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Young Bible Scholars... This past Sunday was the Third Grade Bible Sunday at Marlborough Congregational Church. The third graders participated in the service by reading Bible passages, playing Bible trivia and receiving their first copies of the Bible. From left are Adeline Concodello, Lorelai LaBarre, Nolan Mahoney, Sydney Johnson and Kenzley Banks.

### **Bobcats Head to** State Title Game

By Josh Howard

After winning a conference championship at the Mohegan Sun Arena on Feb. 26, the girls basketball team from Bacon Academy will return to the home of the Connecticut Sun for a shot at a state title this weekend.

The No. 2 seed Bobcats will play top-seed Windham for the Class M state championship this Saturday, March 15 at 10 a.m.

To secure a return trip to Mohegan, the championship-bound Bobcats soundly defeated the Wildcats from Seymour High School, 63-30, in the state semifinals at Maloney High School on Monday.

Following the latest victory, senior captain Katelyn Novak said the team is ready to tackle the next challenge.

"I'm so excited - I can't believe this," added Novak. "Our goal was to go to Mohegan twice, and we've achieved that goal."

It was a thoroughly dominant performance on both ends of the court for a Bobcats bunch that led wire to wire in the 33-point semifinal blowout.

Sophomore point guard Kayleigh Engle scored a game-high 23 points, controlling the tempo and sparking an offense that notched 17 points in the opening quarter and 23 more in an electrifying third quarter.

Head coach Kevin Fennell was impressed with his team's ball movement throughout the game and credited senior Veronica Smith for her lockdown defense on Seymour's Victoria

Michalczyk entered the semifinals averaging 12 points per game, but was limited to five points, none coming in the second half.

"It allowed our team to relax and settle in offensively," expressed Fannell. "We were poised and I loved how our shooters made shots."

Bacon Academy drained eight shots from beyond the arc, with Novak knocking down four of those triples.

The Bobcats shared the ball and scored at will against a Seymour team that had limited their previous three state tourney opponents to an average of 31.6 points per game.

"We were moving the ball and it really allowed us to have success on offense," noted Novak, who finished with 19 points.

Junior Skyelyn Schoen-Rene added 13 points, including eight in the first four minutes of the game, as Bacon Academy surged out to an 11-4 lead and never looked back.

Leading 27-19 at the half, the Bobcats ended any doubt by outscoring the Wildcats by 16 points in the third quarter.

Engle and Novak combined to score 21 of the team's 23 points in the frame.

Including the ECC tourney, it was the sixth straight elimination game the Bobcats have won by double digits.

"A lot of us have experience and we've been here before," stated Novak. "We tell each other before the game to leave it out on the court."

The victory improved Bacon Academy to 24-2 overall.

See Bobcats, page 33

### Hebron Maple Fest Returns This Weekend

This weekend, thousands of residents will swarm Hebron to enjoy the town's historic sugarhouses, a plethora of tasty treats and fun activities, including a tractor parade, capped with unrivaled community spirit. Of course, it's time for the Maple Festival.

The two-day extravaganza will be held on Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m-4 p.m, in the center of town, with activities spanning along Main Street.

For 35 years, the festival has marked the coming of spring and is embedded as an essential tradition for local residents and maple enthusi-

"It means community pride and love," said Holly Habicht, the president of The Town Center Project (TTCP), the group overseeing the festival. "When you stop and think about it, it brings 10, 15, 20 thousand people to town that are prospective taxpayers, prospective business owners, investors."

This year, patrons will be able to enjoy Maple Festival classics — including "sugar on snow," found at the Hebron Interfaith Human Services booth. Two sugarhouses will have their doors open: Wenzel Sugarhouse (located at 522 East Street) and Woodyacres Sugarhouse (located at 80 Cone Road).

In addition to touring their operations and showcasing how maple syrup is produced, Ron and Joyce Wenzel were named the "Maple Marshals" of the festival.

"We're honored," Ron Wenzel said. "It won't sink in until afterwards."

This will be second time TTCP is hosting the festival, after it took over the reins from the Windham Chamber of Commerce following a seven-year run. Last year was largely billed as the rejuvenation of an event that some people thought had departed from its intended local emphasis. The theme, therefore, was "Bringing it Home."

"There was a lot of controversy" about the Windham chamber's handling of the Maple Fest, Habicht recalled. "Everybody needed to come and see what we were about, and we appreciated that. We hope that they come again."

The focus of the weekend was recalibrated to-

wards Hebron's nonprofits, businesses and artisans — a shift both Habicht and Wenzel believe was successful.

"The energy is phenomenal," Wenzel expressed, highlighting an abundance of volunteers who stepped up this time around.

There were a few hiccups last year, Habicht said, noting that "last year taught us a lot." One systemic change entering this year's festival was the delegation of different tasks. Before, a core of TTCP members handled nearly every maplerelated question that popped up, which was impractical.

'Quite honestly, we got burnt out last year," Habicht explained.

This time, though, TTCP has broadened its oversight, establishing subcommittees led by different community leaders, which has resulted in a much smoother process. And people have responded to the call; there were roughly twodozen residents in attendance at a weekly status meeting last weekend, all chipping in with unique insights and reports.

See Hebron Maple Fest, page 33

Inside... Marlborough Time Capsule Opened.....pg 9 'Anything Goes' Coming to PHS......pg 11 UConn Professor Arrested......pg 15 **East Hampton** Council Considers Car Tax Change ... pg 25 Town, School Budgets Presented......pg 27 Regional **Obituaries** ......pgs 31 & 32

**Crossword Puzzle...Pg 30** sponsored by Carl Guild & Associates



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#### **Upcoming Library Programs**

Andover Public Library, 355 Route 6, has announced three upcoming programs. For more information or to register for any event, call 860-742-7428.

Downsizing Demystified: How to Effectively Declutter Any Space: Tuesday, March 18, 6 p.m. The program leader is Tonya Maurer, client guide manager with Amston Home Transition Solutions, and she will share professional tips for decluttering to help you achieve rightsizing for your current space or a future move. This free 90-minute program takes place downstairs at the library. A minimum if 10 participants are needed to run this program, so if you would like to attend, let the library know ASAP.

Rock Painting with Karen: Saturday, March 15, 10 a.m. The library will provide the paint markers and instruction, but you should bring your creativity (and some rocks, too). Call the library to sign up.

Afternoon Storytime: Andover Public Library Friend Ellen Repay hosts Afternoon Storytime at the library once a month, and the next session will be Wednesday, March 19, at 4:15 p.m. The theme and craft for this month is "In Like a Lion, Out Like a Lamb?

#### **Congregational Church News**

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

Children's Church: Is provided. Choir: At 9

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.; Senior Pantry is on the opposite Wednesdays.

AA Meetings: Saturdays and Mondays, 7

Bingo & Basket Raffle Night

Andover Congregational Church, 359 Route 6, will hold a Bingo & Basket Raffle night on Friday, March 14, starting with dinner at 5:30 p.m. The game starts at 6:30 p.m.

Admission is \$12 and includes dinner, drink, dessert and bingo. No reservations required. Leave a message at the church at 860-742-7696 with questions.

**Zoning Board of Appeals** Vacancy

Any Andover elector interested in serving on the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term ending Nov. 18, 2025, should send a letter of interest to: Town of Andover, c/o ZBA Vacancy, 17 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232 or email townclerk@ andoverct.org.

#### Scholarship Available for **Andover Students**

Andover Elementary School is now taking applications for the Andover Education Association and the Andover PTA Annual Scholarship.

The scholarship is offered to any Andover student.

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

Applications are due May 2.

#### **President's List**

Breana Adams of Andover made the fall 2024 President's List at Goodwin University in East

#### **Honor Society Inductee**

Mykenzie Mawdsley of Andover was recently inducted into Eastern Connecticut State University's chapter of the Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society.

Mawdsley is a senior majoring in criminology and sociology.

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a.m. Sundays in the sanctuary.

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Sonshine Stampers: Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.

#### Craft Supply Tag Sale

Andover Congregational Church, located at 359 Route 6, will hold a Craft Supply Tag Sale on Saturday, March 22, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Are you a crafter and have craft supplies you no longer need or want? Are you in search of new supplies? Then this is the event for you. Tables are available to rent for \$20.

Leave a message at the church, 860-742-7696, for an application or more informa-

Sustainable CT

**Reorganizing**The local Sustainable CT committee is reorganizing and has openings on the committee. If you are interested in sustainability, empathy and caring for the town and residents, you are asked to join the committee, which tackles various the environment-, planet- and weather-related is-

One does not need to be representing any commissions or committees in town. Contact Cathy Palazzi at 860-916-6122 for questions or to express interest in this program.

#### **Interested in Filling Board Vacancy?**

Any Andover elector interested in becoming a candidate on the April 11 special election ballot for the Board of Selectmen vacancy should call the secretary of the state's office at 860-509-6100.

Voting will take place Friday, April 11, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., in the community room of Town Hall.

#### **Library Friends Offer** Scholarship

The Andover Friends of the Library are offering a \$1,000 scholarship to an Andover high school senior. Applications are due May 1, and are available at the guidance office at RHAM High School in Hebron; at Andover 355 Route 6; and 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 library card.

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

### **Local Man Arrested** for Animal Cruelty

An Andover man was arrested and charged last week with animal cruelty after tethering his dog to his vehicle, according to South Windsor police.

Tre Patrizz, 26, was charged with one count of malicious wounding or killing of an animal, a class D felony, as well as tethering a dog to an object or mobile device, according to online state judicial records.

Patrizz was arrested on March 3 at 5:56 p.m., after South Windsor police received two 9-1-1 calls. One of the calls, according to police, was from Patrizz himself, who reported that his dog had jumped out of his car while

However, a second call came from someone who witnessed Patrizz driving with a dog tethered to the back of his vehicle, police stated. The witness said they tried to "cut off Patrizz's vehicle to get him to stop the car."

According to police, Patrizz then took his dog — identified as a gray pit bull — to the New England Veterinary Center in Windsor, where officers later arrested him.

Patrizz told police "he forgot the dog was tethered to the vehicle," according to the department's new release.

Police added that the dog did not appear to have life-threatening injuries, but had "significant road rash to his underbelly and paws." They said the dog will "will likely make a full recovery after long-term bandage care and pain management."

According to state records, Patrizz posted bond and was released from custody. He has not entered a plea and is due in Manchester Superior Court on April 24.

#### Community & Senior Center Happenings

The Andover Community and Senior Center (ACSC) is open daily from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. The lounge is open for cards, games and puzzles anytime, and coffee is always on. All are welcome.

For all senior-related events (such as weekday gatherings, birthday/bingo, luncheons and trips), call Director Tess Grous at 860-742-7305 x4510 or 860-798-6862. Sign-ups are necessary.

Community Connections Newsletter: The center's monthly newsletter is available on the Town of Andover website, www.andoverconnecticut.org. Copies are available at the center, Town Hall, and Andover Public Library. Call administrative assistant Kim Hawes to be put on the monthly newsletter email list.

Transportation: Please provide one week's notice for all requests. Registration is required. Paperwork can be emailed, mailed or picked up at the center. All passengers are required to fill out proper paperwork before utilizing Transportation. Transportation is available to town events and meetings, voting, senior events, group shopping, and medical appointments. The driver's shift ends at 5 p.m.; please plan ac-

Transportation is curb to curb. Passengers must be able to navigate independently to the vehicle and during appointments. Driveways must be accessible. If assistance is required, passengers may bring an assistant (18 years or older). All seniors, veterans, and disabled are welcome. Call Grous for all transportation-re-

Chair Yoga: Mondays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Cost is \$7, payable at the time of class. For more information contact Haley Proto at 203-645-4933. Contact Grous for transportation.

Food Pantry: Mondays, 5-7 p.m., 3/24 and 3/31. Transportation to Andover Congregational Church is available (except for on holidays) by contacting Grous. For more information on other available dates and times, contact Joan Soucy at 860-208-3226.

Shopping Dates: Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m. Manchester 3/18; Willimantic 3/25. Transportation is available; contact Grous.

Food Share: Wednesday at 8:30 a.m., 3/26. Transportation to Andover Congregational Church is available by contacting Grous. For more information on other available dates and times, contact Joan Soucy at 860-208-3226.

Senior Social - Lunch/Matinee: Wednesday, 3/19, 12:30 p.m. Have a light lunch, followed by movie and popcorn. Sign-up is necessary. Transportation is available, contact Grous.

Yoga: Thursdays, 5:45-6:45 p.m. Cost is \$10, payable at the time of class. For more information, contact Linda Derick at 860-655-4409. Drop-ins welcome.

Quilting: Every Thursday at noon. Bring supplies and a snack. Transportation is available. Call Haley with any questions at 203-645-4933.

Knitting: Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.-noon. Call Grous for more information. Transportation is

Coffee & Crafts: Every other Friday at 9:30 a.m. Next date is March 21. Sign-up is necessary and transportation is available.

Senior Gathering: Fridays at noon, 3/14 and 3/28. Cost is \$10, payable at time of lunch. Signup is necessary. On 3/28, special guest is historian/photographer Scott Yeomans.

P. A. L. (People Across Lifetimes): Friday, 3/14, noon. Sign-up is necessary and transportation is available. The P.A.L. Mailbox is located at the center; P.A.L. friends can drop off cards to Pen Pals.

Haircare with Sheila: Monday, 3/17. Appointments available every 30 minutes. Fee is \$22 per appointment. Sign-up is required. Clean hair required. Transportation is available.

Foot Care: Tuesday, 3/18. Appointments are every 30 minutes, and are \$40. Sign-up is required and transportation is available.

**Blood Pressure Clinic:** Wednesday, 3/19, 10 a.m.-noon. EHHD (Eastern Highlands Health Department) is providing this clinic. Sign-up is suggested, but walk-ins welcome. Transportation is available. Contact Grous for appointment times.

**Tour of The Ivy in Ellington:** Tuesday, 3/25, 1 p.m. In this Senior Living Open House, themed "Soup to Nuts," warm up to the idea of senior living with a hot bowl of soup. Learn more about the senior living option and get a taste of The Ivy lifestyle. Sign-up is necessary. Transportation provided. There is no cost for the event.



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#### **From the Editor's Desk**

### **Observations & Ruminations**

By Mike Thompson

The future of Medicaid has been a hot topic across the country in recent weeks – and Connecticut is no exception. In fact, last week the governor and other state officials gathered in Hartford to discuss potential impacts of any possible cuts to Medicaid.

As the news outlet *CT Mirror reported, it* likely will be months before states will know how deeply Congress and President Donald Trump will cut into Medicaid, the federal program that funds health care for 1.2 million Connecticut residents.

But, the *Mirror noted*, the U.S. House of Representatives has a goal of \$880 billion in overall federal budget cuts – and that figure can't be reached without major reductions in Medicaid, according to a report last week from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

And while it's true no one yet knows how steep cuts to Medicaid might be, the fact of the matter is the state received \$6.6 billion in federal Medicaid grants this year – an amount that, as the *Mirror* noted, is equal to around 25% of the entire state budget.

"We cannot possibly replace what we have been getting from the federal government," State Comptroller Sean Scanlon said last week, according to the Mirror. "And that is something that I think worries all of us."

So with that in mind, I thought it might be interesting this week to take a look at just how many folks in the *Rivereast* towns are on Medicaid. And the numbers may surprise you.

The state Department of Social Services has an interactive data dashboard that lets you go

town by town and see how many people in each municipality are receiving government assistance, such as Medicaid, or SNAP (formerly known as food stamps), or social work services.

For 2025, in Colchester there are 2,466 residents on Medicaid; in East Hampton, 1,695; in Portland, 1,464; in Hebron, 926; in Marlborough, 677; and in Andover, 534.

So, as you can see, there are a lot of people on Medicaid in each of our towns. This is despite the fact that each of our towns had a median household income of over \$100,000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Indeed, there are folks in all 169 Connecticut municipalities on Medicaid – even in our storied "gold coast." For example, in Westport – which has a median household income of a whopping \$250,000 (come on, are you surprised?) – there are 1,699 residents on Medicaid.

But, to go back to our *Rivereast* towns, there are scores of people here on Medicaid. You may know some personally – or perhaps are on it yourself. Indeed, I have several friends and family members who depend on Medicaid to get by. There's absolutely no shame in it.

So, in the coming months, it might be worth it to follow the news coming out of Washington regarding Medicaid's future – and if you're concerned, perhaps reach out to one of our senators or congresspersons. Hopefully the cuts aren't too severe, but if they are – well, that's an awful lot of people who could be impacted.

Editor's Desk continued on page 5



Carpino Reads to Kids... State Rep. Christie Carpino (R-32) visited Gildersleeve School on March 6 to celebrate Reading Across America Week. Carpino read Maddi's Fridge by Lois Brandt to Laura Winoski's second grade class. "What a wonderful visit," she said the next day. "When my kids were little, she [Winoski] read to them. Yesterday, I had the chance to visit her classroom at Gildersleeve – on Pajama Day no less – and read to her kids."

Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum

#### **Burgers and Fireqworks**

Greetings, Hebron-area Fireworks-goers: Let it be known, a dynamic duo, Famous Le-

gion Burgers and fireworks, will return in June.

The Hebron American Legion Post 95 will be serving Famous Legion Burgers at the Hebron Lions Fairgrounds during the fireworks display. For those of the Hebron area who experienced a Famous Legion Burger in the past, they will once again enjoy. This is also an opportunity for those who have only heard of the Famous Le-

gion Burger experience to partake.

The Hebron American Legion holds several fundraisers throughout the year, and many feature our Famous Legion Burgers, although the Hebron American Legion also holds a fundraiser featuring "Chicken-to-Fly." Please refer to the *Rivereast News Bulletin* for events, in conjunction with our large display sign in front of our Hebron American Legion building between Douglas Library and The Flour Girl Café, on Main Street; you are welcome to visit each one of the fundraisers.

Note: The Hebron American Legion is available for rental; if interested, contact Joe Fetta at 203-848-5913.

Experience the fireworks display and our Famous Legion Burgers Sunday, June 29, from 5-9

p.m. Gates open at 4 p.m. Rain date: June 30. To all, be well, stay safe. For God and Country, respectfully, submitted for the Commander,

Senior Vice, and the entire Hebron-area veterans of Hebron Post 95, R. A. Bob Mangillo, Adjutant

#### American Legion Post 95

Time for a Change To the Editor:

The U. S. Congress recently considered legislation, known as the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act of 2025. The act states it shall be a violation for a recipient of federal financial assistance who operates, sponsors, or facilitates athletic programs to permit a person whose sex is male to participate in an athletic program or activity that is designated for women or girls. Put simply, to prevent trans-gender males from competing against women and girls in programs not designated for males.

Multiple surveys show that 80% of Americans agree with this legislation. 80% of Americans believe it is wrong for males to compete in women's and girls' sports. In addition to being unfair, women and girls have suffered injuries competing against males. A woman suffered a brain injury when a male spiked a volleyball

#### **Bulletin Board**

As we (hopefully) move seamlessly from winter to the delights of an early spring, I feel compelled to look back on recent months with all the wisdom of a crochety old coot who believes no worthwhile music has been made since about 1973.

In this case, though, I'm referring to winter.

In case you hadn't noticed (or you're young enough to have better things to do), winter sure isn't what it used to be. First of all, it seems to me that we got a lot more snow when I was a kid. People like to say, "No, it just seems that way because you were so much smaller." Well, they're wrong. We did used to get a lot more snow. I know. I was there and I distinctly remember that we had a major blizzard about every other day.

Not that anybody ever paid much attention. They never canceled school when it snowed. Well, hardly ever. Nowadays, you get a little dusting of snow and the weathermen incite panic-stricken mobs to rush out and buy batteries, bottled water and special booties for the dog and school gets canceled for a week—I mean it's downright embarrassing.

In my day, they didn't cancel school unless penguins were lined up trying to book trips to Miami Beach. You'd be standing out there in snow up to your keister and the school bus would come right on time just like it always did. Of course, those were also the days when your mother could dose you with paregoric without benefit of a prescription, which may have something to do with my memories of those happy winter mornings in utopian suburbia.

In those days, kids organized their own winter activities—which, I am afraid, has become a lost art in modern-day structured childhoods. There was no need for a paid Recreation Director. One of our favorite recreational activities was throwing snowballs at passing cars and trucks. Eventually, a police cruiser would come along and the officer would admonish us to knock it off or he'd notify our parents. Inevitably, as he pulled away from our outwardly chastened but inwardly incorrigible band of mischief-makers, some miscreant would feel compelled to hurl a snowball at his car, whereupon we'd all scatter (as if the police back then didn't know us all by name and where we lived). Today, I suppose, this kind of thing might land you in juvenile court, inspire politicians to make snowball fights a Class C felony and lead to home visits from social workers, church outreach representatives, personal injury lawyers and similar undesirables. Back then, nothing ever came of it.

A couple of other things stick in my mind about those long-ago winters. You may recall those pre-Thinsulate times when your mother spent 20 minutes pushing you into various layers of clothes and snowsuits. And, of course, you'd no sooner get out the door than you'd realize you had to use the bathroom.

Then there was the legendary case of the kid up the road (I swear this is absolutely true) who (at the urging of his older brother) touched his tongue to his metal snow coaster one wintery afternoon. To get him off with tongue intact, they had to bring him in the house, snow coaster and all, and apply warm water to the metal. His misfortune provided considerable grist for stories for many winters to come, the general consensus being he was darn lucky he hadn't tried to lick the hood of his father's car.

One more thing about winter back then: Snow meant money. After every snowfall, the neighborhood would be crawling with kids carrying snow shovels looking to make some extra money shoveling driveways. There was an early run on the homes of the old and infirm, excepting the well-established tightwads of course. (They were pretty much homebound until spring.) As I recall it, the going rate for driveways ranged from about \$2 to \$4. One particular driveway in the area was a \$6 job, but that driveway was about as long as the Massachusetts Turnpike and generally ended up with some kid who'd rolled out of bed too late to grab the plums.

But all of this uniquely American entrepreneurship ended sometime in the '60s with the arrival of that technological marvel, the snowblower. One by one, our jobs disappeared as homeowner after homeowner invested in snowblowers. Things were never quite the same after Mr. Toro's creation arrived in the neighborhood.

And now, if the past two or three winters are any indication, it seems global warming may be finally putting an end to the Golden Age of the Snowblower as well. I greet this development with mixed feelings. Childhood memories are all well and good, and I do sympathize with the polar bears, but I also have to admit that the less snow I have to clear from my driveway, the better I like it.

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.

RIVEREAST —

#### **News Bulletin**

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Letter Writers: Letters must be 400 words or less, and must be submitted by Tuesday at noon. Email is preferred; send to bulletin@glcitizen.com. All letters must include the writer's town of residence and daytime contact phone number. Letters must pertain to local issues, news or events; letters regarding national issues or national public figures will not be published. 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 bullying or name-calling will be tolerated. There is no guarantee that all letters will be published.

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Reader Forum • Reader

The legislation passed in the House despite 'nae' votes by all of Connecticut's five Democrat representatives. In the Senate, it received 51 'yea' votes which was not enough to overcome the 60-vote filibuster threshold, resulting in defeat. Connecticut's two Democrat senators, Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy, voted no.

The votes by our members of Congress make it obvious that they have lost their political and moral compasses. It is time Connecticut voters vote for a change.

**Doug Sargent - Portland** 

#### Thank You, Knights of Columbus

To the Editor:

East Hampton High School's Unified Sports Team would like to thank the local East Hampton Knights of Columbus for their generous financial contribution to our club. Their donations help in making it possible for the continued success of our Unified Sports program. Some of the things that the club was able to purchase are new medals for our sports competitions, as well as sponsoring an upcoming field trip to the Yard Goats' "Baseball in Education Day."

The support from KOC exemplifies what Unified Sports is all about: promoting inclusion through sports and activities.

With much thanks and appreciation, **Unified Sports Team East Hampton High School** 

#### **Maple-Flavored History**

To the Editor:

It is time to embrace all the maple-flavored goodness that is the Maple Festival, especially the local maple syrup and Hebron's diverse history. Through the discovery of handcrafted stone projectile points it has been documented that Hebron has been home to Indigenous people for nearly 10,000 years. The first inhabitants, the Paleo-Indians, entered a wide-open tundra landscape filled with grasses and low shrubbery. Over the next thousands of years the tundra changed to woodlands, which included the Sugar Maple tree.

