downstairs in the nursery; however, children are always welcome at the worship service.

Faith Formation (Bible Study) is led by Pastor Bob Faulhaber and meets Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. upstairs in the lounge. All are welcome.

AA meets downstairs in the Great Hall Wednesdays with two meetings, one at noon and another at 7:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight service, with the Chancel Choir and Holy Communion, will be held in the sanctuary at 9 p.m. The anthem "O Holy Night" will be sung by soloist the Rev. Bob Faulhaber.

Sunday, Dec. 25 Christmas Day worship service is at 10 a.m. The service will be led by

Faulhaber and, after 20 years of service, it will be his last Sunday serving as the church's settled pastor. The Rev. Val Seaver begins serving the church as its settled pastor starting Jan. 1.

Sunday, Jan. 1: Holy Communion will be served, with worship led by Seaver. Communion is open to all, regardless of church affiliation, including children, with parental guidance. The bread used is gluten-free.

Second Blessings Thrift Shop: Closed until Feb. 3, to set up for late winter and spring selling. Donations will be accepted in January; call the church office to make arrangements. The shop also sells items year-round through eBay at bit.ly/MCCebay.

General Info: Worship services and programs are open to all. The church is an Open and Affirming faith community. For more information on the church or its programs, call the church office at 860-295-9050.

Parks and Rec Programs

Marlborough Parks and Recreation has announced the following. For full descriptions or to register, visit marlboroughct.recdesk.com and click on "programs," stop by the office at Town Hall, 26 N. Main St., or call 860-295-6203.

Youth Programs: Netto Indoor Soccer: Indoor soccer for fifth- and sixth-graders. Games will begin week of Jan. 9, and will be played after school on Mondays and Wednesdays at Marlborough Elementary School. Games will conclude at 4:30 p.m. Fee for this program is \$75 and participants will receive a T-shirt.

Sparkling Spinners: Tuesdays, Jan. 3-March 15, 4:15-4:55 p.m., for ages 3-5. This is a pre-ballet, creative movement class, held at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Registration fee is \$150.

Tiny Twirlers Dance Class: Thursdays, Jan. 5-March 16, 5:15-5:45 p.m., or Saturdays, Jan. 7-March 18, 9-9:30 a.m., for ages 2-3 with caregiver. Children will be introduced to basic dance moves, work on their motor skills, and develop a sense of music. Class held at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Registration fee is \$130.

Hip Hop/Jazz: For ages 9-11. Thursdays, 6:45-7:30 p.m., from Jan. 5-Feb. 16. Class held at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Registration fee is \$129.

Funky Tumblers: For ages 4-7. Saturdays, Jan. 7-March 14, 11:15 a.m.-noon. This is a basic tumbling and hip-hop class, held at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Registration fee is \$146.

Lego: Winter Wonderland Engineering:



Senior Center News and Notes

Marlborough Senior Center, 17 School Dr., is open for activities. Call 860-295-6209 for the center's hours and more information.

Monday, Dec. 26: Senior center closed in observance of Christmas.

Tuesday, Dec. 27: Transportation, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Grocery Shopping, 8:30 a.m.-noon; Quilling, 9 a.m.-noon; Meals-on-Wheels, noon.

Wednesday, Dec. 28: Assistance, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; 8-Ball Pool, 10 a.m.-noon; Meals-on-Wheels, noon; Congregate Meal, noon. Menu: grape juice, pepperoni pizza, marinated vegetable salad, fresh fruit; setback, 1-4 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 29: Tai Chi, 10:30-11:30 a.m.; Congregate Meal, noon. Menu: orange juice, boneless pork chop with apples and onions, cornbread stuffing, parsleyed carrots, egg-nog and cookie; setback or card game of your choice, 1-3 p.m.; PD Exercise with Anne, 3-4 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 30: 8-Ball Pool, 10 a.m.-noon; Assistance, 10 a.m.-noon; Commission on Ag-

ing meeting, 11 a.m. at Town Hall; Congregate Meal, noon. Menu: cheese and beef raviolis with marinara sauce, California-blend vegetables, garlic knot, fresh fruit; Cards, 1-4 p.m.

Congregate Meals: All meals are served with milk, bread and margarine. Suggested donation: \$3 or what you can afford.

Transportation: Available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Transportation available to the senior center, shopping, and medical and non-medical appointments. A 36-hour advance registration is required. Masks are also required, as well as appropriate distancing.

Food Bank: Located at 3 Willenger Drive (860-295-6008), the food bank is open every Tuesday from 10 a.m.-noon and 3:30-5:30 p.m. The food bank is open to qualified residents in need of food. Transportation for seniors and/or physically challenged individuals is available; call the senior center if you need a ride.

Weather-Related Closings/Late Openings: In instances of inclement weather, tune to WFSB-TV 3 or NBC Connecticut for the latest.

Town Office Holiday Closing

The offices of Marlborough Town Hall, Senior Center and Public Works Department will be closed Monday, Dec. 26 for the Christmas Holiday.

Marlborough Historical Society Calendars

Marlborough Historical Society 2023 calendars are now available. This year's theme is 'Historic Newspaper Articles.'

Cost is \$20 and can be purchased online at www.marlboroughhistory.org/store.

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Historical Society Calendars Available

Marlborough Historical Society has announced 2023 calendars are now available. This year's theme is 'Historic Newspaper Articles.'

The cost is \$20 and can be purchased online at www.marlboroughhistory.org/store or by mail at MHS, P.O. Box 351, Marlborough, CT 06447. All proceeds go to support preservation initiatives and upcoming events by the Marlborough Historical Society.

New Year's Eve Celebration

All are invited to a New Year's Eve Open House at the Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., from 6-9 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 31, weather permitting. Feel free to bring a snack and a drink. All are welcome.

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Santa's Elves... Dave Pratt and Leanne Essinger, of Marlborough Food Bank, recently picked up 100 holiday meals from Will Malkasian of Sadler's

State Names MES a 'School of Distinction'

By Jack Lakowsky

Earlier this month, the state Department of Education named Marlborough Elementary School (MES) a "School of Distinction," after hard-working students achieved high growth in math skills.

"There is no doubt that this is directly due to the exceptional and dedicated work of our students, teachers, staff, and administration with the support of our wonderful families and the Marlborough community," the school said in a post to its website.

"For our students to have achieved improved results compared to pre-pandemic performance and growth is remarkable and provides us all with a confident sense that we are on a great path."

In an email to the *Rivereast*, Superintendent of Schools Holly Hageman said she is proud of the elementary school's high growth in math, and that MES staff, as the school emerged from the pandemic years, "carefully mapped out mathematical content and analyzed the math progress of each student,"

adjusting instruction as each learner needed. Hageman said the efforts of students also contributed to the school's "important growth."

The school's score, Hageman said, was higher than pre-pandemic results.

