

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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April 14, 2023

Community Rallies Behind Owner of Food Truck

By Michael Sinkewicz

Community support is pouring in for a small business owner in Colchester after her food truck was stolen last weekend.

On April 8, the Redneck Gourmet Donuts & Sweets food truck was reported stolen from its home at 46 Broadway (Route 85), according to state and local police. Police retrieved the bright orange trailer in Torrington — some 50 miles away — severely damaged.

“It was pretty traumatic,” Redneck Gourmet Donuts & Sweets owner Ruth Lack told the Rivereast. “My trailer has sat there for five or six years and it’s never been touched.”

Daniel Fortier, a 36-year-old Torrington resident, was charged with first-degree larceny and first-degree criminal mischief, according to police. His bail was set at \$15,000 and he is due in Norwich Superior Court on April 21.

Police said they were notified of the larceny at around 12:15 p.m. April 8. Through investigation, officers determined the food truck had been stolen at approximately 7:30 that morning.

Posts regarding the stolen food trailer were broadcast to local police departments, and splattered over social media. There were sightings reported to Colchester Police.

The 24-foot trailer was towed by a dark-colored Ford Super Duty pickup and was last seen traveling Route 2 westbound.

There were then sightings of the trailer in Torrington and at around 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, State Police Troop K was notified that the trailer was found at the Rusty Nail Bar and Grill in Torrington. The suspect was located in his vehicle with the trailer by Torrington Police. Colchester Police responded to the scene and arrested Fortier.

Colchester Resident State Trooper Sgt. Zach-



A popular Colchester food truck was stolen over the weekend – and was later found in Torrington, severely damaged. Photo via state police.

ary Cash told the Rivereast that “various investigatory methods were conducted which provided information the vehicle was traveling in the Torrington area.” He said Troop K notified Torrington Police, and the trailer was ultimately located.

After conducting an inventory of the trailer, police determined that a number of cooking items had been damaged.

Cash stated that “this was a crime of opportunity.”

“This was pretty egregious,” he said. “You’re

stealing somebody’s livelihood.”

Lack stated that there was at least \$10,000 worth of damage to her trailer. A commercial lock was smashed and the items inside were not bolted down and stored properly, resulting in a “trashed” interior. She posted numerous pictures on Facebook revealing the extent of the damage, including appliances that were thrown from shelves.

Lack shared that she is battling pancreatic cancer, which has impacted her life and business. She and her husband were already strugg-

ling to operate and sustain the food truck before this setback. Due to canceled insurance, which happened when Lack temporarily closed down the truck a few months ago, the financial burden associated with the incident would not be covered.

However, on social media, dozens of local residents have reached out and offered to start GoFundMe pages and contribute to Lack’s recovery.

“The people of Colchester are amazing,” she said. “The community has rallied and they want to help.”

While Lack emphasized that she’s taking her rebound one step at a time, Redneck Gourmet Donuts & Sweets will return.

“We’re going piece by piece but we will be back,” she asserted.

The alleged crime itself didn’t make sense to her — the bright orange exterior and the large font on the side almost guaranteed that a sneaky getaway would be impossible. Lack speculated that the suspect was a food truck business owner himself, a claim that hasn’t been verified.

“Who owns a business and then tries to steal another?” Lack quipped.

Cash said he couldn’t confirm that piece of information.

On Tuesday, Lack posted on her business’ Facebook page.

“It’s going to be a lot of work to get the box back in shape,” she wrote. “Thank you all who have offered. The support you have offered is amazing. We miss being open [and] seeing you all!”

The community support wasn’t limited to Colchester. Mark Bellino, owner of the I Know A Guy food truck out of Burlington, called Lack and offered to host a fundraiser. He would bring his food truck and set up at Lack’s spot at the corner of Clark Lane and Broadway. James Bas-

See Food Truck, page 25

\$1M Cut from Proposed School Budget

By Michael Sinkewicz

The Hebron Board of Finance advanced a combined spending proposal for the 2023-24 fiscal year to a public hearing, after reducing the proposed school budget by \$1 million.

The total proposal, which includes funding for town government and both local and regional school systems, is for \$39.56 million — a \$2.54 million or 6.88% increase from current year spending.

During a workshop last week, the finance board opted not to modify the town budget as presented by the Board of Selectmen. That figure is slated at \$11.22 million — a \$678,954 increase or 6.44%. The proposal approved by the selectmen was actually a 5.92% increase. Town Manager Andrew Tierney confirmed to the Rivereast that while the bottom line remained the same, the percentage slightly changed due to an accounting update for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

The Hebron Board of Education’s budget was trimmed to \$12.94 million — a \$739,274 or 6%

increase. Their original proposal, which was adopted in February, was for \$13.98 million — a \$1.77 million or 14.5% increase from the current school budget. That total was revised to \$13.94 in the selectmen’s budget summary due to insurance adjustments.

For the RHAM school budget, Hebron, with 592 students — the most in the district — would contribute the largest share of all three member towns. Its levy, which represents 49% of the total budget, would be \$15.38 million — a \$1.13 million increase from 2022-23. The finance board did not have custody over the regional school proposal.

During the workshop, the board also advanced the 2023-2024 CIP Budget of \$847,886. The public hearing is set for April 18, with a budget referendum scheduled for May 2.

The finance board voted 4-0 in favor of the proposal and to reduce the school budget by \$1 million — Mal Leichter was absent.

Following the town manager’s original budget presentation in the beginning of March, the objective has been to reduce the mill rate and the corresponding tax increase.

Initially, the proposed mill rate was 36.38, an increase of 4.68 mills — the largest increase in 20 years, according to Tierney. The tax bill for the median property assessment would’ve been \$9,035 — a \$1,162 increase over the current year.

Following the reductions accepted by the selectmen and finance board, the mill rate would be 34.09 — a 2.39 mill increase. The median tax increase would be \$594, according to Director of Administrative Services Donna Lanza.

Last month, the selectmen unanimously agreed to cut numerous items from the proposal, totaling around \$324,000. Included among those reductions was the elimination of an additional school resource officer (SRO), saving

See Proposed School Budget, page 9

Inside...

- Regional: Brendan Saunders Remembered pg 9
Portland: \$38.28M Budget Adopted pg 10
Hebron: Swap Shack to Reopen pg 14
Marlborough: Teen Raises Thousands pg 17
East Hampton: \$800K Cut from School Budget..... pg 26
Andover: BOF Reviews Spending Proposal..... pg 30



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Alumni Benefit Event for Scholarships, Project Grad

There will be an alumni benefit event for RHAM scholarships and Project Graduation at Blackledge Country Club on Saturday, May 13, at 6 p.m., with music by the band NightShift!

This event is hosted by RHAM Alumni, with the proceeds to provide scholarships to RHAM seniors and to benefit RHAM Project Graduation.

Tickets are \$25 per person. Blackledge Country Club will serve flatbreads, pastas and snacks, and a cash bar also will also be available. There

will be a raffle of many great items. A limited number of tickets will be sold, all in advance, and none will be available at the door. Tickets can be purchased by cash or check only. Checks should be made out to RHAM Alumni.

Further information and tickets are available from committee members Bob at 860-558-5823 or 860-228-3388; Lynn at 860-416-1575; or John at 860-295-8484.



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From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

I was very heartened to see the state last week hand out so much money to area schools to help improve their air filtration and quality. As the threat of COVID-19 seems very much like something we're just going to have to live with, improving air quality is one of the best things we can do.

As Michael Sinkewicz reports this week, RHAM High School received \$412,317 through the HVAC Indoor Air Quality Grants Program for Public Schools to improve air filtration and quality. The funds can be used for replacing, upgrading or repairing boilers and other heating/ventilation components; replacing controls and technology systems for HVAC operations; installing or upgrading air conditioning or ventilation systems; or other work approved by the Department of Administrative Services.

Meanwhile, in nearby Lyme and Old Lyme, the Region District 18 schools received a whopping with \$12.01 million for HVAC upgrades. The Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School will receive \$6.24 million, the Lyme-Old Lyme Center School will receive \$2.72 million and the Lyme-Old Lyme Consolidated School will receive \$3.05 million.

The funds are part of a \$56 million grant re-

lease to school systems across the state, so that they can improve their air quality. And, like I said, I'm very glad to see it.

We've learned a lot about COVID in the past three years. When the pandemic first started, there were so many unknowns – including just how the disease was spread. Remember folks wiping down their groceries, or leaving mail out in the sun for hours in order to be “fumigated”? People started wearing disposable gloves everywhere.

But we've since learned the disease is airborne. That means good ventilation is so very, very important. Of course, it always was – many viruses are airborne, after all – but COVID has served to underline that need.

“One thing the COVID-19 pandemic exposed is that many school buildings, particularly those that are of a certain age, are in serious need of air quality improvements,” Gov. Ned Lamont said when the grants were announced. “Modernized ventilation systems provide an important public health function that filtrate the air and reduce airborne contaminants, including particles containing viruses.

“Most importantly,” the governor contin-

Editor's Desk continued on page 6



Lions Receive Awards... Marlborough Lions Jean Paul Bolduc and Ken Hjulstrom received awards at the Lions District Governor's Breakfast, which was held in Glastonbury on March 12. Bolduc (not pictured) was recognized as Marlborough's "Lion of the Year" for his 27 years with the Marlborough Lions, including many years as club treasurer, and for his extensive service to the community. Hjulstrom was awarded the Amanda Rose Freeman Award for his 19 years of service to the Marlborough Lions as secretary and for supporting other club and community activities of the club, including collection of medical equipment and vision screening at the elementary school. Pictured from left are Lions Club Zone 6 Chair Dr. Akella Sarma, Hjulstrom, Marlborough Lions President Megan Lloyd and District Governor Dave Roberts.

Bulletin Board

A recent report by the Save Our Seas Foundation observes that about 70 people worldwide die each year from choking on hot dogs, while just 10 people per year die as a result of shark attacks.

In fact, the threat hot dogs pose to Western Civilization is so dire that certain activists—presumably including baseball-hating vegans—are urging that this staple of American ballparks be redesigned, or, at the very least, be required to carry warning labels that they pose a hazard.

While it is true that parents should be careful about allowing toddlers to have hot dogs due to choking hazards, I fear the ramifications of the anti-hot dog crusade are being taken to extremes (i.e., they might affect me). Should these malcontents get their way, I expect it will be only a matter of time before our government—in the name of public safety, of course—will decree that pudding must replace the frankfurter at hot dog eating contests. And then what? Mustard-covered oatmeal wraps at Fenway?

And now the Save Our Seas Foundation is attempting to polish the image of bloodthirsty sharks at the expense of the hot dog.

Shame.

I admit I don't know much about shark attacks (besides not wanting to be the subject of one), but I do recall an incident some years ago where scientists were perplexed as to what prompted a killer whale (yes, friends, a *killer whale*) to...um, kill its trainer at SeaWorld in Orlando.

Again, I'm not a scientist, fellas, but why do you suppose they call these things killer whales? And when's the last time a hot dog dragged somebody into the water and drowned them? (Okay, two questions.)

I mention this only because I am confused by the hostility in some quarters toward the hot dog, while sharks, alligators and killer whales get a pass.

Let me be clear: I have nothing personal against killer whales or against sea creatures in general, though I was once attacked—maliciously and without provocation—by a hermit crab at Hammonasset State Park. By gracious Providence, I escaped with only minor injuries (a smashed thumb) after dispatching my assailant with a rock.

I realize my use of deadly force on the horrid little creature will probably bring a chorus of condemnation from groups such as The Society for the Protection of Psychotic Hermit Crabs, but I'm glad I did it. The little SOB deserved to die.

As for the killer whale, many tears and much ink were spilled over why Tilikum—the Sea-World orca, who had previously been involved in the deaths of two other people (*hellooooo!*)—killed his trainer, thereby bringing his score to three. Suggested possibilities include: he was bored, he was horny, he was distracted by the trainer's ponytail, he was lonely, he was being playful, he was overworked.

Thankfully, a hot dog does not seem to have been involved in this particular fatality, so we dodged a bullet there.

The president of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, a Canadian animal rights group, opined that Tilikum was simply unhappy. He described meeting the whale back in the '80s, recalling: “I sat by the pool and patted the big orca on the head. I also put my hand in his mouth and put my palm on his tongue so he could taste that I was not afraid of him. I remember looking into the left eye of that magnificent predator, and what I saw there was resignation and sadness. He was not a happy whale.”

It's guys like these that make choking to death on a hot dog seem almost like a blessing.

As for hot dogs ... in the interests of full disclosure, I must confess (if it's not already obvious) that hot dogs have long been a favorite part of my diet. I have remained loyal despite incessant efforts by activist kill-joys to impugn the reputation of this sacred American treat. They say that the contents consist of the sweepings from the butcher shop floor, that hot dogs are bad for your cholesterol level, that pigs have feelings too—and now, that you risk death by choking every time you bite into a Fenway Frank.

Calls have actually gone out to redesign the hot dog because its cylindrical shape is the “perfect plug” for children's airways. Okay, so keep an eye on your kid. Or don't give them a hot dog in the first place. What's the alternative? A square hot dog? A hot dog served up like a lump of hash? You would think the nation's ballparks were littered with blue-faced corpses clutching the remnants of half-eaten hot dogs in their cold dead fingers the way some people go on about this.

More annoying still, these do-gooders style themselves as superior beings working on behalf of all humankind.

I have another word for them.

Sissies.

You know what? If you're afraid of choking on a hot dog, I have a simple solution for you.

Chew.

God gave you teeth for a reason. Use them.

Jim Hallas

Riverast Hours of Operation

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

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Corrections

A story that ran on the cover of last week's *Rivereast*, entitled “Insurers Deny Firefighter's Injury Claim,” was incorrect. The Middlesex County Fire School's insurance covered all of the injuries that were the result of the June 2022 incident. The claim for equipment loss was not covered.

The story also reported the gear the Portland firefighter was using was “faulty.” This is not correct, according to Portland Volunteer Fire Department Chief Bob Shea. He said the gear the Portland firefighter was wearing was “fully compliant and only a year old.”

The *Rivereast* regrets the errors.

Also, a letter to the editor in last week's *Rivereast* suggested that the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are gene therapy. But, according to the Associated Press, Reuters, and various other news agencies and medical experts, this is not true; the vaccines do not change a person's genes, as gene therapy does.

BOF 'Stand' Sacrifices Schools

To the Editor:

The Republican members of the Board of Finance have chosen to take a fruitless stand, and they're putting East Hampton schools on the line with little regard for the outcome.

Last week, the GOP members took a hatchet to the 2023-24 spending plans. On the school side, nearly \$800,000 was cut from the proposed budget. They treated the operations side with just as much care, effectively bulldozing any new programming and cutting funding to the senior center.

Meanwhile, two critical components of public safety – funding for the Ambulance Association and a police lieutenant's position – remain very much in limbo. The Finance Republicans are leaving those matters up to their cronies on the Town Council, who could potentially strike a larger blow.

The Republicans claimed they were taking a stand against unfunded mandates being handed down from Hartford to local school systems. How they expected to make their point was not made clear.

What the Finance GOP members are really

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doing is sacrificing the quality of education in East Hampton at a time when our students are most in need of good teachers and support staff. And make no mistake: the funding cut is going to diminish what draws families to town by hurting our school system.

This “stand” is being done on the backs of our students and educators, and that is unacceptable. The GOP is willfully ignoring the cavalcade of speakers from all parties, organizations, and age brackets who came out in support of the budgets.

People want a chance to vote on the budgets that preserve educational excellence, public safety, and quality programming. The Town Council can send these budgets back and request the funding be restored. If not, that is unacceptable and the GOP should be prepared to explain itself to East Hampton families.

Sincerely,
Matt Engelhardt – East Hampton

Please Vote on RHAM Budget

Dear Hebron/Andover/Marlborough Voters:
The RHAM middle and high school administration, together with the RHAM Board of Education (BOE), has completed a proposed budget for the 2023-24 school year. Over the course of three months the budget was whittled down from its original proposal in January by about \$525,000.

This budget still assures RHAM’s ability to provide an excellent student education and keep up with facility improvements. The final result is a proposed budget increase of 2.85% over the current budget, which in these inflationary times compares quite favorably with the budgets of most surrounding communities.

Each individual town’s share of the budget is determined by the percentage of student population in attendance. This year Andover’s percentage of students fell such that its share of the budget dropped by \$533,000 relative to the current year. Marlborough’s percentage stayed about the same and Hebron’s increased.

A referendum on the proposed RHAM budget will take place on Tuesday, May 2. Turnout is typically light. Please exercise your right and responsibility by showing up in your town to vote.

Respectfully,
Eric Shevchenko – Andover
Member, RHAM Board of Education

Governing Hebron: ‘Ex Officio’?

To the Editor:
As a simple suburban peasant, I’m confused by the machinations of Hebron government. Hebron selectmen and employees are sworn to be “agents of the people.” They have unlimited speaking time within the context of their political positions, while Hebron citizens are allotted three minutes. Despite this enormous pontifical advantage, some selectman and town employees have used “ex officio” communication opportunities to promote their personal views. How can they then fairly represent Hebron’s electorate, if their minds are made up?

This compromises the integrity of America’s fundamental representative democracy. After all, I wouldn’t want a lawyer who states “ex officio” that I’m guilty to represent me if I were on trial!

Hebron’s public works complex is on trial. Selectmen and town employees promote it. A large number of already-overtaxed Hebron residents oppose an additional \$20 million project. Without a referendum, no selectman or town official can claim either “in officio or ex officio” that they are representing the will of the people – their political responsibility.

A further violation of electorate access to Hebron’s government has occurred because not all Hebron officials use their published town emails. This denies citizens access to town government – the foundation of New England’s democratic traditions. This communication violation has gone unchecked for years, turning Hebron’s electorate into second-class citizens denying them fundamental rights. It invalidates

“no taxation without representation”!

Free speech without fear of reprisal is a constitutional right. The solution to this “ex officio” conundrum is for all town officials stating “ex officio” personal opinions to conscientiously recuse themselves from official discussions related to their pontifications and for all to use their published emails. This is the only ethical way to restore New England’s established legal tradition of representative local government.

John Baron – Hebron

Working Together

To the Editor:

The East Hampton Ambulance Association is a nonprofit, community-oriented organization serving every resident of East Hampton. Because of their work East Hampton is a Heart-safe Community, a designation that we are very proud of. It is the goal of the EHAA to continue to invest in our community with the best equipment for the proper care of our residents.

Annually the EHAA provides medical standby at COVID vaccination clinics, educational awareness lessons at Belltown Daycare, KOCO, Educational Playcare, East Hampton Nursery School, Memorial School, Old Home Day, Had-dam Neck Fair, High School Graduation, Turkey Plunge, Glorious Gallop, Trunk or Treat and many more events in our town.

Our current members have impressive backgrounds including the nursing and medical field, police officers, patient care technicians, Postal workers, career EMT and paramedic, health workers and teachers...just to name a few.

The EHAA has recently recruited and certified 12 new EMTs in a class held at our facility. These new members are currently going through our intake and membership process.

Now we are asking for a subsidy from the town, which we have never done before. Working with the town to provide our excellent service would be the best outlook for our residents. We participate in state, regional and local meetings with other agencies to look for ways to improve care. We will continue to look for ways to strengthen mutual aid agreements with the goal of reducing response time.

As we move forward, the East Hampton volunteer Ambulance Association holds to its original motto, “Neighbors Helping Neighbors.”

Respectfully,
Barbara Moore – East Hampton
Note: Moore is president of the EHAA Board of Directors.

EHAA Needs Your Voice

To the Editor:

I was devastated when the Board of Finance, at its recent special meeting, removed the East Hampton Ambulance Association’s request from its budget entirely before sending it on to the Town Council. In a nutshell, the board determined it needed more “direction” from the Town Council, despite having been provided the full proposal for review and despite a very recent article that reflected the council’s new openness to further discussions, including a special meeting with the association and more vocal support from some of the council members. This proposal fully and adequately set forth the needs of the ambulance corps and was shared with the Board of Finance.

To me, it felt like the majority of board members hadn’t taken the time to review the proposal. BoF member Ted Turner was the only outspoken opponent of removing our budget request. Removing this line item entirely will essentially take the discussion off the table, and away from the Town Council’s eyes and its thoughtful consideration. The council doesn’t have the authority to add items back in; they

can only send the budget back to the BoF and ask them to “try again.”

Please join me in writing, calling and engaging our Town Council to send this budget back to the Board of Finance with a request that they return the Ambulance Association’s request into the budget. We may be a volunteer organization, but we’ve had to follow the lead – belatedly – of the rest of the nation and begin compensating EMTs and EMRs to entice and retain staff. The entire nation is feeling the pressure of understaffed medical facilities and we’re doing our very best to continue to provide excellence in our community.

Please also join us on April 29 from 10 a.m.-.2 p.m. for an Open House where you can ask questions and see the day-to-day operations of our – and your – volunteer ambulance service. Thank you.

Delores Morgano – East Hampton

Note: Morgano is a member of the East Hampton Ambulance Association.

Running Amok

To the Editor:

The president nominated a Supreme Court justice; no vote taken. A Supreme Court justice enjoys \$500k worth of world travel and perks; no appearance of impropriety.

Alito sees black children dressed as KKK all the time. MTG will save our forest from Jewish Space Lasers. 300,000 kids taken from Ukraine for sex traffic and Russification. 1.3 million ODs is a sign of weed run. Mifepristone is safer than Tylenol. 3,500 lawsuits, the last few are witch hunts. We need guns for everybody to keep us safe.

People believe Fox News....depraved perversions run amok.

Timothy A. Rinell – East Hampton

Why West Haven?

To the Editor:

After reading the front-page article in last week’s *Rivereast*, I am left to wonder why, irrespective of the bank changeover, Colchester has seemingly chosen to emulate West Haven’s financial practices.

