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News Bulletin

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

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February 24, 2023



Checking Out the Kitty... Renowned veterinary practice Glastonbury Animal Hospital, which has deep roots in Glastonbury, has opened a practice in Marlborough, fulfilling a need left empty when the owner of the former Marlborough Bird and Animal Hospital passed away in 2022. Pictured here is vet Dr. Ruairi White examining Jack, a patient cat and one of the office's many happy clients. See story on page 16.

Controversial Call Costs RHAM Title

By Josh Howard

Championships are supposed to be settled between the lines.

But sometimes those lines get blurred.

That's what happened during the Class M wrestling state championships last Saturday when RHAM High School thought they had won a state title after senior Michael Marques pinned Jason Toth of East Haven in the 195-pound title bout.

Prior to Marques' win, the Raptors trailed first-place Avon by 5½ points and the pin awarded RHAM six points and an apparent victory.

"Apparent" being the key word.

During the team's celebration near the wrestling mat, a member of the RHAM wrestling team didn't have his singlet straps pulled up over his shoulders and the team was assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty by the referee, costing the team a point and a state title.

The end result was a heartbreaking half-point loss for the stunned Raptors, who finished as the runner-up to Avon (196.5-196).

It was a shocking ending to an otherwise championship-worthy performance.

RHAM head coach Ryan Fitch called the loss "heartbreaking" and said the penalty was a "pretty outrageous call."

The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC), which is the governing body of high school sports in the state, uses the rulebook from the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) to determine guidelines. According to Rule 7, Section 5, Article 2: Unsportsmanlike conduct involves "failure to keep shoulder straps up while on the mat and failure to comply with the end-of-match procedure."

Lost in the confusing controversy was the

outstanding effort from the Raptors, who had seven wrestlers qualify for the State Open during the two-day meet that took place at Jonathan Law High School in Milford on Feb. 17 and 18.

RHAM placed top six in 50% of the weight classes (7 of 14) and had a pair of wrestlers take home individual state titles.

Along with Marques winning, junior Ben Fournier (106 lbs.) also took home an individual state championship after pinning Cesar Rodriguez of Platt.

Both state champions have roots in the gridiron and in Marques' case he was an all-conference football player this past fall.

Fitch said Marques continued to wrestle his senior year with just one goal in mind.

"He's a football guy, but he came back to help us win a state championship," stated Fitch. "He went out there and pulled it off, but unfortunately it was ripped from us."

In Fournier's case, Fitch said he "made a big leap" this season after an added emphasis on wrestling in the offseason.

Senior Dylan Devine (152 lbs.) placed as the runner-up in his weight class. Devine is captaining the team along with Marques and recently won a Central Connecticut Conference title by defeating Jack Janes of Avon on Feb. 4.

Devine also picked up his 100th career high school win in the team's regular season home finale against Rocky Hill on Feb. 8.

Despite missing his entire sophomore season because of the COVID-19 cancellation in 2021, Devine was still able to achieve the triple-digit win total in just three seasons.

Fitch called Devine the "backbone of the program" and said that falling short of a state title

See *Controversial Call*, page 3

Beloved Custodian Celebrates 50 Years

By Jack Lakowsky

Joseph Dooley is known to generations of locals as the kindly, hardworking, scruffy, generous and enthusiastic custodian at Marlborough Elementary School.

Just how many generations? Well, this year Dooley celebrates 50 years – a half-century – with the elementary school.

Through all that time, his love of the job, of taking part in his community in more than "just" the daily grind, of watching the town's youngest grow, learning to read and write, discovering their talents and passions, of speaking with his coworkers, has not waned.

What kept, and keeps, Dooley so enthusiastic after so many years – after seeing not just the school but the town grow and change drastically since he started at MES in 1973, arriving to

town in the late '50s – is the joy the kids bring him. He's lived in the area all his life, he told the *RiverEast* on Wednesday.

Dooley is quite multifaceted and just as fantastically eccentric. At 80, he walks to work every morning, setting out in the wee hours when traffic is low and he can enjoy a quiet, crisp walk, one he's taken for decades.

"I don't even really drive anymore," he said.

Many of us could take some lessons from Dooley – especially on self-sufficiency and healthy living.

He grows all his own food, and has cut meat out of his diet. He doesn't like the artificiality of fast food, preferring instead homegrown harvests of kale and lettuce and other fruits and greens, and drinking more than one smoothie

daily. He's also working to quit smoking.

"My doctor says whatever you're doing, keep doing it," he said.

This is great news for MES. The much-beloved custodian has zero intentions of heading anywhere else anytime soon.

In younger days, Dooley built kids' toys by hand from high-quality wood – rocking horses, cars, the works, donating the toys to local youngsters. Helping people, giving time to them, is something he was raised to do.

Dooley has seen MES administrations come and go through the years, but he said the current one, with principal Dan White, vice principal Kim Kelley and superintendent Holly Hageman, is the best team he's seen, and one of these

See *Beloved Custodian*, page 32

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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/fundraisers-events/project-graduation.

For more information, contact Jenn Boehler,

AHM Project Graduation coordinator, at jenniferb@ahmyouth.org.

Youth Baseball Spring Registration

RHAM Youth Baseball Spring Registration is now open. Families residing in Hebron, Andover and Marlborough should visit www.rhamyouthbaseball.org to register their children.

Also, RHAM Youth Baseball has transitioned over to Little League, and it also has a scholarship fund for families that have experienced a financial hardship. Contact league treasurer Eric May ericmay51@gmail.com for more information.



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RE2-24-23

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

I was heartened to see multiple letters in the *Rivereast* this week from folks talking about how wonderful a time they had watching Colchester Community Theatre's production of *Young Frankenstein* last weekend.

I saw the musical years ago, when a touring version of it hit the Bushnell, so I know anyone who went would be in for a treat. And boy, it sounds like they really were. It seems there's a lot of talent in Colchester's theater community.

Hopefully the insurance mess can get ironed out and CCT can keep going. I'd love to see what musical delights the group has in store for next year.

Speaking of musicals, I see *Tootsie* is playing this weekend at the Bushnell. I was fortunate enough to catch the original run of the musical on Broadway in late 2019, shortly before COVID hit. The play, an adaptation of the 1982 Dustin Hoffman film of the same name, was just a sheer delight. The songs were great, but beyond that, it was hysterical. I laughed out loud many times. The script, by Robert Horn, won the Best Book for a Musical at that year's Tony awards, and I must say it was very well-deserved.

Now, a lot has changed in the world since 1982, when the original movie came out. In these more progressive times, the idea of get-

ting laughs from a man dressing as a woman is ... well, problematic. But the musical doesn't shy away from this fact. It's quite clear that the main character, Michael, is completely in the wrong when he pretends to be a woman named Dorothy to land a role in a Broadway play.

The musical drew its share of criticism from parts of the transgender community during its Broadway run, but I never viewed it as transphobic. Others may feel differently, and that's fine. I just didn't see it that way. If you do go to the play this weekend, I'd be interested in hearing your take on the matter. Feel free to email me a letter to the editor, at bulletin@glcitizen.com.

For tickets and more information on the show, go to bushnell.org.

Lastly, March is literally next week, which means that, before you know it, it'll be time to bust out the green and celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

Columbia resident Jeanne Esterquest, formerly of Glastonbury and then Hebron, is already in the spirit, and last week sent me this delightful St. Patrick's Day-themed poem that I thought I'd share. The poem is called "On This Special Day."

Editor's Desk continued on page 5

Bulletin Board

Washington, DC: News Flash

President Biden Tuesday ordered the downing of three Canada geese that allegedly violated U.S. airspace over northern New York State. The geese were shot down by fighter planes armed with Sidewinder missiles before they were able to defoul any U.S. golf courses, a White House spokesperson confirmed. The intruders entered U.S. airspace flying in a V-formation, which immediately raised suspicions and led to the president's order to take decisive action, added the spokesperson.

Reminded that each Sidewinder missile costs over \$400,000, the spokesperson said that the missiles used to deflate the geese were paid for with bipartisan Inflation Reduction Act funds, so, according to the administration's economic wizards, they were actually free. Should cost become an issue as more and more mysterious objects are identified and shot down in future displays of steely presidential resolve, the administration will simply print more money, she said.

"The president is determined to ensure the safety of the American people," emphasized the spokesperson. "He will spare no cost when it comes to defending our airspace. As he has repeatedly said over the past couple of days, our sovereignty is sovereign unless it's not sovereign in which case it would be something else. He could not be any clearer. We have been very transparent about our transparency."

Exhausted after this latest display of presidential resolve in defense of our borders, the president made a rare public statement as he doddered across the White House lawn to board a helicopter for a well-deserved nap at his Delaware beach house. Sporting his trademark "Top Gun" macho man aviator sunglasses, he paused briefly as a reporter from the PETA Newsletter shouted a question on the ethics of blasting unarmed waterfowl out of the sky.

"C'mon, man!" the president chortled unapologetically. "They violated our airspace uninvited and we cooked their goose! Or geese. Or whatever." And then, with a sloppy salute and what was either a sardonic grin or possibly a grimace resulting from some sort of intestinal issue, he boarded the chopper and flew off without further comment.

The goose downing follows considerable criticism of an earlier incident wherein a giant Chinese spy balloon was allowed to meander across the entire United States unmolested for fear pieces of it might hit a cow in Montana were it to be shot down. Since then, facing potential challenges should he decide to run for reelection in 2024, the president has found it expedient to take a harder line toward violations of U.S. airspace by unidentified objects and show less concern for the welfare of domestic livestock.

The White House spokesperson scoffed at the suggestion this new display of toughness toward wayward weather balloons, model rockets, nuisance wildlife and possible peace overtures from distant galaxies was intended mostly to strengthen his image as commander in chief. "You're talking about a president who once challenged a fat man in New Hampshire to a push-up contest," she said. "He has nothing to prove. He has already shown his gravitas and depth of character."

Meanwhile, reports that one of the downed geese brained an undocumented immigrant sneaking over the border and that the victim's family has filed a multi-million-dollar lawsuit against the U.S. government have not been confirmed. Asked about a possible lawsuit, the White House spokesperson observed that inflation seems to have stabilized thanks to the president's policy of flooding the economy with free cash; fish swim in water; and, thanks in part to the efforts of the secretary of transportation and similar political appointees with little or no on-the-job experience in their new fields, people who breathed the air within 50 miles of the recent Ohio train wreck and fire might not develop cancer for at least five years if they stop drinking tap water. "The president has not received full credit for these achievements," complained the spokesperson.

The spokesperson also declined to address reports that a previous shutdown of an aerial "object" turned out to involve a mylar balloon emblazoned, "Happy Birthday, Wendy!" When reporters pressed the spokesperson on the identity of the mysterious Wendy and whether she or he or they might be assessed for the cost of the Sidewinder missile used to bring down the birthday balloon, she cunningly lost track of her assigned talking points and pointed out that a recent medical report gave the 80-year-old Commander in Chief a clean bill of health.

So, while Wendy's fate may remain uncertain, it appears the Guy in Charge remains continent, at least for the moment. Hallelujah. Meanwhile, the other big gas bag down at Mar-a-Lago continues to await deflation.

Jim Hallas

Rivereast Hours of Operation

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



Seniors celebrated... The RHAM boys basketball team celebrated Senior Night with a pre-game ceremony before beating Berlin 65-50 on Friday, Feb. 17. The team's four seniors were Luke Polowitz (#33), Matty Fraleigh (#3), Ryan Heneghan (#0), and Roan Trzaskos (#15). The team is coached by Todd Dean and finished the regular season with a record of 12-8.

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Scenic Disaster Area

To the Editor:

I am deeply disappointed and seriously concerned by the decision of Hebron's Planning and Zoning Commission to deny Scenic Road designation for Kinney Road. As stated by the town planner on Nov. 15, 2022, "all requirements have been satisfied." What happened next leaves me with many questions. Just two days later the Board of Selectmen publicly stated the need to have "all our ships heading in the same direction." Then came delay after delay, until on January 2023, when the town planner and the Planning and Zoning chairman requested an additional delay to seek legal counsel. Meanwhile, the Board of Selectmen appointed two new members to the Planning and Zoning Commission without following standard protocol.

This brought us to Feb. 14, when the chairman, a newly appointed member and an alternate member, who had not attended any meetings regarding the Scenic Road request before the vote, acted to deny the designation. The chairman stated her rejection of the request was because it "was not perfectly aligned with the town's Plan of Conservation and Development." I heartily disagree with that assessment and urge residents to read the POCD, specifically Section 2 parts; B. Underground Drinking

Water Supplies, C. Stream Corridors, Bodies of Water and Wetland Soils, F. Agriculture and Farming, H. Scenic Vistas and Streetscapes, I. Areas of Historical Heritage. I believe you will find the Scenic Road request for Kinney Road fulfills all of these guidelines.

Chairman Wood also stated she believed the request did not meet "the spirit" of the Scenic Road ordinance. It seems to me "the spirit" of the ordinance is, if the residents agree to have their road deemed scenic, and they meet the criteria, then they should receive that designation. Simple as that. Yet something went wrong. I can only ask how and why?

Sincerely,

Kevin J. Tulimieri – Amston

Wonderful Cards

To the Editor:

The seniors in town would like to thank you for the wonderful Valentine cards that the kids at Center School and Memorial School made for the seniors in town. It put a very big smile on their faces.

Thank you again.

Shelley Grendzinski
Tenant Commissioner and
Commissioner of Aging

RIVEREAST

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

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Clearing Things Up

To the Editor:
 Contrary to the *Rivereast* reporter's scathing and untrue remarks in a recent article concerning the library expansion plan, the fate of the Senior Center was mentioned and falsely reported. To you, the reader, we want to make these points absolutely clear.

1. We are sorry for any confusion and fears that you may have after reading the above-mentioned article.

2. There are no plans to displace, move or remove the senior center from its present location.

3. When and if there are proposals or plans in the future, you, as a concerned and involved group will be the first to know of any changes.

4. Any plans that were bantered about in a recent Town Council meeting are at least 10 years down the road, sometime way in the distant future.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Sincerely,

Brandon Goff and Alison Walck

Note: Goff and Walck are members of the East Hampton Town Council.

"Biden's War"?

To the Editor:
 Feb. 24, 2023, this first anniversary of the war in Ukraine, is a good time to reflect on what triggered it. Fearing the consequences of a strong America during the previous administration, Putin didn't dare move against Ukraine. But why now?

The current administration prioritized identity politics over competence when filling cabinet and key positions in government, with resultant ineptitude. Military preparedness takes second place to troop-demoralizing gender-pronoun correctness. Woke ideologies displace reality.

Future historians have good reason to refer to the tragedy in Ukraine as "Biden's War."

Peter Kushkowski
 "Almost Heaven"
 Portland

Something More?

To the Editor:
 In last week's *Rivereast* we heard a concerned Hebron resident ask a pertinent questions, "Is it really about the water, the history, a scenic road, or something more?"

My response to this question is, yes. Yes, we do have clean water and private wells. Yes, the land is historic and contains excellent artifacts and stories. Yes, the road is scenic. Flanked by stone walls and farmland it embodies our traditional New England heritage. But wait, there is more. It is quiet, peaceful and home to a special group of people and reclusive wildlife. Bird enthusiasts estimate 75 types of birds frequent the Raymond Brook Watershed.

Generations of farmers, including John Horton himself, have respected this property and all its natural resources. If you are unfamiliar with watersheds and why they are vital, google The Metropolitan District, and read their easily understood information. For roughly 70 weeks we have provided information on ecology, science, politics and history, all thanks to the *Rivereast*. Without their help we would have never known the real dangers we are facing.

The history here is enough to put Kinney Road, and the Raymond Brook Watershed, well beyond scenic. Pertinent historic documentation, and two famous paintings, all stemming from Governor Peters, were recently acquired by the Connecticut Historical Society and support national historic recognition (See Kinney Road Matters FB).

The documented history and the obvious

importance of drinking water are each, alone, enough to save this land, but combined? That's outstanding.

I've heard all human emotions stem from just two places, love and fear. We have listened to the anger used towards residents and towards Hebron's beloved farmland. What is driving such language?

It is nobody's fault that this watershed is historic, feeds local wells and, by natural design, is inappropriate for development. #save17.

Jean Tulimieri - Amston

An Unnecessary Tax

To the Editor:
 Responsible gun owners are being penalized for the actions of criminals!

HB-5653 is a bill proposing an additional tax on ammunition sold at retail in Connecticut. The bill seeks to collect 2 cents per round for 22-caliber or smaller ammo and 5 cents per round for all other ammo. This results in an additional tax of 10% to 15% in addition to the federal excise tax of 11% and the 6.35% CT sales tax we already pay. This is another example of an unnecessary tax for all law-abiding gun owners.

Let Gov. Lamont know that you will remember this next election.

Frank Blume - Colchester

Love Letter to Colchester

To the Editor:
 In April of last year for business reasons we moved from the Catskills in New York to Connecticut. I had never heard of Colchester and it was not my first choice. But we found a Federalist period house built in 1799 on five or so acres and a pond - which we could afford and no one had bid on (a rarity in the craziness of the market back then). We were non-plussed and somewhat apprehensive at what we had done. Boy, were we wrong!!

In the Catskills we were miles away from everything. Here we are next to an award-winning winery, three minutes from an organic cheese-maker one of whose cheeses is called "Dairy Air," and equally near a brewer that makes the best stout we've ever tasted. Ten minutes away is a cinema complex. Every craftsman we've hired has been reliable, competent and honest. Several have even become friends. Nothing like this ever happened in the Catskills.

But what prompted this letter was last Sunday's performance of "by the Colchester Community Theater. We were and still are in absolute awe!! More than 50 people helped perform this outrageous, corny and fabulously funny show by Mel Brooks. The singing was Broadway quality and who knew there were nearly 20 people in Colchester who could tap dance? And the orchestra! Not a sour note and all these people are just normal residents of this ever-surprising town we stumbled upon, giving of their time and energy and talent

I'm proud to say I live in Colchester and thank our good luck in winding up here.

Alden Thayer and Edwin Sanchez
 Colchester

Do Better

To the Editor:
 Wow. Just wow. That is pretty much all I can manage in response to the long front-page article about the Colchester Republican Town Committee's latest infighting adventure.

Our town is crashing and burning under the current leadership. Thousands of dollars overspent in legal fees. A ghost town in the finance department as employees jump ship. Elected

officials in the same party fighting each other tooth and nail. Arts and culture associations dropped from the town insurance without warning, putting them at risk of shutting down.

The list goes on, but I'll end with a challenge to the RTC: Do better. Please find a better candidate. If your idea of "common ground" is simply to band together against "woke socialists" (quoting from the first selectman in last week's article), then you are just as immature, pathetic and laughable as you look.

If you love Colchester like you say you do, please find a way to bring some real leadership to the table. You're currently a sinking ship and you're taking the town down with you.

Susannah Milner - Colchester

A Huge Success

To the Editor:
 The 14th annual Matt Bishel Bobcat Classic wrestling tournament was a huge success and the Bacon Academy wrestling team would like to thank the following businesses and individuals whose generous contributions and donations to our tournament help assist us in purchasing supplies, equipment and training.

Noel's, Family Pizza, Tim's Bistro, Fresca, Pepsi, Oz'N Bones, The Inishmor, The Flour Girl Bakery, Skyview Realty, Carl Guild & Associates, Minuteman Press, Colchester Youth Wrestling Parents & Board, Superintendent of Schools Daniel Sullivan, Amy Ciarcia, everyone who gave monetary donations, and Bacon alumni wrestlers and families and our wrestlers' parents and families for their countless hours of volunteering and donations of food and supplies.

Also - the school administration, Athletic Director & school staff for your help, support, and encouragement throughout the year;

Colchester Youth Wrestling for introducing wrestling to the community and working together with our goals;

The parents and families of our wrestlers for your unselfish dedication to them in support of wrestling;

Our managers Olivia & Natalie for always being there to help our team;

Our trainer Tim for making sure we get back on the mat speedy and healthy;

Our extended wrestling alumni families for never leaving us and keeping wrestling a priority at Bacon Academy; and

Our alumni wrestlers for representing our sport in the community and always looking to give back to our program.

Our goal at the high school is to work together with the community in building a wrestling culture. With the support of all the above contributors that goal becomes a reality. We owe

our thanks to you and appreciate you all.

It is our intention to give back to our community from the lessons we learn in the sport of wrestling!

Sincerely,
Drew DeBowksy
 Bacon Wrestling Head Coach

How Embarrassing!

To the Editor:
 This is in reference to the top of the first page article in last week's (February 17, 2023) *Rivereast News Bulletin* -- "Police Called to Colchester Meeting"

How embarrassing!
 Egotistical and juvenile idiots the Republicans are. Disgraceful and abhorrent behavior on their part...and making a mockery of our town and the wheels of our town government in the process. This isn't the first time the Repugnians, their Town Committee, have brought stink to the town of Colchester. Recently, certain Republican members have taken legal action against the town's senior center project costing the town in legal fees. It hasn't started or ended there, nor will it, when one considers the petulant toddler mind-set of the party all the way to the top.

Just hoping the people of this town (especially the ones who voted for the GOP clowns) have had enough of all their (GOP's) bickering and vote for Bernie and the slate of Dems this upcoming fall!

Congrats to Michael Sinkewicz on his excellent reporting.