With the changing landscape came changes in Indigenous cultures, the Paleo-Indians were followed by Archaic and Woodlands peoples. All the while Indigenous people have been cherishing the gift of maple syrup. As reported in the magazine of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, Winter 2022 Issue, Indigenous people of the northeastern United States and Canada have been making maple syrup for thousands of years. The required skills were carefully passed from generation to generation, along with the associated ceremonies and respect for the maple tree. According to tribal elder, Otsi'tsaken:ra (Charlie) Patton, a Faithkeeper of the Mohawk people of New York State and Quebec, "We call Wahta (maple) the leader of the trees because it is always the first tree to wake up in the spring... We have a ceremony of Enhatihesestáta to put the sap back in the tree, but only Creation has the power to do this." Otsi'tsaken:ra Patton also speaks about the importance of knowing our history, "Wahta trees are strong because they have roots. Native people stay strong in the same way, from our roots that reach back through our mothers and grandmothers, all the way back to the Iotsi'tsisen (Sky Woman) at the beginning of

I look forward to seeing you at the Maple Festival and celebrating Hebron's strong roots. The Hebron Sugar Houses Co-Op will be set up in the Douglas Library parking lot and offers the unique opportunity to taste Hebron's delicious history. After you pick up your bottle of fresh local maple syrup, I hope you will stop by the

Hebron Center History table at Booth 79, near the Douglas Library main entrance. I will be presenting a wide variety of documents, maps and artifacts that illustrates Hebron's remarkable and diverse history. Make sure to ask for your free Hebron Center History postcard and for more information please visit Save Hebron Center on Facebook and #Save17.

> Sincerely, Kevin J. Tulimieri - Amston

#### Don't Add to the Fray

To the Editor:

The editor has decided to take sides on the magnet school fiasco, it seems at request or behest of the school board, being it is verbatim to what the board espouses. If the editor is not a resident of Colchester and doesn't pay taxes to this town, he should just report, not opine on

This added nothing new to the mix, except to stir the pot - and yes the people, and not just 300 online responses, were against.

People complain government doesn't listen; for once they did and Rivereast thinks the board should have done what most elected officials do, i.e. "telling us what's best for us." The people who live here know what's a good fit for this town and it isn't making Colchester full of apartments and more commercial endeavors. We like it as is, not to become another Willimantic.

It was also mentioned crime was a concern. and it must be, because Commissar Sullivan has asked repeatedly for more security guards for the declining student body. Why?

This whole thing has become an us vs. them. Rivereast adding to the fray doesn't help all involved or change anything. What should change is the school board. They tried to put one over on the public; who's to say they won't try again. We shouldn't have to keep one eye on their shenanigans.

P.S.: This also goes for the BOF.

Frank Grande - Colchester

#### Walkable Neighborhoods

To the Editor:

Last week I asked about what happened to small-town America and proposed an easy first step for us to take in order to reconnect and rebuild our communities. This week I propose an idea for every neighborhood to address the problem of not having safe places to walk with a lack of sidewalks.

Sidewalks are expensive to build, especially for a small town like us where foot traffic is relatively minor in the expansive neighborhoods that make up Marlborough. But people still walk around the neighborhood. Where do you walk, reader? Probably in the street, but this can put you, your pets, and or your children at higher risk because of cars.

So how can we still walk around our neighborhood without taking this risk and without paying millions of dollars just to install some ugly cement sidewalks? Well, I propose what I am calling the "living sidewalk." All it requires is a little bit of effort and a tiny portion of your yard that you probably aren't using anyway. I will be turning the couple feet of grass by the road at my house into a walkable area for my community. By planting just a few flowers, I can turn a boring, dead, ugly sect of grass into a vibrant, living, beautiful area that my neighbors can use to walk without being in the road and posing a danger to themselves, their pets, or the cars that use the street. This is not viable for every house, but I hope that with a little bit of ingenuity, anyone can set up paths for their neighbors that livens up the neighborhood and makes walking safe again.

So this spring go see how you can make your neighborhood prettier, safer, more lively, and more neighborly.

Rob Barstow - Marlborough

#### **Supporting Healthy Aging**

To the Editor:

As the warm weather approaches, we are excited to announce that our Senior Walking Club will be starting up again this May, in partnership with the Air Line Trail Committee. This group is more than just a walk in the park, it's an opportunity for older adults to stay active, connect

with nature, and engage in lifelong learning.

Each walk on the Air Line Trail features a unique experience, from learning about local bird species to identifying different types of trees, thanks to knowledgeable guest speakers and nature enthusiasts who join us along the way. It's a wonderful chance to get fresh air, enjoy light exercise, and socialize with friends, all of which are essential for healthy aging

Regular physical activity like walking has been proven to improve heart health, mobility, and mental well-being, while time spent outdoors reduces stress and enhances overall happiness. Combining movement, education, and social connection makes this walking group a powerful way for older adults to maintain both physical and cognitive health.

We welcome all seniors to lace up their walking shoes and join us as we explore the beauty of the Air Line Trail together regardless of skill level, as the trail is flat and easy to navigate.

For more details or to sign up, please reach out to the Waverly Senior Center. Let's make this spring a season of movement, discovery, and community!

Sincerely, **Sarah Elliott-Caratasios** Waverly Senior Center Director **Municipal Agent** 

#### Dementia Talks No. 13

To the Editor:

Touch means so much.

Mom and I sat down in two chairs next to each other, which is rare as most chairs are all filled up. I was happy to be able to sit next to Mom rather than hovering behind her, or perched on an arm of a chair.

Mom was holding my hand as we found our seats and sat down. She then kept hold and tucked my hand with hers onto her lap, holding my arm under hers. Almost as if she would never let go. That she was afraid I might go "poof" and disappear. It was a precious moment of need.

Her need to keep someone she feels love for, close and anchored in place, never to leave. And a need, to feel needed, my need. Both emotions coming from different places, coming from different humans. Coming together in fingers intertwined together becoming one swirl of emo-

It was precious and warmed my heart.

My mom holding my hand, reading the closed captions of the movie not realizing the connectedness we shared in that moment. Or did she? Yes, I believe she did.

It was hard to pull away, but in doing so Mom said I Love You. Words, I wait for with every visit. Words to last a lifetime, alongside the simple gesture of holding hands.

Let there be the warmth of touch and of

With peace and much love, Tonya Maurer - Amston Alz Hot Line: 1-800-272-3900

#### **BOE Lacks Fiscal Restraint**

One year ago, on 3/6/24, I spoke to the East Hampton Town Council concerning the BOE's lack of fiscal restraint that contributed significantly to another increase in property taxes. In case you forgot, 65%+ of our property taxes is spent on the school budget. An estimated 36.6% of the families in EH have school-age children 18 or under, and the majority of the people in EH get bullied into paying the BOE's demands for more money every year.

On Feb. 7, 2025, the Rivereast reported on the tri-board meeting at which schools superintendent Van Tasel told of "unbudgeted" costs in 2023-24 that required the town to provide \$887,000 in addition to the budgeted \$35,858,655. The BOE received another increase of \$1,866,000 in the budget for 2024-25. Each year we hear the same old story that more money for the schools will attract more residents, yet Mr. Van Tasel stated the district is "seeing declining enrollment." That decline would reduce the number of staff (which is 84% of the budget) or replace them with lower-cost

In fairness, Mr. Van Tasel mentioned the undetermined lower cost funding from the state that would impact the town budget. Still, his request for a 7.3% increase in the school budget seems to be out of line, when the state average is 5.26%. Current inflation rate is running 3%, the USDA predicts food increase of 2.2%, the average wage increase in Connecticut is 4.3%, Social Security benefits will increase by 2.5%, and investors can expect to lose 2-3% of purchasing

See Letters, page 6

#### Editor's Desk continued from page 4

In happier news, the weather appears to finally be getting nicer out – just in time for the always-delightful Hebron Maple Fest! It takes place this weekend and is a great opportunity to get out, see some friends, and indulge your sweet tooth with all things maple.

Much like Thanksgiving or the Super Bowl, Maple Fest weekend is not a time to be counting calories. Don't even think about it; trust me, you won't want to know. Just plan to stick to salads for a few days afterwards.

However, if you do want to feel slightly better about all the delectable goodies you know you'll be consuming this weekend, you're in luck. The Maple Fest, well, festivities will kick off Saturday morning with The Sap Run 5K.

The race, through the Burnt Hill Park neighborhood, will start at 9 a.m. It's a run on paved roads, through rolling hills, and past picturesque farmland, race organizers say. Race shirts are included for all runners.

Registration is \$35 - and ends today! So get moving if you want to get in on the fun. To register, visit runsignup.com/saprun5K.

See you next week.

### **HEALTHCARE SERVICES**



## Better Dental









#### CHOOSING AN ELECTRIC TOOTHBRUSH

by George M. Mantikas, DMD

Many electric toothbrush models provide a deeper clean than manual ones. Choosing an electric toothbrush is, in some ways, much like choosing a manual toothbrush: the head size should be small enough to reach your back teeth, the bristles should be soft and contoured instead of hard and straight and the handle should provide a firm grip. But when it comes to head and bristle vibration, an oscillating motion is best. Bristles that simply vibrate provide no benefit over a manual toothbrush. Another feature to look for is a range of settings, such as different cleaning modes, a pressure censor, and a self-timer. Without these personalized settings, electric toothbrush oscillations may feel uncomfortable or even painful.

There is no magic to achieving optimum dental hygiene success. Almost everyone can do it with a modest amount of time invested daily in brushing and flossing. Keeping up with home dental care as well as scheduling periodic cleanings and wellness exams are two important steps toward accomplishing the goal of a healthy mouth. For full-service dental care for all members of your family, please call us for an appointment.

P.S. If you use a battery-powered toothbrush, be sure to change the batteries often or whenever you notice the oscillations begin to slow.

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Reader Forum • Reader

★ Letters cont. from page 5

power due to inflation. All numbers that do not support a 7.3% increase.

The CT Department of Education 2023 reports East Hampton spent \$19,146 per student, whereas the state average is \$16,186, and the U.S. expended \$12,383 per student. The pupilto-teacher ratio in EH was 12.5 versus 16.8 nationwide. Constantly increasing taxes (the majority of which goes to the school budget) will also serve as a deterrent to people looking at East Hampton as a home.

What is it going to take for the citizens of East Hampton to realize the BOE lacks fiscal restraint? The BOE should be lowering costs, not increasing, and certainly should not be putting the burden of irresponsible spending on the taxpayers of East Hampton again.

I hope our Town Council will stand up to Mr. Van Tasel and say NO, you can't have the money; tighten your belt like the rest of us. **Bob Yenkner - East Hampton** 

#### **Women's History II**

To the Editor:

"..It doesn't matter where you come from or whatever else, I think everything is possible, and everyone who has a dream and a passion should go for it. Nothing can really hold you back if you really want to go for it and work hard for it." Inspiring words from equestrian Julia Krajewski.

For decades, women have worked with horses right alongside the men. From baling and stacking hay to veterinary care, stall-mucking, hauling livestock and running farms. As kids, they were our inspirations. As adults, they became our mentors. Daily agricultural chores are physically and mentally taxing often requiring decades of experience and hands on education. The pay is average and generally without

benefits. Mistakes can be devastating but the rewards are endless. This week #save17 honors our unsung and often invisible female equestrians everywhere.

Until 1956, women were not allowed to compete on Olympic Show Jumping teams. However, this didn't stop Mary Mairs-Chapot and Kathy Kusner from becoming the first women to ride on a USA Show Jumping team at the 1964 Olympic Games. These women rode with such skill and accuracy they not only qualified for the team, they broke the glass ceiling paving the way for others to follow. Their high standards didn't begin or end with Tokyo, they continue to this day. But the fight wasn't over. It would take seven years, two Olympics, clearing the Puissance Wall (seven foot, two inches), a law suit and three denied applications before Kusner would obtain her jockey's license. When she did, she became the first woman to ride in

the Maryland Hunt Cup, the toughest timber race in the world.

Some considered these courageous women to be nuts. Others believed these "nuts" deserved the chance to compete at the highest levels. Either way, these exceptionally talented women stood their ground and held their composer even in the face of harsh, and often, bitter judgements. The stigmas, surrounding women might actually remain the toughest hurdles left to clear. From Robyn Smith to Hilda Gurney to Margie Engle, we commend you.

Hebron itself has been blessed with talented, well-educated and successful horsewomen. They're devoted and continually defend their high standards while encouraging others to do the same. As Rosa Parks once said, "Stand for something or you will fall for anything. Today's mighty oak is yesterday's nut that held its

Jean Tulimieri - Amston

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Remember when the state did something good for once? Yeah, me neither. But shockingly, they actually threw us a bone last year and passed a law to reduce car taxes - one of the most painfully regressive taxes out there. You know, the one that punishes regular folks just for owning a beat-up Honda while rich people in Teslas barely notice? It's such a bad tax that nearly half the states in America don't even bother with it.

**Bernie Raises Car Taxes** 

But don't worry, local Connecticut Democrats saw this rare moment of taxpayer relief and thought, "Wait... people might actually save money? We can't have that!" So, in record speed, they lobbied for, and the state passed House Bill 7067, a sneaky little gem that gives towns the option to jack those car taxes right back up - you know, in case local politicians were feeling underfunded.

Cue Colchester First Selectman Bernie Dennler, who wasted no time rushing this new "opportunity" straight to the Board of Selectmen. Did the whole board even realize they were voting to increase car taxes? Who knows! But they did. And now, just like that, your wallet is feeling a little lighter.

So if the first selectman tries to tell you this was about "fixing an error," don't buy it. This was about one thing: grabbing more of your money. And guess who feels it the hardest? It's lower-income people who will be hit hardest by this extra tax burden. For them, every penny counts - and now they're the ones footing the bill for this reckless grab. Classic tax-and-spend politics at its finest, hurting the people who can least afford it.

Sincerely,

Michael Dubreuil - Colchester

#### **Medicaid Cuts Threaten Our Communities**

Your publication has long been a trusted voice for our multi-town community, delivering fact-based reporting that has helped us navigate challenges - from local policies to the COVID-19 crisis. Today, we face another urgent moment that demands the same level of attention: the proposed elimination of \$6.6 billion in annual Medicaid funding for Connecticut.

This is not just a budget cut. It's a direct hit on the services that hold our towns together. Medicaid supports vital programs that many of our neighbors rely on - SNAP benefits that keep families fed, early childhood education, senior care, disability services, and Meals on Wheels for homebound residents. If this funding disappears, the impact will be immediate and catastrophic. Nursing homes may close, local clinics will be forced to turn people away, and thousands could lose access to basic healthcare.

For towns like Marlborough and the surrounding communities, this is not an abstract policy debate—it's a matter of survival. Without Medicaid funding, more families will face impossible choices between rent, food, and medical care. Schools will struggle to support students with disabilities. Our elderly residents may be left without the care they need to stay in their homes.

During COVID, the crisis had an end in sight - a vaccine brought hope. This crisis offers no such solution, only suffering. We know people turn to various sources for information, but local journalism remains essential in shaping a shared reality. I implore you to use your platform to bring these facts to light, ensuring our communities understand the stakes - while there's still time to act.

Thank you for your commitment to informed, engaged communities.

Karen Wilkinson - Marlborough

#### **MES Kindergarten Screening**

Marlborough Elementary School is excited to welcome incoming kindergarten students for the 2025-26 school year. Any child who will be 5 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2025, and meets all residency requirements is eligible to attend. To ensure a smooth transition, families are encouraged to pre-register their child as soon as possible.

Kindergarten screening will take place on May 7 and 8 at Marlborough Elementary School, located at 25 School Drive. Screening time slots will be emailed to registered families

Additionally, families seeking early entrance

to kindergarten for children who do not meet the age requirement must submit a waiver request by March 14. These children will participate in an early entrance screening on March 26, with acceptance or denial notifications sent by April 4. If approved, parents must confirm their child's enrollment by April 18.

For more information about kindergarten entry requirements, visit tinyurl.com/ypcaj3uw.

If you have any questions, contact the school at 860-295-6620 or email vsamolis@ marlborough.k12.ct.us.

#### **Congregational Church News & Notes**

Sunday Worship and Sunday School at Marlborough Congregational Church, located at 35 South Main St., is held at 10 a.m. The service is also broadcast live every Sunday at mcc. marlcongchurch.org and recorded for later viewing. Childcare for infants and toddlers is provided downstairs in the nursery but children are always welcome at the worship service. After Sunday worship all are invited for snacks and refreshments in the Thienes Lounge. Sunday school is available for children ages 3 through grade 8, and all children in the community are welcome. For more information, contact Elizabeth Kukich at ekukich@marlcongchurch.org.

Sunday, March 16 is Boy Scout Sunday, with the scouts "Presenting the Colors" at the start of worship. This second Sunday in Lent service will be led by pastor the Rev. Valerie Seaver and will include the Chancel Choir's rendition of "Nearer My God to Thee."

Outreach: The church collects non-perishable food items year-round for Marlborough Food Bank with a basket located in the narthex for donations. March mission-giving will go to Marlborough Food Bank. The monthly luncheon for residents at Florence Lord Housing will be Sunday, March 16. The Drive Thru Café for Marlborough Food Bank clients and their

families with tickets will be March 30. Second Blessings Thrift Shop, located on the ground floor with access from the parking lot, is open for sales and donations Fridays from noon to 3 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, contact the church office. The shop also sells year-round through eBay at bit.ly/MCCebay.

General Information: Marlborough Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming faith community and all are welcome. The church does not pass a collection plate; however, freewill giving boxes are found by the doors in the sanctuary. For more information on the church or its programs, call Seaver's direct line at 860-295-0432, email her at pastorval@marlcongchurch.org, or contact the church office at office@marlcongchurch.org.

#### Rotary Club Scholarship

East Hampton Rotary Club Scholarship applications are available to any graduating senior in 2025 who resides in either East Hampton or Marlborough who would like to apply.

All students must be residents of East Hampton or Marlborough, 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 multiple year scholarships available. Applications are due April 1, and are available online at tinyurl.com/ EHRotaryScholarship2025 or through the guidance department of the East Hampton, RHAM, Mercy, Xavier and Vinal Tech high schools.

For more information, call Karen Terry 860-462-6760.

#### **Richmond Memorial Library News & Notes**

Richmond Memorial Library, located at 15 School Drive, has announced the following items of interest. Registration required for all programs unless noted. For more information or to register, call 860-295-6210 or visit richmondlibrary.info.

Crafty Kids: Wednesdays through April 9, 4 p.m. Recommended for ages 4 and up. Create your own toys, discover what you can make with aper, and more. Held in the Storytime Room.

Family Escape Room: Thursdays, Mar. 20 and 27, with time slots from 4-8 p.m. Work together to figure out how to escape. The escape room will have challenges at a variety of levels, so even younger family members can participate. Both days will be the same escape room. Recommended for families with children ages 5 and up. Held in the upstairs meeting room. Register the entire family together. Limited to two families per time slot.

Dog Man Party: Friday, March 21, 2 p.m. Part dog, part man - all fun. Celebrate all things Dog Man with activities including games, craft projects, video clips, trivia, and more. Recommended for ages 6 and up. Held in the upstairs meeting room.

Babytime: Fridays through April 11, 10:30 a.m. This baby-centered storytime features songs, rhymes, lap bounces, and a story. For children ages 0-24 months and their caregivers. Held in the storytime room.

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### New Senior Director Reflects on 'Dream Job'

By Michael Sinkewicz

When Shoshana Merced attended Windham High School, she found herself procrastinating on a community service project. And to fulfill her hour requirements, she ended up volunteering a whole day with Special Olympics — a choice that immediately impacted her life.

"I absolutely fell in love and was very passionate about working with people with disabilities," Merced recalled.

She would go on to work for the Access Community Action Agency, a nonprofit based in Willimantic, before joining the Department of Social Services (DSS) in Enfield. About two months ago, Merced was hired as Marlborough's new senior center director, which she saw as the perfect fit.

"Both of my last careers in social work add up to this one," she explained. "So this one is literally my dream job. I get to have the interpersonal, long-term relationships with people, while planning trips and programming.

Officially, Merced's title is director of human and social services and municipal agent for the aged. Essentially, her job is to oversee the senior center and provide social services for Marlborough residents over the age of 55. She took over

the position following the retirement of longtime director Vi Schwarzmann, who leaves behind a decorated legacy.

"I want to honor and respect that, but I'm really looking forward to my tenure here," Merced said. "They're big shoes to fill, but I'm really ex-

Still, she emphasized that it will take time to build rapport: "I'm new here, I want to have everyone trust me."

far, Merced reported that everyone throughout the community has welcomed and supported her. There's excitement, she added, for what the future holds. As she settles in, the new director has begun updating the senior center's website and social media accounts, while networking with community partners, including Marlborough's food bank and health center.

The first months, she acknowledged, have been "exhausting."

"But I'm telling myself this is the hardest part of what will be my career here," she noted.

There are programs Merced pointed to that are currently successful, such as billiards (offered Mondays and Fridays from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.) and "Not Just Quilters" (held on Wednesdays from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.).

Judging the show for awards will be Jack

Broderick, a practicing fine artist, who paints

In her short time at the helm of the senior center, Merced has already created a birthday club, which involves a monthly celebration of all the birthdays taking place at the center. She also established massage days on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., where a retired local veteran, who is a massage therapist, will offer free massages.

Since taking over, Merced has worked on establishing policies and procedures, including a member handbook, to help solidify what the expectations are for the community and what the residents want and need. In the future, she'd like to expand programming, ensuring a booked schedule Monday through Friday, and eventually expand staffing.

"I'm very open," Merced said. "I want to give everything a try. If we test-drive it and it doesn't work, we'll move on to the next idea."

Merced conveyed that roughly 20 to 25 people take advantage of the senior center's programming — a number she's aiming to boost.

"People want senior services," she stated. They want activities, they want programs. So they're going elsewhere." Some residents are perhaps traveling to East Hampton, Colchester or Hebron to get their senior needs, "and that's totally appropriate," Merced said. "But I think those people want to stay in Marlborough they like Marlborough."

As the senior center expands and possibly adds grocery store trips and other initiatives, collaboration with other towns will be essential.

"I think that's what makes a strong community — its ability to make relationships with surrounding areas," she asserted.

In her previous position, at DSS, Merced would have an extremely large volume of clients. But she said she would only see them on an annual or biannual basis, something she found unsatisfying.

"That wasn't fulfilling," she added. "I'm fueled by the relationships that I build with people. This opportunity to be equal parts director, social worker, case manager, was really exciting for me. But I'm hoping in the future, that we can build a staff to break some of those out."

After growing up and living in the Mansfield



**Shoshana Merced** 

area, Enfield had a different feel, Merced explained. She's comfortable in the northeastern part of the state, and notably, Marlborough is a much shorter commute.

"It's been my home," she said, referring to the region. "I wanted something more local to my

Throughout the winter, Merced has met with residents pertaining to a variety of services and helped with energy assistance applications, amongst other tasks. "It's important," she said, "for people to recognize that there are people in their community who are struggling and they have very real problems."

She added that her approach would be simple: "I'm going to be here for you while we learn how to do this together."

A full list of programs and senior services can be found on the town's website: www.marlboroughct.net.

The senior center is open daily from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. To become a member, residents can stop by in person and receive a membership key fob.

#### **Members Art Show**

Marlborough Arts Center, located at 231 N. Main St., will open its annual Members' Art Show Friday, May 9, from 2-4 p.m. – and the center is currently accepting submissions.

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 on Sunday, April 27, between 1 and 4 p.m., or on Monday, April 28, between 4 and 6 p.m. The entry fee is \$10 for one piece, \$20 for two pieces, and an additional \$5 for a third. Membership dues must be up to date.

Over \$1,000 will be awarded in prizes at a reception and awards ceremony to be held on Sunday afternoon, May 18, from 2-4 p.m.

every day in his studio at The Mill Works in Willington. He uses both image and feeling in developing his paintings. He has traveled and painted extensively in Ireland, Argentina, Spain, Cuba and Italy, and has exhibited internationally in Paris, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, Palermo and Tilcara. He is an elected member of the Lyme Art Association.