"Thoughtful and caring educators, motivated learners, supportive families, and a devoted Board of Education and community are the ingredients for this positive outcome," wrote Hageman.

MES Principal Dan White said this specific award is "a new one for us" – though it's not the school's first award.

"This [award] was definitely a team effort," said White.

MES Vice Principal Kim Kelly said the award's the result of a "focused and dedicated" school district and is a fantastic opportunity to recognize student achievement.

Kelley told the local school board in a meeting last week, "This is a really big celebration for us."

St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Church is located at 30 Jones Hollow Rd. Pastor is the Rev. Thomas J. Sas, John McKaig is deacon emeritus and the pastoral assistant is Holly Bangham. The church office can be reached at 860-295-0001; hours are Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. People are asked to call before heading over or connect via the phone or email at stjohnfisher30@yahoo.com.

COVID-19 Protocol: For the fully vaccinated, masks are not required. For the unvaccinated, masks continue to be encouraged. Call the office for more information.

Weekend Masses: 4 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday. All are welcome.

Weekday Mass: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Sundays, 4-4:45 p.m.

Family Faith Formation: This is a new program to focus on active faith formation within the family is underway for families of kindergarten through middle school students; registration is required on the church's Faith Formation website and will close at the end of September.

Confirmation Community: The church's active 9th- and 10th-grade confirmation pro-

gram continues. Registration is required as well.

Adult Worship Choir: Meets Wednesdays from 5:30-7 p.m. All are welcome to join. More information can be found on the church website.

Community Outreach and Service: Food drives are held the second full weekend of each month for Marlborough Food Bank; you may also bring non-perishable food or household donations directly to the Marlborough Food Bank Monday and Tuesday mornings. Sandwich-making and collection continues on the last Thursday of the month for St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown. The Community Garden to benefit Marlborough Food Bank continues to supply fresh produce each week and volunteers are always welcome. Other scheduled service opportunities can be found on the church website and are scheduled monthly.

Other Programs and Offerings: For more information on such programs as adult faith formation, youth group, RCIA, Knights of Columbus or other ministries, call the office, visit the church website at www.stjchurch.org, or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church).

Residents Sought to Serve

The Marlborough Board of Selectmen is seeking residents who are interested in serving on the town's various boards and commissions.

While applications are accepted at any time for all boards and commissions, the selectmen are providing notice and encouraging residents to apply to fill current vacancies on the following boards and commissions:

Economic Development Commission (two alternates); Conservation Commission (alternate); Water Pollution Control Authority (two alternates); and Nature Trails and Sidewalks Commission (alternate). Those interested in applying can complete

the application form at marlboroughct.net; the link for the form is at the bottom of the page on the left-hand side.

In accordance with the town charter, and based on the current composition of the various boards and commissions, party affiliation or other qualifications may or may not be considered when appointments are made. People who are unaffiliated and those who belong to minor parties, as well as Democrats and Republicans, to apply.

Residents are welcome to attend any of the public board and commission meetings to learn more.

Resident Presents Capstone Project

Eastern Connecticut State University's English department held its English Night celebration Dec. 8, and Marlborough resident Margaret Bielaczyc presented her capstone project.

Bielaczyc, a senior majoring in English, presented "Designing a Website to Help Students Study Scottish Drama." Bielaczyc completed this project with the help of her faculty mentor, English professor Kenneth McNeil.



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From the Superintendent's Desk...

Back on Track – On the Rise – Supporting the Community

There is certainly much to celebrate at Marlborough Elementary School. Actually, every day is joyful in an elementary school, particularly one as special as MES. Children walk through the doors smiling, skipping, chatting and they transition beautifully into the caring communities of their classrooms. When you walk through the hallways, in and out of classrooms, like I have the honor and pleasure of doing, it is just amazing to see educators skillfully orchestrating the day, setting up young learners to think, engage in discussions, solve problems, as well as perform. The two-and-one-half years of pandemic schooling are in the rearview and the staff and students of MES have come roaring back!

Our school accountability “report card” for 2021-22 showed a higher overall score than the last time (pre-pandemic) the score was reported, and MES was recognized as a School of Distinction for growth in mathematics! In science, our students ranked 15th out of 182 schools on the Next Generation Science Assessment. There is no doubt that this is directly due to the exceptional and dedicated work of our students, teachers, staff, and administration with the support of our wonderful families. For our students to have achieved these results is remarkable and provides us all with a confident sense that we are certainly back on track.

In literacy, our staff has been deep in the work of the science of reading, transforming our methods of instruction to help ensure that all children have a secure foundation. This has been a big and essential lift that teachers have rallied around. We are grateful to have the support and guidance of the Board of Education so that we have the resources needed to help each child thrive.

The heartbeat of the school was palpable and on display through the lens of the recent holiday concerts. Well over 150 students performed in the Chorus and Symphonic Band in front of packed audiences. The performers were magnificent! Many staff members collaborated to pull all of the logistics together and it was simply superb.

And in this holiday season, it is heartwarming to see how the students, staff, families, and community members associated with MES are a hub of thoughtfulness and generosity through events like Stuffing the Cruiser for Toys for Tots, Holiday Sharing and the Holiday Bear Project for students and families in need, Decorative Lanterns for the Marlborough Rehabilitation Center, Holiday Ornaments and Cards for the Marlborough Senior Center, and Connecticut Children's Pajama Day.

MES is back on track, on the rise, and supporting the community. We look forward to great things ahead in 2023!

Holly Hageman
Marlborough Superintendent of Schools



United States of Gingerbread... Marlborough Elementary School's kindergarten classes are participating in a nationwide gingerbread man exchange. Each student decorated a gingerbread man with iconic Connecticut images. Then each gingerbread man was sent on their way with a letter containing information about Connecticut. In exchange, Marlborough Elementary School is receiving a gingerbread man and a letter with information about the sending state. The teachers in the picture are Karen Craig, Amy Farrior and Amy Cone.



Holiday Donation... Marlborough Democratic Town Committee members, family and friends recently presented the Food Bank of Marlborough with a donation of \$945. Dawn Tavolieri and Dave Pratt were present to accept the donation. To donate to the Food Bank, see more information at foodbankofmarlborough.wordpress.com/donate. Pictured are, row 2, Nina Pakulis, Karen Pakulis-Paul, Pat Carroll, David Pratt; Row 1: Dawn Tavolieri, Aileen Vrooman, Anna Holden family, Dianne Dunn.

★ **Officials Weigh Proceeding cont. from page 1**

Advertising, to potentially assist with a survey and with general public relations regarding the project. The board may consider employing the firm's help at some point in the near future.

Following the brief presentation of the cost breakdown, the selectmen asked a few clarifying questions.

Kasper said he wanted to know how much of the project design would be transferable to an alternative location if the Kinney Road option was not feasible.

“Let's say over time, this ends up going to a different site,” he said. “Are we starting all over?”

