

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Volume 48, Number 10

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March 29, 2024



Super Storm... The Colchester Storm recently won the U15 Silver Indoor Soccer Championship. Pictured from left are, top row, Coach Skip Starks, David Rumph, Jack Hiegl, Jacob Blanda, Zach Brown, Ely Beeler, Shawn Marvin, Coach Steve Stabach; middle row, Reid Gross, Alex Bounas, Owen McLoughlin, Liam Gorreck; front row: Shane Meyer, Wesley Engleman, Christian Stabach, Dylan Kapoor; Missing: Logan Sheridan. See related story on page 24.

Plate Readers Nixed After Public Outcry

By Michael Sinkewicz

Colchester will not move forward with a proposal to install license plate reader cameras throughout town, after the controversial technology received widespread backlash from residents.

During last week's Board of Selectmen meeting on March 21, Colchester police requested three Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) cameras be purchased from Flock Safety, a company formed in 2017 that markets its artificial intelligence systems to law enforcement agencies across the country.

While police officers asserted that installing the cameras in commercial areas of town would help solve and deter local crime, numerous citizens pushed back on the initiative, arguing that it would either be ineffective or a violation of privacy.

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) did not take a vote on purchasing the new system and certain members requested additional information regarding the technology. But following the meeting, First Selectman Bernie Dennler III posted online that the town would not be purchasing the cameras.

He stated residents "appeared uniformly opposed to the proposal."

"Based on this bipartisan feedback from the community, I have informed the Colchester Police that we will not be pursuing the proposal," Dennler wrote.

The first selectman told the *Rivereast* that the community was overwhelmingly against the concept, and not a single person reached out to his office to express support for the cameras.

"I think the public was very clear," he said. "You have to listen."

Because of the overt reaction last week, Dennler conveyed that it wouldn't be "productive" for both the police department and BOS to move ahead with additional research and discussion on the topic.

During the meeting, though, Dennler appeared open to fulfilling the request. When Sgt. Zachary Cash, Colchester's resident state trooper, first approached him with the idea, Dennler acknowledged he was "skeptical."

"However, over the past couple months, I have seen multiple cases where we have been able to deliver resolution to situations that occurred in Colchester or in surrounding communities because of this system," he said.

In his follow-up interview this week, Dennler said he tries to "wear multiple hats" and that the motivation of the police department's presentation was "well-intentioned."

"But I recognize there's always a tension between public safety and privacy," he added.

One of the most outspoken critics of the potential installation of the cameras was former selectman Jason LaChapelle, who leading up to

See *Plate Readers Nixed*, page 29

Housing Spike Proposed for Brainerd Place

By London Brazal

The developer of the Brainerd Place mixed-use project under construction in Portland has proposed a dramatic increase in the amount of housing units – and the spike isn't sitting well with many residents.

Earlier this month, on March 6, developer Dan Bertram appeared before the Board of Selectmen and proposed adding more than 100 new apartments to Building A in the 15-acre development at the corner of Marlborough and Main streets. Bertram told the selectmen he'd found it challenging to find businesses to commit to the original amount of commercial spaces. Another significant alteration was to Building B, which was supposed to be a CVS. The newly-proposed designs made it into two buildings filled with offices and retail. Essentially, the mixed-use lot would have a significant increase in housing while decreasing the number of commercial spaces.

Bertram followed this up at the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting the next night, March 7, by officially applying to amend the zoning regulations by increasing "the allowable MUD [multi-unit development] residential units to 350 from the current 240." This would increase the ratio of allowable apartments from 16 to 21 per 5,000 sq. ft. of commercial space. Another amendment was to add the upper floors to the total commercial area, which currently only includes the ground floor. A request

for special permit modification is contingent on the approval of the previously mentioned application.

Many residents have expressed concerns about the impact the additional apartments could have on the town. On Facebook, some people have shared concerns about a higher mill rate, more traffic and a need for additional town services. Signs of opposition have been appearing in front yards saying "Go and say no" – encouraging residents to express their displeasure at a public hearing scheduled for next week.

In 2017, BRT submitted a fixed assessment application and requested a seven-year deferral of the real estate property tax assessment increase that would be due on the construction of certain buildings. First Selectman Ryan Curley said tax abatements are a common tool utilized by municipalities to promote economic development. "In this case, it is also meant to incentivize the restoration of the historic homes," Curley told the *Rivereast*. "At the time of the initial agreement, the developer only agreed to restore two of the homes but has since taken on the third as well."

At the Board of Selectmen meeting last week, former first selectwoman Susan Bransfield noted that the agreement currently before the board is the fourth fixed assessment; the others were in 2017, 2021 and 2022. Bransfield also mentioned how the developers were found

in default in 2022 but the matter was resolved. Curley explained that the developers were required to file specific building permits and complete a merger. Both items were completed within the 60-day cure window and the town withdrew the notice.

This isn't the first time Bertram proposed vast changes to the ratio of residential to commercial units. According to a *Middletown Press* article from February 2016, the original plan allowed for one to three residential units per 5,000 sq. ft. of commercial space, yielding only 81 units. Additionally, Bertram wanted to remove regulations requiring the completion of 50% of commercial construction before residential units could be occupied, which raised concerns about enforcement.

The current proposed agreement states that BRT has to complete all work, constructing new units and restoring the historical houses, within 12 years (on or before March 14, 2029) of the execution of the original agreement. The applicant seeks a seven-year deferral of assessment increase, starting from the issuance of the certificate of use and occupancy for each completed building. Years one and two are set at 85% deferral, and by year seven, it is set at 60%. After seven years, the town will assess each completed building at 100% of its value. The value of the land, for the purposes of property tax assess-

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RE3-29-24

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

Passport to Connecticut Libraries
Butterfly in the sky, I can fly twice as high
Take a look, it's in a book
Reading Rainbow
 If you're of a certain age – and I, dear reader, am of that age – you're familiar with Reading Rainbow, that wonderful '80s and '90s PBS show hosted by LeVar Burton that was designed to instill in kids a love of reading. It worked for me, as I imagine it did for millions of other kids.

As an adult, that love combined with a driver's license has led me to explore different libraries. They can be just plain fun to visit. If you enjoy doing that too, then there's a state-wide program starting up next Monday that might be right up your alley.

There are more than 150 Connecticut public library locations – including ones in Andover, Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough and Portland – participating in the Connecticut Library Association's Passport to Connecticut Libraries Program during the month of April. The program is open to adults and children – and it sounds like a lot of fun.

To begin, visit your local participating library to pick up your "passport." They will stamp it to get you started. Then, take your passport along as you visit other participating libraries. At each visit the library will stamp your passport and may even give you a small gift.

If you visit at least five participating libraries and return your passport to a participating library by May 10, then you will be entered into a state-wide drawing for a chance to win a \$200 Visa gift card for adults (18 and up) and a \$200 Visa gift card for children (un-

der 18). This is a state-wide contest where four winners will be selected: one adult and one child from a random drawing from all returned Passports with at least five separate library stamps, and the one adult and one child who visited the most libraries/received the most stamps.

As I said, all of the *Rivereast* towns are participating in this year's Passport to Connecticut Libraries, so you can knock off five libraries without even having to travel that far. But why stop at five? If you're able, take a road trip! From Putnam to Prospect, from Danbury to Deep River, there are participating libraries all over the state.

And there's so much more than just books at libraries these days. There are audiobooks, music CDs, DVDs, e-books, and more. Sometimes there are jigsaw puzzles, musical instruments, games – heck, even baking pans! Now's the time to see what different libraries have to offer.

For more details and a full list of participating libraries, ask your local librarian.

This is pretty cool. Mouse Hole Farm Press has announced the upcoming release of a new book, *SAVED: Equine Rescues of Connecticut*, which highlights inspiring stories and challenges of horse, pony, donkey, and mule welfare. Written by lifelong equestrian Andrea Steele, the coffee table-style book features photos by Sarah Grote, an award-winning photographer and vice president of Connecticut Draft Horse Rescue in East Hampton.

"Andrea and I teamed on this project because it's a topic that is close to our hearts,"
Editor's Desk continued on page 31

Bulletin Board

"What do you want for dinner tonight?" asked my wife.
 "Lobster rolls," I said. "With lots of melted butter."
 "I don't have any lobster rolls," she informed me. "You know that. And I'm not going out now to get them."
 "You asked me what I wanted. You didn't say it had to be available."
 "I can melt you some butter."
 "I'd prefer it on lobster."
 "Why can't you answer a simple question without going into the freaking weeds?" she inquired wearily and without any particular malice.
 "You know why."
 "Yes, I know why. Because you were put on Earth to torment me for my sins in a previous life."
 As this was quite probably true, I preferred not to address it. "Remember our first big argument after we got married?" I said.
 "No. Did it involve lobster rolls?"
 "No. It was about fish and chicken."
 She looked blank.
 "You asked me what I wanted for dinner: fish or chicken," I explained.
 "After we were first married?" she said. "On our budget then, it's more likely I asked you if you wanted beans or beans."
 "Nope. It was fish or chicken. And I said 'fish.' And you said, 'I've already taken the chicken out.' And I said, 'Why did you ask me if I wanted fish or chicken if you'd already made up your mind to make chicken?'"
 "That's your idea of a big fight?"
 "I said, 'Okay, okay, we'll have chicken.' And you said, 'No, no, if you insist on having fish, we'll have fish.' And I said, 'I changed my mind. I don't want fish.' And you said, 'Yes, you do. I'm making fish.' And I said, 'No, no, no. I hate fish.'"
 "Could you maybe get to the point? I've got to figure out what I'm going to make for dinner tonight, not 40 years ago or whatever."
 "It kind of accelerated from there, as I recall."
 "I see."
 "Anyway, you never did answer my question."
 "What question?"
 "Why did you ask me if I wanted fish or chicken when you'd already decided to make chicken?"
 "I was probably trying to be considerate."
 "That's not being considerate. That's pretending to be considerate."
 "Maybe I thought you'd say chicken. Maybe I didn't really give a damn what you wanted because I'd been working all day and now I foolishly thought it was my duty to make you something to eat because if you were left to your own devices, you'd starve to death."
 "Aha!" I exclaimed. "Aha!"
 "And here I am still doing it," she added. "I'm an idiot."
 "Do you remember what we had that night?" I said. "The night of the big argument?"
 "I don't know what you had," she replied. "But I'm guessing I had chicken."
 "You do remember?"
 "No, actually, I don't. But that would be the logical outcome. But the real question now is what do you want for dinner tonight?"
 "What are my options?"
 "Chicken or fish."
 "Yes."
 "Chicken it is," she said.
 "Isn't it amazing how we always manage to get from Point A to Point B?" I said.
 "Yeah," she said, taking the chicken out of the fridge. "But why does it always have to be via Point Z?"

Jim Hallas

Rivereast Hours of Operation

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



Polish Club Makes Donation... The Saint Joseph's Polish Club in January recently donated more than \$2,300 to the Colchester Honor Guard. The money was generated at the club's Martinis and Jewelry fundraiser in January.

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Correction

Last week's story on the East Hampton budget indicated the amount budgeted for the East Hampton Ambulance Association was around \$150,000. This is not true; the amount budgeted for EHAA is a \$154,000 increase from the current year, and not \$154,000 in total. The total amount budgeted is \$217,000.
 The *Rivereast* regrets the error.

suit. That would leave two different countries with two weaker defenses. Maybe this is what China envisioned if they could "help" get Biden into office?

Next election, remember to "Flush the Toilet!"

Frank Blume - Colchester

Just Didn't Know!

To the Editor:
 Much concern and controversy has risen over the Marlborough 2024 budget. I ask myself, what could have been done to avoid it? I do not regret asking questions. I think all responsible citizens should ask questions! I think boards have a responsibility to ask questions. Questions are not accusations, they are efforts to become informed.

For several years, I simply did not know that we had 50-year-old culverts and have put off replacing them for legitimate financial reasons.

I was not aware that we would lose the taxes from the Marlborough Middlesex Hospital Emergency Room. I think we are lucky to have them here – I just didn't understand the looming financial change we have now experienced.

I knew the school had a much reduced student population. I was vaguely aware that they retained all the service providers, but that's good

See Letters, page 6

Texas Supreme Court Decision

To the Editor:
 The Supreme Court recently ruled that Texas can proceed in deporting all illegal immigrants. These lawbreakers should never have been allowed in. It is against the law! Biden has no right to allow this! And Biden is trying to stop Texas from deporting these criminals. I have never, in my entire life, seen such criminal behavior from any American president! Why has he not been impeached? Mexico's response was that "Under no circumstances will these immigrants be allowed to enter Mexico!"
 In my opinion, if this border problem is not resolved, Texas might consider withdrawing from the union! If they did and neighboring, adjoining states saw that it was well worth their while, other states might look into it and follow

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Letter Writers: Letters must be 300 words or less, and must be submitted by Tuesdays at noon. Email is preferred; send to bulletin@glcitizen.com. All letters must be signed, and include the writer's town of residence and daytime contact phone number. Writers are limited to one letter per week. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters are subject to editing for grammar, spelling and clarity, and are also subject to fact-checking. No form of harassment or personal attack (such as bullying or name-calling) will be tolerated. There is no guarantee that all letters will be published.

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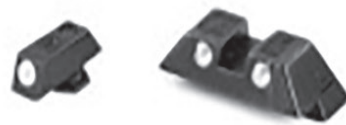
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★ *Letters cont. from page 4*

for kids so it didn't compel me to question it.

I was not aware that a new preschool teacher was hired in advance, when not in the budget. That's not to say I might have objected – only that I would question hiring a new position not in the budget. I am aware, however, that it is most likely false that school population will increase 17% over the coming decade. NESDEC has been wrong many years in a row.

I know that local, state, and national democracy depends on informed voters. I can listen, I can read, and I can think. I can only conclude that if I did not know crucial information about a budget that I was expected to vote on, then either my boards were not transparent or just did not want me to know. I am raising questions that should have been raised by my elected board members.

Fran Terase – Marlborough

A 9.25% Tax Hike!?!?

To the Editor:

In reference to the article on page 1 of *Riverast* last week, Marlborough Town Manager David Porter and our elected officials are seeking a 9.25% property tax hike. He says the town is facing a "perfect storm," with shrinking revenue, expiring pandemic-era funding and pressing capital needs. Well guess what? Marlborough residents are facing the same challenges. Inflation has shrunk our spending power considerably while the price of everything just keeps going up. The COVID relief checks were spent a long time ago. And we also have "pressing capital needs," we just call them food, heat, electricity, mortgage, rent, insurance, gas, college, etc.

My guess is what they really want is something in the range of a 5-7% tax increase. So they ask for a laughable 9.25%, and hope we'll just go along with it, or "compromise," giving them what they wanted all along. I am against anything more than an increase in the 3% range and I hope Marlborough residents feel the same way when it comes time to vote.

We all want a quality education for the kids in this town. We all want decent roads, snow removal, etc. But we also want to be able to pay our bills and not go into debt. Our town leaders need to make some tough choices and make it work, just like the rest of us.

Peter Uus – Marlborough

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Marlborough's Budget

To the Editor:

Those of us who are familiar with how public schools work were truly stunned by Marlborough's decision to hire two school administrators at the top of the pay scale. Consider how previous BOEs did things. When hired, our current principal had some administrative experience, but his starting salary wasn't close to what the retiring principal was paid. And we replaced a retiring assistant principal with an experienced educator new to administration. With considerable reduction to the school budget, previous BOEs were able to replace retiring administrators with the very competent people we are now sorry to lose.

Marlborough had multiple options available when deciding how to fill the two administration vacancies. It is not far-fetched to suggest that \$100,000 could have been saved. But even if we paired either of the two principals we hired at the top of the pay scale with a first time assistant principal, \$50,000 could have been saved. Doing things that way is the norm in public schools, not the exception. Sadly, the public had no input before the contracts were signed. This is just one item in the school budget, but it is a prime example of how questionable expenditures go unchallenged by the Board of Educa-

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tion and the Board of Finance and are automatically defended by some in the community. Marlborough's school has been well funded and has been rated excellent for a long time. But recently additional staff have been added here and there and no one asks how we got along without these positions until now, or how this is going to improve the performance of the students. Reluctance to question the school budget will not encourage fiscal responsibility, and spending more will not automatically result in a better education for the children.

George O'Brien - Marlborough

Only Certain Victims Matter

To the Editor: From the annals of "A Liberal Democrat's Struggle with Morality: Boneheads and Hypocrites", volume #1.

Recently, ABC mercenary George Stephanopoulos (\$15M/year) "interviewed" Rep. Nancy Mace. The opening to this alleged interview was a Stephanopoulos query regarding how Mace, a rape victim, could support a presidential candidate who was "liable of rape." It appeared that George had no intention of interviewing Mace, instead using her as a prop to fulfill his management's directive to torch Donald Trump. TV journalism. What a sacred calling...

First off, regardless of political proclivity, George should have done a little research. Trump was not found liable of rape. He was found liable of sexual abuse by a jury in a civil trial based on a preponderance of evidence that included no physical evidence and no eye witnesses to the alleged 30 year-old crime in a city that overwhelmingly leans Democrat (including Judge Kaplan). Judge Kaplan stated Trump was guilty of rape in post-trial commentary. Like Trump, hate Trump. Those are journalistic facts.

But, do you remember for whom George Stephanopoulos used to work, and what his main functions for his employer involved? Wait for it. There you go! Now you remember! White House Communications Director and Senior Advisor to...wait for it...Bill Clinton! Hmmm. George was also the director of the elite task force known as the Bimbo Eruption Unit, a fast-acting political spin and hit squad assembled to hunt down and crucify the multiple women that accused ole' Bill of being lax with his marriage vows. So, to the average eye (and ear), it would appear hypocritical (a.k.a., liberal) to question someone's political support for an alleged sexual abuser when you were the consigliere of one of the most notorious flesh-mongers in American politics. It was also rude, inappropriate, and purposeful.

Only certain rape victims matter.

**Just Sayin',
Ed Kozlowski - Colchester**

Thank You, Saint Joseph's

To the Editor:

The members of Colchester Veterans Honor Guard wish to express their thanks and appreciation for the generous donation of more than \$2,300.00 to the Colchester Honor Guard, through the proceeds of the Martinis and Jewelry fund raiser at the Saint Joseph's Polish Club in January. As a result of the funds raised by the St. Joseph's Club, the Honor Guard will be able continue to honor the dedicated service of deceased members of the Armed Forces of the United States.

The Saint Joseph's Polish Club, its members and the organizations that worked to the to make the recent fund raiser a success, are dedicated to both community service and the local veterans organizations. Please offer our thanks to the outstanding efforts of your wonderful members who helped in numerous ways.

The Polish Club and the members that provided raffle prize donors are the people that help make Colchester a wonderful and vibrant community. The officers of the Honor Guard and its members believe that the Saint Joseph's Polish Club should be commended for its commitment to community service. You serve as an example to which all community organizations should strive.

**Alphonse Letendre, Deputy Commander
Thomas O'Meara, Executive Officer
Colchester Veterans Honor Guard**

Refresher Course

To the Editor:

"Land conservancies preserve land for future generations, protecting our food and water supply, purifying our air, providing wildlife habitat, and strengthening our communities." -- headwatersconservancy.org

"Open space acquisitions provide Connecticut's residents with options for outdoor activities, preservation of scenic beauty, habitat protection and increased biodiversity, water protection and flood control." -- portal.ct.gov. See Preserved Land.

"Municipalities and local officials play an important role in protecting farmland and creating a supportive environment for local (farms). Understanding the many positive roles that farms play in a town-from the economy to natural resource protection to local food to community character-can help a community appreciate its responsibility to be supportive of farmland pro-

tection and farm viability. Additionally, communities that devote resources to farmland preservation are more likely to attract state and federal funds for conservation projects." -- Role of Municipalities and Communities (ctfarmland.org)

"Those assets that make Hebron a special place to live must be preserved and enhanced. Hebron's special assets include: its extensive open space, forest and farmlands, rivers and streams (among the purest in Connecticut), major recreational facilities such as Amston Lake and two public golf courses, extensive hiking trails, the Hemlocks, and significant reminders of its historical heritage in the Hebron Green, Gilead Hills, Hope Valley and Amston Village Districts." -- POCD (hebronct.com).

"We are clearly not doing enough as a species to keep our planet healthy, hospitable, and thriving for all living creatures. The flora and fauna in our communities do not have a say in what is happening to them. We can do so by legally recognizing that Nature has the right to exist, flourish, and naturally evolve. When we protect Nature, we also protect future generations of humans because we are Nature too." -- Alexis Eynon, *New Hampshire Gazette*, 3/8/24 #save17

Jean Tulumieri - Amston

Portland's Problem with Ethics

To the Editor:

At the March 20 Board of Selectmen meeting more ethics violation concerns were expressed by a former BOS member. The concern expressed was regarding the present BOS of "walking the line" of an ethics violation regarding influencing the Planning & Zoning Commission on an application submitted for a change to zoning regulations.

Prior to the March 20 BOS meeting, others have expressed concerns about ethics violations by two BOS members, Selectmen Manning, and Pelton, for publicly advocating and voting on budgets and supplemental allocations with an obvious conflict of interest. Under ethics rules, at the appearance of a conflict of interest, a board member must recuse themselves and remove themselves from the room to not influence other voting members on the board.

As First Selectman, Ryan Curley, has the responsibility of monitoring any conflict before a public hearing. Currently Curley has been com-

pllicit for unknown reasons.

Since the question of influencing the Planning & Zoning Commission has been raised the proper procedure by the first selectmen should be an investigation by the Ethics Commission to determine if any P&Z commissioner has been approached or influenced by appearance at a meeting, by a BOS member regarding any application before the commission.

The other ethics violations for a conflict of interest regarding Manning and Pelton should be addressed in a separate question to the Ethics Commission for interpretation under state and local rules. A formal Ethics complaint should not be the responsibility of a member of the public while elected officials sit idle.

Without leadership acting without bias and transparency they will continue to fail in their responsibility to the residents of Portland

Rose Aletta - Portland

The BLT Team

To the Editor:

"The American people have been lied to, by Donald Trump, Rudy Giuliani, and various individuals in government and media positions, all of whom worked to create a web of falsehood. At Trump's behest, in early 2019, Giuliani convened a group of political and media professionals for regular strategy meetings at BLT Steak in Washington, D.C. Among others, this group included John Solomon, an investigative reporter for The Hill who had many contacts at FOX News. Then- Congressman Devin Nunes, who had been leading his own investigation into the Bidens, also decided to work with the BLT Team... I have never wavered from saying that there was no evidence of the Bidens' corruption in Ukraine - because there truly was none. On the contrary, by setting up a search for false criminality, every individual majorly involved in this plan was disguising their own criminal activity.

"That persists to this very day: The impeachment proceedings that bring us here now are predicated on a bunch of false information that is being spread by the Kremlin. I will state again for the record that the story of Joe and Hunter Biden's corruption in Ukraine is false; there is absolutely no evidence to support it. I will repeat that everyone who participated in fabricating these lies knew exactly what they were doing. By giving in to the conspiracy theories,

See Letters page 31

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Portland Exchange Offering Scholarship

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

For the scholarship, the club is looking for the student to provide the committee with 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.

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

Stonewall Speakers

The Town of Portland's Committee on Solidarity and Portland Library will present a Stonewall Speakers Panel on Saturday, April 20, from 1-2 p.m., at Portland Library.

The Stonewall Speakers, a program of the Connecticut Stonewall Foundation, Inc., is an all-volunteer speaker's bureau of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, pansexual and queer people, and their allies. The speakers seek to help eliminate hate and promote understanding. Speakers combine personal life stories

with a question and answer session. Visit www.stonewallspeakers.org for more information.

Registration is not required, but is encouraged. This event is sponsored by donors to the Portland Committee on Solidarity. The committee welcomes anyone who is interested to attend their meetings on the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. in the Portland Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave. For more information, email the Committee on Solidarity at portlandctsolidarity@gmail.com.

Spring Rec Soccer Registration

Portland Soccer Club (PSC) has opened registration for the Spring 2024 Recreational Soccer Season. Deadline is Sunday, April 7. To register, visit clubs.bluesombrero.com/portlandsoccerclub.

Player fees are \$75 for all Rec divisions. Late registrations are not guaranteed and will be charged a late fee of \$30 if accepted. Refunds will be given for anyone not placed on a team. Uniforms/jerseys are provided to all divisions, and a ball will also be provided to pre-k players. The spring season will run eight weeks, beginning in late April and ending early June. All Rec activities take place at the Portland Recreational Complex.

Practice/game session start/end times are TBD, with all Saturday activities ending by 12:30 p.m. or earlier. PSC said it expects to operate Six Rec Divisions for the season as follows:

(1) Pre-K - U4 (born 2020); (2) Dribbler - U5 (born 2019) and U6 (born 2018); and (3) Kicker Divisions - U7 (born 2017), U8 (born 2016), and U9 (born 2015). Pre-K and Dribblers will be Saturday-only. Kickers will hold one-hour practice sessions on Wednesdays and have game sessions on Saturdays.