Respectfully,
Stan Soby – Colchester

Perpetually Delusional

To the Editor:

Kudos to the *News Bulletin* editorial staff for featuring a picture of Joe Biden’s babysitter on the cover of last week’s edition. Not only was it a nice acknowledgment of the Easter weekend, it reassured all of us that our country’s fate is in capable hands.

The anti-intellectual, fully-baked cast of the Toilet Paper Mafia are perpetually delusional. These natural-immunity deniers have temporarily risen from their knees at the feet of Lord Fauci and jumped back onto the “Get Trump” bandwagon along with their fellow progressive acolytes. As an example, the recent indictment of Trump is being exalted as a victory for democracy, when in fact it is a laughable compilation of hypocrisy, fear and vindictiveness on the part of a morally destitute Democratic Party (and ultimately funded by George Soros). And apparently the TP Mafia didn’t get the memo: “Don’t write dumb letters with a faulty premise and glaring omissions of facts.” Care to guess how much taxpayer money has gone toward quietly paying off Congressional sexual harassment cases? Remember Jonathan Edwards \$1M payoff to his impregnated mistress? Bill Clinton’s \$850K payoff to Paula Jones? How about Hillary’s \$1M expense for a phony Russian collusion story? Does anyone remember Anthony Weiner, Eliot Spitzer, or Eric Schneiderman? All

stellar examples of progressive liberals trying to save democracy.

It sometimes hurts knowing that I was birthed to a species that spawned the Democratic Party, the members of which possess a special kind of sleaze. Kind of like selling aluminum siding to an Eskimo living in an igloo, or selling shot glasses to an alcoholic. Democrats make their Republican counterparts look like the JV team when it comes to politics.

And don’t look now, Democrats. Here comes Gavin Newsom. The white Barack Obama.

Happy trails,
Ed Kozlowski – Colchester

Part of the Problem

To the Editor:

First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos was against the education budget even before the budget season began. He mocked the Board of Education with unprofessional and snippy comments before the town had a single meeting and before the Board of Education shared any details about that budget. His ally on the Board of Finance, Andrea Migliaccio, appeared to have the same mindset of criticism before understanding and disrespect before collaboration.

At town budget meetings, both seemed ill-prepared and asked basic questions that they should already know. Both have been members of the Board of Finance for years. This year’s budget isn’t their first budget, so why does it feel like it is?

They complain about problems with the current budget a lot. Ironically they caused all those problems on the Board of Finance by advocating for budgeting tricks. Maybe they weren’t paying attention or didn’t think the long-term consequences of their tricks would affect them.

It’s too bad their poor choices and budget tricks will impact kids and families. Andreas and Andrea are undoubtedly part of the problem and aren’t part of the solution either.

John Farrell – Colchester

Public Works Reality

To the Editor:

I am amazed by Hebron’s town leaders and their ongoing efforts to ignore reality. Last week’s letter from Daniel Larson, chairman of the Board of Selectmen, illustrates another example of tunnel vision and selective memory regarding the proposed Public Works facility in Hebron Center.

1) The environmental risk of building on the Horton Property and Raymond Brook watershed has been clearly delineated by a hydrogeologist and 36-year career specialist in road salt contamination.

2) The significant historical characteristics of the Horton Property have been acknowledged by University of Connecticut Professor Robert Thorson and Yale Professor of History John Demos.

3) The distortion that the Horton property was purchased for Public Works is simply not true. The minutes of the Feb. 21, 2019, Public Hearing report on the Town Manager, “A. Tierney stated that this discussion and the Special Town Meeting were for the acquisition of the parcel.” This was confirmed by a selectmen. “J. Collins reiterated this is a vote on the purchase of the land, will be looking for public input on use of land as it moves forward.”

4) Promoting difficulties in fixing the Public Works facility at Old Colchester Road ignores

See Letters, page 6



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★ *Letters cont. from page 5*

the solution. A memo from Town Planner Michael O'Leary, dated May 10, 2016, clearly stated, "we now have preliminary plans for the construction of a new PW facility and Transfer Station. This is at the existing PW site including a few acres... from Eversource."

5) The idea that the facility will not be seen, therefore it is okay, is actually bizarre. The facility will be seen, heard and felt, perhaps with the exception of the contaminated groundwater, that will be unseen.

It is time for the selectmen to accept reality and fix Public Works where it is. For more, please visit Save Hebron Center on Facebook.

Sincerely,
Kevin J. Tulumieri – Amston

Middle Haddam Library

To the Editor:

Full compliance with ADA regulations is vitally important and desirable for the future of the Middle Haddam Library. However, in reaching this objective, I believe that the Library Board has not fully recognized or addressed the deeded encumbrances on the property, such as water and septic easements plus an underground propane storage tank which was hopefully properly installed to state and town regulations.

It seems to me that the Library Board should conduct an extensive feasibility study before attempting any construction on this encumbered property. For this reason, the alternative plans that have been suggested to the Library Board should be seriously considered, as they abut the front of the building and are less likely to infringe on this encumbered land. The board's present plan bifurcates the lawn, sacrificing this area for seasonal outdoor activities. Call before you dig!

Ronald McCutcheon – Middle Haddam

Ultimately Responsible

To the Editor:

A *Rivereast* Jan. 6 article brought to light technicalities concerning Hebron's Public Works and the proposed Raymond Brook Watershed location. Both a Hebron resident and Connecticut DEEP employee, Graham Stevens, made statements referencing water pollution and Connecticut General Statute 22a-471. This Statute basically states, those who pollute drinking water, replace drinking water.

Regarding Public Works, Stevens said, DEEP believes, "any facility can still pose risks to groundwater." In his first letter to Hebron, Stevens emphasized, should the facility be constructed, "regardless of the town's adherence with permit required Best Management Practices, the town will remain responsible for addressing any unacceptable water quality impacts, including impacts to private drinking quality, caused by its storage and/or use of salt."

Considering all the toxic variables involved, is it wise to build the PW on Hebron's watershed or will this be an expensive mistake? Keeping costs low does not always mean choosing inexpensive options. This is where experience comes into focus. Rebuilding on Old Colchester Road is more practical. Even if that quote comes in higher than building on the RBWatershed, the watershed has never been developed and will undoubtedly come with complicated, long term, hidden costs, like pollution and flooding. So which location is really the better value?

Monitors register groundwater contamination but, they don't prevent or stop it. The lag time between warnings and safe water can be years. Retesting wells and installing water will be a lengthy and expensive process. Is there really enough water at Amston Lake to cover our neighborhoods? This untapped water has already been promised to unestablished restaurants, housing and Hebron Center (*Rivereast*, March 11, 2022).

Hebron residents have high expectations that Town Hall would be responsible when it comes to pollution and not waste land, water, and money. #save17

Jean Tulumieri – Amston

Paper Shred April 29

To the Editor:

This is a reminder that the Hebron Green Committee is sponsoring its annual free paper shred on Saturday, April 29, at RHAM High School in Hebron, from 9 a.m. to noon. Please note: The location at RHAM is changed to the north parking lot, not the south parking lot where the shred event is normally held. This event (postponed from last fall due to bad weather) is only for residents of the RHAM towns of Hebron, Andover and Marlborough. To keep this event as safe as possible, everyone must stay in their vehicle, with papers placed in your trunk so we can remove them without reaching into the passenger area, and so you can stay in your vehicle. As in past years, to ensure that everyone has a chance to have their papers shredded, the paper shred is for residents only, no businesses, and there will be a limit of five boxes of papers per vehicle.

To make the process go as quickly as possible, if you want to just drop your papers off and not wait for them to be shredded, you should bring them in paper bags only. Cardboard boxes or any other bins cannot be put into the shredding process, so you must take them back.

Finally, please remember to bring nonperishable food items for donation. Our community has stepped up in a big way in past years with food donations, so let's do the same this year.

We hope to see you on April 29th at RHAM High School!

Mike Harder
Hebron Green Committee

A Great Show

To the Editor:

We are fortunate to have a front-row seat to one of history's greatest shows. A display teeming with all the intrigue of a classic Shakespearean tale of twisting plots, swindlers, porn stars, and sedition. The antihero of this tawdry spectacle is Donald Trump, whose vulgar, reckless, and undignified performance appeals to a less-schooled audience, with a limited understanding of government. Trump is of course a weak man's idea of a strength. A coward's idea of bravery, a selfish man's idea of virtuous, and a foolish man's idea of a president. The result is a political cadre who have turned virtue into vice, truth into slander, wisdom into blasphemy, and patriotism into brutality.

When history closes the curtain on the final act of this sordid tale, it will not be the abject failure, scandal, and chaos of Trump. Instead, it will be the pandemic of racism, fear, vengeance, and intolerance of the republican voters themselves. A party that has succumbed to political arsonists who are attempting to dress their sedition and corruption in hypocrisy, delusion and conspiracy.

The biggest divide in this country is not between Democrats and Republicans; it's between the people who care and the people who don't. This is not a difference in political opinion; this is a difference in morality.

Joe Stevens – Hebron

Robotics Champs!

To the Editor:

After a build season in which students persisted through a number of design challenges, the FIRST Robotics Team 1699 from Bacon Academy in Colchester brought home two blue banners at the New England FIRST Robotics District Championships this past weekend. As a member of Alliance #1 with Westwood Robotics Team 1757 and Aces High Team 176, the Robocats assisted in bringing home both a win in the Wilson Division as well as a grand final win for the whole multi-day event! This means that along with its two alliance members, they finished at the top of the 185 teams competing in the New England District. Our next stop is CT CIAC State Robotics Championship on June 23-24th!

FIRST was founded in 1989 as a competitive but fun program to inspire students to be science and technology leaders and now includes over

ner with schools on these much-needed infrastructure improvements."

Now, there are many old buildings – both state-owned and privately-owned – that could use HVAC upgrades as well, and hopefully they'll receive them in the near future. But this a great, highly important start – and extremely welcome news.

See you next week.

3000 teams in over 26 countries. Bacon Academy's Robocats was formed in 2005 as a new opportunity for students in STEM. Each year, the team of high school students and their mentors spend hundreds of hours designing and building a robot capable of competing in the year's unique game. Throughout the build and competition seasons, they also develop skills such as leadership, advocacy, and teamwork.

Robocats wish to extend a big thanks to their sponsors- Dominion Energy, Raytheon Technologies, ABB, Tsunami Tsolutions, Sunstone Construction, InCord, and Attorney Ron Goldstein for helping make this season happen! For more information about the team, email frcte-am1699@gmail.com.

With Pride,
Cindy Praisner – Colchester
One of 10 Team Mentors

There's No Earth #2

To the Editor:

Earth Day is coming on April 22. What can you do to help? Recently, Girl Scouts in East Hampton Troop #62059 have been learning about ways to protect the Earth as part of World Thinking Day. We learned that there is a limited amount of freshwater on our planet - did you know that only 3% of the water on Earth is fresh?

We've brainstormed ways to help the Earth. For example, people should stop littering and conserve water. Here are some other ideas of things you can do to help:

- Clean up trash
- Recycle
- Use reusable items
- Reduce your use of single-use packaging
- Reducing how much you consume
- Use less water
- Dispose of chemicals and toxins safely
- Compost
- Dispose of cigarettes safely
- Walk or bike instead of driving your car

What are you going to do to celebrate Earth Day?

Sincerely,
Junior Girl Scouts of Troop #62059
East Hampton

Porphyria Awareness

To the Editor:

Porphyria Awareness Week is April 15-22. As an "accidental advocate" for acute porphyria patients (specifically the ones, after being diagnosed with porphyria by local physicians, porphyria "experts" stamp "misdiagnosed" and dump back into raging porph rivers), I've tried each year to do my part in creating, expanding, enhancing porphyria awareness within the local community.

The last nine of the 20+ years I've walked the lane beside a porphyric loved one have been exceptionally challenging, eye-opening and naiveté-shedding. It was during this time that I responded to my gut/brain feelings and did some in-depth research that involved porphyria patients, caregivers and medical professionals from seven continents—not only about porphyria, but of the non-profit American Porphyria Foundation (APF) itself, the "big pharma" partner it teamed up with in the mid-2000s and the government agencies that support both. Throwing COVID-19 into the mix (several porphyric patients I communicate with on a regular basis contracted the virus – all survived), I have to say my perspective on the nonprofit, the pharmaceutical industry and US government's role in all of it moved from thankfulness to disillusionment to disappointment to disgust.

Cover-ups, control and greed abound – and APF's decades-long well-veiled agenda (not surprisingly) is rooted in what started as a U.S. government-supported altruistic venture to help rare disease patients. Problem is, after all these years of suspicion, turns out acute porphyria isn't rare after all. But biased reporting (by the nonprofit and the pharmaceutical partner – both of which benefit from keeping porphyria rare) maintains it is "ultra rare." Humph. As German philosopher Arthur Schnopenaur said, "Truth goes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed, second it is violently opposed. Finally it is accepted as self-evident." I (and several other caregivers/porph patients) have been banned from APF's social media platform. They're gonna dislike me a whole lot more by next year...

Joyce Gould – Portland
Editor's Note: According to the American Porphyria Foundation, porphyria afflicts fewer than 200,000 people in the United States.

Cabaret Thank You

To the Editor:

Thank you to all who attended and supported the East Hampton High School Music Boosters Cabaret "Neon 80s" fundraiser at EHHS on April 5. The boosters support the EHHS Music Department, and the annual Cabaret is the group's largest fundraiser. Attendees enjoyed a homemade pasta dinner and vocal and musical performances by talented student musicians. The event gives students the chance to shine individually or in small groups in a way that is not always possible at the concerts held during the year. Raffle prizes donated by many local businesses and families were given out throughout the evening. The EHHS Music Boosters would like to thank the following for their generous donations which helped make the evening such a success:

Ace Hardware, Airline Cycles, Belltown Therapeutic Massage and Wellness, Black Walnut Bakery, Creative Nails, Deliana, Heart Strings Treats, The Hamptons Pet Supplies, Jim E Jive Hot Sauce, Main Street Pizza, Marlborough Pizza, Old Bank Flowers and Greenery, Paul's and Sandy's Too, Pizzeria Da Vinci, Sweet Jeans, Walt Jedziniak Photography, Willow, YPCCA, Brazal Family, Cronin Family, Decker Family, Kaitlyn Grenier and Family, Lund-Agli Family, Nafis Family, Robichaud Family, Spooner Family, and Wilson Family.

On behalf of the EHHS Music Department, thank you to everyone who performed, attended, volunteered, made food, and donated time and prizes!

Sincerely,
Nancy Nafis
EHHS Music Boosters

East Hampton Proposed Budget

To the Editor:

Being mindful of the rampant inflation, the East Hampton Board of Finance approved a 3.9% spending increase for the Board of Education totaling \$1.3 million in taxpayer dollars. We also approved a 2.9% increase totaling \$509,000 for general government.

The Board of Finance also approved \$2.4 million in capital improvements. East Hampton's ARPA (federal relief funds) as well as grant money received will be applied to capital projects reducing the cost to taxpayer and provides for upgrades to education technology, school security improvements, equipment purchases and repairs along with improvements to Sears Park to name some.

We are proud of the budget the Board of Finance is sending to our Town Council.

Respectfully,
Bridget McLennan, Chair
Alannah Coshow, Vice Chair
Russel Bonaccorso, Deb Cunningham,
Richard Brown

Death by 1,000 Cuts

To the Editor:

Last week, the Colchester DTC issued a statement admonishing the first selectman's aggressive bullying attacks towards public servants and residents. These tactics are in line with the campaign strategy that he spoke to a group of Trump Freedom Movement members on April 10, 2022. He described that his goal was to "strike hard, show no mercy, and deliver death by 1,000 cuts" to his opponents. As mentioned last week, he has brought this strategy into Town Hall as he uses his official capacity to openly campaign.

The first selectman's behavior is unacceptable and an enormous distraction. What is he trying to divert our attention from?

- A serious substantive lawsuit from a former employee that may prove to be very costly;
- An inability to retain staff in Town Hall;
- A complete lack of transparency in his 2023-24 proposed budget that includes huge cuts to key departments like Social Services, the Library, Town Clerk, and Tax Collector and does not follow the requirements for presentation outlined in the Charter;
- An unaudited and overspent 2021-22 fiscal year;
- An inadequately explained current (2022-23) budget that took 4 tries to pass in the late fall (last town in Connecticut to pass a budget);
- An unprecedented number of budget transfers since taking office;
- Complete dysfunction and lack of solid record keeping in the Finance Office;
- A town bank account that was overdrawn by \$1,300,000;
- Lack of leadership on the Republican-controlled Board of Finance;
- Attacks on the Republican-led Board of

Editor's Desk continued from page 4

ued, "these air filtration systems will help ensure that our students can continue receiving their education in-person, in the classroom, where they learn best. When the pandemic began, we dedicated more than \$165 million in our federal relief funding to make air filtration upgrades in schools. Now, with this new state program, we have a dedicated source of funding to continue these upgrades and part-

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Education and their proposed budget from the Republican-led Board of Finance;
 - A Republican Town Committee that does not support his reelection and passed a "No Confidence" vote in him.
 Our public servants and residents deserve open dialogue, civility and respect.

Sincerely,
The Colchester Democratic Town Committee
 Monica Swyden, Chair

Sewer & Water Budgets

To the Editor:
 The first selectman (FS) of Colchester has published some misleading information regarding the Sewer & Water Commission budgets.

On 3/22/23, the S&W Commission held a public meeting, reviewed a preliminary budget/fees, and voted to send it to a public hearing. Fees are based on the cost of materials brought up to date with the current costs.

After the public hearing, the S&W Commission had planned to finalize both budgets and send a final recommendation to the BOS. (The commission serves as an advisor to the BOS).

However, the FS has placed the S&W administrator on leave. This action has several disastrous consequences, including on the ability to finalize the budgets and impact on current projects. In addition, the delay in 2021-22 year-end audit report means we are completely in the dark with respect to our fund balances and whether the enterprise made a loss or a profit. We're working with projections of 2020-21 figures.

We have water tanks on the verge of failure, one with peeling lead paint. Our filtration processing is at 60% capacity. We have applied for grants and the administrator was working very hard to get state funding under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill. Now, these funds will go to other towns on the list. In total, the loss to Colchester is over \$1M.

Another incorrect statement by the FS is regarding a job description for the S&W administrator. This description was created at the request of Acting Public Works Director John Jones, who approved the job description that I sent to the FS which included a salary range appropriate for supervisors in surrounding municipalities. The next step should have been to bring the description to the BOS for discussion. The BOS approves job descriptions and salaries. The S&W Commission does not act on person-

nel matters.

Sincerely,
Stephen Coyle – Colchester

Note: Coyle is chairman of the Colchester Sewer & Water Commission, but said he is speaking as an individual.

Anita Hill

To the Editor:
 If only someone could have warned us about Clarence Thomas.

Annie Steinbrecher – Marlborough

Community Conversation

Dear Colchester Residents:
 On Wednesday, April 19, I will be hosting my first Community Conversation as part of my campaign for Colchester first selectman from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the bar area at Toyo.

I am running because I want to use my professional municipal experience to help restore stability at Town Hall, and because I believe we need leadership that will work to bring Colchester together. In order to work toward that mission, I am looking to meet with community members and hear more about your thoughts and concerns regarding our town's future.

I am seeking the Democratic nomination for first selectman, but in my professional career working the neighboring town of Lebanon I have served under both Republican and Democratic administrations. In my experience, the issues a first selectman is responsible for often have nothing to do with the partisan political framework we see in the national news.

I am committed to being a representative for all of Colchester's residents, and I welcome the chance to talk with anyone regardless of your political party. By working together, we can bring change to Colchester.

If you are interested in getting to know me or sharing your thoughts about Colchester, stop by my table and let's talk. You can also visit Facebook.com/BernieForColchester for information on other upcoming events like this one or you can email me at bernie@bernieforcolchester.com.

Thank you to everyone who has reached out or gotten involved already. I am honored to have your support.

Sincerely,
Bernie Dennler – Colchester
 Candidate for First Selectman

Seditious Antidotes

To the Editor:
 Respectfully submitting another amusing letter filled with "half-baked antidotes" and "seditious rhetoric"! I hope everyone had a wonderful Easter...I even got a flea collar in my basket – bonus! It just goes to show, you can go to bed a smug, arrogant progressive and wake up none the wiser – no matter what the holiday!

Some say that guns are the most dangerous part of living in America. I'm sure the hundreds of millions of people who were killed by their own governments during the 20th century would agree with you.... from their shallow graves! It's easy to claim moral superiority when you cherry-pick data then blame Republicans for all the murders and gang violence that occur in Democratic-controlled cities where gun control/gun free zones are the law of the land. It's almost as if when you make it illegal for people to carry, only the criminals are armed. While the gangs maintain a monopoly on violence that rivals even the states, the average citizen pays the price while politicians, celebrities and wealthy people are escorted around by teams of armed bodyguards.

But we really have to think of the kids and continue to demand that schools be 100% gun-free zones; it would be irresponsible to have any sort of armed security/teachers present considering how dangerous guns truly are. Instead we should be focused on their mental health, that's why it's more important than ever to "affirm" mental illness and normalize things like drag time story hour, transitioning to the opposite gender, and being mindful of their chosen pronouns. Although war looks imminent, now is the time for us to adopt a more peaceful footing and retreat into the safe spaces of our public schools, universities, and corporate offices... where evil Republicans can't kill us!

Colin McNamara – Marlborough

Town Clerk Response

To the Editor:
 I am writing to provide clarification in response to Mr. Bisbikos' recent false allegations.

Connecticut statutes state that when a land record is recorded, a portion of the fee paid is put into a fund for town clerk use only. This portion of the fee is required to go into a separate fund and cannot be put into the town's general fund. The funds are not taxpayer dollars. Town clerks commonly use these funds to pay for unbudgeted items such as historic preservation, education, lodging for conferences and many other items pertaining to the town clerk's office.