The Members' Art Show will be open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday afternoons from 1-4 p.m. from May 9 to June 8, including Memorial Day weekend.

More information, including a prospectus and entry forms for the artists, is available at www.marlborougharts.org.

#### **Greater Together Community Fund Opens Grant Cycle**

The Marlborough Greater Together Community Fund (GTCF) at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving has announced the opening of its third grant cycle.

In this cycle, the fund will award grants ranging from \$500 to \$10,000 to support projects that enhance and improve residents' quality of life. Nonprofit organizations interested in applying should visit www.hfpg/marlboroughcf.org for detailed information on the fund, eligibility requirements, and the application process. Proposals must be submitted no later than April 11.

Organizations do not need to be based in Marlborough to apply, but their proposed projects must directly benefit Marlborough residents. For additional information, contact the Marlborough GTCF Committee at marlborough@hfpgcommunityfunds.org.

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving serves Hartford and 28 surrounding communities. To learn more about the foundation, visit www.hfpg.org or call 860-548-1888.

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#### St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Church is located at 30 Jones Hollow Rd. Pastor is the Rev. Alvin LeBlanc, Bill Gilles is deacon John McKaig is senior deacon retired. 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. The church website is www.stjfchurch.org.

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

Weekday Masses: 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.

Special Lenten Offerings: Stations of the Cross with Soup Supper – Fridays through April 11: soup supper is at 6 p.m. and Stations are at 7 p.m. Weekly Reconciliation - Mondays through April 7, 5-6 p.m.

American Red Cross Blood Drive: Saturday, March 22, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., in the church hall. Register online at redcrossblood.org.

Drive Thru Café: Sunday, March 30. March is the church's commitment month to provide neal to patrons of the Marlborough Food Bank. The café will be held in partnership with Marlborough Congregational Church.

Faith Formation Programs: Programs are well underway for this academic year. For in-

formation, access the church website and click on the Faith Formation link in the upper menu. Cindy Bryan leads the active K, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 family-based program, Eileen Gilles leads the middle school program, and Helena Thomas leads the 2nd grade sacramental program and the 9th and 10th grade Confirmation program. For additional information, call the church office.

Ministry, Social and Parish Community Events: An active adult choir practices weekly; men's and women's prayer groups, Knights of Columbus, Christian Outreach and Prayer Shawl ministry meet monthly; and an active book club meets quarterly. Social activities are planned throughout the year to provide additional parish fellowship.

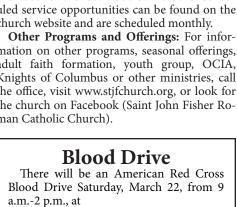
Community Outreach and Service: Food drives are held weekly for the Marlborough Food Bank. You may also bring non-perishable food or household donations directly to the Marlborough Food Bank Monday and Tuesday mornings. Sandwich-making and collection continues the last Thursday of the month for St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown. Various collections supporting Caring Families in Willimantic, House of Bread, ImmaCare and Catholic Worker in Hartford are a few of the other organizations supported. Community Garden vol unteers are always welcome with fresh produce provided for the local food bank. Other scheduled service opportunities can be found on the church website and are scheduled monthly.

mation on other programs, seasonal offerings, adult faith formation, youth group, OCIA, Knights of Columbus or other ministries, call the office, visit www.stjfchurch.org, or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church).





MARLBOROUGH COUNTRY



St. John Fisher Church (enter through the back entrance), 30 Jones Hollow Rd. Donors can enjoy fresh baked goods and

refreshments afterwards. Register by calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood. org and enter "Marlborough" to schedule an appointment.

### Time Capsule Opened After 25 Years

By Michael Sinkewicz

A quarter-century ago, a group of students at Marlborough Elementary School hoisted a time capsule into the ceiling of Deb Bourbeau's fifthgrade classroom.

On Feb. 28, exactly 25 years later, a handful of the former students — who are now adults in their mid-30s — returned to MES to pop open the air-tight bucket, which had remained undisturbed above of a generation of their peers, to review its contents.

Waves of nostalgia swept through the school's community room as retired administrators and faculty who roamed the halls more two decades ago reminisced about the past. The afternoon occasionally felt more like a reunion as the group swapped stories and reflected on their journeys.

It was also an opportunity to bridge the gap between two eras of schooling, with a class of fourth-graders who now occupy Deb Bourbeau's old territory of room 222 joining the fes-

As Bourbeau unsealed the capsule and began sifting through the items, the audience was immediately transported back in time. A pennant marked the UConn men's basketball team's first

championship in 1999; newspaper clips highlighted rising oil prices; an abundance of Legos and Pokémon cards reminded students of their childhood passions.

When Bourbeau pulled out a copy of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, the crowd erupted in excitement, likely recalling the craze the book series caused when it first came out. But in stark contrast, only a couple of current elementary school students said they'd explored the novels.

Matt Ferony, a 10-year-old student in Bourbeau's 1999-2000 class who attended the gathering with his wife, joked as he thought back to his youth, "I turned out okay!"

Ferony, who's now 35 years old, said it was "fascinating" to comb through what his classmates left behind. He noted that some of the items seemed like antiques, gesturing to a beeper resting beside the capsule.

"You're like, 'Oh my gosh, I forgot those existed," he expressed.

While some students' recollection of the time capsule project was fuzzy, Ferony distinctly remembered donating a Pokémon card and a penny. He also knew their plan was to someday revisit the capsule — which happened a bit sooner than he expected.

Parks and Rec. Spring Programs

Marlborough Parks & Recreation has announced the following spring and summer programs. For full program descriptions, or to register, visit www.marlboroughct.net. For more information, call 860-295-6203.

Special Events/Trips: Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday, April 12, at Blish Park. Ages 2 and under are at 11 a.m., ages 6-8 are at 11:15 a.m., ages 3-5 are at 11:30 a.m., and ages 7-10 are at 11:45 a.m.

Kids Fishing Derby: Saturday, May 10, 9-11 a.m., at Blish Park. This event is held for anyone from 4 to 15 years of age. Registration is \$10. Prizes will be awarded for biggest fish, smallest fish and first fish caught.

New York Yankees vs. Tampa Bay Rays: Saturday, May 3, game time at 1:05 p.m. Trip includes ticket to the game, charter bus, and games and prizes on the bus. Registration fee is \$175 (200-level seating) or \$135 (400-level seating). Bus picks up/drops off at Putnam park and ride in Glastonbury.

Youth Programs: Tiny Twirlers Dance Class: For ages 2-3 with caregiver. Tuesdays, 5-5:30 p.m., March 25-May 27 (no class April 15); or Saturdays, 9:30-10 a.m., March 29-May 17 (no class April 19). Classes held at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Fee for Tuesday class is \$135,

and fee for the Saturday class is \$108. Little Limelights Dance Class: For ages 5-7. Tuesdays, 6:30-7 p.m., April 1-May 13 (no class April 15), at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Fee is \$80.

Kids Klub Dance Class: For ages 4-7. Saturdays, 11:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m., March 29-May 17 (no class April 19), at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Fee is \$108.

After School Co-Ed Dodgeball League: For grades 5 and 6. Mondays, March 17-April 29, 3:15-4:15 p.m., at Marlborough Elementary School (MES). No dodgeball on April 8. Fee is \$30 for residents.

After School Co-Ed Handball League: For grades 5 and 6. Wednesdays, March 29-May 1, 3:15-4:15 p.m., at MES. No handball April 10. Fee is \$30 for residents.

Kids Sewing - Beach Tote/Clutch/Hair Accessories: For ages 6 and up. Saturday, April 5,

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9-11:30 a.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee is \$75/resident, \$80/non-resident.

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

Soccer Shots Mini: For age 2. Saturdays, April 12-June 6 (no session May 24), 3-3:35 p.m., at the West Road Memorial upper field. Fee is \$102/resident, \$107/non-resident.

Soccer Shots Classic: For ages 3-5. Saturdays, April 12-June 6 (no session May 24), 3:45-4:30 p.m., at the West Road Memorial upper field. Fee is \$108/resident, \$113/non-resident.

ART-ventures- Artist's Passport Travel the World Through Art: For grades K-6. Tuesdays, April 22-May 27, 3:15-4:15 p.m., at MES. Fee: \$132/resident, \$137/non-resident.

Spring Into Yoga - Kids Yoga & Mindfulness Series: For ages 3-10. Tuesdays, April 22-May 13, 5:15-6 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Parent/guardian must attend to observe or participate with their child. Fee is \$65/resident, \$70/non-resident, or a \$17 drop-in fee.

Mad Science-Mad Medley: For grades K-6. Thursdays, April 24-May 29, 3:15-4:15 p.m., at MES. Fee is \$132/resident, \$137/non-resident.

Skyhawks Multi Sports Tots: Thursdays, May 8-June 12, at MES. Ages 2 and 3 are 5-5:45 p.m., and ages 4 and 5 is 6-6:45 p.m. Parent participation is required with children 3.5 years and younger. Registration fee is \$85/resident,

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

Adult Programs: Adult Tap: Thursdays, 8-8:45 p.m., March 27-May 29 (no class April 17), at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Fee is \$180.

Beginner & Intermediate Tai Chi: Thursdays, 1-2 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee is \$40/resident, \$45/non-resident.

ference room at Fire Station No. 2 and virtually. Fee: \$50/residents, \$55/non-residents, or a \$12 drop-in fee.

p.m., at MES. Drop-in fee is \$5 per week. Ses

Adult Drop-In Basketball: Sundays, 8-10 a.m., at MES. Drop-in fee is \$5 per week. Ses-



Five of Deb Bourbeau's former students recently gathered at Marlborough Elementary School to open a time capsule they'd "buried" 25 years ago. From left are Emily Turcan, Matt Ferony, Bourbeau, Abby Grover, Katelyn Gregor and William Cairnduff.

"I just was more shocked that it'd been 25 years," Ferony exclaimed.

Bourbeau couldn't recall exactly how her class landed on the idea of doing a time capsule, but once the concept was introduced, it gained momentum. The students wanted to do something to commiserate the "new millennium," although she noted that it technically began in 2001.

"I remember the day we put it up into the ceiling," Bourbeau conveyed. "They were so excited."

The "burial" took place on Feb. 28 — a date chosen by Bourbeau because it was her aunt's birthday — and the capsule was raised on a pulley above room and chained to the steel girder above the ceiling.

A special tile marked the capsule's location and the names of the student contributors, but during a subsequent school renovation, it was removed. The capsule could've remained hidden, a lost treasure left for future explorers to uncover.

"Luckily, I described where it was," Bourbeau joked.

The items donated in the capsule were meant to capture a bit of what life was like in Marlborough at the turn of the century.

'This has just been so much fun to listen to their reactions as they pull things out," Bourbeau said. Her takeaway from the capsule: "Kids are still kids." While the specific movie stars or albums that students are obsessed with may evolve, "their interests really don't change a lot."

"And that was the best part about teaching," Bourbeau continued. "Kids are just kids, and every day, you just never knew what to expect."

Bourbeau retired from teaching in 2008, and stuck around in Marlborough; she's currently the chairman of the town's Board of Selectmen.

But tracking down other members of the fifthgrade class proved to be more difficult. While some still live in the general area, others reside in Mexico or the United Kingdom. Overall, five former students were able to attend the ceremony last month.

It was also a chance for past administrators to come back to their school, including Joseph Reardon, who was the district's superintendent

"For people like us, it's nostalgic," he said. Looking at the grown-up elementary school students in front of him, Reardon reflected on the passage of time, "It's just fast, too fast."

There was unequivocal evidence in the capsule that 25 years had lapsed. A dictionary lacked some of the slang used by today's students; a world map identified borders or names that have since changed; and a grocery receipt displayed prices that are perhaps unrealistic today. (It was from Stop & Shop, as Marlborough's Big Y wasn't open yet.)

Along with pictures of the fifth-grade class, Bourbeau included a letter she wrote for today's students, describing the year 2000. Not only did her message document local current events and data, but also moments that would shape the nation moving forward, such as 2000 presidential election.

'Hopefully the items we chose will help you understand life in the year 2000, the fashion, cost of food, popular toys and games, and anything else we felt may be of interest," she wrote. "Enjoy your 'travel' through time. Maybe YOU will create a new time capsule to be opened in 2050!"

The capsule's contents will be displayed at Town Hall for a year, at which point the former can officially claim items.







www.marlboroughpizzact.com

#### From the Town Manager's Desk

**Editor's Note:** For his column this week, Town Manager David Porter is ceding his space to the Board of Finance chair and vice chair. Porter will be back with his regular column next week.

Marlborough Budget Process Update

Three elected boards – Board of Selectmen (Town), Marlborough Board of Education (MES), and Region 8 Board of Education (RHAM) – are responsible for the three parts of the annual budget. Beginning in February, the Board of Finance met weekly to hear presentations about the RHAM, MES, and Town budgets, ask questions, and discuss each proposed budget.

On March 5, the BOF scrutinized and debated several scenarios before directing the Board of Selectmen and the Marlborough Board of Education to cut their budget by \$65,000 each, or \$130,000 total. RHAM had already identified savings, so their budget is set. The BOF is committed to bringing forward a budget that strikes a balance between funding the quality schools and town services our community wants while presenting a tax increase our residents can afford. To meet those objectives, the BOF will need to supplement those cuts with an offset from the Undesignated Fund Balance.

What is the Undesignated Fund Balance (UFB)? Municipalities are encouraged to have a UFB for use in emergencies. For example, if Marlborough experienced a major storm that damaged roads, the school, or other town facilities, we would use the UFB to make emergency repairs while also filing claims with our insurance and seeking appropriate state or federal assistance.

The UFB is one of the indicators ratings agencies use to ascertain the fiscal health of a town. Marlborough will need to bond in the coming years for culverts, other infrastructure projects, and school renovations. Marlborough has worked hard to maintain our UFB at or above 14.5% of our annual budget. At that level, we have adequate resources to respond to emergencies and to qualify for a favorable bond rating.

The BOF has not yet decided how much to offset with the UFB. If the BOF supplements the \$130,000 in cuts with \$170,000 from the UFB, the balance would decrease from 15.0% to 14.4% of our annual budget and the proposed property tax mill rate would be 37.82, a 4.22% increase over last year. That figure is NOT a useful one.

A true apples-to-apples comparison with last year requires that we net out the increase attributable to a change the state legislature made to the way in which cities and towns assess the value of motor vehicles. The new formula reduces the assessed value of motor vehicles in Marlborough by a little more than 7%, which reduces the amount you will be paying on your motor vehicle bills next year. In the above scenario, that reduction in motor vehicle taxes is responsible for 0.28 mills of the increase. After accounting for the motor vehicle tax cut, the true mill rate would be 37.54, which represents an increase of 3.44%.

The next step is for the BOS to meet to decide where their cuts will be made, and the BOE will do the same.

Key dates to remember are:

- · Monday, April 14, 6:30 p.m. First Public Hearing for the Town/MES/RHAM Budget (MES Cafeteria):
- · Wednesday, April 16, 6:30 p.m. BOF meets to discuss the public hearing (MES Library); · Friday, April 25 The *Rivereast* will publish the budget on which residents will vote;
- · Monday, May 5, 6:30 p.m. Second Public Hearing for the Town/MES/RHAM Budget (MES

· Tuesday, May 6, 6 a.m.-8 p.m. – Referendum (MES Community Room).

We encourage all residents to vote on May 6. The proposed mill rate tracks inflation closely. The Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) for the northeast region increased 3.7% for the 12 months ending in January. When food and energy – traditionally volatile metrics – are removed, the CPI-U for the same period increased 4.1%.

If Marlborough residents do not pass the budget on May 6, both the Marlborough Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen will need to reduce services for Marlborough residents before a second referendum two weeks later.

Mike Nastri, Board of Finance Chair Karen Pakulis Paul, Board of Finance Vice-Chair



New Computers... Richmond Memorial Library received a grant to replace the computers that are for public use. This grant came from the Marlborough Greater Together Community Fund at the Hartford Foundation. A new grant cycle has begun for grant requests; for additional information, email marlborough@hfpgcommunityfunds.org.

#### **DTC Seeks Candidates**

The Marlborough Democratic Town Committee is seeking candidates to run for municipal office in November. There are a variety of positions available depending on your interest and expertise.

If interested, contact the DTC Candidate Search Committee at 781-956-6419 or email Marlboroughctdemtowncommittee@gmail.com.

#### Vendors Sought for Craft Fair

American Legion Post 197 in Marlborough will host a spring craft fair Sunday, April 6, from 9 am.-3 p.m. – and craft vendors are sought.

The deadline to reserve a table is Wednesday, March 12. If you make handmade items and would like a space, email dalejrfan21174@gmail.com for an application. Please put 'craft fair' in the subject line.

### Resident's Photos in Town Hall Display

Marlborough Arts Center has an exhibit at Town Hall featuring photos by local resident Danny Veilleux. The photos will be on display through July 31.

This exhibit is open to the public during business hours at Town Hall Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., and Fridays from 8 a.m.-noon.

For more information, check out www.marlborougharts.org, or contact the Arts Center at 860-467-6353 or email marlboroughartscenter@gmail.com.





The local band Seat Of Our Pants – from left, Michael Frantzen, Mark Hall, Carolyn Brodginski and Jeff Gorman – will perform at Marlborough Arts Center Friday, March 28.

#### **SOOP Returns to Arts Center**

The Marlborough Arts Center welcomes Seat Of Our Pants – affectionately known as SOOP – for the next 4th Friday @ the Arts Café series, which will be held Friday, March 28, at 7:30 p.m., at Marlborough Arts Center, 231 North Main St.

With a combination of folk instruments and rock-infused songwriting, SOOP is an award-winning band; the group's music video "Hands" received a 2020 Telly Award, which honors excellence in video and television. The band has performed at The Buttonwood Tree, on the grand stage at Mohegan Sun's Wolf Den,

Podunk Bluegrass Festival, and many other locations around the state. To learn more about SOOP, visit seatofourpantsmusic.com/home.

The 4th Friday @ the Arts Café concerts are \$15 per person payable at the door. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the concert begins at 7:30 p.m. BYOW and nibbles to dine on. Other non-alcoholic beverages are available. There is on-site parking, and the Marlborough Arts Center is handicapped-accessible.

For more information, visit www.marlborougharts.org, email info@marlborougharts.org, or call 860-467-6353.

#### Senior Center News and Notes

Marlborough Senior Center, 17 School Drive, is open for activities. For more information about any senior center program, call 860-295-6209 or email socialservices@marlboroughct. net. Follow the senior center on Facebook; search for Marlborough Senior Center.

**Senior Center Hours:** Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

**Undergoing Renovations:** The center will be undergoing renovations the week of March 17-21. The locations of some events have been changed for that week only; times remain the

Bakery Donations will be delivered to the Town Hall conference room on Monday 3/17 and Tuesday 3/18; Billiards: Canceled on 3/17 and 3/21; Bingo on 3/18 will be held at Florence Lord, 155 S. Main St., from 1-2 p.m.; Cards: Monday, 3/17 from 2-3 p.m., at Fire House No. 2, 200 West Rd., and Wednesday, 3/19 and Friday, 3/21 at Fire House No. 2; Coffee & Conversations: Canceled; Not Just Quilters on 3/19 will meet at Fire House No. 2; Tap: Canceled.

AARP Free Tax Preparation Services: The center is fully booked at this time. If you need assistance, consider calling other senior centers or 2-1-1 for VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)

**Billiards:** Mondays and Fridays, 10 a.m.-

**Bingo:** Mondays, 1-2 p.m. Each card costs \$1 and additional cards after are 50 cents.

**Birthday Club:** All are welcome the fourth Tuesday of each month to celebrate your birthday! March birthdays will be celebrated, with cake, on March 25 from 1-2 p.m. Please RSVP.

**Blood Drive:** The senior center will host a community blood drive with the American Red Cross on Thursday, April 4, from 1-6 p.m., at the center. The Red Cross said it is extremely low in O+ and O- blood. For more information or to make an appointment to donate, call 860-

### **Lions Eyeglass Collection Boxes**

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

The Marlborough Lions drop boxes are located at Town Hall, Liberty Bank, the Marlborough Senior Center, Richmond Memorial Library and at the office of Dr. Steven Rafalowsky on Saner Road. The Lions collect the eyeglasses and hearing aids all year long and once a year Lions Clubs from all over Connecticut meet to turn in the collected items. Eyeglass cases are also appreciated.

If you have any questions, or would like to learn more about the Marlborough Lions, call club secretary Ken Hjulstrom at 860-490-9116 or club president Jean Paul Bolduc at 860-798-2054.

207-4795 or sign up online at redcrossblood.org with sponsor code "Marlborough."

**Blood Pressure Checks and Chatham Health Education Presentation:** Third Thursdays, 10-11 a.m. Next day is April 17.

Cards: Monday, 2-3:30 p.m.; Wednesdays and Fridays, 1-3:30 p.m.

**Chair Massage:** Free, 15-minute chair massage every Tuesday and Thursday 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Must RSVP.

Coffee & Conversations: Meets the third Thursday of each month at 11 a.m. Each session includes a discussion on a particular topic of interest, activity and sometimes lunch. March 20th will be a Celebration of Women's Month. Light lunch provided.

Food Bank: Located at 3 Wilhenger Drive, and can be reached at 860-295-6008. There is an open house Tuesdays from 10 a.m.-noon and 4-6 p.m. The food bank is in need of: pasta, soup, canned chili, sugar, flour, cereal, instant oatmeal, peanut butter, jelly, deodorant, shampoo, feminine products, and toothbrushes. The food bank is open to qualified residents in need.

Not Just Quilters: All skill levels welcome. Needleworkers and other handwork crafters also welcome. The group meets every Wednesday and Friday from 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Supplies not provided. Bring your own project or get in on the block of the month.

Parkinson's Exercise: These are specialized exercise classes for those living with Parkinson's disease. Intervals may vary for each lesson and exercises will be appropriate for the monthly theme. All classes will include boxing and visualization exercises. There is a fee for each class. Visit www.beatpdtoday.com/class-schedule to register and for more information.

**Mahjong:** Every Wednesday from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Fire Station No. 2, 200 West Rd., and the second Friday of every month (next Friday session is 3/14) from 12:30-2:30 p.m. at Marlborough Bakery, 8 Independence Drive. All skill levels are welcome. There is no fee to play, but players use 2025 Mahjong cards, which they purchase on their own.

Meals on Wheels: Provides meals and daily visits. The program serves people 60 years of age and over, and their spouses or caregivers. A suggested donation of \$3 per meal is requested, but no one will be denied a meal if unable to donate. There is no income eligibility requirement. Menus can be modified to accommodate health concerns. You may apply directly with CRT by calling 860-560-5848, or call the senior center for a referral.

**Tap:** The center's tap dance group is open for new, experienced members. The group meets every Wednesday from 5-6:30 p.m.

**Transportation:** Transportation is available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Rides must be reserved three business days in advance. Reservations are taken Monday-Thursday. Call 860-295-6209 for more information.

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### Set Sail for Laughter and Romance with Anything Goes

Prepare to embark on a thrilling adventure filled with romance, mix-ups, and toe-tapping classics in Portland High School's production of Anything Goes next weekend March 21 and 22.

Anything Goes is a comedy musical featuring music and lyrics by Cole Porter, with an original book by Guy Bolton and P. G. Wodehouse, later revised by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse.

Set aboard an ocean liner traveling from New York to London, the story follows Billy Crocker, a stowaway determined to win the heart of heiress Hope Harcourt who is engaged to the aristocratic Lord Evelyn Oakleigh.

With the help of nightclub singer Reno Sweeney and the mischievous "Public Enemy Number 13," Moonface Martin, Billy embarks on a series of comedic escapades. The show features classic songs that later became jazz and pop standards, including "Anything Goes," "You're the Top," "All Through the Night" and "I Get a Kick Out of You."

Since premiering in 1934 at the Alvin Theatre, now the Neil Simon Theatre, on Broadway, the musical has been revived multiple times in both the United States and the United Kingdom.

Sam Tucker, the director, is a music teacher at PHS. He said the plot follows a hectic love triangle between Billy, Hope, Reno and Evelyn. While Hope and Evelyn are stuck in a love-less arranged engagement, Billy is set on taking Hope as his own. Including the cast, crew, and a student pit led by fellow music teacher Kristin Novak, about 80 students are involved in this year's musical.