PSC is a nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization. Volunteer coaches are needed, and prior coaching experience is not a requirement; PSC said it will help all coaches who volunteer.

If you have any questions about coaching, contact any of the following club officials: Chad Wilson, President, nosliw.dahc@gmail.com or 205-999-8842; Chris Donahue, Vice President and Recreational Director, donahuecj@sbc-global.net or 860-638-7400; Anne Whalen, Registrar, awhalen34@yahoo.com or 860-690-3414.

Town-Wide Tag Sale Coming

The Portland Historical Society's 28th annual Town-Wide Tag Sale will take place Saturday, May 11 - and online registration and payment for tag sales is now open.

Visit www.portlandhistsoc.org and click on the link (the big yellow banner) to register; visit follow the instructions online. To complete a paper registration form that can be mailed, visit the website, download and complete the form, and mail it to P.O. Box 98 with payment. Paper registrations are now available in the barrel on the front porch at 492 Main St. The donation to the society for a spot on the Tag Sale Map is \$20 until this Sunday, March 31. The registration fee during the month of April will be \$25. Registration for sales will close Sunday, April 28. Portland residents who sign up will be assigned a spot on the society's official Tag Sale Map issued for that day listing the sale locations and types

of items featured at each one.

Local businesses and organizations can support the society by purchasing an advertising spot on the tag sale map. Past advertisers have received an email with information about this year's map. Map sponsors who have not been contacted by email, will get a visit from a society volunteer in the next two weeks. New businesses interested in having a spot on the map can email the society for information at portlandcthistory@gmail.com. Tag Sale ad spots are approximately the size of a business card and cost \$25. Map sponsorships can also be purchased on the website.

The annual Town-Wide Tag Sale is the main fundraiser for the historical society. Proceeds help to maintain the museum and to further the society's mission to collect, preserve and share Portland's history.



Presidential Primary is Next Tuesday

Primary Day is Tuesday April 2. Polls will be open from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at Portland Middle School, 93 High St. Curbside voting is available; electors needing this service can call the town clerk's office at 860-342-6743 when heading over to the polls.

The last day of early voting will be Saturday, March 30, from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Early voting is at Town Hall, 33 East Main St. Curbside voting is available for early voting. Residents requiring early voting curbside assistance can call 860-342-6740 when they arrive at Town

Hall to early vote. There is no early voting on Friday, March 29.

The last day to apply for an absentee ballot is Monday, April 1, from the town clerk's office. On Tuesday, an elector can only apply for an emergency absentee ballot if they qualify. Absentee ballots can be returned to the town clerk's office, or left in the election drop box at the rear entrance of Town Hall. Absentee ballots must be received by 8 p.m. Tuesday, April 2, in order to be counted.

Preschool Screening

Connecticut public schools are responsible for identifying children who are eligible to receive special education services. Valley View School in Portland will conduct a preschool screening Friday, April 19, for children ages 3-4. The screening is designed to answer any questions or concerns about a child's development as well as identifying children who may be eligible for the preschool selection process.

During the screening, your child will meet with members from our preschool team and participate in a variety of activities. These activities assess different developmental areas includ-

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

Following the screening, you will receive a letter stating your child's results. In order for your child 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 School at 860-342-3131.

Zion Lutheran Church News

Zion Lutheran Church, located at 183 William St., offers in-person worship Sundays at 9 a.m. A recording of the service is posted to YouTube on Mondays by 9 a.m. Bulletins for the service are posted each week at zionlutheran-portland.org.

Throughout Lent, Zion has been collecting various items for the Portland Food Bank. Any items are welcome at any time.

Good Friday: Members of Zion will also participate in the annual community "Cross Walk" beginning at St. Mary Church, at noon on Good Friday, March 29. There will also be a Good Fri-

day worship service at 6 p.m. March 29.

Sunday School for children ages 3 to 16 meets the first and third Sunday of each month at 10:15 a.m. Adult Bible Study is continuing its discussion of *The Chosen* video series and meets the second and fourth Sunday of each month at 10:15 a.m.

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

Scholarship Offered by Portland Garden Clubs

Applications are now available for a \$500 scholarship offered by the Portland garden clubs.

The scholarship will be awarded to a graduating high school senior who is a resident of Portland and has been accepted at an accredited college or post-secondary school, and plans to pursue a major in one of the following fields: agronomy, botany, city planning, conservation, environmental studies, floriculture, forestry, horticulture, land management, landscape design, plant pathology or allied subject. Applicants must have a grade point average of at least 3.0.

The scholarship is funded from the proceeds of community activities of The Portland Garden Club and The Portland River Valley Garden Club. The review committee will consider the applicant's academic record, ability to articulate career goals, and their recommendations. Financial need could be part of the decision.

Applications and letters of recommendation must be received by The Garden Clubs of Portland, Connecticut in care of the applicant's guidance or counseling department or emailed to sueanderson06480@aol.com or portlandrivervalleygc@gmail.com before April 20.

Police News

3/18: Kevin Castro, 21, of Hartford, was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny, Portland Police said.

3/20: Nancy Chrystal, 53, of 798 Glastonbury Tpke., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, second-degree assault and second-degree threatening, police said.

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Easter Bake Sale
The First Congregational Church of Portland, located at 554 Main St., will hold its annual Easter Bake Sale on Saturday, March 30, from 9 a.m.-noon. This fundraiser supports the church's activities and mission. Featured items include cardamom bread, a variety of sweet breads, cakes, pies, lots of cookies, pastries, and bunny lollipops.

Exchange Club Food Drive
The Exchange Club of Portland will hold its annual food drive Saturday, April 6, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at Adams Hometown Market, to benefit Portland Food Bank. The Exchange will be asking for donations of \$5, \$10, \$20 or any other donation amount. All donations collect will be given to the Portland Food Bank.

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Savvy Swap Consignment Hosting 10-Year Birthday Bash

By London Brazal

Growing up, Kerianne Burchardt always had a passion for the art of fashion and knew she wanted to go into retail. As one of five children, she shopped at thrift and consignment stores with her family. Burchardt became interested in the idea of putting together her own boutique and styling outfits for others.

After graduating from Portland High School, she received an associate's degree at Middlesex Community College and a bachelor's degree in fashion and retail merchandising from Lasell College in Newton, Mass.

Following graduation, Burchardt worked at Nordstrom, where she held a management position. While she hoped to open a boutique of her own, Burchardt soon learned she did not have the funds to purchase different items on top of paying for a location. However, that didn't stop her from opening a retail store; she just had to change course.

With the savings she did have, Burchardt opened a consignment store without loans or grants as friends and families purged their closets to create a selective inventory.

By going the thrift store route, Burchardt wanted to set herself apart from other consignment stores. "I'm very picky with our inventory. Some of these pieces were worn once or were bought online and never returned," Burchardt

explained. "I wanted high-end brands and to not be a place that was stuffy or smelled." Over time, many repeat consignors learned what would pass Burchardt's standards. When people come into the shop, the employees will help customers pick out outfits and provide a different shopping experience than a normal thrift store.

Spanning a decade since the opening, Burchardt said her biggest setback was during the pandemic when people could not shop in person. "I didn't allow that to take me down," she stated. To help the business stay afloat, Burchardt started to utilize Facebook Live and host online sales. Social media became a great marketing tool as she and her employees posted try-on videos and styled outfits. On the consignment store's website, Burchardt would post about 50 items a day that people could purchase and then pick up curbside.

When the pandemic started to end, social media still became a great resource that has attracted customers from farther places including people from out of state. "Facebook Live has put us on the map," Burchardt noted. With all the new customers Burchardt gets, she is happy that tons of locals have been with her since day one. Haven Fiocchi, who has worked at the store for two years, became the social media marketer and is grateful to have Burchardt as a mentor. Social media has allowed her to have a different creative side and how they can see their visions come to fruition.

The proudest accomplishment Burchardt reflected on was the fact that her business is still thriving on top of raising a family with a two- and five-year-old. "I'm able to juggle my dreams of seeing my vision come true for the business and starting a family," said Burchardt. She explained that the store only has up to four employees and right now, it's herself and two others. However, with the trust they have built, Burchardt is starting to have more flexibility while getting home to get her kid off the bus.

As a part of the Portland community, Burchardt enjoys the way she feels supported by other businesses and how she can help others.



Kerianne Burchardt had dreams of working in retail and grew up with a passion for fashion. The dedication to her craft allowed Burchardt to open up a consignment shop, now celebrating 10 years in Portland.

Next Saturday, April 6, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the shop is hosting its 10th-anniversary birthday bash. Including a 20% storewide sale, there will be raffles, a fashion show, and samples from Sarah's on Main and Concentric Brewing Company. The models range in age from 10 to 65 and will have a couple of outfits to display. Everyone is welcome to stop by to enjoy fashion, food, drinks and more.

Looking ahead, Burchardt shared her goals of revamping the website to become another way for people to shop. She also wants to have an on-site tailor. "It's a lost art but it would be perfect to have at a consignment store," said Burchardt.

In a few years, Burchardt also hopes to purchase an RV trailer to have a mobile unit for vendor fairs and other events. Another goal in five years is to open a second location near Marlborough or Colchester.

With 10 years in business, Burchardt is proud of how far she has come. "Being a small business, I never would've thought," she said.

Even though it is an upscale, name-brand consignment store, Burchardt sees helping others as the best part.

"It's not just a transaction," she said. "We build relationships with customers and help them dress from head to toe."

Lions Club Scholarship Applications

The Portland Lions Club is now accepting scholarship applications for Portland resident students enrolling in 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. Portland students can obtain an application form from the Portland High School guidance office or by emailing PortlandLionsScholarship@gmail.com.

All applications must be received by April 15 for consideration.

Ronna L. Kuzminski Memorial Scholarship

ConnValley School of Music & Dance is now accepting applications for the Ronna L. Kuzminski Memorial Scholarship.

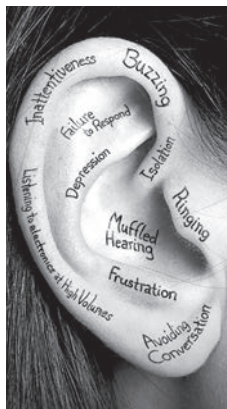
ConnValley School of Music & Dance will be granting \$500 to a graduating senior from Portland High School. This senior must be attending a two- or four-year accredited college in pursuit of a career in dance, music, or the arts. Prior students of Conn Valley School of Music & Dance will be given priority.

Portland students can obtain an application form from the Portland High School guidance office. All applications must be received by April 15 to be considered.



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Tag Sale Donations Sought

The Portland Historical Society will hold its 28th annual Town-Wide Tag Sales Day Saturday, May 11, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The society will participate with its own tag sale on the grounds of the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History.

Volunteers from the society will receive items in good condition at the Ruth Callander House garage, 492 Main Street, from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturdays, April 20 and 27 (note the changes in dates). No textbooks, electronics (including computers or printers), clothing

or footwear, large furniture or unwieldy items (dirty, broken, rusty) are accepted. Vintage and antique items are always welcome. If you are cleaning and tossing photos from the past, please contact the historical society to find out if it would like them for their collection. These photos can be of people, places and events from Portland's history.

For more information on donating items or photographs, call 860-982-1486 or email PortlandCThistory@gmail.com.

Historical Society to Hold Membership Meeting

The Portland Historical Society will hold a meeting for membership to discuss proposed bylaw changes on Tuesday, April 23.

The bylaws were last updated in 2009. Members and the public can read the revised Bylaws as well as the present bylaws before the meeting by going to www.portlandhistsoc.com and clicking on "Publications" in the left-hand column. Choose "Proposed Revised Bylaws" to review the document completed by a Bylaws subcommittee comprised of the following society

members: Trustee George Gilbert, chair; Lynn Fountain, member; Susan Bransfield, President; Christine Sullivan, Trustee; and Julie Macksoud, ex officio.

It is anticipated that a meeting to vote on adopting the new bylaws will be held on Tuesday, May 28.

The Portland Historical Society is a nonprofit organization founded 50 years ago to collect, preserve and share the history of Portland. Membership is open to all, with membership forms available on the website to be downloaded, completed and mailed in with payment.

Free Tax Prep at Senior Center

AARP will be offering free tax return preparation at the Portland Senior Center every Wednesday through April 10, from 9 a.m.-noon each week.

Anyone interested must sign up at the Waverly Center in advance by calling 860-342-6760.

Xavier/Mercy College Fair

Xavier and Mercy high schools will hold a College Fair Thursday, April 4, from 6-8 p.m., at Xavier, 181 Randolph Rd.

More than 100 colleges will be in attendance. The fair is open to all high school students from Xavier, Mercy and surrounding towns.

First Congregational Church News

The First Congregational Church of Portland, located at 554 Main St., is an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ. All are welcome to participate in the worship services and activities of the church. The church is handicapped accessible and also offers You Tube services for those unable to attend in person. The church office is open three mornings a week, and may be reached at 860-342-3244.

Worship: There will be two Easter worship services; the first will be at 7 a.m. outside in the church yard, and the second service at 10 a.m. will be held in the sanctuary. The worship services will be led by Intentional Interim Minister the Rev. Dr. Barry McCarthy. Coffee hour follows the services and is a time of fellowship for all. All are invited to participate in the worship service and coffee hour.

Children's Activities: Church School and Infant/Toddler Care are available each Sunday. School aged children begin in the worship service in the sanctuary with their families and will be brought downstairs for church school after the Children's Message. Infants/toddlers may be dropped off in Fellowship Hall before the service or at any point during the service. The Faith Formation program is under the direction of Mary Clark.

Adult Choir: All are welcome to join the choir, which sings at Sunday worship services.

Dean's List

Portland residents Joshua Doncet, Sierra Koss, Blasia McAuliffe and Nikita Willis made the fall 2023 Dean's List at the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford.

Choir practice is held Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: The Women's Fellowship of the church sponsors a Prayer Shawl Ministry. All knitters are invited to be part of the knitting group that makes the shawls on Tuesdays at 1 p.m.

Twelve-Step Groups: Alanon meets at the church on Sundays at 7 p.m. Living Clean meets at the church on Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

Community Outreach and Service: The church collects non-perishable food for Portland Food Bank and Amazing Grace Food Pantry at each Sunday's worship service. The church sponsors meals for Streetfire Ministries and St. Vincent De Paul in Middletown.

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 from September to June. Contact Amy Jahnke at 860-342-1111 or 1stchurchnurseryschool@gmail.com for more information.

Grange in Tag Sale

Hemlock Grange in Portland is participating in Portland Historical Society's town-wide tag sale on Saturday, May 11. Individuals may join the tag sale and have a space in the parking lot. Individuals need to provide their own table.

The Grange will also accept donations. The Grange will accept most items including small workable appliances. No furniture or clothes will be accepted.

For more information, call Betty Jane at 860-267-7512. Leave your name and number and your call will be returned.

RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM

Alumni Benefit Event

There will be an Alumni Benefit Event for RHAM Scholarships and Project Graduation Saturday, May 11, at 6 p.m., at Blackledge Country Club in Hebron - featuring music by the Rockin' HeartBeats.

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 Benefit.

Raffle prizes are always welcome.

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.

Empty Bowls Dinner Event

The third Empty Bowls dinner event will be held Thursday, April 4, from 6-8 p.m., in the RHAM High School cafeteria.

At the dinner, guests are invited to choose a handmade ceramic bowl to use for a simple meal of soup and bread and to take home as a reminder that there are always empty bowls in the world. In addition, there will be student ensemble and solo performances from

RHAM's select choir.

Dinner tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for students and children and can be ordered at www.schoolpay.com/pay/for/Empty-Bowls-Dinner/MeSL. All proceeds will benefit the Hebron Interfaith Human Services Food Bank, Marlborough Food Bank and Andover Congregational Church Food Pantry.

AHM College Scholarships

AHM Youth & Family Services is accepting scholarship applications from Andover, Hebron, and Marlborough students who are planning to attend college in the fall. Each of the scholarships is needs-based. Applications are at ahmyouth.org/college-scholarship-application. Deadline to apply is May 15.

Erin Garvie Memorial Scholarship: This scholarship was created in memory of Erin Garvie, who passed away in 1998, during her senior year at RHAM High School. She was a star soccer player and president of the student council. This scholarship was created by the Garvie family and friends. Over the years, this college scholarship has been awarded to RHAM High School students who participate in high school athletics.

Paige Houston Memorial Scholarship: This scholarship was created in memory of Paige

Houston, who was entering her senior year as an honors student at RHAM High School in 2013 when she passed away. Paige was active in cheerleading with the RHAM Youth Football and Cheerleading League and had planned on pursuing a career in early education. This scholarship was created by the Houston family and friends. Each year a college scholarship is awarded to a RHAM High School graduate.

William Stelzner Memorial Scholarship: This scholarship was created in memory of William "Bill" Stelzner, who passed away in 2016. Stelzner was known for his humanitarian work locally, regionally, and nationwide. This scholarship was created by the Stelzner family and friends. Each year a college scholarship is awarded to a RHAM High School graduate who plans to attend a two-year college and has volunteered in the community.

Earth Day Clean-Up Walk

AHM Youth & Family Services, in partnership with the Hebron Green Committee, will be at the Earth Day Clean-Up on Saturday, April 20, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Members of the Hebron Community, parents and RHAM High school and Middle School students are encouraged to sign up to volunteer to participate in the clean-up walk by registering at tinyurl.com/bd28twp8.

Also, AHM invites you to test your knowledge on what kind of litter will be found on the

sides of town roads and in town parks, and also how much you know about the harm this litter can do to the environment. Take a 10-question quiz at tinyurl.com/bc6w6z8f. Everyone who completes the quiz by Friday, April 19, at 2 p.m. has a chance to win a gift card to a local restaurant.

Direct questions about the clean-up walk survey to AHM Prevention Coordinator Ashlee Parks at ashleep@ahmyouth.org.

Kids vs. Cops Basketball Game

AHM Youth and Family Services will hold the Kids vs. Cops basketball game at RHAM High School Friday, April 19, from 6-7 p.m.; doors will open at 5:30.

Resident state troopers from Troop K will face off in a basketball game against student athletes from RHAM High School. The goal of this event is to bring students, community members and law enforcement together in a casual, fun and uplifting environment. Additionally, as an educational component for parents/caregivers, a mock bedroom set up by Hidden in Plain Sight will be set up to highlight how drug paraphernalia can be hidden in bedrooms by teens.

Native American Storytelling

The RHAM Middle School Inquiry Academy will hold a presentation of Native American storytelling and Indigenous art at Marlborough Arts Center, 231 North Main St., Marlborough, on Saturday, April 20, from noon-3 p.m.

Native American children's stories will be read from noon-1 p.m. Presentations on Indigenous art and essays on native oral traditions will continue from 1-2 p.m. and there will be an open gallery of student art from 2-3 p.m. On display will be student examples of Molas, an artistic tradition of the Kuna people of Panama, as well as Boruca masks from Costa Rica.

QPR & Narcan Training

AHM Youth and Family Services is hosting a QPR and Narcan training session Monday, April 1.

Training will include: The Good Samaritan Law, support information and resources, and warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond. Participants will receive a QPR (Question, Persuade, Respond) training booklet and a two-dose supply of Narcan.

There is no charge for this training. Registrants must be 18+. Visit ahmyouth.org for more information and to register.

Project Graduation Meetings

AHM Youth & Family Services coordinates Project Graduation for RHAM High School and said it would like parents of the junior and senior class to attend upcoming meetings to learn what is planned and to help with details.

Meetings will be held Wednesdays, April 3 and May 1, from 6:30-7:15 p.m., via Zoom. Zoom meeting information is at www.ahmyouth.org/fundraisers-events/project-graduation.

Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional

Carl Guild Scholarships Available

Carl Guild and Associates is offering a community scholarship for local high school seniors entering college in the fall.

There are six \$1000 scholarships given, one each in East Hampton, Portland, Colchester, East Haddam, Glastonbury and the RHAM district. There are no restrictions or qualifications; all local seniors can apply.

Deadline to apply is April 1. Visit www.carlguild.com/scholarship or ask your school's guidance counselor for an application.

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HAMR Fast Pitch Recreational Softball is looking for **UMPIRES** in our Minors and Majors divisions for the upcoming spring season April-June.

Games are played in the early evening on weekdays and weekends. Umpire Clinics available. \$60 per game.

If interested please email your name and number to hamrsoftball@gmail.com



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Proposed Marlborough Tax Increase Dips Slightly

By Michael Sinkewicz

Marlborough officials this week were expected to advance the 2024-25 fiscal year budget proposal after slightly decreasing the bottom-line total.

On Wednesday, after press time, the Board of Finance met to set the proposed mill rate, and then send the combined budget proposal to a public hearing scheduled for April 15.

The overall budget is currently slated at \$28.07 million — a \$971,700, or 3.59%, increase from current-year spending. That total is about \$60,000 less than the blueprint presented earlier this month due to a savings with the town's RHAM Board of Education levy.

Instead of the anticipated new mill rate of 37.94, Marlborough is now projecting a 37.83 rate — a 3.10 increase. That means that, instead of a 9.24% tax increase, residents can now expect an 8.92% bump.

“That’s still a big number,” according to Town Manager David Porter, but one he’s encouraging residents to support.

For a property assessed at \$250,000, the tax bill would increase by \$774; for a property assessed at \$650,000, the bill would go up by \$2,013. Properties assessed within that range would see a tax increase in-between those two amounts.

To help provide clarity and context behind the budget figures, and specifically the proposed tax hike, Porter said the boards of selectmen, education and finance were working to produce

a joint-statement that will most likely be published next week.

“It’s a big ask,” Porter said regarding the spending plan, and the letter will ideally help residents digest and understand the reasoning behind the proposed tax increase before they head to the ballot box.

Local officials have described the conditions that contributed to the 2024-25 budget as the “perfect storm,” whose conditions include a shrinking net tax base, the expiration of pandemic-era funding and pressing capital needs throughout the community.

In prior budget cycles, the town used roughly \$1.85 million of pandemic-era funds and its own reserves to alleviate the overall tax burden. Officials will emphasize at the public hearing that the cost of services has increased, but the town has been charging less. If the mill rate had adjusted with the consumer price index, it would’ve reached 44.63 — a figure that is far above the proposed rate this year.

Regarding revenue, the town’s net taxable property decreased, the net assessed value of motor vehicles decreased, and state funding is drying up. While most residents and businesses pay their taxes, some are delinquent — a small, but noticeable amount, according to Porter.

Marlborough’s Board of Selectmen recommended a 1.44% increase in the town operations budget. Items such as electricity, tools and equipment and supplies have gone up in price.

Still, other costs, including heating and cooling town hall, will likely decrease due to environmentally friendly initiatives pursued by the town.

Capital represents a substantial portion of the spending plan, as the BOS proposed a capital improvement plan that incorporates a multi-year culvert replacement plan. The Town Aid Roads and Local Capital Improvement Program — state funding — will reduce those expenses as well. Accordingly, while the total capital project bill this year is earmarked at nearly \$3 million, residents would only be on the hook for \$764,577 in the 24-25 budget.

The town is looking to replace the culvert crossing South Buckboard Road and line a culvert crossing Johnson Road, rather than fully replace it. The South Buckboard project would cost \$1.2 million with half the expense canceled-out by a state grant, while the Johnson Road project is slated at \$525,000, a price tag that’s also substantially reduced.

More details on each budget plan are expected to be included in the joint-letter, and the proposed budget numbers are available on the town’s website <https://www.marlbroughct.net>.

As the budget cycle enters the next phase,

Porter — Marlborough’s first ever town manager, who officially took over last summer — described the process as a “learning experience.”

“By and large, it has gone well,” he said. “I’m proud of the budget we have produced.”

Porter has proposed another new initiative: a book club.

He’s asked the members of the boards of selectmen, finance and education to read *The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation* — a 2001 book by Daniel Yankelevich. If the boards agree, they’d all participate in a retreat to review ways to improve communication and collaboration in Marlborough.

So far, Porter conveyed, board members appear open to the concept and he’s optimistic it will take place at some point moving forward.

“It will always be hard work — it always is,” Porter said in regard to crafting a spending plan with multiple entities involved. “We will be able to forge highly professional relationships and work really well for all Marlborough’s residents.”

He conveyed that with municipal governing, “there will always be difficult decisions to be made.”

But even when officials disagree, it can be done “agreeably” and “civilly,” Porter said.

Lions Brewery Tour

The Marlborough Lions Club will host a brewery tour Saturday, May 4. The bus will depart Marlborough at noon, with 50 seats available with two brewery stops.

Tickets are \$45 and include raffle prizes, transportation a private room at Five Churches Brewery in New Britain, food and one more brewery stop yet to be determined.

Beer can be purchased at each site. Five Churches Brewery offers beers which range

from \$5 to \$9, with \$3 tasters, wine for \$10, pre-made cocktails for \$8, or soda for \$2. There will also be stuffed breads provided by the tour; however, additional food can be purchased if desired.

For more information, visit the Lions’ Facebook page at www.facebook.com/connecticut.marlbrough.lions or reach out to Lions Club member Jennifer Greloch at jenbruhns@gmail.com.

Call for Artists and Artisans

The Marlborough Arts Center will hold its annual Members Art Show Sunday, May 5, from 2-4 p.m.

