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RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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

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## Top 23 Local Sports Moments of 2023

By Josh Howard

It has been a year full of individual and team athletic accomplishments around our local towns. With 2023 coming to a close on Sunday, here is a look at the Rivereast's Top 23 Sports Moments of the last year.

### 1. Bobcats, Glover Bring Home Bacon

In what turned out to be a championship match for the ages, Bacon Academy girls soccer outlasted previously undefeated Suffield 2-1 on penalty kicks (11-10) to win a state championship on Nov. 18 at Trinity Health Stadium in Hartford. Once the dust had settled on the epic match, the Bobcats had earned the program's first state title and left the Capital City as the Class M state champions. Junior goalie Elizabeth Glover earned the Most Valuable Player award after scoring a pair of goals on penalty kicks – including the championship-clincher – and stopping four of Suffield's penalty kicks in extras.

### 2. Trifecta for Stennett, Highlanders

For the third consecutive season, Luke Stennett and the Portland High School golf team finished atop the leaderboard, winning the Division III championship at Stanley Golf Course on June 6. Stennett shot a (-3) 68, sinking three birdies and draining an eagle on nine to easily beat runner-up Shane Luca of East Catholic by eight strokes. It was the third year in a row that Stennett, a University of Rhode Island-commit, finished atop the leaderboard at the championship, winning it outright as a freshman in 2021 and finishing as the co-medalist as a sophomore a season ago. As a team, the Highlanders also destroyed the competition, throttling runner-up East Catholic by 17 strokes. It marked the program's seventh title overall, sixth in the last seven years.



Bacon Academy soccer goalie Elizabeth Glover was named the MVP of the Class M state championship game in November. Glover, a junior, is pictured with head coach Matt Rafala following the team's historic win, which earned the Bobcats the top local sports moment of 2023.

### 3. Basketball Supremacy for Bellringers

East Hampton girls basketball celebrated the program's first state championship since 1980, edging Valley Regional 31-29 in dramatic fashion at Mohegan Sun Arena on March 18. Liana Salamone finished with a game-high 12 points and hauled down a team-high 10 rebounds, while Jackie Russell made a pair of clutch plays

on both ends of the court to help preserve the victory. Along with bringing home a state championship, East Hampton captured a fourth consecutive Shoreline Conference (SLC) title and won 26 of 27 total games during the magical season.

### 4. RHAM Volleyball "Three-Peat"

The RHAM High School girls volleyball team

won a third straight CIAC state title, defeating Joel Barlow in the Class M championship match on Nov. 18 at East Haven High School. The win was the program's 10th state championship overall. In the latest title triumph, Lani Fecho was named the Class M Most Valuable Player after posting career-highs in both kills (35) and digs (39) in a five-set win over Suffield in the state semifinals and another 27 kills and a dozen digs in the championship match. Fecho was also named the team's Most Valuable Player after earning her second straight All-State recognition. Her 498 kills in 2023 not only led all of Connecticut, it was most in all of New England. She also surpassed 1,000 career kills in the state championship match, finishing her career with 1,021 kills, which is the third-most in program history.

### 5. Swimmer Shines at State Open

Bacon Academy's Riley Anderson won both the 50 Freestyle and 100 Freestyle at the State Open at Yale University on Nov. 19. It was the second straight season that Anderson won the 50 Freestyle at the State Open, also winning it in 2022 as a freshman. Anderson, a sophomore who swims for the Manchester co-op, also won both the 50 and 100 Freestyle at Class LL finals, marking the second straight year that she won both events at the divisional championships.

### 6. Sullivan Leaves Links on High Note

RHAM High School golfer Holden Sullivan won the Division II State Championship, shooting an even-par 72 at Fairfield Farm Golf Course in Harwinton on June 6. It marked the first individual golf championship in the history of the school. Sullivan shot birdies on three of the last five holes, separating himself from a strong field to win by three strokes. The Raptors finished third overall as a team at the championships.

See Top 23 Sports Moments, page 17

## Local News Highlights of 2023

By Michael Sinkewicz

Before the ball drops and confetti flies on 2023, here are 23 positive, non-political local news moments from throughout the year in Andover, Marlborough, Hebron and Colchester, listed in no particular order.

### 1. Hebron Resident Donates Kidney

In July, Wendy Clark, 60, became a living kidney donor after successfully completing her operation through the Hartford Hospital Transplant Program.

Clark, a nurse at Windham Hospital and a Hebron resident of nearly 40 years, donated her kidney to a woman — who was a total stranger to her — at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Mass.

"It is my ultimate random act of kindness," Clark said just weeks after her surgery. "This was the most rewarding and profound thing I've ever done in my life."

### 2. Groundbreaking Ceremonies

They were two events years in the making:

ground was broken for a new senior center in Colchester, and community center in Andover.

Many dignitaries joined Colchester residents for the ceremony in April, including Congressman Joe Courtney, Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz, state Senator Norm Needleman (D-33), former state representative Brian Smith, state Rep. Mark DeCaprio (R-48), then First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos, Director of Senior Services Patty Watts, the late Cathy Russi, and Senior Center Building Committee Chairman Tony Tarnowski.

State Senator MD Rahman (D-4) and state Rep Steve Weir (R-55) stopped by the Andover festivities in August.

"This is a very special day for us," Andover Senior Coordinator Cathy Palazzi told the crowd.

### 3. Marlborough Gets Its Town Manager

David R. Porter officially became Marlborough's first ever town manager in August.

He previously served as the village admin-

istrator in Winneconne, Wis., for four years. Before that, he worked in Wayland, Mass., as a management analyst and human resources manager. Porter is a member of the International County Manager's Association and received his Master's Degree in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School.

Porter's appointment concluded a lengthy transition away from an elected first selectman after residents voted to modify the town charter in 2021.

### 4. Night of Giving

The Hebron Lions held their annual "Night of Giving" in April, donating \$100,000 to numerous local charities in attendance. Overall, the Lions raised \$140,000 from their 2022 fundraisers, including the annual Harvest Fair and Lights in Motion holiday experience.

"It's affirmation of why I work so hard throughout the rest of the year," said former

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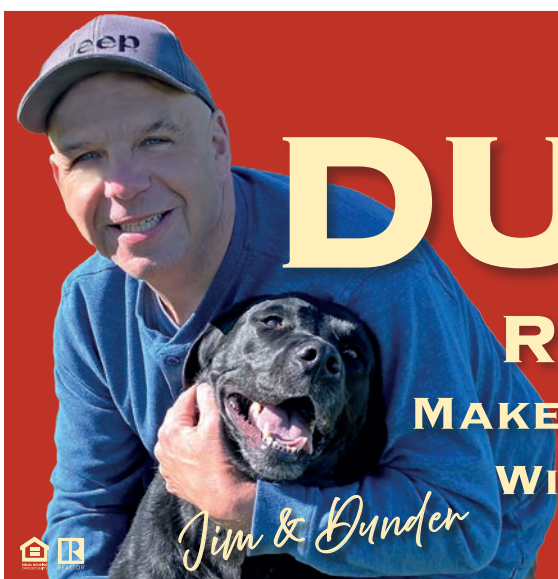
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### Scholarship Opportunity Announced

The East Hartford Garden Club has announced the availability of one \$1,000 scholarship to any full- or part-time student who is a resident of Andover, Bolton, Bloomfield, Coventry, East Hartford, East Windsor, Glastonbury, Manchester, Middletown, Vernon, Storrs or Windsor Locks.

The student must plan on majoring in horticulture, floriculture, landscape design, conservation, forestry, environmental concerns, botany and other allied subjects.

Applications with the submittal instructions are available at the guidance department of the attending school. All completed applications must be received by April 1 to be considered.

### Volunteers Sought for Fields Committee

The town recently received a \$500,000 STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) grant to cover most of the costs of improving the athletic fields on Long Hill – and town selectmen are now looking for people to help oversee the project.

The board is looking for a diverse set of volunteers including parents with young children, those interested in athletics including soccer and softball, as well as adults interested in pickleball to be on the committee. Anyone with a construction or engineering background is also welcome to apply.

These improvements, which are designed to benefit residents of all ages, include the addition of a playground, water and electrical connections to the softball field, three new pickleball courts, and lighting for the soccer field and pickleball courts.

If interested, submit a letter with a short description to the Andover Town Clerk at townclerk@andoverct.org, or mail or drop it off to the town hall at 17 School Rd., Attention: Town Clerk.

The Board of Selectmen is setting up a committee to help oversee this project.

### History of Huskies Hoops

Andover Public Library, located at 355 Route 6, will present “A History Of Huskies Hoops” with author Marty Gitlin on Tuesday, Jan. 9, at 6:30 p.m.

The program will celebrate the history and greatness of the UConn basketball teams. Gitlin will talk about great Huskies players over the years, and will include trivia questions and a Q&A at the end of the program. Plus, neither team has a game scheduled that evening, so you won't miss out on any action!

RSVP is requested, by calling 860-742-7428.

### Commission, Committee Members Needed

Any Andover elector interested in serving on one of the following committees or commissions should send a letter of interest via email to townclerk@andoverct.org:

Capital Improvement Plan Committee, Economic Development Commission, Ethics Commission, Inland Wetlands Commission alternate, Ordinance Review Committee.

### Andover Veterans Ceremony

Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz will host an appreciation ceremony honoring the Korean War-era and Vietnam War-era veterans in the Andover community. The ceremony is tentatively scheduled for January.

All veterans who served during the Korean War-era from June 27, 1950-Jan. 31, 1955, or Vietnam War-era from Feb. 28, 1961-July 1, 1975, provide your name, rank, branch of service, and years of service to the Andover Veterans representatives via email, at veterans@andoverct.org, or calling Susan Camoroda at 703-472-3209 or John Botti at 860-839-3481.

### Andover BOE Announcement

The Andover Elementary School Board of Education 2024-2025 Budget Workshop is schedule over ZOOM at 7 p.m. on Wednesday evenings. Jan 3: Introduction, Overview curriculum & changes; Jan 17: Special education, general supplies, Pre-K; Jan 24: Salaries & Benefits, Insurance; Jan 31: Facilities and Maintenance; Feb 7: Public question and answer session. Zoom Meeting ID: 872 2061 0398, Passcode: 200920

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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](mailto:andoverctchurch@gmail.com) or visit [www.andoverctchurch.org](http://www.andoverctchurch.org).

**Children's Church:** Sunday school is pro-

vided.

**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.; the senior food pantry is open the opposite Wednesdays, also from 9-9:30 a.m.

**AA Meetings:** Saturdays and Mondays, 7 p.m.  
**Sonshine Stampers:** Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.

### 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. Also call Palazzi for all luncheon reservations and transportation needs, including rides to medical appointments. For all Young at Heart events including movies, call Sue Schmidt at 860-604-1057, and call Town Clerk Carol Lee at 860-742-0188 ext. 2 for all trip information. For all senior events and information, visit the senior page of the town website, [andoverct.org](http://andoverct.org).

**Rides to Food Pantry:** The bus is 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, all medical appointments, and to the monthly farmers markets, are available by calling Palazzi.** All seniors, veterans and disabled are welcome. If you have a caregiver, they may come with you.

Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional

### Tri-County American Legion Baseball

Registration is open for those interested in participating in tryouts for one of the Tri-County American Legion baseball program's 2024 summer teams. Deadline to register is Dec. 31.

baseball – 19U, 17U, 15U and 13U.

Tryouts will begin on weekends in January at some nearby indoor facilities. The tryout dates are available on the Tri-County Legion website but age-group schedules will be finalized and shared with registrants after the deadline.

Interested players should register at [www.tcleague.com](http://www.tcleague.com) or contact GM Len Lampugnale at [Lampugnale@comcast.net](mailto:Lampugnale@comcast.net) or at 860-295-0437 for more information.

Serious players who will be between the ages of 13-19 in 2024 – and who have a parent residing in Andover, Colchester, East Had-dam, East Hampton, Hebron, Lebanon and Marlborough – are eligible. Depending on interest, Tri-County is again preparing to enter teams at all four levels of American Legion

### Radon Test Kits Available

January is Radon Awareness Month. If you would like a free radon kit, the Chatham Health District has acquired a limited number of radon test kits from the state Health Department, while they last.

is complete, you will need to mail the kit in for analysis at no charge to you. The results will be sent to you and will not be public information.

Please only take a test kit if you are committed to following the directions and mailing it out. If you are interested in a test kit, please call 860-365-0884.

One test kit is available per residence for those living within the district. Once the test

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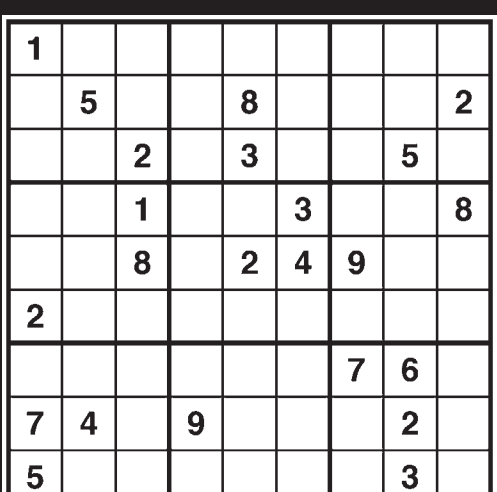
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### Family Resource Center Winter Programs

The AHM Family Resource Center will offer the following winter programs for young children and families, starting the week of Jan. 9. Children attend with a parent or caregiver. For more information about any of the programs, visit [ahmyouth.org/programs-services/family-resource-center](http://ahmyouth.org/programs-services/family-resource-center). Register for any of the programs at [ahmyouth.recdesk.com/Community/Home](http://ahmyouth.recdesk.com/Community/Home). Families that are struggling financially but still to attend can apply for a program scholarship at [ahmyouth.org/program-scholarship-application](http://ahmyouth.org/program-scholarship-application). For more information, contact Becky Murray at [beckym@ahmyouth.org](mailto:beckym@ahmyouth.org) or Ashlee Parks at [ashleep@ahmyouth.org](mailto:ashleep@ahmyouth.org), or call the Family Resource Center at 860-228-0871.

building, 25 Pendleton Drive in Hebron, starting Wednesday, Jan. 17. Classes are 9:30-10:15 a.m. for ages Birth-2 1/2 and 10:30-11:15 a.m. for ages 2 1/2 and up. Mallory Kokus will lead the program, which features singing, movement, rhythm and instruments. Cost is \$125/family.

**Tumble and Roll:** For children ages 1 1/2-5 and adults. Will be held in the gym at Gilead Hill School on Thursdays, starting Feb. 8. Children will get a chance to play and practice motor skills including running, jumping, throwing, and balance skills. There will be a brief circle time at the end of the group with motor activities such as using parachutes, scarves and dancing. Cost for the six-week program is \$40/family.

**Play and Learn Groups:** For children ages Birth-5 and adults. Will be held at the Gilead Hill School Family Resource Center Tuesdays, Jan. 9-Feb. 27, from 9-10:15 a.m. The program includes crafts, free play with materials in the Family Resource Center (trucks, train table, play kitchen, puzzles), 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 eight-week session.

**'Things that Go':** This is a transportation-themed group for children ages birth-5 and adults, and will be held at Gilead Hill School Family Resource Center on Fridays, 9:30-10:45 a.m., starting Jan. 12. Have fun learning about things that move through play, exploration, sensory and art experiences. This group will incorporate different kinds of vehicles including cars, trucks, and trains. Snack and story time will be included. Cost is \$53/family for the six-week session.

**First Steps in Music Class:** For children ages Birth-5 and adults. Will be held at the AHM

### AHM Program

AHM Youth and Family Services' Winter & Early Spring program guide is now available, and registration is open. Classes are open to residents in Andover, Columbia, Hebron and Marlborough.

View the program guide at [ahmyouth.org](http://ahmyouth.org).

### Internet & Phone App Safety Discussion

All are invited to AHM Youth and Family Services on Tuesday, Jan. 23, from 6-7 p.m., and meet Officer James White, who will discuss digital trends and identify high-risk behaviors associated with some youth.