If a portion, or even substantial part of the plan could be transferred, that would potentially save the town a significant amount of money with additional design costs – if they did choose a new location.

Tierney said he was uncertain about the exact percentage of the design that could be re-used or transferred to a different site, but confirmed that “a lot of it would still be valid” and the “building is not going to change.”

Tiffany Thiele, a Democrat on the board, inquired into whether the funding for the cost design was in a specific line item in the budget.

Tierney stated that the money was not currently in the spending plan.

“We would look to budget that money,” he said, adding that the funding would “have to be approved by the Board of Selectmen and then would go to the Board of Finance.”

Kinney Road residents have been the most vocal critics of the proposal, bringing up a variety of concerns. Perhaps most commonly brought up are fears of salt contamination that could result from the new storage area or from vehicle activity outside the facility.

Kevin Tulimieri, a Kinney Road resident who has consistently opposed the project and submitted documents to the board to support his views, urged the selectmen to consider providing Kinney Road homes with public water.

“If you must put this facility in, you have to consider providing us with town water so that we can protect our homes, protect our lives and really our own health,” he said.

Part of the debate over salt contamination intensified after William Warzecha, a retired hydrogeologist with the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, wrote a letter in September highlighting his concerns with the project.

Warzecha stated that the Kinney Road site is classified as “GA” by DEEP, meaning that it is suitable for drinking without treatment. Ideally, he'd recommend constructing a Public Works facility on a “GB” site, or an area that has impaired groundwater.

On Dec. 8, a week before the selectmen meeting, Warzecha was invited to a Hebron Green Committee meeting to offer his insights.

Board of Selectmen Chairman Daniel Larson was also in attendance at the meeting and participated in the committee's conversation with Warzecha.

Then, during the selectmen meeting, Larson reported that Warzecha did “verbally indicate that [the proposal] did seem workable.”

Warzecha told the committee that while he hasn't reviewed the final plans and designs, the site at Kinney Road was not an ideal choice for the project.

“I think from an environmental planning standpoint, this is not a great location for a Public Works facility,” he said.

He emphasized that road salt is a “terrible problem” and “when it gets into ground water and pollutes people's drinking water, it's very difficult to resolve.”

Proponents of the new facility have argued that it will be built to newest and highest standards, which would eliminate the risk of contamination.

While Warzecha acknowledged that he predominately dealt with slightly older facilities during his career, he stated that regardless of the standards, the risk of contamination may hinge on good “housekeeping.”

Sometimes, whether it's through sloppy actions or just an accident involving something spilling off a truck, contamination is seemingly “inevitable.”

Warzecha has a brother-in-law who lives on Kinney Road, he shared, which is partially how he became involved with the subject.

He did offer a few measures that would make a new facility safer, including monitoring wells near the salt storage building. He also suggested that town water should be provided to at least a few of the houses closest to the site.

Warzecha, seemingly aware that his letter has circulated throughout the community, expressed that he wasn't trying to interfere with the project.

“I'm confident you guys will figure this out,” he told the Hebron Green Committee.

The town is still waiting for an update from DEEP regarding its stance on potential contamination at the facility.

In a previous statement provided by the Department of Public Health in consultation with DEEP, the department wrote that “given that the construction, maintenance and operations of the facility are conducted with best management practices, any chance of groundwater contamination associated with the project would not be of significant concern to the departments.”

The town also provided written responses to numerous questions brought up by the community in previous months.

In one of its written responses, the town addressed fears over salt contamination.

“Storage and handling of salt will be within enclosed structures and performed on impervious surfaces,” the town wrote. “Storm water management systems will be designed to prevent pollution by avoiding storm water coming in contact with other materials and providing impervious surfaces in these areas.”

At the selectmen meeting, additional concerns were raised about the storm water treatment pond.

Jean Tulimieri asked a question regarding the pond, leading to an exchange with Larson, who said he was unfamiliar with the details of the pond, and Tierney.

“There is a pond on the property that's going to take care of the parking lot surface water,” Tierney said. “The structure that's going to be proposed, that's going to store the salt, has a drainage system underneath a rubber membrane that goes into an oil water separator and then goes out and is discharged into the sanitary sewer – not into the groundwater, not into the wetlands.”

He added that there would be catch basins for the parking lot and that water ultimately goes to the pond.

Tulimieri then asserted that parking lots still have salt and oil, which could then be released into the pond.

“So, there's a chance that storm drain waste from impervious services would contain sodium chloride that will be released into the wetlands – that is a possibility?” she asked.

Tierney said the possibility was the same as it would be when truck drives down a residential street with salt.

“Until they come up with another product, that's the product of choice,” he said.

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BOE Talks Next Steps After Noose Incident

By Michael Sinkewicz

District leaders continue to formulate their response and strategy going forward following the discovery of a noose in a locker room at RHAM High School last month.

A 17-year-old teen was arrested and charged with placing a noose on property and second-degree breach of peace in connection to the incident.

On Monday, the RHAM Board of Education held a wide-ranging meeting, where community members and officials addressed the event and provided an update on the district's potential next steps.

The board listened to comments from concerned citizens, as well as a brief presentation from Exec Mommy Group LLC (EMG), a diversity, equity and inclusion consulting firm.

In the immediate aftermath of the incident, local organizations, including the Windham/Willimantic chapter of the NAACP, called for state and federal investigations, while urging the community to take the matter seriously.

"We're sitting on a powder keg here and everybody is acting like it's a joke," Rodney Alexander, the first vice president of the Windham/Willimantic chapter, said following the arrest. "It's time for the jokes to stop."

Other groups, like Hebron's Coalition on Diversity and Equity (CoDE) hosted a rally earlier this month to help combat hate in the community.

At the beginning of the board's meeting this week, one community member asserted that RHAM was being too "defensive" as it continues to receive feedback and suggestions.

"I am hoping RHAM will take this as a learning and teaching event," said Joanne Hebert, who urged the district to "talk about things head-on in the social justice world."

The RHAM school board had held its November meeting just days after the incident occurred. Leading up to this week's meeting,

the board, along with the broader community, had additional time to digest the events and begin formulating both immediate and long-term strategies.

Chairman Michael Morris offered assurances to the community that the incident was being "taken seriously," and said numerous concerns have been voiced publicly regarding the situation.

Morris also responded to specific concerns, including those made by community leaders who continue to closely monitor the district's reaction.

CoDE president Amy D'Amaddio previously stated that her group would be standing back and watching the school, emphasizing that "nothing will be swept under the rug."

Morris said he felt the board, administrators and Superintendent of Schools Colin McNamara are taking the right steps to ensure that the district's response is properly executed.

"This is not a small task, but [the district] is committed to doing what's necessary," he said.

McNamara, during his report to the board, said it's been an "extremely challenging time for the RHAM community."