All media will be accepted, including paintings, photography, digital art, 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 4 and 6 p.m. The entry fee is \$20 for two pieces, and an additional \$5 for a

third. Membership dues must be up to date.

Judging the show will be Rebecca Moran, a practicing fine artist, professional graphic designer and university professor.

The Members’ Art Show will be open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 p.m., from May 10 to June 1, including Memorial Day weekend.

More information, including a prospectus and entry forms for the artists, will soon be available at www.marlbrougharts.org.

Holiday Closing

Town Hall, the Senior Center, and the Public Works garage will be closed Friday, March 29, in observance of Good Friday.

Easter Egg Hunt

Marlborough Parks and Recreation will hold its annual Easter Egg Hunt at Blish Park on Sunday, March 30.

Ages 2 and under are at 11 a.m.; ages 3-5 are at 11:30 a.m.; ages 6-8 are at 11:15 a.m.; and ages 9-10 are at 11:45 a.m.

No registration is necessary. Call 860-295-6203 for more information.

Dean’s List

Jacob Dietz of Marlborough made the fall 2023 Dean’s List at the University of South Carolina. He is a junior at the university.

Scholarships Available

The Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department women’s auxiliary is now 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 Wednesday, May 1. Mail all completed applications to MVFD Women’s Auxiliary, P.O. Box 237, Marlborough, CT 06447.

Red Cross Blood Drive

There will be an American Red Cross Blood Drive Thursday, April 4, from noon-5 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center, 17 School Drive.

All who donate will receive a T-shirt commemorating the new film *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire*. (Details are available at RedCrossBlood.org/GXK.)

To book a time to give, visit RedCrossBlood.org, download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, or call 1-800-RED CROSS.

President’s List

Jonathan Goldstein of Marlborough made the fall 2023 President’s List and Dean’s List at the University of Hartford.

St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

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

Lenten Stations of the Cross: Fridays beginning at 7 p.m. Most Fridays also include a simple soup supper prior to Stations, at 6 p.m.

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

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

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

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

formation, call the church office.

Confirmation Community: Led by Helena Thomas, this is a 9th- and 10th-grade confirmation program. For more information, call the church office.

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

Community Outreach and Service: Food drives are held weekly for Marlborough Food Bank. You may also bring non-perishable food or household donations directly to the Marlborough Food Bank Monday and Tuesday mornings. Sandwich-making and collection is the last Thursday of the month for St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown. Other scheduled service opportunities can be found on the church website and are scheduled monthly.

Other Programs and Offerings: For more information on other programs, seasonal offerings, adult faith formation, youth group, book club, OCIA, Knights of Columbus or other ministries, call the office, visit www.stjfisherchurch.org, or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church).

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Presidential Preference Primary Coming

The presidential preference primary (PPP) is April 2. As of press time, there will be Democratic and Republican primaries.

Also, for the first time, Connecticut has early in-person voting which will be available one more time this week, on Saturday, March 30, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., at Town Hall, 26 North Main St.

New Marlborough voters wishing to participate in early voting must register and enroll in the Democratic or Republican parties by noon at the registrars' office the day prior to the day they want to vote early.

Absentee ballots for the primary are also available.

Call 860-295-6206 for more information.

Senior Center News and Notes

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

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

Food Bank: Located at 3 Wilhenger Drive (860-295-6008), it is open every Tuesday from 10 a.m.-noon and 3:30-5:30 p.m. The food bank is open to qualified residents in need of food.

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

In Case of Bad Weather: Tune in to WFSB-TV Channel 3 or NBC Connecticut Channel 30 for news on senior center closings or late openings.

Monday, April 1: Free bread and bakery goods from Stop & Shop; Help & Support, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; 8-Ball Pool, 10 a.m.-noon; Congregate Meal, noon. Menu: all-beef hot dog, hot dog bun, mustard, relish, baked beans, potato salad, yogurt cup; Bingo, 1-3 p.m.; Setback, 3-4 p.m.; Conservation Commission, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, April 2: Free bread and bakery goods donation from Big Y; Help & Support, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; Meals-on-Wheels, noon; Tai

Chi, 1-2 p.m.; Parkinson's Disease Exercise with Anne, 3-4 p.m.; Board of Selectmen, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, April 3: Not Just Quilting, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Help & Support, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; 8-ball pool, 10 a.m.-noon; Meals-on-Wheels, noon; Congregate Meal, noon. Menu: grape juice, Italian sausage with marinara sauce and red and green peppers on a hoagie roll, ketchup, potato puffs, chuckwagon vegetables, wholegrain fruit bar; Setback, 1-4 p.m.; Sophisticated Ladies, 5-6 p.m.; Hall Park LLC, 7 p.m.

Thursday, April 4: Red Cross Blood Drive, noon-5 p.m.; Meals-on-Wheels, noon; Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.

Friday, April 5: Not Just Quilters, 9 a.m.-noon; Help & Support, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; 8-Ball Pool, 10 a.m.-noon; Meals on Wheels, noon; Setback, 1-4 p.m. Congregate Meal, noon. Menu: roast beef with gravy, mashed potatoes, California blend vegetables, 100% whole wheat bread, fresh fruit.

Note: The Empty Bowls Project at RHAM High School will take place Thursday, April 4; a soup and bread dinner will be held from 6-8 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students/kids. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for bowl selection. Entertainment will be by RHAM select choir.

Parks and Rec Upcoming 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.

Trips: Boston Celtics vs. Washington Wizards: Sunday, April 14, 1 p.m., at TD Garden. Trip fee is \$190. Bus leaves from Putnam park and ride at 7 a.m.

Boston Red Sox vs. Cleveland Guardians Patriot's Day Game: Monday, April 15, 11 a.m., at Fenway Park. Trip fee: \$175. Bus leaves Putnam park and ride at 7 a.m.

Youth Programs: Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday, March 30, at Blish Park. Ages 2 and under are at 11 a.m., ages 3-5 are at 11:30 a.m., ages 6-8 are at 11:15 a.m., and ages 7-10 are at 11:45 a.m.

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

ART-ventures- Just For Fun Adventures: Tuesdays, April 23-May 28, 3:15-4:15 p.m., in the Marlborough Elementary School cafeteria. Fee: \$128/resident, \$133/non-resident.

Marvelous Engineering Using Legos: Mondays, April 15-May 20, 3:15-4:45 p.m., for grades K-4. Fee: \$114/resident, \$119/non-resident.

Soccer Shots: Saturdays, April 13-June 8 (no session May 25), at West Road Memorial upper field. Mini, for age 2, meets 3-3:35 p.m. and fee is \$102/resident, \$107/non-resident. Classic, for ages 3-5, meets 3:45-4:30 p.m., and fee is \$108/resident, \$113/non-resident.

Spring Into Yoga: Wednesdays, April 17-May 8, 5:15-6 p.m., at MSC, for ages 4-10. Parent/guardian required to attend. Fee: \$65/resident, \$70/non-resident. There is also a drop-in option for \$17 per week.

Skyhawks: Thursdays, April 18-May 23, at MES. Mini-Hawk, for ages 5-7, meets 4-5 p.m., and Multi-Sport, for ages 8-12, meets 5:15-6:15 p.m. Fee: \$89/residents, \$94/non-residents.

Kids/Family Sewing - Pajamas: Wednesday, April 24, 5:30-6:30 p.m., at MSC, for ages 8 and up. Fee: \$45/resident, \$50/non-resident.

Mad Science - Energy, Forces, Flight: Thursdays, April 25-May 30, 3:15-4:15 p.m., at MES, for grades K-6. Fee: \$128/resident, \$133/non-resident.

Parents Night Out: Friday, April 26, 6-9 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center (MSC). Drop off your kids in grades K-6. Fee: \$20 per child/resident, \$25 per child/non-resident.

Kids Fishing Derby: Sunday, May 5, 9-11 a.m., at Blish Park, for ages 4-15. Fee: \$10. Prizes will be awarded.

Skyhawks Tots: Tuesdays, May 14-June 11, at MES. Age 2 meets 5-5:45 p.m., and ages 2-5 meets 6-6:45 p.m. Fee: \$89/residents, \$94/non-residents.

Adult Programs: Beginner & Intermediate Tai Chi: Thursdays, 1-2 p.m., at MSC. Fee: \$40/resident, \$45/non-resident.

Dog Obedience - Polite Dog Manners: Saturdays, April 9-May 14, 12:30-1:30 p.m., at MSC. Fee: \$120/resident, \$125/non-resident.

Adult Quilting 101 - Microwave Bowl Cozy: Wednesday, April 3, 5:30-6:30 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center, for ages 16 and up. Students will learn the basics of quilting while creating this useful kitchen tool. Fee: \$45/residents, \$50/non-residents.

Zumba: Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at MES. Fee: \$50/resident, \$55/non-resident. Drop-in fee is \$10.

Drop-In Volleyball: Thursdays, 8-10 p.m., at MES. Fee: \$5 per week. Session runs until June.

Drop-In Basketball: Sundays, 8-10 a.m. at MES. Fee is \$5 per week. Session runs until April.

President's List

Kadence Dietz of Marlborough made the fall 2023 President's List at the University of South Carolina. She is a freshman at the university.

Dean's List

Kadence Dietz of Marlborough made the fall 2023 Dean's List at the University of South Carolina, where she is a freshman.

Rotary Club Scholarship

East Hampton Rotary Club Scholarship applications are available to high school seniors who reside in either East Hampton or Marlborough.

All students must be graduating/have graduated from a secondary school accredited by the State of Connecticut and use the scholarship for expenses at an accredited school. The school may be a 4- or 5-year college or university, a

community college, a trade school or a commercial school. There are multiple single- and multi-year scholarships available.

Applications are due by April 8, and are available online at tinyurl.com/EHRotaryScholarship2024, or through the guidance department of the East Hampton, RHAM, Mercy, Xavier and Vinal high schools.

Congregational Church News & Notes

Easter services are scheduled for this Sunday, March 31, at Marlborough Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, 35 South Main St. All sanctuary worship services are livestreamed at mcc.marlconchurch.org for those who can't attend in person, and can also be watched later through the church web page. The Rev. Valerie Seaver will lead both Easter services and all in the community are welcome.

A Sunrise Service will be held lakeside at Lake Terramuggus at 7 a.m. Hymns will be played by a brass ensemble, led by Bruce Phelps, with special music from singer and songwriter, Steve Pozzato. Hot cocoa will be served. Bring a lawn chair if you wish to sit.

The church sanctuary at the 10 a.m. Resurrection Celebration will be decorated for Easter

Honor Roll

Marlborough residents Logan Kolakowski, Ryan Felipe Martins and Jude Neumuth made the honor roll at Howell Cheney Technical High School in Manchester, for the second quarter of the 2023-24 school year.

Kolakowski, grade 12, made High Honors; Martins, grade 12, made Honors; and Neumuth, grade 9, made Honors.

Dean's List

Marlborough residents Alanna Baker and Nicholas Cannata made the fall 2023 Dean's List at Endicott College in Beverly, Mass.

Baker is an events management major and daughter of Lisa Seethaler and Richard Baker. Cannata is an engineering major and son of Erin and Steven Cannata.

President's List

Addison Brown of Marlborough made the fall 2023 President's List at Central Connecticut State University.

Brown has also been invited to become a lifetime member of the chapter of Beta Gamma Sigma for outstanding scholastic achievements.

Dean's List

Lauren Costa of Marlborough made the fall 2023 Dean's List at the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford.

Dean's List

Lauren Costa of Marlborough made the fall 2023 Dean's List at the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford.

Dean's List

Jacob Dietz of Marlborough made the fall 2023 Dean's List at the University of South Carolina, where he is a junior.



FileShred

Marlborough Community Free Shredding Event

Saturday, April 6th

THERE IS NO LIMIT ON THE AMOUNT OF MATERIAL

Town Hall 8^{am}-12^{pm}

(26 No Main St.)

Asking Donations of Food or Money for the Marlborough Food Bank

PROTECT YOUR PRIVATE INFORMATION through Recycling

FOR FREE



RES-22-24

Arts Center Exhibit at Town Hall

The Marlborough Arts Center is holding an exhibit at Town Hall, featuring artwork by East Hampton resident Dianne Gorrick.

Gorrick is a former art teacher at Bacon Academy. Her current display ranges from traditional landscapes to imaginative themes.

This exhibit is open to the public during normal business hours at Town Hall, and will run through June 30. For more information, visit www.marlborougharts.org, or contact the Arts Center at 860-467-6353 or marlboroughartscenter@gmail.com.

Volunteer. The Benefits Are Extraordinary!



Extraordinary Benefits:

- You'll feel really, really good!
- You'll meet delightful dogs, fabulous felines, and some pretty special humans too!

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Volunteer Positions Available — Day & Evening Hours:

- East Hampton & Wethersfield facilities: Dogs: walking; clean & feed; socialization
- East Hartford facility — Cats: clean & feed; socialization; medical & placement teams



Please call 860-569-0722 or visit www.poainc.org

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April Programs at Library

Andover Public Library, located at 355 Route 6, has announced the following programs. For more information, call 860-742-7428.

Make a Safe Solar Eclipse Viewing Box: Saturday, April 6, 10 a.m. Kids are invited to the library to make their own viewing box for the April 8 solar eclipse. Library Friends Julie Victoria and Ellen Repay will share eclipse stories and help with the construction of viewing boxes.

Cookbook Club: Tuesday, April 16, 5:30 p.m. Recipes of Ree Drummond, the Pioneer Woman, will be featured.

Medicare Seminar: Thursday, April 18, 1-6 p.m. Have questions about life insurance and/or Medicare? Mark Macrina, a licensed life and

Medicare agent from Madison's Senior Health & Retirement Services, will be here to help. You can arrange a one-on-one session or just drop in.

Rock Painting with Karen Zito: Thursday, April 18, 6 p.m. All are invited.!

Lights Out! Connecticut: Tuesday, April 23, 6:30 p.m. Meredith Barges, co-chair of the Lights Out! Connecticut initiative, will present "Of Birds & Stars: Exploring the Wonder of Bird Migration in Connecticut." You will learn more about the secret lives of migratory songbirds, the long-distance journeys they make twice each year to Connecticut, and why they need dark skies to navigate.

Scholarship Opportunity Closing Soon

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

The student must plan on majoring in hor-

ticulture, floriculture, landscape design, conservation, forestry, environmental concerns, botany and other allied subjects.

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

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. Transportation is available for all events. There is shopping on Tuesdays, Foodshare rides bi-monthly on Wednesdays, Food Pantry Mondays and Wednesdays, and lunches bi-monthly on Fridays. For all Young at Heart events, including movies, call Sue Schmidt at 860-604-1057, and call Town Clerk Carol Lee at 860-742-0188 ext. 2 for all trip information. For all senior events and information, visit the senior page of the town website, andoverct.org.

Note: Senior transportation calls are now only heard from 9 a.m.-noon, by calling Palazzi. If you call at any other time, leave your name, phone number, date, time and address of your appointment. A return call will be given within 24 hours. Medicals will no longer be available for Tuesdays. They are available for Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Shopping Dates: Manchester: 4/2, 4/16, 4/30. Willimantic: 4/9, 4/23. Call Palazzi for transportation.

Senior Luncheons: Note that the Friday,

April 5, lunch is canceled due to Town Hall closure while repairs being made. No electricity will be available that day. Next lunch will be Friday, April 19 and will feature meatloaf and sides. Call Palazzi for reservations by the previous Wednesday.

Upcoming Trips: Thursday, April 4, Empty Bowls at RHAM; Friday, April 19, *Legally Blonde* at Little Theater of Manchester. Call Carol Lee for more information.

Rides to Food Pantry: The bus is available for the food pantry on Mondays at 5 p.m. Note: If no seniors want to ride senior transportation on Wednesdays to food pantry, those Wednesdays will be eliminated from the driving schedule so that additional medicals can be scheduled. There will still be a bus for Foodshare every other Wednesday. Call Palazzi if you need transportation or have questions about this change in schedule.

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

Scholarship Available for Andover Students

Andover Elementary School is taking applications for the Andover Education Association and the Andover PTA Annual Scholarship. The scholarship is being offered to any Andover student.

Applications may be obtained from the RHAM High School guidance department or by contacting Andover Elementary School at 860-742-7339.

Application deadlines are May 3.

Collecting for Auction

The Andover Friends of the Library Auction Committee is collecting donations for its 22nd annual Goods and Services Auction that will be held Friday, May 17.

The committee is looking for new items to create gift baskets. The following are examples of popular items: gift certificates, handmade items like jewelry, scarves, quilts, afghans, sports items, paintings and music/video games.

This auction is the Friends' big fundraiser; proceeds help support library programs. Donations are tax-deductible.

Dean's List

Edward Chiffer of Andover made the fall 2023 Dean's List at Western New England University in Springfield, Mass.

Chiffer is majoring in sport management.

Vendors, Donations Sought for Tag and Bake Sale

The Andover Senior Lunch Fundraising Committee is in the process of collecting donations for its annual Tag, Vendor and Bake Sale, which will be held Saturday, April 27. The tag sale is a fundraiser for the senior lunch program.

The committee is looking for items to sell. If you have items to donate, they can be brought to the Town Office Building. Call Carol Lee at 860-742-0188 ext. 2 for more information.

Vendors and bakers are also needed for the sale. For information, contact Cathy Palazzi at 860-916-6122.

Andover Community Garden

The Andover Community Garden Committee (ACGC) is seeking volunteers to participate in planting, weeding, watering and assisting in upcoming projects. This is open to all ages, abilities and genders, residents and families.

Upcoming projects include: roof replacement on the garden shed, gutters and water collection system, and border fence installation (pending funding).

The AGCG said it hopes to provide fresh produce to Andover Food Pantry on a weekly basis. The committee said it intends to connect with young people in town.

The committee currently offers six plots that can be assigned to interested gardeners. However, the potential for "sharing" a spot with your family and/or group expands the number of people directly involved with the program.

Congregational Church News

Andover Congregational Church, UCC, located at 359 Route 6, invites all ages to worship, held 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.

Food Pantry: Mondays from 5-7 p.m. Bring your own bags. The **Foodshare Van** comes to the church every other Wednesday from 9-9:30 a.m.; the senior food pantry is open the opposite Wednesdays, also from 9-9:30 a.m.

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

Sonshine Stampers: Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.
Maundy Thursday Service: Thursday, March 28, 7 p.m.

Easter Sunrise Service: Sunday, March 31, at 6:30 a.m. (change from last week), at Siimets Farm.

Free Easter Family Portrait: Sunday, March 31, 10 a.m. All are invited to the Easter morning service, and to have their picture taken before or after the service.

Preschool Openings

The Andover Elementary School Early Learning Center is accepting applications for preschool students for the 2024-25 school year. Andover's preschool program is full-day. Before- and after-school care is available.

Children who will be age 3 on or before Dec. 31, 2024, are eligible to attend.

The Andover Elementary School Early Learn-

ing Center receives funding for reduced tuition rates from two state grants: The School Readiness grant and the Smart Start grant.

Call Taylor Parker for more information or contact the school office at 860-742-7339 to obtain a registration packet, or download one at www.andoverelementaryct.org.

Friends of the Library News

Andover Friends of the Library, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, has announced the following items of interest:

Solar Eclipse Storytime: On Monday, April 8, Connecticut will witness a partial solar eclipse. All are invited to join Library Friends Ellen Repay and Julie Victoria on Saturday, April 6, at 10 a.m., to make a safe solar eclipse viewing box. The event is free and geared toward children; call the library at 860-742-7428 to indicate if you are coming, so that there are enough supplies.

Library Friends Offer Scholarship: Andover Friends of the Library is offering a \$1,000 schol-

arship to an Andover high school senior. Applications are due May 1, and are available at the guidance office at RHAM High School, at the Andover Public Library, 355 Route 6 and on the town website at tinyurl.com/2huzen57.

Completed applications must be dropped off at the library or emailed to the Friends at andoverfol@gmail.com. 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. For more information, call the library at 860-742-7428 or email the Friends at andoverfol@gmail.com.

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Easter Plant and Bake Sale Continues

The Andover Volunteer Fire Department is continuing its Easter Plant and Bake Sale through Easter Sunday, March 31, at the firehouse on School Road.

Hours are: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and 10 a.m.-noon on Sunday.

There will be many plants to choose from including lilies, tulips, azaleas, mums, hyacinths, hydrangeas, daffodils, spring baskets, pansies and more, as well as treats.

Town-Wide Tag Sale Coming

The Andover annual Town-Wide Tag Sale will be held Saturday, May 18, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Rain date is Sunday, May 19. Proceeds benefit the Andover Senior Luncheon Program.

Residents who would like to be included and have their address listed on the tag sale map should send a check for \$10 payable to Town of Andover and mail it or bring it to: Town Clerk, 17 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232. Include a list of items that you will have for sale so it can be included on the map.

Send information and payment so that it is received by May 3.

Kindergarten Registration

Andover Elementary School is registering kindergarten students for the 2024-25 school year. Andover's kindergarten program is full-day.

Parents of children who will be age 5 on or before Sept. 1, 2024, 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 or not attend school until the following year, and parents who will be home-schooling, are asked to inform the school of this decision.

Quilt Show Coming Up

Haddam Neck Congregational Church will hold its annual Quilt Show and Bits & Pieces sale on Saturday, April 13, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sunday, April 14, from noon-5 p.m.

The event features dozens of handcrafted vintage and new quilts, a tea room where beverages, soups and pie can be purchased, and the Bits & Pieces sale of fabric, yarn and notions. Admission to the event is \$8.

Haddam Neck Congregational Church is located at 408 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck.

Scarves of Hope

A local mom recently donated hundreds of scarves to the community. Crocheting them relieved some of the stress and anxiety while her son battled his addiction for over 10 years. Her son eventually lost his battle with addiction five years ago. These scarves represent hope – whether you love an addict or you are suffering from the hold of addiction.

On Saturday, March 30, from noon-4 p.m., all are invited to stop in and pick up one for free at the VFW Post 5095, 20 N. Maple St.

HNCC BBQ Chicken Dinner

Haddam Neck Covenant Church is hosting a BBQ Chicken Dinner Drive-Thru Takeout Event on Saturday, April 6, by reservation only.

This is the famous barbecued chicken the church has sold at the Haddam Neck Fair for over 40 years. The dinner includes a barbecued thigh/leg chicken quarter, baked beans, coleslaw and corn bread. Cost is \$15; cash only, please.

Call in your reservation to the HNCC Church office at 860-267-2336 or email to officehncc@gmail.com, and indicate your pickup time: 12-1 p.m., 1-2 p.m., 2-3 p.m., 3-4 p.m., or 4-5 p.m. Order deadline is April 2.

Haddam Neck Covenant Church is located at 17 Haddam Neck Rd. Office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Belltown Garden Club to Meet

Nancy and Erin Livensparger from Fire Ring Farm in Portland will present a follow-up to last year's program on garden composting, The "Hole" Deal, at the next meeting of the East Hampton Belltown Garden Club on Monday, April 1, at 6 p.m., in the East Hampton Public Library community room.

All are invited to come learn organic garden techniques used by a master gardener. The Belltown Garden Club is a member of the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut and national garden clubs. Call Sue at 860-575-1349 for more information.

Red Cross Blood Drive

There will be an American Red Cross Blood Drive Saturday, April 13, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., at East Hampton Congregational Church, 59 Main St.

All who donate will receive a \$10 e-gift card to a merchant of choice, plus be automatically entered for a chance to win one of two \$7,000 gift cards. Visit RedCrossBlood.org/Spring for details.

To book a time to give, visit RedCrossBlood.org, download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, or call 1-800-RED CROSS.

Joe Barber Memorial Scholarship

The Joe Barber Memorial Scholarship was established to enable Joe to continue giving as he did in life. A \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded by the Barber family to an applicant, chosen by a selection committee, who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and who has performed selfless service within their school and the community.

Applicants must be an East Hampton resident graduating with the Class of 2024 (whether from East Hampton High School or another High School) who have been accepted to attend an institute of higher learning after graduation.

Applications are available at the East Hampton High School guidance office or by written request to kbarber582@gmail.com. Applications must be received no later than April 5.

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Oil Painting Demo Next Month

The next program of the East Hampton Art Association will be held Wednesday, April 27, at 7 p.m. at the East Hampton Community Center, 105 Main Street. The guest artist for the evening will be Shauna Shane, a full-time professional painter and popular demonstrator and teacher. She will present a demonstration in oils.

Early in her career, Shane was selected to be resident artist at Yellowstone National Park, and more recently was chosen to be resident artist at the New Britain Museum of American Art. She has exhibited and won awards in international competitions around the country, including New England and Northeast Watercolor Societies, Renaissance in Pastel, Academic Art Association, Northeast Watercolor, and the Hudson Valley Art Association Exhibits.

Everyone is welcome at the East Hampton Art Association programs. The programs are free to members, with a suggested donation of \$4 for nonmembers. All programs are free to students.



The next program of the East Hampton Art Association, on April 27, will feature an oil painting demo by guest artist Shauna Shane.