AHM welcomes residents of Andover, Hebron, Marlborough, Columbia and surrounding towns to this discussion. RSVP to Jenn Boehler 860-228-9488 ext. 22 or [jenniferb@ahmyouth.org](mailto:jenniferb@ahmyouth.org).

### Students Sought for Lanterns Mentoring

AHM Youth and Family Services' Lanterns Mentoring Program is seeking students who are interested in having a mentor.

Mentors and students meet once a week for one hour in school or at the AHM Building in Hebron. The mentoring pairs eat lunch together, play games, do crafts, and take walks outside. AHM says youth who are matched with a mentor demonstrate improved academic performance, improved peer/family relationships, increased communication skills, decreased drug use, and improved school attendance.

Students in grades K-12 in Hebron, Andover or Marlborough schools, including the RHAM middle and high schools are eligible. Contact Laura Beeler at [LauraB@ahmyouth.org](mailto:LauraB@ahmyouth.org) for more details.



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**Senior Bowlers...** The Fall Senior Bowling League recently wrapped up for the season. As you can see in this photo, it was a big hit! The Winter Senior Bowling League (for ages 55 and up) will start Wednesday, Jan. 3, at Kickback N' Bowl, 9 Bear Swamp Rd. For more information, contact Jack Anderson at 860-882-3752 or jackande52@aol.com.

## Bulletin Board

"Have you made your New Year's resolutions yet?" my wife inquired this week.

Recognizing trouble on the near horizon (Mama didn't raise no dummy), I pretended to be so absorbed in an important task at hand (in this case, carefully applying mustard to a microwaved hot dog) that I didn't hear her.

"Hello?!" she persisted.

Realizing that she wasn't going to go away, I decided to man the barricades. "Being practically perfect in every way, I don't make New Year's resolutions," I informed her.

She snorted.

"Look," I said. "I am what I am. I have trouble keeping New Year's resolutions. If God had wanted me to be a better person, He, She, It, They, Whatever, would have given me more willpower."

"Oh, so now you're blaming God?"

"Hey," I retorted, "philosophers can argue all they want about free will, but it seems to me that if anyone should have a 'The Buck Stops Here' sign on His or Her or Their desk, it would be God."

"I have a few suggestions that would make life around here easier," she remarked. "No need to get God involved. Just a couple of simple things."

I didn't need to hear the suggestions. I'm sure they were the same as last year and the year before that: blood vows to pick up my dirty socks, be more conscientious about flushing the toilet, put my dishes in the dishwasher—and, of course, the sacred promise that is the one true path to total domestic servitude... "to help out more around the house."

"Actually, I've already made my resolution for the year," I replied impulsively. "I thought I'd keep it as a surprise, but I guess you've forced my hand."

"Oh?"

"Yes. I've decided to give up my dream to climb Mount Everest."

She made a gargling sound that boded ill for my personal safety. "It's all for the best," I assured her hastily.

"Your dream to climb Mount Everest?" she managed to choke out. "What dream to climb Mount Everest?"

"It's a quest I've treasured since childhood," I informed her, glibly rolling forward. "I've never mentioned it before because it's so deeply personal—something wonderful to look forward to in a morass of...of..." I realized I'd managed to talk myself into a serious dead end here. "...of, well..."

"Adult responsibility?" she suggested coolly.

"You were well aware of my adventurous spirit when you married me," I retorted.

"Yes, I just didn't realize that the majority of your adventuring would be spent camped out on the couch watching television. Now it seems I've misjudged you and you have simply been gathering your energies for your assault on Everest."

"Just me and my loyal Nepalese Herpes climbing to the top of the world?"

"Your what?"

"My valiant Herpes. Hey, somebody has to carry all the beer."

"Sherpas," she said.

"What?"

"If you're going to climb Mount Everest, you would presumably rather be accompanied by Sherpas."

"Sherpas, Herpes...whatever. It's all gone now."

"Alas."

"It's not that I'm afraid of the danger," I continued. "As you are well aware, 'Courage' is my middle name. But if I should fail to return, you and the children would be left without my stabilizing presence around the house. I simply can't risk that. It's not fair to you guys."

"How touching," she said, eyes narrowing.

Recognizing my peril, I capitulated. "Okay, I'll try to be more considerate. It's not that I don't want to help, it's just that..."

"You need structure," she finished for me.

Actually, I was going to tell her I have a bad back, but I decided to quit while I was still breathing.

"I'll even show you how to turn on the vacuum," she said.

I'm thinking it's going to be a long couple of weeks, before things get back to normal around here.

Jim Hallas

## Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum

### Deadline Still Tuesday

The *Rivereast* will be closed next Monday, Jan. 1, for New Year's Day. However, the deadline will remain the same.

All copy for the Jan. 5 edition **must** be submitted no later than noon Tuesday, Jan. 2. No exceptions will be made.

Happy holidays from all of us at the *Rivereast News Bulletin*.

### Dynamic and Endangered

To the Editor:

The Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) is brown to light brown in color and weighs between 5-8 grams. As the name suggests, its ears are long. It has broad wings (wing-span nine inches), and it is very maneuverable in flight. This tiny hunter consumes a variety of insects, including those that destroy crops and spread disease. It captures prey both in the air and off surfaces, and it commonly gleans spiders from webs. Moths that are able to hear bat echolocation can't hear the soft, high frequency calls of this bat, which allows the bat to sneak up on both resting and flying moths.

*M. septentrionalis* prefers to roost in tree cavities, crevices and under exfoliating bark. Snags (standing dead or dying trees) are particularly important for this species, though they will also use artificial bat boxes. During the summer, female bats use a network of roosts, frequently switching between them.

These bats hibernate during the winter, usually in caves or abandoned mines and return to the same hibernaculum each year. They often share hibernacula with other species, including Little Brown, Big Brown and Tri-color bats.

Major threats against the northern long-eared bat include habitat loss, human disturbance, and white nose syndrome, a devastating fungal disease. Populations are estimated to have declined by at least 90% in the last ten years due to white-nose syndrome alone.

After EPA officials wisely listed the bat as endangered because of white-nose syndrome, Congress voted to withdraw the decision citing concerns over possible requirements to preserve forest habitat: politics and profit over preservation.

A quote from a member of Congress:

"... long-eared bats? I hope the white-nose syndrome wipes all of them out. We won't have it to worry about," Rep. Ralph Norman (R-S.C.)

Fortunately, President Biden vetoed the measure, keeping protection in place.

Maureen Heidtmann – East Hampton

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### Anderson v Griswold

To the Editor:

Republican and unaffiliated voters filed a lengthy petition in the District Court for the City and County of Denver asking the court to rule that former President Donald J. Trump may not appear on the Colorado Republican presidential primary ballot... [T]he Electors requested that the district court prohibit Jena Griswold, in her official capacity as Colorado's Secretary of State, from placing President Trump's name on the presidential primary ballot. They claimed that Section Three of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution disqualified President Trump from seeking the presidency. More specifically, they asserted that he was ineligible under Section Three because he engaged in insurrection on January 6, 2021, after swearing an oath as President to support the U.S. Constitution.

[https://www.courts.state.co.us/userfiles/file/Court\\_Probation/Supreme\\_Court/Opinions/2023/23SA300.pdf](https://www.courts.state.co.us/userfiles/file/Court_Probation/Supreme_Court/Opinions/2023/23SA300.pdf)

Annie Steinbrecher – Marlborough

### Be Good...Or Else

To the Editor:

Our leaders in Washington recently passed the latest version of the National Defense Authorization Act with strong bipartisan approval. The 3,100-page bill garnered 2/3 of the votes in the House and 87 in the Senate, easily passing and heading to Sleepy Joe's desk for signing. Although the NDAA has been around since 1961 (needing annual approval), it's grown exponentially in both scope and spending since 9/11.

The latest version approves \$886 billion in spending for the Department of Defense, despite the fact that they recently failed their fifth audit and can't account for \$3.7 trillion.

Since 9/11, the NDAA has been a vehicle to erode civil liberties and normalize both the surveillance state and perpetual war. Section 702 of Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act section of the bill allows the government to spy on anyone they want in the name of "national security," ignoring the constitutional protections of the 4th Amendment that is supposed to restrain the government's powers. The result has been the acceptance of a mass-spying apparatus that the government uses to target dissidents, journalists, political enemies, whistle-blowers, and anyone it deems a threat to state power and their "monopoly on violence." Julian Assange, being the best example, has been holed up in embassies or foreign prisons – not for committing any violent crimes, but for merely exposing the crimes of the U.S. military in Iraq. (Google - WikiLeaks Collateral Murder.)

Every single one of the federal representatives for the "Constitution State" voted in favor of the bill – Murphy, Blumenthal, Himes, DeLauro,

## RIVEREAST

### News Bulletin

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## Rivereast Hours of Operation

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**\* Local News Highlights cont. from page 1**  
club president John Johnson Jr. Johnson.  
Wishes on Wheels, which serves as an external fundraiser for Make a Wish CT, received \$35,000 from the Lions this year.  
“For us, it’s huge,” said the organization’s president, Mark Picard.

Next year, the Lions will hand out more donations from the funds they raised throughout 2023.

**5. Mrs. Claus Makes the Hall of Fame**  
Andover resident Dianne Grenier, or better known as “Mrs. Merry Clause,” was officially enshrined in the New England Santa Society (NESS) hall of fame in January.

Grenier was included in the inaugural hall of fame class during the NESS’s annual meeting in Sturbridge, Mass.

“This was from my peers who know the Santa world,” Grenier said afterwards. “They’re professionals and for them to do this, it left me speechless.”

She also received a certificate, plaque and fan pin as part of her prestigious honor.

**6. Colchester Community Theatre’s Milestone Production**

The Colchester Community Theatre returned in February with a presentation of *Young Frankenstein*, the group’s 25th full-length musical production.

“For all of our 25 years, the town of Colchester and our local businesses and local community members have always supported us,” said Wallis Johnson, the show’s director and a co-founder

of the organization. “There’s a lot of celebrate.” Married couple Tullio and Johanna Milani, who starred as “Frederick Frankenstein” and “Inga” respectfully, praised the organization for its welcoming atmosphere. The North Haven residents said they’d return to Colchester regardless if they’re acting in future shows.

“Now, we’re going to do it for the people,” Tullio said. “We’re honored to have met the Colchester Community Theatre.”

He added, “They deserve another 25 years.”

**7. Musters Return to Marlborough**  
Marlborough Jr. Ancient Fife & Drum Corps hosted a muster in September, featuring numerous corps from around the state.

A muster is a collection of fife and drum corps playing for each other, along with a short parade that leads into the muster itself, where each corps also performs.

This was the Marlborough Junior’s 46th muster, but its first since 2010. While the group has existed since 1964, it entered a years-long hiatus, reestablishing itself in 2016.

The corps features children ages 8-18, and the members travel around New England; they’ve performed in Cape Cod during a Fourth of July parade.

“Year after year, I see so much growth in the kids that participate in this,” said Wayne Seidel, the corps’ director. “It’s really something else. They get so much out of it — they form lifelong friendships, they form self-confidence. I see kids come into the group one way and leave as different young adults.”

**8. Plaza Finally Reopens**  
In July, one year after a devastating fire shut down most of its stores, the Hebron Village Shoppes Plaza returned to full-strength.

Ted’s Supermarket was able to open immediately following the fire, which originated in the plaza’s package store. However, other businesses suffered severe smoke damage that required months of restoration.

One by one, each store opened its doors again, with residents flooding the shops accordingly.

“It was very rewarding,” said plaza co-owner Todge Armata. “I think the community was very supportive of the businesses as they opened up.”

**9. Towns Commemorate Anniversaries**  
This year, Colchester celebrated its 325th anniversary, while Andover marked its 175th birthday. Both towns embarked on a weeks-long celebration, full of community events and festivals.

Catherine Magaldi Lewis, chairman of the 175th Anniversary Committee, kicked-off the festivities on Thursday, May 18 — the precise anniversary of when Andover earned its township in 1848.

On Oct. 13, then Colchester First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos recognized his town’s anniversary, stating that, “While Colchester may be ‘Where Tradition Meets Tomorrow,’ it is also where dreams come true.”

**10. New Colchester Superintendent**  
While Daniel Sullivan III was unanimously appointed as the district’s new superintendent by the Board of Education at the end of 2022, he officially began his role as head of schools in January.

Sullivan was selected from a pool of 10 candidates, according to the interim superintendent T.Y. McDowell. Sullivan previously served as the superintendent in Putnam beginning in 2019. Prior to that, he was the principal at South Windsor High School from 2009-2019, and the New London High School Principal from 2006-2009.

**11. Marlborough Native Heading to Space**  
Marlborough native Brendan Hall was selected as one of nine crew members for an upcoming space adventure project dearMoon, operated through SpaceX.

Hall, a filmmaker, was selected following a world-wide search to document the crew before, during and after their journey.

The spacecraft will embark on a week-long journey to the moon and back; it would be the first all-civilian lunar mission.

While the expedition, led by Japanese billionaire, Yusaka Maezawa, was originally scheduled to launch this year, the adventure has been postponed to at least 2024.

“I’m really motivated to work the hardest I can,” Hall said. “This is a chance to make something meaningful.”

**12. Hebron’s New Pastor**  
This summer, Hebron’s Gilead Congregational Church introduced its new pastor, Reverend Dr. Brian C. Hardee.

“I’m happy,” Hardee said. “It’s felt right every step of the way.”

He replaced the church’s longtime, and beloved pastor, Rev. Denise Esslinger, who retired in 2021 after a 22-year stint leading the congregation. Then for two years, Rev. Matt McCaffrey took over as the interim pastor.

**13. Colchester Captures Robotics Championship**  
The Robocats, otherwise known as Team 1699, took home the New England FIRST Robotics District Championship in April, the culmination of hundreds of preparation hours.

After traveling to the Big E in Massachusetts, the squad Colchester high schoolers and its robot “Janky Sue” were selected on the Fire Alliance, along with Teams 757 and 176. They first won the Wilson Division before facing off against the Meir Division winner in the championship, where they were ultimately victorious.

“It was a Cinderella story,” said Cindy Praisner, one of the team’s four lead mentors.

**14. Lt. Governor Honors Veterans**  
Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz traveled through numerous communities this year, including Hebron and Marlborough, thanking veterans of the Korean and Vietnam Wars for their service.

In May, Bysiewicz attended an event at the Marlborough Elementary School, before spearheading a similar ceremony in Hebron at the Lions Fairgrounds in July.

“The reason I really feel so strongly that we should say thank you to our Vietnam veterans, is 50 years ago they did not get the reception when they came home that they deserved,” she said. “They didn’t get a real welcome home, and neither did our Korean veterans. So they were from a generation that served very bravely but didn’t get the recognition that they deserved.”

**15. Marlborough Couple Debuts Feature Film**  
Marlborough filmmakers Abby Horton and  
*See Local News Highlights, page 6*

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

Larson, Courtney, and Hayes – proving decisively that not only do our elected representatives not defend the Constitution they took an oath to uphold but are doing their best to destroy it. I hope you had a Merry Christmas. If you feel alone during the holidays, don’t forget... the government’s always there, listening.

Colin McNamara – Marlborough

**Overhaul U.S.-Israeli Relationship**

To the Editor:  
It’s time to overhaul the U.S.- Israeli relationship. The Israeli government, as an oppressive occupier, is an enemy of justice, the secular and moderate Jewish community and world peace.

The current situation did not begin with the brutal October 7<sup>th</sup> Hamas attack that slaughtered innocent Israelis with others taken hostage. Those seeds were planted on April 9<sup>th</sup> 1948 when conservative Jewish Zionists attacked and slaughtered a peaceful village of well-to-do Arab Palestinians. Zionist leadership knew that this slaughter would lead to an increased exodus of Arab Palestinians, thus freeing up their homes, businesses and farms for Jews to illegally confiscate. And so it was. The Zionists killed women and children, they stuffed their pockets with whatever valuables they could carry off, even cutting off women’s earlobes to get their earrings. Investigating British police reported “many sexual atrocities were committed by the

attacking Jews. Many young schoolgirls were raped and later slaughtered. Old women were also molested. One story is current concerning a case in which a young girl was literally torn in two.”