Tucker noted that rehearsals have been going "very well" and even though there is a lot to do before opening night, the cast is in good shape. Since the show is not ensemble-heavy, Tucker said they are able to focus on making the big

Many of the leads are veterans who have been doing shows throughout their high school careers. "They know their way around the stage," added Tucker. He enjoys seeing the older students serve as mentors to the younger ones, helping teach a new group of lead performers. For the first time, middle school students have joined the ensemble to help fill out the stage. Tucker noted that they are also building mentorships to help them prepare for future high school auditions.

Dylan Cohen, a member of the Class of 2026, takes on the role of Billy, a young Wall Street broker who falls for a girl he met at a party. Cohen said his character will do anything to win over his true love. "He is a man who knows what he wants and no one or thing will get in the way," said Cohen.

In his first musical, Cohen has enjoyed watching the run-throughs improve with each rehearsal. A longtime fan of singing and an All-State musician, he now hopes to develop his act-

Cohen believes the audience will get a good laugh, especially adults who may catch some extra jokes. "The jokes are funny, there are lots of music and lots of good singers," Cohen noted.

Hope, played by senior Maryn Yost, is a beautiful heiress with a strong sense of duty who is willing to sacrifice love and marry to satisfy her mother's wishes. Yost described her character as someone who doesn't want to disappoint others and has a hard time putting herself first.

Yost's favorite part of this show is the comedic timing. "We haven't really done many comedies in the past," she noted. One of the challenging aspects for Yost is the character switch from last year's performance of Matilda where she played Miss Trunchbull, the violent headmistress of



The luxury liner S.S. American is stopping at Portland High School next week for its production of Anything Goes. With a cast and crew of almost 80 students, everyone is invited to come watch the chaotic comedy. Pictured is Maryn Yost playing Hope, an engaged debutante, and Dylan Cohen playing Billy, a young Wall Street broker.

the school. "I went from the villain to the flighty post girl," Yost added.

As a senior, Yost has performed in all four musicals. As a freshman, she felt that she wasn't good enough and had a lot of doubt. However, she thanks Portland for seeing potential in students, knowing they will grow and flourish. Following graduation, Yost plans to continue theater in some manner. "It just brings me so much joy," Yost said. "It's great to look back on it, I've had so much fun?

Junior Toby Hunter is playing Lord Evelyn

Oakleigh, Hope's good-natured but stuffy and hapless fiancé. Hunter said audiences are more likely to laugh at Evelyn rather than with him. Ultimately, the rehearsals have been fun but often stressful, Hunter explained. "The dancing is very fun, especially once you learn it and get to play with it," he added.

Anything Goes will open at Portland Middle School auditorium, 93 High Street, at 7 p.m. on Friday, March 21, and 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 22. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors and students, and \$10 for kids.

#### Trinity Episcopal News

Trinity Episcopal Church, 345 Main St., invites all to services on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Bible Study starts at 8:30 a.m. each Sunday. The church has a long-term Supply Priest, the Rev. Mary Ann Osborn, who leads worship on most Sundays. All are invited to come one Sunday to meet her. The church schedule can be located online at www.trinitychurchport-

The church is open for prayer and meditation, and the church office is open, from 2-4 p.m. each Friday. Anglican Prayer beading sessions are held at this time too; all are welcome - no prior beading experience required. It's a time for fellowship and socializing.

Check www.trinitychurchportlandct.org for more information, a calendar of events, to donate, or to listen to past sermons. If you have any other prayer requests to lift up, email the church office at trinitychurchportlandct@ gmail.com.

#### First Congregational Church News

The First Congregational Church of Portland. located at 554 Main St., holds worship Sundays at 10 a.m.; all are welcome. The next service is this Sunday, March 9.

This Sunday, the Dress a Girl project, which provides new dresses for children around the world, will have a fashion show during worship.

Following the Children's Message, the Church School children will go to class to explore their faith with active learning. The church's nursery looks after infants through preschool children.

After worship is Fellowship Hour, which is a time of conversation and refreshments.

Soup and Substance: Wednesdays, March 26 and April 9. Soup Supper is at 6 p.m., followed by the program at 6:30 p.m. All are invited to "Soup and Substance," a Lenten program designed to nourish both body and soul. On three Wednesdays during Lent, gather for a soup and bread supper. Following the meal, attendees will explore various spiritual practices. The Ministry of Spiritual Life is coordinating this Lenten pro-

For more information, go to firstchurchportlandct.org or call 860-342-3244.

ete list of programs, full course descriptions and costs, or to register, visit portland.recdesk. com or call 860-342-6757. Advanced registration is required.

Boating Certificate-Personal Watercraft Operation: Starts Tuesday and Wednesday, April 1 and 2, from 5-6 p.m., at the Buck-Foreman Community Center. The successful completion of this 8-hour beginner boating class will give you the knowledge and a Completion Certificate needed to obtain a boater's license/

Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday, April 12, 10 a.m., at the Portland Recreational Complex. For families with children ages 1-10. Find the golden egg and win a prize. Golden egg prizes will be provided by Angela Aresco with Carl Guild & Associates. Rain date is Sunday, April

Junior Golf Workshop (Grades 3-5): Saturdays, April 26-May 17, 1:45-2:15 p.m., at the Portland West Golf Course. The schedule may change. Check the Parks and Rec. website for the most up-to-date information.

Junior Golf Workshop (Grades 6-8): Wednesdays, April 16-May 7, 4:30-5:30 p.m., at the Portland West Golf Course. The schedule

Parks and Rec. News & Notes Portland Parks and Recreation offers a variety of programs for adults and children. For a comforther most up-to-date information.

Skyhawks - Multi-Sport (Age 2-5): Satur days, April 12-May 15, at Riverfront Park. Parent participation required for ages 2-3.5 years.

Slamma-Jamma Basketball Camp Spring Break: Monday, April 14 - Friday, April 18, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at Portland High School. Led by Coach David Bradbury, campers will learn the fundamentals of basketball.

Kids' Blast: This is an afterschool (3-6 p.m.) child care program available to students enrolled in grades K-6 in the Portland Public School system.

Tai Chi for Long Life: At the Buck-Foreman Community Center Wednesdays, 9:30-10:15 a.m., and Saturdays, 10:30-11:15 a.m.

Co-Ed Drop-In Volleyball: Tuesdays, 6:30-8 p.m., at Gildersleeve School. Registration is required. There is no drop-in program when the

Drop-In Basketball: Mondays for men and Tuesdays for women, from 7:30-9 p.m. each week, at Portland Middle School. Free to Portland residents. Registration required. There is no program when the school is closed.

Yin Yoga at Riverfront Park: Tuesdays, May 20-June 10, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at Riverfront Park. Great for beginners and intermediates.



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Portland • Portland •



Donation... Portland Exchange President Tim Welsh (left) and Exchange member Jamie Leonard (right) present a donation of \$1,000 for the Portland Fuel Bank to Michelle Ceppaglia and First Selectman Michael Pelton. The donation was raised from Exchange member contributions, along with the proceeds from the Exchange Club's February Bingo Night.

#### Winter and Romance Book Sale

The Friends of the Portland Library's Snow Day table in the Second Hand Prose area will continue with many puzzles and family games to help keep everyone entertained on snowy days or the upcoming school break. Prices range from \$1 to \$5 each.

Aspiring winter cooks will find all sorts of cookbooks. For those wanting to cozy up with a good book including a nice romance story, a wide selection of hardcover, trade and paper-

back books await. Children's books and DVDs are available, too.

All proceeds from the Second-Hand Prose shop are used to support programs of Portland Library, such as the library's Museum Pass Program, children and adult programs, and the library's DVD collection.

Visit www.friendsofportlandlibraryct.org for more information or email questions to friendsoftheportlandlibrary@gmail.com.

#### **Music and Nursing Scholarship Applications**

The Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords (MHVC) Executive Board is taking applications for the group's annual scholarships to be awarded to Middlesex County students pursuing a career in music or nursing. Applications are due next month.

Middlesex County includes the *Rivereast* towns of East Hampton and Portland.

Applicants must have been accepted at an accredited college or university with one of these majors. The Review Committee will consider

academic record, extracurricular and community service activities, the student's ability to articulate his/her career goals and the recommendations of the references. The scholarships will be paid directly to the recipients at the spring concert which will be held on Saturday, May 3, at Portland High School.

All applications must be postmarked by Friday, March 14, and can be obtained at Middlesex County high school guidance offices or by visiting vocalchords20.org.

Jason A. Fedash Scholarship: The Town

Tech Educational Partnership is now accept-

ing scholarship applications for the Jason A.

Fedash Scholarship. Applicants must be a Port-

land High School senior planning to attend a

two or four-year accredited college in pursuit

of a career in computer science, information

technology, environmental science, or the water

dance, music or the arts.

#### Scholarships Available

Portland High School seniors can apply for a pair of scholarships. Applications for both scholarships may be obtained from the PHS guidance office, and are due March 15.

Ronna A. Kuzminski Scholarship: ConnValley School of Music & Dance is now accepting scholarship applications for the Ronna A. Kuzminski Scholarship. Applicants must be a PHS senior planning to attend a two- or four-year accredited college in pursuit of a career in

#### rsuit of a career in industry.

Zion Lutheran Church, located at 183 William St., offers worship on Sundays at 9 a.m. Pastor is Sara Stall-Ryan.

**Sunday School:** Sunday school, for children age 3 to grade eight, is held from 10:15-11:15 a.m. on the first and third Sundays of the month. For more information, call Sylvia LeShane at 860-342-0658.

**The Chosen**: The video series *The Chosen* is viewed and discussed on the second and fourth Sunday of the month, following Sunday worship.

**Soup and Substance:** On Wednesdays during Lent, Zion is participating in the Soup and Substance program together with Bethlehem Lutheran Church in East Hampton at 6 p.m. Dates

**Zion Lutheran News & Notes**ch, located at 183 Wilon Sundays at 9 a.m. April 2 at Bethlehem; March 26 at Zion;
April 2 at Bethlehem; and April 9 at Zion.

Year-Round Giving: During March, the Grace Guild will collect donations of groceries and personal items for the local Food Bank. Also, pull tabs are collected year-round and donated to the Ronald McDonald "House that Love Built," supporting families with seriously ill children. Zion recycles computer ink cartridges to support office supplies for Sunny Hill Preschool and Zion.

For more information about any church activities, or if you are in need of pastoral assistance, call 860-342-2860, email zion.lutheran@snet.net, or visit zionlutheranportland.org.

#### **Business Operating Grants Program**

Applications for the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission's (MCRC) 2025 Business Operating Grants Program are available online. The program, funded through the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, offers grants of up to \$25,000 to qualified small businesses in Middlesex County.

qualified small businesses in Middlesex County.

Middlesex County includes the *Rivereast* towns of East Hampton and Portland.

Applicants are encouraged to consider how the requested funds will positively impact the growth and development of their business or alleviate the negative effects of any hardship currently being faced. The grant funding may be used for equipment and/or technology, leasehold improvements, and other fixed costs, including expenses related to supply chain disruptions, increased employee travel time/mileage, higher vendor costs, loss of income, and additional marketing expenses.

For-profit businesses that apply must be based and have operated in a Middlesex County town for at least 24 months, have no more than 50 employees, less than \$8 million in revenue, and be in good standing with all municipal, state, and federal authorities. A complete list of eligibility and application requirements can be found at mxcrc.org.

Applications are due March 15.

A series of virtual information sessions will be offered for businesses interested in applying. For more details, visit mxcrc.org.

#### Parks and Rec. Summer Activities

Portland Parks and Recreation is offering several programs for kids this summer. For full course descriptions and costs, or to register, visit portland.recdesk.com or call 860-342-6757. Advanced registration is required.

Summer Quest Kiddie Camp: Open to children ages 3.5 to 5 years old, Kiddie Camp will run for three weeks, starting the week of June 30. This program runs from 8:45 a.m.-1 p.m. Kiddie Campers who are 5 years old will have the option of joining the Base Campers from 1-3:30 p.m. Register before May 1 to lock in early bird pricing.

**Summer Quest Base Camp:** Open to children ages 5 to 11 years old, Base Camp will run for seven weeks, starting Monday, June 23. The final week is Aug. 4-8. Camp is held at Portland High School between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 PM. Register before May 1 to lock in early bird pric-

ing.

Summer Quest Teen Camp: Open to children ages 11 to 14 years old, Teen Camp will run for 7 weeks, starting Monday, June 23. The final week is Aug. 4-8. Campers will go on two field trips each week. Outings include a trip to Dunkin' Park, Brownstone Adventure Park, golf at Chris Cote's Golf Shop, and numerous state

Slamma-Jamma Basketball Camp Summer Sessions: At Portland High School from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. each day. Session 1 will run July 14-18, and Session 2 will run July 28-Aug. 1.

S.T.E.A.M. and Legos: Monday-Friday, July 21-25, at the Buck Foreman Community Center. Building Up S.T.E.A.M., for ages 5-6, meets 9 a.m.-noon, and S.T.E.A.M. Works, for ages 7-9, meets 1-4 p.m. All skill levels welcome.

#### **Senior Center News & Notes**

The Waverly Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave., is open Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., and Friday, 9 a.m.-noon. For more information or to register, call 860-342-6761.

Food Bank: The senior center asks that residents not leave Food Bank donations at the senior center unless the Food Bank is open. The Food Bank is open Mondays and Thursdays from 9 a.m.-noon. Also, donations should be of food only; call the senior center to inquire if staff is seeking medical equipment donations at this time. Due to limited space, staff cannot accept donations at the senior center without prior approval by the director.

Weekly Programs: Unless noted, all programs are free. Monday, 3/17: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; Tai Chi, 10-11 a.m. – cost is \$10 to attend; SyncoCize II Dance and Fitness, 10:30-11:30 a.m., cost is a donation to the instructor.

Tuesday, 3/18: Bears on a Journey, 9:30-11 a.m. – help make fleece teddy bears for cancer patients. Bears on a Journey seeks donations of light fleece (one yard or more) for making teddy bears for cancer patients throughout Connecticut. If you would like to donate, call 860-342-0809. Watercolor Class, 9:30 a.m. – for more information contact Bivenne at bivenne@yahoo.com. Congregate Meal, noon (\$3 suggested donation – must fill out form). Menu: Swedish meatballs, egg noodles, carrots, seasonal cookie, string cheese and orange; Coupons for Troops, 1-4 p.m.; Setback, 1 p.m.

Wednesday, 3/19: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; SyncoCize II Dance and Fitness, 10:30-11:30 a.m. – donations are requested for

### Mastering the Art of Vegetable Gardening

On Wednesday, March 26, at 7 p.m., at The Waverly Center, 7 Waverly Ave., author and horticulturist Matt Mattus will share information on the varieties of vegetables and herbs highlighted in his popular book, *Mastering the Art of Vegetable Gardening*.

Get ready for this in-depth "201"-level course in cultivating produce in your garden. All are welcome to attend and light refreshments will be served.

This event is sponsored by the Portland River Valley Garden Club and the Portland Garden Club.

### Planning Begins for PHS Reunion

Planning has begun for the Portland High School Class of 1975 50th Reunion. The committee is seeking current contact information (address, email, phone number) for classmates.

If you have any information to share, email Sue Hale Colby at mrsgtrucking@aol.com or Jane Klemba at klembajane@comcast.net.

#### Republicans Seek Volunteers

The Portland Republican Town Committee is seeking individuals to serve the community as members of one of the town's various boards and commissions.

In addition, the committee is looking for individuals who are interested in running for local elective positions and/or for membership in the Portland RTC.

If interested, email GOPPortlandCT@gmail. com or call Tim Lavoy at 860-212-3114.

The Portland RTC holds its regular meetings on the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at 7 Waverly Ave. Republicans interested in learning more about becoming a member of the RTC are welcome to attend.

instructor; Bridge, 12:30-4 p.m.

Thursday, 3/20: Tone & Stretch, 9:30 a.m.; Knit & Stitch, 10 a.m.; Congregate Meal, noon (\$3 suggested donation – must fill out form). Menu: turkey tetrazzini casserole, dinner roll and butter, garden salad, dressing, string cheese, pears; Mahjong, 12:30 p.m.; Scrabble, 1 p.m.

Friday, 3/21: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; Mahjong, 10 a.m.

**Special Events:** Registration is required for all unless noted. **St. Patrick's Day Party:** Monday, March 17, 2 p.m. There will be a festive food menu and music by the Ray Phillip Band. Cost is \$8 to attend. Registration is required.

**Senior Resources Presentation:** Tuesday, March 18. The theme is "Aging and Nutrition: How Diets Change Over Time."

**Pandemonium Rainforest Project Thrift Shop:** Thursday, March 20, departing at 10 a.m. Visit the thrift shop and have lunch in the café. Cost is a \$5 ride fee; pay for your own meal.

AARP Tax Return Preparation: Wednesdays through April 19, 9 a.m.-noon. This is a free service, but appointments are required.

**Blood Pressure Clinic:** 10-11:30 a.m. on the first Monday of each month; the clinic does not operate if the first Monday is a holiday.

Medical Rides: The center offers ADA-accessible transportation for seniors to medical rides. The fee is \$5/person, round-trip. Please give a two-week notice.

**Foot Care:** The center is taking appointments for the Foot Clinic with Stacey Cormier RN. She will offer various services, starting at \$35. Please call to register and for more information.

**Drivers Wanted:** The center is recruiting volunteer drivers for the Meals on Wheels program in Portland. For full details, call the Waverly Portland Senior Center at 860-342-6761.

### Lions Taking Scholarship Applications The Portland Lions Club is taking scholarship

applications from Portland resident students enrolling in a post-high school certificate or degree program that serves the public in some manner.

Applications will be accepted from students of all academic levels as well as learning challenges. Portland students can obtain an application form from the Portland High School guidance office or by emailing Portlandctlions-scholarship@gmail.com.

All applications must be received by April 15 for consideration.

### Portland High School Auction

All are invited to Portland High School on Thursday, March 27, at 6 p.m., as the PHS sophomore class sponsors a live auction featuring such items as a fire pit and an air fryer.

In addition to these big-ticket items, there will be a silent auction with themed gift baskets and a variety of gift cards and services from local businesses up for grabs.

The event will also feature a bake sale.

Proceeds benefit the Class of 2027. For more information, contact Joanne Choquette or Kristen Vazquez at Portland High School.

#### Palm Cross Sale

St. Mary Ladies Guild is conducting a Palm Cross sale. These crosses are used to adorn the gravesite of a loved one for Easter.

Cost is \$13 each. Call/text Guild President Jane Klemba at 860-301-3731 to place an order. Order deadline is April 4, and pick-up dates for the crosses will be Palm Sunday weekend, April 12 and 13.

Portland • Portland •

### First Selectman Proposes \$15.9M Town Ops Budget

First Selectman Michael Pelton has proposed a \$15.88 million town operations budget for the upcoming fiscal year, marking a 3.74% increase over current spending.

Combined with the Board of Education (BOE) budget at \$25.97 million, the total proposed 2025-26 town budget is \$41.85 million, a 4.5% increase from the town budget. The recommended budget would change the mill rate to 35.79 mills, a 1.49 increase.

On Tuesday, the Board of Selectmen hosted the annual public hearing to discuss the general government and BOE budget as well as other special revenue funds. To start, Pelton went through the achievements from the 2024-25 budget including opening the new track at the secondary schools, approving the Nordic Spa project that should break ground next month and tenants have started to move into Brainerd

"As a town, we are within about 30-something million dollars of a billion dollars for total assessment," Pelton noted. "Projects like the Nordic Spa and [Brainerd Place] will get us over the hump."

Pelton also shared that renovations to the Waverly Senior Center have brought in a record number of people. "We have a number of other groups and organizations that use this; that investment in that facility has made a big difference to the quality of life," Pelton said. "This continues to be a huge asset for the town."

The goals for the FY26 budget mainly surround completing projects such as sidewalk and road construction, advancing the remediation and redevelopment of 248 Brownstone Ave. and continuing economic development efforts. Officials will also continue on the school facility project and begin work on the 2026 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

Additionally, the town aims to improve Middlesex Avenue Park, enhance water, sewer, and energy systems, and explore cost-saving renewable energy opportunities. Maintaining strong public safety, public works, and community services remain a top priority, Pelton said.

Pelton outlined the town's capital spending, highlighting investments funded through various sources, including the general fund and the Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP). The BOE's capital requests include a vehicle and HVAC upgrades. Other urgent needs prioritized include replacing the fire department's Hurst tool and AED, installing a new copier for the library, adding traffic cameras for the Police department, and fire system upgrades for Public Works. Pelton emphasized that these expenditures were carefully selected based on necessity and impact.

#### **Schools Budget Presented**

On Tuesday, Superintendent of Schools Charles Britton also presented the BOE budget, explaining that its budget development starts as early as October. The budget was unanimously approved by the BOE last month. The budget includes an array of programming including academics, athletics, fine and performing arts, extracurricular and co-curricular activities, and student support services.

Britton also shared some accomplishments in the last year. For the second year in a row, the state of Connecticut recognized Gildersleeve as a School of Distinction, scoring in the top 20% of schools. He also shared that the high school had a successful accreditation visit from the New England Association of Schools and Col-

The BOE budget requests \$25.97 million to operate the schools for the next school year, a \$1.23 million increase from current spending. This figure includes the local educational agency's share of budget contributions, which comes from Portland's revenue and the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant. The 2025-26 ECS grant is expected to total nearly \$5 million, reflecting a \$220,000 increase.

Additional funding from federal and state agencies, along with other grants - including the IDEA grant, Titles I-IV grants, summer mental health grants, Open Choice funding, Medicaid reimbursements, and excess cost reimbursements for special education - is projected to total approximately \$2 million. In total, local, state, federal, and other contributions amount to \$28.06 million.

Britton discussed staffing and enrollment projections across Portland's schools. At Valley View, staffing remains stable, but kindergarten enrollment is uncertain. If the number of students exceeds 90, an additional teacher may be needed. At Gildersleeve, two special education positions that were previously grant-funded are now included in the budget, while all other staffing remains the same. Brownstone will see the reduction of one fifth-grade teaching position due to a smaller incoming class.

At Portland Middle School, the budget increases math intervention support from parttime to full-time. Additionally, a mental health clinician position, previously covered by a grant, has been moved into the regular budget. At Portland High School, the district is restoring partial FTE positions in health and art, which were cut last year due to budget constraints.

Britton added that special education and student support services remain a significant focus, with staffing needs fluctuating based on enrollment and student needs. Multiple programs allow the district to educate students in-house, saving an estimated \$2 million in potential outplacement costs. Since these services are mandated, they must be provided regardless of changes in state or federal funding.

For curriculum, instruction, and technology, the district has not filled the director of curriculum, instruction and technology position, with Britton currently handling those responsibilities. One major concern is the need for a Chromebook replacement cycle, as many devices are aging and warranties are expiring. Britton also emphasized that the facilities and infrastructure remain an ongoing challenge, with aging school buildings requiring frequent

#### **Budget Workshops Scheduled**

Budget workshops will continue next week on March 18 and 19, followed by deliberations on March 25 and 26. The four meetings will start at 7 p.m. at the Buck-Foreman Community Room, 265 Main St., and are available on Zoom. The Board of Selectmen is expected to approve the budget on Wednesday, April 2, with a town meeting scheduled for Monday, May 5, and the referendum set for Monday, May 12.

To review the proposed budget, visit portlandct.org/budgets.

#### **Portland Library News & Notes**

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

Hours: Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Holiday Closing: The library will be closed Friday, April 18, for Good Friday.

Youth Programs: Health Care Heroes Storytime. Saturday, March 29, 11 a.m. For children ages 3-10. A Middlesex Health-care hero will read a story featuring a health care provider of color. Youth in attendance get to play surgeon for a day through an interactive activity. Youth in attendance receive a free book that features diverse health care characters. Portland Library is partnering with the Greater Middletown for Equity in Medical Career Opportunities Coalition to host this story time.