Following the noose incident, he said, additional complaints and reports of other potential problems have increased at RHAM. While he didn't detail what exactly those incidents were, he said they were expected as a result of the noose discovery. Those reports are being investigated and followed up on by district leadership, who McNamara said have taken appropriate action.

McNamara stated that the district is largely focused on a long-term response, which has included meeting with a variety of local leaders, consultants and the Department of Education.

He said the district is committed to making the schools welcoming to every student, and that further engagement with the RHAM com-

munity is likely necessary in order to identify the areas of concern.

To that end, McNamara introduced Joelle Murchison, the founder of EMG. He called Murchison a "valuable resource" who can "help navigate the challenges we're facing."

During her remarks to the board, Murchison said the district has a "real opportunity to begin talking" and to "learn from each other."

"The important piece is being deliberate about starting," she said.

Murchison said that as bad as the noose incident was, it also "created an opportunity." That optimism, she said, can be utilized to enact change that some community members have claimed is long overdue.

One of the crucial steps moving forward, Murchison said, is beginning meaningful dialog. She suggested that separate focus groups involving students, teachers and the larger school community would help create a space to decipher the issues.

Those groups would "get a better understanding of what's going on here" and then leaders could "use the information to help shape a plan to move forward."

Hopefully, people will learn from each other throughout that process.

The question, Murchison said, will be, "What are the deliberate actions we can take in this district?"

She continued by stating that there is not a

"one size fits all" solution.

"It can't happen overnight," she said. "It doesn't work that way. It takes time to unlearn what we've been taught."

By starting dialog and taking "one step at a time," RHAM will be moving in a positive direction, she said.

Morris, at the end of the discussion, observed that he's noticed some in the community are concerned about an overreaction to the noose incident, while there are also those fearful of the district underreacting.

The board, which will need to navigate that line, did not vote or make any decisions about how the district should proceed moving forward.

Previously, town leaders involved in the meeting with the superintendent and the consultant shared that they were encouraged with the progress being made so far.

Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney said he was "impressed" by the suggestions made by CoDE and the consultant.

Andover Town Administrator Eric Anderson also expressed confidence in the administration and the work being done by the superintendent.

"The school is going in the right direction with this and they handled the situation pretty well," he said, adding that the school's long-term mission should be on how to "produce students who are good students, who function well within society."

Basketball Clinic, Pasta Luncheon

There will be a Holiday Break Basketball Clinic and Pasta Luncheon with the RHAM High School boys' basketball team Thursday, Dec. 29, from 9-11:30 a.m., at the RHAM High School gym, for boys and girls in grades K-8.

All skill levels are welcome. Children will have the opportunity to meet the players and coaches and participate in drills. There will be contests with prizes. Also, children will have a pasta lunch with the team and coaches,

just like the team does the night before big games.

Cost is \$25 per child, and each child will receive a ticket to get into the boys' RHAM varsity basketball game on Jan. 10 at 6:45 p.m. against Tolland.

To register and pay, email fraleighdonna3@gmail.com by Tuesday, Dec. 27, and a registration form and payment information will be emailed to you.

Family Resource Center Winter Programs

The AHM Family Resource Center will offer the following winter programs for young children and families starting in January. Registration is online at ahmyouth.org/programs-services/family-resource-center. Financial aid is available for families who qualify; email Tressa Giordano for details at tressag@ahmyouth.org. For more information about any of these programs, visit www.ahmyouth.org, contact Becky Murray at 860-573-1260, or contact Laura Beeler at 860-228-0871 or laurab@ahmyouth.org.

Play and Learn Groups: Thursdays, 10-11:15 a.m., from Jan. 12-March 16, at Gilead Hill School in Hebron, for children age birth-5 and adults. The program includes crafts, free play with materials in the Family Resource Center, (trucks, train table, play kitchen, puzzles, dress-up and more) circle time, snack, and information about parenting and child development. All enrolled families will be offered a free developmental screening for their child. Cost is \$70/family for the 10-week session.

First Steps in Music Class: Wednesdays starting Jan. 18, 9:30-10:15 a.m., at the AHM building, 25 Pendleton Drive, Hebron, for

children age birth-5 and adults. Cost for the eight-week program is \$125/family. This is an early childhood music program facilitated by a trained music teacher with singing, movement, rhythm and instruments.

Fun with Dinosaurs: Mondays, Jan. 9-Feb. 27, 9:30-10:30 a.m., for children ages 1 1/2-5 and adults. Younger siblings are welcome. There will be dinosaur activities, books, games and a snack. Cost is \$45/family for the six-week session.

Parenting Workshop: Tuesdays, Jan. 17-31, 7:30-8:30 p.m., via Zoom. Appropriate for parents with children of all ages. Topics to be covered include using encouragement, naming emotions, reasoning, involvement, communication and humor. Class participants will receive the book *E.N.R.I.C.H. Your Relationship with Your Child* by Dr. Debbie Kruegel-Farr. Kruegel-Farr is a parent coach, consultant, and educator with a Ph.D. in research, human development and family studies. She also previously worked in Hebron as the AHM Family Resource Center coordinator. This workshop is free but registration is required; to do so, email Becky Murray at beckym@ahmyouth.org.

'Welcome 2 Reality' Social Media Presentations Planned

Welcome 2 Reality, a Connecticut-based company that provides a variety of services to children and families, will give two 45-minute presentations early next year that are designed to increase awareness and strengthen skills in responding to vulnerabilities of individuals related to social media, internet safety, and media literacy.

The presentations are sponsored by AHM Youth & Family Services' Coalition for a Healthy & Empowered Community.

Topics to be discussed include: internet safety, cyberbullying, media marketing and advertisement, music's impact on values and behavior, and the desensitization of violence via video games. Risk factors associated with social media and technology will be identified and reasonable alternatives that can lessen people's overexposure to these outlets will be provided.

Parents and caregivers of children and teens are invited to attend.

The first presentation, "Social Media and Our Youth," will be Tuesday, Jan. 31, 2023, and will cover the benefits/drawbacks, interpretation, legal ramifications of social media and how to be responsible with social media. The second presentation, "Support for Parents and Caregivers,"

will be on Tuesday, Feb. 28, and will discuss strategies how to monitor technology use at home; giving structure and support with clear boundaries; giving access or freedom in increments. Parent concerns will be addressed on topics such as internet addiction, addictive technology (cell phone, fear of missing out – a.k.a. F.O.M.O.), video-gaming and overstimulation.

Each presentation will be from 7-8 p.m. via Zoom. There is no cost to attend but space is limited to 40 registrations. To register, email AHM Prevention Coordinator Jenn Boehler at jenniferb@ahmyouth.org. Note: if registrations do not exceed 15 people, the presentation will be canceled.

For additional information, visit ahmyouth.org/chec-coalition-committee.



Cocoa With a Cop

AHM Youth & Family Services is hosting Cocoa With a Cop on Saturday, Jan. 7, from 9-11 a.m., at the Marlborough Country Bakery, 8 Independence Drive, Marlborough.