This event caused Albert Einstein and other secular Jews to condemn the Zionists as “fascists” and “terrorists”. The transformation of a post-WWII Jewish community that fled the horrors of European genocide – into a nation using Nazi-like aggressions once used against them, is a deep, sad tragedy. As the Nazi SS used trained dogs to mutilate Jews, so now do we see the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) use their trained dogs to even attack an elderly hospitalized Arab in a wheelchair. The SS would kill 20 women and children for every German soldier killed by the resistance. Israel employs the same 20-1 formula.

American tax dollars just sent another five thousand 2000-pound bombs to Israel. Little of Gaza will remain, to America’s enduring shame.

Ed Smith – Andover

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**★ Local News Highlights cont. from page 5**  
 Ryan Dickie debuted their first feature film this fall, fulfilling their “lifelong dream.”  
*Blow Up My Life* is a comedy/thriller starring Jason Selvig, from the comedy duo, The Good Liars, as well as Kara Young, Davram Stiefler and Reema Sampat.  
 The picture debuted in September and toured AMC Theaters around the country; it hit iTunes/Amazon in November.  
 One of the film’s primary filming locations was Middletown, Horton’s hometown, along with many familiar local spots, including Hammonasset, Bradley International Airport and Bushnell Park.

“I’m proud that we were able to accomplish this dream,” Horton said.  
**16. “Benches for Heroes”**  
 Andover honored one of its former residents, Vietnam War veteran Gerry Wright, by installing a bench overlooking the town’s veterans park adorned with a plaque dedicated to his legacy.  
 It reads, “For his advocacy of veteran’s rights and his contribution to Veterans Monument Park.”  
 Wright led the effort to establish an Agent Orange Memorial, and helped sell bricks inscribed with local veterans’ names for a new walkway at the park. He also advocated for getting a portion of Rte. 316 from the intersection of Rte. 6, to

Monument Lane — near the park — designated as “Agent Orange Memorial Highway.”  
 The installation project was spearheaded by selectman Jeffrey Murray, who reached out to Ed Cutler, an Army veteran who refurbishes pieces as part of his “Benches for Heroes” initiative.  
 “I was very humbled,” Wright said. “I can’t believe they did that.”  
**17. Fire Department’s Rebranding Effort**  
 This year, Colchester fire services underwent a significant process to rebrand itself, uniting its entities with a new name, new patch and new ordinance.  
 Everything was updated — from letterheads

to apparatus — with the new name: “Colchester Fire & EMS.”  
 For residents, nothing changed regarding services. But internally, the transition was essential in resolving an “identity crisis.”  
 The Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Company and the town’s Fire Department, which are two separate organizations that share a common goal, are now unified.  
 “This is pretty monumental for Colchester,” said Fire Chief Steven Hoffmann.  
**18. Mapleleaf Farm Gets a Paint Job**  
 In October, a local artist completed a long overdue paint job for the Mapleleaf Farm in Hebron.  
 Anyone passing through Gilead Street (Rte. 85) can now see the vibrant “Enjoy Milk” message displayed atop the barn, along with a new portrait of a cow enshrined inside a dark red maple leaf on the side of the barn.  
 The work was done by Ben Keller, a Vernon resident, who grew up just a few doors down the road and attended RHAM.  
 “I had an opportunity to leave something in my hometown,” he said. “You never really leave your hometown and I’m proud to say I grew up in Hebron.”  
**19. Joe Courtney Meets With School Leaders**  
 Congressman Joe Courtney (D-2) led a roundtable discussion in September with local school administrators to spotlight mental health challenges, following the distribution of \$15 million of federal American Rescue Plan Act [ARPA] to over 70 school districts across Connecticut.  
 The funding was allocated through the state Department of Education’s School Mental Health Specialists Grant program, which targeted the hiring and retention of school mental health specialists for the 2024, 2025 and 2026 academic years.  
 The event was hosted at Andover Elementary School and featured representatives from Andover, Marlborough, East Hampton and Scotland, along with AHM Youth & Family Services.  
**20. Holiday Celebrations**  
 Every community marked the holiday season in their own unique way.  
 Colchester residents have a long tradition of gathering on the Town Green to light a giant Menorah in celebration of Chanukah.  
 “I think there’s a lot going on as far as people wanting to express their identity as Jews, and their solidarity with other Jewish people,” Rabbi Yosef Wolvovsky of the Chabad Jewish Center in Glastonbury said earlier this month.  
 Meanwhile, Marlborough’s annual “Gathering on the Green” only seems to grow each year, with thousands of people flocking to the festivities this time to enjoy a firetruck parade, tree lighting and firework display.  
**21. Hebron’s First Pride Event**  
 After officially forming in December of 2022, Small Town Pride hosted Hebron’s first ever Pride event in June.  
 Founders Grace Collins and her mom, Nickie, created the inclusive group with the goal of being welcoming to everyone.  
 The event, held during Pride Month at the Douglas Library, represented a significant moment as the town celebrates the LGBTQ+ community.  
**22. Affordable Housing Forum**  
 A panel of local and state leaders discussed how communities can develop more affordable housing, and dispelled myths regarding a growing crisis across Connecticut.  
 The October forum at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Hebron was hosted by the Coalition on Diversity & Equity (CoDE), which serves Hebron, Marlborough, Andover and Columbia.  
 Ronald Kolanowski, the vice president of Commons Community Development Corporation and the rector at St. Peter’s, was joined on the panel by four others: Brandon L. McGee, Jr. — the deputy commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Housing; Pamela Krist Atwood — counselor and owner of Atwood Dementia Group; Carline Charmelus — collective impact and equity director at Partnership for Strong Communities; and Beth Sabilia — director of the Center for Housing Equity and Opportunity of Eastern Connecticut.  
**23. Andover’s Finest**  
 This year, Andover launched a program to honor its most outstanding residents.  
 “Andover’s Finest” looks to spotlight those who volunteer their time to benefit their community.  
 Those chosen by the Board of Selectmen will have their name engraved on a brick that will ultimately be placed in the walkway outside of the town’s new community center.  
 “Our community has a huge heart,” said selectman Paula King. “Let’s recognize them and say ‘thank you.’”

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# Bethlehem Lutheran Church Welcomes New Pastor

By London Brazal

With a career start in the Navy, Pastor Jamie Stall-Ryan thought something was missing and originally sought out to be a Catholic Priest.

After seven years in the Navy, Stall-Ryan saw that there was a lack of therapists and social workers for people to have a safe, healthy outlet. In his eyes, many people were wrestling with their moral compass and identity. During his enlistment, those seamen looked to chaplains to find peace.

Stall-Ryan learned that being a Catholic Priest was not the direction he wanted to go in and attended seminary school in Gettysburg, Penn. He then served as a pastor at St. Mary's Lutheran Church in Kenosha, Wis. In 2003, Stall-Ryan served as a chaplain for the Navy. At the start of this year, he was honored with the Spirit of the Bear award at the Coast Guard Academy in New London. The award is given to someone who shows of "extraordinary effort toward the well-being of cadets and officer candidates."

When accepting the award, Stall-Ryan said the role of the chaplain was to keep people ex-

cited about their oath of office while helping them on their faith journey.

Knowing he wanted to retire in New England, Stall-Ryan's family moved to Haddam Neck about five years ago. With one kid still in high school, he decided to come out of retirement since they did not plan on moving anytime soon. Many of their friends live in the area and he was roped into the Bethlehem Lutheran Church "very fast."

When the church first showed interest, Stall-Ryan was nervous. "I'm a military guy so this was a large stepping stone," explained Stall-Ryan. The church was understanding of his time as he wanted to retain some form of retirement. "But they have really great people so I thought I would give it a try."

One goal Stall-Ryan has is to put more people in the pews, though he noted the "right people." He wants people who want to give back to their community and the area. His goal is not to create a mega-church, instead, he wants a solid group of collaborative faith from all backgrounds.

Furthermore, Stall-Ryan described the chal-

lenge of getting young families in the pews. "Sports are their priority," said Stall-Ryan. With kids of his own who played soccer and fencing, he understands but would love for people to make an effort.

Stall-Ryan transitioned into the church in September and one of his requests was that there would be no flags in the front. "I want everyone to feel welcomed," said Stall-Ryan. Notably, he wants to keep politics out of the church, and he supports those who come in to worship. "I want people to find a place here, do that and maintain their identity and know they're appreciated. I am Christocentric, that is where my beliefs lie."

With his military background, Stall-Ryan met thousands of people from different walks of life. One of his favorite parts of being at a small-town church is the fact he gets to be with the "family back home." It is a different perspective that he gets to witness. "I enjoy hearing a different side to stories," added Stall-Ryan.

In the three months he has been with Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Stall-Ryan has made community outreach a priority. He made sure to introduce himself to many authoritative figures in town and connect with other religious figures. To reach his goals, he believes that it starts by reaching out to people. "It takes time," said Stall-Ryan. Ultimately, he plans to be more involved with the community and get members of the church to do the same.

Furthering that point, Stall-Ryan simply wants people to be comfortable coming to church. He views East Hampton as a blue-collar community. "They're the ones giving back to the



Pastor Jamie Stall-Ryan

community."

In general, Stall-Ryan feels very fortunate for the opportunity to help spread hope and praise. When he was in the military, people described his leadership style as "humble and authentic." At Bethlehem Lutheran, he is committed to a healthy and safe environment.

Worship and Sunday School begin at 10:15 a.m. All are welcome.

## Congregational Church News & Notes

The Congregational Church of East Hampton, UCC, located at 59 Main St., is open for 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.

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.

Choir meets every Thursday from 7-8:30 p.m. All voices are welcome.

For more information about CCEH and its activities, visit cc-eh.org or call the church office at 860-267-4959 during office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

## Resident Presents Music Internship Work

Music majors at Eastern Connecticut State University used their fall internships to sharpen their arts marketing skills. The students presented on their fall 2023 internships on Dec. 8.

Among the students was Grace Michalowski of Haddam Neck, a senior who is majoring in music.

Michalowski was a social media intern for Eastern's Department of Performing Arts this fall. As part of her internship, she attended and photographed many rehearsals and concerts, posted about department events on social media and created advertisements for events.

Michalowski's content helped increase engagement on social media in increase attendance at events. The jazz ensemble's concert on Nov. 27 saw the highest attendance in its history, and the two performances by Eastern's Concert Band saw high attendance as well.

Further, Eastern's theatre presentation of *Carrie: The Musical* was sold out for its entire run of performances. "I would like to think I contributed a little bit to the attendance at those concerts," said Michalowski.

Michalowski's internship experience enhanced her skills as a creator. "I'm way better at designing things now," she said. In particular, she became fluent in Metricool, a social media management software.

For her development, Michalowski credits supervisor Sheila Rujoub, arts manager for Institutional Advancement. The guidance of an arts management professional helped Michalowski incorporate "things I wouldn't have thought of" into her creations. Michalowski's internship also ingrained skills that will help her promote herself as a musician.

## 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. **The Library will be closed on Monday, Jan. 1 for the holiday.**

**Children's Programs: Bubbles & Beats!** Mondays, 10:30 a.m., for ages 18 months to 5

years (drop-ins and siblings welcome.); **Toddler Time:** Wednesdays, 10:15 a.m., for children ages 18 months to 3 years; **Stories & Songs:** Wednesdays, 11:15 a.m., for ages 3-5 years; **Baby Rhyme Time:** Thursdays, 10:15 a.m., for ages birth to 24 months, and their caregivers.

**Family Storytime:** Saturday, Jan. 6, 10:30 a.m. Ages 3-5 are invited - along with their siblings - to come for stories, songs, and open-ended play. Participants will also have the chance to work on a craft to bring home. No registration required.

**Adult Program: Cookbook Club - Asian Cuisine:** Tuesday, Jan. 9, 6:30 p.m. Try new recipes and chat about culinary adventures. The library will provide plates and utensils; all you need is your dish and 12 copies of the recipe to share; **Tech Help with Sam & Nicole:** Thursday, Jan. 4, 2:00-4:00 p.m.; **Cabin Fever Series:** Saturday, Jan. 13, 11:00 a.m. Meet the author of *Secret Connecticut: A Guide to the Weird, Wonderful, and Obscure*, Anastasia Mills Healy.

## Travel Author to Speak at Cabin Fever History Series

On Saturday, Jan. 13, at 11 a.m., author Stasha Healy will give a talk on her book *Secret Connecticut: A Guide to the Weird, Wonderful, and Obscure* at East Hampton Public Library, 105 Main St. The talk, which will be held in the community room, is part of the Cabin Fever History Series organized by the Chatham Historical Society and co-sponsored by the library.

Did you know that Connecticut has a Stonehenge, a safari park, and America's smallest Native American reservation? Healy scoured the state and discovered 84 places and stories that she collected in *Secret Connecticut*. In her illustrated in-person presentation, you'll find out about the Connecticut resident who was technically president before George Washington, who inspired the character of Indiana Jones, and who flew before the Wright Brothers.

Formerly on staff at *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Fodor's* and *Travel Agent*, Healy is an award-winning freelance travel writer and editor. A member of professional organizations including the Society of American Travel Writers, she has contributed to *Time Out*, *Lonely Planet* and *Frommer's*, among others. She lives in Greenwich. She has another book due out in 2024: *100 Things to Do in Connecticut Before You Die*. Learn more about the author at stashamillshealy.com or find her on Instagram @stashastravels.



Stasha Healy

To register to attend the book-reading, call 860-267-6621 or register online at easthamptonpubliclibrary.org. For more information, contact Chatham Historical Society member Marty Podskoch at 860-267-2442 or podskoch@comcast.net.

## Bethlehem Lutheran Church News

Sunday services at Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, located at 1 East High St., are held Sundays at 10 a.m. Bible study precedes the services at 9 a.m., in the Church Hall. Church pastor is Jamie Stall-Ryan.



## Got Yarn??

The East Hampton Yarners are seeking contributions of yarn for their charitable projects. If you have yarn you'd like to share, contact Judy Hoffhine at jhoffhine@gmail.com.

The Yarners have provided projects for people from East Hampton to Middletown to Honduras.

## 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. The Holy Eucharist is celebrated with the Rev. Diana Rogers.

**Donations:** Food items for East Hampton Food Bank may be placed in the black totes at the rear of the church. Clean returnable bottles and cans are collected in cans by the shed.

**Sunday School:** Sunday School classes are in session. The Rev. Joanne Neel-Richard and Emily Vick lead the group, which meets at 9:55. New students welcome. Contact neelrichard16@gmail.com for information/dates, as classes are sometimes rescheduled.

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## A Lake Sign with a Rich History

By London Brazal

The Lake Pocotopaug sign at the southeast corner of the lake is standing once again, this time marks the third installation.

The original sign was believed to be installed by Ed and Jim Barton in the 1950s. At the time, the brothers owned a machine shop in town and had the resources to create it. The large metal bow and arrow have been known to point over the lake as a symbol of the indigenous history surrounding the area. Over the years, members of the East Hampton/Marlborough Rotary Club maintained the sign by sanding it and repainting it.

In 2012, the late Rotarian Red McKinney saw that the original sign needed to be replaced. The original stood for 60 years but the wooden pole had rotted. Mike Love of Rite-Way Welding created the bow and arrow with a piece of metal, galvanized steel, and a stainless steel rod. In an article published in the *Patch*, McKinney said the second sign looked “like a million bucks.”

Over the summer, Rotarian Kevin Reich heard some complaints that the sign was not visible and contacted the Public Works Director, Matt Walsh to dig up the surrounding shrubs. When the public works department got to it, they all noticed the sign was in poor condition. Reich went to Rotary and they set aside funds to refurbish the sign. However, after reevaluating, they decided it was beyond refurbishing and chose to invest more money into the project so it would last longer without biannual repairs.

When discussing the materials, it was decided to go with aluminum since it does not rot like other metals. Ray Zitroski oversaw the staff

of Nesci Enterprises who purchased the materials and fabricated the new sign. Zitroski said the sign's upgrade was a gift to the community for the holidays. He also mentioned how many different people and organizations were involved, making it a community project. Zitroski loves seeing people taking photographs with their friends and family in front of the sign.