Tricia Heldmann - Colchester

Better Plan for MHPL

To the Editor:
 The Middle Haddam Public Library Board of Directors has been intent on changing the exterior of its historic c.1799 building since 2008. Several renditions of expansion plans have cost thousands of dollars for architectural renderings, all to be discarded due to public opposition.

The latest plan proposed includes a 220 square foot porch and handicap access ramp that stretches conspicuously in front of the building. These structures will dominate the simple gambrel and its sensitively designed wing, and are therefore not in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for historic buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition, the porch will encroach on several encumbrances buried in the library's tiny

See Letters, page 6

Editor's Desk continued from page 4

There must be something magical about the seventeenth of March
 For we all become a wee bit Irish on this special day.

We wear the color of the shamrocks,
 so that all can see that we are truly Irish on St. Patrick's Day.

We may drink a mug of Irish stout and maybe a shot or two of whiskey, and get a wee tipsy,

on this special day.

Corned beef with cabbage and Irish soda bread may fill our Irish bellies on St. Patrick's Day

We might dance the Irish jig and definitely speak some blarney cause we know we're a wee bit Irish On this one special day.

**

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★ *Letters cont. from page 5*

side yard, including a propane tank, well, septic easement, well easement and septic system.

As such, we hired Crosskey Architects, the architectural firm that does work for Preservation Connecticut and the State Historic Preservation Office, to craft a more appropriate alternative. The plan can be seen at the Middle Haddam Post Office and on my personal Facebook page. It features a tasteful flagstone walkway with wooden railing that hugs the main building and leads to a side door.

Handicapped access would be accomplished without detracting from the elegant simplicity of the historic structure and at a fraction of the cost of the clumsy addition the library board is proposing. Please urge the board of directors to consider this option before irreversible construction begins: middlehaddamlibrary@gmail.com. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Margaret McCutcheon Faber
12-Year Member of
Connecticut's Historic Preservation Council

restrictions on the Second Amendment, installing 87,000 new IRS agents, and giving our strategic oil reserves to China. While some people believe peace will come through superior weaponry, Biden knows violence is never the answer so he is doing the Christian thing of casting down the sword as he gives our munition stockpiles to Ukraine in their quest for "freedom." As Jesus once said, "If your neighbor is without, give him Hellfire missiles and Abram tanks to make him capable of war." Truly doing the Lord's work.

While many pundits speculated that Trump winning a second term would bring about WWII, it was all just empty bravado and hot air from President Cheetoh. In contrast, Biden has been making big moves to accomplish what Trump couldn't. Biden's got tiger blood coursing through his veins...no joke! Name me a world leader who would change places with Joe Biden. Name me one! Name me one! You can't...Biden is the indispensable man.

Colin McNamara – Marlborough

to a budget that will pass at referendum.

Figuring out how to manage these issues should be BOE's priority, not dealing with fiscal blindsides as the first selectman looks to shift snowplowing costs away from his own budget.

At one point, there was a spirit of collaboration between the town and schools. That has been replaced with tension and distrust. This is bad for all of us. Together, the Town of Colchester and Colchester Public Schools are able to do things that neither could afford alone. Shared services are cost-effective – taxpayers lose out when the two components of our town can't work together,

Residents, taxpayers, and students deserve leaders who will work together for them. Restoring trust and fixing this broken relationship between the town and schools should be a priority for the first selectman.

Bernie Dennler
Candidate for First Selectman
Colchester

Americans were barred from service until 1863. Although Army wages were less than day laborers' wages, so many African American men from Connecticut enlisted that the 29th Black Regiment resulted in the formation of the 30th and 31st. Benjamin Buck, Joseph Hyde, Francis Morgan, and Austin Seymour enlisted from Hebron. The descendants of Cesar Peters provided several volunteers. George E. Peters died during the Battle of Richmond. His father Leverett received a disability pension when he was discharged. Henry Peters' son John Peters also received a disability discharge. George Sylvester Peters, son of Ira Peters, served in the 29th Regiment.

Ironically, many white men from Connecticut sought medical deferment or hired a substitute to avoid serving. A recently discovered letter in the town records written by a Mr. Blinn states that he was recruited as a substitute for an unnamed Hebron man by an Irish recruiter from Boston!

Isn't it time for Hebron to honor its African American veterans while celebrating Memorial Day and other national holidays?

John Baron – Hebron

Town vs. Schools?

To the Editor:

The frayed relationship between the town side of Colchester's government and the Board of Education has me concerned for our community's future. Decades of shared services seem to be ending. Last week, BOE members were surprised to learn that the first selectman plans to stop covering snowplowing services at Colchester schools. That leaves BOE to plug a significant hole in the schools' budget.

The news couldn't have come at a worse time. With staffing costs rising and COVID-related grant funds drying up, this could be the schools' most challenging budget in years. The superintendent's plan to mitigate some costs includes drastic reductions to the physical education program at WJMS and Bacon's business program. Will we be a town that doesn't offer adequate physical activity to middle-schoolers or a business pathway for high school students? I hope not, but BOE will have a real challenge finding a way to protect these programs and get

Hebron's African American Veterans

To the Editor:

There are no monuments to commemorate the service of Hebron's African American veterans. Yet, African Americans from Hebron served in both the Revolutionary and Civil wars, even though they were denied the right to vote.

Although there were general apprehensions of slave rebellions by arming African-Americans during the Revolutionary War, some 9000 African-Americans fought for the American cause and 20,000 for the British. Bristol Augustus Post from Hebron served for three years, was wounded in 1777, and discharged. Also serving from Hebron were "Negro Cesar," "Negro Jack" and "Negro Peter." John George, listed as an "Indian man," also fought for the American cause.

The Civil War was not popular in Connecticut, which made it difficult to fill town recruitment quotas. Cotton mills across the state were tied into the southern cotton economy. African

Echoes of the Past

To the Editor:

America Firsters in the 1930s were pro-German, anti-Semitic isolationists, who espoused a head-in-the-sand approach towards the Nazi threats. More than a few in government were on the Nazi

payroll. Roosevelt stood strong, supported England and helped save democracy.

Today we have echoes of the past. A pro-Putin ex-president, who denied recent election results, tried to demolish NATO, and the western alliance is still spouting his lies. The House of Representatives has more than 100 MAGA election deniers. They threaten to withhold aid to Ukraine to stress America First as their mantra. The House is hell-bent on isolating and finger pointing to conduct rabbit-hole conspiracy theories, rather than govern for the benefit of the American people.

President Biden has helped restore NATO and the democratic alliances that are necessary to our future.

The Bully (Putin's Russia) cannot be ignored, but must be confronted and defeated. To do otherwise is to court disaster.

The 2024 elections must change the House so that it becomes once again a group that governs wisely for the country.

Ed Gyllenhammer – Portland

Vacation Thoughts

To the Editor:

Well, shoot! On vacation and forgot to bring our *Rivereast* for a photo including our excellent weekly and remarkable Jamaican views. My beloved Christie Hazen and I are relaxing in the sun with longer days, tropical flora and fauna, recharging before she returns to teaching at Andover Elementary, and I in East Hartford. We recommend Riu Negril to others looking for an excellent, less expensive all-inclusive resort. Our daily beach walks pass several others, reinforcing our good luck in choosing Riu Negril.

At the moment, \$1 U.S. is worth \$153 Jamaican, causing major sticker-shock until you do the math. *New York Times* online notes America's inflation rate has declined seven straight months with the unemployment rate the lowest since 1969. President Biden just visited President Zelenskyy in Kiev, Ukraine, supporting a country bravely resisting Hitler II, and which

Both Foreign and Domestic

To the Editor:

President Biden is the most inspirational leader to ever hold office. A political juggernaut, who despite running a basement campaign, was able to clinch 11 million more votes than second-fiddle Obama...what a lightweight that guy was!

While other world leaders may talk a big game and play tough with diplomacy, Joe Biden delivers both with the ease and statesmanship of an octogenarian career politician – always delivering his messages with the utmost clarity. Whether it's his playful grin when pressed about how he would "disable" the Nord Stream pipeline or his decision to go check on his money in Ukraine over visiting the relief efforts in East Palestine, you have to give the man credit for sticking to his guns.

Speaking of which, he astutely tells the citizens that you'd need a F-16 to take on the federal government, while calling for further re-



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would not exist (nor would NATO) if Donald Trump had stolen the 2020 election.

Biden's naysayers keep labeling him decrepit, senile and doddering, embarrassing themselves as Biden keeps hitting home runs no matter how many brush-back pitches Republicans throw. He neutered multiple GOP hecklers at his State of the Union address with simple laughter. Called out Republican opposition to Social Security and Medicare, inducing hypocritical screams of protest, thus reminding Americans that two-faced Republicans have long had these social safety nets in their sights. Shot down the Chinese spy balloon on his watch, whereas Trump's administration with 'his' generals let three pass over without interference.

Lastly, many thanks to *Rivereast* for covering the 2023 CT Middle School Science Bowl. Other CT media are consistent no-shows. Here in Jamaica their 'Schools Quiz Challenge' is proudly broadcast on national TV. America appears ashamed of its brightest students achievements, while besotted with anything athletic. Small wonder American schools lag behind other nations academically.

Edmund Smith – Andover

Be Heard on School Budget

To the Editor:

Good schools are a hallmark of the Nutmeg State. Quality public education systems are essential to our communities and our investment is returned many times over as families support local businesses, grow the economy, and improve quality of life.

Excellent educators are key to that success, and Connecticut is home to many of the most talented, knowledgeable, and passionate teachers and school staff anywhere in the country. From prekindergarten right through our public university system, our educators have our kids' backs and propel them to their best.

East Hampton exemplifies that teaching excellence – and our educators are doing the job at a bargain rate. In 2021-22, the per pupil expenditure in East Hampton was \$19,146, according to the information provided by the superintendent. Regionally, that figure puts East Hampton in the bottom fourth of nearby municipalities. Despite the relatively low funding, teachers are making a difference.

Some would look at that expenditure and say, "wow, our teachers are doing more with less. Let's continue that trend." But imagine what our teachers could do without the fear of more cuts, or better yet, with just a little more funding in the budget?

Next Monday, the Board of Education will finalize its budget proposal and forward it to the Board of Finance. Pretty much all increases are contractual or related to inflation – absolutely no frills. Still, the finance members – and ultimately the Town Council – hold the final decision before the referendum.

In other words: now is the time to speak up, be present, and be heard. When the Board of Finance meets in March, show up and let the members know that cuts to the schools won't be tolerated. In the process, you'll demonstrate to our teachers that you've got their backs.

Sincerely,

Matt Engelhardt – East Hampton

Kinney Road Again

To the Editor:

I read with interest the article, "Town Aims for a New PW Facility Survey," in the Dec. 9 edition.

As I was reading it all I could think of is that the members of our BOS are still not listening.

Have a few questions myself. First, how much of taxpayers' money have you spent already? Now you want to set up a townwide in-depth survey and hire a marketing person to run a PR campaign. Here's a low-cost suggestion. Post a simple yes/no question on the Hebron Facebook sites and measure the reaction. The last time this came up on one of the Hebron sites it became very active and almost 100% of the responses were 'no.' So I challenge Daniel Larson's statement that there's "a lot of support out there."

Have seen several references to a "study" being performed on alternate sites and the answer(s) came back defining them as unacceptable. Have you ever made these studies available? Also, all site reviews (studies) are set up before with established guidelines for the people performing the study to follow. What were the guidelines used and who established them?

We're now facing an economic slowdown with escalating interest rates and a potential recession. Have you as our elected officials considered the cost impact to the Hebron taxpayers? Doing the math, a 20-year bond for \$20M results in a per capita tax burden of \$9,000 for a family of 4. With interest rates, that number will probably double.

Last question. Have you ever had your statements and facts "verified"? The statement by Daniel Larson aimed at Jean and Kevin Tulimieri is bush league at best.

The entire Hebron BOS has lost my vote over this situation. Not because they're wrong, but because they're not listening to the people who voted them into office. Time for some new people in our town management team.

Davis Howell – Hebron

New Political Committee

To the Editor:

I would like to take the time to introduce myself to our Marlborough community. My name is Susan Stolfi and I am the chair of the newly formed Independent Party Slate Committee. As a parent of four children and currently a member of both the RHAM and Marlborough Elementary school boards, my passion is to play an active part for a better and safer community and a better town in which to live and raise our families. My professional experience has been with Fiserv, a banking software company, where I have worked for over 25 years in the Program Management area. I also have a BA in accounting.

The Marlborough Independent Party Slate Committee is devoted to being of service to our town. A vast amount of knowledge and experience is crucial for any organization to succeed. By bringing together many people with wide ranging experiences, the Marlborough Independent Party Slate Committee is looking to further build on this foundation of experience and dedication, not only within our committee, but in the community. We want a strong, diverse, and engaged Committee and we welcome your help and your ideas to keep our vision focused and productive!

With your support we can provide our Town of Marlborough another option, especially since 43% of voters in our town are neither Democratic nor Republican. The Democrats make up about 30% with the Republicans coming in at 27%.

I welcome the community to reach out to any members of the executive committee of our newly formed Independent Party Slate Committee with any questions you may have or if you would just like to be added to our email distribution list. We are on social media:

Facebook: IndependentPartySlateCommitteeofMarlboroughCT

Website – <https://marliparty.com>.

Thank you for your support and questions. Together, we can make a difference.

Sue Stolfi – Marlborough

Note: Stolfi is a member of the RHAM and Marlborough boards of education, but said she is speaking as an individual.

The Banana Republic of Hebron

To the Editor:

Evidence of Hebron's descent into a banana republic was on full display last week as the Planning and Zoning Commission denied designation of Kinney Road as a scenic road. Thirty-two residents representing well over 100 citizens in the greater neighborhood presented the application to the PZC in September. After the town planner stated the application fulfilled all criteria, the BOS threatened to revoke the PZC's authority to designate scenic roads. That didn't work so the BOS fast-tracked appointments of two members to vacant PZC positions who eventually provided the majority to deny.

Instead of following the town attorney's opinion, the PZC majority cited nonsensical memos from the current and former public works directors. The current director said such a designation would add "a hurdle to the efficient operation of Public Works," which is, of course, technocratic gibberish. Kinney Road is less than one mile long and represents a fraction of the 70 miles of Hebron roads. The other director, now town manager, spoke of his years "working hand-in-hand with the DOT, where my sister-in-law... was in charge of scenic road designation..." which, I guess, seemed to have rubbed off and given him special knowledge.

Meantime, the fire department is dealing with "demands/challenges of Colebrook Village," which previously was given huge tax abatements by the BOS. The BOS is now considering giving a 10-year tax abatement to yet another business in town.

The push for taxpayer-subsidized development and a public works/municipal complex in the face of overwhelming citizen opposition has harmed our democracy and our community. The disgraceful treatment of the Kinney Road citizens and the deterioration of PZC as a democratic institution are only a few of many examples. Are we a banana republic or a democracy? Bring public works to referendum!

John Collins – Amston

Christian Nationalism: Congressional Testimony

To the Editor:

"Christian Nationalism is a political ideology and cultured framework that seeks to merge American and Christian identities, suggesting 'Real Americans' are Christians, and that true Christians hold a particular set of political beliefs. Christian Nationalism is more about ethno-national identity than religion and is a gross distortion of the Christian faith. A growing number of Christians feel a religious imperative to stand against Christian Nationalism, which uses the language, symbols and imagery of Christianity. It uses the veneer of Christianity to point, not to Jesus, but to a political figure, party or ideology. Christian Nationalism provides cover for white supremacy and perpetuates a sense of cultural belonging limited to native-born white Christians.

"Christian Nationalism is not patriotism, a healthy love of country. Nationalism is an allegiance to country that demands supremacy

over all other allegiances. The Christian nation myth downplay[s] or ignore[s] the role of Indigenous communities, Black Americans, immigrant populations, religious minorities, secular Americans and all others who undercut the false narrative that the US was founded by and for white Christians. This myth contradicts the U.S. Constitution, specifically, the prohibition in Article 6 against religious tests for public office, a revolutionary aspect of the constitution, laying the foundation for the U.S. being a faith-freedom nation. Christian Nationalism has caused violence against our country's people, public spaces, and diverse houses of worship and helped fuel the attack on our Capitol on Jan. 6, uniting disparate actors and infusing their political cause with religious fervor.

"Understanding Christian Nationalism is imperative to dismantling white supremacy and preserving religious freedom for all. Our belonging in American society must never depend on how we worship, what we believe or how we identify religiously." -- Amanda Tyler, Executive Director, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, 12/22, the U.S. House Oversight subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

Annie Steinbrecher – Marlborough

Let the Magic Continue

To the Editor:

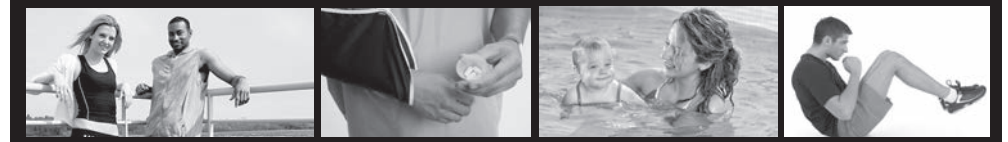
The *Rivereast* ran an article Feb. 17 entitled "Future of Theater Group Uncertain," in which it was thoroughly mentioned how and why Colchester Community Theater may not be able to continue due to an insurance glitch which would take away their town sponsorship. The article elaborates how the town is fully engaged in this issue and is really trying to support the effort of keeping the theater. Wallis Johnson, co-founder of this theater, had a letter to the editor in this same paper and highlighted the many benefits the theater provides (scholarships, collecting food for the needy, etc.) and the magic their performances offer.

On Saturday, Feb. 18, I witnessed why the town must keep this community theater... I witnessed the magic. I saw their production of *Young Frankenstein* which was a wonderful, professional production. But that was not the magic; the magic was to see all the people in line waiting to get in and to hear the chatter, not about the worldly woes we face or the local political hijinks we've been exposed to. No, it was conversations about the play, about the school, about having not seen a neighbor etc. The magic continued with the wonderful performance, the laughter, the applause, the good time this (my) community was having together.

I realize we cannot remove nor avoid tragic world events (of which they seem to be too many) but it is good to have an escape from these difficult times and not just the use of TV or Gaming, but to have a good interaction with our fellow citizens and our citizen thespians is healthy and good for the community. So, I beseech the town of Colchester to do everything possible to keep this well-needed asset in our town.

Ralph Bianco – Colchester

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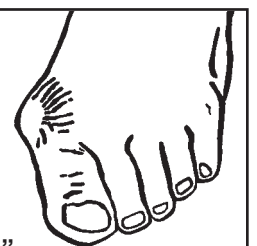
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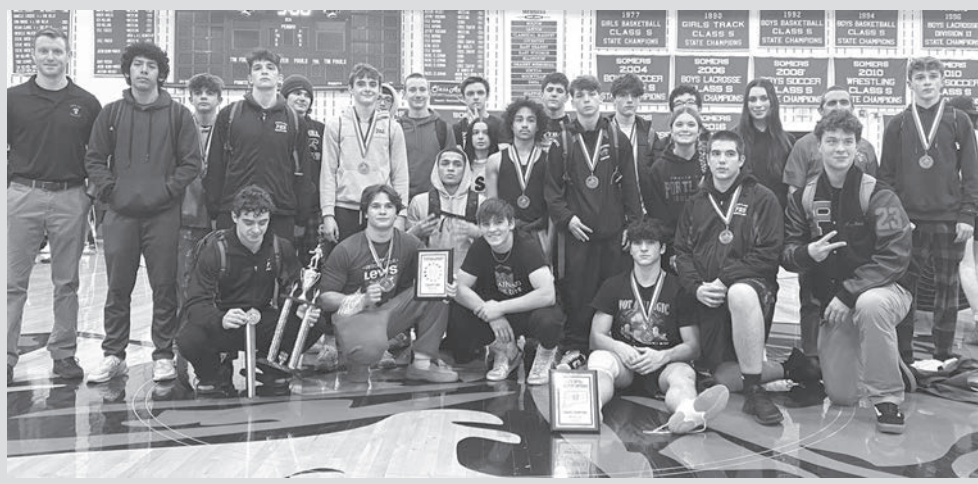
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The Portland High School wrestling team took first place in the North Central Connecticut Conference tournament on Feb. 11.

PHS Wrestling Wins Championship

For the first time in program history, the Portland High School wrestling team has won back-to-back North Central Connecticut Conference (NCCC) championships after going undefeated in conference matches and taking first place in the conference tournament on Feb. 11.

Senior captain Spencer Rosado was named the Most Outstanding Wrestler of the tournament, also taking first his weight class. Tyler Quinn (160 lbs.) also won, while Andrew Johnson (182 lbs.), Brody Quinn (120 lbs.),

and Adam Dean (113 lbs.) had second-place finishes. Josh Rosado, Ronny Diaz, Josh Cruz, Griffin Shafer, and Ethan Krasniewski each placed third.

The ten top-three finishes allowed the Highlanders to hold off runner-up Rockville.

"I told everyone that it was going to be close and that every match mattered," said head coach Mark Favale. "In the final tournament, we won by only one or two matches; it was really a total team effort."

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.

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.

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.

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.

Boat America – Online Boating Safety

Course: This eight-hour course is taught by qualified members of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, and completion will give you the knowledge and a Completion Certificate needed to obtain a boater's license/certification in many states. There will be one course taught in March and one taught in April. March course dates: 3/21 and 3/22, 6:30-9 p.m., and 3/28, 6:30-9:30 p.m. April dates: 4/18 and 4/19, 6:30-9 p.m., and 4/25, 6:30-9:30 p.m. All classes held via Zoom. Cost: \$65 per course

Second Chance Babysitting Course: Thursday and Friday, March 9 and 10, 5-8 p.m., at BFCC. This is a six-hour first aid, CPR and AED course designed for babysitters. Fee: \$75/residents, \$85/non-residents.

