

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Volume 47, Number 04

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February 10, 2023



Don't Forget the Flowers!... Valentine's Day is Feb. 14. Colchester Florist can help you pick out the perfect arrangement for that special someone. Visit Ernie (the cat) and the experienced florists at 215 Lebanon Ave. in Colchester, or check out www.colchesterflowers.net, for that purrrfect gift.

Marlborough Native Headed for Space

By Jack Lakowsky

This year, one of Marlborough's own heads to that staggering, daunting frontier where there is no warmth, sound, air, or light: outer space.

Like anyone, Brendan Hall feels some nerves about flying to the inhospitable. More than anything though, he feels lucky. Hall, a filmmaker, has been selected from among countless others to document the adventure and the crew of upcoming spaceflight project dearMoon, run by Elon Musk's SpaceX.

It will be the first all-civilian lunar mission ever. A hard date has yet to be set, but it's slated for later this year. The crew will fly a week-long journey to the moon and back.

"I'm really motivated to work the hardest I can," Hall told the Rivereast last week. "This is a chance to make something meaningful. I could talk about this all day; it's so surreal. This is the start of a new era of civilian spaceflight."

Hall is a Marlborough native, a filmmaker early in his career, and a lifelong avid lover of the night sky, quite a starry sight in a small, low-light town like Marlborough. His stargazing is more meaningful than just appreciating the pretty lights.

"I've always felt this incredible wonder under the night sky, going out alone when I'd visit my grandma, taking these long walks alone, taking photos, feeling this really deep connectedness, a feeling of being home. It was a profound force. For whatever reason it's part of my soul."

He said "going up there wasn't something I'd thought would happen; it felt so farfetched. I can't imagine a cooler opportunity or more incredible way to push the comfort zone."

Hall hadn't planned on flying with dear-

Moon. He saw the app and, on impulse, applied. Then, to his surprise and joy, he got a response.

"At this point I was still in unreality," said Hall, who overnight went from anonymity to appearances on the Today Show. "My girlfriend walked out, and we got wide-eyed."

After interviewing, Hall was vindicated, saying afterwards, he felt he truly was a good candidate, that he had something to offer the momentous flight.

Hall's job is to document the crew, and himself, before, during, and after the journey.

"I've met most of the crew, they're amazing people, each from a different walk of life," he said.

The team's leader is Yusaka Maezawa, a 47-year-old Japanese billionaire and the first ever to pay to tour space for a previous flight, as well as American DJ and musician Steve Aoki, a Grammy nominee, and a K-Pop star.

Hall has other American crewmates, and also includes a Czech/Nigerian entrepreneur, and people from Ireland, England and India, all of whom believe their work can impact people positively.

"I love the moon," Maezawa told ABC News in 2018. "I like to do the things that never have been done before. So I want the challenge to go to the moon."

"This whole thing is greater than the sum of its parts," Hall said.

Hall is soon to start training his body for the intense rigors of space travel, which takes an immense physical toll. Mentally, he's been training for two years, first learning of his selection.

See Headed for Space, page 32

Racist Message Found at RHAM

By Michael Sinkewicz

A racially charged message was discovered at RHAM High School last week – less than three months after a noose was found hanging in the boys' locker room at the school.

Superintendent of Schools Colin McNamara notified the community on Feb. 3 that a student reported that they had seen a racially motivated message written on the back of a bathroom stall door.

The administration immediately reported the incident to both the local and state police.

McNamara didn't specify what the racially charged inscription included, but wrote in his letter that the "writing was very difficult to read due to the thin and light script, and it appears the message may not have been written recently."

"Based on the information we have at this time, it will be a significant challenge to identify a specific time frame the message was written,

therefore making it equally challenging to identify the individual(s) responsible," he stated. "However, it is my sincere hope that we do, and if/when we do, we will take all appropriate steps, including student discipline, to prevent any recurrence of such hateful and inappropriate conduct."

The uncovered message represents the second racially charged incident made public at RHAM in recent months.

In November, a 17-year-old boy was arrested and charged in connection with a noose found at RHAM High School, according to Connecticut State Police. He was charged with placing a noose on property and second-degree breach of peace following a police investigation.

That incident sparked community outrage and calls from civil rights organizations for local, state and federal inquiries, as well as up-

graded hate crime charges.

Now, the district faces a second incident that will likely fuel the community's concerns.

"I want to be sure that my position on this matter is clearly stated – RHAM is not a place where this type of behavior or ideology is tolerated," McNamara continued in his statement. "As the Superintendent, it angers and disappoints me that our school district will be subjected to criticism and negative attention due to the ignorant actions of one individual that do not represent who we are as a school community."

He added that as he's previously stated, "RHAM is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe and free from any harassment and discrimination."

See Racist Message, page 31

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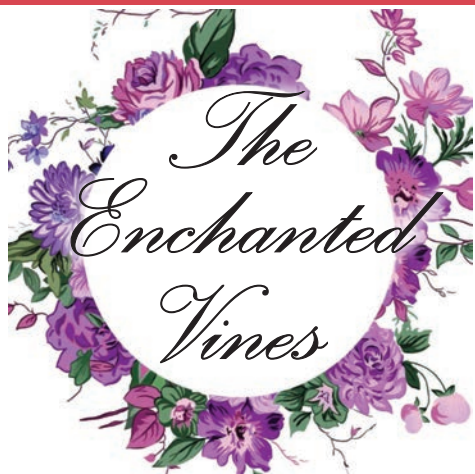


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Social Media Presentation for Parents/Caregivers

AHM Youth & Family Services, in partnership with Welcome 2 Reality, will host a presentation Tuesday, Feb. 28, for parents and caregivers who have children, tweens and teens who use phones and are on social media.

The presentation, entitled "Support for Parents and Caregivers," will feature strategies on: how to monitor technology use at home; giving structure and support with clear boundaries; giving access or freedom in increments. Parent concerns will be addressed on topics such as

internet addiction, addictive technology (cell phone, fear of missing out – a.k.a. F.O.M.O.), video-gaming and overstimulation.

The presentation will be from 7-8 p.m. via Zoom. There is no cost to attend but space is limited to 40 registrations. To register, email AHM Prevention Coordinator Jenn Boehler at jenniferb@ahmyouth.org.

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

'Dinner and Laughs' Sponsorships Available

The RHAM Boys' Basketball team will host the second annual "Dinner and Laughs" Comedy Night, produced by Franco's Comedy for Your Cause, on Saturday, April 1, at Blackledge Country Club in Hebron.

Organizers are seeking sponsorships for this event to help offset the cost of this event, including the cost of the comedians and food, so that all funds raised through ticket sales can be donated to help the RHAM boys basketball team. This fundraiser will help support the team in ways that are not covered by the school budget. Being a sponsor of this event will help you or your business get some publicity and a tax

write-off. There are two levels of sponsorships that each feature different recognition packages: a \$100 "Slam Dunk" Sponsorship or a \$50 "Buzzer Beater" Sponsorship.

Contact Allison Heneghan at jfawhen@com-cast.net or Donna Fraleigh at fraleighdonna3@gmail.com to learn more about sponsorship opportunities.

Paint Night Fundraiser for Project Graduation

AHM Youth & Family Services will host a Paint Night Fundraiser to benefit the RHAM High School Class of 2023 Project Graduation on Friday, Feb. 24, from 6:30-8 p.m., at the AHM building at 25 Pendleton Drive in Hebron.

This guided art class will be led by Amy Ordonez, owner of Studio 13 in East Hampton. Attendees will paint a soothing beach sunset with palm tree silhouettes. Cost is \$40 per person, with snacks available to purchase. Ages 11 and up are welcome.

To register, go to ahmyouth.recdesk.com/Community/Home. To learn more about AHM Project Graduation, visit ahmyouth.org/fund-raisers-events/project-graduation.

For more information, contact Jenn Boehler, AHM Project Graduation coordinator, at jenniferb@ahmyouth.org.

Youth Lacrosse Registration

RHAM Youth Lacrosse spring registration. There are programs for both boys and girls in grades K-8, who reside in Hebron, Marlborough, Andover, East Hampton, Columbia, Bolton and other local towns that do not offer a youth lacrosse program.

Visit www.rhamyouthlacrosse.com for more information and to sign up. Email any questions to ascibek@gmail.com. Registration deadline for the spring season is Saturday, Feb. 11.



AHM Youth & Family Services recently received a \$3,800 grant from Wireless Zone, to support the Lanterns Mentoring Program. Pictured are Ryan Herrick of Wireless Zone (left) and Lanterns coordinator Laura Beeler.

AHM Receives \$3,800 Grant

AHM Youth & Family Services recently received a \$3,800 grant from Wireless Zone, to support the Lanterns Mentoring Program. This program brings children together with positive adult role models in a school setting.

Ryan Herrick, Wireless Zone executive franchise director of sales and operations, served as the sponsor of the grant, by providing Wireless Zone with information about the regional charity.

Lanterns Mentoring Program coordinator Laura Beeler talked about the significance of

the program. "So many young people feel isolated and are struggling with their emotional health," she said. "Having a caring, supportive adult to talk to can help ease a child's difficulties and give them a person to look forward to seeing each week. Mentors often report they get as much joy out of the experience as the child."

For more information about AHM programs for children, teens, young adults, families, and seniors, visit www.ahmyouth.org.



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

By Mike Thompson

First off, a warm welcome to the new social worker for the Russell Mercier Senior Center in Hebron.

Michele Boutin recently started at the Hebron senior center. She is a graduate of the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, and is currently pursuing a master's degree in social work at the university.

According to senior center program coordinator Mandy Rocznik, "Michele is passionate about helping people locate services that can help make life easier." Mandy invited everyone in town to come by and say hello to the new social worker.

Welcome to Hebron, Michele. I hope you enjoy your time in that beautiful, friendly town.

* * *

Are you a budding entrepreneur in East Hampton or Portland? Well, this may be right up your alley then.

The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce in 2018 launched The MEWS+, a workspace for entrepreneurs and startups. And starting later this month, The MEWS+ will host Middlesex StartUp Nights – with the first evening pitch event taking place Wednesday, Feb. 22, from 6-8 p.m., at Sicily Coal Fired Pizza in Middletown.

The event will provide Middlesex County-based early-stage entrepreneurs and startups

with the opportunity to pitch their business ideas and share their backgrounds, markets, products, and business challenges. Following the pitches, the startups will get a change to meet with audience members – fellow entrepreneurs, business mentors and community members – in a small group setting to ask questions, receive feedback, and make connections.

The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce stressed this event "can help validate ideas, refine products and services, improve presentation skills, and make introductions to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem."

Applications to pitch at the inaugural event are open until Feb. 17 for Middlesex County-based entrepreneurs, startup founders, and new business owners. Applications can be found online at themewsplus.com/startup-night-application.

Not an entrepreneur but want to check out the pitches? You can register to attend the event at themewsplus.com/etn/middlesex-startup-night.

There is no fee to attend or pitch at the StartUp Nights.

* * *

Speaking of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce: Have you ever wanted to meet Geno Auriemma? Now may be your

Editor's Desk continued on page 7

Bulletin Board

I recently came across a selection of excerpts from an actual 1950s Home Economics textbook intended to help high school girls prepare for married life.

I don't know who put this guide together, but it had to be a guy, possibly a Taliban guy, or at least the '50s equivalent. The book advises newly married or soon-to-be American brides on a variety of tactics—most of them personally demeaning—to ensure that at least one party to the partnership (guess who) remains content. I offer you a few samples of the official 1950s roadway to marital bliss, accompanied by some editorial "reality check" commentary.

"1. Have dinner ready: Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal—on time. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him, and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospects of a good meal are part of the warm welcome needed."

[As opposed to a "hot welcome," where you screech, "Where the hell have you been! Dinner's been ready for an hour and a half! Is that liquor on your breath!"]

"2. Prepare yourself: Take 15 minutes to rest so you will be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people. Be a little gay and a little more interesting. His boring day may need a lift."

[For a special lift, try chasing your hubby around the house with a steak knife, shouting, 'Boring?! Boring?! You think your day was boring?! Try picking up after three kids all day! Try washing your own damn underwear! Do you think you could possibly pick up a damn sock for once in your life?!']

"3. Clear away the clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives, gathering up school books, toys, paper, etc. Then run a dust cloth over the tables. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too."

[Throw that empty rum bottle over the fence into your neighbor's yard. Take a breath mint. Put some clothes on, so he won't know you've been lounging around in your pajamas all day.]

"4. Prepare the children: Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces if they are small, comb their hair, and if necessary, change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part."

[Let the kids out of the closet. Throw their dirty diapers in the dumpster behind the liquor store. Tell the little treasures that, if they mouth off to Daddy, you'll feed them to the Bogey Man.]

"5. Minimize the noise: At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of washer, dryer, dishwasher, or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet. Be happy to see him. Greet him with a warm smile."

[You don't want to alarm the neighbors with loud noises such as gunshots that might give police an exact time of death. The warm smile will distract him from the baseball bat you are holding behind your back.]

"6. Some DON'TS: Don't greet him with problems or complaints. Don't complain if he's late for dinner. Count this as minor compared with what he might have gone through that day."

[When he asks where his dinner is, tell him (nicely) that you're not running a restaurant; the rest of you ate an hour ago and if he's hungry he can either fish the leftovers out of the garbage or help himself to the year-old turkey TV dinner (his favorite) in the freezer.]

"7. Make him comfortable: Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or suggest he lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him. Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soft, soothing and pleasant voice. Allow him to relax and unwind."

[If using a commercial rat poison, you will want to make a drink that has sufficient flavor to mask the bitter taste. If he begins to thrash around, arrange the pillow firmly over his face and press down.]

"8. Listen to him: You may have a dozen things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first."

[You don't have to actually listen. If the coroner asks you what his last words were, just make something up, but make it believable, like, "He said, 'What's for dinner ... arrrgghhh.'"]

"9. Make the evening his: Never complain if he does not take you out to dinner or to other places of entertainment; instead try to understand his world of strain and pressure and his need to be home and relax."

[Be patient. Pretend you really care. Remember, as the Widow Smith, you'll be using his credit card to go out on the town soon enough.]

Jim Hallas

Riverast Hours of Operation

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



Happy Birthday, Mary... Andover Seniors Young At Heart celebrated February birthdays with cake and ice cream at the meeting Feb. 1. Pictured is Mary Duval. Photo by Sue Schmidt.

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More Half-Baked Beliefs

To the Editor:

Another week, another inventory of half-baked beliefs from MAGA numbskulls. This time from Colin McNamara, who deviated from his usual hysterics about government schools, vaccination plots, international banking collusions, and new world order conspiracies. Last week Colin amused readers with his assessment that Connecticut's way of life is sliding into the abyss. Supposedly as a result of bills proposed by Democratic legislators. His litany of progressive atrocities includes everything from reducing the voting age, expanding abortion access, to forbidding gas stoves, and curtailing hunting.

Of course, the reality is quite different. For

instance, the bill to lower the voting age to 16 was supported by Republicans. Unfortunately, his abortion claims were equally inaccurate. There was an amendment proposed to protect the right to an abortion – not expand it. However, there is another resolution to allow increased access to birth control; this was sponsored by a Republican. There was also legislation to allow emergency contraception to be dispensed via medical vending machines which was supported by both Democrats and Republicans.

Mr. McNamara's claim that the legislature is attempting to curtail hunting is also false. The truth is the majority of bills introduced actually expand hunting privileges in the state, not curtail them. His nonsensical fear regarding gas stoves is part of a larger bill that includes solar

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panels, and clean air standards. The fact is state legislators introduce many bills throughout the session, from funding for roads and bridge repairs, to a Republican resolution to raise caterpillars and release butterflies.

Although Mr. McNamara may claim to be politically unaffiliated, whatever that means, the truth is his views mirror the same anti-democratic, paranoid beliefs of MAGA insurrectionists. Which is both a comedy and a tragedy.
Joe Stevens – Hebron

Lack of Leadership

To the Editor:
I am following up on my previous letter about the crisis a lack of leadership and support is causing the finance department for the town of Colchester.

Since my letter, the chief financial officer has resigned. An unprecedented 22 people have left since Andreas Bisbikos became first selectman.

Previous *Rivereast* reporting has outlined the crisis in the town hall, with former and current employees saying there is an “abuse of power” and the “toxic” and “juvenile” atmosphere goes “beyond bullying.”

As the saying goes, people don’t quit bad jobs; they quit bad bosses.
John Farrell – Colchester

Dismay Over Development

To the Editor:
A few weeks ago I noticed while reading the *Rivereast*, an ad in the real estate section for 155+ acres of land in Portland on Glastonbury Turnpike/Route 17 for sale. The photo showed the land intact, with the Connecticut River in the background.

When I checked further online, much to my dismay, I saw the land had already been clear-cut, including a 50+ acre sand and gravel pit! Also advertised was a chance for “extensive development.”

This was a shock to me, especially when I realized the entrance was directly across from Isinglass Hill Rd. I was saddened to think that Portland would ever agree to “extensive development” on such a vast scale, with land in such a sensitive area. We in Portland should never take the land, nature or wildlife for granted. Portland is situated on a bird migratory path and we should be preserving such land around the river instead of extensively developing it.

I’m thankful for the Middlesex Land Trust for working hard to preserve land and preventing it from development. It’s clear this amount of land was too much to purchase.

I am disappointed in the town of Portland, that they did not regulate this, offer to buy a parcel, or at least save a portion of it.

Twenty-three years ago, my husband and I moved to Portland for its nature, quiet, wildlife, and rural feel...not a suburban one.
Katherine Spada Basto – Portland

Balanced Information

To the Editor:
A recent letter was sent to the *Rivereast* concerning the proposed Public Works plan in Hebron titled “Two sides to the story.” Unfortunately, the letter then went on to present only one side. While the 2000 Environmental Review Team Report (ERT) referenced in that letter discusses the increased permeability of the fractured bedrock and faster rates of groundwater dispersal, it does not specifically state there is a high risk of contamination spreading throughout the area. That is the conclusion drawn by the letter writer.

What is important to note about the ERT report is that it was a review based on mixed use development on this site which would have a greater impact than the currently proposed Public Works facility. Included in the report are recommendations to mitigate the potential environmental impacts on this site. They include public water and sewer, which are already planned to be incorporated into the building. Contrary to the implication in the letter of bias, the town’s website does include the entire report. I encourage you to read the entire report and make your evaluations based on the information presented, not just excerpts tinged with opinionated commentary.

The letter goes on to state opinions of a retired DEEP employee concerning potential salt contamination if a salt shed was located at this site. While all opinions should be considered and evaluated, standards and “best practices” have changed since his retirement, and the town has correspondence directly from CTDEEP stating that CTDEEP is the permitting and enforcement authority for these matters. The state would be the authority who would issue the permit and that they would require “Best Manage-

ment Practices” and the latest standards to be incorporated in the construction of any salt storage facility. These actions, they believe, would sufficiently mitigate the risk.

Finally, with respect to the historical impact on the property, the town completed the requisite historical and archeological studies and received correspondence from the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) stating that the development, as currently proposed, is minor and would not diminish the potential significance of the 86-acre project parcel, and as such, had no objections to the development of the current area of potential effect.

Thank you, Daniel Larson – Amston

Note: Larson is chair of the Hebron Board of Selectmen, but said he is writing as an individual.

Thank You, Polish Club

To the Editor:
The members of the Colchester Veterans Honor Guard wish to express their thanks and appreciation for the generous donation of \$1,520 to the Colchester Honor Guard through the New Year’s Eve Party and Shepherd’s Pie dinner. The Polish Club is instrumental in enabling our organization’s efforts to recognize and honor the dedicated service of deceased members of the armed forces of the United States.

The Polish Club, its members and the organizations that worked to the to make the recent New Year’s Eve party a success and raised funds for the Honor Guard, also need to be recognized for the outstanding efforts. Members who contributed many hours include: Sue and Tim Cordova, Paige and Mark Knoble, Josh Barnett, Ramona Smedick, Melissa Thompson and Carol Carlson.

The following businesses and individuals also helped make the event a success by providing raffle prizes and donating time to decorate the Club. They are: Broadway Wine and Spirits, Cellar on 85, Noel’s, Smokers World, Gary’s Package Store, Paige Noble, CT Modified (Josh Barnett), Colchester Pizza, Two Brothers Pizza, Brian Caton, Deborah Tichenor, Crystal Johns, Triano’s Auto Dealership.

The Polish Club and the members and the raffle rize donors noted above are the people that help make Colchester a wonderful and vibrant community. I believe that Saint Joseph’s Polish Club should be commended for its commitment to community service. You serve as an example to which all community organizations should strive.

Alphonse Letendre, Deputy Commander and Thomas O’Meara, Executive Officer Colchester Veterans Honor Guard

Hebron Facts Aren’t Fear

To the Editor:
With all due respect Mr. Larson, sharing facts is not spreading fear, it is providing a complete perspective of the situation.