Teen Programs: LGBTQ+ Teen Game Night: Join QPlus every first and third Wednesday nights of the month, from 6-8 p.m. at the library, for tabletop gaming, crafts and snacks. For ages 13-18. All identities welcome; no regis-

Edible Birdhouses: Monday, March 24, 3:30 p.m. Use seeds, fruits and more to create an architectural feast for your feathered friends. Space is limited.

Adult Programs: Mystery Lovers Book Club: Tuesday, March 18, 1 p.m. Death in the Details by Katie Tietjen will be discussed. Talk About Books: Tuesday, April 1, 1 p.m. Saturday

Food Bank

**Benefit Concert** 

Brewing Company, 91 Main St., on Saturday,

People are asked to bring a non-perishable item to

the show, which will be donated to the food bank.

'Lions Roar' Cycling Event

annual "Lions Roar" cycling event, Saturday,

May 17 - and the club is currently registering

Routes of varying length have been planned

where a hot lunch will be served to those par-

To register for the event, go to bikereg.com/

Consulting Inc., Serving the Community for 40 years.

The Portland Lions Club will hold its second

The concert will benefit Portland Food Bank.

April 19, at 2:30 p.m.

ticipating in the ride.

riders.

lions-roar.

#### **World War II Veterans** Portland resident Tony Rome and his band The Excuses will play a concert at Concentric

The Town of Portland has been asked by living World War II veterans, for a stateecognition ceremony to be held in

The town is in process of identifying WWII veterans living in Portland. Call Town Clerk Michael Tierney at 860-342-6743 if you are or know of a living Portland resident who served anytime between Dec. 7, 1941 and Dec. 31, 1946.

Evening Girls Club by June Healy will be discussed. 1st Thursday Night Book Club: Thursday, April 3, 1 p.m. A Woman Is No Man by Etaf Rum will be discussed.

Movie: Wednesday, April 9, 1 p.m. Conclave (2024; rated PG) will be shown. Run time is 120

Monthly Writers' Cafe: Saturday, March 15, 12:30 p.m., in the Van Beynum Room. The first hour will be quiet, communal, writing time, with the final 30 minutes set aside to chat about your project with fellow writers.

**Art Exhibit Reception - Youth Art Month:** Thursday, March 20, 4 p.m.; snow date: March 27. The visual arts instructors for Portland Public Schools will present an art show showcasing the work of the Grade 8-12 students, in celebration of Youth Art Month. Meet the student artists at this opening reception hosted by the Friends of the Portland Library. The exhibit runs March 20-April 19.

Adult Craft: Irish Calligraphy: Monday, March 17, 6 p.m. Learn Irish calligraphy, which is also known as the Uncial style. Calligrapher Debby Reelitz will teach the basics, provide guidelines and lettering samples and guide you through a project.

Medicare Basics: Monday, March 24, 6 p.m. If you're considering retirement or want to make a change to your existing Medicare policy, this program will provide understanding of Medicare Basics which is essential for making informed decisions about your healthcare coverage

Weekly Knifty Knitters Group: Saturdays, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Adults of all experience levels are welcome. No registration required; simply drop in.

#### Register Now for Town-Wide Tag Sale

The Portland Historical Society's 29th annual Town-Wide Tag Sale will be Saturday, May 10 rain or shine. Publicized widely and with shoppers visiting from all over the state, the Town-Wide Tag Sale can be a fundraiser for you, your family or for an organization or business.

Online registration and payment for tag sales is now open. Visit www.PortlandHistSoc.com and click on the link (the big yellow banner) to register; just follow the instructions online. To complete a paper registration form that can be mailed, visit the society's website. Download and complete the form and mail to P.O. Box 98 with payment. Paper registrations are available starting this weekend in the barrel on the front porch of 492 Main St.

The donation to the society for a spot on the Tag Sale Map is \$20 until March 31. The registration fee during the month of April will be \$25. Registration for sales will close Sunday, April 27. 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 will receive an email with information about this year's map in the next two weeks. New businesses can email the Society for information at portlandcthistory@gmail.com. Tag Sale ad spots are approximately the size of a business

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



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Aidan Peterson (left) earned All-Shoreline Conference first-team for his work on the courts this winter. Peterson is pictured with fellow senior Nico Oliva, who was named All-SLC Honorable Mention.

### Rivereast Standout Athletes of the Week

**By Josh Howard** 

Here are the Rivereast Standout Athletes of the Week for the week of March 3-9:

Aidan Peterson - Portland High School (Basketball): Peterson was named All-Shoreline Conference (SLC) first-team after helping the Highlanders to a berth in the Division V state tourney where they earned a 50-32 home win over Wheeler in the first round. Peterson, a senior, ran point as Portland won 12 total games during the initial season under first-year head coach Frankie Lee. Peterson now turns his attention to the links where he is also an all-conference golfer for a Highlanders team seeking a fifth straight conference championship this

Colby Bell - RHAM High School (Boys Ice Hockey): Bell, a senior captain from RHAM, scored the game-winning goal in overtime as the Northeastern Shamrocks defeated Milford 6-5 last month. The Shamrocks, a co-op team based in Bolton, rallied from a 5-0 deficit after the first period and tied up the game with 18 seconds left in the 3rd period thanks to an assist from Bell. Bell then scored the clincher, finishing his four-point night with two goals and two

Brady Lynch - East Hampton High School (Basketball): Lynch, a senior, wrapped a phenomenal career on the local hardware by leading the Bellringers to a total of 18 wins this winter, including two wins in each the Shoreline Conference (SLC) tournament and Division V state tourney. Lynch averaged 19 points, five rebounds, and three assists per game as he earned All-SLC first-team for the third straight season. He finished his career at EHHS as the second leading all-time scorer with 1,597 points. He will next represent the Bellringers by playing in the Senior All-Star game on March 25

Marissa Nudd - Colchester/Eastern Connecticut State University (Basketball): Nudd earned All-Little East Conference (LEC) second-team after starting all 26 games for the Warriors of Eastern Connecticut State University. Nudd, a 2023 graduate of Bacon Academy, finished second on the Warriors in both scoring average (13.7) and points (357), along with third in rebounding (4.9). She had a seasonhigh 31 points against Lasell College on Nov. 13 and posted 10 or more rebounds three times

To nominate a Standout Athlete of the Week, email joshhowardsports@gmail.com. Please include as many details about the athlete or performance as possible.

#### Student Art Show Returns

month, featuring works from elementary, free and the building is fully accessible. middle and high school students in Marlborough, Hebron and Andover.

The show will be open on weekends through March 23, every Saturday and Sunday from 1-4 p.m. Admission is free.

The Marlborough Arts Center is a nonprofit regional center for the fine arts, per-

The Marlborough Arts Center will once forming arts and fine crafts, and is located at again host the annual Student Art Show next 231 North Main St., Marlborough. Parking is

> Details about this and other artistic endeavors, rentals, and membership can be viewed online at www.marlborougharts.org. Anyone who has questions or would like to speak with a member of the Board of Directors can leave a message at 860-467-6353.

#### Chili Cook-Off in Moodus

hosted by the East Haddam/Moodus VFW Post 3336 on Saturday, March 22, from noon-3 p.m., at the American Legion Post 156, 35 Neptune Ave., Moodus.

Sample chili from Fresca Tequila Bar & Grill, Inishmor Pub, The Pattaconk, River Valley Provisions, Higher Grounds Café, Westchester Marketplace, and the Moodus Sportsmen's Club. Other items to tantalize your tastebuds will be hard cider tastings from the Yankee Cider Company, fresh-baked sourdough from Flour & Feather, and hot sauce from Face Melter

Admission is \$10/person and kids under 10 are free. Cash bar available. Get your tickets

All are invited to the first Chili Cook-off now (https://www.zeffy.com/ticketing/2025chili-cook-off-3) or at the door. This event is held indoors and will be rain or shine.

Vote for your favorite chili and the restaurant with the most votes wins!

Proceeds from this event benefit The Nest Coffee House in Deep River, a program of A Little Compassion Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides authentic and enriching employment and social opportunities for young adults with autism, intellectual/developmental disabilities, and related disorders (www.thenestcoffeehouse.org).

For more information, call Don at 860-227-

#### RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM

#### KinderRHAMa Preschool Summer Camp

Registration for KinderRHAMa Preschool Summer Camp is underway.

Held at the AHM KinderRHAMa classroom and play yard at RHAM High School, the camp is for children ages 3-5. Two early childhood teachers will staff the program along with vol-

The program will run 9 a.m.-noon Monday through Friday. Families can choose to enroll for 1-8 weeks. Children must turn 3 by Sept. 1 and must be fully toilet-trained in order to par-

In camp, children work on social skills, gross and fine motor and school readiness skills in a relaxed atmosphere while enjoying summer recreational activities inside and outside.

Fee is \$120/per week (\$96 for the June 30-July 3 week). Financial aid may be available for families who qualify. The dates and themes are as follows:

Week 1: June 23-27, Cruising Around the World; Week 2: June 30-July 3, Holiday Week (No camp 7/4); Week 3: July 7-11, Locomotion; Week 4: July 14-18, Dinosaur Week; Week 5: July 21-25, Ocean Week; Week 6: July 28-Aug. 1, Pirate Week; Week 7: Aug. 4-8, Fairytale Week; Week 8: Aug. 11-5: Variety Week.

To register, go to ahmyouth.recdesk.com/ Community/Home.

For more information, visit ahmyouth.org/ programs-services/kinderrhama-preschool-

If your family is struggling financially and you would like to attend, you can apply for a program scholarship at ahmyouth.org/programscholarship-application. For more information, contact Becky Murray at beckym@ahmyouth. org, or 860-228-0871.

#### **KinderRHAMa Registration to Open**

Registration for KinderRHAMa Preschool for the 2025-26 school year opens on March 17. Located at RHAM High School, the preschool is for children ages 3-5. Children must be 3 by Sept. 1 and be toilet-trained in order to attend.

Two experienced teachers staff the program and RHAM students assist in the classroom. The program follows the Early Learning Development Standards from the State of Connecticut for preschool-aged children. Regular activities include circle/story time, outside play, science- and math-based activities, and daily arts and crafts projects.

There are part-day and whole-day options. The 3-year-old program is held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m.-noon, and the 4-yearold program is held Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. There is an option of 7 a.m.-3 p.m. on the days that your child attends. There are also limited spaces to have your child attend five days a week from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.

The 2-day/week 8:30 a.m.-noon program is \$2,415/year; the 3-day/week 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. program is \$4,332/year, and the 5-day/week 7 a.m.-3 p.m. program is \$7,200/year.

The 2-day/week program with extended day (T/Th from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.) is \$3,492/year, and the 3-day/week program with extended day (M/W/F from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.) is \$5,240/year.

Tuition can be paid in 10 installments. Financial aid may be available for families who

Initial registration for the public will be online starting March 17 at ahmyouth.recdesk. com/Community/Home. Families will be informed as to whether their child has a space within a week. If they have a space, families will be asked to pay a \$45 registration fee and \$150 deposit to hold their child's space.

For more information, contact Becky Murray at beckym@ahmyouth.org, or 860-228-0871.

#### Paint Along with **Bob Ross**

The National Art Honor Society at RHAM High School is hosting a Paint Along with Bob Ross event on Wednesday, April 9, at 5 p.m., at the high school, 85 Wall St., Hebron.

Ross was an American painter and art instructor who famously hosted the longrunning PBS series The Joy of Painting.

Refreshments will be provided, and there will be a prize for the person who comes dressed in the best Bob Ross attire.

Admission is \$20 and advanced registration is required. Email carrie.dinunzio@ rhamschools.org to register or for more information.

#### **AHM Family Resource Center Programs**

AHM Youth and Family Services' Family Resource Center is offering various programs for young children and families. Children must attend with a parent or caregiver. For more information, contact Becky Murray at beckym@ ahmyouth.org or 860-228-0871.

First Steps in Music Class: Will be held at the AHM building, 25 Pendleton Drive in Hebron. The eight-week program runs Tuesdays, April 1-May 27, from 9:30-10:15 a.m. This program is a researched early childhood music program taught by Mallory Kokus, with singing, movement, rhythm, and instruments. Cost is \$125/

#### Middle School Orientation Program RHAM Middle School's Orientation and

Transition Program for parents/guardians of incoming seventh graders will be held Tuesday, April 8, at 6 p.m., at the RHAM High School auditorium.

#### Kids vs. Cops **Basketball Game**

AHM Youth and Family Services, in collaboration with RHAM High School and the Connecticut State Police, will hold the second annual Kids vs. Cops basketball game Friday, March 14, from 6:30-7:30 p.m., at the RHAM High School gym; doors will open at 6 p.m.

This is a free event open to the community. All are invited to help fill the stands and cheer on the RHAM High School students and local law enforcement as they face off in a friendly game of basketball.

#### Save the Date for 50th Reunion

All members of the RHAM High School Class of 1975 are advised to save the sate for their 50th Reunion, coming up this fall.

The reunion will take place Saturday, Oct. 4, at the Hilton Garden Inn in Glastonbury.

Stav tuned for more information regarding ticket sales, event registration details, and accommodation options. Also, class members are asked to reach out to their fellow classmates and

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### **UConn Professor Charged with Misappropriating Funds**

A University of Connecticut professor from Hebron was arrested last month after an investigation found that she used university funds to pay for numerous personal trips, according to

Sherry Zane, 56, of Hebron, was charged with first-degree larceny on Feb. 13 and remains on administrative leave from UConn, according to Stephanie Reitz, a university spokesperson.

In a press release, UConn Police said it was alerted by the Office of University Compliance of "a potential misappropriation of university funding by an employee," later identified as Zane, who was an Associate Professor in Residence and Interim Director of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

A criminal investigation was launched and concluded that Zane used university funds for a variety of domestic and international trips spanning from June 2021 to December 2023, 'which personally benefitted her and her immediate family," police stated.

The investigation found that Zane provided false or misleading information on travel forms she submitted to the university. In total, the inquiry found that Zane took 19 trips — including visits to Disney World, Chicago and even overseas to Belfast, Northern reland — totaling 187 travel days and costing the school \$58,084, according to police.

According to Zane's arrest warrant, police reached out to Zane and her attorney regarding the allegations. Trent LaLima, the attorney, provided a letter claiming Zane's travel was discretionary and for legitimate research purposes, according to the warrant.

LaLima did not return a request for comment, but previously issued a statement to CT Insider: "Dr. Zane has dedicated years of her life to UConn. She denies any allegations that she stole from the university, and she intends to plead not guilty to these charges.'

Reitz stated that the university's compliance office completed its investigation in November and found that a faculty member used university and grant funds "for personal travel and related personal expenses" that violated UConn's travel policy, Employee Code of Conduct and its Guide to the State Code of Ethics.

"The university travel policy states that university funds cannot be used to reimburse employees for personal expenses," she stated.

"Travel expenses paid by the university must meet the definitions of what is allowable under university policy and IRS rules, in which all reimbursable expenditures must have a business purpose and must be supported by documenta-

According to Reitz, the alleged violations related to costs for transportation, lodging, meals and other expenses.

Reitz said the travel was presented by Zane as being "entirely in support of research and teaching," but added that this was determined through the investigation to be "inaccurate."

After being placed on administrative leave, the compliance office referred the matter to UConn Police. The State's Attorney's Office then determined there was enough evidence to apply for a felony arrest warrant, which was later authorized by a Superior Court judge, Reitz added.

In the arrest warrant, UConn Police said Zane "provided little to no documented work product" pertaining to the trips.

"Zane rarely adhered to the cited business justifications on the request forms she submitted to her supervisor," police stated. "Nearly all of the trips were in desirable tourist locations and involved some personal element; Zane even referred to many of the trips as 'vacations' in work emails?

Additionally, police stated that Zane provided "inaccurate or misleading information during the course of the compliance investigation" and that Zane "made multiple purchases using UConn funds that she later admitted to [the compliance office] were personal."

UConn police concluded in the warrant that there was probable cause to believe that "Zane created false business justifications to go on personal trips, and then authorized the reimbursement requests to UConn for these trips."

UConn President Radenka Maric issued a statement conveying that the university "takes its ethics and compliance responsibilities very seriously, and it is critical that we always hold ourselves and our workforce to the highest standards of accountability.'

"The university has multiple mechanisms to identify potential issues, including through our Audit and Management Advisory Services unit and the university's Office of Compliance," Maric stated. "The university conducts thorough investigations into potential policy violations and takes appropriate action as needed. That is what happened in this case, and it is also how we continually support a culture of compliance on our campuses."

Prior to the investigation, Reitz stated that an internal audit review of the university-sponsored travel revealed "several control vulnerabilities" and that the university "is enhancing relevant system controls surrounding travel, including requiring extra levels of approval above a certain amount.

#### **UConn Report**

According to the university's report, Zane "went on multiple trips for personal reasons where she planned or created work after the fact in an effort to justify the expenses to the uni-

The university stated that Zane went on vacations with her children, including three trips to Disney World, which were expensed in whole, or in part, to UConn "under the pretense of doing 'research," according to the report.

Zane allegedly took multiple trips to the Chicago area, including to attend a family wedding and to "assist in the care of her ailing stepfather." Those trips were also expensed at least in part to UConn.

According to the report, Zane traveled to Belfast seven times to conduct research.

"However, as the facts outline, Dr. Zane first traveled to Belfast to visit her daughter who had recently moved there to attend school," the report stated. "Dr. Zane then traveled to Belfast at the University's expense to attend her daughter's graduation ceremony and then again to get married — a trip expensed to a grant provided to UConn by the Mellon Foundation."

Zane spent 109 travel days in Ireland, according to the report, "where Dr. Zane's daughter and now-husband resided."

"Of the seven trips Dr. Zane took to Belfast, six were taken within a 15-month period," the report noted. "Not one day of the 109 days where Dr. Zane traveled to Belfast, including the day of her wedding, were claimed as personal."

The report claims that Zane expensed the trips even when there was "no actual planned business activities and then provided information or created documentation after the fact to justify the expenses incurred by the University."

The compliance office identified "several instances" where Zane allegedly offered "misleading or false information" to UConn when she was asked to justify the expenses. Additionally, the university said Zane provided misleading or false information on travel request forms that were submitted.

"In these circumstances, Dr. Zane's actual activities while traveling were distinctly different and off-topic from the agreed-upon purpose," according to the report.

The report stated that Zane cited contracts with SUNY Press and Filmbank Entertainment as justification for some of the trips, and that the contract with SUNY Press – a publishing house affiliated with the State University of New York - had been in place since 2018, with an original deadline of 2019. But the compliance office "found no evidence of a manuscript or any documented progress to such end."

Zane was contracted with Filmbank Entertainment - a film and television production company – and UConn financed multiple trips where research pertaining to that agreement was cited. The compliance office stated that Zane "did not have approval to engage in this activity as required under university policy governing faculty consulting" but, "even if such approvals were granted, the university would not otherwise pay for Dr. Zane to travel for personal financial benefit."

The report concluded that several of Zane's trips "resulted in little to no work product" and that "Zane did not provide sufficient documentation to support the research she claimed to have conducted on several of these trips, and for some trips, provided no documentation at all."

While the compliance office verified that some trips did involve pre-planned work being conducted that was actually aligned with the stated business justification, "these were a small fraction" of the total trips, according to the report.

**NOTE**: As the Rivereast went to press Wednesday, news broke that Zane is suing UConn for defamation. Look for a full story about the lawsuit

#### St. Peter's Polish Dinner

St. Peter's Episcopal Church will hold its first monthly community dinner of the year on Saturday, March 22, from 4-5:30 p.m. or until sold out. St. Peter's is located at 30 Church St. (Route 85) in Hebron.

The menu will include pierogies, kielbasa, sauerkraut, stuffed cabbage, sweet and sour cabbage, pickled beets, and your choice of desserts. The cost is \$17. Credit cards will be accepted.

This is a take-out only dinner, with no pre-orders or reservations; meals are firstcome, first-served. Servers will come to your car, take your order and payment, and bring your meals back to your back seat or trunk. There is no need to get out of your car.

A portion of each meal sold will go toward supporting AHM Youth and Family Services. For more details, call the church at 860-228-3244 or visit www.StPetersHebron.com.

As a kickoff to 2025 Hebron Maple Festival weekend, The Town Center Project (TTCP) is sponsoring the second annual Maple by Moonlight Gala Fundraiser. This evening of dancing, food, cocktails and community will be hosted at Colebrook Village, 55 John E. Horton Blvd., on Friday, March 14, from 6:30-9:30 p.m.

This year's menu includes a stunning chef epared charcuterie, passed hors d'oeuvres. Colebrook Roll, scallops wrapped in bacon, sliced beef crostini, deviled eggs, lamb lollipops, a chef-attended gourmet mac & cheese martini

Maple by Moonlight Gala Fundraiser station, and of course dessert!

> One hundred percent of the proceeds goes directly to TTCP to fund its community events like the Hebron Summer Concert Series, Make Music Day Hebron, and the Harvest Moon Festival. Proceeds also help maintain and expand art installations like the Adirondack chairs and the SnoFolk of Hebron.

Tickets are \$100 per person and include two drink tickets and a commemorative glass. Get your tickets at givebutter.com/5OShj5.

**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 860-228-3727. Church of the Holy Family is a member of the Catholic Community of the Good Shepherd.

Praise Band and Choir Rehearsals: New members are welcome. Choir rehearsals are Tuesdays at 7 p.m., and Praise Band rehearsals are Thursdays at 7 p.m. For details, contact Nicole Bernier, Music Ministry, at nbernier@ holyfamily.com.

Church Collecting for Homeless Shelter: The church collects items for Project Hope, Inc. (formerly Windham Region No Freeze Project, Inc.), which provides the following assistance to homeless adults: housing, outreach, prevention, and emergency shelter. The shelter's needs are:

paper towels and TP (always extremely needed); men's and women's wool socks, handwarmers, and gloves; men's boxer briefs (M,L,XL,2XL) & women's briefs (sizes 7-10); 4-, 13- & 55-gallon trash bags; shampoo & conditioner; body wash; men's & women's deodorant and razors; toothpaste; lip balm; laundry pods or liquid laundry detergent; antiseptic pump hand soap; Lysol disinfectant spray & household cleaning products; \$15 Stop & Shop gift cards for people living in their cars to purchase gas; \$25 Walmart gift cards for client emergencies; and \$10 Cumberland Farm gift cards for "non-sheltered" persons to purchase hot beverages and snacks. Call to arrange the pick-up of gift cards. 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 bulletin at gileadchurchucc.updates. church, email gcc@gileadchurch.net, or call 860-228-3077. The church office is open at the GCC Parish House Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Worship: Sundays at 10 a.m., followed by coffee hour at 11. Services can also be viewed online at YouTube at www.bit.ly/Gilead-ChurchUCC and on Facebook at tinyurl.com/ GileadChurchUCC.

This Week's Scheduled Events/Meetings: 3/15: No Yoga today; 3/15: Maple Fest Craft Fair, 10 a,m,-4 p.m..; Sunday, 3/16: Winter Children's Playgroup at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service with Baptism at 10 a.m. (livestreamed), Coffee Hour at 11 a.m.; 3/17: Bible Study via Zoom at 9:30 a.m.; 3/18: AA Meeting at 7:30 p.m.; 3/19: Yoga at 9:30 a.m., Choir Practice at 7:30 p.m.; 3/21: World Down Syndrome Day.

'Rock Your Socks' at this Sunday's Worship Service: Next Friday, March 21, is World Down Syndrome Day, because people with Down syndrome have three copies of the 21st chromosome. Since the chromosomes look like mismatched socks, celebrate by wearing mismatched, brightly colored socks at worship this Sunday, March 16.

Card Game Nights: Hosted by the Fellowship Committee on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at 6:30 p.m. (note the adjusted start time) in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome; bring a deck of cards or a card table.

Faith & Film Potluck: Friday, April 4, 6 p.m., in the church Social Hall. No RSVP necessary.

Winter Play Group: Welcome to kids up to 5 years old, this group meets Sundays from 9:15-9:45 a.m. through March 23; parents are encouraged to bring breakfast and stay for the 10 a.m. worship service. Contact the church office for more info.

Card-Making with Gayle: Sunday, March 23, 11:30 a.m. All are invited to create one-ofa-kind cards for \$15, with a portion of proceeds benefiting the Connecticut Food Bank.