Second Chance Heartsaver CPR/AED/First Aid Course: Saturday, March 25, 12:30-3:30 p.m., at BFCC. This is a course designed for the general public or lay rescuers whose job requires a first aid course completion card (such as restaurant workers, coaches, members of church organizations, or teachers). Fee: \$95/residents, \$105/non-residents.

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.

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.

Storytimes: The schedule is: Preschool Storytime, Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.; Storytime for Toddlers and Tots: Mother Goose on the Loose, Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. or 11:15 a.m. No storytimes the week of March 6.

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.

Renaissance Times: Thursdays, March 9-23, 3:30 p.m., for grades K-2. Go on a quest

to gather ancient coins, fashion a dragon for a jousting tournament, and prepare a medieval snack. Registration is required and space is limited.

Family Craft Night: Pressed Flower Lanterns: Wednesday, March 8, 6:30 p.m. This activity has steps that are appropriate for all ages, but a parent or guardian must be with children to help with supervision. Registration is required and space is limited.

Teen Advisory Board: Monday, March 6, 3:30 p.m. Share your thoughts on what you would like to see the library offer in terms of programs, materials and more while enjoying some snacks. You will earn community service hours for each meeting you attend. Registration is required.

Teen Event: National Pi Day: Monday, March 13, 3:30 p.m. This time, kids will be making their own pies. Registration is required.

LGBTQ+ Social and Support Groups: The library, in conjunction with Portland Youth and Family Services, QPlus and Health Care Advocates International (HCAI) will be hosting social and support groups for LGBTQ+ youth beginning in March. Teens are invited to social meetups at the library on the first Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Support groups will meet on the third Wednesday of the month, with a parent and caregiver support group running concurrently in another room at the library. For more information, contact Jenn Renk at 860-342-6770.

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

Book Discussions: TAB – Talk About Books: Tuesday, March 7, 1 p.m. *The Women's March* by Chiaverini will be discussed. **1st Thursday Night Book Club:** Thursday, March 2, 6:30 p.m. *The Miniaturist* by Burton will be discussed. **Mystery Lovers Book Club:** Tuesday, March 21, 1 p.m. *Tuesday Mooney Talks to Ghosts* by Kate Racculia will be discussed.

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.

Police News

2/12: Russel Hahn, 63, of Middletown, was arrested and charged with operating under the influence, Portland Police said.

2/12: Ruben Cortes, 41, of West Hartford, was arrested and charged with operating under suspension, evading responsibility and failure to drive in proper lane, police said.

2/15: Peter Hrynyszyn, 59, of 31 Crimson Heights, was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

United Methodist Church News

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

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

Dean's List

Harrison Deane of Portland made the fall 2022 Dean's List at Curry College in Milton, Mass.

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Vocal Chords Awarding Scholarships

The executive board of the Portland-based Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords is offering college scholarships.

Scholarships will be awarded to students from Middlesex County pursuing a career in nursing or music who have been accepted at an accredited college or university. The review committee will consider academic records, extracurricular and community service activities, the student's ability to articulate his/her career

goals and the recommendations of references.

The \$1,000 scholarships will be paid directly to the recipients at the Spring Concert at Portland High School, Saturday, April 29, at 7 p.m., at Portland High School. Applications are available at the school guidance office or by calling Dianne at 860-344-0743. Deadline is Friday, March 24.

Visit vocalchords20.org for more information.

Preschool Screening

Connecticut public schools are responsible for identifying children who are eligible to receive special education services. Valley View School will conduct a preschool screening Friday, Feb. 24, for children ages 3-4. The screening is designed to answer any questions or concerns about a child's development as well as identifying children who may be eligible for the preschool selection process.

During the screening, children will meet with members of Valley View's preschool team and participate in a variety of activities. These activities assess different developmental areas

including cognition, communication, fine and gross motor skills and social interaction. During this time, the parent/caregiver will meet with another member of the team to discuss the child's adaptive and personal social skills.

Following the screening, the parent/caregiver will receive a letter stating your child's results. In order for your child to attend Valley Views preschool program they must participate in the screening process. Peer role models are determined on a year-to-year basis. For more information and to schedule an appointment, call Valley View School at 860-342-3131.

Historical Society Annual Meeting

The Portland Historical Society will hold its annual meeting for election of officers and executive board members Saturday, Feb. 25, at 2 p.m., in the Portland Public Library's Mary Flood Room.

After a brief update on society activities around town as well as at the museum on Main Street, restoration architect Alain Munkittrick will present a program related to his newly-released book *Historic Homes of the Connecticut River Valley* (published recently by Arcadia for its "Images of America" series). Munkittrick is an architect, architectural historian and advocate for historic preservation. In this book, he curates historic photographs

from the archives of local historical societies, museums, libraries, and private collections throughout the valley.

Also at the meeting, Munkittrick will update the society on the three historic houses being preserved at Brainerd Place.

Autographed copies of his book will be available for sale with a percentage going to support the mission of the Portland Historical Society. Several local residents and groups will be recognized for their role in helping to preserve Portland's history in 2022.

All are invited to attend this annual business meeting. Light refreshments will be served.

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.

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 leader-

ship and development on culture, diversity, equality, and other issues facing the community. RSVPs encouraged; contact Revicki to sign up.

Afterschool Drop-In & Draw: Tuesday, March 14, from 2:30-4:30 p.m., at BFCC. This is a time for students to come after school and do some semi-structured art. Come when you want, and stay as long as you want.

Youth & Parent LGBTQ+ Support-Style Groups: Wednesday, March 15, from 6-8 p.m., at the Portland Library. There are separate groups for LGBTQ+ youth and parents of those youth, co-facilitated by Q+ and local volunteers.

Drop-In & Draw Meet-Up: Friday, March 17, 10:30-11:30 a.m., at the BFCC.

Youth Services Advisory Board: Tuesday, March 21.

Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday, April 1.

Trinity Episcopal Church News

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

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

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

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

Check out more information, the church's calendar of events, donate, or listen to past ser-

mons at www.trinitychurchportlandct.org. If you have any other prayer requests to lift up, email the church office at trinitychurchportlandct@gmail.com.

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

Little League Registration Wrapping Up

Portland Little League Registration for the spring season and winter clinics runs through March 1. There are baseball and softball programs offered for players ages 5 through 14.

Visit www.portlandlittleleague.com to register.

Hearty Highlander Breakfast

The Friends of Portland Music (Portland Secondary Schools Music Boosters) will sponsor the 11th annual Hearty Highlander Breakfast Saturday, March 4, at St. Mary Church Hall, located at 51 Freestone Ave., from 8-10:30 a.m. Snow date is Sunday, March 5.

The menu is: French toast, scrambled eggs, sausage, home fries, and coffee/tea/milk/juice.

Tickets are \$10 per person, and there is a limited number available. To order tickets or ask questions, email Tara Tabellione at pssmusicboosters@gmail.com.

Proceeds from the breakfast will help to provide music enrichment programs for the middle and high school students.

Soccer Club Spring Registration

PSC Spring Travel and Rec Division Registration is now open. Visit clubs.bluesombrero.com/portlandsoccerclub for the registration site, or contact PSC President Chad Wilson at nosliw.dahc@gmail.com.

Travel Details: Players with birth years from 2008-14. Registration deadline is Sunday, March 5. Cost is \$170. Practices are twice per week, with up to two weekend games against other towns. The season starts in early April and ends mid-June.

Rec Details: Players with birth years 2014-

19. Registration deadline is Sunday, April 16. Birth year determines division. Cost: pre-K is \$60, Dribblers and Kickers is \$75. Pre-K and Dribblers play on Saturday mornings only. Kickers play Saturday morning games and practice Wednesday evenings. All Rec activities are held at the Portland Rec Complex on Gospel Lane. The Rec season runs from April 22-June 10.

Note: late registrations are not guaranteed participation.

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.

Senior Center News & Notes

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

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

Free Grab-and-Go Meals: The senior center is offering Waverly Senior Center members, who reside in Portland only, one free Grab-and-Go meal starting in February. You must be able to pick up the meal yourself, at 11:45 a.m., at the Waverly Senior Center, in the Mary Lou Rice room. Please do not arrive before 11:30 a.m., as there are programs in that room. Note: You are not eligible if you are already receiving Meals-on-Wheels. You must register one week in advance for a Grab-and-Go Meal. For information, or to sign up, call at 860-342-6761.

Foodshare: Monday, Feb. 27, 1 p.m.

Next Week's Programs: **Monday:** Light Aerobics, 9:30 a.m.; Syncocize II Dance Fitness. **Tuesday:** Bears on a Journey, 9:30-11 a.m. - making fleece teddy bears for cancer patients; donations are sought of light fleece, one yard or more for making teddy bears for cancer patients throughout Connecticut. If you would like to donate, call 860-342-0809; Coupons for Troops, 1-4 p.m.; setback, 1 p.m.; Progressive Dulcimer Class, 6 p.m. - Beginner Dulcimer

classes canceled for this month; **Wednesday:** AARP Tax Preparation, appointments from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (last appointment at noon, to register call Lynn or Alexis at 860-342-6760); Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; SyncoCize Exercise, 10:30-11:30 a.m.; Social Duplicate Bridge, 12:30-4 p.m., multipurpose room; Tai Chi Qigong, 1 p.m. **Thursday:** Knit & Stitch, 10 a.m.; Mahjong, 12:30 p.m.; Scrabble, 1 p.m. **Friday:** Light aerobics, 9:30 a.m.

Trip to Sans-Souci Restaurant: Tuesday, Feb. 28. Bus leaves the senior center at 11:20 a.m. Cost is a \$5 transportation fee. To register, call Lynn or Alexis at 860-342-6761.

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

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

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

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

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

Dean's List

Portland residents Desmond Cleary and Theresa Rodriguez made the fall 2022 Dean's List at the University of Hartford.



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BOE Adopts Modest Budget Increase

By Michael Sinkewicz

The Andover Board of Education unanimously adopted a school budget for the 2023-2024 fiscal year during its meeting Feb. 8, calling for a modest increase in spending. The proposal now heads to the finance board for approval.

The school board approved a proposal of \$4.23 million — a \$182,000 or 4.5% increase from current year spending.

“I think it’s a fair budget,” school board chairman Gerard Creme said following the vote. “I think it’s fair to the residents. It’s fair to the school.”

Two of the main budget drivers were contractual salary increases and fuel costs. Overall, with a few variances, salaries increased by 3%; the cost for teachers increased by over \$70,000. Heating oil jumped from \$62,440 to \$107,800 — a 72% spike.

Many of the budget lines remained the same in the proposal. Facility maintenance stayed at \$61,292. Other costs, like special education transportation increased by large percentages, but not significant dollar amounts.

Superintendent of Schools Valerie Bruneau told the *Rivereast* this week that her team of administrators, finance officers and board officials “worked effectively and efficiently” to utilize revenues and minimize the budget increase for this upcoming year.

“We definitely did our due-diligence and I’m proud of that,” she said. “We’ve answered community questions and this absolutely is academically sound and fiscally responsible.”

Many districts across the state are facing challenging circumstances as they formulate their budget proposals for the 2023-24 fiscal

year. Earlier this month, the Hebron school board adopted a \$13.98 million budget — a \$1.77 million or 14.5% hike from the current budget.

Hebron Superintendent Thomas Baird described the budget season as the “perfect storm” of factors that ultimately contributed to a substantial leap in spending.

Bruneau, however, expressed that Andover’s school system was able to thwart a similar budget acceleration due to a combination of circumstances.

“We did luck out,” she stated.

Andover was able to negotiate its teacher salary increases before the cost-of-living figures became more inflated. While the district couldn’t entirely avoid rising costs due to inflation, it didn’t experience the same increases other districts have gone through.

“We averted it for a short period of time,” she said, adding that potential budget hikes may be coming in the future. “It could be a thorn in our side in a year or two.”

In addition, the district strategically targeted grants that helped supplement the overall budget ask. Each individual small grant contributes and amounts to a significant number.

“We were able to make the best use of grants and that takes little bits out of the increases we would’ve had,” Bruneau said.

For this proposal, rising fuel costs were unavoidable, she said. While costs of diesel and electricity, which increased from \$64,765 to \$74,765 — a 15% jump — heating oil was the largest change.

Bruneau explained that for the current bud-

get, the district was fortunately able to lock-in oil at a relatively moderate price. The per-gallon cost for the next fiscal year increased by nearly a dollar, she said, calling the situation a “blessing and a curse.”

“There was no way to come close to that [cost] for next year,” she said. “That meant automatically there was quite an increase.”

Other expenses, like special education, were maximized in the proposal. Bruneau stated that the district was able to push certain items to other areas in the budget and rearrange expenses.

The district will need to consider adapting a new reading program, in accordance with recent state legislation. Bruneau said that the district will be seeking a waiver that would allow the school to largely continue with its current program. Still, Bruneau expressed that the school is making general modifications to “meet the mandates of the state.”

Otherwise, the district is not implementing any major new initiatives. One of the reasons the district hired Taylor Parker, the elementary school principal, ahead of this school year was to allow her to review the schools’ programs and determine what ideas could be explored moving forward.

“Next year, we’ll look to remove what’s not working,” Bruneau said. “For this year, hold the ship, and she’ll have a year’s worth of observation and data collection.”

She emphasized that Parker has successfully transitioned into the district and has been “instrumental” with enhancing the school.

Prior to approving the budget, the school board held multiple budget workshops to allow

the community to understand each line item and ask questions. Bruneau expressed that the meetings were an important tool for residents looking to clarify concerns and grasp where the increases were originating from in the proposal.

“We give a frame of reference for people,” she said. “People say, ‘oh, I didn’t know that,’ and it allows them to jump in and really get a handle on the expenditures.”

Each workshop was targeted for a different aspect of the budget. Sometimes, Bruneau said, community members don’t fully understand the driving forces behind the budget and she’s always willing to help people so they can make a more informed decision when voting.

“I like being able to educate people,” she said. “I wish more people would take advantage of [the workshops].”

Still, residents will have the opportunity to deliver a final verdict on the budget, but Bruneau is optimistic that the community will sign-off on the spending plan.

“I think the community will appreciate that we gave them the smallest increase we could,” she said. “I hope people will see that this was the best job that we could do.”

In general, she believes residents, who are managing their own budget increases at home, will recognize that schools are going through similar struggles.

She expressed that the district was not “under as much pressure” as some other schools who are battling more strenuous circumstances.

“I have sympathy for my colleagues and they present budgets with tough numbers,” she said. “Nobody wants to be in that position.”

Library Friends Collecting for Auction

The Andover Friends of the Library Auction Committee is in the process of collecting donations for the 21st annual Goods and Services Auction that will be held Friday, May 19, at 6:30 p.m., in the Community Room of the Town Office Building, 17 School Rd.

Popular items include: gift certificates, handmade items like jewelry, scarves, quilts, afghans, sports items, paintings and music/video games. The Friends group is also looking for new items to create themed gift baskets, such as: Mother’s Day, Father’s Day,

graduation, baby shower and bridal shower or if you would like to donate a gift basket.

This auction is the Friends’ big fundraiser of the year; proceeds help support library programs.

Donations may be dropped off in the town clerk’s office at the Town Office Building, or mailed to A.F.O.L. - c/o Carol Lee, 17 School Road, Andover, CT 06232. People may also call Carol Lee at 860-742-0188 ext. 2 to arrange for pick-up.

Congregational Church News

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

Children’s Church: Sunday school is provided.

Food Pantry: Mondays from 5-7 p.m. Bring

your own bags. The **Foodshare Van** comes to the church every other Wednesday from 9-9:30 a.m.; next date is March 1. The senior food pantry is open the opposite Wednesdays, also from 9-9:30 a.m.; next date is March 8.

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

Sunshine Stammers: Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.

Tenebrae Service: Thursday, April 6, 7 p.m.

Senior Citizen News & Notes

The following items have been updated for Andover seniors, veterans, and disabled. If you want to attend any events, call senior coordinator Cathy Palazzi 860-916-6122 to register. For all senior events and information, visit the senior page of the town website, andoverct.org.

Tuesday Shopping: Willimantic, Feb. 28, and Manchester, March 4. Masks available on all vehicles.

Senior Luncheons: Fridays, March 3 and 17, and Thursday, March 30. Reservations required by the previous Wednesday. On March 30, RHAM Boosters will provide entertainment.

Upcoming Trips: Aquaturf on March 14; Westbrook for lobster on March 20. For information, call Town Clerk Carol Lee at 860-742-0188 ext. 2.

Rides to Food Pantry: The bus is now available for the Food Pantry on Mondays at 5 p.m.

and for the Wednesday Foodshare or food pantry — all of which take place at Andover Congregational Church.

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

New Seniors Welcome: New seniors are welcome to all events. Call Palazzi for all luncheon reservations and transportation needs, including rides to medical appointments. For all Young at Heart events including movies, call Sue Schmidt at 860-604-1057, and call Town Clerk Carol Lee at 860-742-0188 ext. 2 for all trip information.

Dean’s List

Andover residents Taylor Fitch and Clarice Jayawickrema made the fall 2022 Dean’s List at the University of Hartford.

Board of Fire Commissioners Vacancy

Any Andover elector interested in serving on the Fire Commission for a term ending Nov. 20 should send a letter of interest to: Town of Andover, c/o Fire Commission, 17 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232, or email townclerk@andoverct.org.

Take Your Child to the Library Day

Andover Public Library, located at 355 Route 6, will celebrate Take Your Child to the Library Day on Saturday, Feb. 25, at 10:30 a.m. All are welcome, and while registration is not necessary it is requested, by calling 860-742-7428.

During this event, Ellen Repay of the Andover Friends of the Library will present a story about winter and/or snow, followed by a craft. All attendees will have their names put into a drawing to win a bookbag filled with goodies. No purchase is necessary.

Officially, the 12th annual Take Your Child to the Library Day was Feb. 4, but the day is celebrated throughout the month at libraries across the state.

Senior Trip to Aqua Turf

Andover senior citizens will go to the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville on Tuesday, March 14, for a corned beef luncheon, featuring entertainment by the McLean Avenue Band and Irish step dancers.

Cost is \$22 for Andover seniors and space is limited. Any senior interested in attending should call Carol Lee 860-742-0188 ext. 4218 to reserve a space/confirm availability.

Open Call to Apply for Grant Funds

Andover’s Greater Together Community Fund Advisory Committee has released its open call for 2023 project proposals. Up to \$10,000 will be awarded in grant funds to support one or more proposals.

All projects eligible for Community Fund support must benefit the residents of Andover. For further details on project guidelines and how to apply, please visit hfpg.org/Andovercf.

Project applications or grant proposals will be accepted until March 15.



Andover resident Christina Tamburro is shown here modeling the Library Friends’ new Adventure Backpack, which is now available to patrons at Andover Public Library. Photo by Julie Victoria.

New Adventure Backpacks Available at Library

The Andover Friends of the Library recently received a Greater Together Community Fund Grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to assemble “Adventure Backpacks,” part of the Andover Public Library Outdoors program.

The backpacks are intended for patrons to spend quality time outdoors, to have fun and to relax. Four backpacks are available for a seven-day loan period. Each contains one pair of adult and one pair of children binoculars, two magnifying glasses, and seven laminated pamphlets on topics including birds, wildflowers, trees,

tracks, insects, wildlife and butterflies.

“Many libraries are currently circulating more than books and these backpacks are just a sample,” said Library Friends acting president Julie Victoria. “We thank the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and encourage everyone to come and ‘check them out.’”

Located at 355 Route 6, Andover Public Library’s hours are Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m.-2 p.m. For more information, call 860-742-7428 or email andoverctpubliclibrary@gmail.com.

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Kindergarten Registration

Andover Elementary School is registering kindergarten students for the 2023-24 school year. Andover's kindergarten program is full-day.

Parents of children who will be age 5 on or before Dec. 31, 2023, are asked to contact the school office at 860-742-7339 to obtain a registration packet or access it at www.andoverelementaryct.org.

Parents choosing to have their child attend an alternative kindergarten, not attend school until the following year, or who will be home-schooling are asked to inform the school of this decision.

175th Committee Selling Items

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

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

Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner

Andover Congregational Church, 359 Route 6, will hold a Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner Friday, March 17, from 5-7 p.m. The meal is takeout or eat-in. Cost is \$18 and includes dinner, drink and dessert.

Pre-order by March 13, by calling 860-742-7696.

AVFD Anniversary Banquet

The Andover Volunteer Fire Department will celebrate its 85th anniversary with a banquet at A Villa Louisa in Bolton on Saturday, April 1, from 6-10 p.m.

There will be hors d'oeuvres, a buffet dinner, a DJ and a cash bar. Tickets are \$40 per person and can be obtained by calling Chief Ron Mike at 860-335-0264, Deputy Chief Mindy Hegener at 860-706-3074, or by stopping at the firehouse on Wednesdays after 6:30 p.m.

Tickets must be purchased no later than March 22.

Senior Trip

Any Andover senior interested in going to Water's Edge in Westbrook on Monday, March 20, for a lobster dinner followed by "Trivia Night" should call Carol Lee at 860-989-6988 to reserve a spot.