American Powder Coating baked on the blue background to help make the paint last longer. In addition, Ray Nichols Jr. of Liberty Landscaping painted the bow and arrow signpost. Kristin Haddad, artist, and owner of Killustrateit, painted the sign to match the original one. She was even able to color-match the blue to match the public building signs around town. Though Haddad is from East Haddam, she is a huge fan of doing local projects. “It was wonderful news that they wanted me to do it,” mentioned Haddad. “Every time I drove by in recent years, I thought to myself, ‘I hope they call me to do it when it's ready to be redone.’” She said it was an honor to be a part of the process and that it was amazing to see the team effort from local businesses.

The public works department helped clean up the area around the sign, installed a split rail fence and assisted in installing the new sign. Walsh said they had a crew of about five guys including the foreman Kyle Riley. After they cleared the dead brush, the crew was pleased with how the area looked. Walsh explained how a lot of the work his department does is unknown and this project was good morale for his crew. “Now we drive by and say ‘Wow, what a great spot we helped create,’” comment-



The replacement of the Lake Pocotopaug sign was made possible with a large team of community members including the East Hampton/Marlborough Rotary Club and the East Hampton Public Works Department. Now, the sign is ready for future generations to enjoy.

ed Walsh. Furthering that point, he added how he loved the community involvement from the project's start to finish.

Overall, Reich is fascinated with how many people showed interest in the sign. During the third installation, when people drove by they waved, beeped their horns and gave a thumbs-up. “Here it is, one sign, but it means so much to people,” said Reich. Another Rotarian, Mark Cibula, was happy to be involved with the project and is content with the outcome. “The sign

is iconic in the area,” said Cibula. “Many people know the sign as a direction landmark. It's important to me because of all the people who have been involved in the past.”

After the new sign was involved, Paul's and Sandy's also decorated the fence with a fresh set of garland and red bows for the holiday season. With many organizations involved, a sign with a rich history can now be enjoyed by residents and future generations to come.

### Spaghetti and Meatball Dinner

The Knights of Columbus St. John Paul II Council 6190 at St. Patrick Church will be sponsoring their semi-annual spaghetti and meatball dinner on Jan. 26 from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the church parish center located at 47 West High St. If cancelled due to weather, the reschedule date is February 2. Take out and dine in meals will be offered.

Meal prices are \$13.00 for adults and \$12.00 for seniors. Children 5 and under eat for free.

The meal will include a salad, bread, dessert, coffee and a punch drink. Canned soda and bottled water will be available for \$1.00. Proceeds will support local charitable programs.

The Knights of Columbus will also be collecting non-perishable food items for the East Hampton Food Bank. Please contact Jim Radavich at 860-319-9288 or email jradavich@yahoo.com for additional information.

### Senior Center News & Notes

East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., announces the following. Registration is 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 Monday through Friday, to ages 60 and up. Call 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; a \$3 donation is requested.

**Weekly Activities: Quilting Group:** Mondays, 9 a.m.; **Mexican Train Dominoes:** Mondays, 9:30 a.m.; **Setback:** Mondays and Thursdays, 1-3 p.m.; **Bible Study:** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; **Bingo:** Tuesdays, 1-3 p.m., in person and via Zoom; **Yoga with Kitch:** Wednesdays through Feb. 21, 1 p.m. (started Dec. 27; fee is \$20); **Cross-Stitch & Embroidery with Shannon:** Wednesdays, 1:30 p.m. -- Bring projects to share and work on together; **Tai Chi:** Thursdays, 10:30-11 a.m.; **Tap Dance:** Thursdays, 11:15 a.m. **Cribbage:** Fridays, 9:30-11 a.m. -- let the center know in advance if you plan to attend; **Mahjong:** Fridays, 10 a.m.-noon -- call also to put your name on a list if interested in learning how to play; **Textile Group:** Fridays, 1 p.m.

**Wii Bowling:** Every other Thursday at 11

a.m.; **Cornhole:** Every other Thursday at 11 a.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. Groups meet in-person or via Zoom.

**Wonderfully Wicked Women's Group (WWW):** First and third Mondays of each month, at 10 a.m. This is an opportunity to meet others and share resources. The group determines the topics for discussion for the next month.

**Pictionary:** Group play will be held at the Senior Center Friday, Jan. 12, from 10-11 a.m.

**Design and Create:** This craft session will take place Thursday, Jan. 18, at 1:30 p.m.

**Blood Pressure Screenings:** Monday, Jan. 22, starting at 12:30 p.m., at the senior center.

**Trip: Shopping Trip:** Wednesday, Jan. 10, 11 a.m., to the Willimantic Walmart. Cost is \$4 for transportation.

**Volunteer Shopping:** The center has a program where a volunteer will shop for you. Call in your list to 860-267-4426 or email it to [jewing@easthampton.gov](mailto:jewing@easthampton.gov). The shopper will call you before the drop-off to let you know the cost of the groceries. You can write out a check for the amount, payable to the Town of East Hampton. The volunteer will drop off the groceries at your door and pick up the check in a prearranged designated spot.

### Capstone Grants Available for EHHS Students

The East Hampton Arts & Culture Commission is accepting applications from East Hampton High School juniors and seniors for two \$200 grants to support two East Hampton High School Capstone projects.

The grants will help support the student's proposed Capstone project, a multifaceted assignment that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students. Cap-

stone projects may take a wide variety of forms including a long-term investigative project that culminates in a final product, presentation, or performance.

Applicants will be invited to present their Capstone Project idea to commission members. Deadline to apply is Feb. 1. Visit [www.artsforeasthamptonct.org](http://www.artsforeasthamptonct.org) for an application or pick one up at the town manager's office at Town Hall.

### Dean's List

Alejandro Campo de la Vera of Haddam Neck made the fall 2023 Dean's List at Belmont University in Nashville, Tenn.

### Technology Tutoring

Middle Haddam Public Library, 2 Knowles Rd., Middle Haddam, will host one-on-one technology tutoring sessions with members of the East Hampton High School Interact Club.

Sessions will be held Tuesdays, Jan. 30, Feb. 13 and Feb. 27, from 3-6 p.m., at the library. Bring your cell phone or iPad for some one-on-one time with the students.

For more information, call 860-267-9093 or visit [www.middlehaddamlibrary.com](http://www.middlehaddamlibrary.com).

### Epoch Arts Winter Classes

Epoch Arts is offering a variety of winter classes for area youth. Classes start the week of Jan. 8, and include ceramics, improv, art and more. Teens can also join Epoch's original theater production that stages in May.

All classes are held at 27 Skinner St. Register online at [www.epocharts.org](http://www.epocharts.org) or call 860-365-0337.

### Last Day to Change Party Affiliation

The last day to change party affiliation to be eligible to vote in the April 2 Presidential Preference Primary is Jan. 2. This deadline does not apply to electors currently registered as Unaffiliated.

To check your registration, visit [portaldir.ct.gov/sots/lookup.aspx](http://portaldir.ct.gov/sots/lookup.aspx).

### EHMS Volleyball Registration

East Hampton Middle School student/athletes in grades seven or eight who are interested in playing for the boys or girls volleyball teams can register at [FamilyID.com](http://FamilyID.com). Athletes must have a physical within a 13-month period in order to participate.

Registration is limited to the first 60 girls. Deadline for registration is Monday, Jan. 28. For more information, call EHMS athletic director Michael Mercaldi at 860-463-6837.

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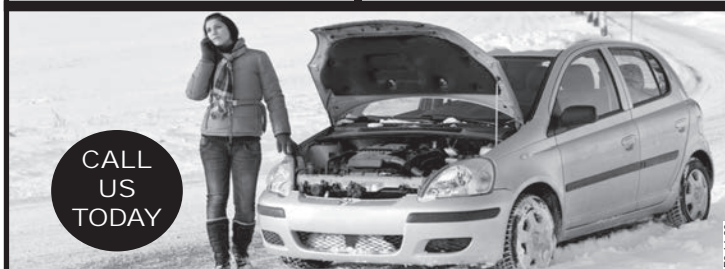


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# Clean Energy Task Force Sets Goals for New Year

By London Brazal

At the last Town Council meeting, Clean Energy Task Force Chairman Russ Kaplan discussed the set goals of the committee for the new year.

Described as a “fairly ambitious agenda,” Kaplan said one of the main goals is to work closely with the Council, Town Manager and other departments to educate residents about various programs that allow more clean energy to be used.

About ten years ago, the Town Council established a series of forward-looking goals regarding clean energy and then created the task force. Ultimately, the goals have stayed fairly the same: provide more information and resources about clean energy while providing access to credits, incentive programs and grants.

In the upcoming year, the task force identified four areas of concern. The focuses include community solar, Shared Clean Energy Facility (SCEF) projects, expanding electric vehicle charging and maintaining the goal of sustainability.

Community solar is any purchasing program within the town where the benefits flow to multiple customers such as individuals, businesses or non-profits. In this focus, the task force wants to work with the Council to help people become aware of the programs and how to get involved.

SCEF projects provide locally generated, renewable, low-carbon clean energy. An included benefit is that eligible households and small businesses will receive discounts on their electric bill. People must apply for the program and qualifications can be found at [eversource.com/SCEF](http://eversource.com/SCEF). The application goes through Eversource but is also administered through the United Illuminating Company (UI). Those who are accepted into the program receive the benefits for 20 years.

For this program in particular, the task force is looking to expand the knowledge of the opportunity. They also encourage more people to take advantage of it. “It would be great if East Hampton was over-represented in a sense,” said Kaplan. “Residents can only benefit.” The Council passed a motion to encourage residents to become participants in the Eversource SCEF program.

In addition, the Council will encourage the state senators and representatives to support a solar power program that will aid in the reduction of electrical costs to the residents. Ultimately, someone would build a new solar array and the program benefits the town and customers who sign up by saving money.

The third item for the Clean Energy Task Force is to expand electric vehicle (EV) charging

since there are only three public chargers in town. At a state level, Governor Lamont aims to gradually stop selling new gas-powered vehicles by 2035 and shift the focus towards replacing them with electric vehicles. However, earlier this month, he had to withdraw the proposal. Kaplan reported that one of the concerns was regarding the availability of reliable EV charges. “Our task force is also anxious to pursue [this,]” said Kaplan.

The task force hosts an annual electric and hybrid vehicle show, this year’s was hosted in June at the high school. Owners were able to showcase their vehicles while energy companies and dealerships were also present to answer any EV-related questions. The task force believes that additional EV charging would enhance participation in the car show and exposure to the town. The overall goal of the event is to promote clean energy and move towards sustainability.

The last area of interest, sustainability, ties in with the town’s commitment to clean energy. “But it’s more than just clean energy,” commented Kaplan. He believes that when discussing new programs, the town has to ask questions about the long-term benefits and if there are any future burdens. “Sustainability can go well

beyond clean energy.” Kaplan also mentioned how most towns in the state have programs in the area of sustainability, however, East Hampton is one of the few that does not.

Another major event the task force organizes is a Clean Energy Fair. The last one was hosted earlier this year on Nov. 4. Unfortunately, attendance was weaker than the previous year, likely due to unfavorable weather and the simultaneous occurrence of another town event. Nine companies were able to attend and interact with companies and the public. Some of the vendors even received referrals. Next year, the task force’s goal is to have the fair coincide with another community event to encourage more participation.

In general, the task force encourages members of the community to get involved whether it be in-person at meetings and events or virtually. Both provide residents with valuable information to save energy and money.

The Clean Energy Task Force is committed to expanding clean energy use in East Hampton. More information can be found on their page at [easthamptonct.gov](http://easthamptonct.gov). The task force meets on the first Tuesday of each month, the next meeting is on Jan. 2 at 5:30 p.m.

## 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](mailto:middlehaddamlibrary@gmail.com), visit [middlehaddamlibrary.com](http://middlehaddamlibrary.com) or call 860-267-9093. The library’s P.O. Box number is 123.

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

**Mahjong:** Mondays at 10:30 a.m. Experienced and new players welcome.

**Fiber Arts:** Thursdays, 10 a.m.-noon. Bring

your spinning wheel, knitting, weaving, embroidery, etc. All are welcome.

**Yoga:** With Erin Day of Ten Summit Yoga. Mondays at 9 a.m., Tuesdays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at 9 a.m. Cost is a \$15 drop-in fee. Register at [tensummitst@gmail.com](mailto:tensummitst@gmail.com).

**One-on-One Technology Tutoring Sessions with the East Hampton High School Interact Club:** Tuesdays, Jan. 30, Feb. 13 and Feb. 27, 3-6 p.m. Sign up for your individual session in advance by calling the library. Bring your cell phone or tablet to the session.

## Haddam Neck Covenant Church News

Haddam Neck Covenant Church, located at 17 Haddam Neck Rd. in East Hampton, invites all to online or in-person worship Sundays at 9 a.m. Pastor is the Rev. Tom Cowger. Refreshments are served after the service.

**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.

**Children’s Ministry:** For children in grades K-5, held in Fellowship Hall during the worship service. The theme is “Friends with God.”

A toddler nursery is also available. All are welcome.

**Vocal Choir:** Choir rehearsals are held Wednesdays at 7 p.m. New members are welcome.

**Adult Bible Study:** Sundays at 10:30 a.m. in the Music Room. The study is on “Fruits of the Spirit.”

**Office Info:** The office can be reached at 860-267-2336; hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. The church website is [www.hncovenantchurch.org](http://www.hncovenantchurch.org).

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### Marlborough Arts Center Exhibit at Town Hall

The Marlborough Arts Center is pleased to announce a new exhibit at the Marlborough Town Hall. Featured is artwork by Dianne Gorrick.

A resident of East Hampton, Ms. Gorrick is a former art teacher at Bacon Academy. Her background includes a Bachelor's degree from Purdue University and a Master's degree from Wesleyan University. She is also the recipient of two National Endowment Fellowships which included a residency at Dartmouth College and independent research focused on the Hudson River School of Painters.

Gorrick's work has been exhibited throughout

Connecticut and has earned numerous awards and grants over the years. The current display presents a wide range of subject matter, from traditional landscapes to imaginative themes.

This exhibit is open to the public during business hours at the Town Hall: Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Fridays from 8 a.m. to noon, and will continue from January 3 to June 31, 2024. For more information, please check out the website [www.marlbrougharts.org](http://www.marlbrougharts.org), or contact the Arts Center at 860-467-6353, or email [marlbroughartscenter@gmail.com](mailto:marlbroughartscenter@gmail.com).

### Preservation Society Calendars Available

The Marlborough Preservation Society's 2024 calendars are now available.

This year's theme is "Marlborough's Notables," and will feature people who have a connection to Marlborough and who have made an impact to the state, country or world - past and present. This is a full-color, 11x17 calendar with history and accomplishments of 12 notable people from town.

The cost is \$22 per calendar. All proceeds

go to storing the historic Town Green mural.

For more information, visit [www.marlbroughhistory.org/store](http://www.marlbroughhistory.org/store). For mail orders, the society's mailing address is: Marlborough Preservation Society, P.O. Box 351, Marlborough, CT 06447.

And for more information on the society, visit [marlbroughhistory.org](http://marlbroughhistory.org), or email [mhs@marlbroughhistory.org](mailto:mhs@marlbroughhistory.org).

### Parks and Rec Fall Programs

Marlborough Parks and Recreation has announced the following. For full program descriptions or to register, visit [marlbroughct.recdesk.com](http://marlbroughct.recdesk.com) and click on "programs," stop by the office at Town Hall, 26 N. Main St., or call 860-295-6203.

**Youth Program: Netto Indoor Soccer:** Games will begin the week of Jan. 8, and will be played after school on Mondays and Wednesdays at Marlborough Elementary School. Games will conclude at 4:30 p.m. Fee is \$75 and

participants will receive a T-shirt.

**Adult Programs: Adult Volleyball:** Thursdays, 8-10 p.m., at MES. Fee: \$5 per week.

**Adult Drop-In Basketball:** Sundays, 8-10 a.m., through March 31, at MES. Fee is \$5 per week.

**Driveway Reflective Number Signs:** Cost of the sign is \$50. Vertical sign is double sided 8" x 24" with 4" numbers on blue highway reflective metal. Order forms are online and at Town Hall.