All are invited to come mingle with local officers, receive a stress-relieving police car, and get a free mug (while supplies last).

This event is sponsored by AHM's Coalition for a Healthy & Empowered Community (CHEC) and paid for by the Drug-Free Communities Grant. For more information, visit ahmyouth.org/programs-services/prevention-programs and follow AHM CHEC on Facebook.

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★ Grants Helped Portland cont. from page 1

continued remediation at two brownfields on Brownstone Avenue, work that has gone on since just before the pandemic.

Curley said this money isn't yet guaranteed. As a condition of receipt the town must have a dedicated developer. A previous attempt at finding a private partner failed, with no developers responding to the town.

"We learned a lot from that," said Curley. "One thing [that discouraged firms] was the property wasn't remediated."

Now it nearly is, Curley said, with "clean fill" getting trucked in "as we speak."

Curley had wanted to find a restaurant for the site. He stills wants one, but said in this next round the town will be more flexible.

He said eventually the site will mean "long-term revenue," and will spark further development.

Another windfall to the town's coffer came earlier this year, with the state committing \$500,000 to fund repair of the defunct high school track, long in disuse and a topic of much discussion in town Facebook forums.

Former town first selectman Susan Bransfield, near the end of her 20-year tenure, brought in a granted-funded shelter diversion program, a way of helping people at immediate risk of losing their housing. In short order the program has grown, with a \$440,000 boost in outside funding, the program will go until at least the end of next year.

With the state's investments and the arrival of new businesses like military contractor Birdon, Curley said Portland's on the radar, and has a lot of "untapped potential," a potential that will hopefully finally be tapped when the Brainerd Place project finishes.

Curley said he expects good, visible, "vertical" progress at Brainerd throughout next year.

Another perennial topic Curley hopes to expedite next year: water. The town's water vendor, the Metropolitan District Commission, has spied prices in recent years, and the town is trying to position itself to leave MDC when their shared contract ends in a few years.

Portland wants to find its own water source. Curley said pursuing this work has taught him how to navigate the state's labyrinthine red tape.

"Sometimes you have to move within the system," he said. "Things can't always move as fast as we'd like."

Now, state approvals and a contractor in hand, Curley expects test drilling of potential wells to move far ahead next year.



Reach out to a friend about their mental health.

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SEIZE THE AWKWARD



Rivereast at the Rio Grande... Bob and Martha Czarnecki of Colchester recently attended the Balloon Festival in Albuquerque, N.M. A side trip was made to Rio Grande State Park.

Where in the World is the *Rivereast*?

Hey! Are you taking a vacation or a day trip soon? Bring the *Rivereast* along with you, snap a picture with it, and email the photo and your address to bulletin@glcitizen.com.



Wild Blue Yonder... Pictured is Keron Flannery of East Hampton in 4 Cliffs in Humarock Ma Hickum Air Force Base military reservation.



Beautiful Balloon... Colchester resident Diane Caron brought her *Rivereast* to the recent 50th Anniversary of the Hot Air Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque, N.M.



Mission Trip Memories... Burton Jones of Andover and his wife Yvonne recently returned from a dental mission trip with the organization DDS International, where the two were part of a team that provided dental service and education to 450 people in need in the remote mountains of Esquipulas, Guatemala.

Where in the World?

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Obituaries

Marlborough

Joseph A. Concodello Sr.

Joseph A. Concodello Sr., 71, of Marlborough, beloved husband of Louise (Lagueux) Concodello, passed away peacefully early Saturday morning, Dec. 17, at Middlesex Hospital, surrounded by his loving family. Born Oct. 15, 1951, in Hartford, he was the son of the late Ambrose J. and Anna (Bartholomew) Concodello. He attended South Catholic High school and graduated class of 1969.



Joe's close cousin Frank Corona introduced Louise to him during a blind date and he married the love of his life, Louise, on May 12, 1973.

Following school, Joe instantly took interest in the construction trades, starting with a family-owned construction company while building their new house in Marlborough and then with S. G. Milazzo in 1980. He worked for S.G. Milazzo for 34 years, retiring in 2014, most of which were as a foreman, where he was known for his quiet demeanor, likeability and unstoppable work ethic. He had the ability to not only be the leader, but to be able to work alongside with his crews all while developing lasting friendships. On the weekends, he would always make time to help both Joey and Michael at their own houses, even while renovating his own.

He loved coaching MYAL baseball and basketball teams that his sons were on, most of which had first-place finishes every season, taking them to many state playoffs. His drive to help every player, not just his sons, develop into the best they could be was a true joy to watch, setting an example for all. He would even conduct baseball practices under the pavilion at Blish Park so as to not cancel a practice due to rain. Following his coaching career, he made sure to never miss any after-school or weekend games throughout both Joey and Michael's middle and high school sports careers, bringing his folding chair to sit closer to the action.

His favorite vacation spot was Misquamicut, R.I., during the early family years until more recently, in 2005, when he and Louise began vacationing with Royal Caribbean, eventually cruising 10 times in total, bringing the whole family and close friends whenever possible. They decided in 2020 to have a backyard pool oasis built to more easily enjoy the summer

months with his wife, sons and granddaughters. His perfect evening included sitting in the hot tub with his wife, making a small fire in his chimenea and watching the Yankee game.

Besides his love for family and work, he faithfully watched the New York Yankees, New York Giants and UConn sports teams, celebrating each of their great championship runs over the past years. He could also be found lifting weights in his basement weight room while listening to the latest rap and hip-hop music, with the volume turned up loud shaking the ceiling, followed by making his protein shake. His love for their 350Z convertible was evident by the way he would wash, wax and polish the chrome rims every weekend. He always made time for Facebook, making it part of his daily routine during the more recent years. He would love sharing current events, town political news and commenting on important posts. He was always supportive of his wife's daycare and the children she helped raise through the years, loving some of them as much as family, attending their school and sporting events whenever possible.

Some of his proudest moments were in 2014 and 2015 when both sons married. But his smile was never brighter than when he would hold his granddaughters in his arms in either his rocking chair or recliner, at first feeding them their bottles and then later their favorites, push up popsicles and ice cream cones. He truly enjoyed just being present in their playroom, watching them learn to crawl and walk or just listening to his granddaughters play.

Besides his wife, Joe is survived by his son Joseph A. Jr. and his wife Veronica (Ojeda) Concodello of New Haven and youngest son Michael J. and his wife Meredith (Young) Concodello of Marlborough; a sister, Patricia Johnson of North Port, Fla.; and five granddaughters, Adeline (6), Aubrey (3), Alana (1), Sophia (3) and Scarlett (1).