Donations Sought for Concert Series

Donations to the 2024 Joseph N. Goff House Gazebo Concert Series are being accepted.

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

zebo in the East Hampton Village Center during the summer of 2024.

Tax-deductible checks (Tax ID number is 06-1494507) should be made payable to The Joseph N. Goff House Inc., and mailed to: The Joseph N. Goff House, Inc., P.O. Box 337, East Hampton, CT 06424. Call 860-918-4400 for more information.

Rotary Club Scholarship

East Hampton Rotary Club Scholarship applications are available to high school seniors who reside in either East Hampton or Marlborough.

All students must be graduating/have graduated from a secondary school accredited by the State of Connecticut and use the scholarship for expenses at an accredited school. The school may be a 4- or 5-year college or university, a

community college, a trade school or a commercial school. There are multiple single- and multi-year scholarships available.

Applications are due by April 8, and are available online at tinyurl.com/EHRotaryScholarship2024, or through the guidance department of the East Hampton, RHAM, Mercy, Xavier and Vinal high schools.

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.; **Setback:** Mondays and Thursdays, 1-3 p.m.; **Bible Study:** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; **Mexican Train Dominoes:** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; **Bingo:** Tuesdays, 1-3 p.m., in person and via Zoom; **Cross-Stitch & Embroidery with Shannon:** Tuesdays, 2 p.m. -- Bring projects to share and work on together; **Yoga with Kitch:** Wednesdays at 1 p.m. -- next session runs March 6-May 15, and cost is \$20; **Tai Chi:** Thursdays, 10:30-11 a.m. -- next session runs March 7-May 9; **Tap Dance:** Thursdays, 11:15 a.m. **Cribbage:** Fridays, 9:30-11 a.m. -- let the center know in advance if you plan to attend; **Mahjong:** Fridays, 10 a.m.-noon -- call also to put your name on a list if interested in learning how to play; **Textile Group:** Fridays, 1 p.m.

Wii Bowling: Every other Thursday at 11 a.m.; **Cornhole:** Every other Thursday at 11 a.m.

Writing Our Lives to Open Our Hearts: There are two groups; one meets Thursdays, 10-11 a.m., and one meets every other Thursday, 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Groups meet in-person.

Wonderfully Wicked Women's Group (WWW): Meets the first and third Mondays of each month, at 10 a.m. This is an opportunity to meet others and share resources.

Mighty Magnificent Men's Group (MMM): Meets the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 10:30 a.m. This is an opportunity to meet others and share resources.

Line Dancing by Video: Tuesday, April 2, 10 a.m. Learn some new steps in this interactive class.

Meditations and Reflections: Wednesday, April 3, 10:45 a.m. Relax and learn the process of meditation, then share your thoughts on the process during this group class.

Learn the Fundamentals of Ukulele: Friday,

April 5, 11 a.m., with instructor Julie Stepanek! Bring your own ukulele or borrow one for the day.

Senior Center Book Club Meeting: Tuesday, April 9, 10:30 a.m. *The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post* by Allison Pataki will be discussed.

Special Volunteer Appreciation Celebration: Wednesday, April 10, 1-3 p.m. All senior center volunteers are welcome to attend; call the senior center to register. The celebration will feature refreshments, and music by the Four Fun Band.

Kindness Week: April 15-19, at the senior center. See a staff member for a kindness log and worksheet for random acts of kindness at home and at work.

Trips: Shopping and Lunch in Old Saybrook: Wednesday, April 17, 11 a.m. Head to the Estuary Thrift Shop and have lunch on your own at The Little Pub. Cost is a \$4 donation for transportation.

April Lunch for Seniors at Howell Cheney Technical High School: Thursday, April 4, leaving the center at 10:30 a.m. Have lunch prepared by the school's culinary students. Bus transportation is a \$4 donation; pay for your lunch at the school.

Shopping at the Estuary Thrift Shop in Old Saybrook: Wednesday, April 17, 11 a.m. Have lunch on your own at The Little Pub. Cost is a \$4 donation for transportation.

Shopping Trip to Windham Walmart: Wednesday, May 1, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Take a trip to Walmart for some shopping and then have lunch on your own at a location to be determined. A donation of \$4 for transportation is requested.

Coach Trip Offerings!: May 1: Daffodil Days with Tea at Blithewold, Narragansett, R.I.; July 17-19: Trip to Lancaster, Pa., to see Sight & Sound Theater's presentation of *Daniel*. July 17 to 19, Lancaster Pa. Fliers with details are available at the Senior Center.

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.

Music for a Sunday Afternoon

Members of the New England Chamber Choir will present "Music for a Sunday Afternoon" on Sunday, April 7, at 4 p.m., at Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam,

The concert feature works by Bach, Haydn, Purcell and Schubert to showcase the church's Appleton organ which dates back to 1827. It is one of the oldest surviving instruments in the country, made by the Boston organ maker

Thomas Appleton.

Soloists from the choir will also sing a few familiar tunes by Richard Rodgers and George Gershwin, two "pops" composers.

A free-will offering will be accepted at the concert. Refreshments will follow in the handicapped-accessible lower hall. The church is located at 52 Middle Haddam Rd. in Middle Haddam.

Upcoming Senior Trips

East Hampton Senior Center, located at 105 Main St., is offering a pair of coach bus trips for seniors in the coming months. To register or for more information, stop by the center or call 860-267-4426. Payment for trips is due at signing.

Daffodil Days with Tea at Blithewold: Wednesday, May 1. Located in Bristol, R.I., overlooking Narragansett Bay, Blithewold is a 33-acre garden estate. The visit will include a Tea Luncheon and a guided tour of the garden and 45-room mansion. Cost is \$139/person based on 35 to 50 participants. Depart at 9 a.m. from the senior center and return at 9 p.m.

Lancaster, Pa., and Performance of Daniel: July 17-19. Features a visit to the Old Windmill Farm, Quilt Shop, Dinner in an Amish Home, National Constitution Center and the Liberty Bell.

The trip will include two nights at Comfort

Suites in Lancaster, Pa. The first night will feature dinner at a real Amish home. On Day 2, visit the Old Windmill Farm, an authentic 72-acre working Amish Farm owned by the Lapp Family. Visit the Lil' Country Store & Miniature Horse Farm, a quilt shop, Kitchen Kettle Village, with lunch on your own. Then, settle in reserved seats at the Sight & Sound Theater for a performance of *Daniel*, a story of exile, faith and trust. Have dinner at the Shady Maple Smorgasbord.

On Day 3, visit Philadelphia's Independence National Historical Park, visit the National Constitution Center featuring a multi-media "Freedom Rising" exhibit, and walk through Philly's historic district to the Liberty Bell.

Cost is \$645 double occupancy or \$779 for a single, based on 40 participants. Price includes two nights' hotel, two breakfasts, two dinners, sightseeing and admissions, tour escort, driver and tour director gratuity.

RTC Scholarship Available

The East Hampton Republican Town Committee is accepting scholarship applications for a 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 May 1.

Easter Egg Hunt at HNCC

Haddam Neck Covenant Church, located at 17 Haddam Neck Rd., will host its annual Community Easter Egg Hunt Saturday, March 30. The hunt begins at 1 p.m. by age groups.

Over 1,000 colorful candy-filled eggs will be hidden outside the church. The Easter Bunny will be available for photos. There will also be Easter gift bags for the children to take home along with their candy.

All are invited.

Xavier/Mercy College Fair

Xavier and Mercy high schools will hold a College Fair Thursday, April 4, from 6-8 p.m., at Xavier, 181 Randolph Rd.

More than 100 colleges will be in attendance. The fair is open to all high school students from Xavier, Mercy and surrounding towns.

Easter Bake Sale

Christ Episcopal Church, located at 66 Middle Haddam Rd., will hold an Easter Bake Sale Saturday, March 30, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Items for sale include candy, cookies, scones, granola, pies, cakes and bread. Jams, jellies and preserves will also be available.

Online Farmers Market

Healthy PlanEat is a local online farmers market where people can shop directly from local sustainable farms and food artisans. There is a pick-up location at HydroCat Microgreens, 47 Tartia Rd.

To place a pre-order, visit bit.ly/healthyeast-hampton. The pre-order window for each week is Sundays at 5 a.m. through Thursdays at 9 p.m. Through the winter, pickups will be Saturdays, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Easter Services on Sunday

Haddam Neck Congregational Church and Second Congregational Middle Haddam churches have yoked and are sharing services together -- and all are invited to celebrate Easter this weekend.

A Sunrise Easter Service is planned for Sunday, March 31, at 7 a.m. at Haddam Neck Congregational Church, 408 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck, with guest preacher Linda Chosen. A potluck breakfast follows in the parish house.

A 10:30 a.m. Easter service will be held at Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam, 51 Middle Haddam Rd., Middle Haddam, featuring guest preacher Christine Sima.

Easter Sunrise Services

Faith leaders from East Hampton and surrounding area churches invite all to a combined congregation Easter Sunrise Service on Sunday, March 31, at 6 p.m., at Sears Park on Lake Pocotopaug.

All attendees are asked to bring one or more non-perishable food items, to be donated to East Hampton Food Bank and Epoch Arts Food Pantry.

Library Planning for the Future

East Hampton Public Library, located at 105 Main St., reminds residents that there is still time to participate in its Strategic Planning process and help to shape the future of the library.

Through March 31, there is a survey available to take, online at www.easthamptonpubliclibrary.org, or as a paper version at the library, Town Hall, and Senior Center.

Bread-Making Demo at Church

On Tuesday, April 2, from 7-8:30 p.m., Christ Church on 66 Middle Haddam Rd. in Middle Haddam will hold a demonstration on how to make a boule of bread. All participants will receive a recipe along with some useful tips on general bread making.

The demonstration will take place in the Christ Church parish hall kitchen. Free parking for the event is at the rear of the church on Long Hill Road.

Cost for the demonstration is \$10, with all proceeds going to Christ Church. No pre-registration is required. There will be a door prize for one attendee.

Bar Association to Award Scholarships

The Middlesex County Bar Association will, once again, award a total of \$3,000 in funding for two scholarships of \$1,500 each. Applications are due soon.

All high school seniors residing within Middlesex County are eligible. Middlesex County includes the *Rivereast towns of Portland and East Hampton*.

The award recipients will be honored at the association's Law Day luncheon on May 3.

Applications can be obtained from Paladino and any questions can be answered by contacting him at rfgwpsherwood@aol.com. The deadline to receive applications is April 5.

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Bellringers Spiker ECSU-Bound

By Josh Howard

Following an all-conference season on the volleyball courts, East Hampton High School senior Mackenzie Player is ready to take her talents to the next level.

"I am so excited to announce my verbal commitment to Eastern Connecticut State University to further my education and athletic career," Player posted last week.

Eastern is a natural landing spot for Player, whose two older siblings also attended the university. Her sister, Katie, was a cheerleader and graduate of the school and her brother, Zachary, was a member of Eastern's baseball team that won the Division III national Championship in 2022.

Along with having family ties and familiarity with the Willimantic-based university, Player will be able to pursue both of her passions as Eastern implemented a nursing program a few years back.

"Overall, I loved the campus and loved everything about it," stated Player. "I'm just so excited to get started."

Prior to becoming an all-conference volleyball athlete at the high school, Player was a gymnast for a decade before going through a growth spurt which prompted the change in her athletic endeavor.

She called giving up gymnastics a "very hard decision," adding, "as much as I loved doing gymnastics, I could only see myself doing volleyball in college."

Player made a smooth transition from the

gymnastics mats to the courts, earning a spot on the Bellringers varsity squad midway through her freshman season and then progressively improved her game with each passing season.

Head coach Molly Grabowski called Player "incredibly coachable" and a "fierce competitor" with a variety of on-court attributes that made her both force at the net and contributor in all phases of the game.

"Beyond her skillset, what brings Mackenzie's play to another level is her fearlessness and how she handles herself on the court when the game might not be going her way. She is a poised player, who recovers from mistakes," added Grabowski. "When stakes are high, she continues to play aggressively, and she is unafraid to attack the ball."

As a junior, Player finished second on the team in kills (159) as the Bellringers won both a conference and the program's first state title.

She saved her best performances for the post-season tournaments, racking up a dozen kills in the 2022 Shoreline Conference Championship (SLC) win over Hale Ray and then knocking down a season-high 15 kills in the state semi-finals win over Griswold. She capped her junior season with another 11 kills in the team's Class S championship triumph over Hale Ray.

This past fall she took her game to another level, leading the team in kills (221). She also finished second in blocks and served up the third-most aces on the team as the Bellringers won a second straight SLC title, defeating Valley Regional in the championship match behind a

career-high 24 kills from Player.

Over the last two seasons with Player in the starting lineup, the Bellringers have won a total of 46 of 50 games (92%), including an 11-1 record in postseason play.

Player, who finished with over 500 career kills in high school, said that Grabowski helped her blossom into an all-conference athlete, adding, "Molly was the best coach I could have asked for."

But volleyball is only half the reason she chose Eastern.

Player has long had a calling to become a nurse, noting, "helping people is what I want to do."

Player's desire for nursing stems from watching her godmother die from a rare form of cancer over a decade ago.

"Obviously it affected me and my family, because we were super close with her," recalled Player. "I wanted to be able to help her."

Coincidentally, Player found out she got a spot on Eastern's volleyball team 12 years to the day that the passing of her godmother, also an Eastern alumnus.

With her future in volleyball and nursing set, Player also noted that the size of the school at Eastern felt like home.

"I loved growing up in a small school because everyone knows everyone. I couldn't imagine myself going to a huge high school where you could walk by someone in the hallway and you don't know who they are," added Player, who was born and raised in East Hampton.

At ECSU, she is joining a volleyball program led by Megan Silver-Droesch, who has been the head coach of the Warriors for a decade and with the program for the past 13 years as the Warriors have been consistent contenders in the Little East Conference (LEC).

Player said that Sliver-Droesch's demeanor



East Hampton High School senior Mackenzie Player has committed to Eastern Connecticut State University for volleyball and nursing.

reminds her of Grabowski and the vibe of the program is similar to the "team first" nature of the volleyball program at East Hampton.

Along with already possessing all the physical tools, Grabowski believes Player is "just getting started."

"She is a natural athlete and while I have seen incredible growth as a high school player, I believe the real growth as a player will continue to happen in college," added Grabowski.

Still Time to Apply for Grant

There is still time to apply for the East Hampton Arts and Culture Commission's \$500 Community Grant. Deadline is April 1. Visit www.artsforeasthamptonct.org for an application.

The commission welcomes grant applications from East Hampton organizations and individuals with programs and/or projects designed to enrich the lives of East Hampton residents through the arts.

Criteria for awarding grants: The artistic and organizational quality of the organization

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

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

Christ Episcopal Church News

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

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

Sunday School: Sunday School classes are in session.

Lenten Fundraising Drive: All parishioners are asked to donate to the Mission Team's annual

Lenten fundraising effort for St. Vincent's School for Handicapped Children in Haiti. Conditions for all are very difficult there, and the children of the school are particularly in need of all kinds of medical supplies. Save your change during Lent, or write a check with Missions in the memo line.

Holy Week Schedule: March 29, Good Friday: Stations of the Cross from 5-5:30 p.m., and Good Friday service at 6 p.m.; March 31, Easter Sunday service, 10 a.m.

For more information or if in need of assistance, contact Donna Hyrb, senior warden, at 860-633-0472 or donnadubehyrb@gmail.com.

Middle Haddam Public Library News

Middle Haddam Public Library, 2 Knowles Rd., Middle Haddam, has announced the following. To register or for more information on any program, email middlehaddamlibrary@gmail.com, visit middlehaddamlibrary.com or call 860-267-9093. Mailing address: P.O. Box 123, Middle Haddam, CT 06456.

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

Art Exhibit: April's exhibit will feature photographs by East Haddam resident Everett Hart, with a closing artist's reception on Friday, April 26, from 4-6 p.m. Everett Hart earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Hartford, studied at Paier School of Art, and earned an Associate's Degree in art and science from Middlesex Community College. His work has been exhibited in the Pfizer juried show, Real Art Ways, Rose Farm Gallery and River-view Children's Hospital

Coffee Time at the Library: Mondays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Stop by and have a fresh cup.

Fiber Arts: Thursdays, 10 a.m.-noon. Bring your spinning wheel, knitting, weaving, embroidery, etc. All are welcome.

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

Family Yoga Series: Fridays at 9:30 a.m., for 45 minutes. Class runs for six weeks, from April 19-May 24. For a family of two, fee is \$12 to drop in or \$60 for the series; pay an extra \$3 for each additional person in the family. Email zenlotus860@yahoo.com for more information and to register.

Pilates: Thursdays at 6 p.m. Taught by personal trainer, nutritionist and exercise specialist Mary Henderson. Sign up for six classes at \$10 per class and get a seventh class free, or pay \$12 to drop in. To register, call 203-592-4448 or email abstite@sbcglobal.net.

Poetry Reading and Drumming Event: Friday, April 12, 3 p.m., with East Hampton Poet Laureate Stan Lindh, known professionally as "Sympetalous." In honor of National Poetry Month, all are invited to come hear original work by Lindh and share some work of your own or poems you enjoy by other poets.

A Program on Living With Connecticut's Wildlife: Saturday, April 27, 1 p.m. This presentation by Master Wildlife Conservationist Paul Colburn focuses on how to live with and enjoy such wild neighbors as black bears, Eastern coyote, bobcat, fisher, raccoon, skunk Virginia Opossum, red and gray fox, woodchuck, white tailed deer, birds, bats, reptiles and amphibians.



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Residents Demand Developer Accountability in Watershed

By London Brazal

Things lately had been looking up for Lake Pocotopaug, which for decades had been beleaguered by blue-green algae outbreaks. However, due to the heavy rain of the past several months, pollution is back on the rise – and residents who live on and near the lake have come together to demand accountability for developers behind nearby housing projects.

Resident Kevin Reed told the *Rivereast* that runoff from the Edgewater Hill apartments has flowed into holding ponds, leaving behind brown silt. He explained that with the large rainstorm last weekend, and others throughout the winter, the ponds have overflowed into Markham Bay, the northeast inlet of Lake Pocotopaug.

“There is no filter system before it gets into the lake,” said Reed, “The developer is not doing what they should to protect the lake.” Reed also noted how this isn’t the first time the issue has occurred. Since he moved onto the lake 25 years ago, the runoff from the Lake Vista condos also caused unwanted materials to deposit into the lake.

At the Town Council meeting on Tuesday, several residents mentioned that when the Lake Vista project was built back in the 1980s, the runoff from the construction was a “catalyst” for the water quality problems in the lake. The biggest request was for the Town Council to hold the developers accountable for problems residents alleged were known before the housing was even built. With that, residents want more regulations for sediment control to minimize and ultimately stop what is polluting the lake.

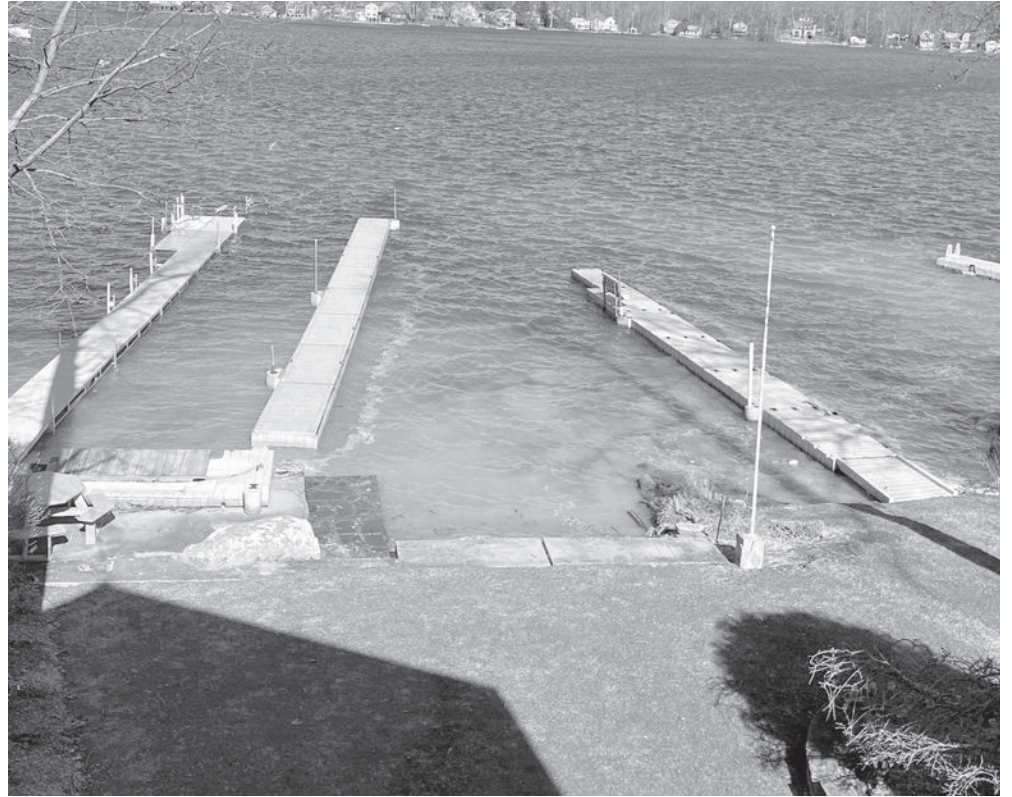
As residents took turns making similar points, they made sure to come prepared with evidence. At the meeting, Reed showed multiple photos showing the brown silt in the holding ponds near the Edgewater Hill apartments and the runoff that went into the lake. Another

resident explained how EverBlue Lakes tested the runoff from the town hall area and other apartment developments in the watershed area to find high amounts of phosphorous.

According to the town’s zoning regulations, last updated in July 2023, direct discharge of stormwater into the wetlands or waterways or existing catch basins is prohibited within the watershed zone. The Lake Pocotopaug Protection Zone Regulation was adopted to support and carry out the goals of the adopted “Lake Pocotopaug Nine Elements Watershed Based Plan.” The watershed plan by Northeast Aquatic Research published in 2017 revealed several failed stormwater retention basins including ones at the Skyline Estates, built in the last 10 years. One of the requests said the town Public Works Department “needs to monitor and enforce responsible development.” It appears that not much has changed as residents continue to complain about basins overflowing and depositing polluted runoff into the lake.

The watershed area is vigorously developed in many areas and is a primary source of stormwater runoff that carries nutrients and pollutants that contribute to the degradation of its water quality. As the Edgewater Hill apartments start to be leased, another development has started its logging process on a 30.5-acre lot on Lakewood Road.

However, the road was already at risk due to a severe icing condition in December. Runoff from adjacent hills flowed onto the road and froze, creating a hazardous condition exacerbated by the road’s condition. Staff milled new “gutters” in select locations to divert water to the side of the road but a larger project is planned for the summer to address the problem. With new development, there are risks of worsening the road conditions and all construction runoff flowing into the lake. At a Planning and Zoning Commission meeting last month, there was a



Brown silt flows into Lake Poctopaug following heavy rain events. Multiple residents have done their research showing that the runoff from newly constructed developments contains harmful pollutants such as phosphorus and is a direct cause of the lake’s water quality. People are demanding the town to take action and hold developers accountable for their negligence of the lake.

pre-application discussion about an open-space subdivision for the parcel but it has yet to be discussed as an official application.

From a different perspective, other residents were worried about the Lakewood Road development ruining one of the few open space areas in the watershed. Public outcry has spanned further than the town council meeting. On Facebook, resident Rina Johnson posted a video showing the wetlands and how the logging process has brought multiple trucks to the area,

creating more runoff. She mentioned how there may be some oversight on these developments since there is only a part-time interim planner who has responsibilities for multiple other towns as well.

Public comments at the meeting on Tuesday lasted for about 30 minutes, but there was no indication of what will happen next. Multiple residents shared the same sentiment: “Accountability can’t start tomorrow, next month, or next year; it needs to start now.”

YPCCA to Perform Mean Girls

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 daily Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m. and meets at East Hampton High School from June 27-July 23.

This year, YPCCA will perform the musical *Mean Girls*. Adapted from Fey’s hit 2004 film, *Mean Girls* was nominated for 12 Tony awards, and was itself turned into a movie earlier this year. Performances of *Mean Girls* will take place July 18-21 at East Hampton High School. Auditions for the show are held one week before camp begins.

Mornings at the camp will be devoted to workshops in skills that include acting, show choir, dance, stage make-up, voice, and stage combat. Afternoons at camp are spent in rehearsals for *Mean Girls*.

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.ypcca.org. Register by May 1 and tuition is \$625 for the four weeks. Scholarships are also available for students with financial need. Email info@ypcca.org for more information.



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Excess Cost Grant's Impact on Education Budget

By London Brazal

Following the initial budget presentations to the Board of Finance, Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith shared a reduction in a few budget items which overall lowered the budget increase.

From the update on March 18, the education budget was slated at \$37.7 million, a 5.21% increase. As the initial budget is due by March 1, there are many unknown costs regarding certain line items including special education outplacements. A large contributor to help reimburse those costs is the Connecticut Excess Cost Grant; however, the money is not always guaranteed, which can make it difficult to keep the budget even.