### St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Church is located at 30 Jones Hollow Rd. Pastor is the Rev. Alvin LeBlanc, Bill Gilles is deacon John McKaig is deacon emeritus. Heather Mancini is church secretary and can be reached at 860-295-0001; hours are Monday-Wednesday and Friday, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. People are asked to call before heading over or connect via email at [stjohnfisher30@yahoo.com](mailto:stjohnfisher30@yahoo.com).

**Weekend Masses:** 4 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday. All are welcome. **Week-day Mass:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 8:30 a.m.

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:** Mondays at 9 a.m.

**Weekly Sacrament of Reconciliation:** Saturdays, 3-3:30 p.m., or by appointment

**Family Faith Formation:** Led by Cindy Bryan, this is an active family faith formation program for the church's kindergarten through elementary school population. Deacon Bill Gilles leads the middle school program. For more information, call the church office.

**Confirmation Community:** Led by Helena

Thomas, this is a 9th- and 10th-grade confirmation program. For more information, call the church office.

**Adult Worship Choir:** Meets Wednesdays from 5:30-7 p.m. All are welcome to join. More information is 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 is the last Thursday of the month for St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown. Other scheduled service opportunities can be found on the church website and are scheduled monthly.

**Other Programs and Offerings:** For more information on other programs, seasonal offerings, adult faith formation, youth group, RCIA, Knights of Columbus or other ministries, call the office, visit [www.stjfisher.org](http://www.stjfisher.org), or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church).

### Congregational Church News & Notes

Sunday Worship and Sunday School at the Congregational Church of Marlborough, United Church of Christ, 35 South Main St., is at 10 a.m. Worship is streamed live every Sunday at [mcc.marlbroughchurch.org](http://mcc.marlbroughchurch.org) and recorded for later viewing at the website. Childcare for infants and toddlers is provided downstairs in the nursery but children are always welcome at the worship service. All children in the community are invited to attend Sunday School. Contact Gwen Lawson at the church office at [office@marlbroughchurch.org](mailto:office@marlbroughchurch.org) for more information.

**Sunday, Dec. 31.** The worship service will be led by Reverend Valerie Seaver. Sunday School and child care and resumes on January 7.

**Outreach:** The church collects non-perishable food items year-round for Marlborough Food Bank with a basket located in the narthex for Sunday worshipers to bring their donations.

The Drive-Thru Café for Marlborough Food Bank patrons is held monthly at the church.

**AA:** The church sponsors three scheduled meetings: Wednesdays at noon and 7:30 p.m. in the Great Hall, and Thursdays at noon in the Youth Room.

**ACA:** Meets in the Youth Room Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

**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 Seaver's direct line at 860-295-0432 or email [pastorval@marlbroughchurch.org](mailto:pastorval@marlbroughchurch.org).

We wish you a happy and safe new year!

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### New Year's Eve Open House

There will be a New Year's Eve open house at Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., on Sunday, Dec. 31, from 6-9 p.m.

Bring a snack to share, your own drink, and enjoy the company of others who also want to celebrate, but not at midnight. There is on-site parking and the building is fully accessible.

The open house is free. For more information, call 860-467-6353.

### Holiday Closings

Marlborough Town Hall, Senior Center and Public Works Garage will be closed Monday, Dec. 25, and Monday, Jan. 1.

The Transfer Station will be open Saturday, Dec. 23, and Saturday, Dec. 30.

### Changing Your Party Affiliation

If you are currently enrolled in a party and want to change affiliation for Connecticut's April 2 Presidential Preference Primary on your voter registration, the last day to transfer is Jan. 2.

### 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. Transportation is Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays; call 36 hours in advance of your appointment to guarantee a ride.

**Food Bank:** Located at 3 Willhenger Drive (860-295-6008), it 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.

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

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# Marlborough's New Town Manager Settles In

By Michael Sinkewicz

Less than two weeks ago during a powerful December storm, two transformers went out, leaving 70% of Marlborough without power. That issue was resolved in about two hours, but then another transformer immediately went down, causing 600 more outages.

Navigating that weather event, which involved wind gusts exceeding 50 mph, and downed trees blocking local streets, seems like a stressful day at the office. But for Marlborough's new town manager, it's the reason he wanted the job.

"Being that calming influence during storms like that is part of why I love being a town manager," said David R. Porter, who began his new role on Aug. 7. "I derive a lot of satisfaction from calmly managing through challenging issues so that other people don't have to worry and we can get things resolved quickly and professionally."

Last week, Porter sat down with the *Rivereast* to review his first months in the corner office at Town Hall, and how the community's first ever town manager is acclimating to his new position.

"I think Marlborough is just a delightful community," he said, adding that everyone has been welcoming and kind.

## A Smooth Transition

Porter was unanimously endorsed by the Board of Selectmen (BOS) during the summer, after the community voted in 2021 to modify the town charter, converting its local government from an elected first selectman to an appointed town manager.

A search committee consisting of nine residents was guided by the executive search firm Municipal Resources Inc., who advertised the position before interviewing and selecting finalists for full BOS consideration.

Porter had served as the village administrator in Winneconne, Wis., for four years. Prior to that, he worked in Wayland, Mass., as a management analyst and human resources manager. Porter is a member of the International County Manager's Association and received his Master's Degree in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School.

When he took over, Porter said that being a successful town manager would involve drawing a clear distinction between elected and appointed leadership. That individual, he said, should be someone who can communicate in a nonpartisan manner.

So far, Porter believes he's been able to accomplish that.

"That's going to be something that never goes away," he said. "You always have to do that."

Over the last five months, he's communicated with members of the major political parties and formed working relationships with elected officials.

"I think and I hope that they view me as an honest broker, that I'm not going to favor one side or the other and that ultimately my goal is to take everyone's interests into account and help them reach a consensus that benefits the entire community," Porter said.

What is his initial impression of Marlborough?

He said the distinguishing quality of the town is a "tremendous spirit of volunteerism." There are numerous committees all staffed with volunteers — either elected or appointed — who all take their work seriously.

"I don't take that for granted because I know that it doesn't happen that way everywhere," he said.

Previous first selectmen deserve credit as well, Porter continued. In recent years, leadership has made quality decisions that have advanced the community forward.

"I didn't walk in on the first day and discover a disaster," he said. "The town is in good shape."

Most of his initial tasks after taking over involved "getting a deeper understanding of operations so that I can help and support my team members to do their best work and provide high quality services efficiently."

## Town Manager's Priorities

The main priority is infrastructure, with the two largest areas of concern being culverts and trees. Many culverts, Porter said, were installed in the World War II era, and are now reaching the end of their lifespans.

Replacing them, however, is expensive and the town will be pursuing grants, supplemented with funding included in upcoming municipal budgets. Most likely, there will need to be some amount of bonding to accomplish all of the town's infrastructure needs over the next few years.

Porter identified stakeholder engagement as another major priority moving forward. He explained that it's essential for the town to communicate on a regular basis with local residents and business owners and "meet them where they are."

That could either be through editorials in the

*Rivereast*, he said, or with a potential monthly email newsletter that community members could subscribe to.

By utilizing those avenues, town meetings and other events could be advertised months in advance and residents could be more involved during the early stages of a project, Porter said, instead of being looped-in once something is near its completion.

"I think that we will see people come out and engage with us," he said.

But there will still be instances where it's not feasible for residents to attend every single meeting, even if they want to. Accordingly, the town partnered with FlashVote to help conduct community surveys. So far, roughly 200 people have signed-up, and Porter hopes that participation will only grow in the weeks ahead.

"Their opinions and insights matter and should be included in that policymaking process," Porter said.

During his tenure, Porter has handled problems as they arise. In October, a small number of flyers belonging to a New England hate group were discovered in several Marlborough driveways.

The leaflets, which were generated by The Nationalist Social Club — an organization the Anti-Defamation League describes as a "neo-Nazi group" — sparked community-wide condemnation, including a joint-statement by the local Democratic and Republican Town Committees.

"While the message was deeply troubling, and I think we can all agree that it doesn't represent any broad sentiment in the community, I was really impressed by the response," Porter said. "I hope that that discourages that type of behavior in the future."

## Community Coordination

Compared to Wisconsin, there are many small differences with municipal government. Unlike other states across the country, Connecticut does not have county governments, leaving some responsibilities instead to the towns themselves.

"I was a little bit nervous coming to Connecticut," Porter said. "There were all these things that I didn't have to do before that now I'm going to have to. But what I've really noticed is, it's created space and an impetus for greater cooperation."

For example, many neighboring towns collaborated and formed the Chatham Health District, which forces municipalities to work together on public health issues.

"If the county was doing that function, then I think there would be less regional cooperation than there is," Porter explained. "That's one of the things that I really appreciate and most like about coming to Connecticut."

Coordination also occurs between the leaders of each community. Porter said he routinely talks with Hebron's town manager, Andrew Tierney, and has formed a friendship with David Cox, the town manager in East Hampton.

Marlborough will also continue to value its community partnerships, including with the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department. Porter has joined the Capital Region Council of Governments, taking a seat on the group's Policy

Committee and Legislative Affairs Committee.

## Day-to-Day Operations

A typical day at Town Hall for Porter begins somewhere between 7:30-8:00 a.m., when he maps out his day. There's a mixture of scheduled appointments and walk-ins, where people will stop by and hopefully be accommodated.

His focus is split between big picture strategic initiatives and on the ground administrative duties, which don't fall under the purview of any specific department.

While Town Hall closes at 4:30 p.m., Porter typically sticks around an hour longer to capitalize on a sustained, uninterrupted moment to tackle his work.

On an abnormal day, such as the storm response earlier this month, additional coordination is required from a variety of individuals. Of course, it's impossible to predict which specific trees will fall, or which homes will lose power, but from a municipal perspective, the town can be as prepared as possible.

Public Works and Fire Department crews were fully staffed, and the Emergency Management team, led by its director Todd Gianetti, were monitoring reports throughout the storm.

The town manager, meanwhile, was communicating with its Eversource community relations specialist to keep up with the power restoration efforts. Porter completed a training that allows him access to an Eversource website specifically offered to local officials that allowed him to see where crews were working in town and how many customers were impacted per outage.

As the storm progressed, Porter's office would field calls from residents seeking updates. But after the storm passed, many of those same indi-



New Marlborough town manager David R. Porter.

viduals took the time to call back and say, "thank you."

"From my perspective, we were just doing our jobs," Porter said, adding that he was grateful for the response. "It really means a lot to me."

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### Colchester Celebrates the Legacy of MLK Jr.

The CORE Commission will be hosting a Community Reading on Saturday, Jan. 13, 10:00 a.m. at Cragin Memorial Library. A variety of local leaders and residents will be reading and

sharing their experiences on how they have applied Dr. King's teaching in their own lives. The public is invited to join the event and celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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RE12-30-22

### 50 Years of Bacon Wrestling

2023-24 is Bacon Academy Wrestling's 50th varsity season. All are invited to help celebrate at any or all of the following events:

Wednesday, Jan. 10: Bacon Academy Student Night. All Bacon Academy students get in for free.

Wednesday, Jan. 24: Senior Night. Prior to the meet we will honor the seniors on the team.

Saturday, Feb. 3: The Matt Bishel Bob-

cat Classic. This is an all-day tournament at which Bacon Academy Wrestling will honor former alumnus Matt Bishel, who passed away in 2011. Wrestling starts at 10 a.m.

At all Wednesday events, wrestling starts at 6 p.m., but all are invited to come early and enjoy some of the pre-meet activities, which will start around 5:15 p.m.

During each event there will be some special activities.



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RE12-22-23

### 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.

**Bible Study for Men:** Mondays at 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 8 a.m.

**Women's Bible Study:** Tuesdays at 10 a.m.

**Community Bible Study and Prayer:** Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

**Donuts with Don:** Fridays at 10 a.m. This is an open discussion on how God fits into your life.

### Senior Center News & Notes

Colchester Senior Center, 95 Norwich Ave., has announced the following. Unless noted, registration is required for all programs. For full descriptions and to register, call 860-537-3911, email [csc@colchesterct.gov](mailto:csc@colchesterct.gov), or for a full list of activities, visit [www.colchesterct.gov/senior-center](http://www.colchesterct.gov/senior-center).

Monday, Jan. 1: Closed for New Year's Day.  
Tuesday, Jan. 2: Making Memories 9 a.m., Pinochle 12:30 p.m., Bingo 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 3: Walking Group meetup at the Airline Trail in Amston 9 a.m.

Thursday, Jan. 4: Exercise w/Ann 9 a.m.

Friday, Jan. 5: Sit & Be Fit Video 10 a.m., Choral Group 10:30 a.m., Yoga 11 a.m.

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RE11-3-23

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# Overdue Audit Report Finally Complete

By Michael Sinkewicz

A long-awaited Colchester financial audit report was finally completed last week, but the town is still working to be in compliance with the state Office of Policy and Management (OPM) moving forward.

The submission of the fiscal year 2021-2022 audit comes nearly one year after it was initially due.

The report, issued by PKF O'Connor Davies, identified one single material finding that the town failed to close its financial reporting system within a reasonable timeframe and perform a year-end bank reconciliation on time.

Essentially, the finding indicates that monthly reports relied upon by the boards of selectmen and finance were potentially inaccurate because errors wouldn't have been identified in a timely manner, according to the independent auditor.

The cause of the issue was "a lack of staffing and resources due to staff turnover," the auditor notes — specifically, turnover in the town's Finance Department.

"It's not serious," First Selectman Bernie Dennler III told the *Rivereast*. "But it cannot be allowed to recur."

As the audit notes, he continued, the boards depend on the accuracy of financial reports to manage the town, and "it can start to create problems" if they're not issued accordingly.

"We've avoided that so far," Dennler said. The auditor's recommendation to remediate that issue was for the town to develop, document, communicate and monitor a financial closing process in order to facilitate an effective monthly close and year-end close. Dennler stated that the town will correct the issue internally and will work on potential strategies.

But typically those alterations can be assimilated for the following fiscal year — something that did not happen. Because the submission of the 2021-22 fiscal year, which spanned from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, was significantly delayed, the 2022-2023 fiscal year fully transpired without any corrections being made.

There wasn't an opportunity to adjust the town's practices for that fiscal year, which officially ended in June (the town is currently halfway through the 2023-2024 fiscal year).

## 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.

## Ahavath Achim News

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

**Tuesday:** Aggaddata class, 6 p.m.; Talmud class, 6:30 p.m.; Kabbalah class, 8 p.m. on Zoom; call for link.

**Wednesday:** Hebrew, 2:30 p.m., Jewish Literacy, 3:30 p.m.

**Shabbat Schedule:** Friday at 6:30 p.m., in-person and on Zoom — Shabbat; Saturday morning, 10 a.m., in-person and on Zoom — Shabbat service.

There are daily Facebook Live classes on Ken Alter's Facebook page; Ask the Rabbi and Jewish Trivia are also featured.

For more information, or a link for services or classes, call 860-537-2809. Office hours are Wednesday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

"It's done," Dennler said. "What happened, happened."

The same material finding from the previous 2021-22 report will "likely be there again" in the 2022-23 report, according to Dennler.

Over the past two fiscal years, the town has experienced significant staff turnover, extending beyond the Finance Department. Dennler explained that when a position such as Public Works Director is vacant, it's harder to retrieve documents and locate files needed to complete the audit report.

"It takes longer to get answers," he said.

### The 2022-2023 Fiscal Year Audit

The town is now pivoting to the 2022-2023 fiscal year audit, which is due at the end of the 2023 calendar year. Not only was the town unaware of the material finding in the previous fiscal year, but several additional hurdles challenged the municipality during that period, which covered July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023.

That fiscal year, Dennler asserted, was plagued by "instability."

"There was a lot of disruption that year," he said.

Notably, that fiscal year was impacted by significant turnover at the top of the Finance Department. Longtime Chief Financial Officer Maggie Cosgrove retired in June, 2022 — just before the 2022-23 fiscal year officially began.

Her successor, Debbie Kratochvil, worked in Colchester for a short period of time, with current Finance Director Mary Williamson then taking over in February of 2023.