Connecticut statutes require the town clerk to attend conferences, which are not offered virtually. These conferences have presentations by the secretary of the state, the Department of Public Health, and many other state departments to inform us of changes in legislation concerning elections, vital record handling, preservation of documents, and other essential town clerk duties. I have used the funds for a map copier, historic preservation, and lodging at required conferences among other things. I

have provided the same documentation regarding these expenses since 2014 without issue.

As the elected town clerk for the past nine years during both Republican and Democratic administrations, I have served the Colchester community with integrity, honesty, and transparency.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Bisbikos attacks town employees publicly without ensuring he has all the facts, therefore spreading misinformation. I am always here to answer questions from the Colchester community regarding the town clerk's office and the services we provide.

Gayle Furman, CCTC, CMC
 Colchester Town Clerk

Independents Take Note

To the Editor:
 On Sept. 11, 2001, al-Qaeda terrorists attacked America killing thousands. Of the 19 terrorists, 15 were Saudi Arabians and two were United Arab Emirates. Trump, upon leaving office, helped his son-in-law secure a \$2 billion investment into Jared Kushner's brand new private equity firm. A month ago, the United Arab Emirates contributed hundreds millions more to the same fund. Trump, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have long been tight. The Saudi LIV professional golf tournament will play at three 3 of Trump's U.S. golf courses. Trump's elite International Golf course is in Dubai. Add all this up and then tell me why the Republican majority House is investing huge resources and time to try and dig up any dirt they can find on Hunter Biden, whose dealings with Ukraine and China were in the low millions of dollars?

Recall that Trump often belittled President Obama for playing too much golf. Upon leaving office, Trump had played golf on 266 days while Obama played 98 days for the equal duration.

For over 20 years, Clarence Thomas has enjoyed annual luxury trips paid for by Harlan Crow, the most conservative Republican billionaire. Just one trip cost approximately \$500,000. A number most *Rivereast* readers wish they had in their retirement bank accounts. Thomas claims this didn't affect any of his conservative votes, while Crow justified it saying they had been great friends for over 25 years. Clarence Thomas became a SCOTUS 30 years ago. Recently, Judge Juan Merchan who is overseeing Trump's NY criminal case, enraged Republicans when they learned he donated \$35 to Democrats in 2020. They want him removed.


Independents and 'Fence sitters' take note. Dwell on these factual numbers. You will decide the next election. Gerrymandered districts, the Electoral College and lying Fox News already give Republicans a huge advantage.

Edmund Smith – Andover

Colchester BOE

To the Editor:
 The Colchester Board of Education policy manual denotes the BOE recognizes that the community determines the quality of local ed-

See Letters, page 8



Better Dental HEALTH
 A Practice For Optimal Dental Fitness
 by George M. Mantikas, DMD

SENSITIVE TEETH

Sweet treats and frozen desserts can be a delicious indulgence for many people, but for millions of others, the mere thought of biting into something cold or sugary can cause them to cringe. Even hot foods and beverages can cause major tooth pain in some people. This is due to tooth enamel that has been worn down or cracked, and there are some remedies to try to resolve the problem. First, make a dentist appointment to ensure the problem is not more serious. In addition, avoid or limit all acidic and sugary foods and beverages since they can aggravate the issue. Changing toothpaste to one designed for sensitive teeth is another option, as is using a soft-bristled toothbrush.

Our many years of training and experience have made it abundantly clear that the connection between oral health and a patient's overall health is a strong one. We therefore will use the many techniques available in today's dentistry to diagnose, treat, restore, and promote total patient well-being. We offer this column as a way of educating the general public about the benefits of oral health. If we can help, either by answering questions or by providing comprehensive dental care, please call us. State-of-the-art dentistry and a dedicated professional dental team make our office the ideal place to achieve optimum oral health.

P.S. You may think that the harder you scrub your teeth the cleaner and healthier they will be, but aggressive brushing can wear away tooth enamel, leading to sensitivity and even cavities.

George M. Mantikas, DMD, PC
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★ Letters cont. from page 7

ucation. Thus, it's imperative members of the community and the school personnel collaborate in planning, developing policy, implementing programs and evaluating results. However, the BOE is failing in this goal. Despite being elected representatives of Colchester's citizens (and not volunteers as they've suggested), they stated they're only interested in providing the bare minimum of statutorily required budget information to the public. They're not interested in transparency or revealing to the citizens how truly inefficiently Colchester's schools operate (e.g., increasing office and custodial supplies 50% from \$362,508.00 to \$545,121.00).

The BOE is interested in ensuring their overpriced new superintendent, Daniel "50-K extra" Sullivan III, rationalizes an overinflated budget to the community. To achieve that end, Mr. Sullivan relies on prevarication and deflection. As just one example, he emphasized that a new out-of-state special education expense of \$695,000/year, not including transport, is required by law (it's not; it's the result of an internal settlement). Then he tried to claim no portion of the expense is reimbursable by the State Department of Education because the facility is not approved in Connecticut. That's also untrue; it's not reimbursable because the facility isn't even approved for special education in the state where it is located. That means they failed to investigate the eligibility of this facility for the Special Education Excess Cost Grant prior to conceding to this expense, leaving Colchester's citizens on the hook.

The BOE, Mr. Sullivan, and impudent commenters emphasize how increasing the tax burden by 10% is important to attract new families to Colchester. To them it's not important that Colchester's seniors (quickly becoming the citizen majority) be able to afford to keep their homes.

Respectfully,
DeAva Lambert – Colchester

◆ **Happenings** ◆

CAPSTONE EYEGLASSES DRIVE
– I'm Morgan Sundell, a junior at PHS. For my capstone, I've organized an eyeglasses drive. Donations will go to Portland Lions Club. Boxes can be found at Adams, Bud's, Mellili's, and Inner Circle through 5/14/23.

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Former State Senate Candidate Saunders Dies Unexpectedly

By Jack Lakowsky

State Sen. Norm Needleman (D-33) announced this week that his 2020 election opponent, Republican and former Baptist minister Brendan Saunders, has died unexpectedly.

Saunders, 49, died April 8, after complications from routine knee surgery. He leaves a wife, Mary, and a daughter, Jordan.

A prominent local Republican, he was chair for the Clinton Republican Town Committee. In 2020 he sought to unseat Needleman for the 33rd senatorial District, earning about 46% of the vote, ultimately losing the race. He kept active, though, with his “Saunders for Connecticut” Facebook profile posting regularly about fundraisers and local GOP happenings.

In a statement, Needleman said he was “deeply saddened” to learn about the “tragic passing of Brendan Saunders.”

“While we had opposing political views, especially during our 2020 campaign, I always admired Brendan’s belief in humanity, passion for serving people, and love of family and community.”

In a follow-up with the *Rivereast*, Needleman said Saunders was a tireless advocate for what he believed in and was always motivated by do-

ing what saw as the right thing, and that he had contagious, boisterous energy that will be sorely missed. He expressed condolences to Saunders’ family, and said his thoughts are with them as they “navigate through this profound loss.”

Saunders worked with several local Republicans, including First Selectman Ryan Curley, Portland’s state Rep. Christie Carpino (R-32) and state Rep. Irene Haines (R-34), who represents East Hampton, East Haddam and Salem.

Haines told the *Rivereast* she was “heartbroken that Brendan has been taken from all of us.”

“Really can’t believe it,” she said. “My heart goes to out to Mary and Jordan and the rest of his family. His love for the world and all its people, his infectious laugh, and tremendous spirit will be missed by all.”

Carpino, who in 2020 campaigned alongside Saunders, taking out joint ads and talking with voters, said, “Brendan was a true friend to those he knew.”

“He was loyal, smart, hardworking – and always, always willing to help a friend,” Carpino said. “I will miss his ability to light up a room with his positivity.”

Curley told the *Rivereast* he got to know Saunders during his 2020 campaign, and for all

the work Saunders did for the 33rd.

“He was definitely a special person and his loss was such a complete shock,” said Curley.

On Facebook, Amy Stefanowski, Madison Republican Town Committee vice chair and wife of former GOP gubernatorial candidate Bob Stefanowski, also mourned Saunders’ bright, jovial enthusiasm, “his support of our RTC events and marching in [the town’s] Fourth of July parade.”

She went on, “He will be missed by many, myself included. We just did a radio show together last week and laughed [and] raised money for the numerous local charities he supported.”

“I am in shock and disbelief,” she said. “We have lost too many good people we love these past few months and as I sat [in church] this morning, I was thinking of them all and the daily struggle without them.”

“There are just no words to express how devastating this news is and I’m sorry to have to share it,” she said.

In a 2020 interview with the *Rivereast*, Saunders said Connecticut’s ever-soaring cost of living inspired him to seek a state senator’s seat. Saunders was a native of the Nutmeg state.

After graduating from Pennsylvania’s Clarks Summit University, where he trained in ministry, Saunders went on to earn his master’s degree in biblical exposition from Capital Seminary in Lanham, Md. After completing his studies, Saunders served as a pastor for youth and young adults in Baltimore.

Saunders moved back to Connecticut in 2008, and founded Lighthouse Community Church in Westbrook.

Saunders was also experienced in the tourism and hospitality field. He served on the Hospitality Advisory Board at Manchester Community College and as sales and marketing director at the Courtyard Marriot in Cromwell.

In his 2020 interview, Saunders shared with the *Rivereast* that he grew up with four brothers, and the majority of his cousins were also male.

“In my head, I always had a son,” said Saun-



Brendan Saunders

ders. “When we found out we were having a girl, I freaked out, I thought ‘Oh my gosh, I’m not ready.’”

This attitude changed when his daughter was born.

“I was sitting with her as a baby, thinking that for the rest of her life, her view of men and what makes a good relationship will be determined by how I treat her,” said Saunders. “Then I wasn’t afraid of it; it almost felt like an honor. Having a daughter has been the greatest thing for me.”

Marriage, Saunders said, taught him that he had lived a “selfish” life and that to make a marriage last, both partners must “subside selfishness.”

Saunders said his daughter’s birth led to some personal introspection, and he learned that he had “locked away emotion.”

“Having a daughter opened my heart up to shed a tear,” said Saunders.

From the State Senator’s Desk...

In my time as a state senator, one of my favorite parts of the job has involved the value of state grants in our communities. There are countless organizations and groups aiding our area every day, and they could use some help here and there. That’s why I’m proud to let you know about some of the latest grants distributed in our region.

Most importantly, in 2022, I voted for legislation which formed the HVAC Indoor Air Quality grants Program for Public Schools, initially proposed by Governor Lamont in an effort to improve air quality and filtration in schools across the state. I knew this program had significant value in improving the everyday health and wellness of students, and I am overjoyed to tell you our region is already seeing results.

As part of the program’s first release of grants, the Lyme-Old Lyme school district, Region 18, received a whopping \$12.009 million in support to overhaul its heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment in school facilities. These funds can be used to replace, upgrade or repair boilers, replace controls and technology for HVAC operations, or install or upgrade air conditioning systems, among other approved uses. I’m ecstatic to know that our students will be breathing in cleaner, healthier air.

There’s more, too. From November to March, 10 different arts and entertainment organizations in Clinton, Colchester, East Haddam, East Hampton, Essex and Old Saybrook received more than \$150,000 in collective organizational grants. These funds were distributed through the Department of Economic and Community Development to support theaters, performing arts groups, and countless other organizations working to bring entertainment and education in our region. The Colchester Choir and Orchestra, East Haddam’s I-Park Foundation and Old Saybrook’s Drama Works Theatre Company were just a few recipients of these grants and I’m glad they’ll be ready to continue their successful efforts.

It is reassuring to know our state is supporting efforts like these – no issue is too big or too small to get the support it needs. I’m hopeful that I’ll have more details to share with you regarding more grants in coming months.

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

Note: The 33rd District includes the Rivereast towns of Colchester, East Hampton and Portland.

Standout Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

Here are the Rivereast Standouts of the week for April 3-9:

Grace Baran – RHAM High School (Tennis): Baran has assumed the role as the team’s No. 1 singles player this spring and is thriving, winning her first two matches in straight sets. Baran, a senior captain, won her first match (6-4, 6-3) during the team’s season-opening win over Bolton at RHAM High School on April 4 and then won (6-0, 6-1) as the Raptors swept Bloomfield at RHAM on April 5.

“She has great game sense and adjusts her play throughout the match when necessary,” RHAM head coach Carol Fish said of Baran. “Her consistency, patience, and strong net game make her a formidable opponent.”

Olivia DeMartino – East Hampton High School (Softball): DeMartino opened the spring season by going 4-4 from the plate, scoring four runs and driving in four more as the Bellingers beat Valley Regional 11-5 at East Hampton High School on April 3. DeMartino, a sophomore, powered a line-up that cemented the game with a five-run fifth inning. Jocelyn Gustavson and Emily Jovel each scored a pair of runs, while Kendall Jump, Alison Hebb, and Allison Jacobsen also crossed home plate in the season opener.

In the following game, a 2-1 win over Cromwell in extra innings, DeMartino was clutch. She connecting on three hits and scored both runs, including the game-winner in the eighth inning to seal the upset of the defending state champs at Cromwell High School on April 5.

Mason Pingree – Bacon Academy (Baseball): Pingree earned his first varsity win, striking out seven over final four innings of relief duty as the Bobcats defeated Stafford 7-3 to win



Grace Baran

their first game of the season on April 4. Pingree, a sophomore, also had a pair of hits, including a double, and drove in two runs. Senior A.J. Blanchette walked three times and scored two runs as the Bobcats piled up five runs over the first two innings, thanks to six walks and three wild pitches.

Ryan LaPila – Portland High School (Baseball): LaPila went 2-3 from the plate, slapping a double and scoring a pair of runs as the Highlanders earned an 8-4 win over Old Saybrook, the reigning Shoreline Conference champs, on April 5. Harrison Collins also connected on two hits and scored a pair of runs, while Austin Vess drove in two more.

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★ Proposed School Budget, cont. from page 1

around \$100,000 from the Police Department payroll and expected insurance fees. The local Board of Education had made a request for the additional SRO last year, but was ultimately denied the funding.

Heading into its workshop last week, the finance board was in agreement that the overall budget proposal was still too high. There was a brief discussion on whether the board should wait until after the public hearing to make any official motions modifying the bottom-line, which would allow the community to weigh-in first. However, the board ultimately decided to take action.

Leichter wrote a letter to the board conveying his own thoughts on the budget process. He stated that the current figures were “far from affordable” and that a tax increase of over \$1,000 would be “unacceptable.” A spending plan resulting in anything above a two-mill increase would likely fail at referendum, he wrote, adding that the board had to “drastically reduce” the proposal in order for it to be approved by voters.

In order to keep \$125,000 in state grant funding and to avoid a fine, the board had to reduce the overall budget by around \$500,000.

Finance Director Elaine Griffin stated that there were numerous budget drivers this year. However, without those issues, the “elephant in the room” would be the increased RHAM levy associated with Hebron’s rising enrollment.

Lanza provided the board with different mill rates and the dollar amounts needed to achieve them. A \$1 million reduction, the board determined, would get the town close to an “optimal” mill rate increase for 2023-24.

The question was, was that possible?

“I think it is,” said finance board member Michael McCormack.

“I think it is, too,” replied Chairman Diane L. DelRosso.

Tierney previously told the boards that there wasn’t any “fluff” in the town government proposal — the finance board agreed.

Because the RHAM proposal is out of the board’s control, the only remaining area to examine for cuts was the local Hebron school board.

The \$1 million reduction still leaves the Hebron school budget at 6% higher than current-year spending.

“I think it’s appropriate that it’s in line with what the town government is receiving,” McCormack said. “So, 6% I believe is fair.”

Finance board member Janet Fodaski indi-

cated that the reduction shouldn’t interfere with the district’s contractual obligations.

“So, there is other room for them to do some other stuff,” she said, adding that deciding what to cut was “going to be a hard decision for them.”

Tierney previously told the Rivereast that the school board may have “to do some soul-searching” to determine what items it could live without for the upcoming fiscal year.

One of the largest initiatives included in the school proposal is expanding the district’s preschool program, which would cost \$226,000. The school board requested an additional preschool teacher, a special education teacher, 1.5 paraprofessionals, new furniture, programming materials and professional development for the new staff members.

At a Feb. 9 school board meeting, Hebron Superintendent of Schools Thomas Baird emphasized the importance of receiving more funding for the upcoming fiscal year.

“If we don’t get a more sizable increase this year for the town, there really is no way to move forward without it impacting programming in some type of way,” Baird said. “We’ll have to make some really tough decisions.”

Griffin noted that some revenue items were decreasing or not being extended into the 2023-24 proposal, including a \$283,862 decrease in ECS funding. The town received \$364,147 in motor vehicle reimbursement in 2022-23, but will not receive that funding in 2023-2024. Combined with the RHAM levy, there were a lot of factors the board could not influence.

“We’re in a bad place,” Fodaski expressed.

Furthermore, town retirements resulted in around a \$7,000 shortage in an assigned fund balance account. Sixteen additional employees are eligible to retire next year, which would potentially cost up to \$322,000.

While it’s unlikely that all of those employees would retire at the same time, the board should be prepared for the “worst-case scenario,” Griffin said.

DelRosso stated that situation was an “item of concern” for the upcoming fiscal year. The board may consider a \$100,000 supplemental appropriation this year with the possibility of a second appropriation at a later date, if necessary.

If a sum of \$322,000 was required at once — which is unexpected — the additional funding would require taxpayer approval.

Griffin said she would send letter to the selectmen notifying them of the unfolding situation.

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BOS Adopts \$38.28M Overall Budget

By Jack Lakowsky

The Portland Board of Selectmen unanimously adopted a proposed fiscal year 2023-2024 budget at its April 5 meeting.

After some trimming, the general government's asking locals for about \$14.73 million, and schools are asking for \$23.54, totaling more than \$38.28 million, a 3.35% jump over the current spending package, down from an initial request of close to 3.5%.

The town is proposing to raise the mill rate about 2.6% bringing the value of one residential mill to about \$840,729, and a motor vehicle mill rate of about \$110,000.

In Connecticut a mill is equal to \$1 for each \$1,000 of assessment. To calculate multiply the

assessment of the property by the local mill rate and divide by 1,000.

Portland's budget process has been a cooperative one, with little to no public contention unlike in nearby Colchester, Hebron and East Hampton.

Curley empathized, saying this is an especially tough year for everyone, especially for towns, which must balance demanding fiscal responsibilities and the needs of the local tax base.

"I feel for what everyone's going through," said Curley on Wednesday, referring to the bumpy budget debates in other towns.

"Costs are up and that really does put a strain on town services," he said.

Curley said the Portland selectboard spares no time or energy combing the budget and determining what, Curley said, it feels the town wants: maintaining or improving services while minimizing the burden on residents.

"There are not a lot of things on there we didn't absolutely need," said Curley. He said it would've been easy to deliver a high-aiming budget that called for a stark increase, but doing so is not in the best interest of the town. "We could've added another million," he said, adding that 3.35% more when inflation is nearing 8% higher than last year isn't, in his view, too bad at all.

He said there are so many things the town will need to tackle; it's a matter of balance and pacing.

Responsible money management also helps keep things light. Curley said the schools still had \$200,000 in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) funds, a drop in the \$13 billion Congress distributed in 2020, an effort at pandemic relief.

The budget adds a 13th officer, which'll bring pay police payroll to about \$1.20 million from about \$1.05 million.

Along with boosting the number of officers in town the new officer will help the department reach its listed goals for the coming fiscal year,

including reducing car accidents, participating actively with the local Solidarity Task Force (a local social equity group), work with the local Complete Streets Group to encourage safe driving and pedestrian safety.

Last year the department responded to nearly 6,000 calls, according to police info, and as of last July, all officers were equipped with the required body and car cameras.

The budget also adds a groundskeeping position, "long overdue," Curley said, as in the last several years the town has grown its amount of park spaces.

"I'm grateful we have such a great Board [of Selectmen]," he said, also offering praise to the town finance director, schools superintendent, and Board of Education.

One item that hasn't risen in two years, Curley said, are water and sewer prices.

The budget now goes to the voters and property owners of Portland, first at an annual town meeting on May 1, and then to be voted on at referendum on Monday, May 8.

Polls will be open on May 8 from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Portland Middle School, located at 93 High St. Absentee ballots will be available in the town clerk's office at Town Hall beginning Wednesday, April 19.

Kenny Fletcher Car Show at Valli

The Kenny Fletcher Car Show at Valli will return this year on Saturday, April 29, from 3-7 p.m., at Valli Construction, 22 Sand Hill Rd. Rain date is May 6. The show is in memory of local veteran Kenny Fletcher, who passed away from cancer in 2011.

Show car entry fee is \$10. Admission for spectators is free, although donations are appreciated. There will be trophies for first, second and third place, and dash plaques will be given to the first 200 cars. There will be music and food, water and soda will be available for

purchase. No dogs allowed.

Proceeds from the car show go to the Portland Food Bank, Portland Zion Lutheran Church, Middlesex Hospital Hospice, PHS Class of 2023 Project Graduation, Middlesex Cancer Center, and Portland VFW Post 6121.

For more information, call Michael Bellobuono at 860-707-4231, or Michael Brown at 860-982-3227. The event also has a Facebook page; look for "Kenny Fletcher Memorial Cruise Night."

Middle School Honor Roll

Portland Middle School has announced the honor roll for the third marking period of the 2022-23 school year.

High Honors

Grade 8: Madison Anzellotti, Nathaniel Dietrichsen, Ava France, George Germaine, Avery Johnson, Lucas Kirsche, Sierra Markham and Evan May.

Grade 7: Max Bernard, Darci Black, Costantino Caratasios, Giselle Castellano, Aliyah Cherry, Penelope Christensen, Kelsey Desmarais, Connor Doyle, Anthony Ezzo, Abigail France, Daniel Glezen, Isabel Grzegorek, Jameir Henry, Samuel Jacobsen, Nicholas Johnson, Drew Kelly, Ellery Keoppen, Connor Libby, Lanayah Mandeville, Aiden Maselek, Blake Pandolfo, Anna Piascik, Evan Piascik, Abygail Rascati, Molly Reilly, Piper Rettich, Jeremiah Rowe, Alex Trovato, Bryce Walsh.