He was predeceased by a sister, Rose Marie Arbour.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Tuesday, Dec. 27, at 11 a.m., at St. John Fisher Church, 30 Jones Hollow Rd., Marlborough. Burial will be at the convenience of the family. Friends may call at the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, on Monday, Dec. 26, from 4-6 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Marlborough Food Bank, 3 Wilhenger Drive, Marlborough, CT 06447.

For online condolences, please visit www.mulryanfh.com.

East Hampton

Dr. Leonard Abraham Jr.

Leonard Gladstone Abraham Jr. was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on his mother Ruth's birthday, March 3, 1926. Growing up with his younger siblings Bill, Barbara, and Betty in Madison, N.J., Len sang in the church choir, competed in the high jump, built and flew model airplanes, and experimented with radios.



Partway through college at Cornell, Len enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1944, ultimately serving on Guam; he mustered out two+ years later as an electronics mate, 2nd class. Returning from service, he went on to complete his undergraduate as well as graduate degrees in electrical engineering. It was at Cornell that Len met and married Jean Marian Glindmyer. He also continued his love of singing, this time in barbershop quartets.

During his Ph.D. thesis and throughout his career, his field of research was radio wave and microwave propagation and manipulation. While much of his work as a civilian contractor for the Department of Defense was, and remains to this day, classified, we know he helped develop the Ultra-Low Frequency submarine communication system that is still in use today by the U.S. Navy.

Working first at the GE Labs in Schenectady, N.Y., in 1959, Len was recruited by the Department of Defense to work for the GTE Sylvania Research Lab in Waltham, Mass. Commuting weekly for two years between New York and

Massachusetts, he and his wife Jean and their four boys, Charles, Robert, Richard, and Roger, eventually moved to Lexington, Mass.

Len was active in the purebred dog world with basset hounds, a bloodhound and a beagle in both dog shows and field trialing. He served in many roles as a member of both the Pilgrim Basset Hound Club and Eastern Dog Club.

Six years after Jean's passing in 1972, Len met and married Kathleen Sabourin, a Wellesley school teacher. They moved to Stow, Mass., while he finished his career at the Mitre Corporation in Bedford, Mass. Once both retired, Len and Kathy moved to Belchertown, Mass., enjoying the unique blend of rural and university access the area is known for. Len continued to sing in the church choir and stayed involved in the Eastern Dog Club.

Preceded in death by Kathy in 2013, Len moved to Loomis Village in South Hadley, Mass., and eventually into the Soldiers' Home of Holyoke, from where he passed peacefully on Dec. 20, 2022.

He leaves behind his two sisters, Betty Dowd and Barbara Shrauner, and sister-in-law, Berta Abraham, sons Charles (Rhoda) Abraham, Robert (Janet) Abraham, Richard (Diane) Abraham, and Roger (Cynthia) Abraham, nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren with a ninth on the way, and many nieces and nephews.

It is worth noting that in his later years, despite losing two wives to cancer, Len would often share that he was truly blessed to have loved and been loved by two exceptional women.

He will be missed by all who knew him.

In lieu of flowers, gifts can be made in Len's memory at takeethelead.org, a 501C3 organization that assists professional dog handlers during times of crisis.

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LEGALS

TOWN OF PORTLAND

Legal notice is hereby given to the taxpayers of the Town of Portland that the second installment of real estate and personal property taxes on the October 1, 2021 Grand List and the Supplemental motor vehicle taxes are due and payable on January 1, 2023.

Taxes not paid in full on or before Monday, February 1, 2023 become delinquent and are subject to interest at the rate of one and one half (1 1/2) per cent per month from due date (3%, if paid in February). Minimum interest charge is \$2.00. Quarterly water and/or sewer usage bills are due and payable January 17, 2023. Payment not made in full on or before February 17, 2023 will be subject to interest of 1.5% per month from due date.

Failure to receive a bill does not invalidate the tax. Please contact the Collector of Revenue if you do not have a bill. Tax information is available on the Town of Portland website www.portlandct.org.

Online tax payments are accepted by visiting our website www.portlandct.org and are subject to convenience fees. Payments are accepted at the Collector of Revenue's office, 33 East Main Street, Portland, CT or by mail: Town of Portland Collector of Revenue, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480-0071. We do have a drop box for after hour payments by the back door.

Office hours are as follows:
 Monday, December 26, 2022: CLOSED
 Monday, January 2, 2023: CLOSED New Year's Eve
 Monday, January 16, 2023: CLOSED Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 Tuesday: 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
 Cynthia L. Gotta, CCMC
 Town of Portland
 Collector of Revenue

3TB 12/23, 1/13, 1/27

TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH LEGAL NOTICE

All persons liable to pay the January installment for Real Estate, Personal Property, Motor Vehicle and the Supplemental Motor Vehicle tax to the Town of Marlborough as levied on the October 1, 2021 Grand List are hereby notified the taxes are due and payable on January 1, 2023 and will be delinquent February 2, 2023. The mill rate for the Motor Vehicle and Supplemental Motor Vehicle tax on the 2021 Grand List is 32.46 and the Real Estate, Personal Property mill rate is 35.55. Delinquent bills shall be subject to interest of 18% per year (1.5% per Month). Minimum interest is \$2.00. Tax payments may be paid at the Tax Collector's Office, 26 North Main St., Marlborough, CT or by mail to Tax Collector, P.O. Box 29, Marlborough, CT 06447. Checks are to be made out to the Town of Marlborough. The Tax Collector's hours are Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 8:30am to 4:30pm; Tuesday 8:30am to 7:00pm and Friday 8:30am to 12noon. Tax payments can be paid on-line at www.marlbroughct.net with a Master Card, Visa or ACH (automatic checking). A Drop Box to left of the main door to the Town Hall is available for payments as well as in the Tax Collectors office.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Barbara C. Murray,
 Tax Collector

3TB 12/23, 1/6, 1/27

TOWN OF PORTLAND PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Portland Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, January 5, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Buck Foreman Room (2nd Floor), 265 Main Street, Portland, CT. Public access through Zoom link A at www.portlandct.org to consider the following:

Application #22-12: 378 Cox Road. Request for an 11-lot subdivision on a property containing wetlands. Application of Tom Briggs, Property of Synnot Properties, LLC. Map 78, Lot 21. Zone RR/Forest Neighborhood Overlay Zone.

Application #22-15: 1401 Main Street. Proposed 2 lot re-subdivision. Application and property of Cote Range LLC. Map 68, Lot 1. Zone R-25.

At this hearing interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications will be received. A copy of these applications are available for review in the Portland Land Use Department.