Space is limited. Transportation will be provided from the Town Office Building; arrive by 3:50 p.m. to board the bus.

Preschool Openings

The Andover Elementary School (AES) Early Learning Center is accepting applications for preschool students for the 2023-24 school year. The preschool program is full-day, and before- and after-school care is available.

Children who will be age 3 on or before Dec. 31, 2023, are eligible to attend. Parents/guardians should call AES Principal Taylor Parker at 860-742-7339 for more information or to obtain a registration packet. Packets are also at www.andoverelementaryct.org.

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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 district.

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 Representatives' Desks...

House Finds Agreement on Free Lunches & Financial Guardrails

The House of Representatives recently met to act on emergency certified legislation extending the state-wide school free lunch program through the remainder of the school year and re-instituting fiscal guardrails prior to the start of budget negotiations. The unanimous vote on the House floor in support of the bill shows that the legislature can put forth quality public policy when it works in a bipartisan manner.

As a result of the successful passage of the legislation in both chambers, funding for the Free Meals for Students program will be provided by the state. There was consensus among lawmakers that free lunch provides benefits to many students and families that are still coping with the lingering effects of the pandemic. The goal is to provide a healthy lunch to students so they can focus on their academics.

In addition to preserving the free lunch program, legislators also found agreement on fiscal guardrails before the state budget process gets underway. In 2017, a bipartisan budget was passed with an emphasis on Connecticut paying down its debt obligations while capping spending and borrowing. Consequently, guardrails were implemented to keep the state coffers in a consistent state of solvency. Those guardrails were set to expire at the end of the current fiscal year, which is why the legislature took swift action to extend them for another five years.

These fiscal parameters helped the state remain fiscally stable through the pandemic, created the unprecedented Rainy Day Fund (reserve account) of more than \$3 billion, and a projected future deposit after the 2023 fiscal year of an additional \$3 billion to the budget reserve. The successful legislation extends the bond-lock covenants issued by the treasurer to perspective investors, promising that the state will provide fiscal constraint in its spending and restricts the legislature from circumventing the caps. Additionally, it preserves caps that help the state establish reserves for future deficits and help pay down the state's pension obligations.

Will there be agreement on what programs and services are prioritized within the final state budget when it is presented to the General Assembly for a vote? That question is yet to be answered. But, we agree the commitment these budgeting boundaries by both political parties is a step in the right direction. Our job is far from over. We remain committed to advocating for immediate tax relief by reducing the state income tax, eliminating the meals tax, and growing the economy by creating incentives for employers to invest and diversify their workforce.

The legacy of the 2017 bipartisan budget continues to benefit the state. There is a pathway that a bipartisan budget document is created, but we must continue to focus on the goal of an affordable Connecticut.

State Rep. Christie Carpino (R-32)

State Rep. Irene Haines (R-34)

State Rep. Mark DeCaprio (R-48)

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Standout Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

Here is a 'double dip' version of the *Rivereast* Standouts of the Week. There were so many terrific performances over the last couple of weeks that each school has two representatives.

Spencer Rosado – Portland High School (Wrestling): Rosado was named the Most Outstanding Wrestler as the Highlanders made history by winning back-to-back conference titles, winning the North Central Connecticut Conference (NCCC) for the second straight season. Rosado, a senior captain who wrestles at 138 lbs., then placed 3rd at the Class S state championship on Feb. 18, defeating John Maroney of St. Joseph in the 3rd-place match at Killingly High School.

Joe Rusczyk – Portland High School (Basketball): Rusczyk scored 24 points as the Highlanders wrapped up the regular season with a 67-40 victory over Hale Ray, earning the top seed in the Shoreline Conference (SLC). Harrison Collins added 18 points in the victory and junior Tyler Wydo drained five 3-pointers, adding 15 points. The Highlanders will host Old Lyme in the opening round of the SLC tourney this Saturday, Feb. 25, at 6 p.m.

Jackie Russell – East Hampton High School (Basketball): Russell scored a game-high 20 points, canning a handful of three-pointers, as the Bellringers avenged their only loss of the season and beat Cromwell 44-37 on Feb. 10. The Bellringers finished the regular season with a record of 19-1, winning the final 14 games following a loss to their conference rivals from Cromwell on Jan. 3.

Alexis Pettine – East Hampton High School (Cheerleading): Pettine was named first-team All-Shoreline Conference (SLC) for a second straight season. Pettine, a senior, was joined on the all-conference first-team by three fellow Bellringers in senior Isabella Bafumi, sopho-

more Samantha Yorker and freshman Madelyn Daniels. Freshman Sydney Vicino was named to the all-conference second-team.

Isabella Mondo – RHAM High School (Track & Field): Mondo won both the Central Connecticut Conference (CCC) and Class M championship in the 3,200 meters. Mondo, a senior, broke a 25-year old school record by running an 11:47.02 at the conference championships and then defeated runner-up Laura Funderburk by over eight seconds to win a state championship on Feb. 11.

Sarah West – RHAM High School (Basketball): West had back-to-back monster games last week, scoring 28 points in a 55-54 overtime victory at South Windsor and then dumping in 22 points in the team's regular season home finale, a 66-39 victory over East Catholic. West, a senior captain, helped the Raptors win 13 of 20 regular season games and now the team is prepping for the Class MM state tournament, starting Monday, Feb. 27.

Ryan Moores – Bacon Academy High School (Track & Field): Moores placed third in the 1,600 meters at the Class S championships, running a personal-best 4:24.99, on Feb. 9. Moores, a senior, qualified and compete at the State Open the following week. Both events were held at the Floyd Little Athletic Center in New Haven.

Marissa Nudd – Bacon Academy High School (Basketball): Nudd became the third all-time scoring leader in the history of the program during the Bobcats' 52-40 victory over East Lyme in the quarterfinals of Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) tournament. Nudd finished with a team-high 15 points on a night when she passed 2013 graduate Taylor McLaughlin, who finished her career at Bacon Academy with 1,312 points.

Renewable 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.

From the State Representative's Desk...

The 2023 session is in full swing, with nearly 3,000-4,000 bills or concepts being proposed before we recess on June 7. By the end of session, that list will likely be whittled down to 300-400 bills, and we'll likely vote on less than that amount. I have been appointed to the Higher Education, Housing and Labor & Public Employees committees. Each committee and legislator has the opportunity to propose bills, and more importantly, listen to constituents and citizens, as they testify as to whether they support or oppose a particular bill. The Capitol and the Legislative Office Building are fascinating places to visit.

This session, I proposed several bills that worked to limit the size of our government, to reduce costs, or to reduce the burdens placed on individuals and businesses in the state. Examples of these included reducing agency regulations, eliminating the highway use tax for trucks (which will lead to increased costs for all of us), bringing back qualified immunity for law enforcement officers, relaxing the standards for minimum wage for people under age 18 to encourage more youth in the workforce, removing the tax on prepared foods, and eliminating certain class action lawsuits against restaurant operators.

Additionally, I've had the opportunity to see other bills proposed that are of great concern. There are dozens of proposals that violate individual rights, property rights, or otherwise propose to make Connecticut even less economically competitive compared to other states. HB-5704 would make voting mandatory – with fines if you don't vote. HB-6593 removes local control over zoning, believing that one size fits all for our 169 municipalities. HB-6109, HB-6588 & SB-138 all work to strip property rights away from housing providers. SB-229 proposes to pay striking workers unemployment compensation after they choose to go on strike and HB-5480 allows children to be vaccinated without parental consent. Some of these proposals may have started off with the best of intentions, but many will have unintended consequences, where future legislation may be required to fix flawed legislation.

When I was sworn in, I took an oath to protect the Constitutions of the United States and of Connecticut. Any time I am reviewing proposed legislation, meeting with constituents & subject matter experts, or proposing legislation myself, I am always concerned with how the legislature's actions will affect our citizens. I am constantly challenging myself and my peers on the question: What is the proper role of government? It is of utmost importance to me that we protect individual rights. When a piece of legislation is proposed or voted on, it should not grant rights or benefits to one person or group by taking away from another person or group. Equal rights for each individual are often violated by proposed legislation and certainly existing laws.

And finally, in order for the legislature to be reminded of what our purpose is, we need an engaged citizenry. We need to hear from our constituents on all sides of the issues. Too often, we citizens assume that what goes on up in Hartford operates outside of the purview of the citizens. It's often that a controversial piece of legislation draws a crowd. However, each year, little pieces of our rights are taken away without any input from citizens. To that end, I urge any constituent from the 55th District to contact me with questions, concerns or input. I work for you!

State Rep. Steve Weir, R-55th District, Steve.Weir@housegop.ct.gov

Note: The 55th Assembly District covers Andover, Hebron, Marlborough, Bolton and Glastonbury.

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CBA Makes Donation... The Colchester Business Association recently presented two checks for \$1500 each to the town of Colchester fuel bank and food banks. The funds were raised in December during the CBA's Holiday Auction. "Thank you to the members of the Colchester business community who graciously donated so many items for the auction, and to all those who attended and bid so generously," said Ash Bashir, auction chair. "We are so humbled by your support and are so grateful to be able to give back to the community that supports our businesses." Pictured from left are CBA President Chuck Maynard, Amber Albee of Colchester Youth and Social Services, CBA Vice President Jennifer Marozzi, First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos, and Bashir.

Upcoming Senior Center Trips

The Colchester Senior Center is planning the following trips – and reservations are due in March.

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

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

Gorgeous Glass in Boston: Tuesday, April 18. Spend time at the Mapparium at the Mary

Baker Eddy Library. This huge glass globe shows the world's boundaries frozen in time circa 1935. Also have a three-course family style Italian lunch at Maggiano's Little Italy, and then see flowers made of Austrian blown glass during a guided tour of The Glass Flowers exhibit in the Harvard Museum of Natural History. Cost is \$130 per person. Sign up at the senior center by March 17.

Beautiful: The Carole King Musical at the Thomaston Opera House: Sunday, April 30. See a matinee of this musical about the true story of singer-songwriter Carole King's rise to fame. A pre-show lunch will be served at Black Rock Tavern, with a meal choice of chicken marsala, salmon or pork tenderloin. Cost is \$125/person. Sign up at the senior center by March 30.

Kindergarten Registration

Kindergarten registration for the upcoming 2023-24 school year is now open at the Colchester Public Schools website, www.colchesterct.org.

Children who reside in Colchester and will be age 5 by Jan. 1, 2024, will be eligible to register for the full-day program. New registrations must be completed online.

To register, go to the website, select the "For Families" tab, and on the drop-down menu click on the tab for "Registration and Residency."

Complete and submit the pre-enrollment form and then follow the necessary steps outlined on the website and in the email you receive from the central registrar.

A list of required documents can be found on the website.

Also, Kindergarten Family Orientation Night will be held Thursday, May 11, in the Colchester Elementary School cafeteria. Families are invited to meet the teachers and learn more about the school.

Shredding Old Tax and Personal Records

Residents and businesses of Colchester and area towns can safely shred their old financial, medical and personal records on Saturday, April 22, from 9 a.m.-noon, at the Town Hall parking lot 127 Norwich Ave.

Boy Scout Troop 72 will have the certified shredding company File Shred in place to accept and safely shred your financial records. You can actually watch the items being put into the shredder and destroyed.

Old personal documents, business records, tax information and medical records, etc. will be accepted. There is no need to take off paper clips or staples. Costs are \$5 for a bag the size of a plastic grocery bag and \$10 for boxes the size of a case of copy paper. A bulk price can be negotiated for larger quantities of records.

Troop 72 will also accept recyclable containers on the records on shredding day, should you wish to donate them.

Ladies Guild Offering Trip

The St. Andrew Ladies Guild is offering a travel opportunity in May. From May 10-12, people can head to Lancaster, Pa., for a variety of activities.

Travelers will see two shows: *Moses* at the Sight & Sound Theatre, and *Footloose* at the Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre. There will also be a trip to Hershey, Pa., for a guided Hershey Town Tour. The last stop before heading home is a visit to the Wind Creek Bethlehem Casino for lunch on your own.

Cost is \$615/person double and \$745/person single, and includes transportation, two shows,

two nights' hotel, two breakfasts, two dinners, sightseeing and admissions as per itinerary, and a tour guide and driver gratuity.

Deposits are being accepted. Deposit is \$150 and the check is made to Friendship Tours. Send deposits to Guardian Angels Parish, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415. Trip protection coverage is strongly recommended at the time of deposit.

For more information and reservations, contact Barbara Gozzo at 860-537-0179 or barbgozzo@gmail.com.

New Story at Colchester StoryWalk

Families can enjoy a new picture book, *Best in Snow* by April Pulley Sayre, at the Colchester StoryWalk. With photo illustrations, the award-winning author sheds light on the wonders of snow.

From the beauty of snow blanketing the forest and falling on animals' fur and feathers to the fascinating winter water cycle, this nonfiction picture book celebrates snowfall and the science behind it.

The StoryWalk is located at 96 McDonald

Rd. Children and their families can follow the trail of weatherproof stations along a short hiking trail. Each station features suggested questions or simple activities to enrich the story and hike.

Colchester's StoryWalk features books with nature, wildlife, and gardening themes that appeal to young children. New books are posted four times a year as weather permits. Copies of each story can be checked out at Cragin Memorial Library.

Christian Life Chapel News

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

Weekly Schedule: Bible Study for Men: Mondays at 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 8 a.m.; Bible Study for women: Tuesdays at 10 a.m.; Community Bible Study and Prayer: Wednes-

days at 7 p.m.; Fridays: Donuts with Don at 10 a.m. -- this is an open discussion: How does God fit in this thing called life?

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

Project Grad Golf Tournament

Early bird registration for the Bacon Academy Project Graduation Golf Tournament will end April 15.

The tournament will take place Monday, May 15, at Glastonbury Hills Country Club. The day's activities include cookout lunch, 18 holes of golf with cart, scramble format, contests and prizes, raffles, and dinner at the clubhouse.

The event is open to the public. Registration until April 15 is \$130 per golfer, and all who register by this date will also be entered into an Early Bird Raffle. After April 15, the cost is \$160 per golfer.

Event details, including volunteer opportunities, sponsorship, donations, and participant registration, can be found at www.baconacademyprojectgrad.org. Email ba.projectgrad@gmail.com to request a printed brochure, which is also on the website; mailed registrations can

be sent to: Bacon Academy Project Graduation, PO Box 393, Colchester, CT 06415.

Proceeds from the tournament support Project Graduation, whose mission is to enhance drug- and alcohol-free awareness by providing safe events for seniors. Funded activities include Graduation Rehearsal refreshments; a senior yearbook signing event; commemorative gifts; 250 additional chairs for the graduation ceremony; and a post-graduation party at a surprise location.

All the events Project Graduation conducts are entirely paid for through the fundraising efforts and contributions of Bacon Academy parents, students, businesses and community members.

ButterBraid and Cake Roll Fundraiser

The St. Andrew Church Ladies Guild of Colchester is sponsoring a ButterBraid and Cake Roll fundraiser through March 21. All proceeds will fund the Guild's annual high school and college scholarships.

People may order online at tinyurl.com/mvty6xe4. Pickup will be Saturday, April 1, from 9-11 a.m., at the St. Andrew Parish Hall. For more information, call Kathleen at 860-917-7616.

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.

Incoming Kindergarten Story Time

Colchester Elementary School will host an Incoming Kindergarten Story Time session Tuesday, March 14, from 11:10-11:40 a.m., in the media center, 315 Halls Hill Rd., for 4- and 5-year-old Colchester children who will be entering kindergarten during the 2023-24 school year.

Children will listen to books read by kindergarten teachers, while parents learn about the registration process, the kindergarten curriculum, readiness expectations, the school day, school policies and transportation. A question-and-answer period will be available. No pre-registration is required.

Future sessions will be Tuesdays, April 4 and May 9. Parents and children are invited to attend multiple story times. Topics for parent information change each month.

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Additional \$1.5 Million Sought for Senior Center

By Michael Sinkewicz

The Colchester Senior Center Building Committee is requesting an additional \$1.5 million for constructing the new senior center.

On Feb. 14, the committee unanimously adopted the recommendation, which was forwarded to the boards of selectmen and finance.

Earlier this month, the selectmen awarded a construction contract to BRD Builders LLC in the amount of \$8.6 million.

The project has faced several hurdles, including litigation that threatened to delay construction indefinitely.

Republican Town Committee Chairman Taras Rudko and Selectman Jason LaChapelle previously sought an injunction that would've prevented the town from awarding the contract. However, New London Superior Court Judge Karen Goodrow denied the injunction request while also lifting an emergency injunction previously granted by the court.

At the 2021 referendum on the project, residents signed-off on \$9.5 million for the building of a new senior center. In recent weeks, town officials have signaled that additional funding avenues would likely be pursued to prevent future lawsuits.

In court, Goodrow agreed with assessments placing the project budget estimates somewhere between \$10.2-\$10.8 million. Currently, she said, the town has not committed to funds exceeding the amount approved at referendum.

Moving forward, town officials will have to determine whether an additional \$1.5 million is necessary to ensure that the project moves forward. To secure that funding, the town would likely need to hold a second referendum to secure community support, or utilize the Bendas estate funds, which were left to the town.

"Upon consultation with Andrea Migliaccio [chairman of the finance board], the next step in this process is to see the impact of value engineering on the total cost of the project," First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos said in a statement to the Riverast. "As promised to the public, the expectations were that the community would see the impact of value engineering before en-

gaging in the referendum process and alternative funding sources."

Value engineering involves working with the builder to potentially substitute items, which cuts costs without impacting the overall design of the building.

Bisbikos continued by stating that a majority of the finance board agrees that the focus should currently be on working on the town and education budgets.

"Once budget season is over, they will then be ready to discuss the approach on additional funding, which may include a referendum," he said. "With a contract in place and value engineering set to take place, there is nothing obstructing construction and movement on this project."

During the committee meeting, chairman Tony Tarnowski reviewed the project budget and explained the reasons for the request. Mainly, there are "escalation costs," which are increases associated with the pandemic and the extended timeframe of the project.

Ultimately, the total budget, if approved, would extend to \$11 million.

"This is the money I think we would like for them to get to us so we can get the project back to where it originally was," Tarnowski said.

Many budget lines increased while others remained the same. Tarnowski recommended raising construction costs from \$8.6 million to \$9.1 — a \$468,530 spike. He explained that this would allow the alternate bids that were removed from the budget to return.

The committee also called for \$290,000 more for furniture and equipment — a budget line that had been almost entirely eliminated previously to save money.

Another large increase was for legal services, which saw a \$40,000 hike. Although the prior expenses connected with the injunction are being covered by the town, the committee still expects other fees to arise.

"There are instances that could pop up where we're going to need to talk to our attorney and I don't know what they are right now, but I'd

rather be on the safe side," Tarnowski said. He added that many if the budget line increases were precautionary, and all of the additional funding may not be entirely necessary.

"For budget purposes, and going back to the town, I'd rather do it one time and have a little extra there and then always give it back," he explained.

During a phone call this week, Tarnowski stated that the committee was "trying to get back what we lost to inflation."

"These are things that we looked at if we had to cut costs and had to live without," he said, adding that the committee wasn't looking to add more than it originally intended or expand the building further. "It's still the same building."

One large item, he continued, was \$427,000 for a contingency fund, which was largely empty before. That money, if approved, could ultimately be returned to the town if the project runs smoothly.

Tarnowski emphasized that the committee was not looking to spend more than the taxpayers and boards intended. The town received a state grant of \$2.5 million, he said, bringing the cost down \$9.5 million to \$7 million. With this additional \$1.5 million request, the town would still be bonding \$8.5 million, he said.

Still, if the request heads to referendum, the town faces the possibility of the budget request being rejected. Although the original referendum passes by a large margin, it's difficult to determine if the community would support more

funding.

"Anything is possible," Tarnowski said, but expressed that as of now, the project is "still moving forward." Value engineering will be an "ongoing process," which could further reduce the budget, he added.

Overall, Tarnowski expressed that he remains confident in the project and believes groundbreaking will take place sometime in April.

"I've done construction my whole life and you let issues play out," he said. "People are always going to be in the negative and construction is a game of constant adjustments."

Tarnowski stated that he's worked through challenging circumstances before, including a project during Hurricane Katrina. While each situation is unique, it's his job to react to the problems and decisions in front of him.

"That's the same thing here. We make a plan to move forward."

During the committee's discussion, member Sean Nadeau stated that value engineering with BRD Builders would still take place, which would change the budget numbers, but "eventually we're still going to need more money."

The comments underscored the urgency of the request, especially as the boards enter budget season. Now that the request was approved, the boards have ample time to prepare and formulate a strategy moving forward. Selectman Rosemary Coyle, the committee's liaison, expressed that scheduling a referendum often takes several weeks upon road approval.

Dot Mrowka Scholarship Available

Applications for the annual memorial scholarship honoring the late Dorothy Mrowka, a Colchester woman remembered for her devotion and public service to her community, state and country, are currently being accepted.

The \$500 scholarship will be awarded to a graduating Bacon Academy student who will pursue a career in political science or govern-

ment service. Applications are available in the Bacon counseling office and must be returned there no later than Friday, March 10.

Anyone interested in donating to the scholarship fund in memory of Mrowka may send a check written to Bacon Academy with "Dorothy Mrowka Scholarship" noted directly to the school at 611 Norwich Ave, attention Danielle Bossie.