Honors

Grade 8: Jacob Anderson, Ian Binnington, Lucas Bolstridge, Marcus Clements, Karly

Cruz, Elijah Eckert, Colin Fitzgibbons, Thomas Gaetani, Fiona Graham, Shane Guilmette, Lily Hale, Jack Hallinean, Jonah Hess, Parker Johnson, Megan King, Rowyn Kootz, Terrance Lin, Alyson Low, Matthew Maldonado, Miles Matterfis, Peyton Mazzullo, Ema Medunjanin, Brady Mierzejewski, Ryan Nadolski, Aurelia Napp, Lilah Nolan, Lily Otero, Zoey Pires, Leonxia Rivera, Luke Thompson, Erika Tine, Lena Trojanowski, Ella Woodward.

Grade 7: Isabella Aquino, Todd Aresco, Alex Brown, Caylee Carter, Calvin Celinski, Cody Christensen, Sophia Coe, William Coleman, Leah Cruz, Gabriella DeFronzo, Natalie Farmer, Andrew Fischer, Chad Gatto, Jayden Gomez, Blake Harlow, Isabella Hayden, Lydia Heath, Andrew Kuskey, Bianca Labbadia, Brianna Liranzo, Colin Martin, Kaelin Mullen, Reese Nicol, Nolan O'Connor, Brooks Oliva, Mya Peterson, Elizabeth Porter, Jason Revicki, Levi Srb, Cameron Szymaszek, Danica Vess, Anna Vicino,

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.

National Day of Prayer

St. Mary Church, along with the Knights of Columbus Council 7, will host the National Day of Prayer ecumenical service on Thursday, May 4, at 7 p.m., at the church, 45 Freestone Avenue.

The service will feature prayer and song from the choir of St. Mary, as well as guest speaker Alyssa Martin. She is the community outreach and education coordinator for New Horizons Domestic Violence Services in Middletown.

On the night of the service, a goodwill collection will be held in support of the New Horizons Domestic Violence Program. At the conclusion of the service, refreshments will be served in the Parish Hall.

Vocal Chords Spring Concert

The Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords (MHVC) will present its 33rd annual spring concert, entitled "It's a Grand Night For Singing" on Saturday, April 29, at 7 p.m., at Portland High School, 95 High St.

MHVC will also present scholarships to graduating students from Middlesex County who will be pursuing a career in nursing or music. Proceeds from ticket sales and the Patron Drive help to fund this community outreach program.

Tickets for the concert are \$25; call Diane at 860-347-2787 or Joyce at 860-342-3120 to reserve your seats. For more information, visit VocalChords20.org or "like" the group on Facebook.

Knights of Columbus Car Show

Knights of Columbus Freestone Council No. 7 will present its seventh annual car show Friday, June 2, starting at 3 p.m., at St. Mary Church, 45 Freestone Ave. The show is dedicated to Antonio "Buddy" Hernandez.

Classic cars, muscle cars, street rods, trucks and more are welcome. There is a \$15 entry fee, with proceeds to benefit local charities.

The Knights' Kitchen will be open, offering burgers, hot dogs, sausage and pepper grinders, and beverages. There will be a raffle, with prizes including signed Joey Logano collectibles, car accessories, electronics, gift baskets, wine and more.

Awards will be presented for Best of Show, Oldest, Classic, and Truck.

Class of '73 Reunion

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

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

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

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Free Household Hazardous Waste Collection

The Lower CT River Council of Governments will hold a free Household Hazardous Waste Collection event Saturday, April 22, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at the Clinton Public Works Garage, 117 Nod Rd., Clinton.

The collection is open to residents of the RiverCOG region which includes East Hampton and Portland. No commercial or business waste allowed.

Visit rivercog.org/household-hazardous-waste for more information.

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All Annual trays \$1.49 each or \$14.99 for a flat of 12 trays.

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We have thousands of 10" Hanging Baskets starting at \$15.95. 12" Combination Baskets for \$30.95.

QP will open Thurs., April 27th!

We have 3 cubic ft. bags of Mulch for sale along with bagged Top Soil & Potting Soil

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Pancake Breakfast April 16

Portland Volunteer Fire Department invites everyone to an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast Sunday, April 16, from 7-11 a.m., at Engine Company No. 1, 7 Middlesex Ave., right behind the Post Office.

This is a fundraiser for a Portland firefighter and town employee who has suffered some medical conditions. Anyone who wishes to help out serving, setting up and cleaning afterwards should call or text Wayne Mergel at 860-759-6921. Any amount of time is welcome.

The breakfast will feature sausage, all-you-

can-eat-pancakes (chocolate chip, regular and blueberry), and assorted beverages. Cost is \$8 for adults and \$4 for children. All proceeds received will be given to family member.

Also, PVFD will have ceramic pancake coffee cups for sale, featuring the department's logo and a cartoon character squirting syrup on a stack of pancakes. Cups cost \$20 each.

This is the last PVFD pancake breakfast of the season; look for them to resume in October. For more information or to be placed on an email notification list, call Mergel.

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. Sunday worship is at 10 a.m. Nursery care and church school take place every Sunday during the worship. 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.

This Sunday, April 16, is called "Bright Sunday," and the Rev. Julie Olmsted will lead worship with her sermon titled, "Jokes all Around." Wear a funny hat or outfit and bring a joke or

two to share with the congregation during the worship. Coffee time follows the service.

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. Those who wish to follow the church on Facebook may do so at The First Congregational Church of Portland, CT.

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.

Save the Date - Read and Recycle: Saturday, June 24, 10 a.m.-noon. The Friends will collect gently used, books, DVDs, CDs and puzzles. Donations support library activities.

Youth Programs: Nutmeg Voting: Runs at the library through April 30. This is the only book award in the state where kids pick the winner. Nominees have been divided into four categories: Elementary (Grades 2-3), Intermediate (Grades 4-6), Middle School (Grades 7-8), and High School (Grades 9-12). Visit the library website for a complete list of nominees. Winners will be announced on May 15 and next year's nominees will be announced on May 1.

Drop-In Playdates: Thursdays, 10:30 a.m., through May 25. Ages birth through 5 and their caregivers are invited to come for an hour of socialization and open play with the library's story room toys. No registration required.

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 or 11:15 a.m.

The Friends in My Brain: Author Event and Crafts for Kids: Monday, April 17, 6 p.m. Local author Rebecca Tripp will read her new book aimed at teaching preschoolers about how the brain sends messages to the rest of the body. No registration required, and attendees will receive a free copy of the book.

Family Craft Night: Im"peck"able Bird-houses: Wednesday, April 26, 6:30 p.m. This activity has steps that are appropriate for all ages, but a parent or guardian must be with children to help with supervision. Space is limited.

Foodshare Truck

The Connecticut Foodshare truck comes to the Waverly Center, 7 Waverly Ave., every other Monday from 1-2 p.m., except for holidays. People do not have to be a Portland resident to attend. Please bring bags.

The next Foodshare visit will be Monday, April 24, at 1 p.m.

Wetlands and Vernal Pools

The Portland Conservation Commission will host Denise Savageau, chair of the Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District, for a presentation on wetlands and vernal pools Wednesday, April 19, from 6-7 p.m., at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave.

Savageau will discuss the role wetlands and vernal pools play in animal and plant habitat, water conservation and flood control. All are invited.

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

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

Preschool Screening April 28

Valley View School will conduct a preschool screening Friday, April 28, for children ages 3-4. The screening is designed to answer questions about a child's development, as well as identify 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 that assess different such developmental areas as cognition, communication, fine and gross motor skills, and social interaction. During this time, par-

ents/caregivers will meet with another member of the team to discuss the child's adaptive and personal social skills.

Following the screening, parents/guardians will be sent a letter stating their child's results. In order for children to attend Valley View's 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 at 860-342-3131.

Historical Society Seeks Tag Sale Donations

The Portland Historical Society's Town-Wide Tag Sale Day is coming Saturday, May 13 (see separate notice in this paper), and the society is as usual hosting a sale of its own during the event.

The historical society's tag sale that directly benefits the society will happen on the grounds of the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History. Volunteers will receive items in good condition at the Ruth Callander House

garage, 492 Main St., from 9 a.m.-noon Saturdays, April 22 and 29. No textbooks, electronics (including computers or printers), clothing or footwear or unwieldy items (dirty, broken, rusty) are accepted. Vintage and antique items are always welcome.

For more information about donating items, call 860-982-1486 or email PortlandC-History@gmail.com.

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.

Free Grab-and-Go Meals: The center offers Waverly Senior Center members who live in Portland one free Grab-and-Go meal. You must be able to pick up the meal yourself, at 11:10 a.m., at the senior center, in the Mary Lou Rice room. Please do not arrive before 11 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.

Rent Rebate: Appointments begin this month; please no drop ins. Make an appointment in advance by calling Lynn or Alexis at 860-342-6761.

Next Week's Programs: Monday: Light Aerobics, 9:30 a.m.; Syncocize II Dance Fitness, 10:30 a.m. **Tuesday:** Bears on a Journey, 9:30-11 a.m. - making fleece teddy bears for cancer patients; donations are sought of light fleece, one yard or more for making teddy bears for cancer patients throughout Connecticut. If you would like to donate, call 860-342-0809; Watercolor Lessons, 9:30 a.m.-noon - to register, email bivenne@yahoo.com; Coupons for Troops, 1-4 p.m.; setback, 1 p.m.; Walking Club with Lynn, 3:30 p.m. **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. on the second and fourth Wednesday, multipurpose room; Tai Chi Qigong, 1 p.m. **Thursday:** Tone and Stretch with Lynn, 9:30 a.m.; Knit & Stitch, 10 a.m.; Mahjong, 12:30 p.m.; Scrabble, 1 p.m. **Friday:** Light aerobics, 9:30 a.m.; Tech Class with High School students Camille and Marley, 10:30 a.m. Register with Lynn or Alexis at 860-342-6761.

Trip to Max Fish in Glastonbury: Wednes-

day, April 19, bus leaves the senior center at 11 a.m. There is a \$5 transportation fee to the driver on the day of the trip. Register with 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 Duclos of "All Ears" in Portland. No registration is necessary.

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

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

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.

Exchange Offering Scholarship

The Portland Exchange Club is offering the \$1,000 John W. Goodrich Scholarship to any Portland resident senior going on to a higher education institution after graduation.

Applicants must provide a short essay describing their community service and its impact on how the community benefited. Other secondary factors considered are good academic achievement and participation in extracurricular activities.

Applications are available at the Portland High School Counseling Center and online at www.portlandexchange.org/john-w-goodrich-scholarship. Deadline for applications is April 15.

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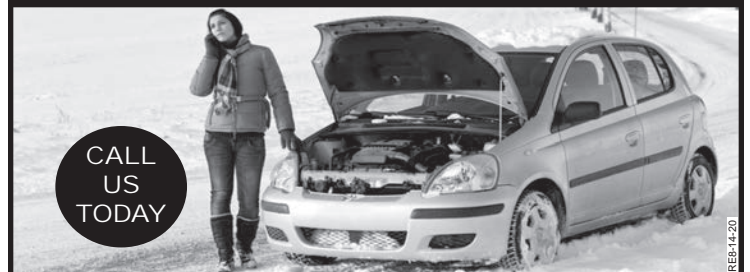
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Food Drive... The Exchange Club of Portland held its annual Food Drive at Adams Hometown Market on Saturday, April 8. From left are Exchange members Heidi Abbott, Mike Wrang, Mimma Burke, Jen Donahue and Roger Jensen, who collected over \$2,000 in donations to benefit the Portland Food Bank.

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 e-purl.com/h5m35f.

Intro to Dungeons & Dragons: Wednesdays, April 19, May 3 and May 10, 5-7:30 p.m., at the Buck-Foreman Community Center, 265 Main St. Learn to play this roleplaying game with folks from The Battle Standard in East Windsor. The April 19 session is currently full; contact Revicki for the waitlist.

Youth & Parent LGBTQ+ Support-Style Groups: Wednesday, April 19, from 6-8 p.m.

Community Leadership Series: Tuesday,

April 25, 6-7:30 p.m. This virtual program is designed to help participants develop strong, effective leadership skills. Contact Revicki to register.

Drop-In & Draw Arts & Crafts: Friday, April 21, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Power Up Portland: Wednesday, April 26, 6:30-8 p.m., at BFCC. The Prevention & Wellness Council works on youth substance use prevention, positive mental health and becoming a recovery-friendly community. Contact Revicki or just show up if interested in joining in.

Little Hikers: Friday, May 5, 10:30 a.m., at the Portland Air Line Trail, Middle Haddam Road parking lot.

After School Drop-In & Draw: Tuesday, May 9, from 2:30-4:30 p.m.

Summer Kick-Off: Monday, June 26, 3:30-5:30 p.m. Save the date.

From the First Selectman's Desk...

Spring has arrived here in Portland and I hope that you all are enjoying this stretch of beautiful weather. From car shows to tag sales there are so many great events coming up here in town and I am looking forward to seeing many of you at them. Below is a brief update on some of the things that we have been working on here at Town Hall.

Annual Budget: The Board of Selectmen unanimously adopted the fiscal year 2023-2024 budget at its April 5 meeting. The budget can be viewed in its entirety at www.portlandct.org/budgets as well as in the town clerk's office and Portland Library. The budget calls for an overall increase in expenditures of 3.35% between the Board of Education and General Government. If approved at referendum, residents would see a 2.57% increase to the current mill rate.

The budget now goes to the voters and property owners of Portland, first at an annual town meeting on May 1 and then to be voted on at referendum on Monday, May 8. Polls will be open on May 8 between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. at Portland Middle School, located at 93 High St. Absentee ballots are available in the town clerk's office beginning Wednesday, May 19. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions on the budget.

Portland Library: I am pleased to announce that Jennifer Billingsley has been selected as the new Library Director of Portland and her first day will be on April 28th. Jennifer comes to us from Russell Library in Middletown, where she has been serving as the Head of Youth and Family Learning. Please give her a warm welcome when you see her. I would also like to thank longtime library director Janet Nocek for her many years of service to Portland. Janet will be missed by all and we wish her a wonderful retirement!

Portland Senior Center: The Senior Center renovation project is currently underway with an estimated completion date expected in July of this year. Renovations include upgrades to the kitchen, HVAC, as well as the power capacity of the senior center. These improvements have been made possible by a \$725,000 grant from the CT Department of Housing.

High School Track Replacement: I am pleased to report that the track replacement project at the Portland Secondary Schools is moving forward. Residents came out and approved the allocation of the additional funds necessary at a special town meeting that was held last month. The Board of Selectman have since authorized a contract agreement for me to sign with Classic Turf Company, LLC. The project remains scheduled to be completed this fall.

Water Source Project: The engineers at GZA Geo Environmental Inc. have completed their initial assessment of Portland and have identified three potential locations for drilling and testing new underground wells. GZA believes that these locations have the best chance for producing the high yield that the town would need to be fully water independent. The drilling and testing of these wells is expected to be conducted as early as next month. This project is funded by a \$250,000 grant from the CT Department of Public Health.

Brownstone Avenue: The planned remediation of 248 Brownstone Ave. has been completed and I am happy to announce that it has come in under budget, leaving additional grant funds still available. The town is currently working with our engineers and the state to determine how to best utilize those remaining funds to make the property as attractive as possible for developers. The town will be seeking developers for the property in an RFP to be issued later this year. This project is funded by a \$1,125,000 grant from the CT Department of Economic Community Development.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or comments: by email at rcurley@portlandct.org or by phone at 860-342-6715. Office hours can be made by appointment or by stopping by Town Hall.

Sincerely yours,
Ryan Curley
Portland First Selectman



Congratulations, Emma!... Emma Murphy of Portland was accepted to the U.S. Youth Soccer Olympic Development Program, Girls East Region Team. Emma has honed and demonstrated her skills as a defender, most recently for Portland's U14 Boys Travel team the last two seasons. According to her coach, Emma is a hard worker and consistently "cool under pressure" at the fullback position. The Portland Soccer Club says she brings commendable dedication to practices, games, and training events offered by the club. Emma also demonstrates her leadership abilities when mentoring junior players. Emma's favorite player is Mia Hamm, and she describes the soccer field as her "happy place," noting that it is her second home!

Lions Club Scholarship Available

The Portland Lions Club is accepting scholarship applications for Portland residents enrolling in a post-high school certificate or degree program that serves the public in some manner.

Applications will be accepted from students of all academic levels as well as learning challenges. Students can obtain an application form from their guidance office or emailing portlandctlionssscholarship@gmail.com.

All applications must be received by April 15.

Soccer Club Spring Registration

Portland Soccer Club spring Rec division registration, for players with birth years 2014-19, runs through Sunday, April 16.

To register, visit clubs.bluesombrero.com/portlandsoccerclub or email PSC President Chad Wilson at nosliw.dahc@gmail.com. Birth year determines division.

Costs: Pre-K is \$60, Dribblers and Kickers is \$75. Pre-K and Dribblers play 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.

Veterans Sought for Committee

The Portland Veterans Affairs Committee (VAC) is seeking Portland veterans interested in serving on the committee to fill three vacancies.

The VAC meets monthly. The committee provides recommendations pertaining to veterans' issues to the Portland first selectman and Board of Selectmen. The commission also assists with the Portland Memorial Day Parade and the annual Veterans Day Dinner for local veterans.

If interested, contact VAC chairman Bill Willinsky at DadWillinsky@gmail.com. All names submitted by April 30 will be considered for the current vacancies and any future vacancies this year.

For more information, visit the VAC webpage at www.portlandct.org/veterans.

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Tony Rome Free Concert for Police Union

As part of his "New Blood and Hungry Tour," local rocker Tony Rome will put on a free show to benefit the Portland Police Union on Saturday, May 6, at 2 p.m., at Concentric Brewing, 91 Main St. Rain date is Sunday, May 7.

While the show is free, donations will benefit the police union. Donations can be sent to Sgt. Scott Cunningham, Portland Police Department, 265 Main St., Portland, CT 06480.

Horseshoe League Seeks New Members

The Portland Horseshoe League is looking for new players of all abilities to participate for the 2023 season, which will start in late May (date to be determined).

Folks from surrounding towns are welcome also. Games take place at the horseshoe pits in Bransfield Park on Rose Hill in Portland. The league meets from 5:45 to 8 p.m., and league leaders are currently deciding on the best day of the week to throw.

Email Andy Bauer at AndyTBauer@gmail.com if interested and let him know what days work for her. Portland Horseshoes is an alcohol-free activity.

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Local Teen Raises Thousands for Cancer Research

By Jack Lakowsky

Earning second place in a statewide fundraising race, RHAM student and Marlborough teen Maggie Walker raised nearly \$20,000 to fund research to cure lymphoma, breezily surpassing her \$15,000 goal.

Walker told the *Rivereast* she's extremely proud of herself and everyone who helped her on this months-long campaign, and that is gave her experience that will serve her the rest of her life.

Maggie was personally affected by lymphoma, losing her beloved grandmother to the illness in 2021.

"I learned team leadership and marketing skills," she said, and she learned a little about other people too, a humbling, enlightening, lesson; when they truly can, people give. And give. And give.

"It was moving and touching to be part of this," she continued. "It really gives you perspective; it made me appreciate the small things."

Walker ran a campaign any nonprofit should hope to mimic.

She sent a big thanks to Andover Elementary School, which had a "red-out" day to raise awareness of, and money for, Walker's campaign. Students could each pay \$1 to wear red clothes that day.

She had an auction too – auctioning off Red Sox tickets, a basket of UConn goodies, dinner and a movie and a self-care basket. She wasn't sure how much was raised at the auction, but said it was considerable. She said they racked up a couple thousand dollars on the very last day of the campaign.

According to a recording of the March Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) gala in Washington, D.C., the charity's student visionaries campaign raised more than \$3 million to research, advocate and teach about lymphoma and leukemia.

"Student Visionaries of the Year" is a philanthropic leadership development program through which high-school students embark on a journey of professional growth, fostering professional skills such as entrepreneurship, marketing, and project management all while working to raise as much as possible for LLS's mission.

The students fundraise for LLS in honor of blood cancer survivors. The "Student Visionaries of the Year" titles are awarded to the candidate teams who raise the most funds in their community during the 7-week competition.

Walker was second only to campaign winner

and West Hartford teen Evan Berey, who raised more than \$30,000, Walker said.

Walker may have found herself a career path, saying she plans to keep up with charity work and may do another campaign next year.

"I just don't know quite what to do yet," she said.

Nothing this major can be done alone – Walker said her family and friends, too many to name, deserve huge thanks.

Last month proud mom and campaign helper Leslie said their friend closely involved with the Connecticut LLS, encouraged Maggie, saying she'd do a great a job.

"It's a really nice thing watching her grow up, seeing the new skills she's developing; she'll come home and talk about 'emailing Andover,'" Leslie said.

LLS funds blood cancer research across the world and helps develop and accelerate new discoveries, treatments and cures for blood and skin cancers, serving cancer patients for more than 70 years. LLS is the world's largest nonprofit supporter of blood cancer research and has been key in advancing 75% of available blood cancer treatment options in the last 5 years.

Along with leukemia and lymphoma, LLS researches Hodgkin's disease and myeloma.

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma is one of the most common cancers in the U.S., according to the American Cancer Society, accounting for about 4% of all cancers. More than 80,000 people are expected to get it this year, both adults and children; the disease affects anyone at any age. About 20,000 deaths are predicted.

Some good news: lymphoma rates have declined about 1% since 2015, and in the last decade, the death rate has gone down 2% annually.