Some vital facts are new discoveries. This includes the significant historical connections found at the proposed Public Works site in Hebron Center/Kinney Road. Presented to the selectmen on Feb. 2, this information features a 200-year-old map and is now posted on Kinney Road Matters on Facebook. As recommended by Dr. Sarah Holmes’ archeology report, May

2022, page 40, this area has a potential to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This new information is the type of historical documentation necessary and the selectmen have a responsibility to act upon it. With connections to Native Americans and Hebron’s first settlers, as well as prominent figures such as Gov. John S. Peters and the emancipated Cesar Peters, this is a unique educational opportunity waiting to happen. Tourism in Connecticut is a \$4 billion a year industry and creating a living history museum at this location could be one of Hebron’s greatest assets.

Other important facts have been known for a long time. In June 2000, the Eastern Connecticut Environmental Review Team reported on the proposed Public Works site in Hebron Center and the fractured bedrock found there, page 9, “A corollary to increased water supply, greater fracture density also suggests increased permeability and faster rates of groundwater dispersal and also faster rates of dispersal of potential contaminants that may enter the groundwater system.” It is estimated that 50 truck trips per day will visit the PW facility, and surely many times higher than that during a winter storm. No matter how technologically advanced the salt shed is, this area of focused activity will naturally spread excess road salt beyond the covered building. It’s just a fact.

Sincerely, Kevin J. Tulimieri – Amston

Foreign Donations

To the Editor:
Jesse Benton was pardoned by Trump in 2020 for a campaign finance crime. He was recently found guilty on six counts for illegally funneling Russian money to Donald Trump’s 2016 campaign. Donald Trump said he financed his 2016 campaign with “100% of his own money.” Jesse Benton is Ron Paul’s grandson-in-law, and a former senior aide to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky).

Previously, Great America PAC, a hybrid super PAC, reached an agreement with the Federal Election Commission to resolve the more recent allegations. A key player in the scheme, a veteran Republican operative, is facing criminal charges over allegedly funneling tens of thousands of dollars in foreign cash to Trump’s re-election effort, making news of the fine the latest in an emerging pattern of conduct. The

\$25,000 civil penalty stemmed from an undercover investigation by the *British Telegraph* newspaper in late 2016. Reporters approached the PAC’s principal, Eric Beach, posing as representatives for a Chinese national who wanted to donate to Great America. Beach worked with GOP operative Jesse Benton to devise ways to conceal the source of the funds, including funneling the money through a “dark money” nonprofit or through Benton’s consulting firm. No pardon for Benton this time. (*Washington Post*, *CREW*, *CNN*, *MSNBC*)

Annie Steinbrecher – Marlborough

Hebron’s Black History

To the Editor:
In 1774, southeastern Connecticut had one of the highest populations of African Americans in New England. Connecticut finally abolished slavery in 1848, 13 years before the Civil War. At that time, Hebron had the largest concentration of free African Americans in Tolland County. These African Americans, most of whom lived, worked, learned and worshipped beside their Yankee neighbors in Hebron Center, prospered. Yet racial prejudice was so generally widespread that ardent abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison dubbed Connecticut “the Georgia of the North”!

Early 19th-century Hebron was home to Pemberton Brown, who never abandoned his native African language. Eber Oran’s family lived in a large farmhouse in Hebron Center. Charles Morgan’s family lived comfortably near Godfrey Hill, while Lude Barber’s family lived across from Henry Peters’ substantial farmhouse now the CVS. Fuller’s Tavern was the largest employer of African Americans.

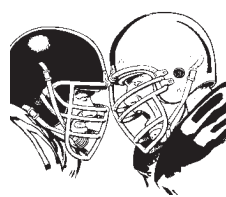
Interestingly, Hebron never had an abolitionist society nor are there any definitively documented Underground Railroad sites. However, Yankee and African Americans lives were intertwined. John Thompson Peters, born at Burnt Hill Park, and his cousin Governor John S. Peters were founder and president of Connecticut’s Colonization Societies. Ezekiel Skinner, a student of Governor Peters, was the founder of Liberia in Africa. Josephine White Griffing was instrumental in founding the Freeman’s Bureau.

Governor Peters often referred to Cesar Peters’ family as his “colored cousins.” One day riding in a public coach from Hartford to Hebron, he signaled for the driver to stop after

See Letters, page 6

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★ Letters cont. from page 5

passing an African American woman carrying a market basket. The passengers were appalled when Governor Peters opened the door waving for the woman to ride with them. The woman was the wife of Henry Peters who farmed Governor Peters' land on Kinney Road.

Hebron has much to celebrate, preserve, and commemorate, during Black History Month and throughout the year.

John Baron – Hebron

Hebron's Reign of Error

To the Editor:

Having convinced no one that building the Public Works complex on the Horton property is anything but 24-karat stupidity, the Hebron Town Government has hired – and we are all going to have to pay for – a public relations firm (this in addition to hiring a cadre of former employees and consultants to push building a cost-prohibitive and unneeded municipal complex). This firm will develop and conduct a “survey”

of Hebron residents, the result of which will show that we really, really, really do want to ruin our town by putting an industrial facility in the Town Center.

You might ask, why do we need a survey? In our democracy, don't we already have surveys called free and fair elections? Well, the selectmen and town manager have said they know that their proposal will fail in referendum. So, instead of an election, something that we as Americans believe in, we are getting PR firm-developed survey, one that can be controlled and manipulated, and that will undoubtedly affirm what they want.

In addition to the professional spin doctors, the Public Building Committee will evaluate a few new sites so that they can once again parrot the party line: none but the Horton property is feasible (For real spin, see the PBC's Town Response to Public Comments, <https://hebronct.com/town-departments/public-works/building-project/>). Many of the same members of the PBC have been at it since 2011. The idea of their original recommendation, Burnt Hill Park, was to combine dump trucks with children's sporting events. Great! Some of them also thought St. Peter's Park next to the library would be a good location for this vast industrial operation. All to say, this is not a serious group.

Enough spin. Bring it to referendum. Let's vote!

John Collins – Amston

Thank You, Post Office

To the Editor:

It is easy to complain and I do my share of that but you have to give praise where praise is due.

I noticed a change. This year at Christmas-time there were no long lines for service at the Hebron post office. The staff was different and they were very helpful and a joy to deal with, which is unique in the world of today.

So thank you to the Hebron Post Office and all the people involved in the great change that has occurred.

Thomas Spittler – Hebron

The Sagan Saga

To the Editor:

“Men first felt necessity then look for utility, next attend to comfort, still later amuse themselves with pleasure, thence grow dissolute in luxury, and finally go mad and waste their substance.”

“We've arranged a civilization in which most crucial elements profoundly depend on science and technology. We have also arranged things so that almost no one understands science and technology. This is a prescription for disaster. We might get away with it for a while, but sooner or later this combustible mixture of ignorance and power is going to blow up in our faces.”

Mankind was convinced to believed in things like cigarettes, the Titanic, nuclear power, the Keystone Pipeline, fracking, prescription pain killers, FDA drugs with laundry lists of side effects, and an expansive Public Works facility to be located on Hebron's highly-sensitive Raymond Brook watershed.

“One of the saddest lessons of history is this: If we've been bamboozled long enough, we tend to reject any evidence of the bamboozle. We're no longer interested in finding out the truth. The bamboozle has captured us. It's simply too painful to acknowledge, even to ourselves, that we've been taken. Once you give a charlatan power over you, you almost never get it back.” -- all quotes, Carl Sagan.

People of Hebron, let's be extremely careful about protecting our natural resources, watersheds and the town's reputation. The Raymond Brook watershed, preserve and marsh are a large part of Hebron's appeal. How we chose to treat this land and water will speak volumes of who we are and what we value as a community. The decision to save the land as a preserve sets a strong moral compass for younger generations to emulate. Reusing our present PW location, responsibly and economically, confines pollutants to one compromised location. #save17

Jean Tulimieri – Amston

Lamont has Failed Us

To the Editor:

Ned Lamont and his Democrats have chased countless businesses out of Connecticut – the gun industry, high-profile insurance companies, Lego, Pratt & Whitney has steadily reduced its presence and their workforce, thousands of “mom and pop” retail stores. There was a huge hit on the hospitality industry – restaurants, bars and nightclubs all sacrificed in the name of “safety.” Plastic shields were everywhere – Plexiglas manufacturers were euphoric – and they did nothing to protect anyone, at a costly unnecessary expense. In October 2019, Lamont added a 1% surcharge on food and beverages and, after shutting us down for 14 months (3/15/20-5/1/21) he chose not to remove it. Thanks, Ned!!

When the state government is the largest employer, like most third-world countries, socialism is on the menu.

Edmund Smith is a devout supporter of Lamont and socialism. He questions whether Connecticut is really the 49th or 50th worst state to open a business. Well, Mr. Science, you have never owned business, never had to deal with employees, pay state unemployment taxes, collect sales tax without any consideration, provide unfunded mandates – two months' maternity leave, paid sick leave and a \$15 minimum wage when it's \$6 for a loaf of bread and a gal-

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lon of milk and \$7 for a dozen eggs. Well “Mr Science” or should I say Mr. Know-it-all!!

Tolls are on the way, I’m sorry to say. Ned needs more money for social programs to solidify the Dems’ voter base. He has already targeted the truckers with “road use tax” that has resulted in higher prices on good and services and the automobile driver is next!!!

I’m not through!!

Don Denley – Andover

Top Priorities

To the Editor:

While your favorite president was setting records on the golf course Russian bears hacked our computer systems. For at least 18 months they perused the Department of Agriculture, Treasury, Justice, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Health & Human Services, Homeland Security (ironic no?), Labor, Transportation, the CIA, NIS, FBI, most Fortune 500 companies and about 2,000 other high-value targets.

Take out our power grid? Child’s play. Shut down all wireless communications, no cell-phone. If that doesn’t get your attention China should. Shoot the balloon down? Trump had a chance. What do you do about these not so existential threats? Find a person who believes Jewish lasers started the California fires and believes 9/11 is a hoax and there is no proof a plane hit the Pentagon (they got hacked too).. and put that person in charge of National Intelligence.

The Dems should have been smart enough and given McCarthy the votes he needed for the speakership. Let him squirm for awhile but Dems should have sent some love his way. Now we have to deal with 20 clowns hell bent on wrecking our growing economy and soft on Russia and the Ukraine War. We finally got the to do list and on top Hunter Biden. Didn’t ‘You miss me yet?’ already investigate Hunter? Of course. The other is the weaponization of the government.

Tim Rinell – East Hampton

A Farewell to Chocolate

To the Editor:

On behalf of the Women’s Fellowship of the First Congregational Church of Portland, I would like to thank everyone who came out in support of our 25th annual and final Mid-Winter Chocolate Fest held on Feb. 4. It was definitely a bittersweet event for us, but it was also a sweet success thanks to the many people who braved the very cold temperatures on that day.

I was personally touched by all the comments and stories shared with me throughout the afternoon from longtime and new customers alike. One person said, “It is so sad it is the last one. Maybe you could make an appeal to the youth in the congregation to continue this fantastic event with its delicious food.” Another shared, “When I heard this was the last one, I took the day off to come. You guys do such a good job.” And another longtime customer said, “I don’t know how you have done it for so many years. Such a wonderful job. It is always so beautiful.” The best one yet came from a loyal customer who said “We hope you pull a Tom Brady.” I’m

not sure that will happen, but I will not rule out a new event of some kind in the future.

It has truly been a pleasure to bring joy and lasting memories to so many people throughout the state for the last 25 years. Our gratitude runs deep for your patronage. We may be saying farewell to chocolate, but stay tuned as we may be saying hello to something new and just as heartwarming. Happy Valentine’s Day to all!

**Nancy L. Johnson
Chocolate Fest Chair
First Congregational Church of Portland**

Conspiracies Everywhere

To The Editor:

Ed Kozlowski tells us that, “Liberals might want to consider that what they’re told isn’t always true.” And he tells us that Biden avoided in-person campaign events not because of COVID-19 guidelines but because of fear of gaffes. And he tells us the Russian collusion story – still gaining steam in the news – is a hoax. And he tells us that progressives are absurdly gullible. And he tells us that Biden has a D.C. reputation for dim-wittedness. He’s right: we shouldn’t believe everything we’re told!

Paul Bureau imagines more conspiracies that we have words to debunk, but let’s take two.

He wants us to believe COVID is no more dangerous than the flu, because of similar recovery rates. This is nonsense. In the U.S. there are about 28 million flu cases and 35,000 deaths per year. So far for COVID, it’s more like 34 million cases and 375,000 deaths per year. If those numbers seem similar to you, I can recommend a good remedial math instructor.

He also wants us to believe that the “education industry” does not care about children. If he’s including teachers in that odd phrase, then he clearly has not met many teachers. Not all of them, to be sure, but a vast majority are in the underappreciated field precisely because they do care about children. He also mentions teachers’ unions. He’s right; unions don’t care about children. Their mission is helping the teachers, not their students. Of course, happier, more contented teachers do better by their students.

And Colin McNamara picks up Don Denley’s anti-Connecticut rant. I’ll tell you what, it’s been a great place to grow up, raise a family, educate my children, own a business, and find fulfilling, well-paid work. Perhaps he’d find Mississippi more to his liking.

**Sincerely,
Scott Sauyet – Andover**

Colchester Finance Chaos

Dear Colchester Residents:

Are you paying attention to what’s happening in Colchester Town Hall’s finance department? You should be. The department charged with overseeing millions of dollars in taxpayer funds has been neglected and thrown into chaos.

At Town Hall, employees and volunteers complain about bills going unpaid....employee tax forms misprinted....budgets with inaccurate numbers. At meetings, staff have repeatedly warned that the department lacks the resources or training to keep up with the demands of the office.

Nothing has been done about it.

“The Eskimos had 52 names for snow because it was important to them: there ought to be as many for love.” — Margaret Atwood

“When we love we always strive to become better than we are. When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too.” — Paulo Coelho

“Love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place.” — Zora Neale Hurston

“Love is something sent from heaven to worry the hell out of you.” — Dolly Parton

“Love is a fire. But whether it is going to warm your hearth or burn down your house, you can never tell.” — Joan Crawford

“The heart has its reason of which reason knows nothing.” — Blaise Pascal

“You never lose by loving. You always lose by holding back.” — Barbara De Angelis

“Where there is love there is life.” — Mahatma Gandhi

“To love at all is to be vulnerable.” — C.S. Lewis

And lastly, something beautiful to perhaps say to your significant other next Tuesday, from who else but the wonderful poet Maya Angelou:

“In all the world, there is no heart for me like yours. In all the world, there is no love for you like mine.”

See you next week.

This fall, we learned that the first selectman overspent his budget by hundreds of thousands of dollars. The Board of Finance wants to avoid a repeat of that situation and recently held a meeting in which they tried to forecast spending for the remainder of this fiscal year. That meeting was derailed when the BOF learned there were serious errors and outdated information in the current financial reports.

Last week, we learned the recently hired Finance Director is already resigning. In less than a year, this critical department has lost its top position twice.

I have been shocked by the complete lack of leadership from the first selectman in dealing with any of this. When we served on the Board of Finance together, he marketed himself as a champion of financial transparency and accountability. Where has that person been for the last year?

It may not be as interesting as photo ops or as much fun as planning parties, but making sure the finance department can pay its bills and accurately track its spending is a pretty important job for the first selectman. Colchester deserves someone who takes the job seriously and works together with others to find solutions.

**Bernie Dennler III – Colchester
Candidate for First Selectman**

Oh Look....a Balloon!!

To the Editor:

In a shocking turn of events, the nation’s attention shifted from troves of classified documents hidden inside of Ol’ Joe’s Corvette to a dastardly Chinese spy balloon that stealthily floated down upon us from the Canadian Great White North. The nation’s imagination was completely captured for three solid days of high-flying ballooning excitement as we watched the “spy balloon,” carrying an equipment bay the size of three city buses, float slowly across a broad swath of the American interior to the delight of both young and old alike.

The United States military, the most technologically-advanced and deadly fighting force on God’s good green earth, remained paralyzed... unable to decide on a course of action to counter this egregious dirigible transgression. All we could do is wait, wait and pump 24/7 balloon fear porn over all radio and TV broadcasts.

The entire event was a wonderful illustration

of the power the media holds over the American public’s mind and thoughts. Although Chinese “spy satellites” are orbiting over us constantly, we were asked to suspend all of our critical thinking skills that might contradict some good fear-based propaganda.

Initially spotted in Montana, floating over some of the most sparsely populated areas of the country, we allowed the balloon to continue its flight, unmolested...spying, all the way to the Atlantic Ocean. Once over water, with its spy mission complete and wirelessly uploaded to Chinese central command, a taxpayer-funded, F-22 led assault blew it out of the sky in a stunning display of force that sent all three city buses worth of equipment hurtling into the murky depths of the coastal Atlantic...to be destroyed on impact and from the salt water...puncturing the balloon and capturing it after a slow, controlled descent be damned...USA USA USA!!! God Bless ‘Merika!!!

Colin McNamara – Marlborough

Imagine Part 2

To the Editor:

Imagine believing...
Our southern border is secure and illegal immigration is fake news;
Religious institutions and leaders have not been infiltrated by evil;

Driving an electric car is helping to save the environment;

NASA landed on the moon in 1969;
The history of our nation and earth is as we’ve been told;

Pharmaceuticals promote health;
Anthony Fauci cares about our health;

The banking industry is not corrupt;
Paying taxes on money already taxed is fair;

Taxes paid are used to improve America and our lives;

The U.S. dollar, not backed by precious metals, has value;

Nancy Pelosi, Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton are patriots;

Mitt Romney, George Bush, John McCain are/were patriots;

Artificial intelligence (AI) is not used nefariously;

American citizens are not routinely surveilled by government and big tech;

See Letters, page 25

Editor’s Desk continued from page 4

chance.
Geno will serve as the keynote speaker at the Chamber’s Breakfast Meeting on Monday, March 15. The meeting will take place from 7-9 a.m. at the Sheraton Hartford South Hotel in Rocky Hill.

“We are all very proud of Geno’s success in leading the UConn women’s basketball program,” Chamber President Johanna Bond said.

Cost to attend the breakfast is \$25 for Chamber members and \$35 for non-members. Advance registration is required; to do so, visit www.middlesexchamber.com.

Lastly, Valentine’s Day is next week, so I thought it might be fitting to close today’s column with quotes on love. Some are inspirational, others funny, and a few are just absolutely beautiful. I hope you enjoy them.

“Each time you love, love as deeply as if it were forever.” — Audre Lorde

“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.” — Helen Keller

“Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.” — Lao Tzu

“All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn’t hurt.” — Charles M. Schulz

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Local Author Stresses Loving Yourself

By Jack Lakowsky

Newly published Portland author Sean Fournier said he wanted to write a story about a character falling in love with the things that make them unique.

So he went and did just that, penning over the course of several years his debut children's book, *Barry Needs a Hug*.

What makes the titular protagonist unique? He's got needles all over his skin. He's also green and wears knee-high socks and sweat-horts. Because, you see, he's a cactus, and he needs some love. You cold folks might hesitate to hug him, fearing the minor impediment, but that's okay.

First, Barry needs to love himself. "I thought, there's a really good lesson," Fournier told the *Rivereast*. "I didn't know at first how everything would ply out, but I knew I wanted the prickles to be the main thing, and for him to rethink himself, to be proud of the thing that makes him, him."

Much like actual plant life Barry's story started as a tiny seed, taking root as a two-panel comic strip Fournier whipped up years ago, about a cactus holding a sign that read "Free Hugs," with two other cacti pointing and laughing at the sheer futility of the effort.

"I just kinda thought I'd turn it into a kids' book," he said. "It's something I've always dreamt about doing. I grew up drawing and illustrating and making up characters."

Barry, feeling deeply insecure after friends reject him from playing, finds a magical brew that smooths out his needles. More "acceptable" perhaps, but no longer himself. Then, turns out, those same peers got themselves in a situation Barry's needles would've been perfect for.

Describing himself as "new to the game" of writing and publishing, having a professional

background in marketing, not fiction writing, Fournier said completing the story was a challenge happily undertaken, teaching himself the basics of storytelling structure and researching how to put a kids' book together, looking at average page and word counts.

"There were definitely some hoops," he said.

In *Barry*, Fournier wants everyone, of any age, to see that piece of themselves, that prickly little cactus that just needs a hug, but for whatever reason, is afraid to open-up.

"Through that lens you can feel sorry for him, but you can root for him at the same time," said Fournier.

"Everyone has something they're self-conscious about."

And those things don't stay the same throughout life, a lesson Fournier himself has learned, having just reached his 40s.

"As a kid I was always very skinny, rail thin." He went from insecurity about thinness to feeling icky about "gaining the weight of a 40-year-old."