Dated at Portland, CT this 19th day of December 2022
 Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
 Planning & Zoning Commission

2TB 12/23, 12/30

Andover Board of Education Budget Schedule 2023 In Person & Via ZOOM

January 11 7:00 p.m. Regular Board of Ed Meeting – Overview of the State of School Affairs
 January 18 7:00 p.m. Special Meeting/Budget Workshop (Special Education, Curriculum, Proposed Initiative Changes)
 January 25 7:00 p.m. Special Meeting/Budget Workshop (Salaries, Insurance, Facilities Maintenance)
 February 1 7:00 p.m. Public Input and Special Meeting/Budget Workshop
 February 8 7:00 p.m. Regular Board of Ed Meeting – Expected Vote to Approve Budget

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87220610398?pwd=amFaOXZVMmVhVakVPam0NOjVWkFOQT09>
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2TB 12/23, 12/30

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF ANDOVER REVENUE COLLECTOR'S NOTICE

To the property owners of the Town of Andover:
 The third installment of the taxes listed on the October 1, 2021 Grand List becomes due and payable to the Town of Andover on January 1, 2023. Payments must be postmarked, paid on line, or brought to Town Hall by February 1, 2023 to avoid an interest charge. Interest will be charged starting February 2, 2023 on all delinquent bills at a rate of 18% per year (1 1/2% per month) from the due date of January 1st, with a minimum charge of \$2 for each bill.

View or pay taxes online at www.andoverct.org. Cash, check or money order payments are accepted at the Town Hall during business hours. Payments by check or money order may be mailed to the Tax Collector's office or placed in the drop box outside Town Hall. Office hours in January are Monday 8:15 pm – 7:00 pm, Tuesday and Thursday 8:15 am – 4:00 pm. The office will be closed on Monday, January 16, 2023 in honor of Martin Luther King Day. Please refer to www.andoverct.org for updated office hours.

Failure to receive a tax bill will not invalidate the tax or any interest which may, by State law, accrue.

If you have any questions, please contact the tax office at 860-742-4035 option 4.
 Eileen Curtin, Tax Collector
 Town of Andover
 17 School Road
 Andover, CT 06232

3TB 12/23, 12/30, 1/27

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON ATTENTION ALL TAXPAYERS

Notice is hereby given to the taxpayers of the Town of East Hampton that the taxes for the second installment of real estate, personal property, and supplemental motor vehicles levied on the Grand List of October 1, 2021 are due and payable on January 1, 2023. The last day on which to pay without penalty is February 1, 2023. Real estate and personal property taxes are based on a mill rate of 34.66 mills which equates to \$34.66 in taxes per \$1,000 of net assessed value. Supplemental motor vehicle tax is based on the state capped mill rate of 32.46 mills. The supplemental motor vehicle tax bills were mailed on December 9, 2022.

Late payments will be subject to interest penalty at the rate of 1 1/2% per month or a fraction thereof, 18% per annum, from the due date of the tax, as required by Conn. Gen. Stat. 12-130, 145 and 146. Payments legibly postmarked by the USPS on or before February 1, 2023 are considered on time regardless of when they are received by the Tax Office. Payments received February 2, 2023 and later, including payments postmarked February 2, and later, are considered past due. The minimum interest charge is \$2 on each tax bill. A returned check fee is \$20. As owners of property, taxpayers are responsible to see that taxes are paid when due. Failure to receive a tax bill does not exempt the taxpayer from payment of all taxes and interest charges should the tax become delinquent.

Please make checks payable to: Town of East Hampton. Payments may be mailed to Collector of Revenue, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424. Pay online by visiting www.easthamptonct.gov. Hours of collection are: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 8:00 am – 4:00 pm, Tuesday 8:00 am – 6:30 pm and Friday 8:00 am – 12:30 pm.

Respectfully,
 Kristy L. Merrifield, CCMC
 Collector of Revenue

3TB 12/23, 1/6, 1/27

TOWN OF HEBRON LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that a copy of the "Professional Agreement" between the Regional School District No. 8 Board of Education and the Regional District No. 8 Administrators' Association is on file in the Town Clerk's Office, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, Connecticut. The new contract is for the period July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2026.

Dated at Hebron, Connecticut this 21st day of December, 2022.
 Carla A. Pomprovicz, Town Clerk
 Town of Hebron

1TB 12/23



TOWN OF HEBRON Revenue Collection Department Press Release

The Collector of Revenue for the Town of Hebron, Adrian MacLean, reminds taxpayers 2nd half Real Estate taxes are due, the payment stub for January 2023 was included with the original bill due back in June 2022. Motor Vehicle Supplemental bills are also being mailed separately. You may receive a Supplemental bill if you purchased a vehicle between October 1, 2021 and September 30, 2022. Bills are due without penalty by February 1, 2023. Payments received or postmarked February 2nd or later will be subject to interest of 3% (1.5% per month from January 1, 2023). If you would like to pay your bill online using a credit/debit card or directly from your checking account, visit www.hebronct.com, the link is located by selecting Town Departments--Tax Collector--View & Pay Your Taxes.

If you believe you should have received a bill or need a copy, please contact our office at 860-228-5971 x146. Our office encourages any taxpayer to contact the office if you need to make payment arrangements, while we must abide by state statute we will make every effort to work with you.

The Tax Office and Assessor's Office does close Monday – Thursday from 12:30 – 1:15 for lunch. The Revenue Department would like to wish everyone a Happy and Safe New Year.

3TB 12/23, 1/6, 1/27

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON LEGAL NOTICE Notice of Hearing

The East Hampton Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a regular meeting on January 4, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, Eaton Smith Council Chambers Room 107 and via ZOOM Virtual Meeting to consider the following:

PZC-22-010: Connecticut Water Company. Install well metering building. Map 10A/ Block 85/ Lot 5C
 Ray Zatorski, Chairman
 Note* any question re: Applications and Maps are on file in the Land Use Office 860-267-7450.

2TB 12/23, 12/30

TOWN OF PORTLAND PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF DECISION

At the December 15, 2022 meeting, the following actions were taken:

APPROVED with Conditions PZC Application #22-10: 311 Brownstone Ave. Request for a Special Permit Modification to change approved storage building to public bathrooms and welcome center with small studio living unit. Application and property of Dean and Darlene Soucy. Map 28, Lot 54. Zone B-3/Riverfront Overlay Zone.

APPROVED with Conditions PZC Application #22-13: 69 Marlborough Street (Main Street and Marlborough Street). Request for Special Permit Modification. Application and property of BRT DiMarco PTP, LLC. Assessor's Map 19, Lot 68. Zone B-2. Riverview Street. Request for a Special Permit Modification to construct a 24,000 sq. ft. building with a 5,000 sq. ft. mezzanine office area. Application of PDS Engineering & Construction. Property of Birdon Property LLC. Map 3, Lot 8. Zone R-10.

APPROVED with Conditions PZC Application #22-11: 47 Lower Main Street and adjacent town lot. Request for Site Plan Modification for 12,560 sq. ft. addition and new parking lot. Application and property of 47 Lower Main and The Town of Portland, LLC. Map 19, Lots 82 & 83. Zone I.