Losing her grandmother to lymphoma in 2021 motivated RHAM student and Marlborough teen Maggie Walker to lead a campaign raising money to research it, one of the most common types of cancer. She was hugely successful, winning second place in the whole state, raising nearly \$20,000.

Commission on Aging News

The Marlborough Commission on Aging meets every third Wednesday of the month at 11 a.m., at the Town Hall.

The commission, in collaboration with the Marlborough Senior Center, invites those age 50 and up to the fourth speaker series being held at Goodwin University. The event is Tuesday, May 16, and the topic is Purposeful Engagement in Your Community. If you need a ride to the event, sign up with Vi Schwarzmann at the senior center, at 860-295-6209. A link to register for the event is at tinyurl.com/bdfsztc5.

Did you know? The Marlborough Senior Center has a small gift boutique, which includes greeting cards.

For more information on the Commission on Aging, call Colleen Kaplan at 860-918-5705.

Workshop on Rock-Carving

Marlborough Arts Center will hold a workshop on Rock-Carving Saturday, May 6, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., at the center, 231 N. Main St. All materials will be covered in the \$60 fee. This class is offered to adults and teenagers.

Instructor is Susan Hourihan, who has been teaching soapstone rock carving for the past eight years. Some of her carvings are currently on display at the arts center.

A class registration form can be downloaded from marlborougharts.org and mailed with a check for \$60 to the Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., Marlborough, CT 06447.

For more information, contact the Arts Center at 860-467-6353 or marlboroughartscenter@gmail.com.



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The Marlborough Lions recently recognized Marlborough Elementary School nurse Alice Mecca (right) with the Lions Ambassador of Sight Award. The award was presented by Lions Club President Megan Lloyd (left).

School Nurse Receives Lions Award

The Marlborough Lions Club recently recognized Marlborough Elementary School nurse Alice Mecca with the Lions Ambassador of Sight Award, for her service in support of the Lions and for her years of service as a dedicated member of the school community. Mecca has been particularly supportive of the Marlborough Lions' vision screenings of

students in grades Pre-K to 6, through her work coordinating the scheduling of students for the screening sessions. The screening process utilizes a specially designed camera that detects vision anomalies. Mecca then notifies parents of children with identified issues so that the child can be referred to a specialist for further evaluation.

Ladies English Tea and Luncheon

There will be a Ladies English Tea and Luncheon, with traditional food served, at Fellowship Evangelical Free Church, 24 South Rd., on Saturday, May 6, from 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. The theme is "A Spring Cleaning for the Heart and Soul." The speaker will be Julie Kieras, mother of two boys, homeschool mom, and author of several books for women and children. She is a former English teacher who

helps homeschool families by sharing resources, encouragement, and motherhood content on her website, happystronghome.com. Her aim is to glorify God by encouraging women to build happy homes on a strong foundation of faith. RSVP by Wednesday, April 26, at fccefree@gmail.com or call 860-295-0944. Ladies ages 13 and up are welcome. There will be gluten-free options.

Lions Club Raffling Kayak

The Marlborough Lions are raffling off a 10-foot Ascend kayak with paddle and a one-year rental of a kayak rack at Marlborough's Blish Park. Note that use of the rack at Blish Park is limited to Marlborough residents, but the raffle for the kayak is open to everyone. Raffle tickets are \$20 each. Tickets will be sold at various locations through May 28 or can be purchased from Marlborough Lions Club mem-

bers. Proceeds will support the Lions. The raffle drawing will take place at Blish Park Sunday, May 28. Winners need not be present. For more information or to purchase raffle tickets, call Lions Club President Megan Lloyd at 413-687-5537, or Lions Jean Paul Bolduc at 860-798-2054 or Ken Hjulstrom at 860-490-9116.

Call for Artists and Artisans

Marlborough Arts Center will open its annual Members' Art Show on Sunday, April 23. All media will be accepted, including paintings, photography, sculpture, pottery, woodwork and jewelry. Artist members are invited to bring up to three pieces of artwork to the Arts Center, 231 North Main St., on Sunday, April 16, between 1 and 4 p.m., or on Monday, April 17, between 5 and 7 p.m. The entry fee is \$20 for two pieces, and an additional \$5 for a third.

Membership dues must be up to date. Alicia Meluzzo, an artist from Old Saybrook, will judge the show for awards. The Members' Art Show will be open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 p.m., from April 28-May 28. More information, including a prospectus and exhibition forms for the artists, will soon be available at www.marlborougharts.org.

Parks and Rec Programs

Marlborough Parks and Recreation has announced the following. For full program 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.

Special Event: Kids Fishing Derby: Sunday, May 7, 9-11 a.m., at Blish Park, for ages 4-15. Registration is \$10. Prizes will be awarded for biggest fish, smallest fish and first fish caught.

Youth Programs: Soccer Shots: Saturdays, April 22-June 17, at the West Road Memorial upper field. Mini, for age 2, is 3-3:45 p.m., and Classic, for ages 3-5, is 3:45-4:30 p.m. Fee for Mini is \$102/resident, \$107/non-resident, and fee for Classic is \$108/resident, \$113/non-resident.

Skyhawks - Soccer, Baseball and Basketball: Thursdays, April 20-May 18, at Marlborough Elementary School. Mini-Hawk (ages 5-7) meets from 4-5 p.m., and Multi-Sport (ages 8-12) meets from 5:15-6:15 p.m. Fee: \$89/residents, \$94/non-residents.

Kids/Family Sewing - PJ Shorts: Saturday, May 6, 10-11:30 a.m., at Marlborough Senior Center, for ages 8 and up. All supplies included. Fee: \$48/resident, \$53/non-resident.

Tennis Lessons: Tuesdays, May 9-30, at Blish Park. Ages 5-7 are 3:45-4:30 p.m., and are \$65/resident, \$70/non-resident; ages 8-12 are 4:30-5:30 p.m. and are \$85/resident, \$90/non-resident.

Horseback Riding Lessons: For ages 5 and up. Lessons are private, an hour in length, and days and times are flexible. Fee is four lessons for \$175/residents, \$180/non-residents.

Adult Program: Zumba: Thursdays through May 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m., in the conference room

at Fire Station No. 2 and virtually. There is a \$10 drop-in fee each week.

Adult Volleyball: Thursdays, 8-10 p.m., at MES. Cost is \$5 per week; drop in. Session runs until June 2.

Trips: Boston Red Sox Patriots Day Bus Trip: Monday, April 17, see the Los Angeles Angels play the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park at 11 a.m. Trip includes: charter bus, ticket to the game (right field roof top), breakfast before bus departs, games and prizes on the bus. Registration fee is \$160. Bus departs Putnam park and ride in Glastonbury at 7:30 a.m., and returns at 5 p.m.

New York Yankees Bus Trip: Sunday, May 28. See the San Diego Padres vs. New York Yankees, at 1:05 p.m. Trip includes: charter bus, ticket to the game, cookout before the game, games and prizes on the bus. Registration fee: \$120 for upper level outfield, \$165 for sections 232-234. Bus departs Putnam park and ride in Glastonbury at 7:30 a.m., and returns at 6 p.m.

Boston Red Sox vs. New York Yankees Bus Trip: Saturday, June 10, at 7:35 p.m., at Yankee Stadium. Trip includes: charter bus, ticket to the game, food served on the way to the game, and games and prizes on the bus. Registration fee: \$209. Bus departs Putnam park and ride in Glastonbury at 3 p.m. and returns at around 1 a.m.

Driveway Reflective Number Signs Available: Cost of the sign is \$35. 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.

Local Singer Has Strong Showing

Micah Dubitzky of Marlborough was among the Eastern Connecticut State University music students who had a strong showing in statewide student auditions held by the Connecticut chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing. Dubitzky is a senior who majors in music and is a tenor.

Independent Party Info Session

Sue Stolfi and Kerri Barella of the Marlborough Independent Party Slate Committee (IPSC) will be at the Marlborough Bakery on Saturday, April 22, from 8:30-11 a.m., to talk to any residents interested in learning more about the committee. Light refreshments will be served.

The IPSC is also looking for community members interested in filling open slots on its ballot in the November election.

Sewer Bills Due May 1

Homeowners in the Marlborough Sewer District are reminded that the last day to pay their Benefit Assessment Bill, without interest, is Monday, May 1. Late bills will be charged interest at 1.5% a month reverting to the due date of April 1.

The tax office, located at 26 N. Main St., is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Tuesdays, from 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; and Fridays, 8:30 a.m.-noon.

Bills can be paid by mail to the Tax Office, P.O. Box 29, Marlborough, CT 06447, in person or the lockbox to the left of the Town Hall Door (no cash in the lockbox, checks only). Sewer bills cannot be paid online.

For questions, contact Barbara Murray at 860-295-6205 or taxcollector@marlboroughct.net. Failure to receive a bill does not invalidate the fee or interest.

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Modern Riffs at Arts Café

The Modern Riffs (www.modernriffs.com), a Marlborough-based classic rock, jazz and pop band, will perform at the 4th Friday @ the Arts Café on Friday, April 28, at 7:30 p.m., at Marlborough Arts Center, 231 North Main St.

This group, founded in 2008 by Marlborough saxophonist Bruce Phelps, is a collaboration of high school musicians and long-time experienced musicians. The April 28 show includes a lineup of high-energy material from Stevie Wonder, Steely Dan, Spiral Staircase, AWB, Patsy Cline, Earth Wind And Fire and many others.

Current Riffs members include three RHAM seniors – singer Caelyn Calhoun, bassist Miguel Genung, and trumpeter Ben Cancellaro. The others, also from RHAM, are drummer Alexa Odoy, trumpeter Trevor Hooker, baritone saxophonist Finn Blake, and tenor saxophonist Jake Sauer. The two adult mentors are Keith Coakley,



The Modern Riff will perform at the 4th Friday @ the Arts Café on Friday, April 28, at 7:30 p.m., at Marlborough Arts Center, 231 North Main St.

keyboards; and Bruce Phelps, alto saxophone.

Admission is \$10/person. Doors open at 7 p.m. Marlborough Arts Center is a nonprofit regional center for the arts, fully accessible, and with on-site parking.

Richmond Library News & Notes

Richmond Memorial Library, located at 15 School Drive, has announced the following programs and events. For more information or to register, call 860-295-6210 or email richmond-programs@gmail.com.

Books for Babies: Town families with children ages birth up to 12 months are invited to stop into the library to pick up a Books for Babies Box and register for your baby's first library card. Advance registration is required and can be done online. At least one parent must have a library card but that can be done at the same time.

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.

Kids Crafting Club: Meets every other Tuesday at 4 p.m. Next meets April 25. Registration required.

Scholarship Applications Available

The Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department Women's Auxiliary is accepting scholarship applications from any graduating senior who resides in Marlborough.

The applications are available online through the RHAM guidance department. Applications are due by Monday, May 1. Mail all completed applications to MVFD Women's Auxiliary, P.O. Box 237, Marlborough, CT 06447.



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Project Graduation Trivia Night Fundraiser

Project Graduation will hold a Trivia Night fundraiser Friday, April 28, at St. Joseph's Polish Club. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the game begins at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20/person, with tables seating up to 10. Register at baconacademyprojectgrad.org.

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 performing the shredding. Cost is \$5 for a bag the size of a plastic grocery bag and \$10 for a box 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.

Spring Baseball, Softball Registration

Registration for Colchester spring baseball and softball teams is at www.cbsl.org. Registration closes April 30. Anyone interested in coaching should sign up for that volunteer role when registering a player. People can also volunteer for any of the different volunteer roles via the "volunteer opportunities" tab on the website as well.

Free CPR/AED Training

The Colchester Hayward Fire Department is offering free CPR/AED and Stop the Bleed training to Colchester residents at Company No. 1 (52 Old Hartford Rd.) on Tuesday, April 18, from 2:30-5 p.m. To register, call 860-537-2512 or email firedepartment@colchesterct.gov.

Vendors Wanted

The Colchester Dog Park Committee is looking for vendors that sell-dog related items for its ninth annual "Spring Bark for the Park." The event will be held on the Town Green on Sunday, May 21, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Vendor slots are available at \$40 per booth. There is no charge for nonprofit organizations. Email tagnobark@gmail.com for more information.

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Handwriting Contest Winners... Each year, a number of Jack Jacter Intermediate School students participate in the annual Zaner-Bloser Handwriting Contest. Students who attained proficiency were then selected by grade level to represent our school in the state competition. The writing of JJIS students Nina Caplet, Neil Drylie and Samantha Roberts (pictured from left) was recognized at the state level. As of March 24, Nina's submission was chosen to participate at the national level.

Incoming Kindergarten Story Time
 Colchester Elementary School will host Kindergarten Story Time Tuesdays, April 25 and May 9, for 4- and 5-year-old Colchester children who will enter kindergarten during the 2023-24 school year.
 The sessions will run from 11:10-11:40 a.m., in the CES media center. Children will listen to books read by kindergarten teachers, while parents learn about Colchester's kindergarten program.
 Topics for parent information change each session. No pre-registration is required. CES is located at 315 Halls Hill Rd.

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History Museum Reopens for Season

The Colchester History Museum has reopened for the season – and new this year offers a Scavenger Hunt! Bring your family or be a solo sleuth to find all 20 of the objects pictured on the hunt card and win a \$5 gift card from Dunkin' Donuts, Mel's Downtown Creamery or The Plum Tomato. Have fun while discovering facts about Colchester's history. The Colchester History Museum, located

at 24 Linwood Ave., is open Sundays from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., until Dec. 3. The museum, adjacent to Cragin Memorial Library, is free and features both permanent and special exhibits all highlighting the people and events in Colchester's history. The museum offers both guided and self-guided tours. For more information, contact the historical society at mail@colchesterhistory.org or 860-537-3240.

Thanksgiving in April?

A turkey dinner with all the trimmings will be served at Westchester Congregational Church, 98 Cemetery Rd., on Saturday, April 29, from 4-6 p.m. Served will be roasted turkey, mashed potatoes, squash, stuffing, cranberry sauce, rolls and dessert, for \$15 per dinner. The meal is drive-thru only, and is first-come, first-served. All proceeds benefit the church.

Understanding Your Utilities

The Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) will offer a program on Connecticut's utilities Thursday, May 4, at 10:30 a.m., at Colchester Senior Center, 95 Norwich Ave. Marissa Paslick Gillett, chairman of PURA, will discuss what the authority regulates, your monthly electric bills, and information about selecting a third-party supplier. Registration is required for this free program and opens May 1; call 860-537-3911 to register.

Dean's List

The following Colchester residents made the fall 2022 Dean's List at Endicott College in Beverly, Mass.: Rachel Dona, a nursing major and the daughter of Judith and Paul Dona; Hailey Groene, a liberal studies/education major and the daughter of Julie and Bradley Groene; and Rachel Wells, an accounting major and the daughter of Illyse and Stephen Wells.

'Spring in Bloom' Vendor Fair Coming

Colchester Federated Church's annual 'Spring in Bloom' Vendor Fair is Saturday, May 6, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the church, 60 Main St. All are invited to attend. The fair will showcase local crafters, vendors and farmers; there will also be the Up-scale Tag Sale, Bake Sale and Raffle.

Resident Tours Puerto Rico

The Chamber Singers from Eastern Connecticut State University toured Puerto Rico during spring break in March, where they gave three live performances and relished a week in the Caribbean. Among the student performers were Scott Kardys of Colchester, a first-year student who majors in music.

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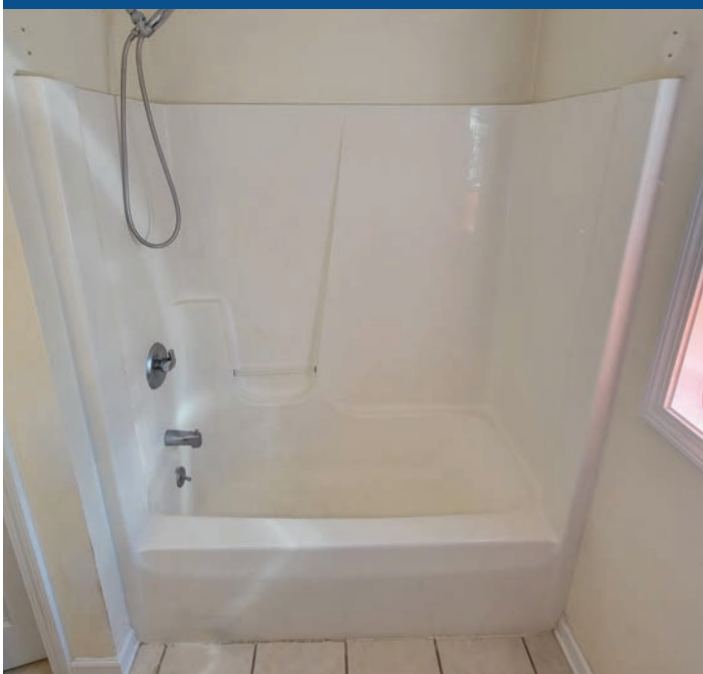
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Short-Handed Bobcats Prep for Golf Season

By Josh Howard

Despite working with a skeleton crew this spring, Bacon Academy boys golf plans to be competitive.

The Bobcats have only six golfers on the roster, which includes a pair of underclassmen.

Craig Kupper, who is the co-head coach with Dave Mason, is anticipating having to rely on his four veteran golfers for a majority of the season as the team's two younger players get comfortable with the local courses.

Heading the team will be senior Connor Tuttle, the team's best golfer as a junior last spring. At the 2022 Division II state championship, Tuttle tied for 17th overall as the Bobcats placed 10th as a team.

Tuttle has played all four years at Bacon and Kupper is expecting him to be leader, on and off the course.

"He's a really solid player," Kupper said of Tuttle. "We expect him to steady the ship at the top for us."

The only other senior on the roster is Robert June, who Kupper said had progressively gotten better each year and will be counted on heavily this year.

Junior John Ceruti is also back in the mix after posting the team's second-best round at the state championships, paring a pair of holes at Tallwood Country Club last June.

Junior Alex Gallardo will round out the team's foursome.

Sophomore Tristan Pedroso and freshman Devon Kudrak will learn the ropes under the experienced golfers.

Kupper said that, despite the low number of players, he is optimistic about this spring.

During the team's practice rounds this spring, Kupper noted that his main four have been posting scores in the mid- to low-40s.

"Obviously we'll need them to be consistent, and in this game it is not easy to do that, but I think we'll be okay," stated Kupper, who is also the head coach of the boys basketball team at the school.

Kupper added the team normally has around 10 golfers on any given season and said that the long-term goal is to get more multi-sport athletes to come out for the team.

But for now, the coaches are rolling with

the six-person squad they have teeing-off this spring.

Bacon Academy opens the season on the road, visiting Elmridge Golf Course in Pawcatuck to take on Stonington High School on Tuesday, April 18 at 3:15 p.m.

The Bobcats first home match will be on Thursday, April 20, when they host Woodstock Academy at 3 p.m.

It will be one of seven home dates the team has slated this season. All the home matches are played at Chantclair Golf Course at 288 Old Hebron Rd. in Colchester.

Colchester Federated Church News

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

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

Sunday School: Sunday School is held during

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

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

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

Community Conversation with Dennler

Colchester residents are invited to join first selectman candidate Bernie Dennler for "Let's Bring Colchester Together," a community conversation, on Wednesday, April 19, from 6-7 p.m., in the bar area of Toyo Hibachi & Asian Fusion at 464 South Main St.

This is a chance to meet Dennler, ask questions, and share ideas or concerns about the

future of Colchester. Dennler is seeking the Democratic nomination for first selectman ahead of the November municipal election.

All are welcome. Residents can also contact Dennler at bernie@bernieforcolchester.com or at [Facebook.com/BernieForColchester](https://www.facebook.com/BernieForColchester) for information on future events.

Senior Center News & Notes

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

Monday, April 17: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise with Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Pet Therapy; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 12:30 p.m., Mahjongg; 12:45 p.m., Setback; 1 p.m., Bridge.

Tuesday, April 18: 7:30 a.m., Harvard Glass Trip to Boston departs; 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10:30 a.m., Book Club; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1:30 p.m., Bingo; 2 p.m., Golf League Meeting.

Wednesday, April 19: 9 a.m., Making Memories Program, Walking Group meet-up at the Air Line Trail in Amston; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Sit & Be Fit; 11 a.m., Floral Frenzy Luncheon; 1:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming I; 2 p.m., Cardio Drumming II.

Thursday, April 20: 9 a.m., Exercise with Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling; 11 a.m., Yoga; noon, Chair Massage; noon-3:30 p.m., Senior Benefits Counseling with Ellen; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes; 1 p.m., Knit & Crochet.

Friday, April 21: 9 a.m., yoga (note time

change for today only); no Sit & Be Fit or Choral Group today; 10:30-11:45 a.m., CSC will be closed for Groundbreaking Ceremony; 10:30 a.m., New Senior Center Groundbreaking Ceremony, Town Hall; 11:45 a.m., Blood Pressure Clinic; 1 p.m., Tech Time with Harry; 1:30 p.m., Bingo; 2 p.m., Ham Radio.

Upcoming Programs: Volunteer Appreciation Event Luncheon: Friday, April 28, 10:30 a.m. This is a luncheon for those who volunteer at the Colchester Senior Center 25 hours or more annually. RSVP by Friday, April 21.

Survivors of Stroke (SOS) Support Camp: Wednesdays, May 3, June 7, July 5, 1-3 p.m. Offered in collaboration with Hartford Healthcare. Stroke survivors and their families will learn about stroke prevention, education, socialization, and community resources. To register, contact stroke nurse navigator Maureen Hahn at 860-823-6324 or Maureen.Hahn@hhhealth.org.

Hearing Screenings: Friday, May 5, 10:30 a.m. Dr. Matthew Cross from HearUSA of Glastonbury will be at the center; call 860-537-3911 to make an appointment.

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. Proceeds benefit Project Graduation.