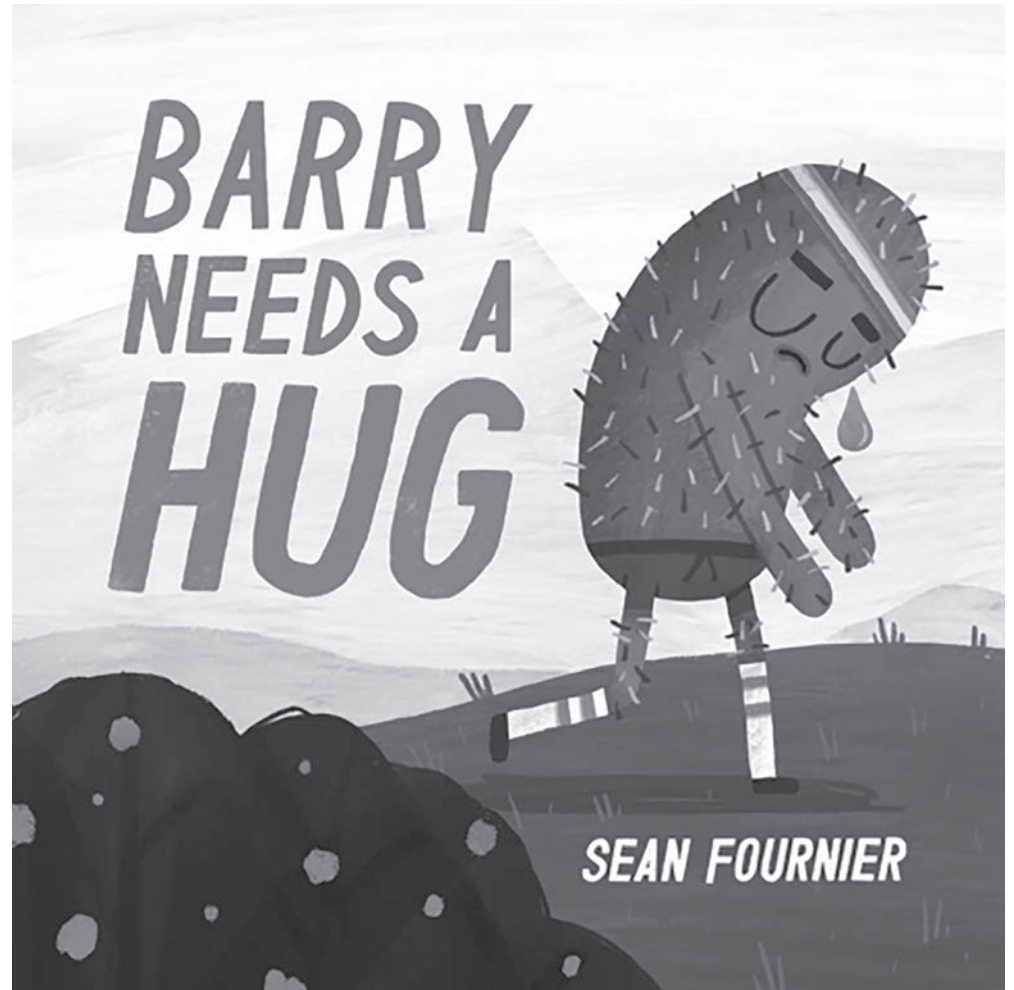
Barry's thorns are a metaphor for limitless personal insecurities.

The theme of *Barry Needs a Hug* stayed consistent throughout the revision process, Fournier said. The delivery of the theme, however, changed greatly.

"I would be sitting there counting on my fingers, trying to get the right of words" per page, he said. "I wrote it and rewrote it."

Barry went through a few overhauls, including changing the whole text to a rhyming one. It was an additional challenge to keep the rhymes fresh throughout the story, he said.

After publishing, Fournier said he was a little thunderstruck, repeatedly saying to himself "Wow, I did it. I'm a kid's book author. It was huge moment."



Portland's Sean Fournier has published his first book, a children's story about how before you love others, before others love you, you must love yourself.

Fournier plans to expand the *Barry*-verse with merchandise, activity books and coloring books, T-shirts, "really trying to build things up." Nothing's cemented yet, but Fournier hinted a possibility of returning to *Barry* for more stories.

"I don't want to do it just to do it," he said, "it

has to be worthwhile. I'm really proud of this book, and if I did another one, it would need to be as good – or better."

Get Barry's whole story on Amazon, Barnes & Noble.com, Bookshop.com, and the local library, or visit www.fournier.co.

Installation Service Sunday for Zion Pastor

Zion Lutheran Church will be celebrating the installation of its pastor, Sara Stall-Ryan, on Sunday, Feb. 12, at 2 p.m., at the church, 183 William St. The public is invited.

With a call coming from the New England Synod Council, Stall-Ryan was welcomed as interim/transition pastor in December 2019. With churches basically shutting down due to the COVID-19 pandemic a few months later, Stall-Ryan quickly worked with church members, Zion organist Allen Hill, and her own family to put together worship services posted to YouTube each week.

As COVID-19 numbers came down and social distancing recommendations were reduced, she was able to conduct outdoor services at the church, while finding innovative

ways to celebrate Holy Communion and still keep parishioners safe.

And finally, with her guidance, Zion was able to return to worshiping within the church itself. Services are still video recorded and posted to YouTube for viewing by anyone who might be unable to get to church physically, or anyone who is just curious about Zion.

After following church protocols for calling a pastor, the congregation voted in June 2022 to invite Stall-Ryan to become Zion's pastor, no longer "transitional" or "interim." She accepted.

Refreshments will be served following the Feb. 12 service.

Zion Lutheran Church News

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

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

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

Adult Bible study takes place on the second

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

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

Food Bank, Foodshare Truck

Portland Food Bank is located in the lower level of the Portland Waverly Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave. The food bank is open Monday and Thursday, 9 a.m.-noon, except for holidays. The food bank will be closed Monday, Feb. 20, for Presidents Day.

To access the food bank's services, people are required to register with the food bank (copy of an ID and recent piece of mail or utility bill) and be a Portland resident. Donations are only taken during food bank hours. Call 860-342-6795 for

more information or for volunteer and donation opportunities.

The Connecticut Foodshare truck comes to the Waverly Center every other Monday from 1-2 p.m., except for holidays. People using the Foodshare are required to form a line and everyone will have an opportunity to "shop" at the truck once it is set up. People do not have to be a Portland resident to attend the Foodshare, and they're asked to please bring bags.

The next Foodshare is Feb. 13 at 1 p.m.

First Congregational Church News

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

First Church Nursery School offers a program for 3-year-olds on Tuesday and Thursday, and one for 4-year-olds on Monday, Wednesday and

Friday. Contact Amy Jahnke at 860-342-1111 or 1stchurchnurseryschool@gmail.com for more information.

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



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KoC Baby Shower

The Freestone Council 7 Knights of Columbus will hold its annual Baby Shower Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 11 and 12. All items donated at the Gathering Space at the Church of St. Mary will be shared with the local Portland Food Bank, and Birthright.

Birthright provides a wide range of support services for expecting and new mothers, including no-cost non-judgmental pregnancy testing, prenatal health care, and maternity/baby supplies.

Donations should be new and unwrapped.

Items needed include diapers, sleepers, blankets, rattles, bibs, bath towels, wipes, lotion, shampoo, bottles, baby bath items, pacifiers, comb and brush sets, socks, stuffed animals, blanket sleepers, crib sheets, sweaters, hats, diaper bags and booties.

A box for "Respect Life" cash donations will also be available. Donations can also be mailed to Freestone Council, PO Box 7, Portland CT 06480.

For more information, call David Shovlin at 860-342-4259.

YFS News & Notes

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

Afterschool Drop-In & Draw: Tuesday, Feb. 14, from 2:30-4:30 p.m., on the first floor of the Buck-Foreman Community Center, 265 Main St. This is time for students to come after school and do some semi-structured art. Come when you want, and stay as long as you want.

Drop-In & Draw Meet-Up: Friday, Feb. 17, 10:30-11:30 a.m., at the BFCC. This month, make a patriotic popsicle stick gnome for Presidents Day.

Portland Library News & Notes

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

Hours: Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Masks are optional. **Holiday Closing:** The library will be closed Monday, Feb. 20, for Presidents Day.

Tax forms: The library has copies of 1040 and 1040-SR tax forms. Find a federal instruction booklet and a state tax form. You may also request printing of other forms and instructions.

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

Drop-In Playdates: Thursdays through Feb. 23 (no program Feb. 16), at 10:30 a.m. Children ages birth to 5 and their caregivers are invited for an hour of socialization and open play with the story room toys. No registration is required.

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

Minecraft Unplugged: Thursday, Feb. 23, 3:30 p.m. Grades 3-5 are invited for some *Minecraft*-themed offline games, crafts, challenges and more. Space is limited.

Family Fort Night and Nocturnal Animal Hunt: Friday, Feb. 10, 5:30 p.m. Come after the library has closed to create your own cozy reading den, enjoy a bear-themed snack, and search the library once the lights go out for some animals hiding in the book stacks. Registration is required and space is limited.

Family Craft Night: Foam Mitten Wreath: Wednesday, Feb. 15, 6:30 p.m. Make custom foam mitten wreaths. This activity has steps that are appropriate for all ages, but a parent or guardian must be with children to help with sub-

Brownstone Quorum Annual Meeting

The Brownstone Quorum annual meeting will be held Monday, April 24, at 7 p.m., in the Mary Flood Room at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave.

The meeting to elect officers and present awards will be followed by a presentation by David DeLucia, past president of the Ct. Cactus and Succulents society, on cacti and succulents in Connecticut.

The public is invited, and light refreshments will be served following the presentation.

Prevention & Wellness Council: Wednesday, Feb. 22, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at BFCC. Help work as a community on youth substance use prevention, positive mental health, and making Portland a recovery-friendly community. Contact Revicki or just show up if you're interested in joining in.

Youth LGBTQ+ Drop-In Night: Wednesday, March 1, 6-8 p.m., at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave. There will be games and snacks and other ways to have fun and just de-stress for a bit.

Youth & Adult Leadership Training: Tuesday, March 7, 6-7:30 p.m., at a location to be determined. In this follow-up to the Youth Listening Circles, YFS will invite youth back, as well as anyone else interested in some leadership and development on culture, diversity, equality, and other issues facing the community. RSVPs encouraged; contact Revicki to sign up.

pervision. Space is limited.

Readers' Theater: The Mitten: Tuesday, Feb. 21, 1-2:30 p.m., for grades K-3. Everyone will be assigned a part and given a script when they arrive. Kids will then play some theater games and be ready to put on a performance for friends and family by 2 p.m. Space is limited.

Wildlife in Winter: Saturday, Feb. 25, 11 a.m. Staff from the White Memorial Conservation Center will discuss a variety of ways that animals survive the winter, from staying active to migrating to hibernating. There will be a story, some props and even some local animal friends. Space is limited.

Monster Mitten Craft and Valentine Snack: Monday, Feb. 13, 3:30 p.m. Create a sweet or scary mitten friend while snacking on some Valentine treats. Registration is required.

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

Book Discussions: Mystery Lovers Book Club: Tuesday, Feb. 21, 1 p.m. *The Stills* by Jess Montgomery will be discussed. **TAB - Talk About Books: Tuesday, March 7, 1 p.m. The Women's March by Chiaverini will be discussed.**

Black History Month Programs: Who We Are: Monday, Feb. 13, 6 p.m. This documentary will be shown, followed by a discussion. **Summer of Soul:** Thursday, Feb. 23, 1 p.m. This is the award-winning film about the 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival.

Seed Library: Will soon be available for garden enthusiasts, whether beginner or seasoned. You will find free seeds available for your garden. Have some leftover seeds? Donations are welcome. For more information, call Jan Nocek at 860-342-6771.

St. Mary Church News

St. Mary Roman Catholic Church is located at 45 Freestone Ave. The church office can be reached at 860-342-2328. Office hours are 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday-Friday. For more information, visit www.stmaryportlandct.org. Pastor is the Rev. John Antonelle. Masks are strongly recommended.

Weekend Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday and 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Sunday. The 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass is livestreamed each week; visit the parish

website for more information.

Weekday Mass: Monday and Tuesday at 8 a.m., and Friday at 12:10 p.m.

Confession: Saturday at 4-4:45 p.m., or call Antonelle for an appointment.

Other Programs: For information on faith formation programs, baptisms, blessings of marriages, Knights of Columbus, the St. Mary Ladies Guild and more, call the church office.

Parks and Rec. News & Notes

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

Adult Drop-In Programs: Tai Chi for Long Life: Wednesdays, 9:30-10:15 a.m., and Saturdays, 10:30-11:15 a.m., at Buck-Foreman Community Center. Drop-in fee is \$7 per session.

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

Drop-In Basketball: Men play Tuesdays, 7:30-9 p.m., at Portland Middle School, and women play Mondays, 7:30-9 p.m., also at the middle school.

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

Class of '73 Reunion

The Portland High School Class of 1973 will celebrate its 50th reunion Friday, May 12, beginning at 5:30 p.m., at the Red Fox Restaurant in Middletown.

All 1973 graduates from Portland High School Class of '73 and their spouses, partners or significant others are invited to attend. The cost is \$65 per person, and includes a buffet dinner, music, memories and more. There will be a cash bar.

The reunion planning committee is still searching for contact information for several classmates. If you have not been contacted or know a classmate who has not yet been contacted and is interested in attending, please call or text Don Milardo at 508-259-5526 or Diane (Kollias) Bascom at 860-985-1861 for more information and/or to request an invitation.

Exchange Club Seeks New Members

The Exchange Club of Portland is looking for new members.

The Exchange holds various events year-round that contribute towards area organizations in supporting the club's effort to helping others in need. The club also annually gives out the John Goodrich Scholarship to an area high school senior, and contributes to other local scholarship programs.

If interested in joining, visit www.portland-exchange.org for more information.

Dean's List

Portland residents Patrick Dandaneau, Justin Kapoor, Jenna Lastrina and Brooke Ryan made the fall 2022 Dean's List at Quinnipiac University in Hamden.



Coach of the Year... Portland Soccer Club's Evan Yardis has been named Connecticut Junior Soccer Association Boys Competitive Coach of the Year for 2022. The CJSA recognized Yardis with the award at its annual dinner and awards ceremony in Bristol on Friday, Jan. 27. Yardis, who's shown here with his son Easton, coached a recreational team in addition to a travel team, and he volunteered for the Saturday morning Rec Program's field set-up.



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Schools Chief Calls for 9% Budget Increase

By Michael Sinkewicz

Colchester Superintendent of Schools Daniel Sullivan III on Tuesday presented the district's budget proposal for the 2023-24 fiscal year, calling for a substantial increase in spending.

The proposal is for \$45.8 million — an increase of \$3.77 million or 8.99% from the current budget.

Sullivan emphasized that in order to maintain the status-quo of the district's current services, the proposal would've required a 14% increase, which was unworkable. He cautioned the school board on making any further cuts, warning that this was a "critical point for our schools."

The presentation officially launched the town's budget season and was the first major opportunity for Sullivan to address the community since taking over as superintendent in January.

Sullivan led the presentation along with Assistant Superintendent of Schools Charles Hewes. The school board will provide feedback during a budget workshop next Tuesday, but Board of Education Chairman Alexander Oliphant briefly addressed Sullivan prior to adjourning the meeting, stating that he "came up with a really good presentation."

The head of schools acknowledged that the proposal was a drastic increase, primarily a result of inflation, expiring grants and contractual obligations. From 2013-23, the average education budget proposal typically called for a 2% increase, with the town untimely approving an even lower amount.

"There's a proud tradition in Colchester," he said, adding that his goal was to elevate the district's reputation to where it once stood.

As expected, salaries and benefits make up the majority of the budget at \$27.8 million. Special education costs amount for \$10.7 million. Those two areas alone represent over 75% of the total budget.

Sullivan and Hewes alternated through the slideshow presentation, highlighting three main levels of focus including student wellness, lost learning from the pandemic and school safety. To tackle these areas, they outlined several initiatives, although dollar amounts were not at-

tached.

With school safety, an area Sullivan previously stated would be examined further and resolved through all the town stakeholders, a few possible ideas were proposed.

While there's cameras at all of the district's schools, they should be attended to and monitored at all times, Sullivan said. One of the schools, William J. Johnston Middle School, currently needs a greeter, as well.

Additionally, Sullivan stated that all of the schools need safety officers as well as more support for the district's current school resource officer, who splits time across the four schools. He suggested that the town's police department could potentially provide some coverage to assist that officer.

Last year, Interim Superintendent of Schools T.Y. McDowell sent out a survey to the community to gauge interest in adding armed security at the schools. Over 65% of respondents were in favor of the addition.

"It's staring us in the face," McDowell said before the start of the school year, referring to school security. "It's the world we're living in."

During the pandemic, the district has relied partially on stimulus grant funding, which was primary used to maintain services and keep students up to date with learning. From 2019-21, student proficiency rates dropped: literacy went down by 7%, while math and science both decreased 4%.

Hewes explained that for this budget proposal, grant funding that was used for summer programming and tutoring, as well as some salaries — nearly a million dollars during that period — was lapsing.

Numerous positions that were grant-funded are returning to the operational budget, he said. Some of these jobs include a kindergarten teacher, a preschool teacher and a special education teacher.

While there are a couple positions that will be added through grant funding, some "difficult decisions" were made in the proposal.

Included in the list of cuts are four certified secondary staff, one certified elementary posi-

tion, three non-certified positions, a central officer director, and 3.5 classified positions. There are also two position requests that are going unfulfilled.

The growth to the school budget, if all other town factors remained the same, would result in a tax increase of around \$430 per household, according to the presentation.

Sullivan emphasized that overall, this proposal was "fiscally responsible" and is representative of challenges caused by outside factors.

Apart from increases in salaries, employee insurance jumped from \$3.82 million to \$4.33 million — a \$509,392 increase.

Pupil services increased from \$376,413 to \$1.02 million — a \$652,412 spike.

Another increase was for pupil transportation — increasing from \$2.28 million to \$2.62 million, a \$341,244 rise, or nearly 15%.

Sullivan and Hewes will start conversations with the school board next week with the goal of presenting a board-approved proposal to the Board of Finance early next month.

After Sullivan was hired last year, Oliphant stated that the new schools chief was an "excellent communicator" whose skills would be valuable during the budget process.

"Dan will bring a collaborative problem-solving style to the district as well as fresh ideas on making the BOE budget proposal easier for the public to understand," he said. "Both of these

abilities are much needed in Colchester today."

Sullivan was previously the superintendent in Putnam and helped prepare a budget presentation for that district in order to facilitate a smooth transition with the interim superintendent.

Last month, Chris Rivers, a Democrat on the school board, stated that a collaboration between Sullivan and Hewes would result in the most effective budget presentation.

He said the collective approach allows for the "fresh perspective of a new superintendent coming that that's going to have to put the budget that ultimately gets approved into action" along with the "longevity and institutional knowledge of Dr. Hewes of what's been happening the past several years."

During a meeting in December, Mike Hayes, a Democrat on the finance board, expressed that the previous superintendent, Jeffrey Burt, presented the budget at a public hearing one time, and that he's hoping for a leader "who's willing to work for us and answer questions."

Rivers told the board that Sullivan will be "far more transparent than the previous superintendent."

He was "optimistic" that the budget season would be different than last year.

Resident Joins Real Estate Team

Carl Guild & Associates has announced the addition of Liz Kessler to its team of real estate professionals.



As a lifelong resident of Colchester, Kessler has over 15 years of local municipal experience and seven years of running a family business.

"We are thrilled to welcome Liz to the team," said Carl Guild, Owner of Carl Guild & Associ-

ates. "Her extensive experience, passion for real estate, and dedication to her clients will make her an invaluable asset to our agency."

Kessler said she is eager to start her real estate career and is ready to help her clients with all of their real estate needs. "I am honored to join such a reputable agency and look forward to working with my clients to help them achieve their real estate goals," she said.

For more information about Carl Guild & Associates, or to schedule a consultation with Kessler, call 860-367-5888 or email lizkessler-realtor@gmail.com.

Senior Center News & Notes

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

Monday, Feb. 13: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise with Anne, CoA meeting (Town Hall); 10 a.m., Sittercize, Pet Therapy; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 12:30 p.m., Mahjong; 12:45 p.m., set-back; 1 p.m., bridge.

Tuesday, Feb. 14: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10 a.m., Regional LTC Ombudsman meeting; 10:30-11:30 a.m., Blood Pressure Clinic/Presentation; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1:30 p.m., Bingo; 7 p.m., SCBC meeting (Zoom).

Wednesday, Feb. 15: 9 a.m., Making Memories Program, Walking Group meet-up at the Air Line Trail in Amston; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Sit & Be Fit; 11 a.m., Luv Bug Valentine's Day Luncheon.

Luncheon.

Thursday, Feb. 9: 9 a.m., Exercise with Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling; 10:30 a.m., Shopping Trip; 11 a.m., Yoga; 11 a.m., Pizza and a Movie; noon, Chair Massage; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes; 1 p.m., Knit & Crochet.

Friday, Feb. 17: 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., AARP Tax Aide by appointment only; 10 a.m., Sit & Be Fit; 10:30 a.m., Choral Group; 11 a.m., Yoga; 1 p.m., Tech Time with Harry; 1:30 p.m., Bingo.

Upcoming Programs: Block-Printed Apron Craft Session: Tuesday, Feb. 28, 10:30 a.m. All are invited to come and design an apron using various textile stamps and fabric paint. Both floral and geometric stamps will be provided. Cost is \$10 includes an adult-sized canvas apron, use of stamps and paint. Space is limited. Register by Feb. 17.