For the 2022-23 budget, the Board of Education's (BOE) budget was in a deficit of about \$330k. The primary contributing factor to the overspending was attributed to special education outplacements, particularly in tuition and transportation costs. Additionally, the deficit can be linked to an increase in interventionists providing one-on-one support to students, the utilization of long-term substitutes and a reduction in Title I benefits aimed at assisting low-income families.

While looking at the currently proposed budget, an important fluctuating cost is outplacements. In 2024, the tuition cost per student for the outpaced program varied from \$113,999 to \$275,072. Over the past decade, there has been a notable rise in the enrollment of special education students in East Hampton. In the 2013-14 academic year, the district accommodated 181

students, whereas the current enrollment stands at 352. While the count of outplacements has fluctuated over time, recent data reveals a steady increase over the last five years, climbing from 7 to 14 placements.

Instead of resorting to outplacements, the district has strengthened local programs like STARS (Supportive Teaching for At-Risk Students), STEPS, The Learning Center and the Transition Academy. However, another notable factor contributing to uncertainty and financial risk is additional school vehicles. These expenses are eligible for reimbursement through excess cost grant applications for high-needs students.

Special education outplacements get costly due to transportation, additional services and tuition. The district is responsible for the first 4.5 times the net current expenditures per pupil for the prior year. The excess cost grant reimburses districts for high-cost special education students for costs that exceed the previous equation. In 2023-2024, the town was responsible for the first \$90,890, costs exceeding that level were reimbursed at a percentage ranging, in the last five years, from 69% to 78%.

The state has never given the district a 100% reimbursement as the grant is a capped, entitlement grant. This means the district receives funds without applying but the legislature sets a fixed amount of money each year. If all districts request more money than the fixed amount, each district's entitlements will be reduced to fit within the limit. Districts seeking reimbursement must submit student and expenditure data

twice a year: first by Dec. 1 and then by March 1. By law, 75% of the initial capped award is paid in February, and the remaining balance is paid in May of the same year.

According to the education commissioner's data, towns have already requested about \$255 million and the amount appropriated by the legislature is \$181 m, or 71% of the costs. Recently, the district learned about the decrease in state funding from the education cost share grant that went from supporting 26% of the budget to only 18% in the last nine years. Similar to that trend, the special education excess grant reimbursement rate has also decreased in the last four years from 80% to 71%.

Since 2022-23, an amendment was added that established three tiers of reimbursement based on the wealth ranking of the municipality. East Hampton was ranked as a B-tier, in the middle of the state. The law states that if after the ap-

plication of tiers of reimbursement, the total request still exceeds the available appropriation, then all districts are to be reduced proportionally. Smith said, that even though these tiers exist, they haven't been using them to the full extent. Since the tiers have not been reflected in the reimbursement rates, it provides difficulties in accurately predicting future requests for excess cost entitlement from districts.

The excess cost grant is another factor that makes the budget challenging since it is up to the state legislature to set the reimbursement rate. With the initial budget proposed in early March, much of the information comes in too late to make changes. And, even if the charter was changed to submit the budget later, the fiscal year dates remain the same as the district continues to face unpredictable factors due to fluctuating costs.

Lake Clean-Up Day Coming

The Friends of Lake Pocotopaug, with the help and support of the Conservation Lake Commission and East Hampton Parks and Recreation, will hold the town's annual Lake Clean-Up Day on Saturday, April 20. Volunteers are welcome to come down to Sears Park at 9 a.m. to help clean.

All volunteers will receive a Friends of Lake Pocotopaug T-shirt, gloves, plastic bags, directions and assignments along with a snack at Sears Park.

Dumpsters will be placed at Sears Park for bringing metals, tires (no rims), wood, plastics and brush. No furniture, mattresses

or household items allowed. Friends of the Lake will only be collecting its plastic bags from around the perimeter of the lake.

The Friends of the Lake said it would like to thank sponsors Ace Hardware East Hampton, American Distilling, Bevin Bells, Center Package Store, Custom Auto & Marine, Critical Screenprinting, Lakeside Bar & Grill, Laurel Island, Paradise Marine & Dock Supply, Paul's & Sandy's Too and the Hairitage. Full details are available at www.flpeh.org.

For more information, call Joe Carbonell at 860-917-7366.

Gelding Clinic

The Connecticut Draft Horse Rescue is hosting the 12th annual Gelding Clinic on Saturday, April 20 (rain date: Sunday, April 21), from 8 a.m.-4 p.m., to help economically challenged horse owners castrate their colts/stallions.

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 to perform the gelding. Cost is \$125 per horse/mule/donkey and covers all necessary aspects of the procedure, including anesthesia administra-

tion by trained professionals, the surgery itself, pain medication for comfort, and a penicillin injection to prevent infection.

Note: the clinic will take place at the CDHR (113 Chestnut Hill Rd.), so the rescue will be closed to the public on that day.

Pre-registration and pre-payment are required. Registration deadline is April 8. To find out more and to register, visit www.ctdraftrescue.org/geldingclinic2024. Questions can be sent to ctdraftrescue@aol.com.

Kindergarten Registration

Memorial Elementary School in East Hampton is accepting applications for all children eligible to enter kindergarten in September.

Any child who is five years old on or before Sept. 1, 2024, is eligible to register for Memorial's kindergarten program. If your child will not be 5 by this date but will be 5 by Jan. 1, 2025, and you would like them to attend kindergarten in the 2024-25 school year, you must submit a request for early entry.

Registration packets are available in the Memorial School lobby, at East Hampton Public Library, and at www.easthamptonps.org. Completed registration forms are due to the Memorial School office by Thursday, March 28, along with a full-size copy of the child's birth certificate and proof of residency in East Hampton.

In addition, a current health assessment form

must be on file with the school nurse's office by Friday, Aug. 9. Students may not begin kindergarten until vaccination records have been submitted.

Once all completed registration paperwork is returned to Memorial, you will be contacted to schedule a screening appointment for your child.

Screening appointments will be held Monday, May 13; Wednesday, May 15; and Friday, May 17. Appointments will be scheduled for half-hour time blocks between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. If you have requested early entry to kindergarten for your 4-year-old, you will be also scheduled for an additional assessment on Monday, May 20, or Friday, May 24.

Contact the Memorial School office at 860-365-4020 if you have questions regarding the registration process.

Haddam Neck Covenant Church News

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

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

Children's Ministry: For children in grades K-5, held in Fellowship Hall during the worship service. The theme is "Friends with God" and is

taught through Bible stories where the characters are friends with God. A toddler nursery is also available. All are welcome.

Vocal Choir: Choir rehearsals are held Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. New members are welcome.

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

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

East Hampton Library News & Notes

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

Library Hours: The library is open Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. **Holiday Closing: The library will be closed Friday, March 29, due to Good Friday.**

Monday Movie Madness: Monday, April 8, 6 p.m. Bring blankets and get comfy for a screening of the 1993 film *The Sandlot*. Pizza will be served. Movies at the library are sponsored by the East Hampton Prevention Partnership.

Children's Programs: Bubbles & Beats! Mondays, 10:30 a.m., for ages 18 months to 5 years (drop-ins and siblings welcome.); **Toddler Time:** Wednesdays, 10:15 a.m., for children ages 18 months to 3 years; **Stories & Songs:** Wednesdays, 11:15 a.m., for ages 3-5 years; **Baby Rhyme Time:** Thursdays, 10:15 a.m., for ages birth to 24 months, and their caregivers.

Family Storytime: Saturday, March 30, 10:30 a.m., for ages 3-5; siblings welcome. All are welcome for stories, songs and open-ended play. Participants will also have the chance to work on a craft to bring home. No registration required.

Fun With Food! Wednesday, April 3, 10:30-11:30 a.m., for ages 3-5. Share a food-themed story, practice basic math skills while making a fruit pizza, and then eat the pizza.

Ready to Read Book Club: Wednesday, April 3, 4:30 p.m., for grades K-2. This month's book is *Baloney and Friends* by Greg Pizzoli. Registered participants will receive a book to take home.

DIY Days: Grades K-8: DIY Squishy: Saturday, April 6, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Activities available while supplies last. No registration required.

Learn to Play the Ukelele! Tuesday, April 9, 1:30-2:30 p.m., for grades 2-8 and their caregivers. Learn to play the ukelele with musician Julie Stepanek. No previous experience required and ukeleles provided. Register each participating individual to ensure there are enough ukeleles

for everyone.

Nintendo Switch Game Play: Grades 1-5: Saturday, April 13, 2-3 p.m. Kids can come play *Carnival Games* (rated E 10+). All skill levels welcome.

Teen Programs: Pizza & Poetry: Tuesday, April 2, 5 p.m. April is National Poetry Month. Start the month with pizza and try some poetry writing, crafts, and other activities. Registration required for this program. Then all month, drop into the library's Teen Space for poetry-related activities like book spine poetry, and browsing poetic displays.

Nintendo Switch Game Play: Grades 6-12: Saturday, April 6, 2-3:30 p.m. Pull up a beanless bag chair in the library Community Room for a big-screen Nintendo Switch hangout. All skill levels welcome.

Middle Grade Dungeons & Dragons One-Shot: Wednesday, April 10, 4:30-6 p.m., for grades 5-7. No previous playing experience or past participation required; this is a new stand-alone game in a new world. The library will provide basic, fifth-edition characters; all supplies included.

Teen Movie Matinee: Friday, April 12, 2 p.m., for ages 13 and up. Popcorn will be served. Movies are sponsored by the East Hampton Prevention Partnership.

Adult Programs: Cookbook Club - Spice It Up: Tuesday, April 2, 6:30 p.m. Try new recipes and chat about your culinary adventures. The library will provide plates and utensils; all you need is your dish and 12 copies of the recipe to share.

The "Hole" Deal with Fire Ring Farm: Monday, April 1, 6 p.m. The library and East Hampton Belltown Garden Club welcome back Erin and Nancy Livensparger from Fire Ring Farm. Learn about adding organic material to enrich the small garden.

LibrarYoga with Amie Meacham: Tuesday, April 9, 6:30 p.m. Meacham, a Yoga 200 certified instructor, will lead an hour of gentle yoga for adults in the Community Room. All levels welcome; bring your own mat if you have one and wear comfy clothes.



Bowling Champs... The East Hampton Senior Bowling League held its very first March Madness Bowling Tournament on Wednesday, March 13. There were 24 bowlers (three per team) competing in a double elimination format. Pictured are the three winning team members with their trophies. From left are Jim Spadorcia, owner of Kickback n' Bowl, Gus Bosselman (94 years young), Carol Lanigan, Bill Peterman, and Brian Miner, manager of Kickback n' Bowl.

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Police News

3/12: Christopher Lyford, 50, of 8 Starr Pl., was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, East Hampton Police said.

3/13: John Reynolds, 68, of 168 Hog Hill Rd., was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, police said.

3/14: Jessica Martin, 43, of 6 Daniel St., was issued a summons for evading responsibility and failure to drive right, police said.

3/15: Catherine Garofalo, 67, of 2 Cobalt Rd., was arrested and charged with driving under

the influence and traveling too fast for conditions, police said.

3/17: Justin Slater, 34, of 204 Jobs Pond Rd., Portland, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, police said.

3/21: Adam Motowidlo, 37 of 30 Wangonk Trl., was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said.

From March 11-24, officers responded to 33 medical calls, five motor vehicle crashes and 19 alarms, and made 75 traffic stops, police said.

Carl Guild Grand Opening

Carl Guild & Associates invites all to a Grand Opening open house for its new office at 40 West High St. The open house will take place Saturday, April 20, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

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Trip to Newport Playhouse

The Colchester Senior Center, located at 95 Norwich Ave., will offer a trip to the Newport Playhouse to see *The Foresome* on Thursday, May 16, at 9:30 a.m.

In the play, four old school chums get together for a friendly round of golf during their fifteenth college reunion. Old rivalries, romances and bragging rights are won and lost in 18 holes. Enjoy a homemade lunch buffet

before the show and a cabaret after the show.

Cost is \$152/person. Register by coming into the senior center before April 16. Trips are available to Colchester Senior Center members and their adult guests over the age of 18. Membership is free for Colchester residents aged 55 and older. There is an annual fee of \$15 for seniors residing outside of Colchester.



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Absentee Ballots Available for Primaries

Absentee ballots for both the Democratic and Republican presidential preference primaries are available in the town clerk's office through Monday, April 1. (Primary Day is Tuesday, April 2.)

In Connecticut, in order to vote in the primary you must be a member of the party to which the primary pertains.

Absentee ballot instructions: Fill out an application for an absentee ballot. You may obtain an application in the town clerk's office, or visit oabr-sots.ct.gov where you can fill out an application. You must be a current Colchester voter at the time of the application.

After the town clerk's office receives the completed application, you will be given an absentee ballot to fill out. If you apply in person, you can fill out the ballot at that time or take it with you to return within the specified period. If you ap-

ply online the ballot will be mailed to you.

Deadlines for receiving the fully filled-out ballot and enclosed envelopes are:

If delivered in person, it must be delivered to the town clerk no later than Monday, April 1, at 4:30 p.m.;

If delivered in person by a family member, or qualified designee (such as a caretaker, police officer in town, or registrar/deputy registrar of voters in town), it must reach the town clerk's office by the end of polls on Primary Day;

If delivered by mail it must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. on Primary Day; or

If put in the Absentee Ballot box located in front of Town Hall, it must be placed by the 8 p.m. close of polls on Primary Day.

For more information, call the town clerk's office at 860-537-7215.



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AARP Meets Next Week

The next meeting of the AARP Colchester Area Chapter 4019 will be held Tuesday, April 2, at 1:30 p.m., at Colchester Senior Center, 95 Norwich Ave., in the activity room. Members of the board will meet at 1 p.m., before the main meeting.

The presenter will be UConn certified advanced master gardener Janet Acosta of Eastern Connecticut Succulents in Salem, who has lived with houseplants for 50 years. She will chat about their care and how they can help people unwind from stress.

Acosta got her start with succulents in 2017 when she lived in California. It wasn't until the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic when her interest in succulents really flourished and she purchased different varieties and learned everything she could about how to grow each individual variety and species through personal experiences and experiments. She likes to show people that it is actually possible to have big succulents in a four-season climate.

'Spring in Bloom' Market Coming

Colchester Federated Church's annual Spring in Bloom Market will take place Sunday, May 4, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. There will be more than 40 local crafters, artisans, vendors and farmers.

Don't forget to swing by the Bake Sale and Up-scale Tagsale, or try your luck at the Raffle Table. To be a vendor at the fair, email Renee Misbach at rouillette01@snet.net for more information.

Kindergarten Registration

Colchester Elementary School has announced kindergarten registration is now open for the 2024-25 school year.

To register, go to colchesterct.org and follow the link to Registration then Pre-Register. Be sure to select the 2024-25 school year.

For more information, call 860-537-7628.

CSC Board, Coach Positions Open

Several Colchester Soccer Club (CSC) board positions are available for the 2024 soccer season. For more information on open board positions, email Tim Daniels at president@colchestersoccer.org.

There are also Travel Coach Positions open for the 2024 season. Interested candidates should contact Lee Elliott by April 7 by emailing lee.elliott@colchestersoccer.org.

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Honor Society Inductee

William Stewart III of Colchester was recently initiated into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. Stewart was initiated at Syracuse University in Syracuse, N.Y.

Honor Society Inductee

Colchester resident Rexford Welch, a member of the Class of 2026 at Eastern Connecticut State University, was recently inducted into the Sigma Tau Delta honor society. Welch is an English major at the university.

Dean's List

Evan Clark of Colchester made the fall 2023 Dean's List at Merrimack College's Girard School of Business.

President's List

Dante Ricci of Colchester made the fall 2023 President's List at Bryant University in Smithfield, R.I.



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Town Eyes Massive Public Works Spending Hike

By Michael Sinkewicz

The Colchester Board of Selectmen (BOS) last week embraced an overarching proposal that would drastically increase town spending in the Public Works department for the upcoming fiscal year.

During its March 21 meeting, the board reached a consensus to support a sweeping overhaul of the town's Public Works operations, including additional employees and materials that would help revitalize a struggling department.

While the board did not officially vote on the comprehensive presentation provided by Public Works Director Joseph Leone, it gave the go-ahead for First Selectman Bernie Dennler III to incorporate the initiatives into the 2024-25 municipal budget proposal, which he will unveil next week.

The exact figures that Dennler will include in his spending plan are unclear, but he told the *Rivereast* that many of the subsections that comprise the Public Works department, such as grounds maintenance and facilities, would represent one of the largest "budget drivers" next year.

Some costs, however, are known, including an approved collective bargaining agreement between the town and Municipal Employees Union "Independent" MEUI Local 506, SEIU, AFL-CIO, CLC representing Transfer Station, Grounds, Highway, Fleet and Facility Maintenance, and Water Department Employees — which will increase labor costs by \$113,000 in 2024-25.

In addition, the board expressed support for hiring three part-time seasonal employees who would specifically work at the town's recreation complex costing \$61,000. Leone also requested that specific funding pockets and positions that were previously reduced be restored into the upcoming budget, including a grounds maintainer at \$70,000, road improvement materials at \$15,000 and funding for maintaining facilities like Town Hall at \$26,000.

"I want it back," Leone told the board regarding the funding.

Although resetting certain line-items to their prior funding levels while simultaneously continuing to support other budget areas that spiked in the current fiscal year — such as tree removal — will most likely be a financial challenge, Dennler asserted that the investment was worthwhile for Colchester.

"This is the baseline for maintenance that we owe the town," Dennler said during his interview. "That's what we expect from the town when it comes to services."

'We Can't Sustain Our Operations'

Throughout his presentation in front of the board, Leone described a Public Works department that was struggling to attract and retain quality employees and provide adequate services for the town, especially regarding the recreational fields.

Leone stated that his department has not been fully staffed in over a year and there are currently four vacant positions. Of the 11 employees who left in nearly a one-year span, 10 of those individuals went to pursue another position or employer, he added.

The town's current compensation level is less than roughly 90% of 40 neighboring towns Leone examined, and even with the new contract kicking in soon, Colchester's wages will not be attractive until the 2026-27 fiscal year, Leone said.

"We're not really competitive right now and we won't be for some time," Leone said.

Dennler, who was previously the office manager to the Lebanon first selectman, asserted that Colchester was an easy target to steal employees from.

"I poached from the town of Colchester because it's very easy pickings here," he said. "We get talented people. We bring them up through the ranks [and then] somebody else takes them. That culture's not going to change over night."

Leone highlighted several negative financial

and safety impacts as a result of being understaffed, including a lack of crack sealing, the inability to prepare drainage for weather events resulting in washouts, and impaired visibility at road intersections due to the lack of mowing.

Along with the increase in wages, Leone emphasized funding for professional development and safety training that will also benefit town employees.

Still, he acknowledged that filling the four current vacancies along with the potentially three new part-time workers would be a challenge.

"That is a concern," he informed the board.

In addition, the selectmen expressed support for another concept pitched by Leone to modify how the town handles snow removal. The plan, he explained, was actually implemented in the current fiscal year, but he would be asking for support moving forward. It involves eliminating snow removal contracts moving forward — which have expired — and pursuing an additional highway maintainer.

Leone pointed to other items he'd like to see increased in the 2024-25 budget that were reduced this year. Some items that were trimmed included fleet repair, equipment rental and the salt budget.

While the reductions alleviated the bottom-line for the current town budget, Dennler conveyed that "the cuts only exist on paper."

"They're not actual cuts to services," he told the board. "They [who's they?] haven't changed the town's spending habits; they've changed the budget that we presented to the public."

Dennler said the costs of running the town have gone up, especially under recent inflationary pressures, but municipal spending has remained relatively flat since the pandemic.

"I think we are at the point point where the bubble is about to burst on the town side because we can't sustain our operations," he said.

Republican Art Shilosky, the board vice-chair, interjected, saying of the "bubble," "I think it busted."

Overdue Field Maintenance

While the condition of the athletic complex at Bacon Academy has received widespread attention, with numerous student-athletes, coaches and residents calling for substantial upgrades, the state of the town's recreation facilities is also a local priority.

Last July, the BOS approved nearly \$250,000 of American Rescue Plan Act funds to install field irrigation at the town's recreation complex, which is accessed by several youth and adult sports leagues and hosts multiple tournaments a year.

Leone referenced a field feasibility study by Tom Irwin that was solicited by the town during the 2022-23 fiscal year that concluded the fields are under-maintained. He listed numerous issues with the complex, including soil that is both overly compact and lacking nutrients, pervasive weeds and clover, and insufficient town labor.

The report matches what multiple local sports leaders have previously told the *Rivereast*, including Tim Daniels, the president of Colchester Youth Soccer.

"The fields are the worst in southeastern Connecticut," he said. "They're a safety risk."

Leone provided pictures of the fields, asserting that "they can't play the game the way it was intended to be played."

In the upcoming fiscal year, Leone stated that he wanted to seed the fields seven times, fertilize them six times, mow them twice a week and apply biostimulus organisms and calcium — just some items on his laundry list of ideas.

The town does not have the proper staffing to maintain the 13.5 acres at the complex, Leone continued.

"We're basically putting in about one-third of the effort that we need to be putting into these fields, according to the professionals from the study," he said.

In order to fulfill the necessary hours required to adequately maintain the fields, the study recommended an additional 2.96 full-time equivalent, which Leone adjusted to three part-time employees.

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.colchester-ct.gov/recreation-department. Parks and Rec. can also be reached at 860-537-7297 or at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

Let's Sew!: Tuesdays, April 2-23, 6-8 p.m., at Town Hall, for ages 18 and up. You will need to bring your own sewing machine, manual, power cord and supplies (thread, scissors, thread & pins). Cost: \$50/resident, \$55/non-resident. Class minimum is 2, and maximum is 5.

Dog Training Classes: Saturdays, April 6-May 18 (rain date of May 25 if needed), from 9-10 a.m., at Ruby Cohen Woodlands. No class April 13; also, no dogs allowed at the April 6 class. For ages 18 and older. Class minimum is 4, and maximum is 8. Fee: \$150/resident, \$155/non-resident.

Summer Day Camp: Camp registration is underway. The summer day camp, for kids entering grades K-7 in the fall, will run June 24-Aug. 16, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. each day. Cost per week is \$170/child. Aftercare is an additional \$45 each week. Cost includes all activities and field trips but does not include food. All snacks and lunches must be sent with your camper. There are separate

Dean's List

Colchester residents Anna Legault and Luke Reynolds made the fall 2023 Dean's List at the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford.

camps for grades K-5 and grades 6-7.

Counselor-in-Training (C.I.T.) Leadership Program: For ages 14 and up. Session 1: June 24-July 12 (no camp July 4 or 5); Session 2: July 15-Aug. 2. Hours are: Monday-Friday, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. each day. Fee: \$125. Upon successful completion of the program you can volunteer as a **Junior Counselor** at day camp from July 15-Aug. 16. You'll attend camp for free.

Colchester Youth Theatre Camp: For kids entering grades 2-7 in the fall. The two-week session runs Aug. 12-23, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. This two-week camp is designed to immerse kids in the world of theatre, culminating with performance of a play on Friday, Aug. 23. No acting experience necessary. Fee: \$300/camper. A minimum of 20 campers is required, with a maximum of 40 campers.

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Youth Soccer Captures Winter Title

By Josh Howard

The Colchester Storm, a U14 team that plays under the Colchester Soccer Club, won the U15 Silver Indoor Soccer Championship in dramatic fashion on March 16.

Playing at the Wide World of Indoor Sports facility in Montville, Colchester took down Lebanon in the title bout, winning 3-2 in overtime.

Shane Meyer netted a hat trick by scoring all three of Colchester's goals, including the equalizer in the waning moments of regulation and the game-winner as time expired in the extra session to secure the victory.

Meyer powered the offense, while goalie Christian Stabach stabilized the defense on the backend in the championship match.

Head coach Skip Starks said that it was a "very rewarding" victory for a team that was playing against a U15 Lebanon team featuring several athletes who were a year older than his players.

"It was a great atmosphere and a tremendous ending for us," added Starks, also the head coach for boys' soccer at Bacon Academy. "It was exciting and I'm really happy for the kids. It's a really good group of kids."

The championship match featured three lead changes and two ties with the Storm having to battle back from a pair of deficits.

Lebanon struck first before Meyer netted his first goal to tie the game in the second half. After Lebanon regained the lead, Colches-

ter's Dylan Kapoor delivered a pinpoint corner kick with less than ten seconds remaining in regulation that Meyer booted in for his second goal, sending the game into a golden goal overtime period, in which the first team to score wins.

Meyer's game-winner in the extra session came courtesy of teammate Wesley Engleman, who assisted on the goal with a perfectly placed cross in the closing seconds of the overtime session. Meyer's shot hit the back of the net as the final buzzer sounded, prompting the officials to check the replay to determine the goal crossed in time.

Once the championship-clincher was upheld, Starks said it was "trophy hoisting at that point."

After finishing the regular season with an 8-2 record, the team of 7th and 8th graders earned a bye and easily won a play-in game to set up the title tilt with Lebanon.