Full event details, including sponsorship opportunities, are at www.baconacademy-projectgrad.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, P.O. Box 393, Colchester, CT 06415.

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Theme Chosen for Memorial Day Parade

The theme for this year's Memorial Day Parade is: "Colchester Honors and Remembers Those Who Served and Sacrificed in the Vietnam War." All marching units and organizations designing floats should try and use the theme in preparing for the parade, which will be on Sunday, May 28.

Applications to join this year's Memorial Day Parade are available online at www.colchesterct.gov, and at the first selectman's office in Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave. File your application before May 4.

The parade committee is expecting to have

several military units represented, including the Connecticut Army National Guard, 1109th TASM-G, U S Navy Silver Dolphins Drill Team, U.S. Marine Reserve, the Coast Guard and the U.S. Air Force Reserve. The local American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Colchester Veterans Honor Guard will also participate. There is room for community organizations to help fill in the ranks.

The Parade Committee will award prizes in three categories; 1. Best marching unit, 2. Most patriotic float and 3. Most creative float.



Here Comes Peter Cottontail... Teacher Michelle Donahue and the kids of Colchester Cooperative Nursery School recently enjoyed an Easter party and egg hunt, and were happily surprised to have the Easter Bunny as a special guest.

Upcoming Programs at Cragin Library

Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave., has announced the following. For more information, visit www.colchesterct.gov/library. The library can be reached at 860-537-5752.

Take & Make Foodie Fun: Saturday, April 15, for children and teens. Create an animal from fruit.

STEAM Saturday Pick-Up: Saturday, April 15, for grades 3-5. Pick up your kits for this month's STEAM activity. Registration required.

Take & Make 3D Flower Craft: Monday, April 17. Available at the children's department.

Pressed Flower Lantern Take & Make: Wednesday, April 19, for adults and teens. Stop by to pick up a craft kit.

In-Person Flower Paint Craft: Wednesday, April 19, 6 p.m. Come to the children's depart-

ment to paint flowers in a watering can.

Teen Writing Club: Thursday, April 20, 3-4 p.m., for ages 14-18. The library will give prompts or guidance to help teens accomplish their writing goals.

Rainbow Popsicle Craft: Saturday, April 22, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Cragin Book Club: Monday, April 24, 6 p.m. *The Last Checkmate* by Gabriella Saab will be discussed. Stop by the adult circulation desk for a copy.

Mushroom Identification for Beginners: Thursday, April 27, 5:30 p.m. Karen Monger of the 3 Foragers will discuss which mushrooms are safe to eat and which ones you should avoid.

Dried Flower Bookmarks Craft: Saturday, April 29, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Parks & Rec News & Notes

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

Community CPR/AED/First Aid Classes: Cost is \$90/person. Class dates: April 18, 6 p.m., Basic Life Support (BLS) CPR; Sept. 19, 6 p.m., Heartsafe CPR & First Aid; Oct. 17, BLS CPR; Nov. 14, 6 p.m., Heartsafe CPR & First Aid.

Card-Making Class: Thursdays, April 20, May 18, June 15, July 20 and Aug. 17, 6-8 p.m., at Town Hall. Cost: \$15 per class, per person (\$20 for nonresidents).

Annual Spring Clean-Up: Saturday, April 22 (rain date April 29), at 8 a.m., on the Town Green. Locations include the schools, town buildings and parks. Meet up at noon at Mel's Downtown Ice Cream for a free ice cream as a thank you.

Puzzlepalooza: Friday, April 28, 6 p.m., at Town Hall. Register as a team of up to four, or individually (you will be put with others), and the first team to complete a select puzzle wins a prize. Bring your own snacks. Cost is \$25 per team.

Touch-A-Truck: Saturday, April 29, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., on the Town Green. There will be kids' activities, games, and trucks. To participate with your vehicle, call the office.

Food Festival on the Green: Sunday, May 6 (rain date May 7), on the Town Green. Follow the event on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FOODIEAFF.

Tennis Lessons: Mondays, May 1-May 22;

make-up date: June 5. Ages 5-7 are 3:45-4:30 p.m., and \$65/session; and ages 8-12 are 4:30-5:30 p.m., and \$85/session.

Gentle Yoga: Online with Facebook Live. For ages 45 and older. The four-week classes are held Mondays from 4:45-5:45 p.m. Choose May 1-June 5 (no class May 15 or 29), June 12-July 17 (no class June 19 or July 3), or July 24-Aug. 14. Cost per four-week session: \$35/residents, \$40/non-residents.

Spring Pickleball: For adults age 16 and older. Tuesdays, May 16-June 13, at Colchester Elementary School. Beginner is from 6-7:30 p.m. and is \$30/player; Intermediate is from 7:30-9 p.m. and is \$20/player. Limited spaces available.

SPT Summer Soccer Camp: For ages 5-15. Monday-Friday, June 19-23, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., at the RecPlex. Cost is \$225/player for full-day (9 a.m.-3 p.m.), and \$150/player for half-day (9 a.m.-noon). There will also be a camp Monday-Friday, July 24-28, from 5-8 p.m., at the RecPlex. Cost is \$150/player.

Bus Trips: Registration forms are available online. Bus will leave from Town Hall. For full itineraries, see the website. **Newport Flower Show:** June 25, \$150/person; **Niagara Falls:** June 26-28, \$679/person double occupancy; **Montreal Festivals and Fireworks:** July 2-5, \$1,249/person double occupancy; **Block Island Breeze:** July 18, \$150/person; **Spooky Salem:** Oct. 21, \$114/person.

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

Internships: College students looking for an internship in the recreation field can contact Parks and Rec. to set something up. Internships are available any time of the year. Call the office to discuss options.

Ahavath Achim News

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

Tuesday, Aggadath class from the Talmud, 6 p.m.; Talmud class, 6:30 p.m.; Kabbalah class, 8 p.m., on Zoom and in person; Wednesday classes, 2:30-4 p.m. - Hebrew Conversation, Jewish Literacy and Jewish Business Ethics on Zoom. Friday night service, 6 p.m., hybrid in-person and on Zoom; Shabbat morning service, 10 a.m., hybrid in-person and via Zoom.

There are daily Facebook Live classes on Ken Alter's Facebook page. Also on the page: "Ask the Rabbi" and the Positive Affirmation of the Day.

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

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Upcoming Land Trust Events

The Colchester Land Trust has announced the following upcoming events:

Hike-and-Seek for Families: Sunday, May 7, 11 a.m., at Bulkeley Hill Preserve. Colchester Land Trust and C3 will join up to offer this free family hike. Pick up your hike-and-seek card to see what you can find along the path. The trails have mild inclines and can be rough, so the hike is not stroller friendly. Call Cindy at 860-267-7901 for directions and more information.

Intro to Geocaching: Saturday, May 20, 11 a.m. Experienced geocaching team Joe and Joni Aveni, a.k.a. AlphaDog (a geocacher handle),

will show people how to place and find beginner caches and explain why thousands join in this worldwide scavenger hunt.

Presentation on Bluebirds, Backyard Habitats: Wednesday, May 24, 6 p.m., at Cragin Memorial Library, Norton Room A. Connecticut Audubon Society's RTP Estuary Center's Conservation & Education Coordinator Joe Attwater will teach people how they can attract bluebirds, sparrows, warblers and more, as well as which bird species are likely to visit at this time of year.

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: Wednesdays at 7 p.m.; Fridays: Donuts with Don at 10 a.m. -- this is an open discussion on how God fits in your 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.

Choir and Orchestra Seeks Members

The Colchester Choir and Orchestra rehearses Thursdays at Bacon Academy. New members are welcome.

Rehearsals are for CCO's spring concert on May 20. Seats are open in both choir and orchestra. Choir rehearses in the choir room from 6-7:30 p.m. Orchestra rehearses in the band room from 7:30-9 p.m.; come at 7 p.m. to warm up.

For more information, visit colchesterchoirorchestra.org, like the group on Facebook, or email colchesterchoirorchestra@gmail.com. Half-year registration is at tinyurl.com/4ysam6sw.

Polka Dinner Dance

The St. Joseph's Polish Society, located at 395 South Main St., will host a Polka Dinner Dance Sunday, May 7.

Dinner will be served at 1 p.m., and includes choice of chicken marsala or pork roast with rice, roasted vegetables, coleslaw and a roll with butter. Dennis Poliski and the Maestro's Men will play from 2-6 p.m.

Advanced tickets only. Tickets are \$25 each and can be purchased at the club. Call 860-537-2550 for more information.

Guardian Angels Parish Offering Italy Trip

Guardian Angels Parish – which encompasses St. Andrew Church in Colchester and St. Francis of Assisi Church in Lebanon – is making a pilgrimage to Italy from Oct. 30-Nov. 9.

The Rev. Richard Breton will lead pilgrims through Florence, Assisi, Sorrento, Amalfi Coast, Pompeii and Monte Cassino, ending in Rome. The trip will include an audience with Pope Francis.

Cost is \$3,479, and the trip departs from New York. All admissions, fees and hotel services are included.

For more information, contact Angela Corentin at 860-402-8316 or acorentin1219@gmail.com.

Ukrainian Catholic Church News

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

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

Kindergarten Registration

Children who live in town and will be 5 by Jan. 1, 2024, can register for kindergarten for the 2023-24 school year at the Colchester Public Schools website, www.colchesterct.org. Select the "For Families" tab, and then "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.

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.

Missing Students for Class of '73 Reunion

The Bacon Academy Class of 1973 will be holding their class reunion on June 17 in Colchester – and the committee is looking for the following classmates:

Charles Arnold, Dina Bienvenue, Geraldine Ford, Robert Giguere, Diana Hula, Donald Hutchins, Charles Lankford, Leny Martin, Phylis Medbery, Debra Skut, Donald Smith and Wayne Zielinski.

If you have any information regarding these people or you are on the list, please provide an email address and/or home address to baconacademy73@gmail.com.

Honor Society Inductee

Lindsay Amor of Colchester was recently initiated into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society.

Amor was initiated at Ithaca College in Ithaca, N.Y.

Cover Story • Cover Story • Cover Story • Cover Story • Cover Story • Cover

★ Food Truck, cont. from page 1

scetta of the Taco Shack food truck will also be joining him.

Bellino told the *Rivereast* that he saw the updates on social media and wanted to help out in any way possible.

"We know how it is and know these trucks aren't easy; it's a lot of work," he said. "And for her to be down with health issues, too, you have to look out for people."

While he hasn't settled on a date yet, Bellino hopes to hold the fundraiser sometime later this

month. He confirmed that 100% of the profits will go toward Lack and her business.

Regardless of how much is raised, they "want to give her something."

He emphasized that typically, food vendors respect each other and understand the hardships of the industry. He also stated that the suspect had ties to his own food truck, expressing that "he should know."

"It's a slap in the face," he asserted. "It doesn't make sense."

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Finance Board Cuts \$800K From School Budget

By Jack Lakowsky

In a move Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith called unexpected, the East Hampton Board of Finance cut nearly \$800,000 from the school district's requested 2023-24 budget.

A majority of finance board members, mostly Republicans, said because the schools realized a savings in medical insurance, with the state's actual increase of 7% rather than Smith's estimated 12%.

The finance board also totally cut funds for the local volunteer East Hampton Ambulance Association, which were about \$174,000, which the EHAA would've used for 7 years. Board member Richard Brown, a Republican, said the EHAA has plenty of money to take care of itself, adding without a clear idea of what the money would be used for, and if it's even necessary in the first place.

The board also cut more than \$100,000 from the police department's requested budget, removing a new requested officer but keeping the proposed new lieutenant's position.

As to the schools, board chair Alannah Coshow, also a Republican, said the school's budget is growing at an "alarming" rate while its population declines, saying in enrollment is down 100 kids in the last 10 years, but funds have risen 12%, and that the district's original request for around a 6% increase was almost half of the increase of the last five years.

She said taxpayers are making hard choices of needs versus wants, and that the education system might have to make similar choices.

Finance board Republican Russell Bonaccorso, who made the original motion to cut the school board budget, said the town needs to send a message it's unwilling to accept what he called unfunded state mandates.

Now, with the Republican cuts, opposed only by board Democrat Ted Turner, bring the new

school board budget request down to \$35.61 million, down from the original request of more than \$36 million.

On Monday, Smith said he wasn't sure where he was going to make the nearly \$800,000 cuts, but said it's very likely to be teachers.

"I can't commit to exact reductions without knowing the town council's feelings on the budget," said Smith, though Town Council Chair Mark Philhower said last year he didn't want to see a school board request more than 3%.

"Offhand, this is five to seven teaching positions reduced," said Smith.

Five years ago, the town cut a similar number of positions from the schools, which were refilled during the height of covid, with the goal of helping local learners catch up on pandemic learning loss. It took years of effort to get the positions reinstated, he said, and now numbers are likely to fall back to where they were.

Class sizes are also bound to increase, Smith said, not ideal at a time when schools are focusing on student achievement and mental health.

"It saddens me that as we're speaking about getting kids caught up," Smith said, "that we could cut this at this time."

Smith said he will share the cuts with the public when he and the school board figure them out; schools were on vacation this week.

The cut surprised Smith. "This is the first I heard about it," he said.

School board chair Christina Tammaro-Dzagan also said the cut came as a surprise, and that it was done out of misdirected anger. It's the state's underfunded mandates that finance board should be frustrated with, not the local schools.

"We have to comply with mandates, and we have to provide services the students need," said Tammaro-Dzagan.

Tammaro-Dzagan took over the board chairwoman's position as a Republican; however, she said, as the rift between the school board and the Republican-majority Town Council grew, she felt she had to switch her party affiliation to Independent instead.

The Republicans currently seated on the council and the finance board, she said, have proven to be opponents of local schools and local public safety. Morally and politically, she said she couldn't align with the local GOP on these issues.

"Additionally, the lack of BOF questions during budget workshops shows a lack of engagement," she told the *RiverEast* in an email. "That's why I was most surprised by the large reduction. One thing has been made clear: there is complete disregard for the students in the district when it comes to the Board of Finance."

"It's a sad day for East Hampton's students who are still recovering from the loss of learning imposed by the overarching COVID restrictions," she continued. "Our only hope is the town council will choose to do the right thing this year and restore the education funds."

The insurance savings, according to Smith, doesn't come near the cut, being a bit over \$200,000.

Schools weren't the only ones on the chopping blocks; the board made some cuts to local emergency services too.

In the original town budget request was more

than \$170,000 for the EHAA, built in by the town manager. This didn't pass muster with the finance board. Save for Turner, board members said the EHAA needs to have a detailed plan ready first.

Brown said while he fully supports the ambulance association, he doesn't feel they're in a crisis. Members Bonaccorso, Coshow and fellow Republican Deb Cunningham agreed this was the right approach to the EHAA.

The finance board also took a knife to the police budget, cutting \$105,000. Turner said the cut was "shocking."

He said he was glad the lieutenant's position was still in play. On the ambulance, Turner said the service was asking for money for seven years of help.

"How can we turn them down?" said Turner, pointing to ambulance volunteers attending the meeting.

Brown said it wasn't a final decision, as the budget ultimately has to go before the voters at referendum. He added that the town needs to make sure it's using tax dollars to the best effect.

With these, a \$125,000 cut to the general fund contribution to the capital line and a few other cuts, the town budget is down to just under \$18.00 million.

Combined, the town and school budget proposals total \$53.60 million, up about \$2 million, or 3.56%, from current year spending.

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.

Red Cross Blood Drive: Saturday, April 15, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Seeds of Hope fundraiser Race: Saturday, April 29.

Church school classes meet every Sunday.

Police News

4/1: Craig Dilla, 64, of 239 East High St., was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

4/1: John Fazio, 76, of 221 Clark Hill Rd., was issued a summons for second-degree breach of peace and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

4/2: Christina Bernard, 57, of 21 Holly Dr., was issued a summons for driving under suspension, police said.

4/6: Tina Cowee, 34, of 60 Mountain Rd., Colchester, was issued a summons for traveling

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.

unreasonably fast, misuse of plates, operation a motor vehicle while under suspension and operating a motor vehicle without insurance, police said.

4/9: A 14-year-old juvenile and a 16-year-old juvenile were issued juvenile summonses. Both juveniles were charged with second-degree assault and risk of injury to a minor, police said.

From April 3-9, officers responded to 11 medical calls, two motor vehicle crashes and eight alarms, and made 26 traffic stops, police said.

Red Cross Blood Drive

There will be a Red Cross Blood Drive Saturday, April 15, from 8 a.m.-1 p.m., at East Hampton Congregational Church, 59 Main St.

Book a time to give by visiting RedCrossBlood.org, downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App, or calling 1-800-RED CROSS.

All who donate will receive an exclusive Red Cross and Peanuts T-shirt, while supplies last. Also, all donors will be automatically entered for a chance to win a three-night trip for two to Sonoma County in California. This getaway includes flights, hotel, a \$1,000 gift card and special tours of the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Snoopy's Home Ice.

EHACC Informational Reception

The East Hampton Arts & Culture Commission will host an informational reception Thursday, April 20, at 6 p.m. at Studio 13, 41 West High St., to share ideas for the Garden Tour and Plein Air Painting event planned for July.

Refreshments will be served. For more information, email arts@easthamptonct.org or call Melissa at 860-993-5311.

East Hampton Library News & Notes

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

Library Hours: The library is open Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

All Ages Book Bingo! Tuesday, April 25, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Win free books. Refreshments provided.

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

DIY Days - Spring Cleaning: Saturday, April 15, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., for children and families in grades K-8. This week, come do a DIY project you missed earlier this year. No registration required; just drop in. Available while supplies last.

Kindergarten Readiness Skills: Monday, April 17, 6:30 p.m. Learn about the skills that

kindergarten teachers suggest spark success for young learners and how caregivers can introduce and support their development at home.

Trails and Tales: Wednesday, April 19, 10:30 a.m. Lynn Kochiss, master naturalist, will read an interactive story to both the storytime group and local seniors, then lead people on a short walk around the library/senior center. Best for ages 3-5 but all are welcome. Rain date: Wednesday, April 26, also at 10:30 a.m. Held in partnership with the East Hampton Senior Center.

Kids Comic Creators: Wednesday, April 19, 4:30 p.m., for grades 2-5. Discuss, craft and create comics inspired by the graphic novel *Phoebe and Her Unicorn* by Dana Simpson.

Nintendo Switch Tournament: Saturday, April 22, 2-3:30 p.m., for grades 1-5. This month's game is *Mario Strikers*. All skill levels welcome.

Teen Programs: Teen Friday: Friday, April 21, 3:30-4:30 p.m., for grades 6-12. Kick off your weekend with a craft.

Teen Creative Writing Workshop: Wednesday, April 26, 5:30-7:30 p.m., for grades 6-12.

Teen Cookbook Club - Breakfast is Served!: Saturday, April 29, 1 p.m., for grades 6-12. Make your favorite breakfast recipe and bring it to the library ready to share. The library will supply plates and utensils.

Nintendo Switch Tournament: Saturday, April 29, 2-3:30 p.m., for grades 6-12. All skill levels welcome.

Adult Programs: Book Club: Tuesday, April 18, 6:30 p.m. *We Are the Brennans* by Tracey Lange will be discussed.

Belltown Book Blast: Friday, April 21, 10 a.m. Stop by for coffee or tea and bookish banter. No registration needed; just drop in.

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Federal Funds Will Lead to Boardwalk, Eventually

By Jack Lakowsky

Hard to think piecing together some wooden slats over a tiny creek would cost nearly \$2 million – but it does, and thankfully for local taxpayers, the federal government is going to foot some of the bill.

Last week, the federal government awarded \$1.4 million in community project funding to help pay for the long-awaited boardwalk in a stretch of Belltown's share of the Air Line Trail, a walkway that will bridge a stream, removing a disruption in the trail's connectivity. The trail stretches all the way up to northeastern Connecticut, a.k.a. the Quiet Corner.

Town Manager Dave Cox told the *Rivereast* the money is an important step, but there's still some waiting to be done. The boardwalk has been planned for years. Progress was made in recent months when Eversource started removing old telephone poles in the same area, to be finished soon, Cox said.

On Monday, Congressman Joe Courtney

(D-2), along with Cox and some other local officials, toured the eyed spot, at a time that really stressed how needed the boardwalk is – Cox said, after some rain, the creek was more of a river.

The money was included in the federal government's budget package, passed late last year.

In a release Courtney said the investment will pay dividends for the town's economy. On Monday, Cox agreed. He said a completed trail will draw outdoorspeople from all over the state, and that, on his own, he's observed people leaving the trail and heading to the Village Center.

The trail's completion will make this easier, he said. Connectivity to the Air Line Trail has been a goal of Village Center businesses for some time. East Hampton's downtown is one of the only ones right on the trail, and one of the largest.

"This project has been in motion for several years" said Jeremy Hall, saying he's happy

the funding finally went forward, saying that it could be of use to hundreds of thousands of people.

Cox also said many thousands will benefit from the new asset.

For now, the town's playing the waiting game, the town manager said. There is still some more paperwork to complete, and then get the work would need to be contracted. He added there's a local share to cover the whole cost, which is about \$1.8 million.

"I think the optimistic person might think work would start on that maybe this fall," said Cox. He said work can be done in winter too. Hopefully, the new boardwalk will be open next spring.

Cox said the boardwalk covers one of the trail's larger gaps, and that it's part of a larger effort to bolster regional tourism. A longer-term goal, Cox said, is connecting the Air Line Trail with two others in central Connecticut, making a large continuous loop with huge potential.

The whole trail would be more than 110 miles total and could be used for events like marathons, bringing large crowds to small towns.

State Rep. Irene Haines (R-34), told the *Rivereast* she's delighted about the funding, and that the Air Line is "such a wonderful trail." With this last connection, even more people from more towns can enjoy it.

This project is one of 15 community projects across Connecticut's Second District that secured funding for in the 2023 government funding package, according to Courtney's info.