APPROVED: 236 Main Street. Request for TCVD approval for replacement siding and recommended by the TCVD design consultant. Application of Magee Companies and property of 236 Main Street Portland LLC. Map 28, Lot 30. Zone B-3/TCVD.

Dated at Portland, CT, this 20th day of December 2022
 Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
 Planning & Zoning Commission

1TB 12/23

LEGAL NOTICE MARLBOROUGH ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

The Marlborough Zoning Commission will hold the following Public Hearing Thursday, January 5, 2023 at 7:00 PM at Town Hall located at 26 North Main Street:

APPLICATIONS

#Z-08-22: Austin HGB, LLC Bill Gjonbalaj (Applicant / Property Owner), Map 6 Block 28 Lots 4,5,6, 12 and #25 South Main Street Provide apartment housing by building (2) 48-unit buildings.

#Z-12-22: Amendment to Zoning Regulation Article 7A VCD, Article 8A DBIPZ. Cannabis Regulations (PERMITTING).

#Z-14-22: Amendment to Zoning Regulation Article 7A VCD, Article 8A DBIPZ. Cannabis Regulations (PROHIBITING)

Written testimony will be received at the public hearing and written testimony can be sent to the Building/Land Use Department at Town Hall ahead of the public hearing.

Kevin Asklar, ZONING COMMISSION CHAIR

2TB 12/23, 12/30

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF COLCHESTER ATTENTION COLCHESTER TAXPAYERS

Notice is hereby given to the Town of Colchester taxpayers that Motor Vehicle & Personal Property tax bills on the Grand List of October 1, 2021, are due and payable on December 1, 2022, and become delinquent after January 2, 2023.

If any tax due on December 1, 2022, is not paid on or before January 2, 2023, the tax installment shall be delinquent and interest at the rate of 18% per annum (1 1/2 % per month) shall be charged dating back to the original due date of the bill. The minimum interest charge for delinquent taxes is \$2.00.

Avoid waiting in long lines by using our on-line feature, return your payment by mail or use our night drop box. If a receipt is desired, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope and two copies of the bill. Mail postmarked (US Postal Service postmark only) on or before January 2, 2023, will be considered as having been paid on time. **Payments dropped in the town hall's drop box after 12:00 P.M.(NOON) on December 30, 2022, will be deemed as paid late.** Please note our holiday hours: 12/23/2022 CLOSING AT NOON; 12/26/2022 CLOSED; 12/30/2022 CLOSING AT NOON; 1/2/2023 CLOSED – OPENED REGULAR HOURS ALL OTHER TIMES.

Notice is also given to the Town of Colchester that the 2nd installment of Real Estate & Motor Vehicle Supplemental Bills on the Grand List of October 1, 2021 are due and payable on January 1, 2023 and become delinquent after February 1, 2023.

If any tax due on January 1, 2023, is not paid on or before February 1, 2023, the tax installment shall be delinquent and interest at the rate of 18% per annum (1 1/2 % per month) shall be charged dating back to the original due date of the bill. The minimum interest charge for delinquent taxes is \$2.00.

Taxpayers who did not receive a bill should contact the Tax Office immediately. Failure to receive a tax bill does not invalidate the tax or any interest charged should the tax become delinquent. Taxpayers may access tax bill information and pay on-line from the homepage of the Town of Colchester website at www.colchesterct.gov and clicking the "View and Pay Tax Bills" link under Online Services – fees apply.

Avoid waiting in long lines by using our on-line feature, return your payment by mail or use our night drop box. If a receipt is desired, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope and two copies of the bill. Mail postmarked (US Postal Service postmark only) on or before February 1, 2023, will be considered as having been paid on time. **Payments dropped in the town hall's drop box after 4:30 P.M. on February 1, 2023, will be deemed as paid late.** Please make all checks payable to the Tax Collector. Mail payments to the Tax Office, 127 Norwich Avenue Colchester, CT, 06415. Questions concerning tax payments should be directed to the Tax Office, (860) 537-7210.

Michele Wyatt, CCMC
 Town of Colchester
 Tax Collector

1TB 12/23

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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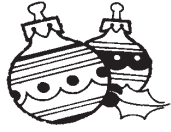
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PT COOK WANTED: Experience preferred. Please inquire within at Eggs Up Restaurant Rt.66 Portland, CT



Senior Center Van Driver – P/T \$17/Hr.

The Town of Marlborough is accepting applications for a part-time Senior Center Van Driver for Wednesday and Friday from 8am to 12noon. This position is responsible for safely driving seniors and persons with disabilities to appointments and outings on an assigned schedule. Valid Connecticut Driver's License and Class A/B Public Service License with Endorsement F is required. The full job description and employment application are available from the Town Clerk's office at Town Hall or online at www.marlboroughct.net. Please submit an application and cover letter to: Marlborough Town Clerk, 26 North Main Street, P.O. Box 29, Marlborough, CT 06447. This position will remain open until filled. The Town of Marlborough is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

4TB 12/9, 12/16, 12/23, 12/30

HELP WANTED: CASO'S HVAC, LLC, East Hampton, CT is now hiring Commercial & Residential HVAC Mechanics/Technicians. B2 or S2 License Required. Must have at least 5 years experience. We offer competitive hourly wages. Please email resume to casohvac@comcast.net or call 860-267-5851.

MUSIC DIRECTOR FOR SPRING MUSICAL: Glastonbury Youth and Family Services is seeking candidates for the seasonal position of Musical Director for their spring musical. Will be responsible for teaching music from the production to the cast by playing piano and use of prerecorded tracks. Must be able to demonstrate/coach proper vocal technique as it applies to musical numbers. \$1250.00 stipend for 10 afterschool rehearsals March through beginning of May. Email jason.stankowski@glastonbury-ct.gov for details.

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CIT5-19-22

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RE8-13-21

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Please call Kristina Pink: 860-801-1114

CIT9-1-22

TOWN OF HEBRON ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK

The Town of Hebron is seeking an experienced administrative individual to serve as Assistant Town Clerk. This position is responsible for performing a wide range of clerical and record keeping duties for the smooth and efficient operation of the Town Clerk's Office. Records and reports land records and vital statistics, issues licenses and permits; assists in the administration of elections; provides office administrative assistance to Town Clerk; and assumes responsibility of the office in the absence of the Town Clerk. Three years of office administrative experience is required. Certification as a Municipal Clerk is preferred. This is a full-time position with a starting salary range of \$50,000 - \$55,000 DOE with a generous benefit package. A detailed job description and application are available at the Office of the Hebron Town Manager, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, Connecticut 06248, by calling (860) 228-5971 or at www.hebronct.com. Applications and resumes will be received until Friday, January 20, 2023, at the above address. The Town of Hebron is an equal opportunity employer.

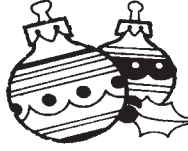
1TB 12/23

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RE12-23-22

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Please call Kristina Pink: 860-801-1114

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