Throughout the winter session, the Storm relied on a potent offense attack, scoring a total of 50 goals.

"For those kids [eighth-graders] this was a last hurrah and that's a one heck of a hurrah," noted Starks. "Coaching them has been fun and from a coach's standpoint it was rewarding."

For most of the eighth-graders, they are leaving youth soccer as champions and will be moving on to play for Starks and his Bobcats at the high school in the fall.

Shredding Old Tax and Personal Records

Residents and businesses of Colchester and area towns can safely shred their financial and personal records Saturday, April 27, from 9 a.m.-noon, at the Colchester Town Hall parking lot.

Boy Scout Troop 72 will have certified shredding company "File Shred" in place to accept and safely shred your financial records. You can watch the items being put into the shredder and destroyed. Old personal documents, tax information and medical records etc. will be accepted.

Costs are \$5 for a bag the size of a plastic grocery bag and \$10 for boxes the size of a case of

copy paper or case of beer. A bulk price can be negotiated for larger quantities of records. There is no need to take off paper clips or stapled.

Additionally, the troop will accept recyclable cans and bottles on the day of the shredding event.

Funds raised will be used to help Troop 72 maintain its equipment purchases, camping scholarships, enhance its monthly camping program, defray program costs, cost of summer camps and support the high adventure trips. Contact Al Letendre at letendrej@sbcglobal.net for more information.

Memorial Day Participants Welcome

On Sunday, May 26, Colchester will hold its annual Memorial Day Parade, and local groups are encouraged to participate. Each contingent willing to march or bring a float can obtain an application online, at www.colchesterct.gov/memorial-day-parade-committee, or from the first selectman's office at Town Hall.

The parade committee said it expects to have several military units represented. They included the Army National Guard 1109th TASM-G, U S Navy, US Marine Reserve, US Coast Guard and the Air Force Reserve.

The theme of this year's parade will be the

Battle of Anzio, and the Medal of Honor award presented to William Johnston who was awarded it as a result of his efforts in the World War II battle. Many other local WWII veterans were also part of this battle. There will also be a Grand Marshall and guest speaker who are yet to be nominated. Residents of Colchester can offer suggestions to the parade committee.

The Colchester Parade Committee will again award prizes for the best volunteer marching unit, best float meeting this years parade theme and most creative float.

April Programs at Cragin

Cragin Memorial Library, located at 8 Linwood Ave., has announced the following April programs and events. For more information or full program descriptions, call 860-537-5752 or visit www.craginlibrary.org.

Superhero Party: Monday, April 8, 2:30-3:15 p.m., for grades K-5. Registration required, by calling 860-537-7201.

Fairy Garden Crafting: Tuesday, April 9, 10:30-11:30 a.m., for all ages. Registration required, by calling 860-537-7201.

All-Ages Craft - Seed Bombs: Wednesday, April 10. Stop by the adult department to pick up a craft kit while supplies last.

Children's Craft - Take & Make: Wednesday, April 10, and Mondays, April 15, 22 and 29. Pick up your kit in the children's department. Themes are: 4/10: Farm Animal; 4/15: Construction; 4/22: Pets; 4/29: 3-D Flowers. Wednesday, April 10.

Family Movie Night: Wish: Wednesday, April 10, 5:30 p.m. Wear your PJs, bring a snack, and watch a movie.

Free Play: Tubes & Tunnels: Thursday, April 11, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Ages 2-7 are invited for a sensory play experience with tubes, tunnels and pom-poms.

Life Insurance Educational Events: Thursday, April 11, 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. Learn about life

insurance options with Mark Macrina, a local insurance agent. For ages 18 and up.

Medicare Educational Events: Thursday, April 11, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Macrina will talk about Medicare (enrollment, drug stages, penalties, etc.) and the differences between original Medicare and Medicare Advantage. This is an informational seminar; no individual health discussed. For accommodations of persons with special needs, call 860-338-1466 TTY 711.

All-Ages Craft - Paper and Pipecleaner Lilies: Friday, April 12. Stop by the adult department to pick up a craft kit while supplies last.

Sensory Table Plus: Friday, April 12, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Ages 2-5 are invited to Cragin's usual sensory table with some aged sensory experiences.

STEAM Saturday: Popcorn: Saturday, April 13. Best suited grades K-5. Pick up your kit, watch a video, and experiment.

Teen Writing Club: Wednesday, April 17, 3-3:45 p.m., for ages 14-20.

Nerd Camp: Wednesday, April 17, 4:15-4:45 p.m., for grades 3-5. This month, swap stickers. Registration is required; call 860-537-7201.

Foodie Fun: Saturday, April 20. Grab your bag of goodies, watch the video online and create a seasonal treat. For kids and teens.

Watercolor Bookmarks: Saturday, April 20, 10:30-11:30 a.m. This all-ages craft is held in the lobby.

Cragin Book Club: Monday, April 22, 6 p.m. *How Lucky* by Will Leitch will be discussed.

Teen & Adult Craft - Felt Flower Bookmark: Wednesday, April 24. Stop by the adult department to pick up a craft kit while supplies last.

Children's Art Night: Watercolor Flowers: Wednesday, April 24, 6-7 p.m. This in-person craft night is held in the children's department.

Resin Art: Thursday, April 25, 6 p.m., for teens (grade 6 and up) and adults. Registration required; call 860-537-5752 or stop at the adult circulation desk.

Half-Day Gaming: Friday, April 26, 1-2 p.m. Grades 6-12 can stop by for snacks and games on their half day.

Snake Rock: Saturday, April 27, 10:30-11:30 a.m. In this all-ages program, paint a rock in the lobby to help make the snake grow.

ARPA Funding Available for Residents

The town recently launched a new process for residents to apply for financial assistance in a program funded through the town's allocation of funds under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The Board of Selectmen has committed up to \$100,000 of ARPA funds to support resident households who are living at or below 300% of the federal poverty level and struggling with expenses.

Any household still trying to recover from the impacts of the pandemic can apply for funds to assist with the following:

Rental/mortgage assistance; utilities; home repairs that address health and/or safety hazards; car repairs for transportation to work, school or job training; heating; and other categories that may include: medical co-pays, eyeglasses, work uniforms, training programs, and other unforeseen expenses.

Residents are asked to fill out an application for financial assistance available at Colchester-CT.Gov/ARPAHelp and provide required supporting documentation.

For more information, call Colchester Youth and Social Services at 860-537-7255.






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Fire Department Shows Off New Trucks

By Michael Sinkewicz

Colchester Fire & EMS showcased its new fleet of fire apparatus last week and provided an important update on an additional truck arriving next summer.

During a special Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting on March 21, local officials gathered outside of Town Hall to inspect four brand-new firetrucks that recently went into service.

Afterwards, at its regularly scheduled meeting, the BOS approved a revised contract for a new tanker truck — the only purchased apparatus yet to be delivered to the town — that modified its candy-apple red exterior to match rest the iconic yellow of Colchester's other apparatus.

On display were three customized engines and an aerial — including its 100-foot ladder — furnished with upgraded technology and safety features that have already made a noticeable impact on the department's services.

"It's night and day compared to what we had before," said Fire Chief Steve Hoffmann, who added that the vehicles helped revitalize a fleet that included some apparatus nearly 40 years old — well past their expected lifespans. "They're already proving to be good workhorses for us."

So far, the reaction throughout the community has been enthusiastic.

"Everybody has had nothing but really good reviews and feedback," Hoffmann relayed. "They love the color; they love the scheme."

In 2021, Colchester residents approved \$4.5 million to replace a portion of the department's aging fleet with five new firetrucks. Pierce Manufacturing was enlisted for completing four of the vehicles, while the tanker was allocated to Marion.

However, Hoffmann informed town officials in January that Marion was "unable to fill the contract and basically backed out." The lead time for a customized tanker would've been between three to four years, but the fire department was able to secure a \$545,000 contract for an available truck at Pierce, which still kept the overall apparatus overhaul below the overall threshold established at referendum.

While the tanker won't be exactly what the department initially envisioned, "it will meet

our needs," Hoffmann previously told the BOS: "It pumps; it carries water; it does the main stuff that we want it to do."

But its inherent red coating, despite being the traditional color of firetrucks, clashed with Colchester's history. Dating back to the 1970s, the apparatus have been yellow — a feature that distinguishes the department. Hoffmann began softening his personnel on the new look, but then received an update from Pierce: the tanker, after all, would be delivered in yellow at no extra charge to the town.

"That's huge for us," Hoffmann said, adding that it took "a little work on our end."

"But it was worth it."

He conveyed that the department would've eventually sought to convert the new tanker's color to yellow at some point in order to match the rest of the fleet, which he said is expensive; wrapping the tanker would've cost around \$15,000, while a fresh paint job could've set the town back upwards of \$60,000.

The revised agreement authorized by the BOS reflects the color change — the only difference in the contract, Hoffmann confirmed.

"It's a big win for us," he continued. "Obviously yellow is iconic for our department and people are really tied to that."

Hoffmann expects the new tanker to roll into town sometime next July or August. For now, he'll continue highlighting the four vehicles currently seeing action throughout Colchester and the neighboring communities.

Several new components on the trucks help bring the department into compliance with the standards administered by the National Fire Protection Association and Environmental Protection Agency.

Other features, such as the new bucket truck, create opportunities for personnel to work on roofs in a safer and more effective manner. Many fire departments — and until recently, Colchester — use a straight stick apparatus.

"So we have a lot more availability with these newer apparatus," Hoffmann explained. "It just improves the level of service we're able to provide the community, which is great."

Each vehicle is marked with a unique "morale patch," which were designed by different training companies throughout the department to



Colchester's new fire trucks made their debut at last week's meeting of the Board of Selectmen. The new fleet is "night and day compared to what we had before," said the town fire chief.

give fire personnel more input and create more buy-in. For example, the Engine 3 crew is the "The Dragon Wagon."

Earlier this year during a previous tour of the new apparatus, Hoffmann conveyed that fire personnel underwent training to operate the vehicles and learn their intricacies.

"These apparatus are much different than the 40-year-old pieces that we have out there," he said. "They respond differently; they operate differently; the locations of valves and gauges are all different."

To ensure that the firetrucks were built exactly to the department's liking, Hoffmann and a few other personnel traveled to the Pierce facility in Appleton, Wis., to inspect their purchase. The apparatus were subsequently shipped to

Firematic in Rocky Hill before ultimately entering service in Colchester.

Along the way, the crew was able to identify any imperfections, which were fixed, and interact with other fire departments. Sometimes, Hoffmann expressed, he'd brainstorm ideas or see what other crews came up with for their own firetrucks, and some of those "out of the box" ideas actually made it to the Colchester vehicles. For example, a safety net feature that protects the hose from falling off the truck was inspired from the Stamford fire department.

Each of the new trucks purchased by the town is expected to last somewhere between 20 to 25 years before they need to be replaced, according to Hoffmann.

Early Voting Underway

Early voting for the upcoming Democratic and Republican presidential preference primaries is underway.

To participate in early voting, go to Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave., check in, present valid identification, and you will be allowed to vote. You will then be presented with a ballot to complete, and place it in an envelope. The sealed and signed envelope is then dropped into a locked

ballot box. Your ballot will be processed (run through the tabulator) on Election Day along with all the same-day voting and absentee ballots.

Presidential primary hours for early voting are 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday, March 30.

For more information, call the registrars at 860-537-7204.

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Mary Tomasi, left, and Goldie Liverant, right, were each recently celebrated by the Colchester Democratic Town Committee.

DTC Celebrates Two Residents

On the evening of March 16, the Colchester Democratic Town Committee celebrated two Colchester women, Mary Tomasi and Goldie Liverant, at the Polish Club.

State senators Norm Needleman and Cathy Osten, along with state Rep. Kevin Ryan, delivered citations from the Connecticut General Assembly, Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz, State Comptroller Sean Scanlon, Attorney General William Tong, and Congressman Joe Courtney.

Tomasi started teaching fifth grade in Colchester in 1971 and taught for over 30 years. In that time, she was the teachers' union president. She has served on Colchester Housing Authority, Board of Education (14 years and as chair), Colchester Historical Society (as president). She is a justice of the peace and has been a DTC member since 1990. Tomasi is currently president of the Colchester Historical Society. In her free time, she likes to play golf and travel.

Liverant became active in Colchester in the 1950s on the Colchester DTC and Synagogue Congregation Ahavath Achim. She taught first grade for over 30 years in Montville, then Hebron, and finally Colchester. She organized area blood drives for over 40 years and was on the Board of Directors at the Goodspeed Opera House. Liverant has been a justice of the peace since 1989. She joined the Colchester Historical Society in the 1990s and served as president for many years.

Liverant's official service to the town began on the Water and Sewer Commission. She then served on the Board of Selectmen from 1991-99, followed by the Youth Services Board, the Colchester Elementary School Building Committee, and finally the Commission on Aging, where she started prior to 2010 and left only four years ago at the age of 93.

Incoming Kindergarten Story Time

Colchester Elementary School will host the Incoming Kindergarten Story Time program Thursday, April 18, for 4- and 5-year-old Colchester children who will be entering kindergarten during the 2024-25 school year.

Children will listen to books read by kindergarten teachers, while parents learn about the registration process, the kindergarten curriculum, readiness expectations, the school

day, school policies and transportation. A question-and-answer period will be available at each session.

The program will be held each month from 11-11:30 a.m., in the CES media center. Parents and children are invited to attend multiple story times. Topics for parent information change each month. No pre-registration is required.

Project Graduation Trivia Night Fundraiser

Bacon Academy Project Graduation invites all to a Trivia Night fundraiser Friday, April 26, at the Polish Club, 395 S. Main St. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and the game begins at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets include a pasta dinner hosted by BA First Day and a baked goods auction at 7 p.m. It will be a night of prizes, raffles and trivia facts. Tickets are \$30 per person, with tables seating up to 10. Registration and more information is available at baconacademyprojectgrad.org.

The mission of Bacon Academy Project Graduation is to enhance drug- and alcohol-free awareness by providing safe and healthy graduation events for all graduating Bacon seniors. All of the events Project Graduation host are entirely paid for through the fundraising efforts and contributions of Bacon Academy parents and students, and our local businesses and community members.

Colchester Federated Church News

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

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

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

Holy Week Schedule: Good Friday, March 29: Noon, Worship Service: Stations of the Cross. Walk throughout the Sanctuary from station to station and contemplate the seven last words Jesus spoke from the cross. **Easter Sunday, March 31:** 6:15 a.m., Sunrise Service at Lake Hayward; 9 a.m., Worship Service w/ Communion. Celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ together; Communion will be served at our service in the sanctuary.

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

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

Senior Center News & Notes

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

Monday, April 4: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 12:30 p.m., Mahjong, Bridge; 12:45 p.m., Setback.

Tuesday, April 5: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10:45 a.m., Healthy Brain Series No. 2; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle, In the Know; 1:30 p.m., Bingo, AARP Chapter 4019 meeting.

Wednesday, April 6: 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; 10:30 a.m., Life Review Writing; 1 p.m., Backus Stroke Survivors Program, Line Dancing.

Thursday, April 7: 9 a.m., Exercise w/Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling; 11 a.m., Yoga; noon, Chair Massage; noon-3 p.m., Senior Benefits Counseling; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes, Cookie Madness; 1 p.m., Knit & Crochet.

Friday, April 8: 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., AARP Tax Aide; 10 a.m., Sit & Be Fit Video; 10:30 a.m., Choral Group; 10:45 a.m., Blood Pressure Clinic; 11 a.m., Yoga; 11:15 a.m., Chatham Health Education Series; 1:30 p.m., Bingo.

Financial Savings for Seniors: Tuesday, April 10, 10:30 a.m. The center's senior benefits counselor will go over senior programs that can save you money. This is a free program.

Medicare Boot Camp: Thursday, April 11, 5-7 p.m. A counselor from Senior Resources

will share Medicare information you need to know. This is a free program.

Senior Golf League - Preseason Meeting: Tuesday, April 16, 2 p.m. This is an informational meeting to discuss the 2024 golf league season at the Chantclair Golf Course in Colchester. This is a co-ed league, and new members are welcome.

Air Dry Clay Jewelry Class: Tuesdays, April 23 and 30, 10 a.m.-noon. CSC member Gabriella DuCharme will show how to use and create with air-dry clay. This is a two-day class; you must be able to attend both days. Space is limited. The cost of this program is \$10/person and includes all the supplies and use of clay tools.

Live Your Best Life Now: Wednesday, April 24, 10:30 a.m. Join Middlesex Health Care at Home for a discussion on healthy aging. This is a free program and open to all.

Volunteer Appreciation Event Luncheon: Friday, April 26, 10:30 a.m. This will be a Mexican fiesta-themed luncheon for those who volunteer at the senior center 25 hours or more annually. Invitations have been individually sent; RSVP by Friday, April 19.

Photos Needed: As part of its tribute to mothers for Mother's Day and for its May luncheon, the senior center is looking for photos of your mother, that special someone in your life who was like a mother, or you as a mother with your children. Photos can be sent electronically to Jodi at cscprograms@colchesterct.gov or you can bring them into the senior center, where they can be scanned and returned. This is open to all members.

Free CPR/AED Class

Colchester Fire & EMS will offer free CPR/AED and "Stop the Bleed" training to Colchester residents on Tuesday, May 8, from 2-4:30 p.m., at Company 1, located at 52 Old Hartford Rd.

Call 860-537-2512 or email firedepartment@colchesterct.gov for registration.

Westchester Church News

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

Sunday School for children meets during the worship service.

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

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

Trip to Sight & Sound Theater

The St. Andrew Ladies Guild in Colchester, is sponsoring a trip to Amish country in Pennsylvania May 29-31, to see *Daniel* at the Sight & Sound Theater.

The trip will include a dinner with an Amish family, a bus tour of the Amish community visiting local shops, and a stop in Philadelphia to visit a museum and the Liberty Bell. The trip is \$645 per person, double. \$779 for a single. The bus will leave from the St. Andrew Church parking lot in Colchester.

For more information, contact Barbara Gozzo at barbgozzo@gmail.com or 860-208-4121.

Christian Life Chapel News

Christian Life Chapel, located at 392 S. Main St., holds worship in person at 10 a.m. Sundays. Follow the church on Facebook for the livestream. For more information, call Pastor Don Rivers - the church's bi-vocational pastor, who also serves as president for "Racing with Jesus, Inc." - at 860-398-9119 or visit christianlifechapel.org.

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

Women's Bible Study: Tuesdays at 10 a.m. **Community Bible Study and Prayer:** Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

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

Encore Boston Harbor Casino Trip

Colchester Senior Center will offer a trip to Encore Boston Harbor Resort Casino on Wednesday, June 5.

Cost is \$136 and includes a concludes Casinobonus of \$20 in free slot play (subject to change), a deluxe motorcoach and, prior to the time at the casino, a family-style meal at Maggiano's Little Italy Restaurant in Park Square.

Register by coming into the Colchester Senior Center, located at 95 Norwich Ave.

Trips are available to Colchester Senior Center members and their adult guests over the age of 18. Membership in the senior center is free for Colchester residents age 55 and older. There is an annual fee of \$15 for seniors residing outside of Colchester.

DeCaprio to Host Office Hours

State Rep. Mark DeCaprio (R-48) will host Legislative Office Hours in Colchester on Thursday, April 4, beginning at 6 p.m., at Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave.

All residents of the 48th General Assembly District are invited to attend to discuss the 2024 Legislative Session, along with any questions or concerns that you might have regarding state issues of importance.

The 48th District consists of Bozrah, Colchester, Franklin and Lebanon.

If unable to attend, but have a question or comment for DeCaprio, email him at Mark.DeCaprio@HouseGop.Ct.Gov, or call 800-842-1423.

Fish Fry Fridays Wrap Up

The Colchester Fish and Game Club is holding its annual Fish Fry dinners every Friday during Lent, continuing through and including Good Friday, March 29.

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

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

Honor Society Inductee

Eastern Connecticut State University student Ben Williams of Colchester was recently inducted into Kappa Delta Pi, the international honor society for education.

Williams, a member of the Class of 2023, majors in English.

Vendors Wanted

The Colchester Dog Park Committee is looking for vendors that sell dog-related items for its 10th annual "Spring Bark for the Park," which will be held on the Town Green Sunday, May 19, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., with a rain date of Sunday, June 2.

The event will feature a Lucky Duck Egg Hunt for the dogs, May Baskets, a blessing of the dogs, and other canine entertainment. Vendor slots are available at \$40 per booth. There is no charge for nonprofit organizations.

If interested in a vendor slot, email tagnobark@gmail.com by Friday, May 3. Spring Bark for the Park is sponsored by the Colchester Parks and Recreation Department.

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Scouting for Food

Hebron Scouts BSA Troops 28, 1028 and Pack 28 are preparing for their annual Scouting for Food event benefiting Hebron Interfaith Human Services on Saturday, April 27, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

This year's collection is being held in memory of former scoutmaster Mark Sabia, who positively impacted the lives of many scouts during his time with the troop.

The scouts said they would like to grow community participation in the food drive this

year. All are asked to donate unexpired, non-perishable food items and household products. The most needed items are pasta, canned meats (tuna, chicken, Spam), Campbell's Chunky Soup, Progresso Soup, canned fruit, peanut butter, jelly, cereal, tea and coffee.

Scouts will be hosting drop-off boxes in their neighborhoods through April 26. Donations can be dropped off at Ted's IGA or Hebron Interfaith Human Services (HIHS) on the day of the event.

Applications for Property Tax Abatements

Applications for property tax abatements are available to Hebron residents. There is a Town Ordinance that defers property taxes when those taxes exceed 8 percent of total household income from any source.

For example, if the total household income from any source totals \$30,000, the property tax liability would be capped at \$2,400. The abatement would be for any property taxes that exceeded \$2,400. The abatements would apply to the upcoming tax year beginning July 1.

Under the ordinance, taxes that are abated

would be repaid when a property is sold or transferred through probate. Abated taxes would accrue at an interest rate which is significantly less than what is charged for delinquent taxes (18 percent). The interest rate is currently 3.5 percent and is reviewed annually by the Board of Selectmen.

Those interested in the program can request an application by calling the Town Manager's Office. Applications will be mailed upon request. Call 860-228-5971 for more information. The application deadline is May 31.

Parks and Recreation News

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

Easter Eggstravaganza: Saturday, March 30, 10 a.m.-noon, at The Pavilion at Burnt Hill Park, for ages 10 and under. There will be pictures with the Easter Bunny, music, arts and crafts, a bounce house, and more. Easter egg hunts will be broken up by age. This event is free and open to the public. No registration required.

App Inventors April Vacation Camp: April 8-12, 9 a.m.-noon, at Gilead Hill School, for grades 4-7. Use MIT App Inventor software to make fun, creative apps for phones and tablets. All materials provided. Cost: \$185.

Puppy Socialization Class – “Puppy Prodigy” with The Grateful Canine: This class is for dogs 6 months and younger, and for owners that want to get a head start on socializing their young dogs to the world around them. Owners should show a rabies certificate once vaccinated. Classes will be held at the Parks and Recreation

Office at Burnt Hill Park on Sundays, April 14-May 5, from 1-2 p.m. Cost is \$180.

Dog Obedience Class – “Mastering Manners” with The Grateful Canine: This class is for dogs 6 months and older, and for owners looking to improve communication with their dog and building a solid, positive relationship. The first class will be an orientation class without the dogs, and will be followed by six training classes. Classes will be held at the Parks and Recreation Office at Burnt Hill Park on Wednesdays, April 10-May 22, from 6:15-7:15 p.m., or Sundays, April 14-June 2 (no class May 12), from 2:30-3:30 p.m. Fee is \$230.

30+ Basketball: Drop-in games for all skill levels ages 30 and over. Tuesdays, April 16-June 4, 7-9 p.m., at RHAM Middle School. Cost is \$20 for the session or drop-in for \$3 (cash only) each visit. **Home Alone Safety for Kids:** Monday, April 22, 5-6:30 p.m., at Gilead Hill School. This interactive course, for boys and girls ages 8-13, will cover safety concerns parents have when their children are by themselves. Fee: \$45.

Douglas Library News & Notes

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

Friday Films: Fridays at 1 p.m. Bottled water and popcorn will be provided. Schedule: 4/5: *Iron Claw* (rated R); 4/12: *Wish* (PG); 4/19: *American Fiction* (R); 4/26: *Zone of Interest* (PG-13).

Tax-Free Retirement: Wednesday, April 3, 6 p.m. This educational workshop is presented Michael Alimo, president of USA Financial & Tax Services and a 30-year industry veteran.

Eclipse Viewing: Monday, April 8, 3 p.m. Watch the solar eclipse on the library's back parking lot. This will be the last one viewable on the east coast until 2045. The eclipse will also be streaming from NASA on the big-screen TV in the community room. Safe viewing glasses will be distributed at this time (while supplies last). No registration required.

Local Author Talk: Wednesday, April 10, 6 p.m. Hebron author Judith Podell will share stories from her new memoir *Monkeyface*. She will have books available for sale and signing.