Included among the projects was a nearly \$2 million expansion and upgrade of Hebron's Easterseals of Oak Hill Camp Hemlocks, a non-profit that serves children and adults with disabilities and other special needs

The funds, said Barry Simon, Oak Hill president, will be "transformational" for the camp's services, opening opportunities to the kids and adults the camp serves.

Haddam Neck Covenant Church News

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

Music Event: All are invited Sunday, April 23, at 9 a.m., for a music worship event entitled "Hope Resides Here."

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.

Adult Bible Study: Sundays at 10:30 a.m. in the Music Room. The study is on the Book of Revelation.

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 News & Notes

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

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

Weekly Activities: **Quilting Group:** Mondays, 9 a.m.; **Mexican Train Dominoes:** Mondays, 9:30 a.m.; **Setback:** Mondays, 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; **Cross Stitch:** Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30 p.m. – all levels welcome; **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.

Wonderfully Wicked Women's Group: Monday, April 17, 10 a.m. This is a low-key opportunity to meet others and share resources.

Baby Goats: Circle K Farm is visiting Monday, April 17, at 1:30 p.m. Pre-register at the senior center, as space is limited.

Trails and Tales Storytime: Wednesday, April 19, 10:30 a.m. The senior center will join the library's storytime group for ages 3-5, as Lynn Kochiss, master naturalist, reads an interactive story and then leads a short walk around the grounds. Rain date: April 26.

Family Tree: Friday, April 21, 10:30 am. Ken Doney continues to help participants search for

the history of their families. Bring your own mobile device. One-on-one time will be available.

Art with Karen: Sunday, April 23, 2-4 p.m. Karen Williams will take people through the beginner steps of creating an acrylic painting. Class cost is \$5 for supplies. Pay Williams the day of the event.

Birthday Party: Monday, April 24, 11 a.m., for all born in January, February, March and April. There will be cupcakes, music and comedy. Guests welcome.

Ageless Mindful Awareness Techniques: Monday, April 24, 1 p.m. Techniques engage in healing, self-compassion, and gratitude in a group setting.

Free Blood Pressure Screening: Monday, April 24, 12:30-1:30 p.m., at the senior center. Chatham Health sponsors this monthly clinic. Need to monitor your blood pressure? Stop by; no appointment necessary.

Public Health Awareness Week: Tuesday, April 25, 10:30 a.m. Stephanie Reyes from Chatham Health will provide a half-hour presentation on the week.

Trips: Stayin' Alive at the Aqua Turf Club: See a tribute to the '70s band the Bee Gees. This day trip to Plantsville will be Monday, May 22. Cost is \$116. Coffee and donuts provided upon arrival and a family-style lunch will be served. Call for more information or stop by to pick up a flyer.

Saratoga: Aug. 2-3. 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 Jewing@easthampton.gov. The shopper will call you before the drop-off to let you know the cost of the groceries. You can write out a check for the amount, payable to the Town of East Hampton. The volunteer will drop off the groceries at your door and pick up the check in a prearranged designated spot.

Epoch Arts Dinnershow

For the first time since before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Epoch Arts is bringing back its Dinnershow Saturday, April 22, from 6-8 p.m., at Epoch, 27 Skinner St.

The cast of the original play *Voyagers* will serve a pasta dinner with bread and salad. Then eat a variety of desserts as they perform in skits, improv, musical numbers – and Wackadoodles! Random acts are called out by the Dinnershow MC, and the cast has to

scramble to put on their costumes and perform on the spot.

Dinnershow is a fundraiser for the original two-act play *Voyagers*, which will be performed June 9, 10 and 11.

Tickets for Dinnershow are \$12 each and reservations are recommended. For reservations – or if interested in sponsoring a skit for \$25 – email elizabeth@epocharts.org.

RTC Trade Scholarship

The East Hampton Republican Town Committee is accepting scholarship applications for its inaugural Trade Scholarship. This \$500 scholarship will be awarded to any East Hampton High School senior who is planning on pursuing a career in a trade.

Applications may be obtained from the East Hampton High School guidance department and are due by April 28.

Lions Club Offering Scholarships

The East Hampton Lions Club is offering graduating high school seniors who live in town the chance to apply for four \$1,000 scholarships.

Those planning to attend any accredited college, university or trade school are welcome to apply. It doesn't matter if the student attends public, private, charter or magnet high school or if they are home-schooled.

Applications are available at the East Hampton High School guidance office, 15 N. Maple St. Applications are due at the end of April.

Christ Episcopal Church News

Christ Episcopal Church, 66 Middle Haddam Rd., Middle Haddam, holds in-person and Zoom services at 10 a.m. each Sunday. All are welcome. To connect electronically, go to www.christchurchmiddlehaddam.com for directions. The Holy Eucharist will be celebrated with the Rev. Diana Rogers.

Sunday School: New students are welcome. Contact the Rev. Joanne Neel-Richard for information at jneelrichard16@gmail.com.

Bake Sale Thanks: The church thanks all who donated to the successful sale.

Lenten Vitamin Drive: There is still time to donate; vitamins benefit the children of St. Vincent's School.

For more information or if in need of assistance, call the church office at 860-267-0278 or contact Donna Hryb, senior warden, at 860-633-0472.



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Council Okays New Tax Relief Program

By Jack Lakowsky

In a brief but busy meeting Tuesday, the Town Council made a few policy changes and discussed other town business, including the extreme difficulty the town has had in procuring a new police vehicle.

This council also approved an expansion of the town's ability to provide residents, especially seniors and people with disabilities, with a break on property taxes.

A refrain among Connecticut residents, especially seniors on fixed incomes, is that property taxes are severely burdensome.

The ordinance language reads the council wants to improve quality of life for older adults and encourage continued residence and property ownership in Belltown.

There are some requirements to meet: 65 years of age or marriage to a person of the same age group; at least 10 years living in East Hampton. Qualifying income, according to the passed ordinance, is not to exceed "\$50,000 for both married homeowners. "For the full ordinance language visit the town's website and click on the online council packet in the materials for the April 11 meeting.

The council opened talks on this, at the suggestion of Town Manager Dave Cox, back in February.

With the changes, East Hampton's tax relief

options match all those available by state law, an effort to maximize the relief the town can give.

Police Vehicle Woes

Thanks to an error with the town's contractor and Ford, the town thought it was getting a new, long-awaited police truck.

Recently, Cox told the council, he and the police chief were told no.

The status of the truck, Cox said, is a mystery.

He said Ford appears to have overloaded itself with orders for trucks and are now cancelling municipal orders.

"We don't know yet if the vehicle is being built or if it'll get canceled," said Cox.

Chaos in the auto industry, Cox said, continues, and doesn't seem to be getting better. Now the town's seeing if it can get a spare. In the best cases, Cox said, Ford's taking 30 weeks to fulfill orders.

In July last year, the department ordered the new Ford F-150 Police vehicle, which was included in the Capital Plan to replace an existing vehicle in the fleet, Cox put in his written report to the council.

Delays in production, mainly due to the availability of certain parts, caused the delivery date of the vehicle to be delayed several months and vehicles that previously took only a few months to get are now taking at least eight or

nine months.

On March 17, the department was told that the vehicle had been built and shipped and it should arrive within a couple of weeks. But St. Paddy's Day gold proved to be an April Fool's joke.

"As of this writing, it has not been received," concluded Cox.

Library Looks to Help Local Authors

East Hampton Public Library Director Tim Kellogg, who also announced he's accepted a new job at another library, presented a new way for the library to more easily accept into its collections works by local, independent, self-published authors.

"We want to celebrate local authors," said Kellogg. "This update would make that possible."

The council ultimately approved the new, less strict policy. The change is an adaptation to a changing publishing landscape. Kellogg said self-publishing is easier and more accessible than ever, and letting locals on the shelves, exposing them to readers that just happen to their

friends and neighbors. Platforms like Amazon and Barnes & Noble and Facebook all have resources for self-published authors, and now East Hampton is doing what it can to help independent artists.

Several East Hampton authors – like novelist Jack Matthews and poet Robert Clapps – have found success through self-publishing.

Kellogg said the library's collection policy, "though sound," was a barrier to getting local works because it required a piece to be professionally edited; many self-published authors, working on their own, usually lean budgets, often must edit on their own.

The council pressed Kellogg a little, with councilor Allison Walck asking by whose judgment the works are selected. Republican councilor Brandon Goff asked if the library could post some kind of disclaimer near the books, that view in them are not the library's.

Self-published works will be reviewed by staff on a case-by-case basis, and must meet certain criteria.

George Seely Memorial Scholarship

Anchor Lodge No. 112 is offering the George Seely Memorial Scholarship, a \$1,000 scholarship available to graduating students of East Hampton High School or RHAM High School.

The scholarship will be awarded to a student who will further their education in technical, military or academic fields of study.

Applicants will be judged on a 300- to 400-

word essay, expressing their personal thoughts on the subject of patriotism. The essay may be based on history, world affairs or personal experiences. Mail completed application and essay before April 30 to Anchor Lodge, Scholarship Committee, P.O. Box 112, East Hampton, CT 06424.

11th Annual Gelding Clinic

CT Draft Horse Rescue (CDHR) is sponsoring the 11th annual Gelding Clinic Saturday, May 6 (rain date: Sunday, May 7), at 113 Chestnut Hill Rd., East Hampton.

Since the start of this clinic, CDHR has helped over 100 equines and horse owners in need with the issue of unwanted horses. Veterinary students from Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, under the direct supervision of both Tufts and local veterinarians, have all volunteered their time and expertise to perform the gelding. The students gain hands-on experience performing pre-sur-

gical exams and acting as surgical assistants and operating surgeons.

The program was developed based on the philosophy that the castration of a stallion will help prevent accidental, backyard, or overbreeding, thereby reducing the number of unwanted horses being born.

Fee is \$125 per horse/donkey/mule. Limited appointments are available. Pre-registration/payment required, at www.ctdraftrescue.org/geldingclinic2023.

Note: CDHR will be closed to the public on this day.

YPCCA to Present *Rent* This Summer

The Young People's Center for Creative Arts is now accepting registrations for its summer theater camp for students in grades 6-12. YPCCA will run Monday through Friday June 26-July 23, from 8:30 a.m.- 2:45 p.m., at East Hampton High School. Discounted registration is now available.

Mornings at the camp are devoted to various workshops, while afternoons are spent in rehearsals for the summer mainstage production – which this year is *Rent*.

All students at YPCCA perform onstage by participating in the show and *The Event*, a cabaret evening of performances rehearsed in the morning workshops and presented free of

charge to the public during the third week of camp. For those teens interested in a leading role in the show, auditions are held a few weeks before camp. Auditions, however, are not mandatory and those students who do not audition will be featured in the ensemble. There are also ample opportunities to learn behind-the-scenes skills involved in theater work and many campers work as stage and set crew.

Registration and more information on the camp is available by visiting www.yppcca.org. For those who register by May 1, tuition is \$625. Scholarships are also available for students with financial need.

Email info@ypcca.org for more information.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

The Lower CT River Council of Governments will hold a free Household Hazardous Waste Collection event Saturday, April 22, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at the Clinton Public Works Garage, 117 Nod Rd., Clinton.

The collection is open to residents of the RiverCOG region which includes East Hampton and Portland. No commercial or business waste allowed.

Visit rivercog.org/household-hazardous-waste to learn more.

DTC Scholarship Available

The Democratic Town Committee invites East Hampton High School seniors interested in public service to apply for the \$500 scholarship in memory of Governor William O'Neill.

Applications can be obtained at the high school guidance office and are due by April 29.

Garden Club Meets April 24

The Monday, April 24, meeting of the Belltown Garden Club will be devoted to spring garden clean-up and maintenance. Meet at 5 p.m. at the Comstock Bridge for clean-up work, and then adjourn to East Hampton Public Library for pizza and the club's business meeting.

All are invited to attend. The East Hampton Belltown Garden Club is a member of Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut and National Garden Clubs.

Call Sue Hewes at 860-575-1349 for more information.

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.

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.

Pollinator Pathway Meeting

On Wednesday, April 19, at 6:30 p.m., there will be a Pollinator Pathway meeting in Haddam Neck Firehouse.

Featured will be a class by Jane Aldieri on the creation and use of container gardens in support of local pollinators. All are welcome.

Volunteers Needed for Lake Clean-Up Day

The Friends of Lake Pocotopaug will hold the town's annual Lake Clean-Up Day Saturday, April 22, starting at 9 a.m. at Sears Park.

Volunteers are needed – any amount of time is welcome – to help clean up the perimeter around the lake. All volunteers will receive a new Lake Pocotopaug T-shirt, garbage bags, gloves, directions, and area assignments, along with snacks at Sears Park.

Rain date is Sunday, April 23. For more details visit www.flpeh.org or call Joe Carbonell at 860-917-7366.

Budget Referendum Location Changes

The location of voting for the budget referendum will be the Town Hall starting with the 2023 budget referendum. Voting will occur in the community room of Town Hall.

The budget referendum is normally scheduled for May or June during a school day. Due to security concerns at the schools, a decision has been made to move the referendum voting to the Town Hall, so as not to interfere with the students.

Voters will enter through the front door of the building and proceed to the community room. Signs will be posted. Curbside voting will be available at the entrance on the left side of the building.

The regular elections and primaries will continue to be held at the high school because school is usually not in session for those events.

More details will be released once the date of the referendum is announced.

Seeds of Hope 5K/10K/Fun Walk

The Congregational Church of East Hampton mission group, Seeds of Hope, will hold its annual 5K/10K/Fun Walk on Saturday April 29. Pre register at firstmile-fitness.com or in person the day of the race starting at 7:30 a.m.

Pick up your race bag beginning at 7:30 a.m., at the church, 59 Main St. The race will begin at 9 a.m. at the entrance to the Air Line Trail located at Cranberry Bog on Smith Street. Transportation will be provided to and from the trail head. All participants must park at the church. Awards will follow the race, at the church.

All proceeds from the race will help to defray out-of-pocket costs for Seeds of Hope members when they are able to make their next mission trip. For more information or to register, go to firstmile-fitness.com or contact Lisa at 860-918-1170.

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.

Anchor Lodge Scholarships Available

Anchor Lodge is offering two \$1,000 scholarships for graduating seniors who are furthering their education in a trade including arts, environmental science, carpentry, culinary, and wildlife management.

The applicant must be a graduating senior from East Hampton High School, RHAM High School, Nathan Hale Ray High School, VoAg Program at Middletown High School or Vinal Technical High School. Applications are available at the schools' guidance office.

Applications must be submitted before April 30 to Anchor Lodge Scholarship Committee, P.O. Box 112, East Hampton, CT 06424.

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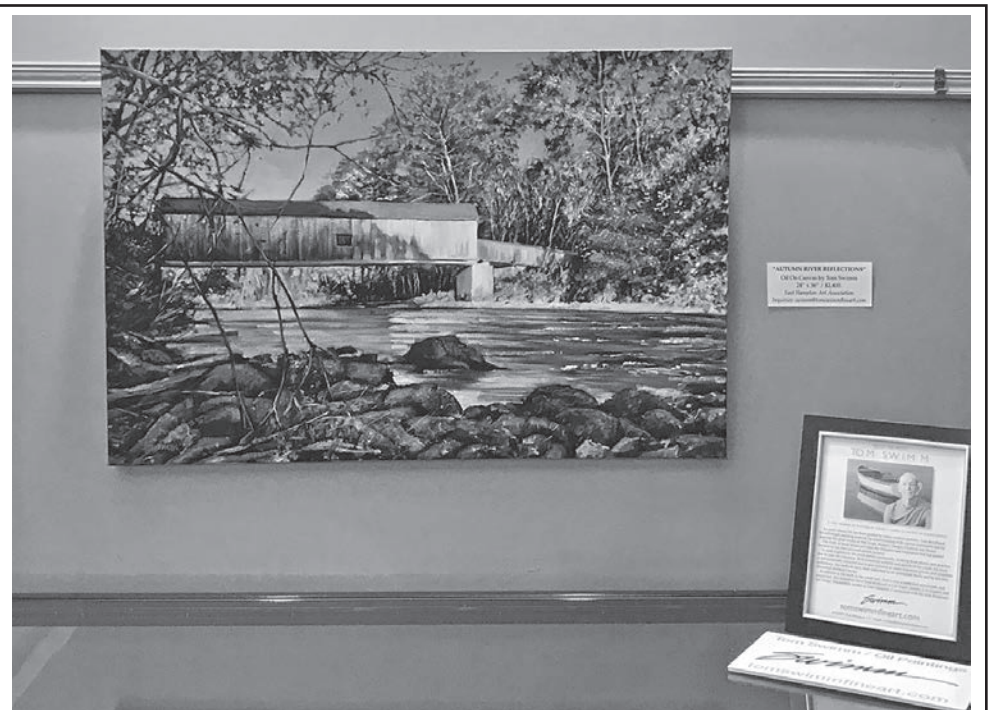
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Cat Tails Donation... The Student Council members collected items for Cat Tails Rescue out of Middletown on Saturday, March 25. They raised \$65 and in addition collected enough items during the "Drive and Drop" donation collection to fill a Jeep. Pictured are, from left, Cameron Fraser, Madi Gay and Sam Kearney. Not shown are Holly Pugo and Sam Kearney.



Artist Exhibit at Library... Tom Swimm, an East Hampton artist who paints in oil and acrylic, is currently exhibiting his work at East Hampton Public Library. The exhibit is sponsored by the East Hampton Art Association. For more information about Swimm, visit www.tomswimfineart.com. Pictured here is his original oil painting "Autumn River Reflections."

Housing Options for Older Adults

The East Hampton Commission on Aging will sponsor a presentation on improving housing options for older adults on Saturday, April 15, from 1-2 p.m., at Town Hall. This free talk by Town Planning and Zoning Official Jeremy DeCarli will cover ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units), renovating homes for

safety, and affording those renovations.

Information about grants and low-interest loans for lower-income residents will be available. Register in advance through the senior center, reached at seniorcenter@easthamptonct.gov, or 860-267-4426. Walk-ins are also welcome.

Drug Take-Back Day

The East Hampton Prevention Partnership will participate in DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day Saturday, April 22, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at Town Hall.

Items that are accepted are prescriptions, Rx patches, Rx medications, OTC medications, vitamins, and medications for pets. Items not accepted include thermometers, inhalers, aerosol cans, needles and ointments/liquids.

Contact Courtney Fitzkee at cwidrick@easthamptonct.gov with any questions.

Golf Tournament

The East Hampton Sports Boosters' 31st annual Golf Tournament will be held Tuesday, June 27, at Blackledge Country Club. The Boosters support various team requests along with awarding two scholarships to graduating seniors.

Golfing and sponsorship opportunities are available. To register, go to tinyurl.com/584trjty or call Jeff at 860-398-1263.

Women's Self-Defense Workshop

The East Hampton Police Department will host a free women's self-defense workshop Saturday, May 6, from 1-3 p.m., at the police station. The workshop is for ages 16 and up, and will teach them how to: be more aware of their surroundings; avoid dangerous situations; and how to defend from violent encounters.

Space is limited to 15 participants. To register, call 860-267-9544.

Local Singer Has Strong Showing

Grace Michalowski of Haddam Neck was among the Eastern Connecticut State University music students who had a strong showing in statewide student auditions held by the Connecticut chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

Michalowski is a senior who majors in music and is a soprano. Michalowski was awarded an honorable mention.

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 tensummitst@gmail.com.

Spinning Fibers: Thursdays at 10 a.m. Bring your own wheel and fiber. All are welcome.

Belltown Antique Engine & Tractor Meet

The Belltown Antique Car Club will host its 48th annual Antique Engine & Tractor Meet Sunday, April 30, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Fireman's Field at Salmon River State Park, across from the Comstock covered bridge.

Note: This year's show is being held "rain or shine" on a "field conditions permitting" basis. Rain prior to or on the day of the show may cause cancellation.

On display will be an assortment of antique stationary engines, as well as working scale reproductions, of the types that once powered early farm equipment, sawmills, lathes and even washing machines. Vintage farm tractors will also be exhibited, many of which have been restored. Judging begins at noon and trophies will be awarded at 3 p.m.

Also included in the show is a flea market with vendors offering antique engine, tractor and vehicle parts, used power equipment for home/farm use, and tools.

Food will be available, provided by the East Hampton Lions Club.

Admission for exhibitors, vendors and the

general public is free, though contributions are accepted. Spectator parking is free. Please, no bicycles or pets.

For more information visit www.belltown-antiquecarclub.org. Interested exhibitors or vendors should call Mark Hoydilla at 203-980-1748, Peter Christianson at 860-510-3340 or Jim Way at 860-319-6088, or email belltowncarclub@gmail.com.

Earth Day Clean-Up

Earth Day is Saturday, April 22, when town residents will meet at the Andover Congregational Church on Route 6 at 9 a.m. to pick up trash bags and gloves to help clean up Andover streets. Mike Palazzi, Bill Penn and Cathy Desrosiers will be there to give out assignments and instructions.

All are welcome to participate; no experience needed. Mike Burke, in charge of the Lake District, will have his helpers meet at the lake for distribution items.

Cleaning is completed at 11 a.m., when bags will be taken to the Transfer Station.

Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover

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.

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 pick-up.

Library Friends Offer Scholarship

The Andover Friends of the Library group is offering a \$1,000 scholarship to an Andover high school senior. Applications are due May 1, and are available at the guidance office at RHAM High School; at Andover Public Library, 355 Route 6; or online at tinyurl.com/2huzen57.

The applicant must be currently enrolled as a senior in any high school, use the scholarship to further their education, and hold a valid Andover Public Library card.

Completed applications must be dropped off

at the library or emailed to the Friends at andoverfol@gmail.com. For more information, call the library at 860-742-7428 or email the Friends.

Veterans Meeting April 15

The next Andover Veterans meeting will be Saturday, April 15, from 1-3 p.m., at the Town Hall Community Room.