#### Professional Mermaid to Appear at Maple Fest

Alexandra the Mermaid will appear at this year's Hebron Maple Fest on Saturday and Sunday, March 15 and March 16, open to the public and free of charge. Families and children of all ages are encouraged to come say "shello" at the "Hebron's Own Expo," located in the Douglas Library, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days during the Maple Fest.

Alexandra will be available for free photos in front of an ocean scene, to play with bubbles, and will be giving out free "pirate treasure" obtained on her mermaid adventures. Aquaticthemed temporary tattoos and sparkly face gems will be available for purchase.

"I can't wait to 'sea' everyone there," Alexandra the Mermaid said. "I'll be sitting on my throne, dancing along to some 'fintastic' tunes waiting to take a 'shellfie' with you!"

Alexandra the Mermaid is a staple performer at the Maple Fest, promoting fun and imagination there since 2022.

When Alexandra's not having fun performing on land, she can be found swimming up and down the Connecticut River and enjoying the beaches along Long Island Sound - and making magic at birthdays, festivals, and fairs of all sizes in and around Connecticut.



Alexandra the Mermaid

For more on the Maple Fest, visit thetowncenterproject.org.

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Hebron • Heb

### **Town Manager Presents 12.8% Tax Increase**

By Michael Sinkewicz

Hebron residents are looking at an eye-popping 12.8% tax increase – but don't worry, it likely won't stay that way, according to Town Manager Andrew Tierney.

Tierney last week unveiled a 2025-26 fiscal year budget of \$42.93 million — a \$1.84 million, or 4.47%, year-over-year increase.

As presented, the new mill rate for real estate and personal property would be 38.93, an increase of 4.43 mills, or 12.8%. Accordingly, for the median property assessment in Hebron (\$248,360), the tax bill would climb to \$9,669, meaning the average homeowner would experience a \$1,101 tax hike.

"I believe we're going to do some work to try to get that number down, so I don't want to scare anybody too much tonight," Tierney expressed during the presentation on March 4.

The mill rate for motor vehicles is slated at 32.46, the same as the current fiscal year.

The overall proposal represents the combination of three separate budgets, which may fluctuate in the weeks ahead.

Currently, though, the largest piece of the spending plan (38%) is Hebron's levy of the RHAM Board of Education budget, which is \$16.56 million — a \$1.07 million, or nearly 7%, increase

Last month, the Hebron Board of Education adopted a \$14.45 million preliminary budget — a \$786,051, or 5.75% boost, which comprises

34% of the total budget.

The smallest component of the spending plan (28%) is the General Government budget, earmarked at \$11.92 million — a \$23,433, or .2%, year-over-year decrease.

In his budget summary submitted to the boards of selectmen and finance, Tierney stated there was "little room for flux" in the proposal.

"The goal in preparing this budget was to attempt to maintain existing services while responding to taxpayer concerns about increasing taxes," he wrote.

The town manager added that the local boards and taxpayers must "work cooperatively to arrive at a budget that will provide necessary services and continue high quality programs/excellent education while acknowledging taxpayer concerns."

He asserted that "creativity and compromise" would be essential for the budget prevailing at referendum.

Tierney listed a number of items driving this year's budget spike, including contractual salary increases and compensation adjustments. Additionally, he pointed to a bump in the state's minimum wage and paid sick leave.

Tierney also included a request from the Hebron BOE for a second school resource officer, who would be funded through the town budget.

The mill rate spike was impacted by a \$12.6 million, or 1.35%, dip in the 2024 Grand List,

primarily from motor vehicle assessments.

The 2025-26 blueprint incorporates \$892,534 Capital Improvement Program, which was approved by the Board of Selectmen last month. Of that total amount, \$564,736 is funded through the town, with the rest coming from a variety of sources, including state grants. The proposed CIP contribution is \$611,998 less than the current fiscal year, which was \$1.18 million.

The CIP would include funding for seven initiatives: road resurfacing and improvements (\$340,475), repaying the Douglas Library parking lot (\$173,919), the town's match for a Hebron Green design services STEAP grant (\$100,000), Horton House improvements (\$92,800), replacing the ambulance stretcher and lift (\$77,840), second-year funding for senior center parking lot drainage, repaying and expansion (\$32,500) and a Parks and Recreation Master Plan (\$75,000).

Besides the CIP, the budget also includes numerous capital expenditures, which are typically items costing between \$10,000 to \$75,000. The proposal lists a total of \$467,040 of those initiatives — around \$333,000 more than the current budget.

Some of the largest expenses include: fire station fire alarm systems (\$74,471), Veteran's Park upgrades (\$65,000) and landscaping improvements at the St. Peter's Field, Gilead Hill School,

Hebron Elementary School and Hebron Green (\$50,000).

In 2025-26, the town's debt service is \$604,148 — a \$239,068, or 28.35%, year-over-year decrease. The town's contribution to Open Space remained flat at \$100,000.

The amount Hebron receives from Education Cost Sharing from the state is expected to go down to \$5.74 million — a nearly \$260,000 decline

Tierney noted in his budget message that he had already reduced the cumulative request made by the town's department heads by roughly \$2.8 million. After initially introducing a \$3.46 million CIP, he recommended that the BOS adopt a much leaner number because it wouldn't "get approved in the booth."

The town manager previously said the budget was on track for a 10-mill increase, which he was able to lower.

Moving forward, the boards of selectmen and finance will examine the budget — although they cannot adjust the RHAM proposal. A public hearing on the budget will be held on March 25, and the selectmen will recommend a budget to the finance board by March 31.

The BOF is expected to host a budget hearing on April 10, with a referendum scheduled for May 6.

Parks and Rec News & Notes

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

Gentle Hatha Yoga: Tuesdays, March 18-April 29, 6:30-7:30 p.m. In this 60-minute Hatha Yoga class, explore a mindful practice that combines the calming power of breath, intentional movement, and deep presence in the moment.

**Gong Bath with Guided Meditation:** Monday, March 31, 6:30-7:30 p.m., in the Douglas

Library community room. This gong-centered sound bath and meditation offers an opportunity to unplug from the stressors of daily life. Bring a yoga mat, blankets and anything else that helps you to relax. Led by Amy Ordonez, artist/sound healer. Cost is \$25.

**Paint Pouring:** Thursday, April 3, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at the Parks and Rec. office. Paint without a brush! In this session, create your own tree. Amy Ordonez from Studio 13 will take you step by step through this process. No art experience needed. Fee: \$40.



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.

**Adult Bible Study:** Sundays, 9-9:45 a.m., at the church. All adults are welcome.

**Kingdom Women: Women's Bible Study:** The study will continue in the Book of Psalms every first and third Thursday of the month from 6:30-8:30 p.m., at the church.

**Kingdom Men: Men's Bible Study:** All men are invited to join the church's study of the Book

of Colossians. The group meets in person on the second and fourth Thursday of every month from 6:30-7:30 p.m., at the church.

4th Wednesday Prayer: Wednesday, March 26, 10-11 a.m. All are invited the fourth Wednesday of each month to offer up their prayer requests.

**Virtual Prayer Night:** Tuesdays, 7-8 p.m., via Zoom. Contact the church office or website for a link and meeting ID.

One-to-One Confidential Christian Care: Provided by Stephen Ministry to people in difficult life situations. If in need of help, call the church office.

**Hebron Maple Fest:** All are invited to stop by the TWC booth and make "maple" slime on Saturday and Sunday, March 15 and 16, from 10 a.m.–4 p.m.



Russell Mercier Senior Center has announced the following programs. For more information and full program descriptions, and to register, call the senior center at 860-228-1700. **Pre-registration is required for all programs unless noted.** For additional regular daily and weekly activities, visit hebronct.com/seniorcenter.

**TED Talk Discussion:** Tuesday, March 18, 10:30-11:45 a.m. Watch a presentation and then discuss what you just watched. To register, and for this month's topic, call 860-228-1700.

Painting with Audrey Carroll: Fridays, March 21 and 28, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. The painting theme is "Don't be Afraid of the Dark." All level abilities. A sample will be available to view at the senior center. Cost is \$40 for both sessions or \$25 for one. Registration deadline is Wednesday, March 19.

**Yoga:** Mondays and Wednesdays through April 2 (started March 10; no class March 17 or 19), 10:15-11:15 a.m. Fee for all six sessions is \$18; drop-in fee is \$5 per class.

Movie Mondays: Mondays, March 17 and 24, at 12:30 p.m. Popcorn will be served. On March 17, see a St. Patrick's Day movie, the romantic comedy *Wild Mountain Thyme*. On March 24, see the recent hit musical *Wicked*. (Please note, this movie runs for two hours and 40 minutes).

**RHAM Bingo:** Tuesday, March 18, 2:30-4 p.m. This will be the last one for this academic year. There will be free bingo with prizes (fourcard limit). Bingo is called by RHAM National Honor Society members. In the event of school closing early due to weather, bingo would be

canceled.

St. Patty's Day Concert & Lunch: Wednesday, March 19. The senior center will present the Sunshine Singers for a St. Patrick's Day Concert, followed by a grab-n-go lunch provided by Marlborough Health & Rehabilitation Center. The concert begins at 11 a.m., and lunch is at noon. The lunches will be your choice of a corned beef or tuna sandwich on a hard roll, chips, water, and a cookie. The lunches will be available to "grab" and take home with you or you can stay, eat and socialize. Pre-registration for lunch is absolutely required with a deadline to register by Monday, March 17, at 10 a.m. There is no cost for the concert or the lunch.

**Mindful Meditation:** Monday, March 24, starting at 11:25 a.m. The class is free, and is held twice per month on specific Mondays.

Weekly Shopping Trips: Fridays. Pre-registration is required by the prior Thursday at 10 a.m. Pick-ups begin around 9 a.m. Upcoming dates: March 14, Big Y; March 21, Stop & Shop; March 28, Walmart/Aldi.

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 dedicated transportation line at 860-228-5977.



The Hebron Lions' annual Pancake Breakfast will return this Sunday, March 16, from 8-11:30 a.m.

#### **Hebron Lions Flipping Pancakes for Charities!**

On Sunday, March 16, between 8 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., all are invited to stop by the Hebron Lions Fairgrounds for a pancake breakfast, before heading out to enjoy the Maple Fest Activities.

This year, the Hebron Lions Pancake Breakfast will be supporting the Hebron Lions Charities. The Lions said they could not decide on one named charity this year, so the club decided to raise funds for the Hebron Lions Charities, which is the source of the donations to all the nonprofit organizations that they donate to. Among the organizations that will be supported by the 2025 pancake breakfast are AHM Youth and Family Services, Hebron Interfaith Human Services, Douglas Library and RHAM Youth Sports.

On Sunday, the Lions will serve up a hot breakfast for all, including fresh scrambled eggs donated by Hillandale Farms, will be flipping pancakes donated by BJs of Willimantic. Sausages will be served, which were donated from the Hartford Provision Company (HPC), and of course coffee and juice will also be included. Also, with the pancakes, the Lions will have pure maple syrup donated by Hebron's own Wenzel's Sugar House.

The RHAM Leos Club will also be present offering raffle baskets to help raise funds for charities with raffle prizes donated from the Hartford Wolf Pack, the Hartford Yard Goats, a Ted's IGA gift certificate, Six Flags tickets, a signed Boston Bruins puck, and many other fabulous items. Families can also have an opportunity to have their photo taken with the Lion and a Bunny.

Tickets are available online at www.hebronctlions.org/pancakes-breakfast or at the door. Adult breakfast pricing is \$12 and \$10 for seniors; children 10 years and younger are \$8.

Net proceeds will benefit the Hebron Lions Charities. The Charities Committee is responsible for the donations made on behalf of the Hebron Lions Club. They have been successful in providing the donations to local organizations such as the programs and services for AHM Youth & Family Services, Camp Hemlocks, HAMR Softball, Hebron Public Schools PTA Programs, Hebron Scouts, Troop 28 and 1028, and so many more. Supporting this event will not only help the continued support of the above organizations but so many others.

In addition to a breakfast, the RHAM Leos will do a free child eye screening. Also, the Hebron Lions said they would like to thank sponsors Hillandale Farms for the donation of the fresh eggs and Wenzel's Sugar House for the donation of all the maple syrup, Discovery Zone Learning Center, The Hartford Provision Company (HPC), and BJ's of Williamntic.

For more information regarding the pancake breakfast, contact Dawn Swagger at Dawn. Swagger@hebronharvestfair.org with any questions

### **Town Eyes DPW Project Decisions**

By Michael Sinkewicz

Hebron's Department of Public Works Action Committee will soon make a recommendation as to which architectural firm should be tapped to design a new DPW complex.

Next week, on both March 17 and 19, the action committee will interview four prospective firms regarding design services for a new DPW facility at Old Colchester Road.

The committee will then make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen regarding which firm should be selected and the cost associated with those services.

That amount will likely be hundreds of thousands of dollars and would require a supplemental appropriation to cover. The selectmen would first have to approve that appropriation, and then the Board of Finance would need to

Due to the likely size of the appropriation, a town meeting would then need to be scheduled where the community would approve the funding. The finance board may also opt to hold a public hearing prior to that meeting to provide background information.

Before the town could hold a communitywide referendum on whether to move forward with the overall DPW project - and its possible multimillion-dollar price-tag — it must have specific design services completed. And residents must first sign off on an initial endowment to procure those services in order to reach an eventual referendum.

In the past, the BOS reviewed estimates to design a DPW facility at a different location, which would've cost \$245,000. That earmark was included in a prior municipal budget proposal, rather than introduced at a town meeting, but was ultimately scrapped entirely and never approved.

Eleven firms responded to a Request for Qualifications issued by the town earlier this year, which the committee narrowed down to four finalists, who received invitations to present in front of the committee. The remaining firms are: Silver Petrucelli & Associates, BL Companies, Weston and Sampson and Northeast Collaborative.

Peter Kasper, chairman of the BOS and the action committee, previously said the design services will be a "significant expenditure."

"It's going to be a lot of money," he cautioned. But, he added, it was necessary to move the project forward. "This is the first step, but it's a steep drop," Kasper said earlier this year.

OSHA Fines Reduced

In other news, Town Manager Andrew Tierney told the BOS last week that the fine imposed by Connecticut Occupational Safety and Health Division (CONN-OSHA) had be slashed in half.

Last month, Hebron was fined more than \$6,000 for violations of Connecticut's Occupational Safety and Health Act.

After attending an informal conference with the division, Tierney reported that the total fine had dropped to \$3,115.

Tierney had previously said the violations were the result of a "random" visit from CONN-OSHA – which inspected five town entities. The majority of citations were associated with the town's Department of Public Works, which incurred over a dozen violations.

Leading up to the conference — which CONN-OSHA allows in order for municipalities to present evidence that could potentially support adjusting the listed penalties - Tierney conveyed that "a lot of these items were corrected at the time of the visit." He also predicted that the fine would be cut in half — which is what ultimately happened.

#### **United Brethren Synagogue News and Notes**

United Brethren of Hebron Synagogue, located at 10 Church St. (Route 85) in the center of Hebron, has announced the following pieces of news:

Upcoming monthly Shabbat services will be on Fridays, March 14 and April 25. Both services will be held at the synagogue, with an option to participate via Zoom. After the service, head downstairs for some snacks. All are welcome; there is no need to RSVP unless you need a Zoom link.

Purim Party!: Families with young children are invited to attend the Purim Carnival and Costume Party at the synagogue on Friday, March 14, from 5:30-7 p.m. There will be games and prizes, pizza and dessert, and a chance to admire the kids' costumes. To learn more and to RSVP, email ubofhebron@gmail.com. Families have the option of heading home at 7 p.m. or staying for Shabbat services.

Maple Fest Bake Sale and Synagogue Tours: Once again, the synagogue is participating in the Hebron Maple Fest. United Brethren mem-

bers will sell baked goods and offer tours of the historic synagogue building from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Sunday, March 16. All are encouraged to stop by. If you would like to volunteer to make something for the bake sale, email ubofhebron@gmail.com.

Community Passover Seder: Following a one-year break, the Hebron Community Passover Seder is back. The ceremonial dinner, hosted by United Brethren, will be held at St. Peter's Episcopal Church Thursday, April 3, at 5:30 p.m. To learn more and to reserve your spot, go to the events page of St. Peter's website, www. stpetershebron.com. A \$20 per person donation is requested to cover the cost of food. Church of the Holy Family and Gilead Congregational Church are also participating in the planning and staffing of this event.

To learn more about the synagogue and its service schedule, visit www.ubofhebron.org. If you wish to get on the synagogue's email list, or have questions, email ubofhebron@gmail.com.

#### Tractor Parade Road Closures

The 11th annual Hebron Tractor Parade will take place Sunday, March 16, during the Hebron Maple Festival - and in connection with the parade, there will be a road closure.

Main Street (Route 66), from Wellswood Road to the intersection of routes 66 and 85, will be closed from 2 p.m. until approximately 2:45 p.m. A detour route will be posted; please follow the arrows and signs. There will be no access to the Main Street businesses in or out during this time.

This is the 11th year for the parade, and participants are welcome. Last year there were over 100 tractors. Viewing is available on Main Street from Ted's to the center of town.

If you wish to enter a tractor, or know more about the festival, go to the towncenterproject.org and follow the links.

#### Goat Story Time and One Last Goat Yoga Session

All are invited to Gilead Congregational Church Saturday, March 22, for two events made possible by a grant from the Hebron Greater Together Community Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

Goat Story Time: 11-11:45 a.m. Enjoy stories and meet the friendly goats. Limited space

Goat Yoga: noon-1 p.m. Relax and have fun with Nigerian Dwarf goats and yoga instruction from The Omstead of Glastonbury.

Register for either event, or both of them, by contacting the church office at gcc@gileadchurch.net or 860-228-3077.

#### **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: The library is showing films at 1 p.m. on the following Fridays: March 14, Darby O'Gill and the Little People (1959; rated G); March 21, In the Land of Saints and Sinners (R); March 28, Calvary (2014; rated R). Bottled water and popcorn will be provided.

Bad Movie Matinee: Every other Wednesday at 1 p.m. Upcoming: March 19, Return of the Living Dead; April 2, Rubber. Bottled water and popcorn will be provided.

Cookbook Club: Tuesday, March 18, 6:30 p.m. Each month, read a different cookbook, and each person will choose one recipe from the book to make and share with the group. This month's book is Debbie Macomber's Cedar Cove Cookbook and is available near the main desk.

Book Discussion: Wednesday, March 19, 7 p.m. Discuss *The Hunter* by Tana French 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 discussion.

Mahjong Club: Tuesdays at 1 p.m. Are you interested in playing Mahjong? Would you like to learn how to play? Fellow patrons have started a weekly American Mahjong Club.

Teen Advisory Board: Wednesday, March 19, 3:30 p.m. Join the teen group as they choose activities for spring and summer. This meeting counts as volunteer hours.

Language Development Information for Little Voices: Wednesday, March 26, 6 p.m. This is a free information session offered by Village Voices Speech Therapy. Learn practical tips and

#### TTCP Seeks Volunteers

The Town Center Project is an all-volunteerdriven 501c3 nonprofit organization that provides art installations and events in Hebron - and organizers are looking for volunteers to help produce a few events.

Help is needed for: the Town-Wide Tag Sale on May 3 - mostly organizing on the back end some advertising; Market Day, a vintage-style market with vendors and food trucks, which will be held June 7; and Make Music Day, always June 21 – which this year is a Saturday!

If interested in helping, email ttcp@thetowncenterproject.org.

strategies to help your child develop effective communication skills. For ages 6 months to 2 years, including those with unique needs.

Children's Storytimes: Tuesdays 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.

Children's PJ Storytime: The first and third Tuesdays of the month, at 6 p.m. Ages 1-5 are invited to come for stories, songs and crafts. Siblings welcome.

Lego Club: The first and third Wednesdays of the month at 4-5 p.m., in the Children's Program Room. Come and challenge yourself to build something new! The library will display your creations in the children's room.

Chess Nights: Pickup games are every Thursday starting at 3 p.m. in the Community Room. All skill levels welcome.

Knitwits: The library's Knit-wits knitting circle meets Mondays, 6-7:30 p.m. Crochet and needle pointers are welcome as well as all skill levels. No registration required; bring your project or your questions.

Museum Passes: The library has museum passes available to many local attractions and most are now print from home. Check them out



New Scouts... On Wednesday, Feb. 19, Scouting America Troop 28 of Hebron welcomed eight new scouts - seven of whom had transitioned from Cub Scout Pack 28 to Troop 28. This has been the largest group crossing over since the pandemic. At the troop's recent court of honor, each of the new scouts received their new neckerchief and hat. Pictured from left are Senior Patrol Leader Douglas Fellman, Daniel Hormuzdiar, Gabriel Gilbert, Sawyer Schmeizl, Colby Schmeizl, Archer Sankovich, Lucas Merkent, Kenny Manthorne, and Troop 28 Scoutmaster Rita Rivera. (Not pictured is Jake Quinto.) Daniel Hormuzdiar crossed over from Pack 13 in Colchester. More information about joining Scouting America in Hebron for boys and girls ages 11-17, or about joining the Hebron Cub Scout program for boys and girls in kindergarten through fifth grade, is at www.HebronScoutsBSA.org.





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#### From the Town Manager's Desk

Hello Hebron Residents:

My office continues to work with the boards of selectmen and finance to create a fair reasonable budget to put to referendum which upholds the high level of services provided to all residents. Virtual workshops will be held each Tuesday in March to review the various requests. Links to the general government and schools' budget requests are available on the town's website at hebronct.com/budget-information.

An email address hebronbudget@hebronct.com has been set up to receive public comments. Emails received will be forwarded to members of the boards of selectmen, finance and education. Public participation is encouraged, and I urge you to become informed and involved in the budgetary process.

The Hebron Maple Festival 2025 will be underway this weekend. This Tierney event has been organized by a handful of Hebron residents and The Town Center Project. Please plan to join this Saturday, March 15, and/or Sunday, March 16, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. each day. The famous Tractor Parade will be held on Sunday! For more information, visit www. thetowncenterproject.org/maple-fest.

I am happy to report that the traffic lights and crosswalks at the intersection of Wall and Main streets are now operational. Please use caution through this area as we adjust to these

Now that daylight saving time has begun, it is a good practice to check the batteries in your fire alarm and CO2 detectors. Please be mindful if you are disposing of ashes from your fireplace or woodstove outdoors.

As we approach spring, our public works crews will be working on the local roadways to repair any damage caused by winter operations. Please be aware when traveling around these work areas as we value our employees. If you have sustained any damage from snow plowing, contact the Public Works Department at 860-228-2871.

Now that the weather is becoming more enjoyable, please consider visiting one or more of our many trails or parks in town that our employees work tirelessly to establish and maintain. In keeping our trails and parks beautiful, kindly remember to remove any items that you may have taken with you.

> Sincerely, Andrew J. Tierney **Hebron Town Manager**



Christ Lutheran Church and Early Childhood Center (daycare) is located at 330 Church St.

Sunday Worship Service with Pastor Matthew Hardaway: 9-10 a.m. All are welcome. Those unable to attend in person can join online at www.facebook.com/clchebron/live.

Sunday Fellowship/Coffee Hour: 10 a.m., after the worship service.

Sunday Adult Bible Study: 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday Lenten Season Evening Service: 7 p.m. March 19 (preceded by congregational soup and bread supper at 6 p.m.).

Early Childhood Center (Daycare): Offers childcare, preschool, and before/after school care, and is open to all faiths. Immediate open-

#### **Transfer Station Summer Hours Start**

The town Transfer Station has returned to its summer hours. Hours are: Sundays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.; and Saturdays, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

· Invisalign

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ings are available for children, and summer camp returns this summer. For more information, call director Jennifer Johnson at 860-228-5134. Application forms are at www.clecch-

Caring Shepherds Social Ministry Group: The group holds regular food pantry days to distribute food staples, household and hygiene items, as well as Bibles and prayers. For more information about donating or participating in food pantry days, call 860-228-1152.

#### 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

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.hebroncoh.com, or follow the church on social media.



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Members of the groups East Hampton Pride and Small Town Pride gathered in Hebron last weekend to show support for the queer community, particularly regarding transgender rights.