By the time she entered the department, the 2021-22 audit was already overdue. The Board of Selectmen (BOS) agreed this year to hire two temporary employees through Robert Half to assist the finance department with the audit, and Cosgrove was added onto the payroll as a

consultant.

The 2022-23 fiscal year also saw the bifurcation of the town and Board of Education (BOE) into separate finance departments. In the fall of 2022, two staff members left the town to work exclusively for the school finance department.

Then First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos told the *Rivereast* at the time that the turnover was affecting the town.

"I would not say that it was handled improperly but rather that it came as a complete surprise because the town side had an agreement with the [Board of Education] that those two employees will be shared, at least, until June 30, 2023," Bisbikos said. "The surprise was magnified because the office was already short staffed, and they took two out of the three remaining employees."

Work on the 2022-23 audit is underway, Dennler said, with the town requesting a six month extension to submit the report.

Adhering to that timeline is essential, the first selectman stated. In a previous Facebook post, he informed the community that OPM made it clear to him that the town cannot delay its 2022-23 audit for another year.

"Failure to produce a timely submission for another year would constitute a 'second trigger' that could put Colchester on a path toward state oversight," Dennler wrote, adding that OPM ex-

pressed that their meeting with the town should be treated as a "red flag."

During a phone call last week, Dennler said the audit will be submitted within the extended timeline.

"I believe that six months is a reasonable amount of time to get this audit completed," he said, adding that he was counting on the town's staff to meet the challenge. "I'm confident we'll deliver."

While Dennler stated that the inaccuracy of financial reports had not yet created any major problems in town, there have been instances during public meetings where reports have been questioned by local officials.

In January, when Kratochvil was still the finance director, she displayed expenditure reports for the Board of Finance (BOF) to review. After one BOF member highlighted an unusually high overage in a line item, Kratochvil explained that due to a technical issue, that item — and potentially several others in the report — were inaccurate. The correct figures, she said, were likely lower than they appeared in her report.

BOF member Mike Hayes stated at the time that if reports were knowingly inaccurate, they shouldn't have been distributed and officials should've been notified of the error in advance of the meeting.

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# BOE Pursues HVAC Grant

By Michael Sinkewicz

The Colchester Board of Selectmen (BOS) unanimously approved three resolutions allowing the Board of Education (BOE) to pursue a CT HVAC Indoor Air Quality Grant for district's high school, Bacon Academy.

During a special meeting on Dec. 13, the BOS authorized the BOE to apply for the grant, and established the school board as a temporary building committee for the project, as required by the grant's outline.

In addition, the BOS approved the preparation of schematic drawings and outline specifications for the project, funding that will come out of the BOE's budget.

Superintendent of Schools Daniel Sullivan III told the BOS that Bacon Academy is the only school in the district that is not fully air conditioned, which has allowed the building to get extremely hot during certain months, and led to students being dismissed early on one occasion as well as heat related illnesses.

Classroom temperatures were recorded at 84°F and 75% humidity during the year.

Sullivan stated that additional equipment, including an outdoor condenser, has reached the end of its lifespan and needs to be replaced.

In outlining the cost of the project, Sullivan explained that the state would be releasing funding through a competitive grant process

to address HVAC projects for schools. The grant would require a local match, and would be awarded using the school construction reimbursement funding formula.

Essentially, if Colchester received the grant, the state would pay for around 60% of the project. The BOE, meanwhile, could tap into its remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) ARPA and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to cover its portion.

If the grant is approved, the district would go out to bid, but the BOE has already partnered with Trane, a company that has visited the school and provided an estimated cost of \$1,533,200 for the project.

The BOE has \$243,960 remaining in ARPA funds and \$119,770 from ESSER II for a total of \$363,730 to contribute to the project.

Sullivan said that the BOE would not be requesting any funding from the municipal budget to cover that gap. His request before the BOS was simply for procedural support, not financial. The remaining funding gap would be included in subsequent school budget proposals; Sullivan said roughly \$75,000 could be added to the district's operational budget over the next two years to cover that shortfall.

## Historical Society 2024 Calendars

The Colchester Historical Society's 2024 calendars are now available.

The limited-edition pictorial calendar highlights notable individuals who left a legacy in Colchester. The people include a military hero, a foreign-born patriot, a photographer, a farmer, a groundbreaking woman, a professional umpire, two store owners, an industrialist, a lawyer and two doctors. All are connected to Colchester and contributed to the development of the town.

Calendars are \$12 each and will be available at the Colchester History Museum on Sundays, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., from Dec. 17 to Jan. 21. For \$20, folks can purchase the calendar and a copy of Historical Landmarks: A Historical Tour of Colchester. This book features 50 historic sites

throughout Colchester, many within walking distance from the center of town. Also available are the books Images of America: Colchester and The Men Connected to Colchester, Connecticut Who Served During the Civil War.

Calendars can also be found at Nathan Liverant and Son Antiques at 168 South Main St.; hours are Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Calendars and any of the books can also be mailed for an additional shipping fee. Contact the Colchester Historical Society at: mail@colchesterhistory.org, or call 860 537-4230 to make a purchase. Calendars and books can also be purchased at www.colchesterhistory.org/get-involved/shop-1.

## Colchester Federated Church News

Colchester Federated Church is an Open and Affirming church located at 60 Main St. Pastor is the Rev. Lauren 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. For those wishing to worship from home, the service is broadcast via Facebook Live each Sunday. Worship videos are at www.colchesterfederated-church.org under the Worship tab. Updated information is also on the church's Facebook page.

**Sunday School:** 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 for more info and to register 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. from September through June.

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**We Pledge Allegiance...** The recent Wreaths Across America ceremony in Colchester started with the Pledge of Allegiance. The ceremony was sponsored by Westchester Cemetery Association and Pack 109.

## Parks & Rec News & Notes

Colchester Parks and Recreation has announced the following programs and events. Registration required unless noted. For full descriptions and to register, visit [www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department](http://www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department). Parks and Rec. can also be reached at 860-537-7297 or at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

**Holiday Home and Business Decorating Contest:** Print your free map and view all of the decorated sites; maps are available online or on the Parks and Rec. Facebook or Instagram pages. Vote for your favorite home and business decorations on Facebook by Dec. 31.

**Colchester Youth Theatre: Winter Show:** Thursdays, Jan. 11-March 7, 5:30-6:30 p.m., for grades 6-9. Cost: \$145. Colchester Youth Theatre is a new community program through Parks and Rec. You'll be cast in several roles, dive into production, and bring a play to life in a public performance on March 7.

**Teen Self-Defense and Krav Maga Class:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, Jan. 8-March 11, 5:45-6:30 p.m., at 360 Defense, 52 Mill St. Ages 12-15 will learn Krav Maga, a self-defense system taught worldwide. Cost: \$128.

**Martial Arts Basics for Kids:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, Jan. 9-Feb. 29, 4:15-5 p.m., at 360 Defense. Kids age 6-11 will work on respect and focus through physically engaging activities. Fee: \$128.

**Adult Actor's Lab:** Mondays, Jan. 8-March 11, 7-8 p.m., for ages 18 and up. This scene study program will help you perfect your craft both onstage and on camera, surrounded by other actors. You'll receive expert guidance from a seasoned actor and director. Fee: \$75/Colchester residents, \$80/non-residents.

**Family Cross-Country Skiing:** Jan. 8-March 7 (as weather permits), at Elizabeth and Ruby Cohen Park. Schedule is: Fridays/Saturdays, 11 a.m.-noon, and Sundays, 1-2 p.m. This will be non-competitive cross-country skiing. Skis, boots and poles will not be provided; you must use your own. This activity is weather-dependent; you will receive updates upon registration. There is no fee for the program.

**Align and Shine Yoga:** Wednesdays, Jan. 10-Feb. 28, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Immerse yourself in a holistic approach that combines traditional yoga postures, breathwork, and mindfulness techniques. Fee: \$80/Colchester residents, \$85/non-residents

**Gentle Yoga:** Four-week classes on Mondays,

Jan. 8-Feb. 5 and Feb. 12-March 11, from 4:45-5:45 p.m., via Facebook Live. (Exact dates on the Parks and Rec. website.) For ages 45 and up. Explore yoga postures, breathing techniques and meditation. Fee: \$35/residents, \$40/non-residents.

**Intermediate Yoga:** Tuesdays, Jan. 9-Feb. 13, 6-7 p.m., at Jack Jacter Intermediate School. This class is designed for beginners as well as experienced. Fee: \$70.

**Barre-Pilates Fusion:** Mondays, Jan. 8-March 18 (no class 1/15 or 2/19), 5:45-6:30 p.m., online via Zoom. This class combines barre and strength exercises with floor work based on Pilates principles. Fee: \$72.

**Pilates:** Tuesdays, Jan. 9-March 26, 6-6:45 p.m., via Zoom. Exercises focus on the core muscles which include the abs, back, glutes and shoulders. Fee: \$96.

**Cardio Strength:** Wednesdays, Jan. 10-March 27, 8:30-9:15 a.m., via Zoom. In addition to using weights to help build strength, this class incorporates some light cardio to help improve cardiovascular health. Fee: \$96.

**Core Strength:** Thursdays, Jan. 11-March 28, 6-6:45 p.m., via Zoom. Fee: \$96.

**Zumba:** Mondays, Jan. 8-Feb. 26, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Fee: \$80.

**Men's Open Gym Basketball:** From beginner to advanced, pickup basketball is open to everyone. Tuesdays through March 26 (no basketball Dec. 26 or Feb. 20), at William J. Johnston Middle School. Must be 18 or older to play. Fee: \$75/session per resident, \$80/session per non-resident.

**Volunteers Sought:** Parks and Rec. is always looking for volunteers to help with events and programs. Call the office if interested.

## 5K Resolution Run

The Colchester Youth First Coalition and Colchester Youth and Social Services will hold the 19th annual New Year's Day 5K Resolution Run at Town Hall at 10 a.m. Monday, Jan. 1. Registration and bib pick-up begins at 8:30 a.m.

Pre-registration is \$30 and Same Day Registration is \$40. The first 200 people registered will receive a race performance tee. Register at [tinyurl.com/59cy4cks](http://tinyurl.com/59cy4cks).

Proceeds benefit youth scholarships and youth center upgrades. For more information, contact Charity Benedict at Colchester Youth & Social Services at 860-537-7255 or [cbenedict@colchesterct.gov](mailto:cbenedict@colchesterct.gov).

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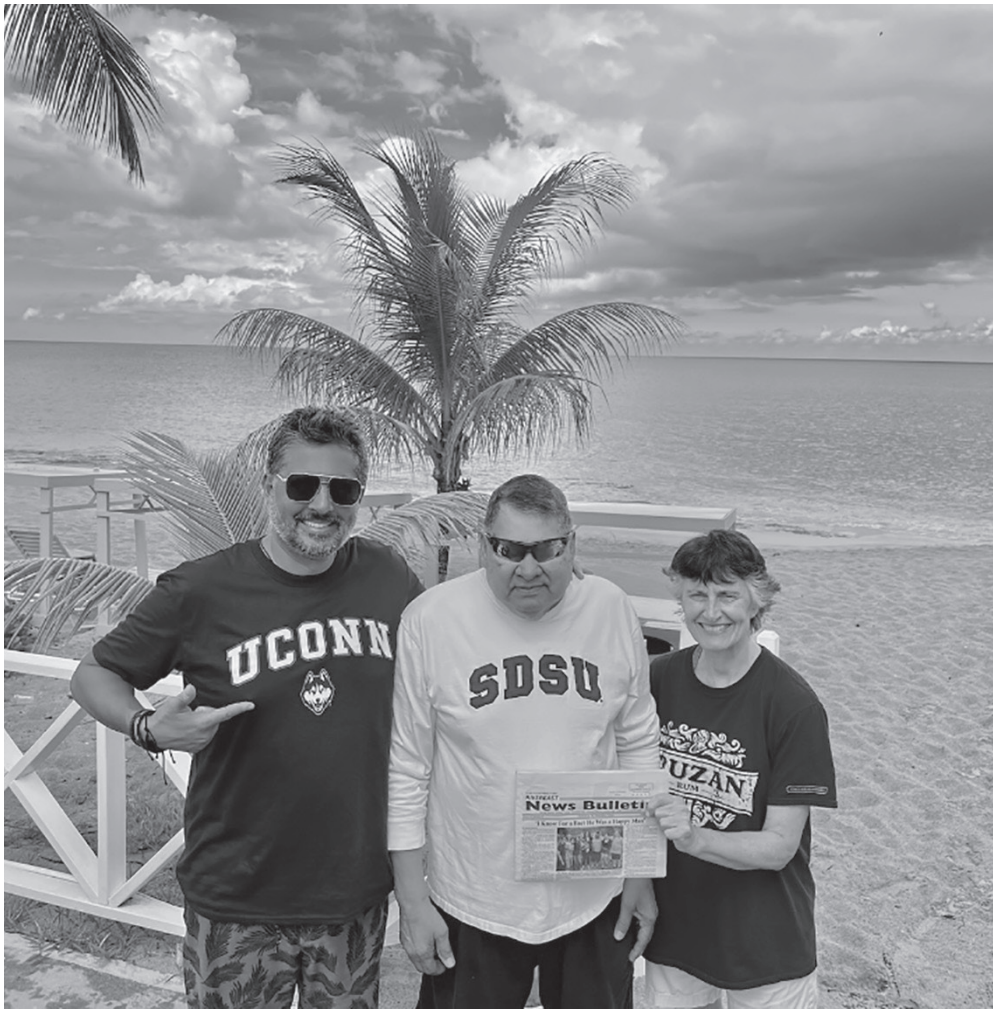
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# Where in the World is the *Rivereast*?

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](mailto:bulletin@glcitizen.com).



Enjoying St. Croix... Pictured are Kenny Haytasingh from San Diego, Calif., and Andy and Ali Garcia of Colchester, on a family reunion in St. Croix.



Rivereast in Romania... John and Leslie O'Kelly of East Hampton recently traveled on a river cruise from Budapest, Hungary to Bucharest, Romania (visiting Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and then Romania). They're seen here with in Constanta, Romania, with the Rivereast.



At the Top Again!... Michael Chotkowski of Marlborough is pictured in October visiting the Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) Burj Khalifa. It's a 163-floor building, and Chotkowski is pictured visiting the 148th floor observatory while on a business trip to see customers in the UAE.



Honeymooning Down Mexico Way... Newlyweds Libby Hay and Ian Bourbeau, of Portland, are shown here on their honeymoon in Mexico City during el Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, festivities at Mexico City's central square, Zócalo.

## Where in the World?

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★ **Top 23 Sports Moments cont. from page 1**

**7. Young Wrestler Thrives**

Chase Paquette, a seven-year-old from Hebron who wrestles and trains with RHAM Youth Wrestling, was crowned a state champion for a second straight season on Feb. 12, winning a decision (9-4) against Laertes Panagiotidis (Ridgefield wrestling) in the title bout. To reach the championship match, Paquette defeated Remy St Pierre (Gladiator youth wrestling) by a major decision (11-1) in a quarterfinal match and then pinned Kai Grant (Meriden youth wrestling) in the semifinals. In his back-to-back championship seasons, Paquette has posted an incredible record of 37 wins and 2 losses, finishing each year as a state champion.

**8. Burton Shatters Records**

Bacon Academy's Maddox Burton had a record-breaking week in mid-May, becoming the program's all-time assist leader and then setting the record for career points. Burton set a new assist mark during an 18-5 win over Killingly when she posted a season-high 11 points, scoring five goals and dishing out six helpers on May 17. The following night, she tallied nine more points (three goals, six assists) to set a new points mark in a home win over Fitch. Burton is now a freshman at Southern Connecticut State University where she is set to start her first season with the Owls lacrosse program this upcoming spring.