Cookbook Club: Tuesday, April 16, 6:30 p.m. Each month, read a different cookbook, and choose one recipe from the book to make and share. This month's book is *The I Hate to Cook Cookbook* and is available near the main desk.

Mindfulness for Clarity Workshop: Tuesdays, April 23 and 30 and May 7 and 14. This four-week program will be led by wellness consultant Karen Gomez. Registration; space is limited.

Life Insurance Presentation: Wednesday, April 24, 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., for ages 18 and up. Learn about life insurance options with local insurance agent Mark Macrina.

Medicare Information: Wednesday, April 24, 3 p.m. or 6 p.m. Macrina will discuss all things Medicare. This is strictly an informational seminar; no individual health will be discussed.

Book Discussion: Wednesday, April 17, 7 p.m. *Yellowface* by R.F. Kuang will be discussed at the American Legion, located next door. Copies of the book will be available for checkout at the Adult Circulation Desk. Must be 21 or over to attend.

Teen Advisory Board: Monday, April 15, 3 p.m. Come say what kind of programs you would like to see at the library. This will also count as a Service Hour for high school.

Boba Tea: Wednesday, April 10, 2-3 p.m. Teens are invited to drop in and learn to make their own Boba Tea. Choice of flavors will be available.

Children's Storytime is Back: Tuesday at 10:15 a.m. is Toddler Time for ages up to 3, and Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. is Pre-K Storytime for ages 3-5. Registration is not currently required.

Lego Club: Wednesdays, April 3 and 17, in the children's program room. Build something new, and then have your creations displayed.

Seed Bombs: Thursday, April 11, for ages 3 and up. There will be a variety of seeds to choose from. Once finished, you can plant them anywhere you want. Registration requested.

Chess Nights: Pickup games are held every Thursday at 3 p.m. in the Community Room.

Knitwits: The knitting circle meets Mondays, 6-7 p.m. Crochet and needle pointers are welcome as well as all skill levels. No registration required; bring your project or questions.

Jigsaw Puzzles: The library has jigsaw puzzles available to borrow for a three-week period.

Musical Instruments: Learn to play a ukulele, jam on a Djembe drum, sing along while playing the keyboard, or find out what an otonatone is and how to play it. Instruments available to borrow for a one-week period.

Museum Passes: Most of the library's museum passes are available with a “print at home” option from the library website.



Bluebird Boxes... oday, March 29, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., more bluebird nest boxes, handcrafted by John Soderberg, will be offered by the Hebron Pollinator Pathway at Ted's IGA, as a fundraiser to continue restoring native habitat at the Raymond Brook Preserve and presenting educational programs to save local pollinators. Bluebirds start nesting in early April. Pictured are John and Barbara Soderberg, with Michele Sinkez of the Hebron Pollinator Pathway.

Absentee Ballots, Early Voting for Presidential Primary

Absentee ballots for the April 2 presidential preference primary are available at the town clerk's office, located at 15 Gilead St. Office hours are Monday through Wednesday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Thursday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.; and Friday, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. For information, call 860-228-5971. The primary will be held at Hebron Elemen-

tary School, 92 Church St., on Tuesday, April 2. Voting will be between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m.

New this year, early voting is available, in the upper meeting room at the Town Office Building, 15 Gilead St. Hours are 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday, March 30.

Preschool Screenings

The Hebron Board of Education will hold screenings at Gilead Hill School, 580 Gilead St., on Wednesday, May 15, for children that reside in Hebron and are 3 and 4 years old by the time of the screening.

Screens in areas of speech, language, cognitive, and motor development will be provided. Parents will also receive information to assist in fostering their child's growth.

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

Honor Society Inductee

Eastern Connecticut State University student Lindsay Anderson of Hebron was recently inducted into Kappa Delta Pi, the international honor society for education.

Anderson, a member of the Class of 2026, majors in early childhood education and sociology.

Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service

All are invited to an Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service at 6:15 a.m. Sunday, March 31. The service will be held in the field behind Gilead Congregational Church, UCC (672 Gilead St.), and representatives from Hebron faith communities will participate in leading worship.

In the event of inclement weather, the service will be moved into the sanctuary of Gilead Congregational Church. Light refreshments will be served in the Fellowship Hall following the service.

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Selectmen Approve New ARPA Purchases

By Michael Sinkewicz

The Hebron Board of Selectmen last week approved two purchases using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds totaling nearly \$100,000, reducing the 2024-25 fiscal year budget proposal's bottom-line.

During its meeting March 21, the selectmen voted 4-0 to approve \$81,600 for Horton House improvements; Democrat Claudia Riley was absent. The funds will be put toward painting the house, a historic town property.

In addition, the board approved \$16,081 to acquire tasers for the police department, which passed by 3-1 tally; Democrat Tiffany Thiele voted in opposition.

She argued that the specific purchase belonged in the police department's budget, and was not an appropriate use of the town's ARPA funds.

"To me personally, that's just not in alignment with what I think American Rescue Plan dollars should be used for," Thiele said.

However, Republican Daniel Larson, vice chairman of the board, endorsed acquisition of the tasers, describing them as a "non-lethal form of protection" for the town's police officers.

Since the tasers and the Horton House improvements are being paid for with the ARPA

funds, both items will be removed from this year's municipal budget proposal, according to Town Manager Andrew Tierney.

Moving forward, the board will have to make more decisions regarding its remaining ARPA resources. The federal government requires all ARPA funding to be "obligated" by Dec. 31 2024 and spent by the end of 2026.

Prior to its latest allocation, Hebron had just over \$350,000 left to expend, an amount that has also been accruing interest.

While the town does not have to officially spend its remaining funds this calendar year, it must have either an approved purchase order or contract in place allocating the money to specific projects. Accordingly, any funding not used by the town would be returned to the U.S. Treasury.

"I'd hate to lose any money whatsoever due to the fact that we missed a deadline," Tierney told the board.

The town manager conveyed that any projects that cannot go through the regular processes or required channels, such as the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC), in a timely manner should potentially be re-worked, or their funding should be re-allocated to a project that could

meet the looming deadline in December.

Some items approved by the selectmen, including new pickleball courts, are expected to be reviewed by the PZC in the near future. However, there are also projects that the Board of Selectmen has not officially made a determination on, which will need to be approved — and given a funding earmark — or denied.

Tierney recommended that the board establish a July deadline to make a determination on continuing or changing course, which would

ideally give the town enough time to shift funds to different projects if certain concepts were deemed to be impractical under the current timeline.

The board reached a consensus that it would need to receive updates or documents regarding outstanding initiatives by its first meeting in June; the selectmen felt this would give them ample time to review the proposals' viability. Tierney assured the selectmen that plenty of updates should be available in that timeframe.

Historical Society Clothing/Textile Drive

The Hebron Historical Society will hold its annual clothing/textile drive in April. Collections will be held Friday, April 5, from 4-6 p.m., and Saturday, April 6, from 8-10 a.m., at Old Town Hall, 26 Main St., adjacent to Douglas Library.

Acceptable items are linens, clothing, shoes, boots, purses, towels or any textile item. Items can be in any condition except moldy, and must

be delivered to OTH in a closed/tied trash bag. No electronics or toys, please.

Funds raised support the society's building maintenance and public programming. To learn more about the Hebron Historical Society, visit hebronthistoricalociety.org. For more information, or to volunteer for this event, email mergonci65@comcast.net.

Christ Lutheran News & Notes

All are invited to worship at Christ Lutheran Church (LCMS), located at 330 Church St., Amston, on Sundays at 9 a.m. People who are unable to attend in person can join online at www.facebook.com/clchebron/live.

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

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

Good Friday Service: March 29, 7 p.m.

Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday, March 30, 11 a.m., open to all children in the community up to age 12.

Easter Sunday: Worship: March 31, Sunrise Service, 6:33 a.m.; Easter service, 9 a.m.

St. Peter's News & Notes

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, located at 30 Church St., holds two services of Holy Communion each Sunday: Rite 1 (no music), 8 a.m.; Rite 2 (with hymns and choir), 10 a.m. Priest is the Rev. Ron Kolanowski.

Service Schedule for Holy Week and Easter: Friday, March 29, 3 p.m.: Traditional Prayer Book Good Friday Service, with Adoration of the Cross.

Easter Day, March 31: Sunrise Service, 6:30 a.m., at Gilead Congregational Church; 8 a.m., Rite 1 Holy Eucharist with hymns; 10 a.m. Rite 2 Holy Eucharist with brass ensemble.

Meetings and Events: Balance Class, Mon-

days, 10-11 a.m., \$5; Cub Scouts, Mondays, 5:30 p.m.; Buildings and Grounds Committee, first Tuesdays, 7 p.m.; Virtual Coffee Hours, Wednesdays at 10 a.m.; Boy Scouts, Wednesdays, 7 p.m.; Vestry, third Thursdays, 7 p.m.; Building Networks International, Fridays, 7:30 a.m.

Outreach: Food Donations: Items for various local food pantries can be placed in the brown donation box outside Phelps Hall.

For more information, visit stpetershebron.com, search for St. Peter's Hebron on Facebook, or email office@stpetershebron.com.

The Worship Center News & Notes

The Worship Center, a non-denominational Christian church, holds services and programs at 99 Marjorie Circle (unless noted). For more information and full program descriptions, visit theworshipcenterct.org and click on the 'events/calendar' link, or call 860-228-4442.

Worship: Services are Sundays at 10 a.m. and are also broadcast on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TheWorshipCenterConnecticut and on YouTube at www.youtube.com/@theworshipcenter9733.

Good Friday Service: For YOUR Sake: Friday, March 29, 7 p.m.

Easter Sunday: Outdoor Easter Sunrise Service: March 31 at 6:30 a.m., followed by a free Easter Breakfast at 7:30 a.m. and Easter Worship

Service at 10 a.m.

Life Group: Meets the first and third Wednesday of every month from 7-8:30 p.m. at the Swensons' home in Columbia, for worship, prayer, Bible study and fellowship.

Journey Group: For grades 6-12. The mission of the group is to support the youth of Hebron and surrounding towns in their spiritual development. Meets every other Sunday directly after the service; lunch is provided. Next meeting: April 7.

Youth Group: First Friday Fellowship! Typically held the first Friday of each month from 6-9 p.m. at the church.

Virtual Prayer Night: Tuesdays, 7-8 p.m., via Zoom. Contact the church office or website for a link and meeting ID.

Church of The Holy Family News

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

Stations of the Cross: The stations, which follow Jesus' journey from being condemned to his burial, are held Fridays at 7 p.m. at the church/

Church Collecting for Homeless Shelter: Church of the Holy Family collects items for the Windham Region No Freeze Hospitality Center, which provides assistance to homeless adults. Due to limited storage space, only the following

items can be accepted: men's & women's wool or wool-blend socks; men's boxer briefs & women's "Boy Shorts" briefs (M,L,XL,2XL); 55- and 13-gallon trash bags; earbuds for cell phones; laundry pods & dryer sheets; TP & paper towels; disinfectant wipes, Windex, Lysol spray, and bathroom & floor cleaners; men's & women's deodorant; men's razors; \$15 Stop & Shop gift cards for gas; \$25 Walmart gift cards for client emergencies; and donations by check. Call to arrange the pick-up of gift cards and to obtain mailing instructions for cash donations. Place donations of goods in the designated collection box next to the church's Cry Room. Place large quantities of donations in the Cry Room. For more information, call Monica or John McKerracher at 860-228-4211.

Gilead Congregational Church News

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

Worship: Worship is at 10 a.m., followed by coffee hour. Services are also available on YouTube at www.bit.ly/GileadChurchUCC and on Facebook at tinyurl.com/GileadChurchUCC.

This Week's Events: 3/30: Yoga, 9:30 a.m.; 4/1: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; 4/2: AA Meeting, 7:30 p.m.; 4/3: Yoga at 9:15 a.m., Choir Practice at 7 p.m.; 4/4: Prayer Shawl Group, 9:30 a.m.; 4/5: Faith and Film with hot dogs and burgers,

6 p.m.

Upcoming Events: This Sunday is Easter! At 6:15 a.m., the church will host Hebron's Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service in the field behind Gilead Congregational Church. Light refreshments will be served in the Fellowship Hall after worship, and the church will continue its Easter celebration with worship in the sanctuary at 10 a.m. All are welcome.

Prayer Shawl Group: Meets the first and third Thursdays of each month at 9:30 a.m. in the Parish House. All are welcome, regardless of knitting/crocheting experience.

Faith, Film, and Potluck: Fridays, April 5 and May 3, at 6 p.m.

Card-Making with Gayle: Sunday, April 21, 12:15 p.m., after worship and coffee hour. This is a special class which will also be a fundraiser for Alzheimer's with the church's Missions Committee. Cost is \$15. Contact Gayle to sign up via the church's administrative office (gcc@gileadchurch.net).

Library Closed Today

Douglas Library, located at 22 Main St., will be closed Friday, March 29, for Good Friday.

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Tours of Mill Sites

The Hebron Historical Society is offering tours of the Hope Valley/Reidy Hill neighborhood mill sites Saturday, April 20, at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Sites are located on private property, covering uneven ground; attendance is limited. Rain date is April 21.

Register for the tour time of your choice and number of attendees by contacting Mary-Ellen at mergonci65@comcast.net or 860-228-9315. Suggested donation of \$10 per adult will be collected at Hope Valley Church, 21 Reidy Hill Rd., where the tour begins.

Last offered in 2021 this excursion was well attended.

The final registration date is April 18. No dogs, please.

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Craft Fair Fun... The Gilead Church Women's Fellowship held its annual Craft Fair during the recent Maple Fest. Maple pudding cakes were also sold. The fellowship said the event was a "resounding success." From left are fellowship members Margot Sheehan, Ginny Miller and Jean Dormer.

Senior Center News & Notes

Russell Mercier Senior Center has announced the following. Registration required for all programs, unless noted. To register, and for more information and full program descriptions, call the senior center at 860-228-1700. The senior center newsletter is online at hebronct.com/town-departments/senior-center.

Holiday Closing: The senior center will be closed Friday, March 29, for Good Friday.

Movie Monday: The movies start at 12:30 p.m. The schedule is: April 1, *Nyad*; April 15, *Wonka*; April 29, *The Boys in the Boat*.

Lunch & Learn: Wednesday, April 10, noon. Co-sponsored and lunch provided by Marlborough Health Center, sandwich, chips, bottle of water and cookie. Heather Hitchcock, community education manager with Bristol Behavioral Health, will discuss the realities of bullying among seniors and the impact it has on everyone. Registration deadline is Monday, April 8, at noon.

Fitness Evaluation/Fitness Planning for the Exercise Room: Tuesdays, 10-11 a.m., through early May. Certified athletic trainer Samantha Freeman will evaluate your current fitness workout, give tips, and help create a plan if you're just getting started. To set-up an appointment, call the senior center.

Watercolor Art Class Taught by Audrey Carroll: Fridays, April 5 and 12. 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Paint landscapes and beach scenes in this two-week class. Cost is \$25; a supply list will be available and some supplies are provided.

Weekly Shopping Trips: Pick-ups begin Fridays at 10 a.m.; pre-registration is required by the prior Thursday at 10 a.m. Schedule: April 5, Stop & Shop.

Volunteer Drivers Needed to Deliver Meals-on-Wheels: Delivery takes approximately 30 minutes to an hour, and the general time is between 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. There is open availability for Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. If interested, call the center.

Bus Trip - Lunch at Windham Tech's Uncommon Kitchen: Thursday, April 11. Bus will leave at 10:15 a.m. and return by 1 p.m. Have lunch featuring the food prepared by the culinary students at Windham Tech. Cost is \$16 which includes lunch, transportation and tip. Deadline to register is Wednesday, April 3; no refunds after this date.

AARP Driver Course: Monday, March 25, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at the senior center. Arrive by 8:50 a.m. and bring something to write with. Fee for AARP members is \$20, and for non-members is \$25. Fee payable to the instructor day of class. Pre-register by noon Friday, March 22. Note: No food will be served, so if you may need something to eat, bring it with you.

AARP Income Tax Preparation: Certified volunteers will be at the senior center from 9

Free CPR Classes

The Hebron Fire Department (44 Main St.) is offering free AHA Heartsaver CPR classes for those who live or work in Hebron. Adult, child and infant CPR, and choking emergencies, will be covered.

The classes will be offered once a month, from 6-9 p.m. on Wednesdays April 17, May 15 and June 19. Call Donna at 860-228-3022 ext. 162 to reserve a seat.

a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesdays through March 26, to prepare basic federal and state tax returns. There are five appointments per time slot and they are one-hour appointments: 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 11 a.m. and noon. Call the senior center to sign-up.

Bus Transportation to Mobile Food Truck and Food Bank: Every other Tuesday; call the center for dates. Pick-ups start approximately 10:30-10:45 a.m., and the food truck arrives at 11:15 a.m. at the Church of Hope/Red Barn at the corner of routes 85 and 66. Food bank arrival is approximately 11 a.m. Bring your own bags. Must sign up by 10 a.m. the day before.

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

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

Mondays: Enhance Fitness, 9-10 a.m. via Zoom; Massage, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.; Yoga, 10:15-11:15 a.m.; Mindful Meditation, twice per month, 11:25 a.m.-noon (call for dates) Movie Monday (twice per month - call for date and title). **Tuesdays:** Knitting/Crocheting/Needle Group, 10:15-11:45 a.m.; Hand and Foot Canasta (cards), 12:45-3:15 p.m.; Card-Stamping, 1-2:15 p.m. **Wednesdays:** Enhance Fitness, 9-10 a.m. via Zoom; Yoga, first and third Wednesdays of the month, 10:15-11:15 a.m.; RHAM Bingo, the third Wednesday of each month from 2:30-4 p.m., from October through May. **Thursdays:** Massage, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.; Sunshine Singers, 10:15-11:45 a.m.; Mahjongg, 12:45-3:15 p.m.; Bingo, 1-3 p.m. **Fridays:** Enhance Fitness, 9-10 a.m.; Fun with Stitches Open Quilting Group & Created to Create Open Arts Group, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Transfer Station Closed Sunday

The Hebron Transfer Station will be closed Sunday, March 31, due to Easter.

Church of Hope News & Notes

Hebron Church of Hope, 1 Main St., holds worship Sundays at 10 a.m., with Education Hour at 9 a.m., including Bible classes for all ages.

The church office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Pastor Jordan Brown is available by appointment. For information about church beliefs, care, small groups, Kids Ministry, and Youth Group, visit www.hebron-coh.com, or follow the church on social media.

★ Plate Readers Nixed cont. from page 1

the meeting encouraged residents to oppose the proposal.

"Bernie made the right call," he said during an interview this week, adding that the ALPR technology "is absolutely an infringement of our rights."

LaChapelle said he felt the cameras, which Flock said numerous Connecticut towns have bought, would track too much personal information and violate civil liberties. Residents' travel habits — whether they involve visiting a friend's house, a medical appointment or going to the casino — shouldn't be digitally archived and accessible to law enforcement, he said.

In his written correspondence to the BOS, LaChapelle described the Flock cameras as "mass surveillance."

"It tracks the comings and goings of every single person's license plate caught on camera, with or without their consent, and then makes those actions available through a centralized database for every single one of Flock's customers to search and catalog," he stated.

Test Trial

Colchester police already had access to the Flock system and data recorded by neighboring police agencies, although no cameras were installed in town.

According to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Flock and the Colchester police department, obtained by the *Rivereast*, the test trial began at the beginning of last October, which allowed local officers to access the company's digital dashboard for investigative purposes.

The arrangement didn't require a financial commitment from the town, according to the MOU. While the document was signed by a sergeant in the Colchester police department and general counsel from Flock, it was never reviewed by the BOS.

LaChapelle, who was still a member of the BOS last October, said he was entirely unaware that the MOU existed at the time it was signed.

Republican Art Shilosky, the board's current vice chair, asserted that the MOU is "useless" because it never came before the board.

"That bothers me," he said, adding MOUs need to be authorized by the BOS and signed by the first selectman. "Procedures need to be followed."

Cash said he was unsure why the MOU didn't reach the selectmen.

"I can't speak for why the board wasn't presented with the MOU," he said. "It's obviously unfortunate."

Denner — who entered office in November — said during the interview he was made aware that the police were involved with a free trial period, but he "didn't realize there was a signed agreement."

"It's unfortunate and it's the kind of thing I'm looking to correct," he said, adding that he didn't believe the police department had any "malicious" intent or was trying to conceal its use of the system.

'Vehicular Fingerprint'

Cash said the trial period has been "successful," and in a memo to the BOS, he wrote that

because of Flock data, "a number of investigative leads were developed regarding larcenies, missing parties, and stolen property offenses directly involving the Colchester community."

Jonathan Paz, a government affairs manager with Flock Safety, explained how the cameras would work and benefit the town. The system would alert law enforcement when a stolen or wanted vehicle enters its coverage territory, and it would also serve as an investigative tool that officers could access for ongoing cases. If citizens know a community features Flock cameras, it would act as a crime deterrent, Paz said.

The specific evidence the cameras would provide, Paz continued, would only be information already visible to the naked eye. He emphasized that the data strictly includes a picture of a "vehicular fingerprint" — the license plate and back of the vehicle.

"It's not facial recognition technology," Paz said. "It's not traffic enforcement."

Officers would not use the data to send traffic violation or speeding tickets to homeowners, he said.

The data would be owned by the town and would not be sold or shared by Flock, Paz continued. After 30 days, any data not connected to a crime would be hard deleted from the Amazon Web Services cloud where it's stored. A valid law enforcement justification and case number would be required to search the system, according to Paz.

In his memo, Cash said the cameras would allow the police force "to proactively target stolen vehicles, identify vehicles used in the commission of crimes, and obtain key evidence to solve cases."

"Securing funding for this platform will immediately enhance public safety and provide a higher level of policing in our community," he wrote.

The three cameras in Colchester likely would've been placed in commercial districts including options near Route 149 in Westchester, South Main Street, Route 16 by Route 2, and Route 85 by 354. The plan would've been to utilize funding from a donation left to the police department from the estate of Stephen J. Bendas in order to finance the system.

Cash argued that the town had a strong need for the cameras due to prevalent criminal activity.

"Unfortunately, Colchester is the highest crime town in Troop K's area out of all municipalities," he said. "We have the most arrests, the most accidents by far."

ALPR technology, he added, is already commonplace and used for a variety of functions, such as toll booths.

"We're just trying to get with the times to try and give us a little help solving some of these crimes," Cash said.

Mike Hayes — a Democrat on the Board of Finance, who said he was speaking in his individual capacity — argued that due to Colchester's large geographic size, three cameras "wouldn't put a dent" in the police's coverage area. There are numerous exits from town, he said, and they can't all be covered.

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Hello, Seattle!... Jerlyn Crowley and Rich Conant recently took the *Rivereast* on a ferry ride to Seattle, Wash.

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.



The Paper in Pitlochry... *Rivereast* traveled with Amston residents Charlene and Steve Reagan to Scotland. Here they are in front of the Atholl Palace Hotel (their hotel for two nights) in Pitlochry, Scotland.



Happy Independence Day!... Jeff and Beth Threloff of East Hampton took the *Rivereast* with them when they celebrated Independence Day (Feb. 23) in the Dominican Republic.



Rivereast Goes to Puerto Rico... Ron and Jane Muskatallo of Portland are here with the *Rivereast* on their way to lunch in Isla Verde, Puerto Rico.

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★ *Letters cont. from page 7*

we allow Russia to use our government for malicious purposes, and to reward selfish people with ill-gotten gains. It is time to stand up and recognize the truth at this pivotal moment – for Ukraine, for our country, and for our future.” – Lev Parnas, businessman and author of the book *Shadow Diplomacy*

Annie Steinbrecher – Marlborough

Historic Hebron Walk

To the Editor:

It was truly a historic walk through Hebron Center! Thank you to the amazing crowd of nearly 40 hearty souls that came to the Hebron Center Walking Tour last Sunday. It may have been chilly but it was warm with the large number of engaged and interested individuals who turned out to experience a journey through space and time. It was a treat to share the stories of Hebron's diverse and fascinating geologic, Indigenous, Colonial and African American past. Walking across the fields of glacial lodgment till soil, left in place 20,000 years ago, and standing among the unique stone wall laneways that flank Kinney Road, created between 1780 and 1830, really brings our distinguished history alive.

A special thanks to my new friend Grant, an intelligent and insightful young man, who came with his sister and their parents. Grant asked many good questions and offered his own interesting insights. As these young people moved energetically about, other attendees of a more advanced age carefully made their way with the help of walking sticks and the arms of friends. It gives me a lot of hope to see young and old alike enjoying our compelling history and beautiful green spaces.

This experience makes me even more committed to the grassroots community effort to preserve 17 Kinney Road as an outdoor historic and environmental classroom. The future of Hebron rests in our compelling past. Historic and eco-tourism is a renewable resource that can bring a wide variety of people to our town and offer a vibrant economic engine. The majority of Hebron residents have voiced their preference for preservation (see Hebron's Racial Justice Survey 2019 and Housing Survey 2022), it is time our town leaders join the effort.

Please visit Save Hebron Center on Facebook for more Walking Tours and events.