Survey to Advise Town on Best Use of ARPA Funds

Residents are encouraged to complete a survey prepared by a town advisory committee to help guide the Board of Selectmen on the best use of about \$2.3 million in funds remaining from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Compiled by the ARPA Advisory Ad-Hoc Committee, working in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen, the survey asks residents to select between six and 10 projects out of 17 applications submitted by town department managers. Projects under consideration include:

- Funds to staff a family empowerment program through C3 – Collaborative for Colchester's Children;
- Equipment and apparatus for the new fire trucks funded at referendum last year;
- Upgrade of the fire department radio system;
- Replacement of the tennis courts on Old Hebron Road;
- A new skate park;
- New parking lots and catch basins at the Old Hartford Road firehouse;
- New social services grant program for residents in need;
- Replacement of the Town Hall roof;
- Replacement of HVAC system and heat pumps at Town Hall;
- Extension of the new natural gas lines to Town Hall;
- Site work at Norton Park;
- Painting and repairs to the water tower at Highland Woods;
- Construction of a parking lot on open space property off Route 16;

-Installation of a new irrigation system and new wells for several fields at the recreation complex;

-Creation of a community parking lot on town-owned land with access to Hayward Avenue and the town green;

-New youth center;

-Expansion of office space for the police department.

In addition to passing along the survey results to the Board of Selectmen, the ARPA committee will be finalizing and ranking the municipal projects for funding approval by the selectmen. The committee has spent the past several months reviewing the project applications in great detail.

Of the \$4.68 million the town received in ARPA funds, \$1 million was used to support local businesses recover from the impact of COVID-19, and about \$200,000 was distributed to community non-profits.

About \$1.1 million in funds have already been approved by the current and prior Board of Selectmen for municipal projects including hybrid meeting room technology at Town Hall, new playground equipment, new roofs for the Westchester firehouse and youth center, and youth counseling programs.

In addition to being able fill out the survey online through the town website, hard copies are available at Town Hall, the senior center and Cragin Memorial Library. Residents are asked to complete the survey no later than Feb. 20.

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Community Theatre Celebrates 25th Show

By Michael Sinkewicz

Following a brief hiatus due to the pandemic, the Colchester Community Theatre is returning with a milestone presentation of *Young Frankenstein* next week, the group's 25th full-length musical production.

Performances of the musical comedy, originally created by Mel Brooks and adapted from his 1974 movie of the same name, will be held at the Bacon Academy auditorium next weekend, Feb. 17-19. Showtimes are Friday at 7 p.m., Saturday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., and Sunday at 2 p.m.

Tickets can be bought in-person at the Wagging Tails Pet Shop and at the Cabinet of Curiosities. They're also available online at www.showtix4u.com/events/1750. Prices are \$18 for adults and \$14 for seniors (65+) and children (age 12 and under). Preferred seating tickets are available for \$28 each.

This week, the *Rivereast* caught up with the showrunners and cast as opening night approaches. As the crew worked through an evening rehearsal, it was clear that the performance would be both hilarious and pleasing to audiences, who have flocked to past productions with lofty expectations.

However, the organization is fearful that its sponsorship by the town is coming to end, which may close the curtain on the theatre indefinitely.

Diane Ozmun, president of the Colchester Community Theatre, said it "felt like the rug had been pulled out from under us."

More information on the future of the theatre will be included in next week's *Rivereast*.

A Milestone Production

Ozmun, who is also performing in the show, is "ecstatic" about the organization's milestone production. For her, the theatre has always played an integral role in the community, and for the 25th time, her group will dazzle audiences.

"It's finally really happening," she said. "You're always excited to do a show but this is beyond that. This show is funny, whacky and crazy. It's got all of these pieces that people just need on the other side of these pandemic years."

Perhaps one of the defining qualities of group is the magic that goes into brewing a masterful performance. Her goal is always to help bring the show to the "next level," but sometimes, like this year, there's more coming together.

"It's awesome to have this group of people who work their everyday jobs and have their everyday lives and then come here with this creativity," she said. "It's a whole different level of energy that's pushing it."

The emotions that come along with a major milestone, as well as a post-COVID show, are almost inescapable.

"We've just missed it so much," Ozmun expressed.

Wallis Johnson, the show's director and a co-founder of the organization, reflected on the "magical" journey the group has embarked on.

"For all of our 25 years, the town of Colchester and our local businesses and local community members have always supported us," she said. "There's a lot of celebrate. For me, I'm just really excited for the show. I'm excited to

have people back with us and us with them."

Johnson said she's involved in all of the group's big productions and the children's summer theatre workshop.

Each summer, she said, anywhere from 50 to 100 kids participate in a two-week program where they learn "all aspects of theatre," including music, dancing, acting and prop building. Then, at the end of the program, the kids put on a full-length musical production that they act out on stage.

In addition, Johnson stated that the organization routinely participates in town events, such as the Memorial Day Parade.

"We do a lot of give back to the community," she said.

Jim Metzler, a Manchester resident who plays the "Monster," has been participating in the Colchester Community Theatre since 2010, when he played the beast. For more than 35 years, Metzler has worked in computer support, but theatre is what he does for fun, and there's a reason he continues to work with this organization.

"From the very first show that I did, they were always very welcoming," he said. "I was welcomed in and they made me feel comfortable and gave me the support that I needed to do a good job with that role. That was a big role to start off with and they were there for me."

Show Preview

Originally, the production was going to be staged two years ago, Johnson explained, but the COVID numbers spiked and then there was an oil spill at Bacon Academy, which would've shut down the show regardless. Still, a theatre committee voted for *Young Frankenstein*, a choice that the crew was excited to revisit.

The guarantee seems to be that this show will be very, very funny.

"I mean it's Mel Brooks," Johnson joked. "It's also risqué. We have some really awesome special effects, so that's going to be a lot of fun. We're hoping to give people a bunch of laughs, which we can all use."

Fans will be happy to know that classic numbers like "Puttin' on the Ritz" are included in the performance, which Johnson called a "showstopper."

Ozmun stated that as the production was organized, they had to reach out to all the people in the original cast and then auctions were re-opened for those who might've missed out initially.

Rehearsals started at the beginning of January and the turnaround is between 6-7 weeks. The group is accustomed to the fast pace, which involves around 3 rehearsals per week.

"There's a formula to it that just kind of works," Ozmun said. "Wallis is very in tune with that formula."

Metzler acknowledged that the schedule can be challenging, but it also motivates the actors.

"It lets you prepare more yourself and bring in the ideas and see if they flop," he said. "In other situations, you have the director's view and you kind of absorb that view and it becomes yours."

While there aren't any professional actors, there are undoubtedly different degrees of experience sprinkled throughout the production. Some are high school students participating in their first show, another is a Vietnam War veteran. They all come together to form a cohesive cast and crew.

"The goal is always to elevate everybody a little bit," Johnson said, adding that each show reaches a higher level. "I love teaching people and that kind of comes into play here. I also notice that the actors help teach each other, which is also a wonderful thing because it builds a tighter community on the stage."



The cast of the Colchester Community Theatre's production of *Young Frankenstein* rehearses earlier this week for next weekend's show.

Johnson never reviews past videos of the production she's tackling with her group. She blocks the entire show before allowing herself to see how other artists interpreted a scene or sculpted a character. As she reads the script, a movie begins playing in her head and that's what hopefully transfers to the stage.

"I don't want to copy what's already been done," she said. "I want our own show."

After COVID, Metzler wanted to be involved with a show and saw that Colchester was taking on *Young Frankenstein* — a movie he loves.

"I came down and said I'd just like to participate. They said, 'Can you make some noise?' I was like, 'Sure, I can make noise.' I made noises and here I am."

Playing the monster is a unique role, which makes it particularly enjoyable for Metzler. He explained that this character allows him to have more fun than past performances.

"It's challenging because for most of the show, I don't have words," he said. "You have to rely on everything else that you have to get points across, like physical acting and lots of noise."

Embracing a role like that can be somewhat daunting, he added, and it's important to allow your instincts to take over. At rehearsal, if something doesn't exactly mesh, then it can easily be changed.

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 will be broadcast via Facebook Live each Sunday at 9 a.m. Worship videos are at www.colchesterfederatedchurch.org under the Worship tab. Updated information is also on the church's Facebook page.

Sunday School: Sunday School is held during

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

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

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

Lions Accepting Grant Applications

The Colchester Lions Club is now accepting applications for grant requests from community groups and organizations, in preparation for its annual Community Night of Giving in April.

Organizations should be prepared to demonstrate how the funds would be used to benefit the community. Applications can be found at colchesterlions.org, or may be obtained in writing: Colchester Lions Club, P.O. Box 423, Colchester, CT 06415.

Completed applications must be submitted by March 15.

Project Graduation Fundraiser

For the entire month of February, when you purchase a reusable Community Bag at the Big Y located at 7 East Hampton Rd., Marlborough, \$1 will be donated to Bacon Academy Project Graduation.

The goal is to sell 200 bags.

The mission of Bacon Academy Project Graduation is to provide drug- and alcohol-free events for all graduating seniors of Bacon Academy. Direct donations are always welcome.

For more information, visit baconacademy-projectgrad.org or look for "Bacon Academy Project Graduation" on Facebook.







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Man Killed by Falling Tree

By Michael Sinkewicz

A Colchester man died last week after being struck by a falling tree during a powerful winter storm.

Police identified the man as 52-year-old Jody Fellows.

Troop K responded to a scene on Clark Road at around 12:30 p.m. on Feb. 4, where they found Fellows unresponsive in the woods besides the residence.

According to police, Fellows had been cutting down trees with his brother when he

struck. The medical examiner responded to the scene and there is no criminal aspect.

First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos expressed his condolences in a statement on Facebook.

“Our hearts go out to the family and loved ones affected by today’s tragedy,” Bisbikos said. “As a community, we send you our deepest prayers and sympathies. May their memory be eternal.”

Upcoming Programs at Cragin

Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave., has announced the following programs. For more information, call 860-537-5752 or visit www.colchesterct.gov/library.

Celebrating Black Inventors: Take and Make Crafts: Mondays in February, stop by the Children’s Department to pick up craft kits that teach kids about Black inventors and their inventions.

In-Person: Valentine Cards: Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 13 and 14, all day. Drop in to the children’s department and make someone special a Valentine’s Day card.

In-Person: STEAM Challenge: Wednesday, Feb. 15, 6-7 p.m. All ages are invited to the children’s department for a gumdrop STEAM challenge.

Teen Craft: Foam Clay: Thursday, Feb. 16, 3-3:45 p.m., for grades 6-12. Stop by the teen room for a craft.

Starting a Vegetable Garden: Thursday, Feb. 16, 6 p.m.: Wellstone Farm operator, and Master Gardener instructor, Ian Gibson will present.

Teen Gaming: Tuesday, Feb. 21, 3-4 p.m., for grades 6-12. Try a new game or play with friends on the Nintendo Switch.

Game Night: Thursday, Feb. 23, 6-7:30 p.m. Come by with your family (or a group of friends) to try out board games from the library’s collection. Snacks and games provided.

Cragin Craft Swap: Saturday, Feb. 25, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Bring in unwanted craft supplies to the library Wednesday, Feb. 15, through Thursday, Feb. 23, and then come for a Craft Swap, to pick up some new-to-you supplies.

Cragin Book Club: Monday, Feb. 27, 6 p.m., at the library. Ask at the Adult Circulation Desk for this month’s book. For updates on the program, sign up at tinyurl.com/cmlbookclub.

CYSS News & Notes

Colchester Youth and Social Services has announced the following pieces of news. For more information and full descriptions, call 860-537-7255 or email youthservices@colchesterct.gov. Register for programs online at www.colchesterct.gov/yss.

Guiding Lights: Tuesdays through March 28, at the Youth Center, 40 Norwich Ave. Seventh-graders meet from 2:15-4:30 p.m., and fifth-graders from 3:15-4:30 p.m. This is a free peer mentoring program that connects fifth-grade students with seventh-grade mentors on a one-to-one basis.

Girls Circle: Tuesdays through April 4, 3:15-4:30 p.m., for girls in grades 4-5. In this free program, girls will make new friends while using interactive games and guided activities.

Minds Over Matter: Thursdays through March 30, 2:15-4 p.m., for grades 6-8. This is a free group for middle school students to learn skills to reduce anxiety.

Skate & Play: Tuesday, Feb. 21, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., for grades 6-10. Fee: \$40. Roller-skate (or rollerblade) at Ron-A-Roll and then we’ll travel

to Nomad’s Adventure Quest for laser tag, arcade, bumper cars, teacups, rock wall climbing and mini golf. Must wear socks and must bring bagged lunch (there is no option for buying food). Drop-off and pick-up are at the Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

Urban Air: Friday, March 10, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., for grades 4-10. Fee: \$42. There will be virtual reality, ninja obstacle courses, laser tag, trampoline and more. Pizza and water included. Complete waiver prior to trip. Drop-off and pick-up are at the Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

Youth Center Drop-In: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2-4 p.m., for grades 6-8. This is a free program offering middle-schoolers a place to go after school. Kids can have a snack, play pool, air hockey, video games, basketball and more. There are also crafts, spaces to relax, and a reading/homework area. You do not need to pre-register to attend; students will receive instructions for online registration at their first visit, and they must be registered online to attend again.

Garden Club Winter Sowing Activity

The Colchester Garden Club is offering a Take-and-Make activity on Winter Sowing. This free drop-in workshop will be held Saturday, Feb. 11, between 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. at Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave. There will be a pre-selected choice of seeds available to plant from the Colchester Seed Library.

Winter sowing is a method of starting seeds in a one-gallon plastic water or milk jug which becomes like a miniature greenhouse, then setting outdoors in winter, generally with seeds

that require a period of cold stratification taking advantage of natural temperatures. This process is easy to do with the seeds sprouting in early spring to be transplanted into the garden once threat of frost is past. All materials and instructions will be provided by members of the Colchester Garden Club. If you have questions, please email colchestergardenclub@yahoo.com and include “CGC-Winter Sowing” in the subject line.

Lions Offering Scholarships

The Colchester Lions invite all Colchester residents in their senior year of high school to apply for one of several scholarships.

Applications are welcome from all graduating students planning to attend any accredited college, university or trade school. It doesn’t matter if students attend public, private, charter or magnet high schools, or if they are home-schooled. Applications are available through the Bacon Academy guidance office or at colchesterlions.org.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Bessette at elizabeth.a.bessette@gmail.com. Bacon Academy students should submit their application to the Bacon Academy guidance office. All other students should email their application to elizabeth.a.bessette@gmail.com or mail them to Colchester Lions Club, Attn: Scholarship Committee, P.O. Box 423, Colchester, CT 06415.

Applications must be received by Friday, March 10.

Arts Studio to Open

The Color House, a new creative arts studio and artisan shop, will hold an open house-style grand opening celebration Saturday, Feb. 11, from noon-4 p.m. The studio is located on the back side of the Colchester town green, on the second floor of the Oz’NBones BBQ building.

The Color House offers walk-in paint-your-own pottery, classes in pottery/ceramics, canvas painting, private art parties, and more. The studio also features a shop where visitors can purchase handcrafted items from local artisans.

For more information, visit www.cohoct.com, follow on social media @thecohoct, or contact studio founder Tina Parsadanov at thecohoct@gmail.com.

Polish Dinner-Dance Feb. 19

The St. Joseph’s Polish Society at 395 South Main St. will host a Polish dinner-polka dance Sunday, Feb. 19. Dinner will be served from 1-2 p.m., and Dennis Polisky and The Maestro’s Men will perform from 2-6 p.m.

The Polish dinner includes pierogies, golumpki, kielbasa, kapusta, rye bread, and butter. Tickets are \$25 per person, and must be purchased in advance.

For more information, call 860-537-2550.

CCO Seeks Members, Starts Rehearsals

The Colchester Choir and Orchestra will begin rehearsals Thursday, Feb. 23, at Bacon Academy, 611 Norwich Ave. The spring concert will be Saturday, May 20, also at Bacon Academy.

All are invited to join the CCO. Seats are open in all sections, both choir and orchestra. The group plays everything from pops to classical. Choir rehearses in the choir room from 6-7:30 p.m., and orchestra rehearses in the band room 7:30-9 p.m.; orchestra members should come at 7 p.m. to warm up.

To register – half-year registration is available – go to tinyurl.com/4ysam6sw. For more information, visit colchesterchoirorchestra.org; look for Colchester Choir and Orchestra on Facebook; or email colchesterchoirorchestra@gmail.com.

Lions’ Breakfast Buffet

The Colchester Lions Breakfast Buffet will return to the St. Joseph’s Polish Society on Sunday, Feb. 26, from 7:30-11 a.m. This is a full breakfast with eggs, bacon, sausage, toast, home fries and pancakes, with juice, coffee, tea or water.

Pre-sale prices are \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors, \$5 for children age 5-12, and free for kids 4 and under. At the door, prices are \$9 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$6 for children age 5-12, and free for kids 4 and under.

Tickets may be purchased in advance at Dime Bank, 139 S. Main St., or by calling 860-537-1093 and leaving a message for Julie.

Vendors Wanted

The Colchester Dog Park Committee is looking for vendors that sell-dog related items for its ninth annual “Spring Bark for the Park.”

The event will be held on the Town Green on Sunday, May 21, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., and will feature May Baskets, a blessing of the dogs, and other canine entertainment. Vendor slots are available at \$40 per booth. No charge for nonprofit organizations.

Email tagnobark@gmail.com for more information.

Local Photo Contest

Until March 15, the Edward Jones office of financial advisor Kevin Harris will accept photos from the town. Photos of nature, buildings, the town green, and whatever you think makes Colchester a beautiful town are all welcome.

A winner will be chosen from each age group (18 & under or 19 & over) and the winning photos will be displayed in the two front windows of the office.

All submissions should be sent to both Ashleigh.krom@edwardjones.com and Kevin.harris@edwardjones.com, and include name, phone number and age group. This information will only be used to let you know if your photo has been chosen; no sales calls.

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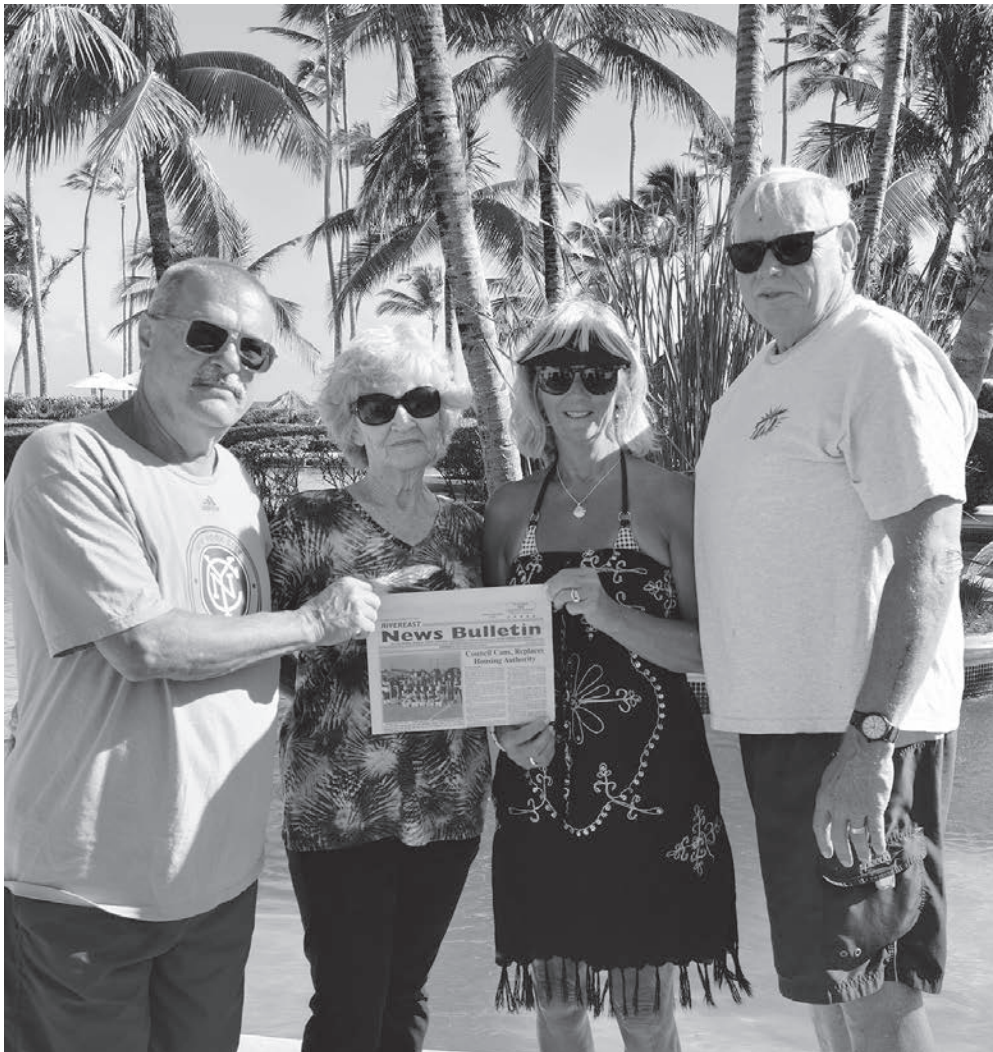
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Rivereast Crosses the Finish Line... Barbara Skinner and her daughter, Diane Coon, finally finished the Boston Marathon on Dec. 25. "I guess carrying the *Rivereast News Bulletin* really slowed us down!" Barbara quipped. She and Diane are both formerly of Colchester.