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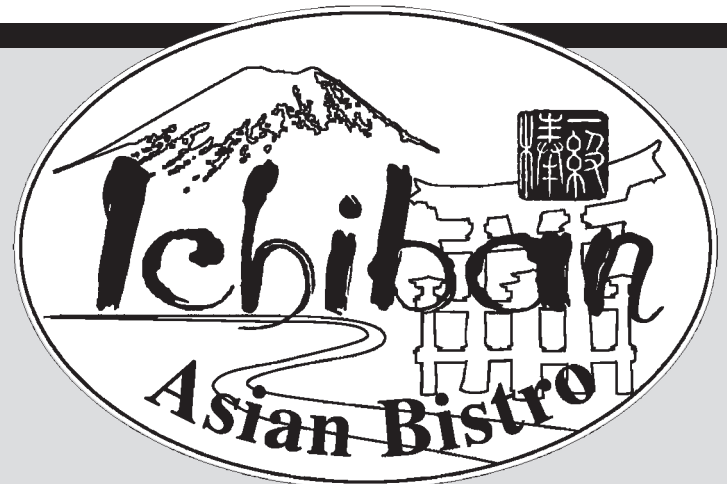
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Town Hires New Finance Director

By Michael Sinkewicz

The Colchester Board of Selectmen unanimously appointed Mary Williamson to be the town's next finance director.

Earlier this month, it was revealed that Debbie Kratochvil, who took over the role in the summer, would be stepping down from the position.

The board approved Williamson following a nearly two-hour executive session on Feb. 16.

First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos said in a statement to the *Rivereast* that Williamson will be a welcomed addition to Town Hall.

"Mary Williamson is an intelligent and hard-working individual with over 16 years of experience overseeing projects in financial and accounting operations for financial markets, risk management, and corporate finance management," he wrote.

Williamson, he said, has worked for the Texas Department of Health and Human Services as a region regional financial services manager where she "forecast revenues and expenditures for the general fund and other funds using trend analysis and econometric models/software."

He added that Williamson "brings prior ex-

perience using MUNIS, the software utilized by numerous Connecticut municipalities for financial accounting."

Bisbikos stated that Kratochvil "moved on due to personal reasons."

"We are thankful for all her hard work and the contributions she made to the town. We wish her the best in her future endeavors."

He did not elaborate on the reasons for her departure or provide a resignation letter.

Colchester has experienced many hurdles in its finance department over the last year.

In June, Chief Financial Officer Maggie Cosgrove retired after 17 years serving the town. Officials frequently cited the transition to a new director as a contributing factor to the difficulties experienced in the department. As Kratochvil began her new role, the town faced obstacles with numerous failed budget referendums, which ultimately resulted in a budget freeze.

The department also had to finalize transfers to ensure that the town wasn't over-budget for the previous fiscal year.

In general, the department has been cut in size, which created further problems. In Octo-

ber, the town began advertising for additional positions as some employees left to work for the school district.

At the time, Bisbikos told the *Rivereast* that department was facing several challenges.

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

While the empty positions were filled, the department was still understaffed.

During a finance board meeting in January, Kratochvil, displayed expenditures reports for the current fiscal year up until the end of December.

After a board member pointed out an unusually high coverage in a budget line, Kratochvil explained that due to a technical issue, that item, and potentially several others in the report, were inaccurate. The real figures, she said, were likely less than they appeared in the report.

Finance board member Mike Hayes stated that if the reports were knowingly inaccurate, they shouldn't have been sent out and the members should've been notified of the error in advance.

He said it was "incompetent," before rephrasing his position, asserting that Kratochvil was "not doing her due diligence."

Bisbikos defended the finance director, stating that "there are a lot of things going on" in the department. He expressed that the error was "no fault to Debbie or the diligent work of our staff."

Book and Bake Sale Coming

The Friends of Cragin Memorial Library has announced the Book and Bake Sale will return to Cragin, located at 8 Linwood Ave.

The sale will begin Friday, March 3, from 4-7 p.m., with a pre-sale admission of \$5. The sale continues with no admission charge on Saturday, March 4, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, March 5, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; and March 6-8 during regular library hours. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday are the \$5 special days – fill a

box or bag for only \$5.

There will be books, music, movies, puzzles and games. Baked goods will be individually wrapped for safety. All proceeds benefit programs funded by the Friends. These programs include, but are not limited to, Museum Passes, Adult Programs, Children's Programs, Summer Reading Programs, and other materials to benefit patrons of The Cragin Memorial Library.

Registration is encouraged, as there may be a limit on the number of attendees. Register at www.colchesterlandtrust.org. Questions can be emailed at info@colchesterlandtrust.org. Meet at the Bulkeley Hill Preserve Parking Lot on Bulkeley Hill Rd, Colchester.

Colchester Land Trust is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that works to permanently preserve and protect open space in Colchester. Go to www.colchesterlandtrust.org to join or donate.

Wild Woolies, Wrigglers and Wings

On Sunday, March 12, at 10 a.m., the Colchester Land Trust invites all to "Wild Woolies, Wrigglers and Wings" – a hiking program to be held at the Bulkeley Hill Preserve.

In this 90-minute hike, Liza Sivek will discuss some of the many native creatures – feathered, scaled and furry – who live in and around the preserve and their habitats. Appropriate for all ages, the three-mile hike features some elevation, the CLT said.

The hike is free for land trust members. (Non member adults \$5 each, kids under 18 free.)

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 dur-

ing 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.

Colchester Half Marathon Returns Feb. 25

The 31st running of the Colchester Half Marathon – a USATF-certified course (CT12001JHP) and a Hartford Track Club winter series race – will be Saturday, Feb. 25, at 10 a.m., at Bacon Academy, 611 Norwich Ave.

There will be an "early" start at 9:30 a.m. for approximately 25 runners who will need more than three hours to complete the race.

This hilly 13.1-mile course will feature three water and Gatorade stations, professional computerized chip timing, mile signs, volunteers on every turn, and dirt roads, cows, and other rural scenery.

There will be pre- and post-race massages and a post-race carbo re-load party in the Bacon Academy cafeteria with food, non-alco-

holic beverages, results, excuses, tales of woe, and camaraderie. Restrooms and showers will also be available at Bacon.

Not a runner? Guests are welcome, especially if they can volunteer to help. For more information or to volunteer, email Rick Konon at r-kon@sbcglobal.net or call him (between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.) at 860-537-4597. Need community service time? Also contact Konon.

Non-refundable entry fee is \$19; the day of the race, it is \$25. Race-day registration ends at 9:45 a.m.

Online registration is available until 6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24, at tinyurl.com/vay2jh2p.

Offer to all runners: If the entry fee is too high, send Konon what you want, or run for free, and donate whatever you can or wish.

Upcoming Programs at Cragin

Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave., has announced the following programs. For more information and full program descriptions, 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.

Cragin Craft Swap: Saturday, Feb. 25, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

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.

Egg Carton Wreaths Take & Make: Wednesday, March 1, for adults and teens. Stop by to pick up a craft kit while supplies last.

Drop-In Storytime: Saturday, March 4, 10:30 a.m. All ages are invited to this all-ages storytime about dragons.

Take & Make Lucky Gnome Craft: Monday, March 6: Pick up a kit in the children's department.

Dean's List

Colchester resident Dylan S. Graham made the fall 2022 Dean's List at Western Connecticut State University.



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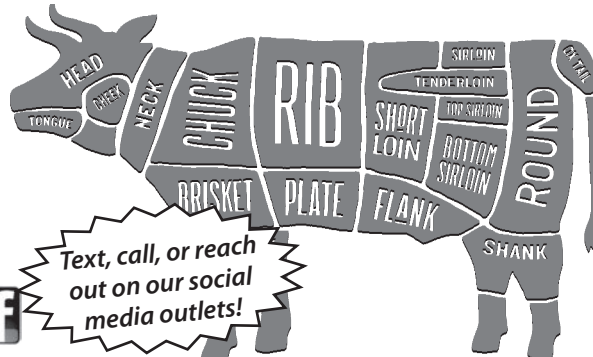
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Pasta Dinner Fundraiser

Troop 13 of Colchester is holding a pasta dinner fundraiser Saturday, March 4, at St. Andrew Parish Hall, 128 Norwich Ave. There will be two seatings: one from 4:30-6 p.m., and one from 6-7:30 p.m. Takeout is available.

Dinner includes: ziti with/without sauce, meatballs, salad, bread, dessert and beverage if dining in; there is no beverage for takeout.

Cost is \$12 for adults and \$8 for children under 10.

Pre-order tickets by contacting Sharon Colburn at troop13pastadinner@gmail.com or 860-798-5341

Operation FairyTale

Do you have new or gently-worn formal, cocktail or evening gowns taking up space in your closet? If so, you're invited to donate them to Kidsignments' Operation FairyTale and help ladies in New London County just in time for prom season.

Dress donations can be made to Kidsignments' 51 Hayward Ave. location during normal business hours.

There will also be an Operation FairyTale dress event Friday, March 3, from 3-7 p.m., at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

Theatre Makes Triumphant Return

By Michael Sinkewicz

The Colchester Community Theatre celebrated a milestone presentation of Young Frankenstein last weekend, the group's 25th full-length musical production.

Following a brief hiatus due to the pandemic, the CCT returned with a rendition of the classic musical comedy, originally created by Mel Brooks and adapted from his 1974 movie of the same name.

Ahead of the show, Diane Ozmun, president of the CCT, promised a "funny, whacky and crazy" performance, perhaps a bit more "risque" than past selections.

"It's got all of these pieces that people just need on the other side of these pandemic years," Ozmun expressed.

On Friday night, the audience line at Bacon Academy extended nearly out the door as community members arrived for the first of four weekend shows.

Fans of the original film and musical adaptation were treated with many familiar jokes and all of their favorite characters, while younger audience members took in a new and entertaining story for the first time.

After weeks of rehearsal, the cast was ready for opening night.

"You always try to put 110% into every show," Tullio Milani, who played the lead character "Frederick Frankenstein," told the Rivereast. "With the first show, having an audience always brings extra excitement and energy."

Milani shared the stage with his wife Johanna, who played "Inga." Around seven and half years ago, Tullio and Johanna Milani met during a production of Young Frankenstein while playing the same characters. Now, they're married with two children.

Although the couple lives in North Haven, they seized the opportunity to reprise their old roles. Throughout the rehearsals, they became more attached to the community and exchanged stories from cast members with deep roots in the CCT. While it was the Milanis' first show with the group, they immediately felt a connection.

"It was very heartwarming," Johanna said, regarding the milestone production. "We were able to witness these stories unfold in front of us and it was so beautiful. Our mission was to make the show as good as possible to help unite the joy of the community."

Tullio said he was experiencing some "post show blues," and wished the production could've continue for a few more weeks. After one show, he said, an audience member popped backstage and was overcome with emotions.

"It was really the sweetest thing," he said. "It shows that we did our job."

At first, returning to a pair of characters who hold a special place in their relationship was re-

warding, but the couple quickly became captivated by the organization itself.

"This community is amazing and welcoming," Johanna said, adding that they always looked forward to driving to Colchester. "I can't wait to come back and do another show."

Tullio agreed, expressing that regardless if they play lead characters, or just sit in the audience, they want to be involved in the future.

"Now, we're going to do it for the people," he said. "We're honored to have met the Colchester Community Theatre."

During the weekend, a cast member welcomed the couple into their home for a few nights, making the schedule more manageable.

"Who does that?" Johanna expressed.

"They deserve another 25 years," Tullio said.

Wallis Johnson, the show's director and a co-founder of the organization, said the show was "truly amazing."

"We had a full-house for every show and audiences really enjoyed themselves," she said. "The talent on stage was extraordinary. The costumes just elevated everything along with the special effects."

After a hectic weekend, Johnson was able to take a moment and reflect on the 25th show anniversary and how the organization has evolved over time. At the beginning, "we had nothing," she explained. Now, after seeing how many crew members are involved with the production and the caliber of shows the CCT can bring forward, Johnson believes this weekend was a "great representation of where we've come."

Many stories stand out, but she agrees with the sentiment shared by Tullio and Johanna. The CCT creates lasting friendships that many of the cast and crew maintain for a lifetime. She recalled that one young girl joined the CCT's summer workshop years ago, and then stuck with the group and stayed involved some capacity.

The girl couldn't be directly involved with this show because she's busy with college, but will likely return again.

"She said 'I'll be here next year for my theatre family,'" Johnson stated. "Those are the stories that really hit me."

Johnson expressed that many out-of-town actors reach out and try to participate in additional shows, despite the added travel. Seemingly, the group has a magically quality that continues to inspire local actors.

"I've heard those words for years," Johnson said, referring to organization being a family. "There's something special about this group."

She said she gets "weepy-eyed" thinking about the success of this show and the CCT.

Both Tullio and Johanna have a familiarity with the characters, but they entered this performance with an open mind. Tullio explained

that in general, comedic acting is challenging and Dr. Frankenstein is responsible not only for landing jokes, but delivering high-powered musical numbers.

As rehearsals progressed, he received feedback that his portrayal was channeling Gene Wilder, who played the character in the original film.

While some audiences are familiar with the events that transpired in Transylvania, others haven't seen the infamous scientist, or his lab assistant on stage before, giving the cast a chance to deliver their own interpretations.

"You try and find a balance between authenticity and your own spin and there's a challenge in creating your own character and paying homage," Johanna explained.

Naturally, with these specific characters, the couple could tap into past ideas, but they both wanted to avoid simply throwing on a lab coat and duplicating what they've already done in the past.

"We wanted to play them differently," Tullio said.

Yes, they're familiar with the roles, but it wasn't exactly like "riding a bike."

"We were trying to figure out how to ride the bike differently," he said, adding that the roles still "mean so much to us."

This time, they looked at the scrip with "new eyes," Johanna remarked.

She said that Johnson was open to different ideas and it was her vision that the cast tried to materialize.

Most couples don't have an opportunity to work together professionally. Having met during a performance and participated in other productions, it can be interesting sharing a stage.

"We're able to separate stage vs. real life," Johanna said. She's directed Tullio in the past and joked that she had to be "mean" to him. "Having chemistry helps and we do really work well together."

Tullio elaborated on Johanna's point, expressing that he always tries to build chemistry with the crew. He acknowledged that working with his wife can be fun, but bringing that mindset to the whole production is beneficial.

"Having chemistry gives you license and trust to explore uncomfortable situations," he said.

This year, developing chemistry was "organic," Tullio added.

"It's being open to saying 'hi,' and not being shy," he said, asserting that he branches out to everyone in the cast, from the lead actors to the last member of the ensemble. "That automati-

cally creates a bond."

Forming those relationships throughout a production becomes invaluable to a show's success, but they also make the final curtain call bittersweet. Tullio referenced his "post show blues," which developed because "we established a family."

It becomes easy to put on a show when you "fully trust the actors," he said.

Once they're out on stage, performing the show is entirely fun and satisfying. The production on Friday night generated countless laughs and delivered on the lofty expectations consistently associated with the CCT.

For Tullio, his favorite part of the show was when "Igor" informs Dr. Frankenstein that the brain put into the monster belonged to "Abby... Normal."

"It's a lot of fun and every night there's a different feel to it," he said.

Johanna pointed to the song, "Roll in the Hay," which she shares with Tullio. However, it was impossible to exclude "Puttin' on the Ritz," which was perhaps the "showstopper."

"Those tappers are mind-blowing and incredible," she said.

Overall, the production went smoothly and without noticeable hiccups, although, Tullio recognized a few slip-ups of his own.

"As performers, we know the accidents," he said jokingly. "Actors are our own worst critics sometimes."

Every summer 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. The organization routinely participates in town events, such as the Memorial Day Parade.

Amora Mellott, from Hartford, was at Friday's production in support of ensemble members Anna and Robin Greenwald, of Marlborough.

"I've been giddy this whole time watching them," she said. "This is also [Anna's] dad's favorite films, so we watched it a couple months ago and then when we found out the play was happening, they got very excited to audition."

Mellott was armed with several gifts for the Greenwald's, including flowers. She, like many in the community, was happy to be at the theatre again.

"This is a great environment," she said. "Any time you get to go to a show is amazing, but whenever you know people in it, it just adds an extra level of excitement and joy."

Parks and Rec News

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

Strategic Plan Survey: All are invited to take part in the Colchester Strategic Plan survey and be a part of future planning. Link to survey: www.surveymonkey.com/r/ColchesterCTStrategicPlan.

Card-Making Class: The third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m., at Town Hall. Upcoming dates: 3/15, 4/19. Cost: \$15 per class, per person (\$20 for nonresidents). A minimum of two people is needed for this class.

Heartsaver CPR AED/First Aid: This course trains participants to give CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED). Cost: \$90 per person. Next class date: Tuesday, March 21, 6 p.m.

Gentle Yoga: See the Parks and Rec. website

for dates and times. Cost: \$40/resident, \$45/non-resident.

Summer Camp Staff: Adults and teens age 16 and up can fill out an employment application to work at Colchester's Summer Day Camp, which will start June 26. Applications are available online, and are due March 30. This is a paid position, and for employees with children, the child can participate in camp for free.

Summer Camp Teen Leaders: Open to Colchester residents ages 14 and older by the start of camp. This is a volunteer position. Applications are due March 15 and can be found online.

President's List

Colchester residents Julia Grottole and Nicholas Tartsinis made the fall 2022 President's List at Western Connecticut State University.

Grottole is working toward a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education/psychology, and Tartsinis is working toward a Bachelor of Arts degree in law and society.

See More Colchester News, page 31

Seed Library Opens March 1

The Colchester Garden Club and Cragin Memorial Library have announced the Colchester Seed Library will open Wednesday, March 1, for the start of its second year.

The seed library offers vegetable, herb, flowers and native seeds free of charge for the public to grow at home, either starting indoors or direct sow when the weather warms. It is located in the Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave., and is available during normal library hours. The Seed Library will continue to be restocked through the growing season with new seed varieties. There are also educational handouts on seed starting and gardening available in the Seed Library Binder, which can be found with the Seed Library.

There are some changes to the seed library this year:

- The public may take up to three seed packages per visit.
- The seed library will be located on the second floor in the adult library section; ask staff

Fish Fry Fridays

The Colchester Fish and Game Club is holding its annual Fish Fry dinners every Friday during Lent, starting Feb. 24 and continuing through and including Good Friday, April 7.

Meal choices include traditional fish and chips, baked fish with baked potato, the club's breaded clam strip dinner, as well as chicken nuggets for the kids. All meals include coleslaw, coffee and dessert. Cost is \$16 for adults and \$9 for kids.

Meals will be served from 6-8 p.m. Take-out is available by calling the club at 860-537-2593 after 5:30 p.m. on Fridays.

for assistance in locating it.

- A seed library for children is being added with five easy-to-grow plant varieties including cherry tomato, basil, cucumber, pumpkin and sunflower. The children's seed library will be located on the first floor near the parenting section in the children's section.

If you would like to be notified when the Seed Library is restocked, send an email to colchestergardenclub@yahoo.com asking to be put onto the email listing for these notices, or complete the contact information form at the seed library.

The Colchester Seed Library is a partnership between the Colchester Garden Club and the Cragin Memorial Library. For information on the Colchester Garden Club, email colchestergardenclub@yahoo.com or call the club's membership coordinator at 860-267-4471.

President's List

Evan Clark of Colchester made the fall 2022 President's List at Merrimack College's Girard School of Business.

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Longtime Glastonbury Vet Opens Local Office

By Jack Lakowsky

Meeting a local need left unmet after a local veterinarian passed away before they could arrange their affairs for the business, venerable vet Glastonbury Animal Hospital has opened an office in the former Marlborough Bird and Animal Hospital location.

"We decided to come in and help fill the void for the town," Emily Nuckols, Glastonbury Animal Hospital's practice manager, told the *Rivereast* this week.

The Glastonbury practice has been around since the 1970s and is a staple in Marlborough's neighboring town. They've been in the same building, and independently owned, since their founding.

Looking at the Glastonbury office you wouldn't think it's decades-old – Nuckols said the business has made sure to keep the business attractive and updated, and this work ethic has carried over into Marlborough.

The vet has hundreds of rave reviews on Google, and calls to the office – not infrequent when, like this reporter, you have a senior dog – are always answered by friendly, helpful staffers. Examinations are thorough and efficient, and even if your pet has a bad case of white coat syndrome, they receive attentive, loving care.

In one website review, one customer was effusive towards the vet.

"I have entrusted the health and care of my pets to Glastonbury Animal for over 25 years. [The] staff are the best. They provide excellent care and definitely go above and beyond for their patients and their care givers. Staff very friendly and knowledgeable. Definitely a 5 star

operation." -Philomena P.

Doctors also point out and appreciate when a customer cares well for their pet, and offer keen insights, like how as dogs get older their discipline tends to wane, but that they're as loving and loyal as ever.

Accessibility and being informative and honest with clients, Nuckols said, is central to the office's business model. They don't want their clients calling and calling, trying to get through to make an appointment.

The vet has been working on opening in Marlborough since late last year, she said.

She said the new spot may have some limited hours now, open Monday, Wednesday and Friday, but they're hoping to expand these soon.

"We're doing mostly small animal," said Nuckols. Along with cats and dogs, the office services smaller, just-as-loved friends like guinea pigs, hamsters and rabbits as well as the "occasional exotic" pet. No matter if your bud is furred, scaled or feathered, Glastonbury Animal Hospital is accepting new clients.

All these services and still locally owned, "not corporate," Nuckols said. "There's no desire to sell to any corporation. Clients still get that personal care and accessibility we pride ourselves on. We treat your animal like family; we treat them how they should be treated. Communication and accessibility all fall back into the best care for that pet."