**9. East Hampton Siblings Blaze Trails**

East Hampton siblings Cameron and Calista Nephew capped off the cross-country season by bringing home a pair of state championship team titles at the CIAC Divisional Championships held at Wickham Park in Manchester on October 29. Cameron Nephew, a senior captain at Xavier High School, helped the Falcons locked in a fifth consecutive Class L boys cross-country team title. Calista Nephew, a sophomore at Mercy High School, earned first-team all-state honors (along with East Hampton teammate Clara Romero) as the Tigers earned the program's first Class M girls cross-country state team title in 30 years. Cameron finished the season with a personal-best time of 16:07 at the Great American Cross-Country Festival in Cary, NC and Calista posted her personal-best time of 20:59 at the Southern Connecticut Conference (SCC) Championship meet in New Haven.

**10. RHAM Record-Breaking Relayers**

RHAM High School's 4x800 relay team of Cam Rhodes, Konrad Jandzinski, Josh Gauthier, and Sam Fortin won a state championship and broke the school's record in the event multiple times, culminating with a time of 8:19.58 during their championship victory at the Class M finals on Feb 11 in New Haven. It was one of several of RHAM's track and field records that fell in 2023, including multiple individual records broken by Isabella Mondo and Max Czarnecki, who are now both competing at Central Connecticut State University.

**11. Highlanders Volleyball Debuts**

This fall, Portland High School's girls volleyball program created history by competing at the varsity level for the first time. When the team took the court for their varsity first varsity match on Sept 7, it was the payoff for a project that was started three years ago by Bella Hettrick-Rivera, who used her Capstone Project in 2020 as an opportunity to bring a volleyball program to the high school. After two years at a junior varsity level, the team debuted this year with captains Elvira Medunjanin, Katie Laverty, and Ella Royea leading the way.

**12. RHAM Grad Receives Prestigious Honor**

Anna Barry, a 2018 graduate of RHAM High School, was selected as Eastern Connecticut State University's Bonnie J. Edmondson Female Sportsperson-of-the-Year on May 16. Barry was a multi-sport standout at the university, playing both volleyball and basketball at the school since 2018. This past winter she took to her game to another level, earning a spot on the Women's Basketball Coaches' Association (WBCA) Division III All-America Team, along with being selected as the Little East Conference (LEC) Player of the Year for a second straight season after averaging career-highs in both points (16.7) and rebounds (12.2). She also finished her career with 1,331 kills on the volleyball court, joining a rare group of college athletes that surpassed the 1,000-career mark in both basketball points (1,446) and volleyball kills (1,331).

**13. Conference Repeat for Bellringers Volleyball**

For the second straight season, the girls volleyball team at East Hampton High School won a Shoreline Conference championship, defeating Valley Regional in four sets at Haddam-Killingworth High School on Nov. 3. Senior Mackenzie Player registered a career-high 24 kills to lead a potent frontline that hammered down 57

total kills. Senior captain Chelsea Woods initiated the offensive change with 46 assists (career-high), while Amber Murphy, also a senior captain, added 11 kills and blocked four shots.

**14. Coogan Breaks Record, Bobcats Get Down and Dirty**

On Oct. 21, Bacon Academy's Skip Coogan recovered a state-record six fumbles, including one for a touchdown, as the Bobcats football team scored a program-record 61 points in what is now known as the "Mud Bowl". Playing on the rain-soaked field at Bacon Academy, the Bobcats blanked Montville 61-0 on Senior Day as senior Avatar Disher forced three fumbles and intercepted a pass to help the defense. Bacon's ground-and-pound approach on offense capitalized off seven turnovers. The team rushed for 192 yards and scored six times with five different Bobcats scoring on the ground. Edward Gignac led the way with 72 rushing yards and a pair of scores, while Julian Rodriguez, Riddick Burroughs, Jason Colon, and Brady Gould also rushed for a touchdown.

**15. Salamone Sizzles as Sophomore**

Along with helping the Bellringers to the program's first state title since in 23 years, East Hampton sophomore Liana Salamone added to her list of growing individual accolades during her second season on the high school courts. In February, Salamone was honored as the Shoreline Conference Player of the Year prior to the team beating Cromwell to win their fourth consecutive conference title and then was selected all-state for the second straight season. Salamone also surpassed the 1,000 career point mark during the team's championship tourney march.

**16. RHAM Wrestling Rises Above Controversy**

RHAM High School wrestling won on the scorecard at the Class M championship, yet a controversial one-point deduction ultimately cost them the team title. Despite the official's decision, a pair of Raptors won state titles and a total of seven wrestlers qualified for the State Open. Michael Marques won a state champion after pinning Jason Toth of East Haven in the 195 pound bout and Ben Fournier (106 lbs.) also took home an individual state championship after pinning Cesar Rodriguez of Platt.

**17. Collins Clutch as Highlanders Protect Home Court**

Portland High School basketball senior Harrison Collins put on a show during his final home game, scoring a game-high 22 points and dishing out eight assists as the Highlanders defeated Wheeler 60-42 in the quarterfinals of the Division V state tournament on March 10. Following the season, Collins was named all-state after leading the team in scoring (21 points per game). He also led the team in assists and steals.

**18. Raptors Cheer Reaches New Heights**

Competing at the Floyd Athletic Center in New Haven on March 4, RHAM High School cheerleading placed 3rd at the Class M state championships. It was the highest the program has ever finished at the state competition and advanced the Raptors to the New England Regionals in Massachusetts for the first time where they would place 6th overall at the multi-state competition at Worcester State University on March 18. The trip to regionals ended another banner year for the Raptors, who won a second straight Central Connecticut Conference (CCC) championship and finished first in the New England Cheerleaders Association (NECA) Open Championships.

**19. Local Baller Hits 1,000**

Andover's Sequoia Turcotte Briggs, a then-junior at Classical Magnet High School, joined an elite group on the hardwood by scoring her 1,000th career point on Feb. 8. Turcotte Briggs surpassed the four-digit mark by draining a three-point shot at the top of the arc with seven seconds left in the first half. She finished the game with 20 points and 11 assists as the Classical defeated Prince Tech 60-43, earning their 12th win of the season.

**20. Devine's Double Delivery**

RHAM High School's Dylan Devine had a week to remember on the wrestling mats, first defeating Jack Janes of Avon to win the 152-pound division at the Central Connecticut Conference Championship at Glastonbury High School on Feb. 4 and then tallying his 100th career win in his final home meet at the high school on Feb. 8. Devine is now wrestling collegiately at St. John Fisher University.

**21. Pineda Scorches Wildcats**

Portland High School's Morganne Pineda scored a career-high 31 points to go along with five rebounds and three assists as the Highlanders notched a convincing victory (56-36) over conference rival Lyme-Old Lyme on Jan 30. The Wildcats from Old Lyme had defeated the Highlanders in the first meeting on Dec. 16 at Portland High School, but Portland got sweet



Chelsea Woods and Amber Murphy are two of the East Hampton's senior captains that helped Bellringers volleyball win a second straight Shoreline Conference championship in November. Both Woods and Murphy were named all-state in 2023.

revenge in the second meeting, winning by 20 points on the road.

**22. Bellringers Brilliant from Plate**

East Hampton High School's Olivia DeMartino and Alex Zimmerman delivered the goods for their respective teams in April. DeMartino led the charge for Bellringers softball, opening the spring season by going 4-4 from the plate, scoring four runs and driving in four more as the Bellringers beat Valley Regional 11-5 at East Hampton High School on April 3. On April 14, Zimmerman powered Bellringers baseball by connecting on a pair of hits, including a grand slam in the fifth inning, as he drove in six

runs during East Hampton's 14-4 victory over Westbrook.

**23. Holm Lights Lamp**

RHAM High School's Nina Holm scored the game-winning goal as the Nighthawks—a co-op team featuring players from RHAM, Avon, Southington, Wethersfield, Newington, Lewis Mills, and Coventry—dealt Darien their first loss of the season on Nov. 11. Holm, a senior, intercepted a pass and fired a shot into the back of the net with less than a minute to play in regulation as the local ice hockey squad won 7-6 and shocked a Blue Wave team in Darien that entered the contest with a record of 16-0-2.

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# Local Gym Looks to Expand Services After Relocation

By London Brazal

Against the Grain Fitness originated out of Glastonbury but recently moved to a larger location at 529 Glastonbury Turnpike in Portland at the beginning of the month. Unlike stereotypical gyms with memberships and random walk-ins, Against the Grain (ATG) is dedicated to science-based strength training.

One of the co-owners, Brian Cusano started weight training at the age of 15 and enjoyed doing so. He then decided to pursue an education and received a bachelor's degree in exercise physiology. While working at different gyms, he became a certified strength and conditioning specialist, Precision nutrition level 1 certified and holds numerous certifications in speed and athletic development.

"I always knew," said Brian as he discussed why he wanted to start his own gym. ATG was created four years ago and was located in Glastonbury but the space was much smaller. It was a narrow building with an office-like design. His wife and co-owner Wendy commented how she has always had an entrepreneurial spirit and it was easy for her to become involved. "It's great working with my husband," added Wendy. "We have a lot of fun while helping others."

The couple met when Brian was teaching a class and Wendy was taking it. Together, they have created a healthy and nurturing atmosphere while helping people achieve their fitness goals. At ATG, they provide individuals physical freedom, strength, wellness, and knowledge through purposeful functional training, nutritional coaching, and kindness.

On Dec. 1, the two finished the move and re-opened on the 3rd. The new location has a unique style in its appearance. Wendy decorated the place to show off the couple's personality.

"We wanted to make it fun, we're fun people and we wanted to share our personalities," explained Wendy. In the gym, there is an industrial look but the space also has several plants to make it more earthy and welcoming. With that, they also wanted to have a clean aesthetic and promote a healthy environment.

Something the couple loves about their gym is the demographic they have brought in. Many people become friends and create real relationships. They even have people in their 70s and 80s who continue to keep a healthy lifestyle while interacting with people in their 20s. "Where else do you see these types of relationships forming," said Wendy. "It's really special."

In their transition, they were fortunate to retain about 95% of their attendees. "We went from a central location to something more rural," added Wendy. "We're super grateful that they came with us." People are coming from West Hartford, Wethersfield and other further towns but they are hoping to get more people from the immediate area.

Overall, the couple's goal is to help teach people of all abilities how to properly train. They don't like seeing people get hurt when most of the time, it's preventable. Brian and Wendy are also focused on building people's confidence. The programs are designed to make attendees comfortable with a workout. That way, they can work out on their own time with less of a risk of getting injured.

From 2021-2023, the gym was named the "10 Best" in personal training by *Natural Nutmeg*, a lifestyle magazine local to Connecticut. The first time around, the Cusanos didn't know how people voted. "It's a really nice honor," commented Brian. Since the gym was awarded three years in a row, the couple sees it as a testament to the



Against the Grain Fitness has been awarded "10 Best" in personal training by the *Natural Nutmeg*, a lifestyle magazine local to Connecticut. The strength-training gym has moved to Portland, allowing the owners to expand their programming and host more classes.

good services they provide and amplifies what they believe in.

At ATG, they provide three different types of services. Personal training is a one-on-one coaching program where the specific workout program is designed to the individual's goals. Semi-private training is still individualized but allows for 2-4 people in the group. Common groupings include friends, siblings, partners, mother-daughter, father-son and teammates. The other type of training they provide is classes. The classes have multiple trainers to help guide and demonstrate exercises. With the

larger gym, the Cusanos are working to add more courses; their recent expansion includes evening yoga classes.

In the coming weeks, there will be a class calendar on their website, [againstthegrainfitness.com](http://againstthegrainfitness.com). Brian and Wendy are also planning to change the class pricing by offering a monthly rate. Any questions about pricing can be emailed to [atgfitness1@gmail.com](mailto:atgfitness1@gmail.com). To find more information about Against the Grain Fitness, visit their website or follow their Instagram and Facebook.

## Vocal Chords Seek Tenors, Bases

The Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords, under the direction of Samuel Tucker and accompanied by a 10-piece orchestra directed by Alan Dougherty, is looking for men and women to enhance their growing tenor and bass sections.

There are no auditions and no experience necessary; just a love of singing and a willingness to make a commitment to the Vocal Chord family. Rehearsals begin Tuesday, Jan. 16, from 6:45-9 p.m., at St. Francis Church, Msgr. Fox Parish Hall, 10 Elm St., Middletown, for the upcoming spring concert, which will take place Saturday, May 4, at Portland High School. New members will be accepted through Feb. 4.

This community-oriented group has been entertaining audiences for 34 years with concerts showcasing a variety of musical interests. These include the top hits of yesterday, today and tomorrow, plus some classical and patriotic pieces. Currently, the group has 90 members hail from all parts of Connecticut and all different walks of life. You do not need to be affiliated

with Middlesex Health in order to join.

Proceeds from the concerts and MHVC's annual patron drive are given back to the community in the form of scholarships given to Middlesex County high school seniors planning on majoring in nursing or music. To date, the Vocal Chords have awarded \$82,500 to area students.

For more information, visit on the web at [vocalchords20.org](http://vocalchords20.org) or call 860-342-3120. The group can also be found on YouTube and Facebook.

## Exchange Club Holding Bingo Night

The Portland Exchange Club will hold a Bingo Night Thursday, Jan. 11, at Concentric Brewery, located at 91 Main St.

Card sales start at 6 p.m., and games start at 7 p.m. Admission is \$20 for four cards to be used for all 10 games, with prizes for the winner of each game. Proceeds from the night will go to the Portland Fuel Bank.

## 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.

**Monday, Jan. 1: Closed for the New Year's holiday.**

**Food Bank Donation Info:** The senior center asks that residents 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 senior center. People are asked to only leave donations for the Food Bank, and only during food bank hours.

**Next Week's Programs:** **Monday:** Closed for the 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 bears (to donate, call 860-342-0809); Coupons for Troops, 1-4 p.m.; Setback, 1 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. on the second and fourth Wednesday, multipurpose room. **Thursday:** Stretch & Tone, 9:30 a.m.; Knit & Stitch, 10 a.m.; Mahjong, 12:30 p.m.; Scrabble, 1 p.m. **Friday:** Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

## Parks and Rec. News & Notes

Portland Parks and Recreation offers a variety of programs for adults and children. For a complete list of programs, full course descriptions, or to register, visit [portland.recdesk.com](http://portland.recdesk.com) or call 860-342-6757. Advanced registration is required.

**Rec Basketball K-2 with Skyhawks:** Saturdays, Jan. 6-Feb. 10, at Gildersleeve School. Kindergarten is held from 8-8:50 a.m.; first grade, 9-9:50 a.m.; second grade girls, 10-10:50 a.m.; second grade boys, 11-11:50 a.m. Fee: \$100/resident, \$120/non-resident.

**Drop-In Basketball:** Mondays (for women) and Tuesdays (for men), 7:30-9 p.m., through May, at Portland Middle School.

## 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](http://zionlutheranportland.org).

All are welcome to all worship services and special events. For more information or if in need of pastoral assistance, call 860-342-2860, email [zion.lutheran@snet.net](mailto:zion.lutheran@snet.net), or visit [zionlutheranportland.org](http://zionlutheranportland.org). Sara Stall-Ryan is pastor.

**Trip: Thursday, Jan. 4, 3:30 p.m.** - Trip to Mystic Village & Dinner at Mano's Wood Fired Pizza, Seating limited, to register call Sarah or Alexis at 342-6761.

**Blood Pressure Clinics:** 10:30-11:30 a.m. on the first Monday of each month (note: if that day is a holiday, the clinic is the following week).

**Free Hearing Screenings:** The second Tuesday of each month at 11 a.m., with Virginia Duclos 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](mailto:myjakjeff@gmail.com).

**Volunteer Drivers Sought for Meals-on-Wheels:** Meals would be delivered to the homebound Monday-Thursday. The delivery usually takes about an hour. For full details, call Alexis at 860-342-6761.

## Party Affiliation Changes

If you are currently enrolled in a political party and wish to change your affiliation to be able to vote in the Presidential Preference Primary on April 2, you must change no later than Jan. 2.

You can change your affiliation online at [voterregistration.ct.gov](http://voterregistration.ct.gov) or by completing a form in the Portland town clerk's office.



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Obituaries

Colchester

Russell T. Morris

Russell T. Morris Sr., 64, of Colchester, beloved husband of Cheryl (Bennett) Morris passed away at his home on Wednesday Dec. 20th.