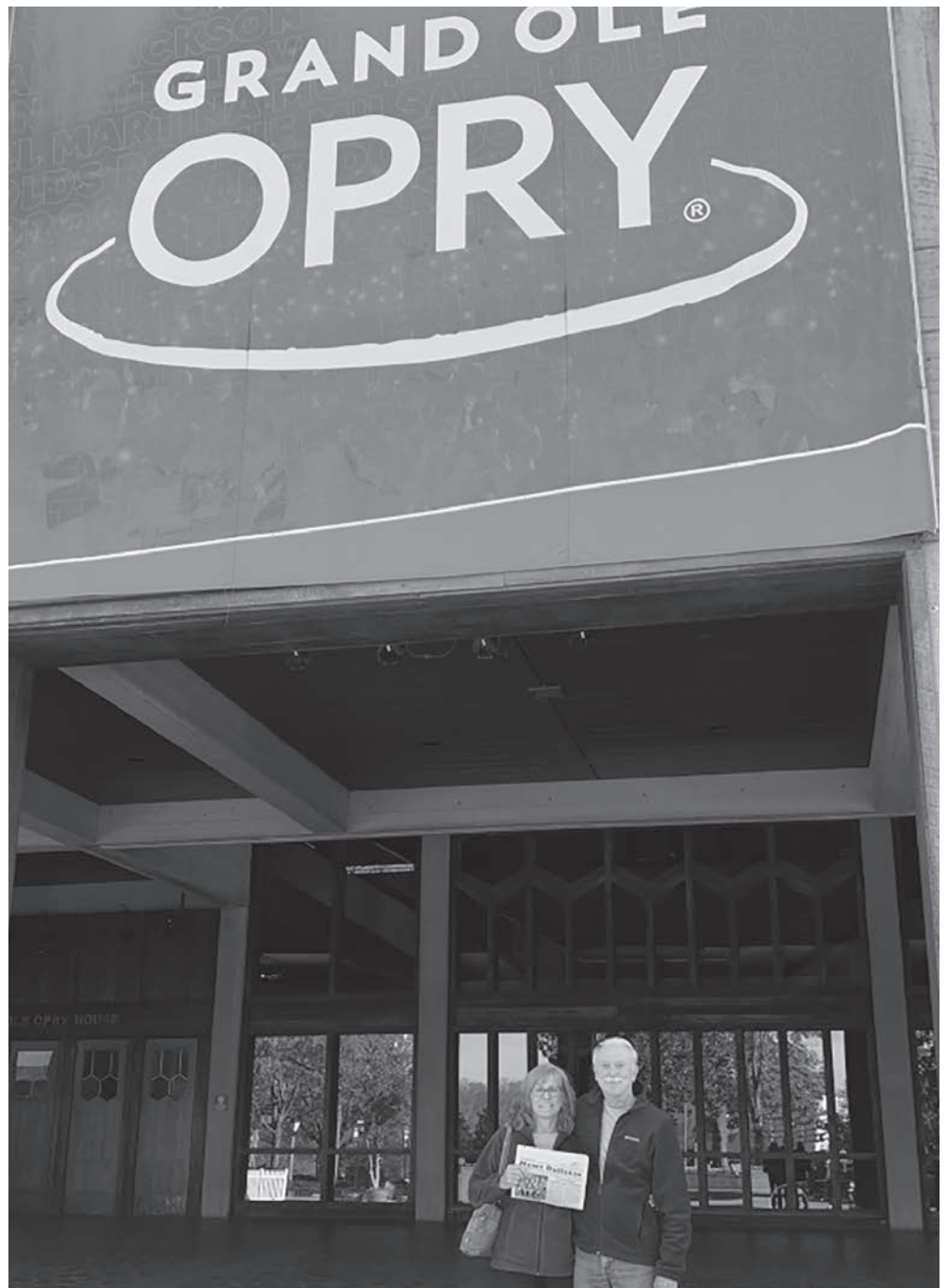
The Paper in Punta Cana... Bruce Henderson, Jane Sullivan, and Sandy and Chuck Anadore recently visited Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic. Bruce, Sandy and Chuck are from Colchester, and Jane is from Cromwell.

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.



Aloha!... Karen Daly of Colchester is pictured at the Pali lookout on Oahu, Hawaii.



A Tennessee Thanksgiving... Tammy and Dave Charbonneau of East Haddam spent Thanksgiving with family down in Nashville. While visiting, they got a backstage tour of the Grand Ole Opry!

Where in the World?

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News from the Commission on Aging...

The East Hampton Commission on Aging (COA) heard of administrative backlogs in the state-funded Energy Assistance Program which funds fuel for eligible citizens in winter. The newly-installed application system and a surge in demand were delaying application reviews for months, while denying ready access to the progress of each application. The COA wrote state legislators. Then Sen. Needleman, co-chair of the Energy and Technology Committee, worked with the Department of Social Services to urgently improve procedures and increase staff. This has already reduced the backlogs and improved service.

If you are a senior or disabled adult living in East Hampton whose application for energy assistance has not been processed, you may request assistance from Senior Services Coordinator JoAnn Ewing at The East Hampton Senior Center, 860-267-4426. Other adults in town may contact the town Department of Social Services, 860-267-4468 ext 3208.

**Submitted by:
Eric Rosenberg, MD,
Chair, East Hampton Commission on Aging**

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King's Bread Sale

The Missions' Committee of the Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam, at 52 Middle Haddam Rd., will sell King's Bread Sunday, Feb. 19, from 10:15-11:15 a.m.

The circular loaf is 1.5 lbs for \$7, decorated in traditional Mardi Gras style including a hidden charm for special blessings.

A percentage of the profits are donated to East Hampton Food Bank.

Call Kathy at 860-510-8102 to reserve.

Valentine Tea

Haddam Neck Congregational Church will hold a Valentine Tea, to benefit Heifer International, on Sunday, Feb. 12, at noon at the church parish house, 408 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck.

The tea will feature homemade Valentine treats and punch. All are welcome.

Admission is free, but donations will be accepted to benefit Heifer International, a national nonprofit that works to eradicate hunger on a global scale.

For more information, visit www.haddam-neckcongregationalchurch.org.

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WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU CLEANED THE SEPTIC TANK?

'Stamped' Arrigoni Photo Taken by Local Teacher

By Jack Lakowsky

East Hampton Center School teacher Joe Gewac thought he was being scammed when a random Instagram account reached out about his 2019 photo of the Arrigoni Bridge.

"In 2021 someone left a comment like 'Please reach out to me'", Gewac said this week. "I'm very skeptical and I thought it was a scam."

But, hedging his bets, Gewac reached out against his judgement. Turns out it was legit.

The contact was a contractor for the United States Postal Service, tasked with combing the internet and social media for photos to use for the 2023 stamp series.

Thanks to tagging his photo under #bridgesofamerica, the internet scouers found Gewac's stunning drone photo of the Arrigoni, a regional, and now to some extent, national, icon.

The person who picked Gewac's photo "fell in love at first sight."

"It's an amazing feeling," said Gewac. "It's kind of weird too; I knew about this so long ago. Two years went by and there was no news about it."

What's new, he said, is the sudden excitement about the photo, the attention he's getting for it. Gewac started his drone and wildlife photography hobby about six years ago.

He took the photo when he lived in Middletown.

"I took a peek outside, and just thought I could get some nice photos," he said.

Flying his drone low, he captured sunbeams sluicing through the bridge's iconic, 600-foot arches. He said most drone photos are taken with a sky-high view, but he takes a different route, taking photos closer to the ground, which makes for great shots.

He said through editing he was quite pleased with the photo. A harsh self-critic, he said if something makes it through his cutting eye, it's probably at least decent.

"Teaching is my career, but I would love to do more with photography," he said, saying he has a lot of material, particularly wildlife photos. Recently he "branched off" into photographing youth sports.

The Arrigoni stamp is only available for bulk purchases, but Gewac hopes he can get a sheet to frame.

To see and support Gewac's art, check out his Instagram, @joegophotos.

Gewac's photo was one of just four chosen from literally countless options.

The bridge, which spans well over a half mile, was opened in August 1938, at a cost of about \$3.5 million, more than \$60 million in today's dollars. The year it was built, it won first prize in the large bridge category from the American Institute of Steel Construction.

It was named for Durham state Sen. Charles J. Arrigoni, who fiercely advocated for the bridge's construction.

Until the 19th century the only way to cross



The photo of the Arrigoni Bridge now gracing a 2023 USPS stamp was taken by another key local resource – a teacher.

the Connecticut River was by ferry. The first service in Connecticut was at Windsor in 1642; in Middletown, service was started in 1726, according to online history transportation archive Kurumi.com.

On April 12, 1896, a 1,300-foot two-lane plank drawbridge was built at Middletown. At the time, it was the longest highway drawbridge in the world.

As motor traffic increased in the early 1900s, especially on weekends and holidays, drivers clamored for a way to cross the river without being interrupted to let marine traffic pass through. Studies for the new bridge date back to at least 1933.

Construction started in 1936 and continued nearly 24 hours a day until the Arrigoni Bridge opened to traffic on Aug. 6, 1938. The day it

opened, the bridge was the longest of any kind in New England.

In 2022, yet another multimillion-dollar investment was in bridge was finished, work that started just before the pandemic began, and just before Gewac took his photo.

Last August the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) announced the safety and pedestrian improvement project at the Arrigoni Bridge has been completed.

The project, which started in February 2020, included replacement of the bridge deck, improvements to the bridge approaches on both sides of the Connecticut River, new sidewalks, and steel and concrete repairs which improve safety and increase the lifespan of the bridge.

Haddam Neck Covenant Church News

Haddam Neck Covenant Church, located at 17 Haddam Neck Rd. in East Hampton, invites all to 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.

Kids Church: Music and hands-on interactive activities are offered for kids in the Fellowship Hall during the worship service. All are

welcome.

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

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

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

EHACC Grants Available

The East Hampton Arts & Culture Commission welcomes grant applications from East Hampton organizations and individuals with programs and/or projects that enrich the lives of East Hampton residents through the arts.

Deadline to apply is April 1; email applications to arts@easthamptonct.org or drop them off at the town manager's office at Town Hall.

Eligibility: One of two \$500 grants are available to be awarded to individuals or organizations residing in East Hampton. The commission reserves the right to award a grant to an individual or organization it determines will have the most potential impact of arts and/or culture on the town. Incomplete forms will be denied; applicants can resubmit.

Criteria for awarding grants: The artistic and organizational quality of the organization and/or project and its likelihood of continuing viability or success. The organization's or project's accessibility and service to the East Hampton community. Grant recipients must credit the East Hampton Arts and Culture Commission on all press releases, posters, print advertising and programs.

Evaluation: An interview may be requested of the candidate prior to awarding the grant. An update of your progress will be required six months post-award date and a final report will be required one year post award date.

Applications are available at www.artsforeasthamptonct.org

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Resilient Bellringers Rally to Beat Valley

By Josh Howard

Sophomore sensation Liana Salamone was at her best when it mattered the most.

After being held scoreless in the first quarter, Salamone went into attack mode over the final three quarters and finished with a game-high 23 points as East Hampton girls' basketball rallied to defeat Valley Regional 44-39 on Feb. 3.

Salamone, the team's leading scorer the past two seasons, exploded for 13 points in the fourth quarter as the Bellringers erased a deficit over the final eight minutes to earn their 15th win this winter.

Despite playing with the home court advantage, East Hampton struggled from the field for most of the game, trailing by as many as ten points in the second half.

The tide began to shift midway through the third quarter when Salamone scored four straight points to spark a 10-2 scoring run for the home team.

In the closing minute of the third quarter, sophomore Katie Ireland buried a three-pointer and senior captain Jordan Murphy scored on a rebound putback to cut the deficit to four entering the final frame.

A baseline three-pointer from Ireland with 1:30 to play in regulation gave the Bellringers their first lead since it was 3-2 in the first minute of the game.

Salamone scored five straight points late in regulation and the Bellringers defense stiffened late, holding the road-weary Warriors to two points in the final three minutes of the game, to polish off the victory.

The win was a microcosm of the season for the Bellringers, who have battled through adversity since longtime head coach Shaun Russell was put on suspension after shoving one of his players in a win at Valley Regional High School on Dec. 20.

Allyson Smith, a 2005 graduate of East Hampton High School, is serving as the team's

interim coach in Russell's absence.

Smith was a two-time all-state and four-time all-conference basketball player at East Hampton High School, finishing with 1,444 points and as the school's all-time leader in steals, before winning a National Title as a member of Southern Connecticut State University basketball team from 2005-2009.

Despite the early-season controversy followed by the coaching shift, the Bellringers haven't missed a beat on the court. They have won 16 of 17 games this season, outscoring their opponents by nearly 31 points per game.

Salamone, who was the only freshman girls' basketball player to be named all-state last winter, has again paced the team offensively but had trouble finding her rhythm in the first quarter against Valley Regional.

Early on, junior Delaney Russell picked up the slack on the offensive end, scoring the team's first eight points including a pair of three-pointers in the first quarter.

Salamone did most of her damage in the second half when she outscored the Warriors (17-16) by herself over the final two quarters.

But it was the team's defense that allowed them to close the door, holding Valley Regional to a mere seven points over the final eight minutes.

Valley Regional's senior captain Abigail Bradbury scored a team-high 19 points, but only three points came in the decisive fourth quarter thanks to a defensive effort led by East Hampton's all-conference junior Jackie Russell.

Following the win over Valley, East Hampton beat Morgan 57-24 on Tuesday, extending the team's winning streak to 11 games.

Next up is a rematch with conference foe Cromwell (14-4) at Cromwell High School (today) Friday, Feb. 10 at 7 p.m.

The Panthers from Cromwell are the only team to defeat East Hampton this season, winning 38-29 at East Hampton High School on



East Hampton's Liana Salamone drives around Valley Regional's Siena Schaller during the Bellringers 44-39 victory last Friday. Salamone led all scorers with 23 points.

Jan. 3. They also won last year's game regular season meeting, handing the Bellringers one of only two regular season losses during the 2021-22 season.

Since 2016, East Hampton and Cromwell have dominated the Shoreline Conference (SLC), combining to win seven straight confer-

ence championships with the Bellringers winning the last three and the Panthers holding the crown from 2016-19.

The rival teams are also two of the top-ranked team in Class M, meaning they have potential conference and state postseason games on the horizon.

Denim, Diamonds and Drafts

"Denim, Diamonds and Drafts," an evening of dancing, dinner and drinks to support the CT Draft Horse Rescue, will take place Friday, March 31, from 6:30-10:30 p.m., at Saint Clements Castle, 1931 Portland-Cobalt Rd., Portland.

There will be music, food, dancing, raffles, live auctions, and silent auctions. Tickets are limited and are \$80 per person. Tickets are available at tinyurl.com/3vrbyuv, and must be

purchased by March 17 – that is, if they don't sell out first. The event is snow or shine. Contact the organizer to request a refund.

CDHR is a nonprofit organization located in East Hampton that is dedicated to saving the lives of neglected or abused draft horses as well as draft horses heading to slaughter. For more information, visit www.ctdraftrescue.com or www.facebook.com/ctdraftrescue, or email ctdraftrescue@aol.com.

Super Bowl Sunday Chili Fundraiser

Christ Episcopal Church, Middle Haddam, is holding a Super Bowl Sunday Chili Fundraiser on Feb. 12. One pint of chili, a serving of corn bread, and a cookie are available for \$10.

Orders must be placed by calling Susie Karl at 860-873-1136. Pick-up will take place at the Parish Hall from noon-2 p.m. All profits will be donated to the East Hampton Food Bank.

Chocolate Cherry Cakes for Sale

The Missions Committee of the Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam at 52 Middle Haddam Rd. will sell chocolate cherry cakes on Sunday, Feb. 12, from 10:15-11:15 a.m.

The cakes are in heart- and star-shaped glass dishes; decorated for \$4 each. A percentage of the profits are donated to the East Hampton Food Bank.

Call Kathy at 860-510-8102 to reserve.

Masked Ball Dance

Epoch Arts, located at 27 Skinner St., will hold a Masked Ball Dance Friday, Feb. 10, from 7-9 p.m.

Teens can get dressed in their dance attire – fancy, funky or fun – and dance all night to a live DJ. There will be a photo booth along with props to pose with. There will be free food and drink all night. Feel free to wear a theater mask or paint one.

Cost is \$10. For more information, visit www.epocharts.org.

Kindergarten Registration to Start

Kindergarten registration packets for the 2023-24 school year will be available at the Memorial School foyer and at East Hampton Public Library starting Wednesday, March 1.

To secure a screening appointment for your child, return all completed registration paperwork to the Memorial School office or drop box in the foyer by Friday, March 31.

Kindergarten screenings will be held from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on May 11, 12 and 15.

Police News

1/27: Suzanne King, 56, of 72 Foxridge Dr., Colchester, was issued a summons for evading responsibility, East Hampton Police said.

1/28: Brian Irizarry, 35, of 25 Hilltop Rd., was issued a summons for misuse of a marker plate and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

2/6: Jeffrey Howlett, 63, of Wethersfield, was arrested and charged with criminal violation of a civil protective order, police said.

Also, from Jan. 30-Feb. 5, officers responded to 19 medical calls, three motor vehicle crashes and seven alarms, and made 34 traffic stops, police said.

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Late Local Activist Mourned: 'A Truly Sad Loss'

By Jack Lakowsky

After a brief battle with pancreatic cancer, longtime East Hampton resident Bob Atherton passed away on Jan. 18, at the age of 72. It was a loss felt by residents and local officials.

Atherton served as the able chair of the town's highly active Commission on Aging, a frequent speaker at town meetings advocating for local senior needs, always energetic and enthusiastic, readily and informatively answering tough questions, presenting relevant information important to a significant number of the town's population, which will soon made of largely seniors.

Atherton led the commission during one of the most challenging times seniors experienced, dealing with concerns of their physical and mental health, the height of the pandemic.

Atherton's work was a reminder that, whether a senior lived alone or not, in a house or apartment or, if East Hampton had one, an assisted living facility (something Atherton said local seniors need), there were hardworking people advocating for them, whether for more local group activities or affordable senior housing, a warming presence even when viewed through the lens of a Zoom call.

Makes sense – you'd need an inviting aura to play Santa Claus, as Atherton so faithfully did.

In 2021, Atherton, commission vice chair Eric Rosenberg and the rest of the board surveyed the needs of East Hampton's older residents 65 and up.

Under Atherton's leadership the survey was hugely successful,

Nearly 500 residents aged 65 or older responded, meeting the body's "stretch goal."

"We're very excited to have all this information at our fingertips," Rosenberg told the *Rivereast* at the time.

Rosenberg said there are about 2,160 seniors

in East Hampton, meaning a bit more than 22% responded to the questionnaire. This is nearly double the number that took a similar survey in 2017.

"It's not a perfectly representative sampling, but it sure means a lot of people spoke up," Rosenberg said, adding these responses equate to 80 hours of public testimony.

Atherton left the aging commission not long after his diagnosis, in December. He started on the commission nearly a decade ago, in 2014, elected chair in 2018. Sadly, pancreatic cancer took Atherton quickly. Like many other pancreatic cases, Atherton's illness was found too late.

Last month, the local Town Council paid tribute to Atherton, filing a statement in his name and presenting him with the Lions Club Humanitarian of the Year Award.

"He led [the commission] with vision, resourcefulness, idealism, commitment, in friendship, good humor, great stories and food.

The council noted Atherton's tireless service to the senior center. He's been volunteer coordinator, database clerk, and a Meals-On-Wheels driver. Though it was derailed by the pandemic, Atherton was part of a second senior group, the East Hampton Senior Center Advocacy Group. He taught tai-chi classes and spent years a Medicare counselor.

In a statement, Town Manager Dave Cox described Atherton's passing as "truly sad."

Cox said, "Bob was a great guy, and a joy to be around."

Speaking for the council, Cox said it was "pleased to honor Bob in a small way, as it recognized his character and contributions to the community as part of the Lions Humanitarian of the Year awards.

"His accomplishments and attitude of service," Cox continued, "will serve as inspiration to those that continue the path he started, fur-



Cancer has claimed the life of local senior commission chair, activist, volunteer and Santa Claus, Robert 'Bob' Atherton. He moved to East Hampton 10 years ago after marrying his second wife. He leaves behind his wife, his mother, siblings, nieces, nephews, stepchildren and grandchildren.

thering the interests of our town and, in particular, the interests of our older adults."

Working together for years, Rosenberg told the *Rivereast* he and Atherton grew closer as Atherton dealt with the stark reality of his diagnosis.

In a letter nominating Atherton for the Lions award, Rosenberg wrote: "His wife Donna notes, 'He's the only guy I know who when you

ask him why he was feeling down, says it's because he was looking back at his life and feeling like maybe he hadn't done as much for humanity as he could have."