The meeting will feature special guest author MSG (R) Marc Youngquist, a member of the Connecticut Army National Guard who has written a book based on the deployment of his unit to Iraq in 2003-04. Copies of the book will be available following his presentation.

For this special event, all are invited; no military affiliation is required.

Scholarship Available

Andover Elementary School is taking applications for the Andover Education Association and the Andover PTA annual scholarship, which is being offered to any Andover student.

Applications may be obtained from the RHAM High School guidance department or by calling AES at 860-742-7339.

Applications are due May 5.



Happy Birthday, Mike and Phil!... Andover Seniors Young At Heart celebrated April birthdays with cake and ice cream at the meeting April 5. Pictured are Mike Palazzi and Phil Mayhew. Photo by Mary Duval.

BOF Examines Budget Ahead of Public Hearing

By Michael Sinkewicz

The Andover Board of Finance continues to review the budget proposal for the 2023-24 fiscal year, with a public hearing scheduled for April 20.

This week, the Board of Selectmen set the town budget meeting for May 2, when a referendum date will potentially be determined.

While some figures in the budget are yet to be determined, Town Administrator Eric Anderson sent the *Riverast* the latest draft of the proposal, last modified on April 5. The finance board was scheduled to meet again this week on Wednesday, after press time.

Currently, the overall spending plan is for \$12.44 million — a \$279,378 decrease from current year spending. The mill rate would be set at 31.44 — a 1.49% decrease.

The town budget bottom line, which is still fluid, is currently slated at \$3.71 million — about \$72,000, or 2%, more than current fiscal year.

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

For RHAM, the overall budget is \$31.13 million — an 863,057 or 2.85% increase from current year spending. Andover, with the smallest enrollment at the school, is responsible for just 14% of the budget, or \$4.49 million — a \$533,524 decrease.

Regarding the local school budget, Anderson stated that the finance board cannot modify the bottom-line of the proposal until after the public hearing. The specifics of the RHAM spending plan, however, are entirely out of the board's purview.

The reduction in the RHAM levy, he explained, is keeping the overall operational bud-

get from soaring.

"We went through a period where our relative levy kept increasing and that was a tough pill to swallow," Anderson said. "Now, we're at the crest of that and that's the difference in the budget."

Andover Superintendent of Schools Valerie Bruneau confirmed that while current Andover enrollment at RHAM has decreased, it will spike again in just a few years.

The pre-k program for the upcoming school year is already full, she said, expressing that the elementary enrollment in town is "robust."

"We're doing very well," she said.

Still, even if Andover's enrollment does ultimately increase again, the town may dodge a corresponding leap with its RHAM levy.

Hebron, who will weather a significant increase this year, will likely absorb the most significant costs if its own enrollment projections hold steady.

Hebron finance board member Janet Fodaski asked RHAM Superintendent of Schools Colin McNamara last month if Hebron's allotment would continue to grow on a yearly basis if the student enrollment projections remained accurate.

"I think that's a fair assessment," he answered.

Bruneau, reflecting on her own local budget proposal, previously stated that her team of administrators, finance officers and board officials "worked effectively and efficiently" to utilize revenues and minimize the 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."

The district was able to negotiate its teacher salary increases before the cost of living figures soared. While the district couldn't entirely avoid rising expenses due to inflation, it didn't expe-

rience the same level of increases other school 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."

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.

After presenting the outline to the finance board at the end of March, Bruneau still believes her budget is in good shape moving forward.

"I am very happy," she said during a phone call. "We did a really good job in the building, and with the Board of Education at being fiscally responsible. The budget is as low as I can go."

She expressed that the finance board did a thorough review of her spending plan and asked respectful questions.

"They were wonderful," she said. "I felt grateful that they had done their due diligence."

Ultimately, it will be the community's decision whether to accept the school board's proposed increase. While the district is asking for additional funding, the staff and school board were "respectful of the taxpayer" when crafting their spending plan.

"I'm optimistic that people will recognize that we are being responsible," Bruneau said. "We did hard work to come up with this budget and I really hope and think people will see that."

The town budget has similarly gone through a long process, Anderson explained. In January, he presented figures to the selectmen who weighed-in on "big picture ideas." Once the

budget was in the custody of the finance board, there were still specific details and numbers that Anderson needed to finalize. Typically, he said, around 80% of the budget is firmly set while the remaining 20% remains in flux.

The placeholders are eventually removed, replaced by actual numbers. Currently, there are only a few undecided items that require further action by the board.

"The majority is in place and correct and now the Board of Finance has to make decisions on if it's acceptable," Anderson said.

A large item, which entered the budget process late in the season, is a request from the Fire Department for a new squad vehicle that would replace two older trucks.

The vehicle would cost around \$900,000 and would likely be paid off over a 7-10 year period, Anderson said. There's a permanent fund in the budget earmarked for fire department projects, which is where the money would be allocated moving forward.

Last November, Connecticut voters approved a measure instituting early voting. Anderson stated that the exact details and parameters surrounding early voting haven't been determined, making it difficult for municipalities to predict how much additional funding is required.

"If you have no idea how many hours you'll do, it's hard to say what the cost will be," he said, adding that the topic has been "contentious" this year.

Andover is also losing somewhere between \$60,000-\$70,000 in education cost sharing (ECS) and grant funding, impacting the town's projected revenue.

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.

Shopping Dates: Tuesdays. Manchester: 4/18; Willimantic: 4/25. Masks available on all vehicles.

Senior Luncheons: Fridays, 4/28, 5/5, 5/19. Reservations required by previous Wednesday.

Senior Trips: Rose trip to Elizabeth Park, 6/14; Main Moose, 7/14 and 8/11. Sign up with Carol Lee at 860-742-0188 ext. 2.

Senior Fundraiser: Saturday, May 6, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., to raise money for the senior luncheon. Ask for details at a senior luncheon.

Rides to Food Pantry: The bus is now avail-

able 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.

From the State Senator's Desk...

One of my focuses as a state senator representing our region is to keep an eye on the costs impacting Connecticut residents and families. Rising costs have put pressure on residents' wallets in recent years, and I am working toward finding a solution toward one tax that I feel we can approach in a better way.

This year, I introduced legislation to the General Assembly seeking to find a better approach to motor vehicle taxation than our current standard. In Connecticut today, the motor vehicle tax can differ wildly in value between communities. From my point of view, the vehicle property tax is regressive and can impact the ability of seniors, young residents and local workers to affordably remain in our state. I know there's a better way, and I'm working with my colleagues to help us find the best possible path.

Senate Bill 497, if it's passed into law, would establish a task force that would study the feasibility of repealing the motor vehicle tax, and what options would be best to replace the resulting lost municipal revenue. I understand towns and cities rely on hundreds of millions of dollars annually from the vehicle tax; the task force is dedicated to finding the best possible option to replace that revenue.

I'm proud of this proposal, especially as the task force would bring all impacted parties to the table. It would hold representatives of tax reform organizations, groups supporting residents over the age of 50, leaders from state towns and cities, members of the insurance industry and members of the Planning and Development Committee. The best way to have such an important conversation is to make sure we hear from everyone involved; that way, we can ensure any potential replacement is seriously considered and can realistically aid our state's economy in the best possible way for both residents and towns and cities.

I will be sure to continue updating you on this bill, as well as the hundreds of others under consideration in Hartford. We've got two months left in the legislative session, and I'm dedicated to bringing positive results back to our communities.

State Sen. MD Rahman
D-4th District

Note: The 4th District covers Andover, Bolton, Glastonbury and Manchester.

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 April 26. The senior food pantry is open the opposite Wednesdays, also from 9-9:30 a.m.; next date is April 19.

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

Sonshine Stamps: Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.

175th Anniversary Events

Several events have been planned for the Andover 175th Anniversary. Offerings include:

Thursday, May 18: Anniversary Dedication Ceremony of Town Gazebo, 6-7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 20: Anniversary Fun Festival, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Andover History Talk, 2-4 p.m.

Saturday, June 3: Olde Andover Burial Ground Tour, 10:30-11:30 a.m.; Townsend Cemetery Tour, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 3: Funky Monkey (Overan-

dover), 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Sunday, June 4: Doris Chamberlain Trail Hike, 9-11 a.m.

Saturday, June 10: Congregational Church Garden Tours, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Andover Library Mural Lecture, 2-3 p.m.

Saturday, June 17: Pollinator Garden Tour, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Saturday, June 24: Finale — Andover Lake BBQ Beach Party, at a time to be determined.

For more information, search for "Andover CT 175th Anniversary" on Facebook.

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.

Bingo & Baskets

Andover Congregational Church, 359 Route 6, will hold a Bingo & Baskets night on Friday, April 28, starting with dinner at 5:30 p.m. The game starts at 6:30 p.m.

Admission is \$12 and includes dinner, drink, dessert and bingo. No reservations required. Leave a message at the church at 860-742-7696 for more information.

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Mobile Mammography Clinic Deadline Soon

Hartford Hospital's Digital Mobile Mammography coach bus is coming to the Russell Mercier Senior Center, 14 Stonecroft Drive, on Tuesday, May 9. Appointments are available from 8 a.m.-1:15 p.m.

All women ages 35 and older can make an appointment, provided their last mammogram was more than one year ago and was normal/negative. The clinic is also for patients who had a diagnostic breast work-up at last mammogram with negative results and who received a recommendation to return in 12 months.

Pre-registration by April 18 is required; to do so, call 860-228-1700.

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.

Items can be purchased at Town Hall.

Norton Commission Scholarship Available

Applications are being accepted through May 1 for the \$1,000 Chester D. Norton Scholarship.

Andover residents who are graduating high school seniors and will attend a 2- or 4-year accredited college/university or technical school are eligible.

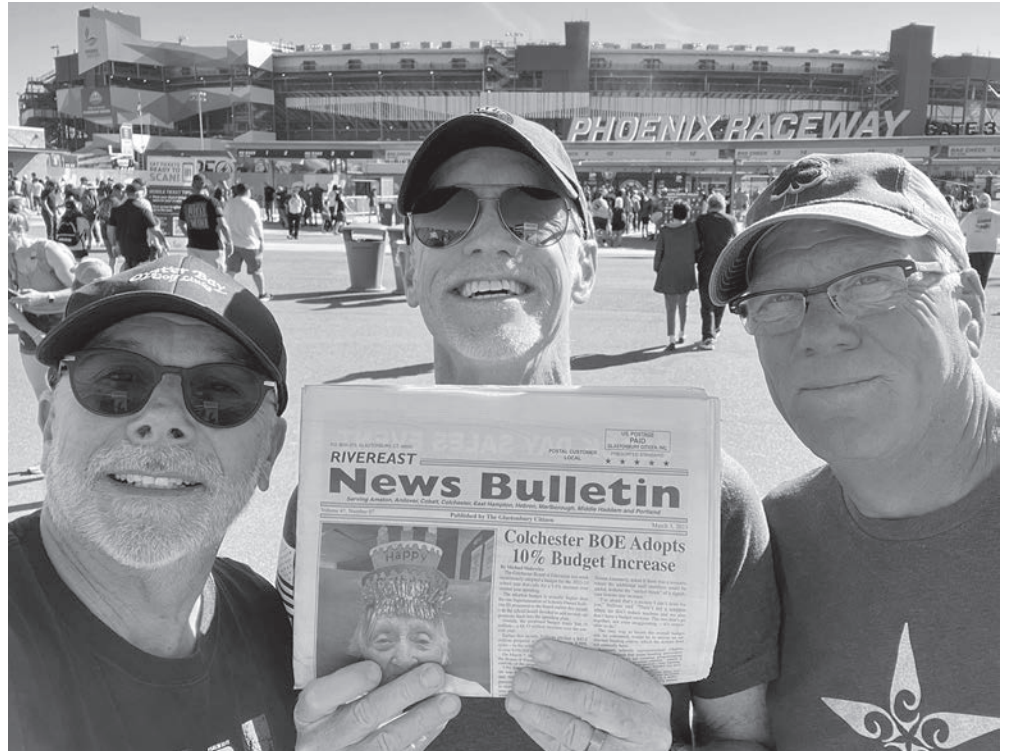
For applications, visit www.andoverconnecticut.org/norton-childrens-fund-commission. Applications can be submitted online or saved as a pdf and emailed to nortonchildrensfundcommission@gmail.com.



Thrill of Their Lives!... The Tine and Barr families of Portland visited Universal Studios in Orlando, Fla. They rode all the thrill rides – like the Incredible Hulk, Rockin' Roller Ride and the Jurassic Park Velociraptor coasters. Pictured from left are Erika Tine, Tom Barr, Steven Tine, Allison Tine, Renee Tine, Liz Barr, Nathan Tine, Zach Barr and Sara Barr.

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.



Enjoying NASCAR... Longtime friends (pictured from left) resident Paul Gayeski and former Colchester residents Rich Luth and Tim Carson enjoying the NASCAR race in Phoenix. NASCAR rookie Gayeski won the pool.



Skiing in Sun Valley... Sharon and David Mann of East Hampton are pictured at Sun Valley Resort, Idaho. They were there from March 15-21, skiing with the Meriden Ski and Snowboard Club.



Ernie Heads South... Colchester Florist's Ernie the cat (pictured on the newspaper cover) joined Mom Virginia Dominick and Auntie Margaret Palmer in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, for St. Patrick's Day.

Where in the World?

**Going on a trip?
Bring along the *Bulletin!***

Submit your travel photo holding the *Rivereast News Bulletin*, and you will win a \$25 Gift Card to Campagna Restaurant if your photo is one of the four entries selected!

To enter, email your photo and address to: bulletin@glcitizen.com

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Ladder safety should not be learned on the fly.

Climbing on a ladder might be the most dangerous thing you do all year. Foot and ankle fractures can result from unsafe ladder use. Make sure you have the balance and strength to use a ladder. Take the time to secure it properly. Don't stand above the marked level and always wear lace-up shoes or boots.

Check our website for more ladder safety tips.

VISIT [ORTHOINFO.ORG/LADDERSAFETY](https://orthoinfo.org/laddersafety)



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Obituaries

Hebron

Charles Joseph Savitski

Charles Joseph Savitski, 75, of Hebron, passed away Monday, April 3. He was born on Oct. 13, 1947, Our Lady of Fatima day, the Miracle of the Sun. Although he had seven sisters, Charles was the only son of the late Theodore Savitski and Charlotte Zawisza.



At 19 years old, Chuck served in the U.S. Army as a Combat Infantryman for the Vietnam War. He earned several medals for his honorable service. Some of these commendations included decorations for Valor, two Bronze Stars, a Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, First Class Gunner, and Expert Rifleman.

Chuck was instrumental in having the Vietnam monument erected on the Colchester Memorial Green. He approached the then-first selectwoman Helen Gaye with the idea. She enthusiastically supported the project, and the town wide dedication ceremony was televised on local stations as well as a national station. Chuck took part in the ceremony, giving an impassioned speech stressing the importance of honoring Vietnam veterans alongside the veterans of other wars.

Charles married Gai Pizzitola in 1978. They were blessed with two wonderful sons, Theodore and Christopher. Their births were the happiest moments of Chuck's life, and he was always extremely proud of them.

Chuck was a very talented carpenter contractor who built many fine homes in Colchester and the surrounding area. As a communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester, he served as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and an usher.

Chuck will be dearly missed by his wife of over 45 years, Gai; their sons, Theodore (Jessica) and Christopher. He also leaves sisters Linda Riel, Judy Ladegard, Marcella Maiorano, Theodora Begun and Regina Butova, as well as their husbands and numerous nieces, nephews, and extended family members and friends.

In addition to his parents, Charles was predeceased by sisters Florence Kochuk and Loretta Stula, as well as in-laws Joseph & Leona Pizzitola and Mary Pizzitola.

Calling hours were Thursday, April 13, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old

Hartford Road, Colchester. A funeral Mass will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, April 14, at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial will follow in the new St. Andrew Cemetery on Gillette Lane in Colchester.

Memorial donations may be made to the Haitian Health Foundation at 97 Sherman St., Norwich, CT 06360 or to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital at 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 (stjude.org).

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

Glastonbury

Steven J. Martin

Steven J. Martin, 45, of Torrington, passed away Thursday, April 6. He was born May 16, 1977, at Hartford Hospital and grew up in Glastonbury.



Steve is predeceased by his mother Mary Martin, and is survived by his father Maxim "Jerry" Martin of Glastonbury; his brother, Tom Martin and his wife Megan of Portland; and his sister, Nancy Staten and her husband Ken of Coventry. Steve also leaves behind nephews Colin and Luke; nieces Mary Beth, Juliana, and Ava; uncles and aunts, and many friends – all of whom meant so much to him.

Steve had a great love for the outdoors which included snowboarding, hiking, landscaping, fishing, and so much more. He was a lifelong fan of the Boston Red Sox and Bruins. Steve loved to watch the morning sun rise, never took a day for granted, and appreciated everyone in his life. He will be missed.

Family and friends may call Wednesday, April 19, from 5-7 p.m., at Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury. A graveside service will be celebrated Thursday, April 20, at 2 p.m., at Holy Cross Cemetery, 17 Wickham Rd., Glastonbury.

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

Obituary Policy

Obituaries must be submitted no later than noon Wednesday for inclusion in that week's paper. There is a \$75 charge for all obituaries.

Colchester

Kenneth Michael Soboleski

Kenneth Michael Soboleski, 58, of Moodus, formerly of Colchester, beloved husband of Nicole (Mudgett) Soboleski passed away Sunday, April 9, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Aug. 11, 1964, in Meriden, he was the son of Virginia Moore of East Hampton and the late Gerald Soboleski.



Mike, as he preferred to be called and loved it (but also his sister couldn't say Kenneth), was a retired master auto mechanic specialist. He was extremely technologically advanced and was able to fix anything. He spent his very limited free time; he was just so busy helping others and loving on his family, building model airplanes and absolutely obsessed over large ocean liners and boats. Mike was always willing to help someone in need and was very forthcoming with all of the knowledge he possessed. But what was most important to him was his family, especially his grandson George who called him Pop-Pop.

Besides his wife Nicole and mother Virginia, he is survived by his son, Thomas Soboleski of Lebanon; daughter, Erica Soboleski of Moodus; brother, Chris Soboleski of Moodus; sisters, Dawna (Fred) Royce of East Hampton, Betty Moore of East Hampton, Debbie (Steve) Knott of Cape Cod, Mass.; and his beloved grandson, George Hyde. He also leaves his emotional support animals, cat Allie and Dug the Dog.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Friday,

April 21, from 5-7 p.m., for a celebration of Mike's life. Family and close friends will gather privately following the celebration of Mike's amazing life.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to CCMC Neurology department.

To leave online condolences, please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com

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LEGALS

TOWN OF COLCHESTER LEGAL NOTICE

The Colchester Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on April 19, 2023, beginning at 7:00 PM in the Colchester Town Hall Meeting Room at 127 Norwich Ave, Colchester, CT to hear and consider the following petition(s): **PZC 2023-005** of Mary J. McDonald (Applicant) and Gingerfield Associates (Mary J. McDonald & Fred J. Criscuolo, Owners) Zone Change from Future Development (FD) to Rural Use (RU) for 90± acres of land located on Chestnut Hill Road (Assessor's ID 4E-05-004-011) Zoning District: Future Development (FD)
At this hearing, interested persons may be heard and written communications received. A copy of this petition is in the Planning Department and Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue, and may be inspected during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday). Planning and Zoning Commission
Joseph Mathieu, Chair

2TB 4/7, 4/14

TOWN OF PORTLAND PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF DECISION

At the April 6, 2023 meeting, the following actions were taken: **APPROVED with Conditions PZC Application #22-24**; Application #22-24: 60 West Cotton Hill Road. Proposed 3 lot resubdivision. Application and property of Bill and Jennifer Mizener. Map 100, Lot 12. Zone R-25.
Dated at Portland, CT this 3rd day of March 2023
Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission

1TB 4/14

Legal Notice Andover Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

The Duly Authorized Agent of the Andover Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission APPROVED the following application on April 12, 2023:
• Application #IWWC 23-03: Sean Maynard, 196 Lake Road- Demolition of a 20-foot-by-20-foot garage, and construction of a 24-foot-by-30-foot garage in the same location within the 200-foot Upland Review Area of Andover Lake.
The above decisions may be appealed to the Andover Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission pursuant to Section 12.2 of the Town of Andover Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations, available at www.andoverconnecticut.org.

1TB 4/14

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, April 20, 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 #22-23: 529 Glastonbury Turnpike. Proposed 2 lot resubdivision and site plan review for 3 new commercial self-storage buildings. Application and property of Global 17 LLC. Map 83, Lot 38-2. Zone I.
Application #22-25: 16 Sand Hill Road. Proposed zone change from IP to B-2. Application of Michael Brown and property of 16 Sand Hill Properties, LLC. Map 22, Lot 4. 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 3rd day of April 2023
Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission

2TB 4/7, 4/14

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS NOTICE OF ACTION

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Appeals held a Regular Meeting at 7:00 pm on April 10, 2023 at the East Hampton Town Hall - 1 Community Drive to consider the following:
ZBA-23-001: Tommaso Prozano, 12 Terp Road Reduce front setback from 50' to 15' and west side setback from 25' to 16.75' for Garage, Map 06/ Block 14/ Lot 5/6 – Denied
ZBA-23-002: Gunnar Anderson, 86 Spellman Point Road, Reduce front setback from 25' to 5.0', south side setback from 15' to 7.2', north side setback from 15' to 7' and rear setback from 25' to 7.9' for single family residence with garage, Map 09A/ Block 70/ Lot 1 – Approved
ZBA-23-003: Global Self Storage, 1 Sinco Place, Reduce front setback for Lot 1 from 25' to 7.5' and rear setback from 50' to 10', increase lot coverage from 50% to 54.5% and Lot 2 reduce rear setback from 50' to 7.5', Map 6/ Block 14/ Lot 2007 - Approved

1TB 4/14

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