#### Pride Groups Gather to Support LGBTQ Community

On Sunday, March 9, the groups East Hampton Pride and Small Town Pride hosted a rally in Hebron in support and solidarity of the queer community, particularly regarding transgender

Over 70 community members gathered together at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Hebron to make signs supporting area LGBTQ family, friends and neighbors. Participants then made their way to the intersection of routes 86 and 66 to rally against what the groups called "injustices" the queer community — particularly transfolk — are facing in light of policy changes at the federal level.

Chants such as, "Trans rights are human rights," "Love is love. All are welcome," and "United we stand. Divided we fall. Trans rights are rights for all" could be heard among the busy Saturday traffic stopped at Hebron's main intersection.

Small Town Pride member Cathy McSweeney said, "It was so inspiring and empowering to see how much support there is for LGBTQ+ issues in our small towns. Not only were there a lot of rally participants but we saw a lot of support from passers-by showing their approval with honks, waves and cheers."

"We live in a country founded on the principles of liberty and justice for all," stated East Hampton Pride Founder Stephanie Heine. "Threats to the queer community are increasing daily ... Erasure of their history, eliminating funding for necessary health care, prohibiting them from serving in the military, and more. We cannot stand by idly as human rights are stripped away from our LGBTQ+ residents. Threats to their rights should be considered a threat to all. If it is so easy to strip the rights from one community, what makes anyone think it could never happen to them?"

Heine continued, "It is our duty to stand together in solidarity and make it known that we see what is happening and we will not keep quiet. We will actively continue to speak out with love and kindness until there is no longer a reason to do so."

East Hampton Pride and Small Town Pride are affiliates of the Coalition on Diversity & Equity (CoDE) in Hebron.

#### RTC at Maple Fest

conjunction with D & S Yardworks and Hyde's gmail.com or via messenger on our Facebook Dairy Farm, is hosting two fundraisers at this year's Maple Fest. The RTC will be raffle off a cord of wood and sell maple milk.

Purchase your \$5 ticket for a tumbled & delivered (within 10 miles of Hebron) cord of wood valued at \$300 and provided by D & S Yardworks in Bolton (dsyardworks.com). Tickets can be purchased at our Maple Fest tent (behind

The Hebron Republican Town Committee, in the library) or by emailing hebron republicans@ page. The drawing will be held at the Maple Fest on Sunday, March 16, at 4 p.m. Ticket-holders need not be present to win.

> The RTC is also selling prepackaged cold pints of maple milk produced by Hyde's Dairy in North Franklin (hydesdairy.com).

> Visit the D&S Yardworks and Hyde's Dairy websites for more details.

### **Countryside Realty**

on the Move Countryside Realty will hold an Open House at its new location, 105 Main St., on Saturday and Sunday, March 15 and 16, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. each day – during the Hebron Maple Fest! Refreshments will be served, and all who

drop by can enter a raffle to win gift cards.

#### **Quilts Sought for Show**

The Hebron Historical Society will hold its annual Quilt Show during the Hebron Maple Festival, March 15 and 16, at Old Town Hall, 26

Contact Mary-Ellen Gonci mergonci65@ comcast.net for more information.



18 Liberty Dr., Hebron (behind the Hebron Post Office)

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#### Vacancies on Town Boards, Commissions

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

There are currently vacancies for regular members on the Commission on Aging, Hebron Housing Authority, Public Building Committee, Hebron Green Committee and the Water Pollution Control Authority.

There are vacancies for alternate members on the Commission on Aging, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Public Building Committee, Parks and Recreation Commission, Hebron Green Committee and the Historic Properties Commission.

There are three newly-created alternate positions on the Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA). The BAA is an official municipal agency designed to serve as an appeal body for taxpayers who believe that the assessor erred in the valuation of their properties or erroneously denied an exemption. The BAA is the first level of appeal from the actions of the assessor.

Interested candidates should attend a meeting of the board or commission in which they may have an interest and discuss with the chairman the frequency of meetings and the time commitment involved.

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

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

All residents of Hebron who are registered to vote are eligible. Letters of interest may be addressed to: The Town Manager's Office, Town of Hebron, 15 Gilead St., Hebron CT 06248. People with questions can call 860-228-5971.

For more information, visit hebronct.com/ contact-us/volunteer-opportunities.

### **Historical Society**

Clothing Drive
The Hebron Historical Society will hold its annual Clothing Drive in April.

The society will collect all size and style of clothing, as well as coats, shoes, handbags, backpacks, sports clothing, towels, sheets and blankets.

All items must be in sellable condition: no stains, tears or rips, no broken zippers, no missing buttons, no rags or fabric scraps.

Bring items in large kitchen trash bags or lawn and leaf bags to Old Town Hall, 26 Main St. (next to Douglas Library), on Friday, April 4, from 3-6 p.m., and Saturday, April 5, from 8-10 a.m.

Email mergonci65@comcast.net for more information.

#### Gilead Church Maple Fest Craft Fair

All are invited to the annual craft fair at Gilead Congregational Church (672 Gilead St., Hebron), a part of Hebron's town-wide Maple Festival, tomorrow, Saturday, March 15, from 10

Check out handcrafted items from local artisans, get lunch from our Men's Fellowship, and try the Women's Fellowship's famous maple pudding cakes.

The fair will feature goods including hats, scarves, jewelry, welcome signs, home decorations, greeting cards, trinkets, the work of local authors, wood carvings, food items, soap, skin products, glassware, photography and more.

For more information, contact the church office at 860-228-3077.



Martin H. Zase, DMD, MAGD, AAACD Radhee Sheth, DMD, NEACD

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**Spring Classes** at Epoch Arts

Epoch Arts is offering a variety of classes this

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Students can also sign up for Epoch's Summer Session in July, and two teen workshops in

Full class descriptions and registration are at www.epocharts.org/classes-registration. All classes will be held at 27 Skinner St.

#### Irish Soda Bread for Sale

The Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam will sell Irish Soda Bread each Sunday in March, from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., at the church, located at 52 Middle Haddam Rd.

The one-pound loaf is \$5. All proceeds go to the Heifer Fund, an international project that supports women's rural farm industries.

Call or text 860-682-2067 with your name, phone number and amount to reserve, or show up and buy, first-come, first-served.

#### VFW Auxiliary **Art Contests**

The Fowler-Dix-Park Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary 5095 is now accepting entries for its 2024-25 Young American Creative Patriotic Art and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art scholarship competitions.

These scholarships are designed to recognize young artists in grades 9 to 12, encourage patriotism, and assist students who wish to further their education.

Entry forms and contest rules are at vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships/young-american-creative-patriotic-art-contest, the town library entrance, or the Post Home.

Student entries must be submitted (along with a completed entry form) to VFW Post 5095; 20 North Maple Street, East Hampton, CT 06424. The deadline for both contests is March 31.

#### Troop 57 Bottle Drive

Troop 57 is having its next bottle drive on Saturday, March 29. Bring clean cans, plastics and glass to the American Distilling Parking lot (31 East High St, Route 66) from 9 am to noon.

All redeemable containers are accepted; the only exception is milk containers. For more information, call Annette Kowalczyk at 860-267-2962.

#### Kindergarten Registration to Start

Kindergarten registration packets for the 2025-26 school year are available at the Memorial School foyer and the East Hampton Public Library.

To secure a screening appointment for their child, parents/guardians are asked to return all completed registration paperwork to the Memorial School office or drop box in the foyer by Friday, April 4.

Kindergarten screenings will be held from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. May 12, 16 and 19. Kindergarten early entry additional assessments will be held May 21.

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

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crackers in a brown cognac sauce **Stuffed Sole** Crab meat stuffing served over spinach mushrooms, shallots in a marsala wine sauce

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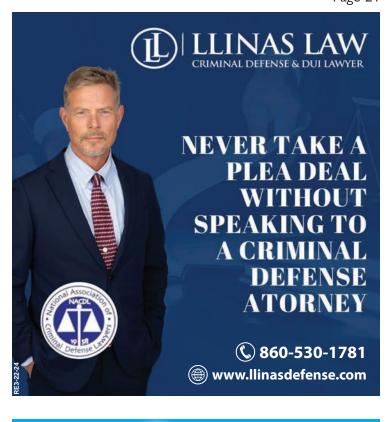
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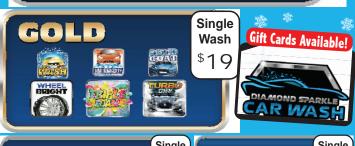
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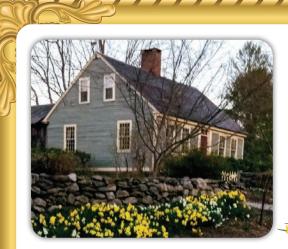
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East Hampton • East Hampton

### School Board Adopts 6.9% Budget Increase

By London Brazal

The Board of Education (BOE) has unanimously adopted a proposed \$40.34 million budget for the next fiscal year - an increase of 6.9% from current spending.

The spending package, which the board adopted last month, is down approximately \$125,000 from the 7.3% increase Superintendent of Schools Timothy Van Tasel first pitched

Reductions included a final actuarial evaluation of the defined pension plan and revisions to substitute lines, legal services and extracurricular activities.

At a BOE meeting last month, Van Tasel and business manager Karen Asetta outlined budget overruns from the past three years and the factors behind them. One of their key goals for the upcoming budget is to maintain core programming while avoiding future deficits.

"School budgets are very dynamic; things are always moving," expressed Van Tasel. He updated the board on budget adjustments nearly eight weeks after the initial proposal, focusing on major cost drivers and proposed reductions.

Van Tasel emphasized the importance of clear communication between district and town leadership, noting ongoing discussions with the Board of Finance, Town Council and school ad-

Van Tasel acknowledged the uncertainty surrounding future financial conditions but stressed the need for collaboration to address past deficits and establish a more sustainable financial path.

The proposed 2026 budget seeks to address recent financial challenges while maintaining a focus on student's academic success and overall well-being. It preserves existing programs without adding new staff and includes a reduction of one certified position.

"The truth is, almost 30% of this year's increase is to correct the course from the prior few years," said Asetta.

Since 2023, the district has overspent because of special education tuition and transportation, one-to-one services, health insurance and electricity. For FY 26, along with the previous reasons, other drivers include general wage increases and mandated reading programs.

Asetta discussed the uncertainty around how much the state will reimburse for excess special education costs. The budget currently assumes that seven students will exceed next year's cost threshold, based on estimates for 2025, though these numbers are uncertain. Additionally, two students in state or agency placements are expected to exceed the lower threshold of \$23,000. The district covers all costs up to the threshold, and the state reimburses only the amount above

The 2025-26 budget assumes a 75% excess cost reimbursement rate, but this rate could change, and there is a lot of uncertainty about what it will be. With more students in placements this year and limited state funding, the actual reimbursement could vary significantly, Asetta said.

Van Tasel explained that the reimbursement rate is influenced by historical trends. For example, last year, the rate was 69.1%, but the district had budgeted for 76%. In previous years, the rate was around 76%, but during the pandemic, it rose above 80% due to additional funding.

He noted that a state proposal was recently introduced that could increase the reimbursement rate for the current fiscal year. However, this change is still uncertain. Additionally, Van Tasel pointed out that when developing the budget, the district must estimate cost increases from other agencies, such as magnet schools, but these figures are not finalized until later in the year, making it difficult to predict exact

In comparison to school districts with similar

socioeconomic status, East Hampton is not the only school facing higher-than-average budget proposals. The district reference group average is 6.41%, but some schools are looking at increases higher than 7.4%.

"I think this just emphasizes that the rates are high this year between special ed, general wage increases and health insurance are big drivers across the state," added Asetta.

#### **Board Members Discuss the Issues**

During the discussion among board members, Republican Nancy Oakley said that if the district works to maintain or improve its programs, it would not expect to see an increase in students leaving for magnet schools.

Van Tasel said that the district has seen a significant decrease in the number of students choosing magnet schools over the years. He attributed this trend to the district's investment in its programs, which have become more attractive to parents, leading them to select local

Director of Curriculum Mary Clark added that the decline in magnet school enrollment has been evident over the past decade. While programs exist for families to explore different options, she observed that more families are picking local schools.

"If programming isn't maintained, the cost of students who are looking for those programs would still fall to the district just facilitated through the magnet system," said Clark.

BOE chair Nancy Kohler, a Democrat, reiterated that point, while cutting the budget and reducing programming might appear to save money, the cost of tuition for students who choose to attend other schools could offset those savings.

Also in the discussion period of the meeting, school board member Michael Buck, a Republican, expressed concern about the financial burden on the town, highlighting that the budget increase is significant, especially compared to neighboring towns. He emphasized the need to

educate the public on the state-mandated portions of the budget and criticized unfunded mandates, particularly expensive ones.

Buck said that, while he supports the budget and staff, he is frustrated with state officials who, in his view, continue to impose financial strain on towns despite their surpluses.

"I'm disgusted with our state leaders, and they need to hear that over and over again," said Buck. "They can't stand up here and say 'there's a surplus in the budget' and we are struggling."

Democrat Matt Engelhardt stressed the importance of increasing the number of residents who turn out at the budget referendum. He noted that while the town received recognition for high voter turnout (89%) in the 2024 presidential election, participation in the last budget referendum was much lower, at just 14%. He emphasized the need to educate and encourage residents to vote, highlighting the critical role this plays in maintaining the quality of educa-

Kohler acknowledged the challenging years the district has faced, emphasizing that the budget is a dynamic number. She pointed out that ongoing efforts have already reduced the budget proposal from a 7.33% increase to 6.94%.

"I think [this] shows – I hope it shows – this community that we are making a good effort to do the best we can and that there may still be changes," expressed Kohler.

**Next Steps for Budget** 

The Board of Education will present its budget at a Board of Finance public hearing and special meeting next Monday, March 17, at 6:30 p.m., at Town Hall and via Zoom. There will then be a finance board workshop focused solely on the school budget next Wednesday, March 19, at 6:30 p.m., also at Town Hall.

The Board of Finance will continue deliberations Wednesday, March 26, at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall, before sending the proposed budget to the Town Council in April.

#### **Invitation to Submit Quilts**

Haddam Neck Congregational Church Ladies Aid invites all to exhibit handmade quilts (bed size, wall hangings or miniatures), quilted clothing and other quilted items in the 36th annual Quilt Show at Haddam Neck Congregational Church, 408 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam

The quilt show will be held Saturday, April 5, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sunday, April 6, from

There is no fee to exhibit quilts, and the church welcomes quilters of all abilities. To exhibit your quilts, complete a registration form for each item and return it by March 24 to Elizabeth Malloy, 201 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck, CT 06424 or email to elizabethhartmalloy@gmail.com. Exhibitors will receive a letter with directions and quilt drop-off times.

If you would like to offer an exhibited item

#### **Red Cross Blood Drive**

There will be a Red Cross Blood Drive at the Congregational Church of East Hampton on Saturday April 12, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Potential donors may schedule an appointment by going to RedCrossBlood.org/donate. Enter the zip code 06424 and select the church on that date. Appointments are recommended, as there may not be availability for walk-ins.

For more information, call the church office at 860-267-4959.

for sale, it will be noted in the program. You must, however, take responsibility for any sale transactions. The quilt show program will show that your item is for sale and will include your price and contact information.

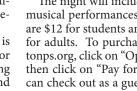
For additional information or a registration form, contact Dianne McHutchison at 860-267-4671 or rdmchutchison@vahoo.com; Lisa Malloy at elizabethhartmalloy@gmail.com; or Melissa Pionzio at mapionzio@comcast.net.

Call for Fabric Donations: The society is also accepting donations of fabric and yarn for the Bits and Pieces sale that will be held during show. Clean out your sewing rooms, closets and storage areas, and donate your surplus! Cotton fabrics preferred. To donate, call 860-993-5311

#### St. Patrick's Brunch Buffet

VFW Cobra Post 5095 will hold a St. Patrick's Brunch Buffet Sunday, March 16, from 10 a.m.-

ing favorites and more!" Cost is \$15 for adults and \$10 for seniors and kids under 12.



**EHHS Music Cabaret** 

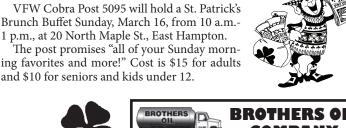
The East Hampton High School Music Cabaret will take place Wednesday, March 26, in the EHHS cafeteria, 15 N. Maple St. Doors open at 5:45 p.m., dinner will be served at 6:15, and performances begin at 6:30.

The night will include a pasta dinner, student musical performances and raffle prizes. Tickets are \$12 for students and senior citizens and \$20 for adults. To purchase, go to www.easthamptonps.org, click on "Optional Online Payments," then click on "Pay for HS-Music-Cabaret." You can check out as a guest, login to your account, or create an account. Be sure to clearly specify your name and number of tickets to ensure a smooth check-in at the event. You will receive an email confirmation of your purchase to present at the door.

Online tickets can be purchased through March 24; any remaining tickets will be available for purchase at the door - quantities are limited! All proceeds benefit the EHHS Music Department.

#### Dean's List

Joshua Gauthier of made the Dean's LIst at Bryant University for the fall semester 2024. Josh is majoring in Business/Marketing.





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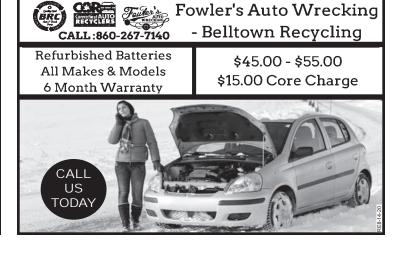
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East Hampton • East Hampton

### **Businesses Band Together to Rescue Lost Foster Dog**

By London Brazal

After a harrowing 10-day journey through ice, snow, and freezing temperatures, a foster dog named Bubs has been safely recovered thanks to a community effort involving local businesses, volunteers and rescue organizations.

Bubs, a 70-pound rescue dog from Los Angeles, had only been in his foster home for two weeks when he managed to slip out an open door near White Birch Road in East Hampton on Feb. 11. Bubs' foster "grandma," Deb McKinney, explained that her daughter Erin has fostered about 60 dogs over three years through the Dog Star Rescue in Bloomfield.

When the McKinneys were walking into their house with another dog, Bubs managed to slip out of the door and made his way to Portland, about seven miles away. Bubs was spotted by several town businesses, including Saint Clements Castle and Marina and Cline Truck and Trailer Repair, both located on Portland-Cobalt Road

Katie Flood, who works at Saint Clements, said staff there had seen the dog outside the property on Feb. 11 and had seen him on the security cameras over the following days. Bubs'

tracks indicated he moved slightly north, navigating sheer ice and enduring multiple snowstorms. Then, Cline Truck and Trailer Repair noticed him and his tracks on their property. The two businesses allowed CT Dog Gone Recovery (CTDGRV) to leave traps, food and cameras in hopes of catching Bubs.

Flood noted that many volunteers had come to Saint Clements to help search for Bubs. Staff members even stayed after their shifts to help with the search, while volunteers, despite the freezing conditions, left food and created treat trails.

On the night of Feb. 21, Bubs was finally caught in a kennel trap set up near Cline, after surviving 10 nights outdoors. Despite the weather, he only sustained a few minor cuts and was a bit hungry but otherwise unharmed.

"This was a true team effort," said Flood. "So many people, from businesses to volunteers, came together to make sure Bubs made it home safely. We're just so glad he's back."

CTDGRV posted on Facebook, highlighting additional involvement, including volunteers from the rescue organization who helped set up equipment, Red Con One UAS drone pilots and

community members who assisted in spreading the word.

McKinney was grateful for the community's support.

"I can't say enough about the people who helped," she said. "It was a huge effort, with so much happening behind the scenes. We're thankful it ended well."

When Bubs was found at night, the owners came to the shop without hesitation to reunite him with his foster family. As a larger dog, McKinney noted that Bubs was resilient, and they were fortunate he was big enough to take care of himself. McKinney shared that Bubs is, "good, and he's happy to be on a soft couch again."

McKinney explained that Bubs was sent from Los Angeles to help clear the shelters following the LA wildfires. At first, he was very skittish, but following his 10-day adventure, McKinney said that he's more laid back and not as nervous around them.

CTDGRV and Dog Star Rescue are hopeful that Bubs will soon find his forever home. Anyone interested in adopting Bubs or learning more about fostering can contact Dog Star Rescue in Bloomfield.



Bubs, a foster dog from East Hampton, is safely back home after a 10-day journey through harsh weather, thanks to a community effort involving local businesses, volunteers and rescue organizations.

#### Fish Frydays Are Back

The Knights of Columbus St. John Paul II Council 6190 is offering a variety of fish dinners on Fridays during Lent. Meals are served from 4:30-7:15 p.m. in the St. Patrick Church Parish Center, 47 West High St. The next dinner will be tonight, March 14.

This year's offerings include breaded cod, clams and shrimp, which will be served with French fries and coleslaw. Baked cod and fried chicken tenders meals have been added. Chow-

der will also be available. Coffee, tea, water and soda are also offered.

Prices of the fish may vary from week to week. Entertainment on March 14 will be Bill Naughton Jr.

Take-out service will also be available; advance orders must be received by noon on Fridays, by calling 860-267-6644. Please do not leave orders on the answering machine.

#### **Budget Meetings Next Week**

The East Hampton Board of Finance will hold the following budget meetings next week:

Board of Finance Public Hearing/Special Meeting: Monday, March 17, at 6:30 p.m., at the East Hampton Town Hall, 1 Community Drive, in the Town Council Chambers 107, and via Zoom. The town and Board of Education will present an overview of their budgets. The Board of Finance will also gather input from the public and other boards.

**Budget Workshops** will be held at the Town Hall, 1 Community Drive, and via Zoom:

· Tuesday, March 18, at 4 p.m. – General Government, Regulatory, Health & Human Services and Culture & Recreation;

· Wednesday, March 19, at 6:30 p.m. – Board of Education;

· Thursday, March 20, at 6:30 p.m. – Public Safety and Public Works.

#### **East Hampton Schools Offer Preschool Programs**

The East Hampton Public Schools system is seeking 3- and 4-year-old residents interested in preschool programs for the 2025-26 school year. The school system is offering two preschool programs this year: the Integrated preschool half-day program and full-day Smart Start program.

Memorial Elementary School's preschool Integration program will be held three times a week for 3-year-old students and four times a week for 4-year-old students. Due to limited spaces, selection for peer models will be determined through a lottery process. If selected, peer models demonstrating age-appropriate skills will be assigned by age to either a three-day-a-week or four-day-a-week schedule (2.5 hours per day). Children must be toilet-trained and turn 3 prior to Sept. 1, 2025, to be eligible for the 3-year-old program and turn 4 by Sept. 1, 2025, for the 4-year-old program.

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

given to 4-year-old children that meet income guidelines or have other factors for consideration. Additional applicants, regardless of economic or risk factors, may then be selected through a lottery process if there are spaces available. Children must turn 4 prior to Sept. 1, 2025 to be eligible for Smart Start.

Parents interested in proceeding through the selection process must pick up an application/information packet at either Memorial Elementary School or East Hampton Public Library. The completed parent interview form, immunization form and a proof of residency must be returned to Kelly Caruso at Memorial School office no later than March 21. Students will not be eligible to enroll if all required immunizations are not current.

Once all three forms are returned, parents will be contacted, no later than March 28, to schedule a time to bring their child for the screening and lottery/selection process.

Forms received after March 21 will not be accepted.

### Music and Nursing Scholarship Applications Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords tigulate his/her career goals and the re

The Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords (MHVC) Executive Board is now taking applications for the group's annual scholarships to be awarded to Middlesex County students pursuing a career in music or nursing.

Middlesex County includes the *Rivereast* towns of East Hampton and Portland.

Applicants must have been accepted at an accredited college or university with one of these majors. The Review Committee will consider academic record, extracurricular and community service activities, the student's ability to ar-

ticulate his/her career goals and the recommendations of the references. The scholarships will be paid directly to the recipients at the spring concert which will be held on Saturday, May 3, at Portland High School.

All applications must be postmarked by Friday, March 14, and can be obtained at Middlesex County high school guidance offices or by visiting vocalchords20.org. If you would like to make a donation to the scholarship fund, visit the website.

#### 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. Visit www.easthamptonct.gov/east-hamptonsenior-center for more information and a list of regular weekly and monthly activities, including games, quilting, Bible study and more.