Born Jan. 21, 1959 in Middletown, he was predeceased by his father Robert Morris, his mother Gloria (Biondi) Morris, and his sister Patricia Morris.

Russell grew up in East Hampton where he met his wife of 42 years, Cheryl. As a teenager he spent most of his time working on a variety of hotrod and muscle cars. After high school, he went to work for Electric Boat, graduating first in his class and becoming certified in many different welding specialties. In 1988, he then went on to become the owner and operator of RTM Contracting. He was a skilled carpenter by trade. He built many homes from the ground up and in the later part of his career took great pride in creating detailed trim work.

While enjoying watching his two sons grow up, he volunteered as a coach for youth baseball and soccer then becoming the "Pit Man" while they shifted gears into many years of dirt bike racing. He had a passion for fishing in Long Island Sound, spending many nights out on the water as well as taking afternoon truck rides with his dog Major.

Besides his wife Cheryl, he is survived by his two sons and their wives Russell and Kylie Morris Jr. of Colchester, Steven and Nikki Morris of Colchester, his mother-in-law Anna Marie Bennett of East Hampton, his father-in-law Gilbert (Anne) Bennett of FL, and his four beloved grandchildren Blake, Adalyn, Aiden and Piper.

Calling hours were held on Thursday. Funeral services will be held at the Spencer Funeral Home at 112 Main St. East Hampton on Friday, Dec. 29 at 11:00 a.m., followed by burial in Lake View Cemetery. To leave online condolences please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Joane Colburn

Joane T. (Rutty) Colburn, 71, of East Hampton, widow of Robert H. Colburn passed away Sunday Dec. 24th at Hartford Hospital.



Born Aug. 5, 1952 in Middletown, she was the daughter of the late Robert and Viola (Valli) Rutty. Joane was a life long resident of East Hampton and had retired from the East Hampton School System where she was the Kitchen Manager of the Middle School. Joane was an active communicant of St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. She had a passion for her cooking shows, and was a die hard N.Y. Yankees Fan and UCONN Women's Basketball fan.

Joane is survived by her two daughters Amber Goulet of Middletown, Shannon Goulet of Norwich, a sister Louise Joyce and her husband David of Ohio, brother-in-law Robert Dennehy of Colchester, two nephews Scott and Ryan and two nieces Katie and Kristen and many friends. Besides her parents and husband she was predeceased by her sister Nancy Dennehy.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home 112 Main St. East Hampton on Friday, Dec. 29th from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. A Funeral Liturgy will be celebrated on Saturday at 10:00 a.m. in St. Patrick Church East Hampton, followed by burial in Lake View Cemetery. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to the CT Humane Society 701 Russell Rd. Newington, Ct 06111, or www.cthumane.org. To leave online condolences please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

New Obituary Policy

Starting with the Jan. 5, 2024, edition, there will be a \$100 fee for all obituaries. Until then, the fee for obituaries will continue to be \$75.

Obituaries can be submitted by email to bulletin@glcitizen.com.

East Hampton

Raymond D. Gebeau

Raymond Dwyer Gebeau, 68, of East Hampton passed away unexpectedly, at home, on Dec. 3. Born Oct. 29, 1955, to the late Ernest and Eileen (Dwyer) Gebeau, Raymond grew up in Middletown before moving to East Hampton. Kuhn Employment Opportunities in Meriden, CT employed Raymond for close to 40 years. Upon retiring, Raymond continued to attend Kuhn's senior program. Raymond was proud to be retired. He leaves behind special Kuhn staff Tanya, and Melinda, who had worked with him for years.



Raymond had a mischievous nature and a unique sense of humor; he could not wait to "get one over on you" and then tell you all about how he did it. He loved things that were round, counting numbers, magnifying glasses, flannel shirts, the color red, the Incredible Hulk, chocolate ice cream, baked ziti, and diet coke. Raymond was very fortunate to spend the past 30 years in the care of the many staff from New England Residential Services. He was able to live his best life because of the wonderful staff who encouraged him to make goals for himself and then helped him achieve them. Raymond loved to travel and enjoyed many wonderful vacations going to beaches, Six Flags, Disney World, and an Island cruise. Raymond was especially happy to spend his vacations with his longtime friend and traveling companion Liam Poirier.

Raymond leaves to mourn his passing his roommates Gregg and Paul, Linda Crowley, who was like a second mother to him, his NERS family, his Kuhn family, and Jill Warzecha his dear friend and guardian. Raymond was predeceased by his friend and roommate Joe Sturgeon.

A celebration of Raymond's life will be held Jan. 9, 2024 at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver Street, Middletown, CT. Calling hours will begin at 10:00 a.m. with a memorial service at 11:00 a.m. Burial will be at Calvary Cemetery in Middletown, CT.

Marlborough

Ruth E. Roberts

Ruth E. (Papoosha) Roberts, 66, of Marlborough passed away unexpectedly at home on Thursday, Dec. 21. Ruth was born in Hamden to the late Erwin & late Norma (Collier) Papoosha.

Ruth was a graduate from Hamden High School in 1975. After attending high school, Ruth held many jobs in Hamden that she enjoyed before settling down in Colchester in 1988 to raise her family. During her years in Colchester, Ruth enjoyed running her home daycare for fifteen years. After closing her home daycare, she was a beloved front end manager at Colchester Stop & Shop. Ruth enjoyed helping the many customers and interacting with them just as much as they were elated to come in and see her. Having retired in 2015, Ruth settled down in Marlborough.

Ruth leaves behind her son Matthew Santacrocce of New Britain, daughter Joan Santacrocce of New Britain and son Kimball Howes III & his wife Heather Howes of Colchester. Ruth is survived by her sister Wendy (Papoosha) Purficiato and her husband, Ronnie Purficiato of Hamden, brother Dave Papoosha and his wife, Christine Papoosha of Durham, brother Eric Papoosha and his wife, Rosemary Papoosha of Wethersfield; her two grandchildren, Salvatore & Cameron. Ruth also leaves behind many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends all whom she adored. Ruth was predeceased by her brother Steven Papoosha.

Ruth had a passion for camping, and throughout her life camped with her parents and siblings, anywhere from Maine and Canada down to North Carolina. She enjoyed her time outdoors, especially gardening during the warmer months. She had an admiration for animals, having owned and enjoyed her many cats over the years. Ruth loved baking and cooking, especially making her holiday baked goods for the family. She will be missed by all.

Ruth will be laid to rest at Beavertdale Memorial Park in New Haven, CT; the services will be kept private to immediate family.

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON LEGAL NOTICE Notice of Hearing

The East Hampton Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a regular meeting on January 3, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall and via ZOOM Virtual Meeting to consider the following: Text Amendment Regarding Required Setbacks on Non-Conforming Lots in the R-1 Zone: Section 8.2 of the East Hampton Zoning Regulations Kevin Kuhr, Chairman Note\* any question re: Applications and Maps are on file in the Land Use Office 860 267-7450. 2TB 12/22, 12/29

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON IWWA ACTIONS

Notice is hereby given that the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency held a Regular Meeting at 6:30 p.m. on December 20, 2023 at the East Hampton Town Hall and via ZOOM to consider the following: Application IW-23-019: John Brown, 209 East High St., Construct a single-family home within Upland Review Area. Map 32/ Block 71/ Lot 1/5 - Approved Application IW-23-025: Jacob Sapia, 15 Brook Trail, Construct a single-family home in Upland Review Area. Map 10A/ Block 78/ Lot 28 - Approved Chairman Joshua Wilson 1TB 12/29

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Regular Meeting at 7:00 pm on January 8, 2024 at the East Hampton Town Hall - 1 Community Drive and via Zoom meeting (see Town website for details) to consider the following: ZBA-23-010: David Spinato, 7 Oakum Dock Road, Reduce front setback from 50' to 12.5' and rear setback from 50' to 40' for addition. Map 01C/Block 9A/Lot 2 2TB 12/29, 1/5

ADVERTISERS

The Glastonbury Citizen and Riverest News Bulletin will make every effort to see that all advertising copy is correctly printed. The publisher assumes no liability or financial responsibility for typographical errors in advertising, but will reprint, without charge, that part of an advertisement in which an error may occur, provided that a claim is made within 5 days of publication. The liability of the publisher on account of errors in or omissions from any advertisement will in no way exceed the amount of the charge for the space occupied by the item in error, and then only for the first incorrect insertion. Also, the publisher takes no responsibility for statements or claims made in any advertisement, and will upon request, reveal the name and address of the person or persons responsible for placing any display advertisement, political or otherwise, except for "blind" box ads. The Glastonbury Citizen Inc. reserves the right to reject advertisements which it deems unsuitable for its publications. Every effort will be made to verify the legitimacy and propriety of all ads for the protection of our readers. The Citizen will take requests for specific placement of ads and will try to accommodate everyone's requests. The Citizen cannot guarantee specific placement.

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LEGALS

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given there will be a caucus of all enrolled Republicans electors of the Town of East Hampton on Thursday January 11 at 6:30pm at The Dublin (East High Street) to endorse candidates for the Republican Town Committee. 2TB 12/29, 1/5

Colchester Democratic Caucus

To enrolled members of the Democratic Party of the Town of Colchester, CT- Pursuant to the Rules of the Democratic Party and State election laws, you are hereby notified that a caucus will be held on Thursday, January 11th, 2024, at 7:15 PM at Colchester Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave. Colchester. The caucus will endorse members for the Democratic Town Committee for 2024-2026 and transact other business as may be proper to come before said caucus. Dated in Colchester, CT, on this day December 29, 2023. 2TB 12/29, 1/5

Hebron Democratic Caucus

All registered Democrats who live in Hebron or Amston are invited to attend a caucus on Wednesday, January 10th at 6:30pm at the Russell Mercier Senior Center located at 14 Stonecroft Drive, Hebron, CT. The purpose of this caucus is to elect the Hebron Democratic Town Committee's Executive Board as well as elect members to the Hebron Democratic Town Committee. All registered Democrats are invited to attend, nominate, be nominated and vote. If you are interested in becoming a member or would like additional information, please email Chair@hebrondems.com. 1TB 12/29

LEGALS

ANDOVER REPUBLICAN TOWN COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP CAUCUS

On January 9, 2024 all register Republicans in the Town of Andover age 18 and up are invited to join the Andover Republican Town Committee (ARTC). A Membership Caucus will start at 7:00pm on Tuesday, January 9th, a Snow Date will be Friday, January 12th starting at 7:00pm both will be in the Community Room at the Town Office. If you have any questions please contact Carol Barton, ARTC Chair at 860-742-9829 prior to the caucus. 2TB 12/29, 1/5

NOTICE OF ANDOVER CT DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS 2024

Under the rules of the Democratic Party and State Election Laws, enrolled members of the Democratic Party in Andover, CT are notified that a Caucus to endorse candidates for the Democratic Town Committee as well as to transact other business before the caucus, will be held in the Andover Town Hall Community Room, 17 School Rd., Andover CT, on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 7:00 pm. December 29, 2023 Andover CT Catherine Magaldi-Lewis, Chair, Andover Democratic Town Committee 2TB 12/29, 1/5

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 4, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the Buck Foreman Room (2nd Floor), 265 Main Street, Portland, CT. Application #23-06: 6 Strickland Street. Proposed 4 lot subdivision. Application and property of Strickland Street LLC. Map 49, Lot 25, Zone R-25. Dated at Portland, CT this 20th day of December 2023 Robert Ellsworth, Chairman Planning & Zoning Commission 2TB 12/22, 12/29

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON LEGAL NOTICE Notice of Hearing

The East Hampton Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a regular meeting on January 3, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall and via ZOOM Virtual Meeting to consider the following: PZC-23-015: Text Amendment regarding Accessory Uses to Agriculture per Sec. 8.4.C PZC-23-017: Salt Pond Apartments, LLC, Edgewater Circle, Re-subdivision approval for the creation of 2 lots. Map 10A/ Block 85/Lot 5C. Kevin Kuhr, Chairman Note\* any question re: Applications and Maps are on file in the Land Use Office 860 267-7450. 2TB 12/22, 12/29

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**SEEKING AUTOMOTIVE MECHANIC:** for immediate hire at fast growing shop in Middletown. Strong mechanical aptitude and troubleshooting skills. Must be able to diagnose and repair mechanical issues and be deadline and detail oriented. Ability to thrive in a fast-paced environment. 2-3 years automotive experience preferred. Diesel experience is a plus! Must have your own tools. Call George 860-346-5551.

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Provides accounting, clerical, and administrative assistance to the Tax Collector in the billing, collecting, and crediting of taxes and related billings or charges. A qualified and interested applicant may be offered the opportunity to combine this part-time position with the part-time Accounting Clerk position. **QUALIFICATIONS:** The skills and knowledge required would generally be acquired with graduation from high school and three or more years of office accounting or bookkeeping experience, or an Associate's degree in Business Administration or Accounting with two years of accounting or bookkeeping experience, or any equivalent combination of education and experience. **STARTING WAGE:** \$22.40 - \$24.00/hour depending on experience and qualifications. Please submit a letter of interest and completed application to the: Town Clerk townclerk@marlboroughct.net 26 North Main Street P.O. Box 29 Marlborough, CT 06447 Open until filled. First review of applications on January 8, 2024. 4TB 12/15, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5

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**EMPLOYMENT POSTING Planning and Zoning Official**

The Town of East Hampton is accepting applications for a highly motivated, dynamic, and collaborative Planning and Zoning Official. The Planning and Zoning Official is responsible for administering and enforcing the zoning and wetlands regulations and other relevant Town Ordinances. Provides staff support to all land use commissions and other boards and commissions as necessary. The Planning and Zoning Official will have significant community engagement and public involvement with boards and commissions, and citizens. The Planning and Zoning Official will play a pivotal role in the management and update of the Plan of Conservation and Development, as well as other land use plans and studies. The ideal candidate should have a bachelor's degree in planning or a closely related field, with supervisory and budgeting experience. Salary range: \$83,634.75 - \$98,393.82 per year, plus benefit package which includes health, dental, vision, 401a defined contribution plan, life insurance and various voluntary benefits, as well as PTO and paid holidays. This is a bargaining unit position. Applicants should submit a cover letter, resume and employment application, no later than January 19, 2024, (or until filled), to the Town of East Hampton, Department of Human Resources, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424. An employment application may be found at [www.easthamptonct.gov](http://www.easthamptonct.gov). AA/M-F/EOE. 1TB 12/29

**HELP WANTED TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER PART-TIME ACCOUNTING CLERK**

Provides clerical and analytical support to the Finance Director, including payroll and benefits administration. Creates and enters complex financial information into the Town's financial and payroll programs. The position requires a high degree of independent judgment, initiative, accuracy, and confidentiality. A qualified and interested applicant may be offered the opportunity to combine this part-time position with the part-time Tax Clerk position. **QUALIFICATIONS:** The skills and knowledge required would generally be acquired with graduation from high school and three or more years of office bookkeeping and/or payroll and benefits administration experience, or an Associate's degree in Business Administration, Accounting, or Human Resources with two years of bookkeeping or payroll experience, or any equivalent combination of education and experience. **STARTING WAGE:** \$22.40 - \$24.00/hour depending on experience and qualifications. Please submit a letter of interest and completed application to the: Town Clerk townclerk@marlboroughct.net 26 North Main Street P.O. Box 29 Marlborough, CT 06447 Open until filled. First review of applications on January 8, 2024. 4TB 12/15, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5

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RE12-29-23

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RE12-21-23

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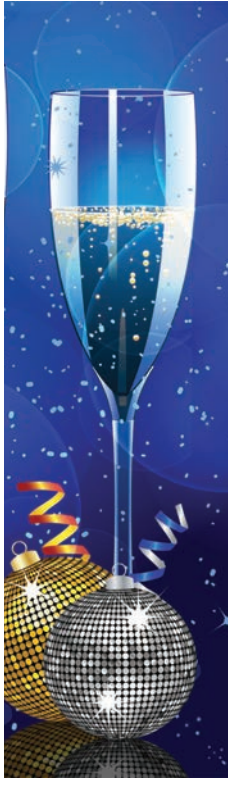


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