Nuckols emphasized the synergy between the two offices, which will share records and be very connected with each other.

There's some productivity going on at the Glastonbury office too, renovating the patient



Renowned veterinary practice Glastonbury Animal Hospital has opened a practice in Marlborough.

area, another in a long list of building beautifications, which includes a new lobby and exam rooms.

For more information visit glastonburyani-

malhospital.com or call/text 860-800-6702 or call the Marlborough office at 860-295-3939 or Glastonbury at 860-633-8394.

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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 richmondprograms@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.

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.; next dates: March 7 and 21.

Kids Crafting Club: Meets every other Tuesday at 4 p.m. Future dates: Feb. 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.

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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. 27: Free bread and bakery goods, 10 a.m.; 8-ball pool, 10 a.m.-noon; Congregate Meal, noon. Menu: grape juice, rigatoni Bolognese, vegetable medley, garlic knot, whole-grain fruit bar; Meals-on-Wheels, noon.

Tuesday, Feb. 28: Grocery Shopping, 8:30 a.m.-noon; free bread and bakery goods, 10 a.m.; Meals-on-Wheels, noon.

Wednesday, March 1: Not Just Quilters (sew day), 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: roast beef with gravy, mashed potatoes, steamed spinach, 100% whole wheat bread; fresh fruit.

Thursday, March 2: Tai Chi, 10:30-11:30 a.m.; Meals-on-Wheels, noon; American Red Cross blood drive, 1-6 p.m.; Parkinson's Exercise with Anne, 3-4 p.m.

Friday, March 3: 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: cracker crumb haddock, rosemary potatoes, baby carrots/tartar sauce, 100% whole wheat bread; setback, 1-4 p.m.

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

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

Food Bank: Located at 3 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.

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

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 Breau, Carrie Crompton, Monika Kinstler and Deborah Robin. To 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.

Lions Eyeglass and Hearing Aid Collection

The Marlborough Lions collect used eyeglasses and hearing aids, which are then provided to people in impoverished countries all around the world.

The Marlborough Lions drop boxes are located at Town Hall, Liberty Bank, the Marlborough Senior Center and at the office of Dr. Steven Rafalowsky on Saner Road. The Lions collect the eyeglasses and hearing aids all year

long, but on March 12, Lions Clubs from all over Connecticut will be meeting to turn in the collected items. Eyeglass cases are also appreciated.

For more information, or to learn more about the Marlborough Lions, call Lions Secretary Ken Hjulstrom at 860-490-9116 or Lions Club President Megan Lloyd at 413-687-5537.

Dean's List

Marlborough residents Kyle Dickinson, Nathan Green and Garrett Kleinhenn made the fall 2022 Dean's List at the University of Hartford.



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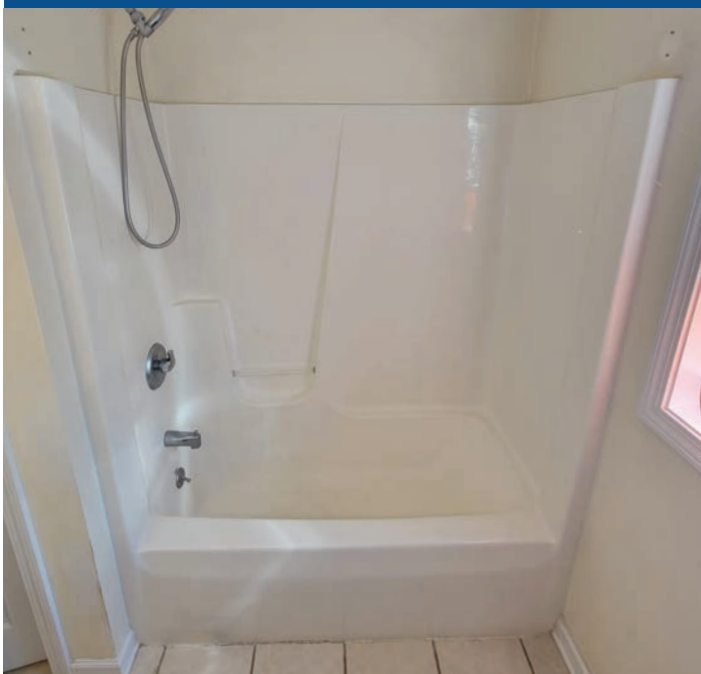
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Kindergarten Registration

Marlborough Elementary School will accept registration packets for kindergarten students for the 2023-24 school year on Wednesday, March 15, from 9-11 a.m., 1-2 p.m. and 5-6:30 p.m.; and Thursday, March 16, from 9-11 a.m. and 1-2 p.m. All completed kindergarten packets should be dropped off at the school's main office located at 25 School Drive.

Children are eligible for kindergarten if they will be 5 years old by Jan. 1, 2024. Registration packets have been sent home to prospective kindergarteners. If you have an eligible child and have not received a registration packet, call the school office at 860-295-6220. If you receive a registration packet and do not plan to enroll your child, you are asked to call the school as soon as possible.

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. 26 is Membership Sunday, when 14 people will be welcomed into the Church as new members. The Rev. Valerie Seaver's sermon title is "Re"Member, based on Genesis 3:19-21 and Matthew 4:1-11. The anthem piece, "Lightworker," will be sung and played by singer and guitarist Steve Pozzato. The Bell

Choir is scheduled to play during the Centering Moment.

Lenten Soup Suppers: Upstairs in the Thienes Lounge at 6 p.m. for five Wednesdays starting March 1.

Bible Study (Faith Enrichment): Meets every Thursday at 10:30 a.m. in the Thienes Lounge.

Outreach: The church supports a variety of mission projects. First-quarter mission-giving will go to Marlborough Food Bank. The church collects non-perishable food items year-round for Marlborough Food Bank with a basket located in the narthex for Sunday worshipers to bring their donations. The Drive Thru Café provides a take-away hot meal at the church to Marlborough Food Bank clients on the last Sunday of every month (except July and August).

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

Second Blessings Thrift Shop is open for selling and donations Fridays from noon-3 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. The shop also sells items year-round through eBay at bit.ly/MCCebay.

General Info: Worship services and programs are open to all. The church is an Open and Affirming faith community. For more information on the church or its programs, call the church office at 860-295-9050 or Seaver's direct line at 860-295-0432.

St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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With Pricy Work Ahead, Town Proposes 12% Budget Hike

By Jack Lakowsky

Facing an incoming storm of rising costs Marlborough Interim Town Manager Amy Traversa has proposed a nearly 12% budget increase in town operations spending for the 2023-24 fiscal year.

With a sharp (and certainly fortunate) decrease in capital spending, the total town request, including general operations and capital needs, is about 7.30%.

In numbers the town's asking the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance, and eventually, voters, to approve a proposal of about \$6.5 million, up from the current expenditure plan of about \$5.6 million, rising around \$442,000 – nearly a fifth of which is due to the town's settling a multi-hundred thousand lawsuit brought by a former employee, an expense that will continue into the 2024-25 budget.

In her presentation, Traversa names a rash of

expenses driving the double-digit increase, including inflation – especially in utility costs – cybersecurity upgrades, new personnel like the town manager and what Traversa calls necessary wage increases to keep the town competitive.

The new town manager position makes up about 9% of the bump, at around \$60,000.

Also listed as major expenses are overdue roadwork, overdue equipment repairs, building maintenance and “unfunded state mandates.”

“In developing this budget,” wrote Traversa, “we have continued to take a conservative yet realistic approach about funding changes that may be realized.”

Raising the town's salaries is another driver of the budget.

For months the town struggled to find a permanent finance director, and while in this case,

Traversa has said, the previous director's departure was not a question of pay, it's necessary to look at means of employee retention.

“We really have to talk about salaries,” said Traversa at the time.

The town's wages and benefits packages, especially for administrators and other high-skilled positions, haven't kept up with private industry, the interim town manager explained. She described the jobs as “woefully underfunded.”

“We have to talk about addressing this or we're going to lose people,” she said. While not everyone can get a pay jump, the town must put a “premium” on higher-skilled positions.

“We're vulnerable,” she said, adding she's not sure if “it'll all wait till budget season.”

Another issue: towns, for need of talent, are “cannibalizing” each other's workforces, and that Marlborough needs to make itself more attractive to employees new and old.

With a proposed mill rate increase of 35.27 mills, down .28 mill from this year, making for a modest savings for most homeowners. Average taxes on a \$250,000 house would go down from about \$8,888 per year to \$8,818.

Grand list growth, the list of all taxable property in a town, was mixed, according to the proposal. Real estate value growth was below .5%, while personal property value and motor vehicles went up by about 4% and 6%, respectively. In all Marlborough's grand list grew a mite more than 1%, about \$6.5 million, putting the overall value of the town's taxable property at nearly \$632 million.

As far as boons to the town, debt service is down, and state funding went up, albeit minutely, by about 2%, or just under \$75,000. If this budget passes as-is the town will have about \$5.4 million in debt after making a \$806,000 payment, the same that was made for the current spending plan.

A major relief comes from capital spending, money spent on major equipment like fire-trucks, which is down by nearly half. This fiscal year the town budgeted \$520,000 for capital spending. Now the town is looking at around a \$307,000 price tag, down nearly 41%.

Town revenues, from sources like taxes and state money, are expected to be more than \$27 million.

Broken down the two priciest departments are general government at about \$2.8 million and the local constabulary, with a budget request of nearly \$1.7 million, more than the budgets of the library and parks and rec combined.

The selectboard and the interim manager touched upon the budget in their Tuesday night meeting.

Traversa said the budget has “many moving pieces”, and that some faulty recordkeeping on the town's part has complicated the process, with information about town projects retired last year not properly tracked. The state is auditing the town's finances, and the town has had to request an extension to give itself time to self-correct.

“We're not the only town doing this,” said Traversa. “We keep in touch with our auditors.”

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.

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.

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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@marlborough.k12.ct.us to receive a screening questionnaire or for more information regarding the program.

Marlborough Lions Pancake Breakfast

The Marlborough Lions Club will hold its annual Pancake Breakfast Sunday, March 26, at the East Glastonbury Fish and Game Club on Planeta Road in Marlborough, which is located off of West Road just east of Exit 12 from Route 2.

The Lions will be open for dine-in or take-out orders from 7:45-11:45 a.m. The Lions will serve various varieties of pancakes along with sausage, ham, fruit coffee and juice.

The Lions Club supports programs that address various issues, including blindness, drug abuse prevention and diabetes awareness as well as supporting many local charities such as the Marlborough Food and Fuel Banks and vision screening for children in grades pre-K to 6

at Marlborough Elementary School.

Tickets will be sold in advance and will also be available at the door. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$9 for seniors and \$7 for children 12 and under.

The success of this event is also dependent upon local businesses, which support the Lions in the form of \$25 sponsorships. Lions Club members will contact local businesses in advance of the breakfast and any business interested in providing a sponsorship is encouraged to contact the Lions.

For more information, to provide a sponsorship or to purchase tickets, call Megan Lloyd at 413-687-5537 or Lions secretary Ken Hjulstrom at 860-490-9116.

Student Art Show Coming

Marlborough Arts Center will host the annual Student Art Show for students from Marlborough, Hebron and Andover on Saturdays and Sundays from March 4-19, from 1-4 p.m. each day, at the arts center, 231 N. Main St. Admission is free.

The show is coordinated by Sue Hollister and Lin Gotta, collaborating closely with art teachers from all the schools in Regional School District No. 8. The art teachers are: Denise Ketterer at Marlborough Elementary, Roseanne Modzelewski at Hebron Elementary, Susan Giammarco at Gilead Hill Elementary, Jessica Waine at Andover Elementary, Micaela Van Sicklin at

RHAM Middle School, and Bev Fisher, Shelly Osowiecki and Carrie Dinunzio at RHAM High School.

Marlborough Arts Center is a nonprofit regional center for the fine arts, performing arts, and fine crafts. Parking is free and the building is handicapped-accessible. Details about this and other artistic endeavors, rentals, and membership can be viewed online at www.marlborougharts.org. Anyone who has particular questions or would like to speak with a member of the Board of Directors can leave a message at 860-467-6353.

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.marlborougharts.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 voicemail message at the Arts Center at 860-467-6353.




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Finance Board Demands Answers About Lawsuit

By Jack Lakowsky

In last Thursday's Marlborough Board of Finance meeting board members pressed Interim Town Manager Amy Traversa for more information about the \$250,000 lawsuit the Board of Selectmen recently voted to settle despite a public vote saying 'no' to doing so.

Specifically, finance board members, particularly Ken Hjulstrom, needed answers on whether the payment needs finance board approval, that the payment exceeds the amount requiring board of finance approval. Traversa rebuffed the claim, saying the board had already discussed the move with legal counsel.

And in Tuesday's Board of Selectmen meeting, members of the public lambasted the selectmen for opaqueness, secrecy and subversion.

The case goes back to the 2010s, during Traversa's time as first selectman. A public works employee filed suit, naming Traversa and the town as defendants, for violating his rights under the Family Medical Leave Act, when Traversa did not grant the employee leave or accommodations to deal with his ailments.

Traversa said she was merely notifying board members of the board, not seeking approval.

Traversa said she, town legal counsel and government administrators went over the rules "with the charter in front of us."

Hjulstrom accused Traversa and the selectboard of acting in "a deceptive manner to skirt the charter."

Hjulstrom said the money eyed to transfer out of the town's legal funds into the selectboard's budget – about \$110,000 – is just under the

amount requiring approval.

A few weeks ago, in a tight vote, locals voted 'no' to the town's paying the settlement with a special appropriation. This doesn't appear to have mattered much – soon after the public vote, the selectboard held a private meeting and voted 3-1 to pay the money in a different way, via interdepartmental transfers. While transfers don't need public approval, when they exceed a certain percentage of the town's operating budget, the board of finance needs to approve it.

In a letter to selectpersons and Traversa, finance board chair Mike Nastri fleshed out what the finance board wants to know.

Nastri wants related meeting minutes and memos, as well as any calculations used. Per the charter, the finance board must approve intradepartmental transfers exceeding 10% of the town's general budget, and for interdepartmental transfers of 1% or more.

The finance board also requested a corrective plan describing how the selectboard plans to prevent future lawsuits.

In his own letter to the town, Hjulstrom gets granular in his reasoning.

"I will note the [current] town operations budget is \$5,560,921, so 2% of that amount is \$111,218, while 1% [would be] \$55,609," he wrote.

"These numbers are critical in determining whether the Board of Finance needs to approve any requests that exceed 1% of town operations or whether any requests need to be sent to a public hearing."

Hjulstrom spelled out his concerns.

First, he said the request to move \$60,000 from contingency to legal fees exceeds the 1% limit that would need finance board approval.

Further, Hjulstrom wrote, "contingency" is not a department, "so when it comes to making an 'interdepartmental' transfer, I contend this section of the charter does not apply to this line item and...I would expect the [selectboard] to get [finance board] approval whenever utilizing contingency funds as has been the case in the past."

Contingency is a resource, not a department, Hjulstrom contended.

In all, the selectboard has made three transfer requests to cover the incoming payment for the lawsuit, with 60 grand from contingency, 30 grand from public works payroll and 20 grand from general maintenance.

Hjulstrom said the transfers make for a \$110,000, and this is the total to be considered as whole.

"[D]ividing the transfer into three pieces...is nothing more than a poorly concealed attempt to avoid the 2% threshold," he said.

Hjulstrom also discussed this in his letter.

He argued the "legal fee" line item in the budget is not an appropriate recipient of funds to pay the settlement. Hjulstrom concedes the selectboard has power to "compromise or settle" legal claims, but that this addresses "services provided by town counsel performed to come to a settlement," not "the actual disbursement of funds to settle a case."

Hjulstrom also said the move directly opposes the public's will. The town in a 59-52 vote decided it did not want the \$250,000 paid as a special appropriation. Hjulstrom wrote this was not just a rejection of the appropriation but was also a vote of no confidence in Traversa.

"We can argue the pros and cons on settling," he continued, "but the public spoke and if the board of selectmen wish to pursue funding any [further funding], [then it] should reapproach the public with more convincing selling points."

Last week, when the board questioned her, Traversa did not provide specific answers, but

rather said the finance board's notification was a matter of rote.

Hjulstrom wrote, in part: "Ms. Traversa failed to present any intelligible response to the questions raised."

He continued: "I would also point out the attorney at the Feb. 1 public hearing was quite insistent that this case would go back to court if the motion failed. This was very misleading for the public since the board of selectmen is now trying to do otherwise."

Resident Christopher Barella, who serves on the finance board alongside Hjulstrom but was speaking as an individual, said not only was Traversa unable to satisfy finance board questioning, but that it had been made clear that if voters said "no", the case would go to trial.

Barella said the board's naming Traversa town manager – Traversa having then-pending litigation against her – was "boneheaded," and said the board should appoint a new interim manager to limit further risk to the town.

According to Traversa and the selectboard, the decision the town voted on was not that simple.

"We don't have any signed agreement," Traversa told the board.

Traversa said the board is authorized to settle the case, what's still being worked on is where the money comes from. The public denied the board the use of an appropriation, so the board has to use other means.

"We have to come up with a solution acceptable to both sides," said Traversa, adding that if no settlement is reached, the case then goes to full trial.

"Nothing has been decided," she said, and that the case at the moment is stalemated.

Turns out, Traversa revealed Tuesday night, Hjulstrom and the other finance board members were correct. The moving of money the selectboard wants to do to settle the case must first get finance board approval, Traversa said, and that she had "thought" she was simply notifying the board.



Artwork on Display... Roy Wrenn is one of the artists on the Board of Directors for the Marlborough Arts Center who is currently exhibiting his paintings in the Marlborough Town Hall. A resident of Glastonbury, Wrenn says his paintings, done in oil or acrylics, reflect his love of the sea. After a career as a chief mate in the Merchant Marine, Wrenn took up painting as a form of relaxation. He is a member of the Glastonbury Art Guild, the Clinton Art Society, the Marlborough Arts Center, and the New Haven Paint and Clay Club. His work is on display in Connecticut and New York. Six of his acrylic paintings are part of the Marlborough Town Hall exhibit and can be seen through June.

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Resident ‘Deeply Disappointed’ by Scenic Road Decision

By Michael Sinkewicz

Last week, the Planning and Zoning Commission denied a request to officially designate Kinney Road as a “scenic road,” sparking controversy – and now a resident is speaking out about the decision.

Following months of debate and several delays, the commission voted 3-2 in favor of denying the request with recently appointed members Jason Boice and Devon Garner joining Chairman Natalie Wood in opposition. Frank Zitkus and David Sousa voted in favor of the designation.

After the vote, Wood expressed that the request was not perfectly aligned with the town’s Plan of Conservation and Development.

“The petition did not meet the spirit of ‘scenic road,’” she said.

Garner added that while the road is “beautiful,” the designation would restrict the Public Works Department’s ability to properly maintain the road.

This week, Kevin Tulimieri, a Kinney Road resident who helped organize the scenic road petition, told the *Rivereast* that he surprised and “deeply disappointed” with commission’s ruling.

“Kinney Road is the definition of scenic,” he said. “The town missed out on an opportunity.”

Tulimieri emphasized that the request went largely unchallenged during the commission’s public hearing and that the petition met the necessary criteria to be awarded the scenic title.

Under the Hebron Code of Ordinances, the scenic road designation is intended to “preserve the existing physical, environmental and cultural features or attributes of the road and right-of-way that characterize the scenic nature and warrant designation.”

In November, Town Planner Matthew Bordeaux wrote a memo stating that upon his review, “the request and supporting materials finds

that all requirements have been satisfied.”

Then in January, Bordeaux recommended tabling a final decision on the designation until the commission received further insight from the attorney.

“In light of a significant debate about the future location of a municipal Public Works Facility, the timing of the request has raised numerous questions about the Scenic Road Ordinance and the Commission’s role and authority,” he stated.

Kinney Road’s connection to the project inescapable. While town officials have maintained that regardless if the facility is constructed on Kinney Road, the characteristics of the street would not be impacted.

“I don’t know why the request was denied,” Tulimieri said. “It appears that this was an effort by the town to leave open the possibility of a Public Works facility.”

Town Manager Andrew Tierney, who wrote a letter to the commission opposing the designation, called Tulimieri’s comments “unfortunate.”

“We’re not looking to upset residents,” he said. “We did what we thought was right.”

He expressed that the commission was acting in the “best interest of the town.” The scenic road designation is used across the state, he said, and Kinney Road simply didn’t reach the “scenic” standard. In Hebron, only one similar request has been approved by the commission, which was for Burrows Hill Road in 2001.

“It’s a beautiful road but I don’t believe it’s scenic,” Tierney said, adding that if any scenic road enthusiasts visited Hebron to explore Kinney Road, they’d likely be “disappointed.”

The town manager also believes the ongoing Public Works facility controversy influenced some residents’ perceptions of the designation, which he said were unrelated to each other.

“During the public hearing, people couldn’t separate Public Works from scenic road, and

they were clearly clouded by the project,” he said. “The town has no intention of changing the appearance of the road.”

Still, the request appeared to be in alignment with the town ordinance. The commission, Tierney said, should consider revisiting the scenic ordinance and how future applications should be handled moving forward.

Selectmen Meeting

At beginning of the commission’s meeting last week, Tulimieri read a section of Hebron’s Code of Ethics from the Town Charter that emphasized the town’s need for honest and fair policy decisions in order to maintain public trust.