Rosenberg called Atherton the epitome of a great humanitarian, worthy of recognition for a life spent devoted to others.

To honor Atherton, donate to the local food bank or the Haddam Neck Covenant Church.

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

Weekly Activities: Quilting Group: Mondays, 9 a.m. **Mexican Train Dominoes:** Mondays, 9:30 a.m. **Setback:** Mondays, 1 p.m., and Thursdays, 1:15 p.m. **Bible Study:** Tuesdays, 1 p.m. **Bingo:** Tuesdays, 1-2 p.m., in person and via Zoom. **Tap Dance:** Thursdays, 11:15-11:45 a.m.; **Cribbage:** Fridays, 9:30-11 a.m. **Mah-jongg:** 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.

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 indoors or via Zoom.

Mighty Magnificent Men's Group: Monday, Feb. 13, 10:30 a.m. This is a social hour of facts, activities and snacks, just for guys.

Book Club: Tuesday, Feb. 14, 10:30 a.m. A *Spark of Light* by Jodi Pecault will be discussed.

Valentine's Day Affair: Tuesday, Feb. 14, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Drop by to have your picture taken and pick up a heart-healthy snack. Think about signing up for lunch and listening to love songs on the piano with Sue Hewes. Register in advance; treats are limited.

Closet Organizing: Folks are invited to help organize the center's craft supply closet Wednesday, Feb. 15, from 10 a.m.-noon. Sign up to stay for lunch too.

Cross-Stitch: Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30 p.m., beginning Feb. 15; all are welcome, whether they know how to cross-stitch or not. Guided by Shannon Urzua. Registration requested.

Family Tree: Friday, Feb. 17, 10:30 a.m. Ken Doney will help people search for the history of their families. Bring your own mobile device. One-on-one time is available.

Scrabble Party with the Interact Kids: Friday, Feb. 17, 10 a.m.-noon. Snacks will be provided. Register in advance.

Beyond: Brazil/Black History in Bahia: Wednesday, Feb. 22, 3-4 p.m., via Zoom. See some famous Salvador sights. A small Brazilian treat will be provided.

Tai Chi & Qigong – Moving for Better Balance: Thursdays, Feb. 23-April 27, 10:30-11 a.m. Cost is \$50 for the 10 weeks. Register with a check, made payable to the Town of East Hampton, or with cash to the senior center. Once payment is received, instructor Tom Cushing will send you the link to the class. This class is also available via Zoom at the Senior Center, also. Call for more details.

Art w/Karen: Sunday, Feb. 26, 2-4 p.m. Karen Williams will take people through beginner steps of creating an acrylic painting. Cost is \$5, paid to Williams the day of the event.

AARP Safe Driving Course: Monday, Feb. 27, 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., at the senior center. Fee: \$20 for AARP members, \$25 for non-members. Bring exact amount for payment as no change will be available. Check made out to AARP or cash (no bills larger than \$20). Arrive 10-15 mins early for paperwork. Bring a pen, and your AARP card number if a member.

Trips: Stayin' Alive: See this Bee Gees tribute band at the Aqua Turf club in Plantsville Monday, May 22. There will be coffee and doughnuts upon arrival and a family-style lunch served. Cost is \$116. Deposit of \$25 to reserve a spot by March 9. Please call for more information or stop by to pick up a flyer.

Lighthouse Cruise-Narragansett Bay: Wednesday, July 12. Cost is \$127. Deposit of \$25 is needed by April 6. Cruise aboard a catamaran and see 10 famous lighthouses and 10 islands. Brunch at the Quonset 'O' Club before the cruise and go shopping at Olde Mistick Village after. Call for more information or stop by to pick up a flyer.

Little League Registration

Registration for the spring season of East Hampton Little League closes Feb. 12. Visit Belltownll.org for more information.

Knights of Columbus State Raffle

The Knights of Columbus Belltown Council 6190 is again offering Connecticut State Council raffle tickets.

There are 10 prizes to be awarded. First prize is \$5,000; second is \$3,500; third is \$2,000; fourth is \$1,500; fifth is \$1,000; sixth is \$600; seventh is \$500; eighth is \$400; ninth is \$300 and tenth is \$200.

The drawing will be held Friday, May 5, at 9 p.m., at the Hartford Marriott Downtown, 200 Columbus Blvd., Hartford. Ticketholders need not be present to win.

Tickets are \$10 each and may be purchased through any of the Knights of Columbus members or by calling Bob DeMarchi at 860-267-5978.

Historical Society Fundraising Drive

The Chatham Historical Society (CHS) recently acquired a new heating and cooling system – and is now seeking donations to help pay for it.

CHS members voted for a new heating and cooling system because the old one was not functioning properly. After doing research they decided to get a Samsung ductless mini split heating and cooling system that is used today by many homes and businesses. After soliciting bids, a system was installed that furnished both heat and cooling to both buildings. This was es-

sential to keep a steady temperature and humidity level to help preserve the historic artifacts in both buildings, the society said.

The cost of the new system was \$10,000. CHS is asking the public if they could donate money towards this cause. The society is a 501(c)3 organization, so donations are tax-deductible.

To contribute to this new system, send donations to Chatham Historical Society (Heating & Cooling Drive), c/o Don Burr, Treasurer 29 Bay Rd., East Hampton, CT 06424.

Schools Offer Preschool Programs

The East Hampton Public School System is seeking 3- and 4-year-old residents interested in preschool programs for the 2023-24 school year. There will be two preschool programs offered: the Integrated Preschool half-day program and full-day Smart Start program.

Memorial Elementary School's preschool Integrated Program will be held three times a week for 3-year-old students and four times a week for 4-year-old students. Due to limited spaces, selection for peer models will be determined through a lottery process. If selected, peer models demonstrating age-appropriate skills will be assigned by age to either a three day or four day a week schedule (2.5 hours per day). Children must be toilet-trained and turn 3 prior to Sept. 1 to be eligible.

Memorial's Smart Start Program will be held five full days per week (8:50 a.m.-2:50 p.m.), following the East Hampton Public School cal-

endar. Priority will be given to 4-year-old children that meet income guidelines or have other factors for consideration. Other applicants, regardless of economic or risk factors will then be selected.

Parents interested in proceeding through the selection process must pick up an application/information packet at either Memorial Elementary School or the East Hampton Public Library. Packets are available at both locations. The completed Parent Interview Form, Immunization Form and a Proof of Residency must be returned to Jodi Blyler at Memorial School office no later than March 17.

Once all three forms are returned, parents will be contacted, no later than March 24, to schedule a time to bring their child for the screening and lottery/selection process.

Forms received after March 17 will not be accepted.

Congregational Church News & Notes

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

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.

Mardi Gras Fat Tuesday Pancake Dinner: Tuesday, Feb. 21, 5-6 pm. Suggested donation: \$15/family.

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.

Valentine Pop-Up Boutique

On Saturday, Feb. 11, the Congregational Church of East Hampton, located at 59 Main St., will hold a Valentine Pop-Up Boutique from 9:30 a.m.-noon.

Featured will be a chocolate bake sale, Emma's Famous Fudge, gifts and a Valentine photo booth. There will be free coffee or hot chocolate for all who attend.

Storm date is Sunday, Feb. 12, from 1-3:30 p.m.

Quilt Show Coming

The Haddam Neck Congregational Church Quilt Show will take place Saturday and Sunday, April 29 and 30, at the church, 408 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck.

The show will feature dozens of vintage and new handmade quilts, a Bits and Pieces sale of fabric, yarn and notions, and the return of the Tea Room with homemade soups, breads and pies.

Email Mapionzio@comcast.net or call 860-993-5311 for information, to exhibit your quilts, or to donate fabric and yarn.

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Standout Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

Here are the *Rivereast* Standouts of the Week for the week of Jan. 30-Feb. 5:

Andrew Johnson - Portland High School (Wrestling): Johnson was named the Most Outstanding Wrestler after taking first place (182 lbs.) at the Matt Bishel Bobcat Classic at Bacon Academy High School on Feb. 4. Johnson and fellow senior captain Spencer Rosado (138 lbs.) were the two Highlanders to win their respective weight classes as Portland finished in 3rd place overall as a team.

Saniyah Otero - Bacon Academy (Track and Field): Otero won the high jump at the Eastern Connecticut Division II Indoor Track and Field Championship at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London on Feb. 4. Otero, a junior, jumped 4 '06" to win the competition and senior teammate Megan Braga jumped 4 '04" to tie for third-place as the Bobcats finished sixth overall as a team.

Brady Lynch - East Hampton High School (Basketball): Lynch scored 32 points in a thrilling 68-67 win over Haddam-Killingworth on Jan. 31. Lynch, a sophomore, scored a career-high 35 points in the game the previous week and is averaging over 20 points per game this season for a Bellringers team that has already qualified for the state tournament and could make some waves in the Shoreline Conference (SLC) tournament starting later this month.

Dylan Devine - RHAM High School (Wrestling): Devine won a conference championship, defeating Jack Janes of Avon to win the 152-pound division at the Central Connecticut Conference Championship at Glastonbury High School on Feb. 4. Devine, a senior, defeated Mike Affum of Southington, Michael Norman of Glastonbury, and Ryan Zydanowicz of Hall to reach the finals. The Raptors finished second overall at the conference championship, finishing behind only East Hartford.



Andrew Johnson (center) was named the Most Outstanding Wrestler at the Matt Bishel Bobcat Classic. Johnson is flanked by Norwich Free Academy's Zaire Wallace to his left and Newtown's Acea Shaham to his right after winning the 182-pound bracket by defeating Wallace in the championship bout.

Scholarships Available

Residents of Andover, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough and Portland can apply for American Savings Foundation scholarships. These renewable scholarships can be used at a range of four-year colleges and universities, two-year colleges, and at accredited technical and vocational programs.

The foundation is accepting applications from high school seniors, college students and nontraditional adult students who will be enrolled for the 2023-24 academic year. Students can apply online at www.asfdn.org, and applications are due March 31. The website also has links to other area scholarship programs as well

as resources for learning about financial aid.

Scholarships are awarded primarily based on financial need, with consideration given to academic performance, community involvement, and other indications of a strong desire to achieve goals through education. Current high school seniors must be ranked in the top third of their graduating class or have a 2.5 GPA or higher. Current college students must be maintaining a 2.5 GPA or higher.

For more information and to apply, students and parents can visit www.asfdn.org or call the foundation at 860-827-2556.

Scholarships Available for Area Students

Carl Guild and Associates has announced its community scholarship program for local high school seniors entering college in the fall.

There are six \$1,000 scholarships given, one each in East Hampton, Portland, Colchester, East Haddam, Glastonbury and the RHAM dis-

trict. There are no restrictions or qualifications; all resident seniors can apply.

Deadline for applications is April 1. Visit www.carlguild.com/scholarship for an application, ask your school's guidance counselor for one.

From the State Senator's Desk...

One of the most rewarding parts of serving as state senator is knowing that our community organizations and schools are receiving support they deserve through the government. I'm especially encouraged today to share with you the latest regarding several grant programs that benefited our region of the state.

In late January, CTHumanities announced the recipients of 31 CT Cultural Fund Operating Support Grants for arts, cultural and historical organizations around the 33rd Senate District, dispersing more than \$388,000 in support in our region. These grants, part of \$30.7 million amid hundreds of grants statewide, will help pay staff and ensure these organizations can continue operations as usual.

What's especially great about this is that ten different towns' organizations received these funds. Colchester's Sustain Music & Nature and Historical Society, East Hampton's Epoch Arts, East Haddam's Goodspeed Musicals, Haddam's Historical Society, Chester Historical Society, Portland's Brownstone Quorum and Historical Society are among the many worthy and helpful recipients of this grant funding. The arts and humanities help us keep the history of our towns alive and foster creativity among us, providing newfound meaning to these funds.

As well, grant programs also help our state address problems, especially those we can fight back against. In early February, four local school districts received funding through the School Mental Health Workers Grant, providing funding for professionals to work with students experiencing issues with their mental health. In our district, these four school systems will receive more than \$1.1 million in total. Portland Schools will receive \$316,355.87 over three years to support mental health professionals, with East Hampton Schools getting \$238,121.10, East Haddam Schools receiving \$270,810 and Region 17 receiving \$297,000.

I'm especially encouraged by this funding both because it is a valuable use of federal American Rescue Plan Act funding and it will go directly to help support students who may be in significant distress. Additionally, this funding allocation is the direct result of Senate legislation dating back to 2021, now having real-world impacts. The more resources we offer students undergoing significant challenges, the more opportunities for meaningful care and aid they can receive, which will lead to long-term benefits.

I'm proud that our towns will receive this support in months to come. It's a meaningful investment by the state in our communities for the benefit of us all. I look forward to working to bring more funding to our communities.

**State Sen. Norm Needleman
D-33rd District**

Note: The 12-town 33rd Senate District includes the Rivereast municipalities of Colchester, East Hampton and Portland.

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★ *Letters cont. from page 7*

'Fossil fuels' are the remnants of dinosaurs; Denver International Airport is simply an airport;

Prominent Nazis did not come to America after WWII;

Washington D.C. is not a foreign entity;

Walt Disney was a good guy;

Professional sports are not corrupt;

Evil has not infiltrated all aspects of society;

An existential war to save us from the clutches of evil is not happening;

Many whom we like in politics, sports, entertainment, etc. are not evil;

Mainstream and social media care about the truth;

Antarctica is simply a large frozen continent; Admiral Byrd observed ice and penguins only during his visits to Antarctica;

A firmament does not lie above us;

The sun and moon are millions of miles away from earth.

If much of the above is shocking and you immediately reject it, it's understandable. But having read it will help you in the coming days as each of us will be confronted with revealing information that will test our minds and souls. Goodspeed.

Paul Bureau - Colchester

Hebron DPW Real Concerns

To the Editor:

As a Hebron resident living in close proximity to the center of town and all the benefits it affords us I have some real, not artificial concerns about the proposed location of the new

DPW facility. Some say the entire town's water is rated GA. Not sure that has any relevance in the town's decision to place a large industrial complex on such an important, historic piece of land which also sits at the head of such an important natural resource: GA-rated water!

The potential of groundwater and well water contamination by the proposed Salt Shed holding sodium chloride is a real concern.

The fact that tons of sodium chloride will be stored here and handled by humans is a real concern.

Maintaining a level of safe handling and storage while following industry standards and best practices, is going to require constant management, oversight and maintenance. Another real concern!

It is recommended that monitoring wells be installed in the overburden groundwater and bedrock aquifers. Who will be responsible for monitoring these wells? What is the mitigation plan should these wells detect increased contaminants? All a real concern!

We have yet to learn the final cost of construction and how this may impact all of our taxes. Something we should all be concerned about!

We've learned that other ground water contaminants such as gasoline can be mitigated to a level where the water is safe for consumption. This is not the case with sodium chloride contamination. There are no known methods for mitigating groundwater contaminated by sodium chloride. The effects this could potentially have on our health and homes is a real concern!

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

**Thank you,
Greg Shortell - Amston**

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Selectmen Enlist PR Firm for Public Works Project

By Michael Sinkewicz

Following months of discussion and analysis, the Board of Selectmen approved a contract with a public relations firm as town officials look to enliven a new Public Works facility project they believe has largely stalled.

“Let’s stop spinning our wheels and move,” Republican Gail Richmond charged the board. “We have to make some decisions.”

The decision to hire an outside firm comes as the selectmen weigh how to move forward with constructing a new DPW facility.

During the Feb. 2 meeting, the Public Building Committee provided the board with extensive information on a variety of potential site options, including one on Kinney Road, which has received considerable pushback from those abutting residents.

Now, after receiving both the pros and cons of each site, the selectmen will develop a survey that will allow community members to share their own thoughts, before delivering an ultimate verdict at a future referendum.

The board enlisted the expertise of DKA Advertising, out of Bloomfield. Last month, the firm’s vice president, Tod Kallenbach, gave a brief presentation to the selectman, outlining the potential services his agency could provide.

His proposal for the town included launching a public survey, which could then be referenced for creating a frequently asked questions sheet. He also suggested the town potentially hold additional public information meetings.

The contract is for \$15,000, but if the town opts to forgo the public meeting phase, that bottom-line would likely decrease.

Town officials previously agreed to launch a survey, but questions remained regarding whether hiring a firm to assist with that task was entirely necessary.

“You want to minimize the criticism and ultimately have the majority of the public view [the survey] as fair and unbiased,” said Republican selectman Peter Kasper. “I think if we do it with some support, that will give the public the confidence that we’re doing the best that we can to provide information to allow them to make an informed decision.”

He added that it was “time to solicit the broad feedback of the Hebron residency.”

For now, the scope of the contract is simply to help conduct the survey and report the data back out to public afterwards. Democrat Tiffany Thiele emphasized that the agency shouldn’t be retained to help sell or promote the site concept that the board decides to pursue.

Along with the new firm, the selectmen have considered forming a new committee to help formulate unbiased survey questions. While the board has previously expressed interest in allowing different individuals to represent their viewpoints, including Kinney Road residents, the exact makeup and commission of any small committee is still undetermined.

One hesitation involved with forming a com-

mittee is whether it would extend the project’s timeline even further. The board has spent several meetings reviewing the Public Works project, and the urgency to move forward continues to grow.

Marc Rubera, a Democrat on the board, said the town was at a “standstill” and described the ongoing conversation with the project as a “filibuster,” with many of the same points being echoed at meetings.

Alternative Sites

The next major decision for the selectmen prior to a referendum is committing to a construction site for the new facility.

For months, the town has largely focused on a site at 17 Kinney Rd., which would also require an extension of John Horton Boulevard.

The cost estimate from engineering firm BL Companies is \$69,800 to design the buildings. Nathan L. Jacobson & Associates, who would be handling most of the design, will charge \$175,000 for its services.

Overall, the combined cost to finalize a project design, including a total project budget that would be voted on at town referendum, is \$244,800.

However, almost all of the plan would be specifically for the 88-acre parcel on Kinney Road.

Thomas Fenton, the town engineer from Nathan Jacobson, stated at a previous meeting that “less than 25%” of the design would potentially be transferable to a different site.

“A lot of tasks would have to be done again,” he said.

Therefore, before giving the go-ahead to finalize a design, the selectmen continue to review viable site options.

In November, the selectmen asked the Public Building Committee to review alternative sites. Then, last month, committee members Richard Steiner and Mal Leichter presented their findings to the selectmen, including multiple sites that could serve as workable facility sites.

At the time, Leichter expressed that there was not a “perfect” or “ideal” location in Hebron for a Public Works facility. The committee was tasked with expanding upon their initial report, which they presented during last week’s meeting.

The first concept discussed involved building a new facility at the current site on Old Colchester Rd. While this site has the advantage of having all the necessary permits in place, there’s several hurdles with pursuing this idea, including relocating or even eliminating the transfer station.

Steiner explained that the actual construction process would also be challenging, since the builders would work around employees who occupy that site. That disruption would likely have a significant impact on the Public Works department.

“The biggest issue is that there’s going to be

times when [the Public Works director] and his team are going to have to do a significant juggling act down there,” Steiner said.

The second site option is Burnt Hill Park, which was previously considered to be an ideal option for a Public Works facility, but the wetlands were more extensive than officials originally thought.

In order to make the site work, the town would have to relocate two playing fields to the Kinney Road site location. This would entail building new fields there, which would require funding, as well.

This idea would likely cause disruptions to sports programming and potentially impact the infrastructure at the park. The fields were constructed with state-of-the-art draining and those features would be potentially be lost.

There’s also logistical issues with parking at the site along with increased truck traffic that would be mixed in with heavy pedestrian travel.

Leichter emphasized that the committee was simply looking at sites with available space and was not necessarily endorsing relocating the fields.

“We’re still paying for those fields,” he said. “I can’t imagine that we would want to tear them up.”

One concept that was eliminated was the Lions’ Fairgrounds site. The town would have to acquire that land, which was a “non-starter.”

The next few ideas involved Kinney Road/John Horton Boulevard. The Building Committee examined the idea of constructing the entire facility at the site, as well as options that included notable exceptions. In those plans, the bulk of the facility would still be built at Kinney Road, but the proposed salt shed storage building would be located at an alternative site.

The challenge for the town would be determining where that remote site would be located. One option would be installing a new shed at the existing site.

In general, Steiner stated that having a remote salt shed would present new issues for the Public Works department, especially during winter storms. Workers would have to travel from the main facility to fill up their trucks at the remote site. Overall, this adds more miles to town vehicles and more hours for employees.

Some community members have expressed concerns over potential salt contamination associated with the new facility. Perhaps, Leichter suggested, relocating the salt building would be a fair compromise.

“We’ve got to give, we’ve got to take and that may be one of the things we have to give to them,” he said.

Steiner added that it would be workable, but at a cost.

“Is it insurmountable? No. But I think we all need to understand that that is one of the drawbacks of having a salt shed remote from where the trucks would be parked.”

Board of Selectmen Chairman Daniel Larson expressed that he would be in favor of the remote shed plan, if it solved the community’s concerns.

Larson and Leichter both stated that if the original plan was still selected, meaning that the salt shed would be included at the same site, the likelihood of contamination was low.