Sincerely,
Kevin J. Tulumieri – Amston

1st Amendment Fact Check

To the Editor:

C. Anne Johnson has again failed Fact-Checking 101.

The recent case before the Supreme Court is *Murthy vs. Missouri.* The court seems likely to overturn it, as the effect of that decision is to forbid most government contact with social media companies. The ostensible problem it was solving was that the government was asking companies like Facebook and Twitter to stop promoting false and dangerous misinformation about topics like Covid and elections.

The 5th Circuit accepted the ridiculous notion that this is censorship. Both platforms – and I assume others like Instagram and TikTok as well – had policies of not promoting clear falsehoods that threatened public harm. All the government was doing was calling attention to such content. This rarely involved taking down these posts; usually it meant adding warning

labels and/or avoiding oversharing such posts. Generally, only posts specifically advocating violence are removed.

This is not censorship. Censorship is *the government* preventing people from speaking their minds. Helping social media companies identify dangerous, false posts is not censorship. The First Amendment doesn't grant you the right to publish whatever you want on a social media site... unless you own one. It doesn't even grant you the right to publish letters in the *Rivereast*. That's up to its editors and owners. Facebook and Twitter CEOs actually *asked* Congress for regulations.

HR-4310 – a bipartisan bill, by the way – does not promote propaganda inside the U.S. Reputable fact-checkers have already debunked this, which Ms. Johnson could easily have found out if she'd bothered looking. All Section 1078 says is that the Voice of America, which broadcasts overseas to promote freedom and democracy, can make its materials available for a reasonable fee to domestic publishing organizations. Voice of America is not authorized to broadcast in the U.S.

(References: <http://letters.sauyet.com/#/2024-03-29/>.)

Sincerely,
Scott Sauyet – Andover

Note: Sauyet is co-chair of the Andover Democratic Town Committee and a member of the RHAM Board of Education, but said he is writing as an individual.

Hearts and Bridges

To the Editor:

The CDC was just legally compelled (by court order) to release a 148-page report on the relationship of the COVID-19 mRNA jabs to myocarditis. In a move that illustrates the “transparency” that the CDC and our government so often tout, every single word of the 148-page report was redacted – meaning, blacked out. Weird.

It's almost like the government and big pharma are colluding to keep data away from the public. Pfizer had already petitioned US courts to allow them to keep their COVID vaccine trial data secrets for 75 years.

Most people are unaware of what's called a “vaccine insert,” a safety data sheet that's held inside the drug's box, so they are definitely in the dark when it comes to anything regarding “vaccine safety.” Within the vaccine insert data sheets of every vaccine – in Section 13 – it discloses that the vaccine “has not been evaluated for carcinogenic or mutagenic potential or for impairment of fertility.” Despite this boilerplate disclosure, the medical establishment assures us that there is no relationship between a worldwide mass vaccination campaign and an explosion in “turbo cancers” and female fertility issues. Phew...thank goodness! Disregard the fact that the COVID-19 vaccine inserts are actually completely blank pieces of paper with only the words “Intentionally Left Blank” printed on them. But don't worry about it...nothing to see here.

In another example of collapsing infrastructure and negligence, a huge cargo ship has brought down the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, causing millions in damage, the deaths of several people so far, and impairing the ability of the port to operate. Francis Scott Key is the composer of our National Anthem, making the “accident” all the more suspicious as we continue to watch the controlled demolition of America.

Colin McNamara – Marlborough

Nurture the Arts

To the Editor:

The music in my household is largely influenced by the East Hampton arts scene, and it is heartwarming to hear.

A week after making her stage debut as a munchkin in the high school's extraordinary production of *The Wizard of Oz*, my 7-year-old is still singing “Ding Dong, the Witch is Dead.” Meanwhile, my family members continue to hum along to “Belle” and “Be Our Guest” from the middle school's excellent *Beauty and the Beast Jr.*

Soon, the songs will change again as the summer approaches and local theater groups – among them YPCCA, Epoch Arts, and Parks and Rec – offer their own programs and shows. But before that, we get another treat from Center School in late April, when *Madagascar* takes the stage in vivid color.

These productions largely come together through the work of volunteers committed to the arts and East Hampton's students. When people tell you – and they will – that community pride no longer exists, just point to these

examples of the good being done by East Hampton residents.

There's more, too. This week, student work from kindergarten to grade 12 was exhibited at the East Hampton Art Show at the high school. Earlier in March, music students from all four schools performed at the Step Up Concert, exhibiting the talent among our young singers and instrumentalists.

The performances also highlighted the quality of teaching and instruction that exists in the arts community. A good education is more than multiplication and the periodic table. We must consider how important the arts are in the student experience, and how they allow everyone a chance to thrive.

Let's continue to do our part by supporting and nurturing the arts, as well as celebrating the contributions of those who enliven East Hampton.

Sincerely,
Matt Engelhardt – East Hampton

Note: Engelhardt is a member of the East Hampton Board of Education, but said he is writing as an individual.

Editor's Desk continued from page 4

Grote said in press release. “We spent 2023 visiting rescues to document their individual stories through words and photographs. The equines we met had their lives shattered and then restored solely because people not only cared; they acted and made a difference. We set out to highlight certain hard truths in a way that would share the challenges, talents, and triumphs of Connecticut equine rescues. I think we accomplished that goal.”

Steele, who is also a mystery novelist as well as producer of the Advanced Equine Studies series of DVDs, added, “A diverse group of nine Connecticut rescue organizations joined us on the *SAVED* project. I feel so privileged

to have them trust us to tell their stories. Reading the book will stir a wide range of emotions, but rest assured you will be inspired by what these rescues accomplish. You'll put the book down with a smile on your face.”


Not only does the book sound quite interesting, it's also acting as a fundraiser for nine different horse rescue organizations – including Connecticut Draft Horse Rescue.

For more information on the new book, search for “Saved: Equine Rescues of Connecticut” on Facebook.

See you next week – and Happy Easter to all who celebrate.


HEALTH CARE SERVICES





Better Dental HEALTH

by George M. Mantikas, DMD

A Practice For

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DENTAL IMPLANTS: A SOLUTION FOR MISSING TEETH

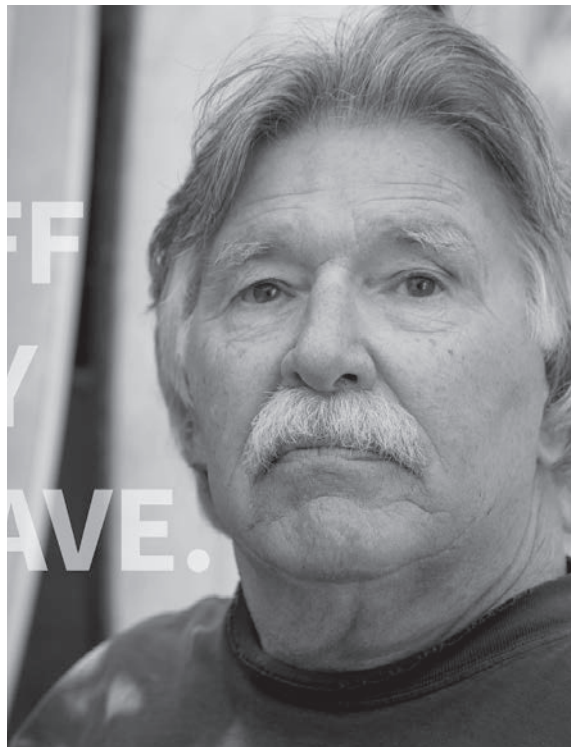
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P.S. The earliest versions of dental implants were carved bamboo pegs used in ancient Chinese civilization circa 2000 BC.

George M. Mantikas, DMD, PC
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RE3-29-24





Ocean Beach native and local surf legend Steve Bettis was diagnosed with MS in 2006. Although surfing is still central to his life, he hasn't been able to get out on the water in 10 years. For a man whose daily routine always included a few waves, more than a decade out of the surf is just too long. This is why the National MS Society teamed up with his buddy Robert “Wingnut” Weaver and used virtual reality to get Steve back on his wave. See their experience and find out how you can share yours at WeAreStrongerThanMS.org.

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RE3-29-24

Obituaries

Andover

John E. Handfield

John E. Handfield, 73, of Andover, passed away Tuesday, March 19. He was born July 29, 1950, to Francis and Thelma (Chamberlain) Handfield.



John grew up in Franklin with his seven brothers and sisters, graduating from Norwich Free Academy in 1968. He worked at Pratt & Whitney for many years as a package designer before moving on to landscaping and delivering oil. John believed in hard work but worked even harder at his passions, and he had many.

As a young man John was an avid water skier and car enthusiast. He enjoyed softball and darts, playing in several leagues over the years. Later he got into hiking, gardening, and building stone walls. Anyone that has ever visited John's home in Andover, with its contoured landscape, meticulous lawns, multiple stone walls and flower beds, and a covered bridge spanning a wandering brook, can attest to his skills. In recent years John began restoring old stone walls, developing a local reputation for the quality of his work. A common through line to all these pursuits is being outside. For John, any day he could be outside was a good day.

If he had to be inside, chess, puzzles, or reading about World War II occupied John's time. And he never turned down a chance to play cards. He would play with anyone, anywhere, anytime. His favorite games were Hearts, Cribbage and High-Low-Jack (Setback).

John was a kind, thoughtful, funny, generous person, always willing to lend a hand to anyone that needed help. He will be greatly missed by his family, friends, and community.

John is survived by his wife, Lois; his stepchildren, Keith Brann (Tami), Kendall Brann (Joan), Brian Gauvin (Betsy); step-grandchildren and a step-great-grandchild; his siblings, Francis "Jerry" Handfield (Val), Carol Valone (Jack), James Handfield (Diane), Philip Handfield (Pam), Elizabeth "Betty" Kasacek (Tony), Charles Handfield (Melinda), Richard Handfield (Deb); many nieces and nephews, and special aunt, Doris Clark. He is predeceased by his parents.

A service for John will be held Saturday, April 6, from 10:30 a.m.-noon, at Potter Funeral Home in Willimantic, followed by a luncheon gathering at the Windham Golf Club.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Andover Fire Department, 11 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232, or the Andover Food Pantry, P.O. Box 55, Andover, CT 06232.

To view John's tribute page or leave an online condolence, please visit potterfuneralhome.com.

Hebron

Milton R. Porter

Milton R. Porter was born Aug. 4, 1924, to Robert P. and Viola I. Porter. He passed away peacefully Saturday, March 23, 2024. He is predeceased by his brother, Gibson Porter, and his son, Carter Porter.



He is survived by his sisters Roberta DeGray and Virginia Hutchinson, and his son Gary Porter and granddaughter Alexandra Day Porter.

He was a lifelong resident of Hebron and a past commander of the American Legion post. He was a proud engineering graduate and lifelong contributor to UConn foremost as well as to UHartford. He served three years in the U.S. Army during World War II. In addition to a few years teaching engineering and mathematics, his career was primarily centered around U.S. Defense-related engineering and manufacturing quality assurance, for a variety of private sector contractors and eventually retiring after 32 years with the U.S. federal government DOD onsite at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford.

A brief visitation will take place Saturday, March 30, from 10-10:30 a.m. at Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd, Colchester. He will then be buried in St Peter's Cemetery in Hebron at 11 a.m.

Colchester

Elaine Sloan

Alice Elaine Sloan, 88, of Mystic died Saturday, March 23, at Lawrence + Memorial Hospital in New London after a brief illness. She was born Feb. 20, 1936, in New London, the daughter of the late Wilbert and Isabelle (Ploszaj) Marvin. She was raised in Colchester where she graduated from Bacon Academy in 1954.



Elaine met her late husband John at the dance hall in Chester after his honorable discharge from the Army when he returned from the Korean War. When they married in 1959, she moved to Mystic where she enjoyed the home that he built for them until her passing.

Elaine was passionate about community service in many forms. She took pride as a literacy volunteer to help new immigrants learn English, regularly volunteered at the soup kitchen and was "Sunshine Lady" for many organizations where she often sent out well wishes to those that were in need. She was a great listener when others needed to talk and was always ready with a firm hug. If she was bringing something to a potluck event, you could bet it would be potato salad or a homemade pie.

She was a proud member of the Groton Senior Center Club 55 and North Stonington Golden Ages. While she loved the social network, she spoke often of the money that they raised for scholarships for high school students. She was an Avon lady for years. Her focus was never on getting others to work for her, but rather the opportunity to see her friends and provide them with a product that they needed or wanted. There was always plenty of Skin-So-Soft in the household.

She was a dedicated member of the Mystic Congregational Church since the mid 1960s and volunteered for many of the committees throughout the years. She most loved the fellowship and being a part of the Christmas Tea and Bazaar, especially bringing her friends to the event.

Elaine's love for local history led her to the Salem Historical Society where she served as historian. If there was an article in a local paper about something historical for the area, it was likely that she cut it out to share with her family and friends. That interest extended to family history, particularly with old photographs where she categorized them for albums to share with others.

Elaine enjoyed traveling to new places, particularly cruising, and was always up for an adventure. Whether snorkeling in the Caribbean or being a passenger in a single engine airplane, she felt life should be lived to the fullest. Her favorite vacation was the Alaskan cruise with her family to celebrate her 80th birthday.

Elaine is best known for her musical talent. She loved to play the piano as well as harmonize whenever she had the opportunity. She was a former Sweet Adeline, a member of the SeaGals and the SeaNotes and was thrilled to sing the National Anthem at Dodd Stadium as part of a quartet. She was a member of her church choir for many years but found her true calling when she joined the bell choir. She was always drawn to music and could carry the tune until the very end, even without her pitchpipe. Her musical interests were not limited to singing, as she also loved to square dance. She enjoyed many years with the Surfside Eight Square Dancers and Sound Steppers Dance Club in Old Saybrook.

Elaine is survived by her daughters, Julie Joaquin and her husband David of Colchester and Ellen McCaskill and her husband Justin of Montgomery, Texas; grandsons, Nicholas Joa-

quin and Ryan Joaquin and his fiancée Chelsea DeTuccio of Colchester; her brothers, Everett and Gretchen Marvin and Walter "Bud" and Susan Marvin.

Family and friends are invited to calling hours from 5 to 7 p.m. Monday, April 1, at the Dinoto Funeral Home, 17 Pearl Street, Mystic. A funeral service will be held at 10 a.m. Tuesday at the Mystic Congregational Church, 43 East Main St., Mystic. Burial will follow in Elm Grove Cemetery, Mystic.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Club 55 Scholarship Fund at Thrive 55+ Active Living Center (formerly Groton Senior Center), 45 Fort Hill Rd., Groton, CT 06340, the Mystic Congregational Church Memorial Gift Fund, 43 East Main St., Mystic, CT 06355, or to a charity of choice.

Portland

Judith Johnson-Siebold

The Rev. Dr. Judith Johnson-Siebold, 76, of Portland, died at home Saturday, March 23, while under hospice care. Judith was born Nov. 16, 1947, in Worcester, Mass., to the late Vera Eloise Mudge and the late G. Louis Johnson. She married the Rev. E. Allen Siebold on Aug. 17, 1968, at Syracuse University's Hendricks Chapel. They were married for 56 years.



She was the proud mother of Jennifer Ann (Chris), Rebecca Leigh, Amanda Jo (Mark) and Dashanna Lou, as well as her grandchildren Caitlyn Eloise, David Edmond, Elizabeth Johannah, Alannah Leigh, and Miriam Aliyah. She is also survived by her sister, Jacqueline (Ralph), and a brother, Richard.

She received a BA from Syracuse University, a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) from Garrett Theological Seminary, and her Ph.D. in education from Syracuse University. On June 4, 1972, she was ordained as Elder in the Wyoming Annual Conference (now the Upper New York Annual Conference) of the United Methodist Church.

During her 50 years of pastoral ministry, she served several congregations as well as being a member of or chairing different committees and boards. She was also a past member of the United Methodist Association of Scholars in Christian Education. She was the author of several children's books as well as a book on her experiences of being a woman pastor in the United Methodist Church called *A Different Kind of Joy*. She retired from active ministry in 2019 and served part-time in the New England Annual Conference until 2024.

She also loved to bake, sew, write and enjoy the wonders of nature in her spare time.

Services will be at the discretion of the family. In lieu of flowers, contributions to Hartford Health Care at Home: Hospice Care would be appreciated.

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Obituaries

Hebron

Arthur Joseph Keefe

Arthur Joseph Keefe, 83, passed away Tuesday, March 12, at his home in Sudbury, Vt. Art was born in Hartford on Dec. 18, 1940. He was the son of Stanley and Marion (Mund) Keefe. He grew up in Hebron, where he received his early education and graduated from RHAM High School, Class of 1958.



He earned his degree from the University of Hartford, Class of 1962. Art began his working years at W.T. Grant's in Hartford and later came to Vermont to work for Agway. He afterwards began a career at Brandon Training School, as a social worker. He continued working for the State of Vermont and retired as a supervisor of the office of public guardian. Seeking something to do following his retirement he worked for a while, as a cashier at the Hannaford's store in Brandon.

Art was always proud of his years, as a gentle-

man farmer. He did shows with his goats and won the national championship with the American Goat Association. He had served the Town of Sudbury, Vt., as a selectman. He enjoyed painting in oil's and did exhibits at the Brandon Library. Art loved animals and interacting with people.

He is survived by his brother, Wayne Keefe and his wife Denise of Weare, N.H. A nephew and a niece also survive him, and a special friend; Dennis Rockwell. He was predeceased by his parents; his spouse, Mark Albert; and a sister, Nancy Geysen.

The memorial service "In Celebration of His Life" will take place Saturday, April 20, at 2 p.m., at the Brandon Congregational Church in Brandon, Vt. A private graveside committal service and burial will take place in Pine Hill Cemetery. Following the ceremony, the family will receive friends, at Brandon American Legion, for a time of remembrance.

Memorial gifts in lieu of flowers may be made in his memory to: Brandon Area Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 232, Brandon, VT 05733.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home in Brandon.

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



A public hearing regarding a proposed increase of apartments for Brainerd Place has sparked debates among the community. Many residents have signs in their yards expressing their sentiments.

★ *Housing Spike Proposed cont. from page 1*

ment, will not be set or determined as part of the project. Curley noted that the town attorney who worked on the tax agreement will be attending an upcoming BOS meeting to address questions raised.

Next Thursday, April 4, at 6:30 p.m., the PZC

is hosting a public hearing at the Portland High School auditorium and via Zoom, regarding the application to increase the ratio of allowable apartments per commercial space. Community members may voice their opinions and a vote by PZC members might follow.

LEGALS

NOTICE OF DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

To the enrolled members of the Democratic Party of East Hampton Connecticut:
Pursuant to the Rules of the Democratic Party Connecticut State election laws, you are hereby notified that a caucus will be held on: April 2, 2024 at 6:30 PM at the Goff House, 2 Barton Hill Road to endorse delegates to the US Senate Convention, State Senate Convention, Multi town State Representative Convention and to transact other business as may be proper to come before said caucus.
Dated at East Hampton, Connecticut on March 25, 2024.
Barbara Moore, Chair

1TB 3/29

LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON
IWWA ACTIONS

Notice is hereby given that the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency held a Special Meeting at 6:30 p.m. on March 14, 2024 at the East Hampton Town Hall and via ZOOM to consider the following:
Application IW-24-003: East Hampton, Public Works Dept., Replacement of Wopowog Culvert. Map 21/ Block 53/ Lot 7. – Approved with Modifications
Chairman Joshua Wilson

1TB 3/29

LEGAL NOTICE

Residents in the Sewer District in the Town of Marlborough are notified that Benefit Assessment bills are due to the Marlborough Water Pollution Control Authority (MWPCA), April 1, 2024.
The last day to pay without interest is May 1, 2024. Delinquent bills will be charged 1.5% interest per month reverting to the due date of April 1 or 18% per year. Minimum interest is \$5.00. Checks must be made out to MWPCA. Sewer bills cannot be paid online.
Payments may be paid at the Marlborough Town Hall, 26 North Main Street or mailed to MWPCA Collector, P.O.Box 29, 26 North Main Street, Marlborough, CT. 06447. There is a Drop Box, checks only – NO CASH, to the left of the Town Hall door. Normal office hours for the Tax Office are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm, Tuesday 8:30 am to 7:00 pm and Friday 8:30 - to noon.
Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Lazzari
Tax Collector

3TB 3/29, 4/12, 4/26

LEGAL NOTICE OF ACTIONS
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
HEBRON, CONNECTICUT

The Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission took the following action at their Regular Meeting, which was held on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at 7:00pm on the following:
Petition 2024-01 and 2024-02 – Petitions of Town of Hebron (Special Permit & Site Plan) to construct a pedestrian bridge and sidewalk connection between the Douglas Library of Hebron and Pendleton Drive. Application is filed pursuant to Sections 3.A.3.5.1 and 3.B.2.5.1 of the Hebron Zoning Regulations, Hebron Green and Main Street Districts. **Approved with conditions.**
The video recording of the Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting can be seen using the following link:
<https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#/s/0c80c51ce1275ee17f34fa638434a984e01418d826149de2373092160c9caeff>

1TB 3/29

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 4, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium at the Portland High School located at 95 High Street, Portland, CT. Public access through Zoom link A at www.portlandct.org to consider the following:
PZC Application #23-13: Proposed Amendment to the Portland Zoning Regulations. Change to section 9.17.1 to increase the allowable MUD residential units to 350 from the current 240 and to increase the ration of allowable apartments from 16 to 21 per 5,000 square feet of commercial space. Change to section 9.17.5.E to allow the sum of the total commercial area to include any single upper floor to the total commercial area where only the ground floor counts currently. Application of BRT DiMarco PTP, LLC.
PZC Application #23-14: 69 Marlborough Street. Request for Special Permit Modification. Application and Property of BRT DiMarco PTP, LLC. Map 19, Lot 68. Zone B-2, B-3 and TCVD. Dated at Portland, CT this 20th day of March 2024
Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission

2TB 3/22, 3/29

TOWN OF HEBRON
SEWER USE LEGAL NOTICE

Sewer Use Bills are due and payable October 1, 2023. The billing rate is \$592 which may be paid in two equal installments, the first installment being due October 1, 2023 and the second installment being due April 1, 2024.
First Installment payments must be postmarked or received no later than November 1, 2023 to be considered on time with no additional charges. Second Installments must be postmarked or received no later than May 1, 2024. Payments that are unpaid as of November 2, 2023 and May 2, 2024, will be charged interest of 1.5% per month retroactive to the installment due date per State Statute 12-146.
To make payments by check, please make check payable to: Town of Hebron. Payments may be mailed to: Town of Hebron, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, CT 06248. If desired, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a receipt. There is a drop-off box attached to the Town Office Building located next to the entrance on the lower level, south side. Additionally, there is a box inside the building located in the hallway between the Tax and Assessor's Office. Payments left in that box when the office is closed will be retrieved as soon as possible.
The Collector's office is located in the lower level of the Town Hall at 15 Gilead Street. Hours are Monday through Wednesday 8:00am to 4:00pm, Thursday 8:00am to 6:00pm, and Friday 8:00am to 1:00pm. Please note Monday – Thursday the office is closed for lunch from 12:30pm – 1:15pm.
Respectfully,
Adrian MacLean
Revenue Collector

3TB 3/29, 4/5, 4/26

LEGAL NOTICE
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
HEBRON, CONNECTICUT

The Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing at a Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at 7:00 P.M., to be held virtually through the GoToMeeting Platform, on the following:
1. **Petition 2024-05** – Petition of James R. Celio to amend the Hebron Zoning Regulations, Section 3.F.2.4, to permit single-family dwellings in the Commercial Technology District
Planning and Zoning Commission
Apr 9, 2024, 7:00 – 10:00 PM (America/New_York)
Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://meet.goto.com/468080581>
You can also dial in using your phone.
Access Code: 468-080-581
United States: +1 (312) 757-3121
Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:
<https://meet.goto.com/install>
Dated at Hebron, Connecticut, this 26th day of March 2024.
Frank Zitkus, Chair

2TB 3/29, 4/5

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

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MOWER OPERATOR: Light Landscaping worker wanted. Call 860-537-2945.

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

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EMPLOYMENT

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Our ideal candidate should have the following:

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Preferred qualifications are possession of a degree in Recreation Management, Gerontology, Counseling, Psychology or Social Work, and two (2) years' experience in the development and supervision of group recreation activities for older adults, plus one (1) year of management experience. This is a full-time, 35-hour-per-week position. The starting salary is between \$52,383. - \$61,627. per year, plus benefit package which includes health, dental, vision, 401a defined contribution plan, life insurance and various voluntary benefits, as well as PTO and paid holidays. This is a bargaining unit position. Applicants should submit a cover letter, resume and employment application, no later than April 22, 2024, (or until filled), to the Town of East Hampton, Department of Human Resources, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424. An employment application may be found at www.easthamptonct.gov. AA/M-F/EOE.

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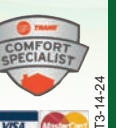
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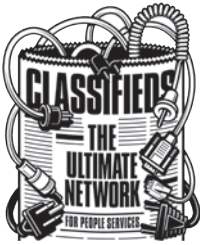
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