Then later that week on Thursday, Tulimieri spoke during the selectmen meeting and stated the board had attempted to influence the commission’s scenic road decision. He referenced one of the board’s discussions during a November meeting, which he said undermined the commission’s own process.

Board of Selectman Chairman Daniel Larson pushed back on Tulimieri’s comments during the meeting.

“I for one, nor anybody else that I know of, has had any communications, literally for weeks if not months, with anybody on planning and zoning,” he said. “I almost take that as an act of slander.”

During his interview, Tulimieri said that it’s “important to hold elected officials accountable.” He added that accountability could also take place at the ballot box.

Tierney stated that Tulimieri’s comments during the meeting were “disappointing.”

“I don’t think he knows where Dan’s heart is,” he said, adding that there was “no intimidation by myself.” He said the commission acted on their “own accord.”

The board unanimously appointed a five-member committee to work with DKA Advertising to formulate a Public Works facility project survey that will be sent out to the community.

DKA was hired by the town earlier this month to help conduct the survey, but the selectmen

have consistently expressed interest in enlisting community assistance, as well.

The committee members include selectman Peter Kasper, Public Building Committee member Mal Leichter and community members Andrea Lattanzi, Mark Stuart and Terry McManus, who currently serves as an alternate member for the Planning & Zoning Commission.

“I really think we need to move forward with this,” Larson said. “Every week we delay it, it just pushes it out a little bit.”

Initially, Tulimieri was penciled-in as one of the three community representatives, but withdrew his offer to serve at the beginning of the meeting.

Tulimieri confirmed this week that he decided not to participate in the committee due to “grave concerns about the process that resulted in the denial of the scenic road request.”

“I just feel like that’s not a place for me to place my efforts,” he said.

The town expected Tulimieri to be involved with the committee and his name was included in a drafted motion on the meeting agenda. He previously expressed a desire to serve and constantly partakes in discussions involving the facility during board meetings. Tierney said he was “disappointed” that Tulimieri opted not to join the committee.

Tulimieri stated that he’s still opposed to the facility being built at the Kinney Road site. He’s unsure if the scenic road debate will continue, or if his focus will shift entirely back to the Public Works dispute.

“I don’t know if we can appeal [the scenic road decision] or bring it up in the future,” he said. “It was a lot of work. I’ll continue to put a lot of effort in. I love Hebron, I love the history.”

Some members of the commission did support the designation. David Sousa expressed that the petition “meets the minimum requirements and has the characteristics that deem it to be scenic.”

“Residents have proven that this road is worthy of protection,” he said.

Preschool Lottery Applications

Hebron Early Childhood Center at Gilead Hill School is taking applications for eligible preschool students for the 2023-24 school year.

Parents/guardians of children who will be 3 or 4 by Dec. 31, 2023, and are planning to have their child(ren) entered into Hebron’s preschool lottery, are asked to call the Gilead Hill School office at 860-228-9458 to have an application mailed to them. The application may also be downloaded from the Hebron School District website, at www.hebron.k12.ct.us; go to “Quick Links” in the bottom left-hand corner

of the website.

Hebron Early Childhood Center receives funding for reduced tuition rates from the School Readiness Grant. Eligibility is based upon household income.

Lottery applications must be completed and returned to the office by Friday, Feb. 24. Enclose two forms of residency when you return the lottery application. The lottery drawing will be held on Thursday, March 16, at 9 a.m., at the school. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance or waitlist status by phone.

Donations Sought for Book Sale

The Friends of Douglas Library group is accepting donations of used books, CDs and DVDs in good condition for its upcoming Saturday, March 4, book sale. In addition to many books, the sale will feature an expansive special table of seasonal books and items.

Fiction, science fiction, mysteries, romances, non-fiction, recent textbooks and children’s books are requested. CDs and DVDs are also welcome. Please do not donate VHS tapes, encyclopedias, magazines, or *Reader’s Digest* condensed books. All donated items should be in good condition, not mildewed, moldy, dirty or torn.

Proceeds from the sale are used to purchase new material for the library, museum passes, equipment, as well as to pay for children’s and adult programs. Tax-deductible donations can be dropped off anytime in the donation box to the right of the main parking lot entrance. For assistance with large donations, call the Friends in advance, at 860-228-9312.

Douglas Library is located at 22 Main St. on the Hebron Green. The March 4 book sale will run from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., in the library’s Community Room. From 1-3 p.m., the Friends will offer a \$5 per bag sale.

Dean’s List

Kelly Wilson, daughter of Tim and Barbara Wilson of Hebron, made the fall 2022 Dean’s List at Providence College in Providence, R.I. Wilson is a senior at the school.

Learn to Braid – Create a Chair Pad

A two-day traditional braiding class, cosponsored by the Hebron Historical Society and Hebron Historic Properties Commission, will be held at the Peters House, 150 East St., on Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 25 and 26, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. each day.

Students will create a round, wool, chair pad with instructor Teri Stratton.

Tuition for the class is \$100. Materials and/or tools can be purchased through the instructor for \$43 maximum, or students may supply their own. All are invited to participate.

For information or registration, call Sue at 860-368-7463.

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.

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Parks and Recreation News

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

Crafting Around the World: Wednesdays, March 1-22, 5:30-7 p.m., for grades K-5. Each week will be dedicated to learning and crafting about a different country. Classes will be held in the community room of Douglas Library, 22 Main St.

Summer Adventure Camp: Runs June 26-

Aug. 18. Camp will feature sports, games, nature, arts & crafts, field trips, theme days and more. Hours are 6:45 a.m.-5 p.m. Registration begins Monday, April 3, at 8 a.m. Must register in advance.

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

Christ Lutheran News & Notes

All are invited to worship at Christ Lutheran Church (LCMS), located at 330 Church St. Pastor is Gary Boye. Masks are now optional.

Sunday Worship: Sundays at 9 a.m. Masks are optional. People can also watch worship live at www.facebook.com/clchebron/live.

Lent Wednesday Services: March 1-29, at 7 p.m.

Sunday Coffee Hour: 10 a.m., after the morning service.

Sunday Adult Bible Study: 10:15 a.m., following Coffee Hour.

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: 2/26: Card-

Making, 11:30 a.m.; 2/27: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; 2/28: AA Meeting, 7:30 p.m.; 3/1: Choir Practice, 7 p.m.

Faith, Food and Film: Friday, March 3. Bring a dish to share. Gathering begins at 6 p.m., followed by a meal, dessert and a movie.

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.

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

Senior Center News & Notes

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

St. Patty's Day Celebration featuring the Sunshine Singers: Thursday, March 16. Doors open at 11 a.m. and singing will be at 11:15 a.m., with lunch served at noon. Menu not yet available. The Sunshine Singers will perform some Irish classics and other well-known songs. Cost for lunch is \$3. Pre-registration for lunch is required and the deadline to sign-up is Wednesday, March 15, by 10 a.m. Call the senior center at 860-228-1700 for more information.

AARP Tax Preparation: Appointments are available for in-person tax prep at the senior center. Tax preparation will take place Tuesdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., through March 28. Ages 50 and up are welcome; you do not need to be an AARP member.

Shopping Trips: Fridays. Schedule is: to Big Y March 3; to Stop & Shop March 17; and to Walmart in North Windham March 24. Pre-registration for each trip is required by the prior Wednesday at 10 a.m. To sign up, call the senior center.

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

Bus Trip: Aqua Turf Dinner and a Show: Tuesday, March 14. This will be a St. Patrick's Day celebration featuring The McLean Avenue Band and Irish step dancers. Leave the senior center at 10 a.m. and return approximately 4:30 p.m. Cost is \$60, cash only, and includes meal and transportation. Space is limited. Registration deadline is Monday, Feb. 27 – and there will be no refunds after this date. To register, call or stop by the center.

Senior Transportation: Offered to ages 60 and up and all adult disabled individuals, for medical care, personal needs care, grocery shopping, or other pre-approved needs. Trans-

Dean's List

The following local residents made the fall 2022 Dean's List at the University of Rhode Island:

Amston: Amanda Clifford, Nick Lavenburg, Tyler Mayo, Abby O'Brien.

Hebron: Alaysia Bunn, Ellie DeDominicis, Charlotte Heersping, Michaela Longo, Natalie Moulton, Erik Thiesen.

Caring Shepherds: Holds bi-monthly Open Pantry hours at Christ Lutheran; watch for the next date in April. Caring Shepherds distributes household and hygiene items, as well as food pantry staples, Bibles, and prayers. For more information, call Caring Shepherds Ministry at 860-494-0431.

Early Childhood Center: The center offers childcare, preschool and before/after school in a Christian environment. The center is open to all walks of faith. Ande Shutler is director. Call 860-228-5134 for more information.

Making, 11:30 a.m.; 2/27: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; 2/28: AA Meeting, 7:30 p.m.; 3/1: Choir Practice, 7 p.m.

Faith, Food and Film: Friday, March 3. Bring a dish to share. Gathering begins at 6 p.m., followed by a meal, dessert and a movie.

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.

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

portation available Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., and Friday, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Appointments must be scheduled a minimum of 24 hours in advance, but 48 hours is recommended – and required for new riders. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call the center.

Recurring Daily/Weekly Happenings: Some programs have a fee, some are free, and most require pre-registration. Detailed information is in the monthly newsletter or at the senior center. **Exercise Equipment Room:** Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. and Friday, 9 a.m.-noon. **Community Café:** Monday-Thursday, pre-registration required, suggested donation is \$3.

Mondays: Technology Assistance: Dates vary, call for times; Enhance Fitness, 9-10 a.m. via Zoom; Yoga, 10:15-11:15 a.m.; massage, second and fourth Mondays of the month, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Movie Monday (once per month; call for date and title).

Tuesdays: Knitting/Crocheting/Needle Group, 10:15-11:45 a.m.; mobile food truck and HIHS Food Bank transportation, 11 a.m.; Hand and Foot Canasta (cards), 12:45-3:15 p.m.; Card-Stamping, 1-2:15 p.m.

Wednesdays: Enhance Fitness, 9-10 a.m. via Zoom; Yoga, 10:15-11:15 a.m.; Mindful Meditation, first and third Wednesdays, 10:15-11:15 a.m.; RHAM bingo, third Wednesday of the month (through May), 2:30-4 p.m.

Thursdays: Massage, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Sunshine Singers, 10:15-11:45 a.m.; Mahjongg, 12:45-3:15 p.m.; Bingo, 1-3 p.m.

Fridays: Enhance Fitness, 9-10 a.m. via Zoom; Fun with Stitches Open Quilting Group, first and third Fridays of the month, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.; Created to Create Open Arts Group, second and fourth Fridays of the month, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Discovery Zone learning Center



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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. 24, *The Inspection* (rated 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.

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.

Orthopedic Practices Join Up

Middlesex Orthopedic Surgeons and Orthopedic Associates of Middletown have joined forces to form Middlesex Orthopedics & Spine Associates (MOSA), the largest orthopedic practice in Middlesex County.

This new alliance features locations in Hebron, at 117 Main St., and in Marlborough, at 14 Jones Hollow Rd., Unit 5. The practice will feature access to advanced imaging, physical therapy and more.

"Our two practices have a history of collaboration and have come together to offer elite care and a superior experience to more patients in our community," said Dr. Terry Reardon, an orthopedic surgeon with MOSA. "The collective expertise of our fellowship-trained orthopedic and spine specialists makes our combined practice not just bigger but also better as we collaborate to provide the best orthopedic and spine care in the region."

Dr. David Hergan, also an orthopedic surgeon with MOSA, agreed.

"Over the years both practices have been selective in their recruitment with the goal of hiring only the best fellowship-trained specialists from the best institutions around the country," Hergan said. "We are proud that we have brought the Middlesex community highly specialized orthopedic and spine care. Our team uses the latest minimally invasive techniques and cutting-edge technologies to ensure the best result and fastest recovery possible without traveling far from home."

MOSA fellowship-trained orthopedic and spine specialists provide:

- Care for the full spectrum of musculoskeletal conditions and injuries including complex fractures, sports injuries and degenerative joint disease;

- Minimally invasive orthopedic and spine surgery;

- On-site physical therapy with advanced equipment including a therapeutic pool, Pilates, traction, and experienced physical therapists with a wide range of specialties;

- In-office X-ray, MRI, and nerve conduction testing, facilitating prompt, complete evaluation of all orthopedic conditions;

- Walk-in urgent care available in Middle-

town;

- Evaluation of Worker's Compensation and personal injury cases MOSA is a member of the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce and sponsor of the Nutmeg State Games. Hergan is head orthopedic team physician for Wesleyan Athletics.

"I am pleased to officially recognize Middlesex Orthopedic & Spine Associates," said Johanna Bond, president, Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce. "It's wonderful news to have two of our county's leading orthopedic specialty practices combine expertise and resources to better serve our community, and I wish MOSA much success."

For more information or to schedule an appointment, patients and referring providers can visit middlesexortho.com or call 860-685-8940 or 860-347-7636.

Dean's List

Hebron resident Grace E. Nieszczezewski made the fall 2022 Dean's List at Fairfield University in Fairfield.

Madelyn Brown of Amston, a business major in the Class of 2025, made the fall 2022 Dean's List at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, N.H.

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Preschool Screenings

The Hebron Board of Education, through the Hebron Early Childhood Center Program at Gilead Hill School, will hold a few screenings for children that reside in Hebron and are 3 and 4 years old by the time of the screening.

The screening will be held at Gilead Hill School at 580 Gilead St., Hebron. Screenings will take place Wednesdays, March 8 and May 10. Screens in areas of speech, lan-

guage, cognitive and motor development are provided, as is an opportunity for parents to learn more about their child's development. Parents will also receive information which will assist in fostering their child's growth.

Call the office of the director of educational services at Hebron Public Schools at 860-228-2577 to register your child to participate in the screening, as reservations are required.

Residents Sought to Serve

The Hebron Board of Selectmen is seeking residents to serve on various town agencies.

There are currently vacancies for regular members on the Zoning Board of Appeals, Parks and Recreation Commission, Commission on Aging, Public Building Committee, Library Board of Trustees, Hebron Green Committee, Water Pollution Control Authority and the Commemoration Commission.

There are vacancies for alternate members on the Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Commission on Aging, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Public Building Committee, Parks and Recreation Commission and the Historic Properties Commission.

Interested candidates should attend a meeting of the board or commission in which they may

have an interest and discuss with the chairman the frequency of meetings and the time commitment involved.

There is also a vacancy for a Hebron resident to serve on the Catchment Area Council 15 for Amplify – North Central Regional Mental Health Board.

A vacancy exists for a Hebron representative on the Central Regional Tourism District Board of Directors. The mission of the district is to promote leisure, business, group and corporate travel to the region.

All residents of Hebron who are registered to vote are eligible. Letters of interest may be sent to the Town Manager's Office, Town of Hebron, 15 Gilead St., Hebron CT 06248. For more information, call 860-228-5971.

President's List

David Kasper of Hebron made the fall 2022 President's List at Western Connecticut State University.

Kasper is working toward a BSBA in business analytics and information management.

Dean's List

Hebron residents Alison Bakke, Brooke Delissio and Amanda Simmons made the fall 2022 Dean's List at the University of Hartford.

Free CPR Classes

The Hebron Fire Department (44 Main St) is offering free AHA Heartsaver CPR classes for those who live or work in Hebron. Adult Child, Infant CPR & choking emergencies are covered.

The classes begin at 6 p.m. and will be offered Feb. 15, March 15 or April 19. Call Donna at 860-228-3022 ext. 162 to reserve your seat. Classes are first-come, first-served.

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Goff House Concert Lineup

The Joseph N. Goff House board has announced the lineup of musicians for the 2023 Joseph N. Goff House Gazebo Concert Series.

The shows will be Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. from June 22-Aug. 3 (no show July 6, due to Old Hoe Days), in the East Hampton Village Center at the Center School Gazebo on Summit Street. Admission and parking are free.

The schedule is: June 22 – The Jesse Liam Band, featuring hits from the '50s to present; June 29 – country band Cobblestone Road; July 13 – Seat of Our Pants, featuring music with a positive message; July 20 – 9th Wave, featuring

surf music; July 27 – Flamingo Road, featuring Big Band hits; Aug. 3 – Big Deal Rock, performing classic rock hits.

Also, sponsors for the concert series are accepted; donation levels include: Maestro – \$250; Soprano – \$150; Alto – \$100; Tenor – \$50; Bass – \$25; or donate at any level you choose. Tax-deductible checks, made payable to The Joseph N. Goff House Inc., should be mailed to: The Joseph N. Goff House, P.O. Box 337, East Hampton, CT 06424.

For more information, visit goffhouseect.blogspot.com.

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.

EHACC Meets Monthly

The mission of the East Hampton Arts & Culture Commission (EHACC) is to foster, promote, encourage and celebrate the arts and culture in the town – and all are invited to join. Meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Joseph N. Goff House Museum, 2 Barton Hill Rd.

The commission currently features a mix of artists, a retired school teacher, a graphic designer and a local business owner. If you're interested in joining the commission, stop by the

town manager's office at Town Hall to submit an application.

EHACC initiatives include community grant and Capstone Grant programs, a student art award program, a garden tour and plein air painting event and an annual art purchase initiative where locally made art is exhibited in a town-owned spaces.

Visit www.artsforeasthamptonct.org for more information.

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. The society said the new system was essential to keep a steady temperature and humidity level to help preserve the his-

toric artifacts in both of its buildings.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Belltown KoC Scholarship and Grant

The Belltown Knights of Columbus Council 6190 is offering two \$1,000 scholarships to students continuing their education at an accredited college/university. Applicants must be members of St. Patrick Church, East Hampton.

The council will also award two \$500 Helping Hands grants to members of St. Patrick Church attending Mercy, Xavier or East Catholic High School.

Applications are available at guidance offices and the parish center office – email spatrick47@sbcglobal.net – and are due April 14.

Helping Hands Reopens March 4

Helping Hands, a ministry of Cornerstone Church, will reopen Saturday, March 4. The church will start accepting donations again Thursday, March 2.

For more information, email Judy Holmquist at judyhl49@yahoo.com.

Dean's List

Reilly Keegan of East Hampton made the fall 2022 Dean's List at the University of Hartford.

East Hampton residents Ryan Arndt, Noah Gibson and Josh Rudder made the fall 2022 Dean's List at the University of Hartford.

Sarina Michaud of East Hampton made the fall 2022 Dean's List at Curry College in Milton, Mass.

Nisha Sidana of East Hampton was named to the fall 2022 Dean's List at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield.

Sidana is a senior majoring in psychology.

Diyangi Perera of East Hampton made the fall 2022 Dean's List at the University of New Hampshire.

Perera earned High Honors.

East Hampton residents Shannon N. Bristol, Rachel K. Gerzabek and Keagan J. Fields made the fall 2022 Dean's List at The University of Scranton in Scranton, Pa.

Bristol is a senior biology major in the University's College of Arts and Sciences, Gerzabek is a senior psychology major in the University's College of Arts and Sciences, and Fields is a senior kinesiology major in the University's Panuska College of Professional Studies.

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Spring Classes at Epoch Arts... Epoch Arts is offering a variety of classes this spring. Students in grades pre-K-12 can register online to take classes like art, ceramics, theater, improv and more. Classes run for eight weeks and begin March 13. For full class description and registration, visit www.epocharts.org/classes-registration. Classes are held at 27 Skinner St. Pictured here is student Silas Rand from one of Epoch's winter classes.

Patch Design Contest Winner

The East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department's 100th Anniversary Committee has announced the winner of its "Century of Service" patch design contest. Ekaterine Tchelidze of East Hampton designed the winning artwork.

Selected from among countless entries received, the winning patch was determined to best reflect the intertwined histories of the town and the fire department as they both evolved over the past 100 years. The Anniversary Committee members were overwhelmed with the outpouring of support from local residents both young and old, and were deeply impressed with the level of artistic talent that resides within the community.

The selected patch will be used at special occasions throughout the centennial year and be presented as a commemorative gift to all members past and present.

The East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department is celebrating the centennial anniversary of its founding in 1923, having developed a longstanding tradition of providing top quality emergency services on a strictly volunteer basis. With over 45 members operating out of three fire stations, the EHVFD's area of responsibility covers over 36 square miles of property within the town's borders, protects



East Hampton resident Ekaterine Tchelidze designed this patch commemorating the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department's 100th anniversary.

over 13,000 residents and responds to several hundred emergency and assistance calls yearly.

Those interested in seeking more information on the fire service are encouraged to contact Department Headquarters at 860-267-2198.



The Chatham Historical Society's Antique Appraisal Day will return March 25. Pictured is a scene from a previous year's event.

Antique Appraisal Day

The Chatham Historical Society will host its 27th annual Antique Appraisal Day Saturday, March 25, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., in the conference room at Town Hall, located at 1 Community Drive.

There will be four appraisers present with a varied wealth of knowledge. There is a \$6 per

item suggested donation and no appointment is needed. This is a fundraiser for the continual maintenance of the Society's two museum buildings and 1840 one room schoolhouse.

Call Maggy Morales at 860-539-0988 for more information, including updates on storm-related cancellations.

Russell Back on Bellringers' Bench

By Josh Howard

After what amounted to a 54-day suspension, Shaun Russell has been reinstated as the head coach of the girls basketball team at East Hampton High School.

Russell was on leave for shoving one of his players during an away game at Valley Regional High School on Dec. 20.