Leichter stated that the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection confirmed that modern sites pose a minimal risk to communities.

“They have no recorded salt pollution from any salt storage facility that has been built to the current standards and managed to the current standards,” he said.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, Rubera asked Kevin Tulimieri, a Kinney Road resident, if he would support the project if the salt storage shed was built at a remote location.

“The groundwater contamination is immensely important but it’s not the only important issue with this site,” he replied.

In a letter to the selectmen, Tulimieri highlighted the extensive history of the Kinney Road site, including ties to Native American lineage. He argued that these historic aspects should be explored further and that the land could be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

“The town of Hebron should apply for this distinguished designation and recognize this historic site as tremendously important to our history and our future,” he wrote.

Douglas Library News & Notes

Douglas Library, located at 22 Main St., has announced the following. For more info and full program descriptions, and to register, call the library at 860-228-9312 or visit www.douglaslibrary.org.

Friday Films: Fridays at 1 p.m. Schedule: Feb. 10, *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* (rated PG-13); Feb. 17, *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (R); Feb. 24, *The Inspection* (R). Bottled water and individually wrapped snacks will be provided.

Chess Night: The first Thursday of each month at 4:30 p.m. All skill levels welcome.

Spirited Book Club: Wednesday, Feb. 15, 7-8:30 p.m., at the American Legion, located next door to the library. This month, discuss *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict. Copies of the book will be available for check-out at the Adult Circulation Desk. Must be over 21 years of age.

Medicare Information: Wednesday, Feb.

22, 2 or 6 p.m., with Mark Macrina. All are invited to learn the ins-and-outs of Medicare and the differences between original Medicare and Medicare Advantage. Local insurance agent Mark Macrina will present. This is strictly an informational seminar, and no individual health will be discussed.

Teen Advisory Group: Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2:30-3:30 p.m. This is a way to get your service hours in. Registration is not needed for any of these events.

Holiday Closing: The library will be closed Monday, Feb. 20, for Presidents Day, and will reopen Feb. 21 at 10 a.m. All online services will be available.

Children’s Storytime: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. These are family classes for children birth to 5. There are stories, crafts, songs and interactive play. No registration is required. This program is free and open to the public. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Gilead Congregational Church News

Gilead Congregational Church, an Open and Affirming Congregation located at 672 Gilead St., has announced the following. For more info, see the church bulletin at gileadchurchucc.updates.church, email gcc@gileadchurch.net, or call 860-228-3077.

Sunday Worship: Sundays at 10 a.m., followed by Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall. Services are also available on YouTube at www.bit.ly/GileadChurchUCC and on Facebook at tinyurl.com/GileadChurchUCC.

Scheduled Events/Meetings: 2/10: Faith, Film & Food (rescheduled from last week), 6 p.m.; 2/12: Board of Missions, 11:30 a.m.; 2/12: Youth Group monthly meeting, 11:30 a.m.; 2/13: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; 2/14: AA Meeting, 7:30 p.m.; 2/15: Choir Practice, 7 p.m.; 2/16: Prayer Shawl Group, 9:30 a.m.; 2/16: Church Council meeting, 7 p.m.

Vendors Sought for Maple Fest Craft Fair

Gilead Congregational Church (672 Gilead St.) will host a Craft Fair on Saturday, March 18, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., during Hebron’s Maple Festival – and vendors are wanted.

If you are a crafter and would like to secure a space in the Fellowship Hall, contact the church office at 860-228-3077 or GCC@GileadChurch.net.

At the fair, crafts expected to be available for sale include handmade soaps, jewelry, local photography, hand-carved wooden pens, kiln-fused glass art, and more.

There will also be Maple Cakes for sale by the church’s Women’s Fellowship, for people to munch on as they shop.

Yoga in the Fellowship Hall: Wednesdays and Saturdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Contact Jennifer Goodine of Wise Warrior Yoga to register, at wisewarrioryoga@gmail.com.

Ash Wednesday: Feb. 22. All are invited to join Gilead in the center of Hebron for ashes, and then in the church sanctuary at 7 p.m. for a community worship service.

Card-Making: Sunday, Feb. 26, 11:30 a.m. Cost is \$15, with a portion being sent to Connecticut Foodshare. All are welcome to join. Contact Gayle at gayle.sylvester@comcast.net to register.

Maple Fest Craft Fair: Saturday, March 18, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall.



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Spring Watercolor Classes at Arts Center

Local artist Mary Horrigan will offer adult watercolor classes at the Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., Tuesdays and Thursdays starting March 2 and running through April 11. Classes will run from 10 a.m.-noon. Tuesdays' lessons are designed for "Basic Beginners," and will run March 7-April 11. This class will cover the basics: brush-handling, laying a wash, making simple shapes, controlling values, mixing colors. Subject matter will include still life objects and landscape elements. Thursdays' lessons are designed for students with some basic experience in watercolor, and will run March 2-April 6. This

class assumes knowledge of the basics, and will concentrate on composition, color theory, working from photos and still life setups. Material lists will be sent once the class is confirmed with enough students registered. Cost for the class is \$120. Registration forms can be downloaded from www.marlbrougharts.org, and a check mailed to The Marlborough Arts Center, 231 North Main St., Marlborough, CT 06447. For more information, contact Horrigan at mehorrigan@comcast.net or leave a voice-mail message at the Arts Center at 860-467-6353.

Richmond Library News & Notes

Richmond Memorial Library, located at 15 School Drive, has announced the following programs and events. For more information or to register, call 860-295-6210 or email richmond-programs@gmail.com. **Books for Babies:** Town families with children ages birth up to 12 months are invited to stop into the library to pick up a Books for Babies Box and register for your baby's first library card. Advance registration is required and can be done online. At least one parent must have a library card but that can be done at the same time. **Pampered Chef Fundraiser:** The virtual fundraiser runs from Friday, Feb. 24, through Wednesday, March 1. For more information, follow the library's Facebook page. A catalog will also be available at the circulation desk for those who do not have Facebook accounts. **Babytime:** Fridays at 10 a.m., for ages 0-18 months and their caregivers. This is a baby-centered storytime with songs, rhymes, lap bounces and a story. Registration is recommended but drop-ins are welcome if space allows. **Digital Microscope Kit:** Did you know the library has four digital microscope kits that can be checked out for a three-week loan period? Each kit contains one pluggable USB 2.0 digital microscope with a versatile observation stand and two sets of 25 prepared microscope slides. These kits have been donated in memory of Audrey Skorski. **Zoom Storytime:** Mondays at 10 a.m.

through April 3 (no storytime Feb. 20), for children ages 2-5. Register online. **Mo Willems Day:** Saturday, Feb. 11, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Celebrate Willems' birthday with a storytime at 10 a.m. followed by drop-in craft activities featuring Elephant and Piggie, Pigeon, and other characters. **Family Fun Night: Let's Celebrate:** It's time to break out the sprinkles, frosting, and candy bits ... we're decorating cookies on Thursday, Feb. 23, 6:30 p.m., for families with children ages 3-15. Let's decorate some cookies! Registration is not required. **Lego Club:** Ages 4 and up are invited to come for STEM-based challenges involving Legos. Registration is recommended but not required. Lego Club meets every other Tuesday at 4 p.m., with future dates being: Feb. 7 and 21, and March 7 and 21. **Kids Crafting Club:** Meets every other Tuesday at 4 p.m. Future dates: Feb. 14 and 28, and March 14 and 28. Registration required. **Tween and Teen Crafters Club:** Fridays at 4 p.m. through March 31, for ages 10 and up. Bring a craft project you're working on; there will also be projects available to make. Registration is recommended but not required. **Blind Date with a Book:** Check out a book from the Blind Date with a Book display, write your name and phone number on the back of the book tag, and you could win a prize drawing for a Date Night Package. Prize drawing will be held on Thursday, Feb. 16.

Pre-Kindergarten Screening Information

All public school systems in Connecticut are responsible for the identification of children who may be eligible to receive special education services. The Early Childhood team at Marlborough Elementary School is accepting applications for current resident children interested in the pre-kindergarten screening for the 2023-24 school year. If you are interested in your child participating in this process, eligible children must be at

least 3 years old by Sept. 1 and parents/guardians must complete and return a questionnaire no later than Thursday, March 23. Note: children identified as kindergarten eligible (those turning 5 by Dec. 31, 2023) are not eligible for the PreK program for the upcoming school year. Contact Marcy Spellman at 860-295-6236 or mspellman@marlbrough.k12.ct.us to receive a screening questionnaire or for more information regarding the program.

Congregational Church News & Notes

Sunday worship services at Marlborough Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, located at 35 S. Main St., are at 10 a.m. Worship is and is broadcast live every Sunday and recorded for later viewing at mcc.cong-church.org. Childcare for infants and toddlers is provided downstairs in the nursery; however, children are always welcome at the worship service. **Feb. 5:** Worship will include a baptism and Holy Communion. Communion is open to all, regardless of church affiliation, including children with parental guidance. The bread used is

gluten-free. Pastor Val Seaver's sermon title is "Light of the World" based on Psalm 112:1-9 and Matthew 5:13-16. **AA** meets downstairs in the Great Hall Wednesdays with two meetings, one at noon and another 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 the church office at 860-295-9050 or Seaver's direct line at 860-295-0432.

Residents Sought to Serve

The Marlborough Board of Selectmen is seeking residents who are interested in serving on the town's various boards and commissions. While applications are accepted at any time for all boards and commissions, the selectmen are providing notice and encouraging residents to apply to fill current vacancies on the following boards and commissions: Economic Development Commission (two alternates); Conservation Commission (alternate); Water Pollution Control Authority (two alternates); and Nature Trails and Sidewalks

Commission (alternate). Those interested in applying can complete the application form at marlbroughct.net; the link for the form is at the bottom of the page on the left-hand side. In accordance with the town charter, and based on the current composition of the various boards and commissions, party affiliation or other qualifications may or may not be considered when appointments are made. People who are unaffiliated and those who belong to minor parties, as well as Democrats and Republicans, to apply. Residents are welcome to attend any of the public board and commission meetings to learn more.

Dean's List

Marlborough residents Avery Rizza, Kayla St. Jean and Jack Tarka made the fall 2022 Dean's List at the University of Rhode Island.

Dean's List

Marlborough residents Brenden Duprey and Taylor Falanga made the fall 2022 Dean's List at Quinnipiac University in Hamden.

Dean's List

The following Marlborough residents made the fall 2022 Dean's List at Endicott College in Beverly, Mass.: Alanna Baker, an events management major and daughter of Lisa Seethaler and Richard Baker; Madison Baker, an interior design major and daughter of Lisa Seethaler and Richard Baker; Emily Deskus, a mathematics major and daughter of Joliene and Jeffrey Deskus; Nicole Genga, a marketing major and daughter of Sherry and Jason Genga; and Lydia Smith, a liberal studies/education major and daughter of Dana and Christopher Smith.

Arts Center Exhibit at Town Hall

Marlborough Arts Center has a new exhibit at Town Hall. Featured is artwork by artists who are members of the center's board of directors. There are watercolors by Audrey Carroll, acrylic paintings by Roy Wrenn, wire sculpture by Neal Alderman, mixed media and acrylic paintings by Laurie Gelston Alt, and watercolors by Mary Horrigan. The exhibit is open to the public during business hours at Town Hall: Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Fridays from 8 a.m.-noon.



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St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Church is located at 30 Jones Hollow Rd. Pastor is the Rev. Thomas J. Sas, John McKaig is deacon emeritus and the pastoral assistant is Holly Bangham. The church office can be reached at 860-295-0001; hours are Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. People are asked to call before heading over or connect via the phone or email at stjohfisher30@yahoo.com.

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

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

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

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

Confirmation Community: The church's active 9th- and 10th-grade confirmation program continues. Registration is required as well.

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

information can be found on the church website.

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

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

Parks and Rec Programs

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

CPR Certification: Saturday, Feb. 25, 9-11 a.m. What is covered: Adult, child and infant CPR, foreign-body airway obstruction, and automated external defibrillator (AED) usage. Cost is \$87/residents, \$92/non-residents.

Youth Program: Acrylic Landscape Painting: Wednesdays, 3:30-5 p.m., March 8-29, at Marlborough Elementary School, for grades 3-6. Students can bring a photo of a landscape or choose from a collection. All materials are provided. Students are encouraged to bring a snack. Fee is \$90 for residents/\$95 for non-residents.

Adult Programs: Zumba: Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at MES. Fee is \$10 per week to drop in.

Adult Drop-In Volleyball: Thursdays, 8-10 p.m., at MES. Fee is \$5 per week to drop in. Session runs through June.

Adult Drop-In Basketball: Sundays, 8-10 a.m., at MES, for ages 18 and up. Fee: \$5 per week. Session runs through March.

Dog Obedience - Polite Dog Manners: Tuesdays, Feb. 7-March 14, 5:30-6:30 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. These are beginner-level classes for dogs 5 months and older. Fee: \$120/resident, \$125/non-resident.

Trip: UConn Huskies vs. St. John Red Storm (Men's Basketball): Saturday, Feb. 25, noon. Trip includes charter bus to Madison Square Garden, tickets to the game and free time in New York. Fee is \$109 for baseline seats or \$140 for sideline seats. Bus leaves from Glastonbury Park and Ride.

New York Knicks vs. Boston Celtics: Sunday, March 5, at the TD Garden. Trip includes charter bus, tickets to the game (balcony) and free time in Boston. Registration fee is \$170. Bus leaves from Glastonbury park and ride.

Reflective Number Signs Available: Cost of the sign is \$50. Help emergency services personnel find your home without delay. Vertical sign is double sided 8" x 24" with 4" numbers on blue highway reflective metal. Order forms are online and at Town Hall.

4th Friday @ the Arts Café

The Marlborough Arts Center is hosting the musical group Eclectica for the 4th Friday @ the Arts Café on Friday, Feb. 24, at the arts center, 231 N. Main St.

Eclectica performs original arrangements of music from the Middle Ages to the present day, on an eclectic variety of instruments including recorders, harp, violin, viola da gamba, hammered dulcimer, and others. Each program features historical commentary about the music. The professional women musicians of Eclectica are Kasha Breaux, Carrie Crompton, Monika Kinstler and Deborah Robin. To see their picture and learn more, visit the Arts Center's webpage at Marlborougharts.org, or look for Eclectica on Facebook.

Admission is \$10/person at the door. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the concert begins at 7:30 p.m. BYOWine. There is on-site parking, and the building is handicapped-accessible. Masks are recommended but not required.

Admission is \$10/person at the door. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the concert begins at 7:30 p.m. BYOWine. There is on-site parking, and the building is handicapped-accessible. Masks are recommended but not required.

Arts Center Membership Drive Underway

The Marlborough Arts Center is holding its 2023 membership drive. Memberships are valid from January through December each year. New memberships are welcome and renewals encouraged.

The Arts Center is a regional nonprofit organization which includes all the towns in the Marlborough area. Artistic and cultural activities are offered throughout the year, including fine art shows, classes, and musical presenta-

tions. Membership forms can be downloaded from www.marlborougharts.org, printed, and submitted with a check to Marlborough Arts Center, 231 North Main Street, Marlborough CT 06447. Payments can also be made through PayPal by using a link on the webpage.

The Arts Center phone number is 860-467-6353.

Senior Center News and Notes

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

Monday, Feb. 13: Not Just Quilting, 9:30 a.m.-noon; 8-Ball Pool, 10 a.m.-noon; Meals-on-Wheels, noon; Lunch, noon. Menu: chicken noodle soup, beef hot dog on a bun, baked beans, coleslaw, garlic knot, fresh fruit; setback, 1-4 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 14: Grocery Shopping, 8:30 a.m.-noon; Meals-on-Wheels, noon; Lunch, noon. Menu: Happy Valentine's Day! Orange juice, caprese-baked chicken, parfried linguini, asparagus/garlic knot, frosted cupcake; Healthy Heart Presentation by Chatham Health Care, 1-2 p.m. at the senior center, with a cookie decorating class to follow.

Wednesday, Feb. 15: Not Just Quilters, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Assistance, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; 8-Ball Pool, 10 a.m.-noon; Meals-on-Wheels, noon; Congregate Meal, noon. Menu: stuffed pepper with sauce, rice, California-blend vegetables, 100% whole wheat bread, fresh fruit; setback, 1-4 p.m.; Sophisticated Ladies, 5-7 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 16: Tai Chi, 10:30-11:30 a.m.; Meals-on-Wheels, noon; Rummikub, 1-3 p.m.; Parkinson's Exercise with Anne, 3-4 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 17: Not Just Quilters, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Quilling, 9:30 a.m.-noon (The Paper Art); 8-Ball Pool, 10 a.m.-noon; Assistance, 10 a.m.-noon; Congregate Meal, noon. Menu: salmon with lemon dill sauce, rice pilaf, spinach, wheat bread, fresh fruit; setback, 1-4 p.m.

noon; Congregate Meal, noon. Menu: salmon with lemon dill sauce, rice pilaf, spinach, wheat bread, fresh fruit; setback, 1-4 p.m.

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

Free Baked Goods: Bread and bakery goods are available for free at the senior center, courtesy of Big Y and Stop & Shop.

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

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

Income Tax Prep: AARP will do free Income Tax Preparation at the senior center Thursdays, Feb. 23, March 9 and March 23, from 9 a.m.-12:15 p.m. each day. To sign up, call the senior center.

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

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Obituaries

Colchester

Alice C. Hutchins

On Monday, Feb. 6, Alice C. Hutchins, a beloved mother, passed away. She was 85. Born to Charles and Gladys Crim in upstate New York, she was a homemaker for much of her life before working as an executive assistant and retiring in 2003.

She married Richard Trzeciak and had four children: Kim Benz, Julie Trzeciak, Brian Trzeciak, and Bruce Trzeciak, Julie passing in 2020.

Alice loved horses and gardening, but, above all, she loved family. Neighbors would often declare that her backyard was park-like, a sanctuary of nature that she transformed from woods and brush. Alice would often remark about the beauty of horses and how she felt as one when riding. She would often boast of her children, motherhood being an achievement she was most proud of. She was a devout Christian and was always active in the church, spreading the gospel whenever she had the opportunity.

She will always be loved and never forgotten.



Marlborough

Carol Ann Zimmermann

Carol Ann Zimmermann, 79, of Marlborough, formerly of Indiantic, Fla., passed away Thursday, Dec. 29, at Hartford Hospital, due to a massive stroke. Born Dec. 9, 1943, in Hartford, Carol was the daughter of Leo and Jenni LaForge.

Carol worked for the City of Melbourne, Fla., where she retired as an activities director. She will be remembered for her strong work ethic and the love she had for her family.

She is predeceased by her parents, her sister Ann, brother Leo, and her son Steve Zimmermann.

She is survived by her Son Jeffrey Zimmermann and his Fiancé Jennifer Marcaurel of Marlborough, her Son Brian Zimmermann and wife Sue of Haddam Neck, her beloved fur baby Lily, Cousin Roger of Massachusetts, and extended family members and friends.

Carol was known for her love of animals; shopping, and she loved taking care of plants and ordering things on WISH. She enjoyed all the time she was able to spend with her son Jeff, Jennifer "a.k.a." Jessi, along with her daughter Talyer Foster. She enjoyed smoking cigarettes and drinking her coffee while being outdoors and soaking up the sun. She disliked the winter and one of her last wishes was to have Christmas in July. She loved to dance and would do so anytime she got the chance to.

Carol will be deeply missed by all who know her.

There will be no calling hours and the burial will be private with the family at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to The American Stroke Foundation at americanstroke.org/donate.



Portland

Lionel DeGraff

Lionel (Leo) DeGraff, 79, of Portland, beloved husband of Marie (Vogt) DeGraff, passed away peacefully Thursday, Feb. 2, at Middlesex Hospital surrounded by his loved ones. Born May 24, 1943, in Buffalo, N.Y.; son of the late Joseph and Alice (Robida) DeGraff.

Besides his wife, Leo is survived by his three daughters, Karleen and her husband Mark Kapitzke of Higganum; Lisa and her husband Rick Aiello of Charlestown, R.I.; Kerry and her husband Richard Morosky of Middletown. He was also the proud Pepe to his six grandchildren: Timothy and Matthew Kapitzke; Taylor and Zachary Aiello; Kaylee and Meghan Morosky. Leo also leaves behind many nieces and nephews and dear friends.

He is predeceased by his brother, Joseph DeGraff; sister, Joan Dickinson; brothers-in-law, Richard Dickinson and Ernst Vogt.

Leo spent his pre-retirement working at Pratt & Whitney in Middletown for 37 years. He enjoyed traveling with his wife and family and was an avid fan of the Boston Red Sox and UConn basketball.

Family and friends can attend calling hours on Saturday, Feb. 11, at Zion Lutheran Church, 183 Williams St, Portland, from 1-2 p.m., followed by a funeral service at 2 p.m. Burial will be in the family plot in Swedish Cemetery, Portland.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to St. Jude's Hospital in Leo's name.

The Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, is in charge of arrangements.



Colchester

Barbara Jean Turner

Barbara Jean Turner of Colchester passed away suddenly Thursday, Jan. 26, at her home. She was 84 years old. Born in Rhine, Ga., on March 15, 1938, she was one of nine children of the late Herbert and Tommie Lee (Harrell) Williams.

At age 18, Barbara married William H. Turner. The couple moved to Colchester where they made their home and raised their son. William predeceased her in 2001 after 45 years of marriage. In 1998, Barbara retired from a 20-year career as a receptionist with the engineering department at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford. She later worked at Stop & Shop in Colchester for an additional 18 years.

Barbara was a woman of strong faith, fiercely devoted to the Lord and she attended the Colchester Federated Church. In her free time, Barbara could usually be found watching an episode of *Law & Order* or dining out with her family or a friend. She will be remembered fondly as a kind, hardworking woman who loved her family and the Lord above all else.

She will be greatly missed but always remembered with love by her son, William Michael and his wife Valerie Turner, with whom she made her home; her siblings, Darwin Williams, Jerrell Williams, Marie McMillian, all of Rhine, Ga., Jerome Williams of Charlotte, N.C., Charlie Mae Dunnham of Alma, Ga., and Roy Williams of Atlanta, Ga.; a step-granddaughter, Nichole and her husband Michael Decker of N. Windham and their children, Aria and Emma Decker; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her husband and parents, Barbara was predeceased by two brothers, Tommy and Bud Williams, and a sister, Lanell Holmes.

Funeral services will be held privately, according to Barbara's wishes.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with care of arrangements. To share a memory or express a condolence to the family, please visit: www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Colchester

Thomas James Rudne

Thomas James Rudne of Orange died Friday, Feb. 3, at Middlesex Hospital, after a valiant eight-month battle for his health. He worked for Sikorsky Aircraft for 33 years, most recently as a logistics coordinator.

In his leisure time Tom was a prolific photographer who loved to capture antique trucks, nature, family and friends. Tom's art evolved and was showcased in various galleries and libraries. Through the Easton Arts Council, he developed close friendships, and he loved the camaraderie of the local art scene. Photography gave him a sense of purpose and pleasure, propelling him on many adventures.

With a sparkle in his bright, beautiful blue eyes, he was ever so witty. His loved ones will sorely miss his take on the ridiculous, the wicked, and the macabre that was uniquely Tommy. He loved collecting Cher memorabilia, trips to Maine, and transforming mundane family photos into works of art. Tom reveled in his sweet tooth, enjoying chocolate-covered marshmallows, cheesecakes, and an unquenchable desire for milkshakes.

Tom is survived by his father, Laurence Robert (Bob) and stepmother Hedy Rudne; his sisters, Tracy Rudne Hawry and Megan Rudne; his brother-in-law, Hayden Hawry; his nephew and niece, Kai and Serena Hawry, and his beloved cat, Madge.

He was predeceased by his brother, Laurence Robert (Butch) Rudne Jr.; his mother and stepfather, Janice and Gerry Sibley; and his long-time cats, Diesel and Shanayney.

He is also mourned by many close friends, all of whom he considered as family.

The Rudne family is grateful for the support from coworkers and the management at Sikorsky over the past eight months. We also deeply appreciate the care Tom received in his final days at Middlesex Hospital from the compassionate staff in the Comfort Care Wing.

A celebration of Tom's life will be scheduled during the summer of 2023.

Donations may be made in Thomas Rudne's honor to the Easton Arts Council, P.O. Box 142, Easton, CT 06612.



Cobalt

Jeffrey Gilarde

Jeffrey Gilarde, 62, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by family and friends Tuesday, Jan. 31, after a courageous five-month battle with pancreatic cancer. Born March 7, 1960, he grew up in Bennington, Vt., graduated from MAUHS in 1978, from University of Connecticut in 1982 with a bachelor's degree, and earned a master's degree from Wesleyan University.

Jeff began his career at Yale then worked at Wesleyan University as director of scientific imaging and was the men's golf team coach until the time of his death. He volunteered with Habitat for Humanity and for 25 years with Skiers Unlimited.

Jeff was well-known as a savvy mechanic and a handyman who could fix anything. He enjoyed traveling to Italy and Spain with his family. All who knew him recognized that wherever he was, magic happened. His legacy is the joy and love he gave to all.

He leaves his wife, a daughter, twin sons, his mother, two sisters, and an extended loving family and friends. He was predeceased by his father.

If friends desire, contributions may be made in his honor to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute or Habitat for Humanity through the Office of Mahar and Son Funeral Home, 628 Main St., Bennington VT 05201.

A celebration of his life will be held at a later date in Connecticut and in Bennington, Vt., in the spring.



Colchester

Kathryn Ellen Noel

Kathryn Ellen Noel, 69, of Colchester, found eternal peace Saturday, Jan. 28, after a brief illness. Born May 17, 1953, in Vernon, she was the daughter of the late Edgar and Jane (Beckwith) Noel, who established the family's longtime home in South Hadley, Mass.

Kathryn was a dedicated daughter, academically bright, musically talented (piano and clarinet) and very active in her local Girl Scout troop throughout her childhood. Following her graduation from Ursuline Academy in Springfield, Mass., Kathryn earned her BA in elementary education from Westfield State and began her teaching career in the South Hadley school system.

While earning her master's in recreation management from Springfield College, Kathryn moved to Colchester, where she spent over 30 years as an educator in the Colchester school system. Kathryn's lifelong passion for educating children inspired her to work part-time during retirement in the Salem school system. Beyond her career, Kathryn also loved animals. For many years she provided a loving home to many Scottish terriers, Labrador retrievers and cats.

This is a woman whose impact and life will be sorely missed by her brother Norman Noel and Debra Spagnesi of West Suffield; niece Justine and Michael Weston; nephew John Noel and Sarah Misch; great-niece Madison Sutkaitis; great-nephew, Jaxon Sutkaitis; many fellow educators, especially retired Colchester teachers Irene Stanavage, Suzie Hawkins and Edwina Callaghan; longtime friend Maria Taylor of Holyoke, Mass.; and countless former students whom she sought to educate in their academic endeavors.

Funeral services will be held at the Aroura-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, on Friday, Feb. 17, beginning at 10 a.m. with visitation, and a service beginning at 11:30 a.m.

Kathy was a passionate advocate for helping young children and supporting play based opportunities. Therefore in lieu of flowers, in memory of Kathryn Noel, please consider donating to the: Colchester Parks and Recreation Summer Day Camp Scholarship Fund - Colchester Parks and Recreation, 127 Norwich Ave., Suite 107, Colchester, CT 06415 or another charity of your choice.

To share a memory of Kathryn or to express your condolences to the family, please visit: www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Gilead

Joan Evelyn Butcher

Joan Evelyn (Peterson) Butcher passed peacefully Saturday, Feb. 4, at the age of 91 in the presence of family, bringing a long difficult time with dementia to an end. She lived a long and full life, dedicating herself selflessly to family and friends.

She was born March 9, 1931, to Lillian and Frederick Peterson, and grew up in Bridgeport.

At the age of 19, after completing her freshman year at the University of Connecticut, she married her first husband, Raymond Brunell Jr., and they settled in the Gilead section of Hebron, where she played piano for Gilead Congregational Church, and taught sewing at the Gilead Grange. After having three children they purchased land from the Foote family, where she designed, and they built their dream home in Gilead.

While raising her family, she went back to college and earned a degree in education and started her teaching career. She taught mathematics at Bacon Academy in Colchester and RHAM in Hebron, then as a professor of math at Tunxis Community College, earning a master's in computer science at RPI along the way. She retired at age 55 as a professor emeritus from the state of Connecticut Department of Education.

After becoming a widow at the age of 42, Joan met and fell in love with George Butcher and married again, enjoying a busy and loving marriage of 28 years. George and Joan enjoyed traveling out west to visit family, Caribbean cruises, and a couple of adventures to Europe. They retired to Salem, S.C., where they enjoyed golf and gardening in their beautiful retirement homes. She made sure she remembered all the children's and grandchildren's birthdays, and handmade Christmas stockings for each one.

Always an avid gardener, Joan added a beautiful perennial landscape to each of her three homes - the one she designed and built in Hebron and 2 retirement homes in South Carolina. She became chairperson of the landscape committee in her retirement community in South



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Obituaries

Carolina.
 She began watercolors as a hobby after retirement and became a very accomplished and prolific watercolor artist and longtime member of the Keowee Key Painting club, earning many accolades and participating in many juried exhibitions. Many prized portraits of family members now grace our homes, and each year she would hand make her own holiday cards from her paintings.
 Her love of music began when she sang chorus in high school and learned piano. She played piano her entire life, and when George passed away, purchased a secondhand baby grand piano, and perfected her talent with more lessons. She continued to play until a few years before her death.

Her loving, kind, and generous spirit, intelligence, creativity, sense of beauty, sense of humor, and selfless dedication to family will be sorely missed, and will continue to be an inspiration for all who knew her.
 She knew how to love, in the best sense of the word, jumping in without hesitation, and her purpose in life was to make sure that love was expressed in her actions, her support of family, and her life choices every step of the way.

She is survived by daughter, Bonnie Brunell of Connecticut, and stepchildren Tina Buckingham of Montana, Greg Butcher and wife Linda of Virginia, and TJ Butcher and wife Sharon of Connecticut and sister Linda Lipnik and family of Tennessee.

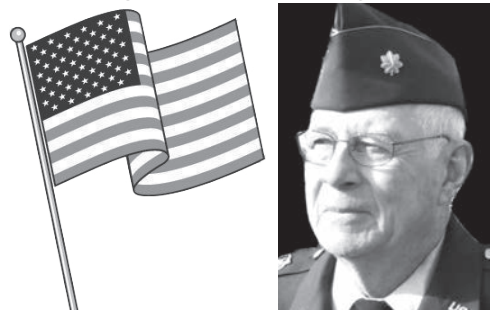
Joan is also survived by grandchildren Patrick Brunell, Jessi Calvo, Knikka Wetzel, Rosie Everhoney, Daniel Butcher, Casey Butcher, Sam Butcher, Luke Buckingham, Levi Buckingham, and many great-grandchildren. They are Dylan Calvo, Matthew Sehl, Ryleigh and Kayden Wetzel, Lea Simone, Ava Rain and Harrison Halevy-Butcher, and Oliver and Evelyn Buckingham.

Joan is predeceased by first husband, Raymond W. Brunell Jr.; their children, Raymond W. Brunell III and Sherry Eve Brunell; brother, Gerald Peterson of New York; and her second husband, George E. Butcher.

Many thanks to the staff at Manchester Manor who tended to her lovingly throughout the last year and a half, providing much-needed support to her and her family. We will be forever grateful.

A Celebration of Life service will be announced at a later date.

Portland
Reginald S. Farrington



Reg Farrington, 84, a proud veteran of the United States Army, passed away at home on Wednesday, Feb. 1, in Portland, surrounded by family. The second son of Norman and Sarah (Andrew) Farrington, he was born on Christmas Day 1938 in Providence, R.I., and grew up in East Hartford.

He graduated from the University of Connecticut and enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1960. He obtained a master's in history from South-west Missouri State College. After 21 years of active duty, including two tours of Vietnam, he retired from the Army as a lieutenant colonel. A true patriot and dedicated supporter of veteran causes, he was the commander of American Legion Post 69 for 17 years, a member of its Color Guard, co-led the effort to establish the Portland Veterans Memorial and was a member of the Connecticut Military Vehicle Collectors Club.

Reg's other occupations included teaching natural resources at Hartford Vocational School (Vermont), joining his brother Ed at American Concrete Pumping, and substitute teaching at Portland High School. He was an avid reader of history, and enjoyed spending time with his local Castelli family, experiencing great joy from his nieces Stacy, Jessica (Josh) Shelberg, nephew Jeremy (Ammie), great-nephews Cole, John and Andrew and great-nieces Carolanne and Charlie.

He is predeceased by his parents; his older brother Norman and his wife Dianne (Boyer); and his parents-in-law Rose (Preli) and Andrew Castelli; and Rose's second husband Louis Castelli; his son-in-law, Robert Johnson; and sister-

in-law, Carol (Anderson) Castelli.
 He is survived by his devoted wife, Andrea; daughters, Elaine Farrington Johnson (Frank Moore) and Norma (Ken) Schneiderman; son, Ethan (Sandee); grandson, Matt (Ari) Leezer; granddaughter, Lauren; great-grandson, Finnley; brothers, Ed (Karen), Geoffrey (Jessie), Stephen (Sharon) and David (Sue); brothers-in-law Steve, Mark (Kim) and Tom Castelli, many nieces, nephews and dear friends.

There will be a graveside service with full military honors for Reg today, Friday, Feb. 10, at 1 p.m., at the Connecticut State Veterans Cemetery, 317 Bow Lane, Middletown.

Donations in his memory may be made to the American Legion Post 69, P.O. Box 161, Portland, CT 06480.

To share memories or send condolences to the family, please visit www.doolittlefuneralservice.com.

Portland
Alfred Norton Sweet IV

Alfred Norton Sweet IV, "Ted" to most and "Papa" to his grandchildren, passed away Wednesday, Dec. 28. Born in 1944 and raised in Portland, he was a resident of Warren, Conn., Richland, Wash., before returning to Portland. He passed away while spending the winter in Barbados with his wife Lucille.

Ted is remembered for his good humor, outgoing personality, and relaxed nature. He took great pride in the accomplishments of his children and grandchildren, whether big or small, and in his service to his country in the Vietnam War. Always young in spirit, he was blessed to be able to boogie board and perform his signature "watermelon" dive until the very end.

He is survived by his loving wife Lucille; daughter Rosalie Chu and her husband Albert; son Zach Sweet and his wife Helena; sister Cyndy Cox; and grandchildren Benjamin, Sandrine, Corinna, and Ren. Through his marriage to Lucille, he is also survived by her daughters Luel Swanson Poglitich and her husband Rob, Bergette Swanson, Sarah Sypek and her husband Aaron, and grandchildren Elle, Connor and Kai. Through his winters in Barbados, he is survived by his tortoises, Norton and Lucy.

A visitation will be held at the Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown, on Thursday

East Hampton
Barbara Ann Plourde

Barbara Ann Plourde, 68, passed away peacefully at Backus Hospital in Norwich, surrounded by loved ones, on Wednesday, Jan. 11. Barbara was born Dec. 9, 1954, in Fort Kent, Maine, to the late Angus and Nora (Jandreau) Plourde.

Barbara grew up in Hartford and moved to East Hampton, where she lived most of her adult life and raised her only son. Barbara dedicated her life's work to The Hartford Insurance Company since the age of 16 and later retired to enjoy her family.

Barbara was a strong, determined, independent, silly and loving mother, aunt, sister, daughter and grandmother who enjoyed pranking and laughing with her family and friends. Barbara was a rare special soul to all those who knew her someone you were sure to never forget. Barbara had a passion for crafting, crocheting, cooking and a deep love for animals.

Barbara left a lasting imprint on everyone she met; she will be missed, loved and always remembered.

Barbara leaves behind her son, Jonathan Morin of Groton; her beloved and only granddaughter, Olivia of East Hampton; brothers, Sylvio Plourde, Marvin Plourde, Wayland Plourde, Leodore (Gert) Plourde, Patrick Plourde, Michael Plourde, Adam Plourde, Robert (Bobbie) Plourde; and her sister; Dale Ocelik. Barbara left us without any answers to the mystery of her missing sister, Nina Coe. In addition, she also leaves behind many nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews, who she loved dearly.

Barbara was predeceased by her brothers, Angus Plourde Jr., Irvin Plourde and Larry Plourde; her sister, Julie (Plourde) Kaiser.

In respect to Barbara's wishes, there will be no services held; Barbara will be cremated and spread among the wild flowers on which she loved to gaze while in bloom.

Those who wish to further remember Barbara can make donations in her name to Best Friends Animal Society at support.bestfriends.org under memorial fundraising.



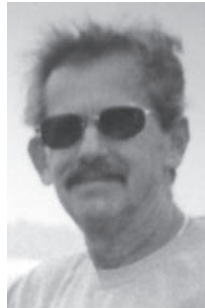
Feb. 16, from 5-7 p.m., with time to share fun stories about Ted from 7-7:30 p.m. A funeral Mass will be held at St. Mary Church in Portland at 10:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 17, followed by a burial service at noon at the State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in his name to Special Olympics Connecticut (www.soct.org) or the Wounded Warrior Project (www.woundedwarriorproject.org).

To share memories or express condolences online, please visit www.biegafuneralhome.com.

Colchester
Robert Donat Dumond

Robert Donat Dumond, more fondly known as Bob, of Colchester, formerly of East Hartford and Manchester, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 7, at Kimberly Hall in Windsor where he had recently been residing. He was 82 years old.



Bob was born Dec. 14, 1940, on Lille, ME, a son of Romule and Aline (Corbin) Dumond. He married his beloved wife Blanche "Bee" Mull on January 1, 1988. The couple made their home in Colchester and shared 32 years of marriage before she predeceased him on March 29, 2020.

Bob was a proud veteran and patriot, serving with the US Army and participation with the American Legion, Adler-Boluck Post 6990 Colchester. He retired several years ago after a varied career with Reed Construction in Manchester, Central Paving in South Windsor, Dadarion Brothers in Windsor, Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford and he also owned and operated a cleaning service with Bee in Colchester. In his free time, Bob was a tractor enthusiast. He loved fixing things or working outdoors.

Bob will be remembered fondly as a kindhearted, hardworking man who loved his family and was a loyal protector of animals. He leaves his daughter, Wenda Dumond of Ellington; a sister, Jean and her husband Don Dube of Vernon; three grandchildren, Joshua Dumond of Sarasoto, Fla., Bryan Dumond of Montville,

CT, Carly Moody of Ellington, CT; a great grandson, Dominick Dumond of Mansfield; a nephew, Dean Desjardins; a niece, Kelly Harvey; and many extended family members and friends.

In addition to his wife and parents, he was predeceased by a sister, Bella Davis. A graveside funeral service will be held at noon on Thursday, February 16, 2023, at the State Veterans Cemetery on Bow Lane in Middletown with full military honors.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association www.alz.org/ct or to the Connecticut Humane Society www.cthumane.org.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with care of arrangements. To share a memory or express a condolence to the family, please visit: www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com

Colchester
Gary Arthur Bowling

Gary Arthur Bowling, 61, of Providence, R.I., passed away Tuesday, Dec. 6, after a brief illness. He was born Dec. 28, 1960, in Hartford, son of the late Frank Bowling and Jane Stewart Bowling.

Gary was raised in East Hartford and Colchester. He graduated from Bacon Academy and the University of Connecticut in Storrs, then went on to travel the world. After graduating from UConn, Gary served at Casa Materna, an orphanage in Naples Italy. He later worked as a devoted tour guide for Collette Tours, where he became a central point in the community and made many lifelong friends.

Gary leaves behind his mother, Jane Bowling Duval; his brother, Michael; sister-in-law, Barbara; and his beloved nieces Katelyn and Elizabeth; his aunts, Kay Bowling, Joyce Valle and uncle James Stewart; plus many dear cousins and their children. He also is leaving behind a loving circle of friends.

Gary was predeceased by his father, Frank Bowling; his sister, Cheryl Bowling; his stepfather, Norman Duval; and stepbrother, Richard Duval.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Feb. 25, at 11 a.m., at the Westchester Congregational Church, 98 Cemetery Rd., Colchester.

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★ Racist Message, cont. from page 31

Anyone with information can anonymously report it to a voicemail system by calling 860-228-5319.

Hebron's Coalition on Diversity and Equity, who previously hosted a rally to help combat hate in the community, issued a brief statement following the latest incident.

"It's so sad to hear about this incident at RHAM. We feel for the students. The efforts being taken by the school and consultant show a sincere commitment to open communications and listening to students, and fostering a culture of inclusion."

McNamara explained in his letter that the district partnered with Joelle Murchison, the founder of Exec Mommy Group LLC, a diversity, equity and inclusion consulting firm. Murchison was previously invited to a RHAM Board of Education meeting to present ideas for the district moving forward.

"Earlier this week, Ms. Murchison and a colleague facilitated student and staff focus groups to gain different perspectives on the RHAM community and hear ideas on what can be done to make it a more inclusive environment and more clearly demonstrate how we value, respect, and celebrate the diversity of our community," he wrote. "I was present during these focus groups and found the information shared to be very insightful. Ms. Murchison and her colleagues will also be leading programs for all RHAM students focused on these topics."

Talking with our students about these issues is a necessary part of moving the district forward in this work."

On Tuesday night, Murchison monitored a community conversation at RHAM that "focused on the power of words we use, and how those words can have an impact on others."

The district made counseling available for all students immediately after the incident.

Then, on Feb. 16, RHAM will be putting on its first "Respect Day," which focuses on kindness, dignity and tolerance.

"These are the principles that represent who we are and what we believe, as well as what we seek to foster and grow every day," McNamara stated. "I want to assure all members of the RHAM school community that the safety of our children is the district's foremost concern, and there are policies and procedures in place to ensure the well-being of all our children."

When she addressed the school board last year, Murchison expressed that the district had a "real opportunity to begin talking" and to "learn from each other."

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

She added that there is not a "one size fits all" solution.

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

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