"The investigation of Shaun Russell has been completed and on Monday, February 13, Shaun was reinstated as coach of the girls' basketball team at East Hampton High School after being on administrative leave since Dec. 21," East Hampton superintendent of schools Paul Smith said in a statement. "The investigation included interviews with team members, parents, others who wished to go on record, and Mr. Russell. The finding of our investigation indicates that the push from the sidelines, while unwise (and for which he was disciplined), was not done maliciously."

Russell has been coaching the Bellringers for 25 years and has been the school's athletic director for nearly two decades.

During his coaching tenure he has won over 400 games and led the team to multiple conference titles.

He was suspended the day following the incident in Deep River and missed the team's

next 15 games.

Russell's reinstatement allowed him to return in time for the team's Senior Night on Tuesday, Feb. 14 – a game the Bellringers would win 78-46.

Interim head coach Allyson Smith led the team in Russell's absence. Smith was a former all-state player at the high school, finishing as the program's all-time leader scorer, before going on to be a standout player at Southern Connecticut State University.

Despite the coaching uncertainty, the Bellringers didn't miss a beat on the court and finished the regular season with a record of 19-1, winning their final 14 games. Their .950 winning percentage was the best in both the Shoreline Conference (SLC) and Class M division, and tied for the second-best record in the state.

The team is currently aiming for a fourth straight SLC title and will play Cromwell in the conference title game tonight (Friday, Feb. 24) at Morgan High School in Clinton at 7 p.m.

Following the conference finals, the Bellringers will turn their attention to the Class M state tournament as they seek their first state title since 1980.

Rotary Scholarships Available

The Rotary Club of East Hampton and Marlborough invites local high school seniors from East Hampton and Marlborough, as well as adult learners from those towns, to apply for one of several scholarships.

All residents are eligible, regardless of what high school they attend – public or private. Applicants can be attending any college, university, trade school, vocational program, or veteran-focused program.

A new scholarship, in memory of Rotary's

beloved Jan Solomon, is available to female candidates, with financial need pursuing a degree in the sciences. This \$1,500 scholarship is sponsored by the Solomon family through the Rotary Club.

Applications can also be obtained through the Rotary Club website at www.easthamptonrotary.org and can be returned electronically to scholarshipapp@yahoo.com.

All applications must be submitted no later than April 3.

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.

KoC Friday Fish Dinners

The Knights of Columbus Belltown Council 6190 is again offering its multi-decade tradition of serving a variety of fish dinners on Fridays during Lent. The first dinner will be today, Feb. 24.

This year's offerings include breaded cod, clams and shrimp, which will be served with French fries and coleslaw. Coffee, water and soda will be offered. Meals will be served from 4:30-7:15 p.m. in the St. Patrick Parish Center, 47 West High St.

Takeout service will also be available. Advance orders must be received by noon on Fridays by calling 860-267-6644. Do not leave orders on the answering machine.

Entertainment will be scheduled weekly. Today, Feb. 24, local singer-songwriter Bill Naughton Jr. will perform a few original songs as well as standards and classics from the 1960s and '70s. On March 3, entertainment will be provided by the East Hampton High School jazz band.

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

Lake Commission Hopes to Preserve 30+ Acres

By Jack Lakowsky

The East Hampton Conservation Lake Commission is seeking to protect 31 acres of land off Lakewood Drive within the Lake Pocotopaug Watershed, the commission recently announced.

Commission chair Chuck Yenker said because the lake and its watershed are highly developed, preserving chunks of untouched land is key to maintaining lake health, especially by reducing chemical runoff from homes and businesses.

Algal blooms – appearing as a green film in the water – have disrupted people’s use of the lake, with summertime closures common. At certain levels the algae are toxic to humans. The town itself has been engaged in cleaning efforts, reoxygenating the water and releasing an agent antagonistic to the algae, more formally known as cyanobacteria.

A dirty lake affects every towns person, but there’s an extra chafing element to people who live on the lakeshore, all of whom pay far higher property taxes than other local homeowners.

Yenker said every member of the Conservation Lake Commission was key in getting the effort going, and named an ambitious list of projects commissioners hope to accomplish over the next few years.

The commission is hoping for a go-ahead from the Town Council at the council’s next meeting.

The property is woodland and can act as a

buffer zone for Lake Pocotopaug if protected as open space. Yenker this week told the *Rivereast* the more undeveloped space around the lake, the more nutrients, which can cause algal blooms, a longtime bane of Pocotopaug, the better. Soil will filter nutrients in the watershed, which then flows into the lake, by far the town’s most notable landmark and resource.

Years ago, the town developed the Nine Elements Watershed Plan, a guide on how to preserve the lake’s health. It recommends the town buy property around the lake to enhance “natural buffers for nutrient reduction.”

Ideally and if all goes to plan, Yenker said he envisions a new passive recreation space for light hikes and strolls, with possibly some new walking trails, a healthful, free resource for the community, especially important as the town’s population ages and becomes mostly elderly.

“It’s a really good spot,” Yenker said. “It has a really nice view of the lake.”

Though a number hasn’t been hashed out, Yenker predicts the town will have to put up some costs to get the parcel. This would add the town’s property buys in an effort to clean the watershed, like in 2021, when it bought the Christopher Pond property, a major tributary to Pocotopaug currently being remediated.

To help defray some costs, Yenker said he’s reached out to the Middlesex Land Trust, which owns large tracts of protected in the area, and that he and the board want to chase state and

federal grants. The more of your own money you have to spend, Yenker reasoned, the more likely you are to get a town approval.

Yenker said the worst blooms happen under certain conditions, which have occurred in the past, particularly two summers ago. Blooms proliferate after heavy rain, especially if it falls in late spring, when most people put out their fertilizers.

Lake cleaning work in East Hampton can get tricky, Yenker, as the lakefront and watershed are particularly developed, so any significant work requires working with many people, property owners, the town, inevitably complicating the process. This proposed preserve, said Yenker, doesn’t have that trip-up.

As it stands, this is about the largest tract of watershed land the commission can hope to preserve.

“The problem is there aren’t any big bites available,” said Yenker. “The immediate lakefront is almost 100% developed.”

He said there’s a smaller bit of privately owned, undeveloped space, which the owner has said they have no intentions to develop. Yenker said the commission keeps track of lake-adjacent properties that go to market.

Yenker said larger developments like Edge-

water Hills and Skyline Estates exacerbated the runoff problem, with large lawns and limited sewer infrastructure.

“We don’t want to see another development go in there,” said Yenker.

The commission has an ambitious slate of plans to help heal the watershed. They’ll continue what they’ve been doing to, working with residents in the “Lake-Smart Award” program, which recognizes residents for lake-friendly behavior, and will keep working with local businesses, particularly the agricultural retailers like Paul’s and Sandy’s.

“There’s just no silver bullet,” Yenker said. “Most steps we can take are going to be baby steps.”

The commission also wants to put in absorbent buffers in O’Neill Brook, which also feeds the lake.

It also wants to start an education program. Yenker and the commission hope to have semi-regular seminars about how to be lake friendly.

Investing money in the lake, Yenker said, will yield returns.

“It makes this an even more desirable place to live,” he said. “It benefits businesses; it’s an important resource.”

Congregational Church News & Notes

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

All are invited during Lent while the church focuses on the theme of Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith.

Church school classes meet every Sunday.

All are asked to donate to Avenue of Dreams to provide foster and adopted youth with free prom wear: gently used dresses, suits, tuxes, shoes, jewelry and accessories. People may

drop off items in the church office Monday and Wednesday from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., through March 5.

The Yarners meet every Thursday from 10:30 a.m.-noon in the Fellowship Hall. All knitters and crocheters are welcome.

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

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

noon. Visit with neighbors and patrons, take out a book and have a cup of tea. Coffee drinkers welcome.

Historic Houses Talk: Wednesday, March 15, hosted by author Alain Munkittrick, who wrote the book *Historic Houses of the Connecticut River Valley*.

Writers’ Workshop: Wednesday, March 22, 7-8:30 p.m. There will be constructive criticism and writing exercises. Registration requested.

Featured Artist: From Feb. 23-March 8, see Secondnature objects gathered and constructed by the maker, Ann C. Burke. Burke will present **Art with the Artist** Wednesday, March 8, 7 p.m.

Middle Haddam Public Library News

Middle Haddam Public Library, 2 Knowles Rd., Middle Haddam, has announced the following. To register or more information on any program, email middlehaddamlibrary@gmail.com, visit middlehaddamlibrary.com or call 860-267-9093. The library has a new P.O. box number: 123.

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

Yoga: Mondays at 9 a.m., Tuesdays at 7 p.m. and Saturdays at 9 a.m., with Erin Day of Ten Summit Yoga. Cost is a \$10 drop-in fee. Register at tensusmitst@gmail.com.

Spinning Fibers: Thursdays at 10 a.m. Bring your own wheel and fiber. All are welcome.

CommuniTea: Saturday, March 11, 10 a.m.-

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-Leo Tolstoy

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Parks and Rec News and Notes

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

Riverside Reptiles: Monday, Feb. 27, 3:30-4:30 p.m., at Memorial School, for grades K-3 (Memorial School students). Cost: \$25.

Bicycle Stunt Show: Tuesday, March 21, 3:30-4:30 p.m., for grades K-5 (Memorial and Center students).

Volleyball Clinics: March 23, 30, April 6 and April 20, at East Hampton High School, for grades 5-8. Girls’ clinics are from 5:30-

6:45 p.m., and boys’ clinics are from 7-8:15 p.m. Cost: \$125.

Spring Candy Hunt: April 1, 10 a.m., at Center School. Cost: \$5. Pre-registration required.

April Vacation Adventures: April 10-14, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., at Sears Park pavilion. Cost: \$210.

Junior Bellringers’ Run for Fun Challenge: Tuesdays, April 25-May 16, 6-6:45 p.m., at the East Hampton High School track. Fee: \$60.

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Adult Workshops at Epoch Arts

Epoch Arts is offering four adult workshops this season. All workshops are held at Epoch, 27 Skinner St., and are led by local artists. Registration and workshop information can be found at www.epocharts.org.

Painting a Coastal Scene in Acrylic: Monday, March 27, and Wednesday, March 29, 6-8 p.m. Join artist Tom Swimm and create a 12"x16" original acrylic painting that will include techniques in capturing color and light in water reflections. There will also be instructions in composition, palette setup, and color mixing. Subject matter will be provided by the artist.

Needle-Felted Owl: Monday, March 6, 6-9 p.m. In this workshop with artist Kristen Walsh, you will master mixing color, creation of texture, building "pieces" of your owl on your work surface and then adding it to your project.

Ceramic Lantern Workshop: Monday, March 20, 6-8:30 p.m. In this workshop you will create and glaze a unique hand-built lantern. Your instructor Nikki Giglio will take you through the building process step-by-step. Finished pieces will be available for pick up 2-3 weeks later.

Needle-Felted Field Painting: Saturday, March 25, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. In another workshop with Walsh, you will learn to blend colors and use the appropriate colors to make



Epoch Arts' latest round of adult workshops begins next week. Nikki Giglio will lead a ceramic lantern workshop at Epoch on Monday, March 20.

your landscape appear to recede in the distance. As an added bonus (and if time allows), you will learn to create a three-dimensional focus flower.

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 Music Room. The study is on the Book of Revelation.

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 Tuesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., and Friday, 8 a.m.-noon. The church website is at www.hncovenantchurch.org.

Senior Center Offering Trip

East Hampton Senior Center is offering a trip to the Harvard Glass Museum and the Mapparium on Tuesday, April 18.

In this trip to Boston, climb inside the Mapparium, a huge globe, showing the world's boundaries frozen in time circa 1935, at the Mary Baker Eddy Library. Enjoy a three-course family-style Italian lunch at Maggiano's Little Italy. Next, enjoy a guided tour of the glass

flowers exhibit in the Harvard Museum of Natural History. Between 1886 to 1936, Austrian glass makers created glass models of 700 species of flowers and plants. Every bit of the flowers, including roots, stems, leaves and even dirt, are made of glass.

Cost is \$130/person. For more information or to register, call the senior center at 860-267-4426.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church News

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church holds services Sundays at 10:45 a.m. All are welcome. The church is located at 1 East High St. Bible study is Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall Lounge.

During Lent, the church will offer Soup and Substance, open to the public, on Thursdays starting at 6 p.m. Attendees will watch a 45- to 50-minute episode each week of the series *The Chosen* as they eat, break bread, and share food. All are welcome. The gatherings begin Feb. 23

and last until April 6.

Lenten services will be shared with Faith Lutheran Church in Middletown. The schedule is:

Maundy Thursday, April 6 at Faith Lutheran at 7:30 p.m. in person and via Zoom; **Good Friday, April 7**, at Bethlehem, at 5:30 p.m. in person and via Zoom; **Holy Saturday, April 8**, at Faith Lutheran, at 7:30 p.m. in person and via Zoom; **Easter Sunday, April 9**, at Bethlehem at 10:45 a.m. in person and via Zoom.

See each church's website for Zoom links.

Foodshare Van Next Thursday

The East Hampton Lions remind all residents that the mobile food pantry will be at Saint Patrick Church parking lot next Thursday, March 2, from 9-10 a.m.

The food pantry is open to all with no proof of residency and no income verification. The attendance appears to be increasing each time; the last visit by the mobile food pantry drew nearly 180 people.

If the line is long when you arrive, stay in your car until the line goes down some but please get in line by 9:45 a.m. The other option is to come early so when the truck arrives you'll

be one of the first in line; however, the line normally starts forming by 8:15 a.m. St. Patrick Church graciously puts out chairs for people to sit on while they wait in line.

If East Hampton schools are closed due to weather, the mobile pantry is canceled. If there is a two-hour delay, though, the pantry will go on unless the Lions feel it is unsafe. If it is canceled, the Lions will post the news on the Let's Talk East Hampton Facebook page, or you may call 860-977-5760 for details.

Food selection varies each visit; last time, there was produce, some dairy and also chicken.

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. -- let the center know in advance if you plan to attend; **Mahjongg:** 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.

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. Kar-

en 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.

Wonderfully Wicked Women's Group (WWW): Mondays, March 6 and 20, 10 a.m. This is a low-key opportunity to meet others and share resources. The group determines the topics for discussion for the next month. Sign up in advance.

Mighty Magnificent Men's Group: Monday, March 13, at 10:30 a.m. A social hour of fun facts and sharing activities, and snacks, just for the guys. Sign up in advance.

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.

Saratoga: Aug. 2-3. Visit the Saratoga racetrack and place your bets, then stay at the Queensbury Hotel and enjoy a welcome dinner. Day two includes heading to the top of Prospect Mountain overlooking Lake George and then a two-hour narrated, luncheon, Lake George steamboat cruise with live entertainment! Also, stroll the village. Cost is \$429/person for a double/triple and \$509/person for a single. Deposit of \$150 is due May 2. Call for more information or stop by to pick up a flyer.

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

Rev. Jack Olson Memorial Service

Haddam Neck Congregational Church will hold a memorial service in honor of the Rev. John "Jack" Olson on Sunday, March 12, at 11 a.m., in the church sanctuary, 408 Quarry Hill Road, Haddam Neck.

All who new and loved Jack are most welcome to attend. A reception hosted by his daughters will follow.

For more information, visit www.haddamneckcongregationalchurch.org.

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From Portland to Puerto Rico... Jeanne and Arnold Bishop of Portland are shown here enjoying the San Sebastián Festival in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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.



Chilling with the Camels... Robert Hardcastle of Portland brought the *Rivereast* with him on a trip to Morocco in northern Africa!



Hitting the Beach... Colchester resident Jenny Rossman and her son Nyles are shown here at Bavaro Beach in the Dominican Republic.



Enjoying Italy... East Hampton resident Sandra Nesci vacationed with friends in Italy last fall. This is a photo taken on their visit to the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

Where in the World?

**Going on a trip?
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Joe Dooley has been a custodian at Marlborough Elementary School for the past five decades, and was honored with plaques and gifts at a ceremony last week. Dooley who told the *Rivereast* that in 50 years he's as passionate about his work and loves the kids as much as he did when he started in the 1970s.

★ Beloved Custodian, cont. from page 32

favorites to work for. To celebrate Dooley's milestone service, last week the school held a ceremony in his honor. Every student attended, and surely Dooley would have had it no other way – throughout his interview he said he "couldn't say enough" wonderful things about the school, its students and staff. When asked what kept him at MES so long, he says simply, "It's the kids." Hageman said it's been a great honor to celebrate "Joe's milestone anniversary." "For any person to have worked for 50 years in one place with complete commitment is a marvel," she said. MES's grown-ups had hoped to keep the ceremony a surprise, but the school's youngsters couldn't contain their excitement and couldn't help but tell Mr. Dooley. "The kids adore Joe and Joe is devoted to them. He didn't want a lot of fanfare, but there was no way we could let this achievement go without the entire school sharing this joyous occasion with him." Hageman said Dooley's a role model for kids and adults alike. "If you love what you do," she said, "it doesn't feel like work, and you can do it for fifty years or more! With that message, Joe wanted to make it clear that he isn't going anywhere

and is looking forward to many more years at MES. "Our school is grateful to have Joe as a pillar," Hageman concluded. MES alumni, decades-gone or only recently gone to middle school, Dooley said, have flooded him with cards and congratulations. "When I see people with young kids I tell them, don't go to Glastonbury, come to Marlborough. There's a great school with the best teachers," said Dooley. Dooley's family has had a presence at MES for the better part of a century. Before him, his father worked at MES for quite some time. Dooley doesn't live with blinders on – he knows today's kids, facing the existential threat of climate change, have a tough road ahead. Still, he's optimistic. "This is such a nice place to be," he said. "I can't say enough about the kids or the teachers. They gave me a plaque for 50 years, all the cards they gave me, oh my gosh." The school gave Dooley gifts he said were hugely meaningful, especially the quilt preschoolers helped make him. Because they can't yet sign their names, they used another feature totally unique to themselves to decorate the quilt – their handprints. "That means something to me," Dooley said.

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LEGALS

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON LEGAL NOTICE Notice of Hearing

The East Hampton Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a regular meeting on March 1, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, Eaton Smith Council Chambers Room 107 and via ZOOM Virtual Meeting to consider the following:
A. PZC-23-001: Two Brothers Café LLC, 20 East High, for a special permit per Sec. 5.2.C.2- Restaurant. Map 05A/Block 62/ Lot 5A
Ray Zatorski, Chairman
Note: any question re: Applications and Maps are on file in the Land Use Office 860 267-7450.
2TB 2/17, 2/24

LEGAL NOTICE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS TOWN OF HEBRON, CONNECTICUT

The Hebron Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing at a meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 7:30 PM, to be held virtually through the GoToMeeting Platform, concerning the following:
Petition 2023-1, Request of SYM LLC, Owner, for a variance of Section 3.A.5 of the Hebron Zoning Regulations, to allow the creation of a 12,156 square foot lot where the minimum lot area is 21,780 square feet, on premise located at 13 Church Street (AKA 7 Toomey Lane), Hebron Green District. Dated at Hebron, Connecticut, on this 22nd day of February 2023.
Martin Halloran, Chairperson
Interested persons may appear and all written communications will be received.
Legal Notice will be published in the Rivereast News Bulletin on Friday, February 24, 2023 and Friday, March 3, 2023.
Legal Notice will be published on the Town of Hebron Website at <https://hebronct.com/agendas/ZoningBoardofAppeals>
Mar 7, 2023, 7:30 – 9:00 PM (America/New_York)
Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
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2TB 2/24, 3/3

TOWN OF PORTLAND PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Portland Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Buck Foreman Room (2nd Floor), 265 Main Street, Portland, CT. Public access through Zoom link A at www.portlandct.org to consider the following:
Application #22-22: 34 Gospel Lane. Proposed Special Permit modification to increase gym business floor size to 4,044 sq. ft. in existing building. Application and property of MJS Realty Ventures LLC. Map 31, Lot 26. Zone IP.
At this hearing interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications will be received. A copy of this application is available for review in the Portland Land Use Department.
Dated at Portland, CT this 14th day of February 2023
Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission
2TB 2/17, 2/24



EMPLOYMENT

FULL TIME OFFICE HELP
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FARM HELP WANTED: Horse Feeding at East Haddam/ Colchester farm. Call John for more info. 860-680-5149

HELP WANTED: CASO'S HVAC, LLC, East Hampton, CT is now hiring Commercial & Residential HVAC Mechanics/ Technicians. B2 or S2 License Required. Must have at least 5 years experience. We offer competitive hourly wages. Please email resume to caso-hvac@comcast.net or call 860-267-5851.

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Salary Range: \$52,949-\$65,120
Deadline: 3/10/2023
Submit application to: First Selectman's Office, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480-0071
Email: mceppaglia@portlandct.org
Starting salary \$52,949; Non-Exempt, 35 hours weekly; MEUI Clerical union position, full benefits package. Subject to pre-employment drug/alcohol testing. All qualified applicants will be considered for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Qualifications: high school diploma or GED equivalent including or supplemented by courses in business practices and word processing, plus two (2) years of progressively responsible clerical experience including public contact, or an equivalent combination of education and experience.
1TB 2/24

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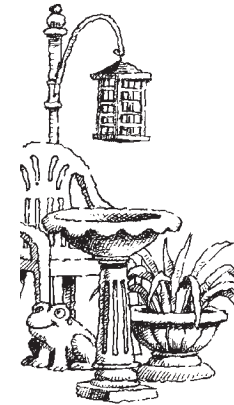
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