**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 10:30 a.m. the day before. Meals are free; a \$3 donation is requested. A Form 5 document must be completed before registering for lunch; stop by the senior center to complete and submit the form.

Monthly and Special Events: Wonderfully Wicked Women's Group (WWW): First and third Mondays at 10 a.m. in the East Hampton Library Community Room during March. This is a low-key opportunity to meet others and share resources.

**Blood Pressure Screenings with Chatham Health:** Monday, March 17, 12:30 p.m. No appointment needed.

Cancer Prevention Presentation with UConn Health: Tuesday, March 18, 10:30 a.m. Maggie Donovan of UConn Health will discuss the importance of cancer screening.

**Design & Create Class:** Thursday, March 20, 1:30 p.m., featuring a birdhouse project.

Family Tree: Friday, March 21, 10:30 a.m.

Kenneth Doney leads this hands-on session on how to research your family history. Bring a laptop, iPad or cell phone to the class.

**Opportunities:** Seniors are needed to design and/or ride on the East Hampton Senior Center Old Home Day Float. This year's parade will be held on Saturday, July 12 and the theme is "Honoring Small Businesses." Call the senior center to find out more.

April 7. Step into wellness with this new group. All pace levels welcome. For the first outing, meet at 9 a.m. at the Cranberry Bog/Air Line Trail, 69 Smith St., East Hampton.

Trips: Lunch for Seniors at Windham Technical High School: Monday, March 24. Enjoy a lunch prepared by the school's culinary students. Depart at 10 a.m. for a 10:45 a.m. seating and return to the center by 12:30 p.m. Cost is \$21 and includes transportation.

Discover Hidden Vernal Pools Walk: Wednesday, April 2, 9:30 a.m. Naturalist Lynn Kochiss will lead a low-key outdoor walk at Highlawn Forest in Middletown to experience examples of hidden vernal pools. The walk is Part 2 of the "Nature is Everywhere" series offered by the senior center; Part 1, the Hidden Vernal Pools presentation, will be held at the senior center on Tuesday, April 1 at 10:30 a.m.

**Volunteers Needed:** Volunteers are needed to answer phones and serve as shoppers for seniors during senior center hours. Stop by the senior center Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to fill out a volunteer application.

#### **Business Operating Grants Program**

Applications for the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission's (MCRC) 2025 Business Operating Grants Program are available online. The program, funded through the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, offers grants of up to \$25,000 to qualified small businesses in Middlesex County.

qualified small businesses in Middlesex County.

Middlesex County includes the *Rivereast* towns of East Hampton and Portland.

Applicants are encouraged to consider how the requested funds will positively impact the growth and development of their business or alleviate the negative effects of any hardship currently being faced. The grant funding may be used for equipment and/or technology, leasehold improvements, and other fixed costs,

including expenses related to supply chain disruptions, increased employee travel time/mileage, higher vendor costs, loss of income, and additional marketing expenses.

For-profit businesses that apply must be based and have operated in a Middlesex County town for at least 24 months, have no more than 50 employees, less than \$8 million in revenue, and be in good standing with all municipal, state, and federal authorities. A complete list of eligibility and application requirements can be found at mxcrc.org.

Applications are due March 15.

A series of virtual information sessions will be offered for businesses interested in applying. For more details, visit mxcrc.org.

#### Senior Center Upcoming Trips

East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., is offering the following coach trips with Friendship Tours. For more information or to register and pay, stop by the center.

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston: Wednesday, May 21. Cost is \$147/person and includes a guided tour highlighting Gardner's art collection, art, rare books and the Venetian Palazzo. Enjoy a family style lunch at Maggiano's Little Italy with appetizer, salad, pasta, entrée, dessert and soft drinks.

Island-Hopping – Nantucket & Martha's Vineyard: Aug. 26-28. Cost is \$779 per person double occupancy and includes motor coach, two nights' hotel, two breakfasts, one dinner, ferries to Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, sightseeing and admissions, tour escort, driver and tour director gratuity. Deposit of \$250 is due by June 3.

#### Bowling, Golf Leagues to Start

Friday Morning Spring Senior Bowling League starts Friday, March 28, at 10 a.m., at Kickback n' Bowl, and the Belltown Senior Mixed Golf League starts Tuesday, May 6, at 10 a.m. at Portland West Golf Course.

All skill levels, from any of the *Rivereast towns*, are welcome to join. Contact Jack Anderson for the details at 860-882-3752 or jackande52@aol.com.

Amish Country in Lancaster, Pa.: Oct. 1-3. There will be an Amish buggy ride, a Chalk Talk event, a farmers market, and a trip to see the show *Noah* at the Sight and Sound Theater. Cost is \$689 per person double occupancy and includes motor coach, two nights' hotel, two breakfasts, two dinners, sightseeing and admissions, tour escort, drive and tour director gratuity. Deposit of \$150 is due by July 9.

Trans-Atlantic Cruise: Nov. 6-22. Fly to Barcelona and transfer to the ship "Breakaway" and enjoy 15 nights aboard, meals, daily activities, entertainments, casino and fitness center, with stops along the way to towns and cities in France, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Stop by the senior center for a flier.

Helping Hands Re-Opening

Re-Opening
Helping Hands, a ministry of Cornerstone
Bible Church, is open the first and third Saturdays of each month. Helping Hands offers free clothing, household items, toys, books, etc., to anyone in need.

Anyone wishing to shop can do so from 9-11 a.m. on the first and third Saturdays of every month. Donations to Helping Hands are accepted on Thursdays from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and on Saturdays that Helping Hands is open from 9-11 a.m.

Helping Hands is located at 27 Skinner St.

East Hampton • East Hampton

### Council Considers Change in Motor Vehicle Tax

By London Brazal

A recent state law, Bill 7067, allows towns to adjust how car values decrease over time for tax purposes - and East Hampton may take advantage of the new opportunity.

At the Town Council meeting on Tuesday, Town Manager David Cox explained that the Council may consider a new way of calculating the taxable value of motor vehicles. In the past, car values were based on market prices, which meant they increased when demand for used cars went up, like they did during the COVID-19

To create a more predictable system, Cox said, the state switched to a fixed depreciation method, where a car's value started at 85% of its original price and dropped each year until it reached a minimum of \$500. This change significantly lowered the total taxable value of vehicles in East Hampton by about \$23.5 million, shifting around \$762,000 in taxes from vehicle owners to real estate owners.

The new bill allows towns to slow this depreciation by starting at 90% instead of 85%, reducing the loss in taxable value, Cox noted. If the Town Council adopts this change, it would add back about \$7.4 million in taxable value, generating roughly \$240,000 in taxes and impacting the mill rate by about 21 cents. "If we leave it alone, and we don't make any change, approximately 21 cents per thousand [dollars] goes back onto our real estate," he said.

Republican councilman Ted Hintz Jr. explained that motor vehicle tax bills are already high, and in the past, there was an attempt to make payments easier by allowing them to be split into two installments. However, he said the council decided against this idea, leaving residents with a higher tax bill to pay in one lump

"Now, you're going to put a higher tax bill on them and then have it as a once-a-year payment, it's kind of like hitting them twice," Hintz commented. He pointed out that, unlike real estate taxes, renters in the town typically have their rent adjusted annually to account for things like taxes and insurance.

#### Friends and Foes in Our Gardens

All are invited to come to East Hampton Public Library, 105 Main St., on Monday, March 24, for a program entitled "Friends and Foes in Our Gardens." The program will be held in the library community room starting at 6:15 p.m.

The presenter is Kaleb Remski of Wilder Gardens LLC, a native plant landscaping company here in Connecticut. His presentation will focus on who are these visitors to our gardens and

how to attract the "friends" and earth-friendly management of the "foes."

This program is presented as a joint collaboration between the East Hampton and Middle Haddam Garden Clubs and the East Hampton Commission on Aging.

For more information, call JoAnn at 860-267-4129 or Hannah at 203-804-3879.

#### Haddam Neck Covenant Church News

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

Message Series: Each Sunday during Lent, the message will be "Upside Down Blessings."

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 worship. A toddler nursery is also available. Confirmation Class is held on alternate Sundays during the

#### Bingo at VFW Post

All are invited to bingo every Thursday at VFW Cobra Post 5095, located at 20 North Maple St. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and games start

Pre-order a fresh homemade sandwich to eat or a drink in the bar to be served during inter-

#### **Dean's List**

East Hampton resident Gavin Santillo made the fall 2024 Dean's List at Bryant University in Smithfield, R.I.

Santillo is a 2023 graduate of East Hampton High School.

worship service.

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

Adult Bible Study: Meets at 10:30 a.m. each Sunday after fellowship, with discussion on

Ladies Fellowship: The next gathering will be Friday, March 20, from 1-3 p.m. at Mary's house. Office Info: The office can be reached at 860-

267-2336; hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The church website is at www.hncovenantchurch.org.

### KofC Scholarship

The Knights of Columbus Council 6190 announces the availability of three \$1,000 scholarships to students continuing their ed-

Applicants must be members of St. John

The council will also award two \$500 Helping Hands grants to members of St. John Paul II Parish attending Mercy or Xavi-

Applications are available at high school guidance offices and the parish center office,

Hintz said that, from his perspective, he prefers the 85% depreciation method because it seems more realistic than valuing a car at 90% of its original price in its first year.

The council also considered establishing two payments for the motor vehicle tax. Hintz explained that other towns, such as Portland and Marlborough, split payments if the bill is higher than \$1,000. While some people may choose to pay it all at one time, it gives them the option to

Democrat councilman Rich Knotek suggested waiting to adopt the 90% schedule for a year, in order to see how the 85% schedule worked out.

"I was thinking maybe we could hold off and see, depending on how Reval goes and the general feeling of how it impacts real estate taxes if we wanted to do something then with it," Knotek said. He agreed with Hintz that the town should stay with the 85% schedule.

Democrat Karen Wanat said she believed it's

fairer to keep the taxes on vehicles rather than shifting the burden to real estate taxes, especially for people on fixed incomes, such as elderly individuals with only one vehicle. She said she supports the 90% option, as it offers a reduction without going as low as 85%, and it still allows for further adjustments if needed in the future.

Wanat suggested getting a number of examples of tax bills and what they would look like under a 90% versus an 85% schedule. "I would like to see some examples to see actual numbers of what people would pay and how much of an impact are we really talking about on an individual person's bill," Wanat said.

The Town Council decided to postpone taking action on the taxation schedule and plans to propose a resolution to split motor vehicle tax payments if the bill exceeds \$1,000 at the next meeting. The Council will meet on Tuesday, March 25, at 6:30 p.m., at Town Hall, 1 Community Drive.

#### Trivia Night to Benefit EHNS

East Hampton Nursery School will hold a Trivia Night on Friday, March 21, at Rule of 3 Brewing, 201 W. High St. in East Hampton. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the game starts at 6:30

The night will feature cash prizes for first, second and third place, as well as the Rescue Dog food truck. The food truck donates a portion of its proceeds to help save rescue dogs.

Also, there will be donation baskets to raffle

#### Easter Bunny Fundraiser

The Easter Bunny is coming to Paul's and Sandy's Too, located at 95 East High St., this Sunday, April 6, from noon-2 p.m.

All are invited to bring their kids, cousins, friends and pets to take photos with the Easter Bunny. Donations are accepted, to help East Hampton High School Project Graduation. EHHS Project Graduation throws a substance-free party for seniors after graduation.

off; cost is \$20 for 25 tickets. There will also be a 50/50 raffle, with tickets at \$10 each.

Register for teams of two to six people. Cost is \$25 per person. Venmo @easthamptonnurseryschool to make payment. In Venmo, include team name and number of registrants (example: Smartypants 2 out of 6).

For more information, email ehnsfundraisers@gmail.com.

#### Crafters and Vendors Needed

Haddam Neck Covenant Church is hosting an Outside Market on Saturday, May 17, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and organizers are looking for additional crafters and vendors.

The \$20 table charge will be donated to outreach programs. Contact Amy at 860-659-7818. Haddam Neck Covenant Church is located

at 17 Haddam Neck Rd. in East Hampton, the road to the Haddam Neck Fairgrounds.



ucation at an accredited college/university.

Paul II Parish.

er high schools.

Applications are due April 25.

### or by emailing stpatrick47@sbcglobal.net. w KENNETH BARBER & ASSOCIATES, LLC Kenneth Barber, Esq. John H. Porter, Esq. Joseph Cassidy, Esq.

**YOUR ATTORNEYS** 

"May your troubles be less, your blessings be more, and nothing but happiness come through your door."

— Irish Blessing

Barber-Law-Firm.com P: 860-267-2263 29 West High Street East Hampton, CT 06424



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East Hampton • East Hampton



Epoch Arts' annual Dinnershow - a night of pasta, musical numbersl, skits and of course Wackadoodles - will return March 29. Pictured is the cast from last year's show.

**Epoch Arts to Hold Dinnershow** 

Epoch Arts will hold its Dinnershow Satur- a variety of skits, musical numbers and Epoch's day, March 29, at 6 p.m., at Epoch, 27 Skinner

Dinnershow is a fundraiser for Epoch's original Mainstage theater production, The Reset, which goes up in May. At Dinnershow, the cast of the Mainstage Theater Production will serve a full-course pasta dinner and then perform in famous Wackadoodles! Skits will randomly be called out and the cast will scramble to put their costumes on and perform on the spot.

Admission is \$15, and \$12 seniors. For tickets, or if you would like to sponsor a skit for \$25 or a Wackadoodle for \$10, email elizabeth@epocharts.org.

#### Parks and Rec News & Notes

East Hampton Parks and Recreation has announced the following items of interest. For more information or to register, call 860-267-7300 or www.easthamptonrec.com.

Twig Wreath Workshop: Wednesday, April 2, 6:30-8:30 p.m., at Town Hall. Craft a wreath to brighten up your home. No experience necessary. Enjoy complimentary Spring Fling & Bunny Bliss mocktails. PYOS: Feel free to pack your own snacks. Cost is \$30/resident, \$35/non-

Spring Candy Hunt: Tuesday, April 15, 5:30 p.m., at Sears Park. Hop into the spring spirit with this candy hunt for kids 10 and under. Participants must register online. Donations are ap-

Lake Pocotopaug Bass Fishing Tournament: Saturday, April 26, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., at Sears Park. Resident anglers age 16 and up are invited. Participants must register by April 25. Registration fee is \$25.

Afterschool Programs at Memorial School (K-3rd Grade): Piggy Palooza!: Tuesday, March 25, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Come join Gilbert the pig and his friends to watch them show off their tricks. Plus, make your own pig pen dirt cup treat to enjoy. Cost is \$30.

April Fools Crafty Capers: Tuesday, April 1, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Create silly pranks and fun crafts to surprise and giggle with your parents. Cost

Afterschool Programs at Center School (4th and 5th Grade): Unicorn Slime!: Tuesday, March 18, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Craft your very own glittery, magical slime and take home a sparkling, one-of-a-kind creation. Cost is \$25.

#### St. Patrick Church News & Notes

St. Patrick Church, 47 West High St., is a member of St. John Paul II Parish, along with St. Bridget Church in Moodus.

Masses are celebrated Saturdays at 4 p.m. at St. Patrick and 5:30 p.m. at St. Bridget, and on Sundays at 7 and 11:30 a.m. at St. Bridget and 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. at St. Patrick.

During the week, Masses are celebrated at 8 a.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays at St. Patrick, and on Wednesdays and Fridays at St. Bridget.

**Lenten Fish Fry:** The Knights of Columbus is offering a variety of fish dinners on Fridays during Lent. Meals are served in St. Patrick Church Center on Fridays from 4:30-7:15 p.m. Take-out service is also available. Prices vary. Entertainment is provided.

**Stations of the Cross:** Every Friday in Lent at

noon at St. Bridget and at 7 p.m. at St. Patrick.

Lenten Book Discussion: Enhance your Lenten journey by learning more about the mystery of the true presence in the Eucharist. Over four weeks, church members will read and discuss Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist, by Brant Pitre. Meet in St. Patrick's Center Library on Thursday mornings from 9-10 a.m. on March 20, 27 and April 3, and on Friday evenings from 6-7 p.m. on March 14, 21, 28 and April 4. Call 860-267-6644 or email SJPDRE@ gmail.com to register and for more details.

Soup & Salad Dinner: The Ladies Guild will serve an all-you-can-eat soup and salad dinner Saturday, March 15, at 6:30 p.m., at St. Bridget's Marian Hall. There will be a variety of soups to try. Cost is \$7 per person or \$25 per family. Children under 5 are free.

#### Middle Haddam Public Library News

The Middle Haddam Public Library, 2 Knowles Road, 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: Mondays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; Tuesdays and Fridays, 3–6 p.m.

Featured Artist for March: Betsy Bailey of Hartford, an award-winning painter, will have watercolors on display at the library all month. Her art is inspired by her love of the natural world and her travels in South America, Italy, Spain and Ireland. Bailey's work is viewable during library hours. There will be a **Closing** Reception Friday, March 28, from 4-6 p.m.; refreshments will be served.

St. Patrick's Day Music: Monday, March 17, at 10:30 a.m. Jim Monahan will perform Irish tunes on his accordion. All are invited to stop by coffee and refreshments.

Open Mic/Stage Night: Friday, March 21, from 6-8 p.m. Share your talents or come listen. Contact the library and sign up to perform.

Eco-Friendly Gardening: Monday, March

31, 5 p.m. Jim Natalie of Wilder Gardens LLC in Groton will lead the presentation. Call the library to register.

Mahjong: Mondays, 10:30 a.m. All levels of experience welcome. Contact the library for more information.

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

Chatham Chess Club: Thursday, March 27, 6-8 p.m. Contact the library for more

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

Friday Family Yoga: Fridays at 9:30 a.m. Drop-in cost is \$12 for two people, and \$3 for each additional person. Cost is \$60 for a sixweek series. Register at zenlotus860@yahoo.

Saturday Family Yoga: The first Saturday of each month at 11 a.m. Cost is \$12 to drop in for two people and \$3 for each additional person. Register by emailing zenlotus860@yahoo.com.

#### **Christ Episcopal Church News**

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

**Donations:** Food items for the East Hampton Food Bank may be placed in the black totes at

Belltown Garden Club Scholarship

The Belltown Garden Club is again offering a scholarship, available to high school seniors who reside in East Hampton.

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.

the rear of the church. Returnable bottles and cans are collected in cans by the shed.

Wednesday Bible Study: All are welcome. Contact Bobette Reed Kahn at bobette@kahn. com if you are interested in participating via

Information/Assistance: Contact Senior Warden Donna Hryb at 860-633-0472 or donnadubehryb@gmail.com for more information.

This scholarship is awarded to an East Hampton High School deserving senior with preferences given to a student who intends to major in sciences or education related to the earth. Related fields of study will be considered. Financial need could be part of the decision.

Applications are due by May 1, and are available through the guidance department of the East Hampton High School.

#### Fair Association Accepting Scholarship Applications

The Haddam Neck Fair Association has announced the opening of applications for its annual scholarship program. This year, the association will award two \$1,000 scholarships to deserving Connecticut students who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to the success of the Haddam Neck Fair through their volunteer efforts.

The scholarship is open to high school seniors and students currently enrolled in an accredited institution of higher education, including colleges, universities, and trade schools. Applicants must have been active volunteers with the Haddam Neck Fair, contributing their time and skills to the event over the years.

To qualify for the scholarship, applicants must: Be a high school senior or currently enrolled in an accredited institution of higher education; be accepted to or matriculated in an accredited college, university, or trade school; have volunteered with the Haddam Neck Fair, with an emphasis on sustained participation in fair activities or summer work nights; and demonstrate involvement in school and community

To apply, applicants must complete a form and include: a list of their volunteer contributions to the fair over the years; an essay (500 words or less) reflecting on how their volunteer experience with the Haddam Neck Fair has influenced their growth and understanding of community; proof of acceptance or enrollment in an accredited institution of higher education; and a letter of recommendation from a teacher, employer or community leader.

Applications can be submitted digitally at bit.ly/HNFScholarshipApp, or a printed copy can ound at haddamneckfair.com (under "Get Involved") and mailed to: Haddam Neck Fair Association, Attn: Scholarship Committee, 26 Quarry Hill Road, Haddam Neck, CT 06424.

The deadline for submissions is May 1.

For more information about the scholarship and application process, visit www.haddamneckfair.com/fair-scholarships or contact MacKnight at jackie.macknight@haddamneck-

#### East Hampton Library News & Notes

East Hampton Public Library, 105 Main St, has announced the following, For full program descriptions or to register for a program, call 860-267-6621 or visit easthamptonpubliclibrary.org.

Hours: Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Adult Programs: Adult Theater Improv: Monday, March 17, 6:30-8 p.m. Learn to be creative, think quickly, gain confidence and build trust with fellow attendees through large and small group games and activities. For adults of all ages and skill levels – beginners welcome! Registration recommended. Led by Valerie Bozzi of the Podium Players and hosted in partnership with the East Hampton Commission on Aging.

Book Club: Tuesday, March 18, 6:30 p.m. Come together to read and discuss the monthly selection. Copies of the month's book are available for checkout at the circulation desk. This month's book is Me Before You by Jojo Moyes. Register or drop in.

Tech Help: Thursday, March 20, 2-4 p.m. Basic technology help for phones, laptops, tablets, and e-readers. No registration required; just bring your device with you.

Belltown Book Brunch: Friday, March 21, 11 a.m. Meet to talk about what you're we are all currently reading, while enjoying coffee, tea, and a breakfast treat. Perfect for avid readers or anyone seeking recommendations. Register or drop

Music in the Library: Coreyanne Armstrong, Bagpiper: Tuesday, March 25, 6 p.m. There's no better time than March for a bagpipe concert in the library!

Teen Programs: Play With Your Food: St. Patrick's Day: Monday, March 17, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Teens in grades 6-12 are invited for an hour of playing with their food. Make St. Pat's Popcorn, have a Rice Krispie Treat contest, and make nobake cookie dough.

Teen Advisory Board: Tuesday, March 18, 6 p.m. All teens invited to join.

Teen D&D One Shot: Grades 8-12: Wednesday, March 19, 5:30-7 p.m. Participate in a short adventure from start to finish. No previous playing experience or past participation required.

#### **Police News**

2/26: Charles Mifflin, 55, of 48 Marlborough St., Portland, was arrested and charged with second-degree breach of peace and third-degree assault, East Hampton Police said.

From Feb. 24-March 2, officers responded to 21 medical calls, four motor vehicle crashes and seven alarms, and made 72 traffic stops, police The library will provide basic fifth-edition characters; all supplies included.

Trapped in the Aviation Museum Escape Room: Grades 6-12: Saturday, March 22, noon. After a day of visiting the local aviation museum, you find yourselves accidentally locked inside. But you're not the only ones left behind. The famed Amelia Earhart was busy looking around in the archives for a special map and has been trapped alongside you! Can you help her find the map and the golden key to escape the museum in time? Pre-registration is required; up to four players per time slot. Sign up as a team or as an individual player. Arrive no later than five minutes prior to your time so that you can begin promptly; no admittance into the room after 10 minutes past your time. Players will have 40 minutes to solve all the clues and escape from the

Magic: the Gathering: Grades 7-12: Wednesday, March 26, 3:30-5 p.m. Whether you already know how to play the card game or want to learn, come together and play with people of all skill levels. Bring your own decks or use one of the

Children's Programs: Read to a Therapy Dog: Grades K-3: Tuesday, March 18, 4:30 p.m. Readers will be assigned a 15-minute time slot to read to a certified therapy dog. This is an opportunity to read aloud in a comfortable environment.

Pete the Cat and the Music Room: Saturday, March 29, 11 a.m. Join children's musician Michele Urban for a show featuring songs about Pete the Cat. Urban will share jazzy new songs and stories about Pete's musical adventures. This program is intended for children ages 1-8 and their families. No registration required. Sponsored by Rotary Club of East Hampton.

#### **Lions Club Scholarships** Available

The East Hampton Lions Club is offering students graduating in their senior year an opportunity to apply for its annual scholarships.

The scholarships are the Gov. William O'Neill Memorial Scholarship, the Joseph Becker Scholarship, the Lions Club Scholarship, and the Gustine Service Award.

Those who apply need to be East Hampton residents who attend East Hampton High School or area charter, tech, vo-ag, or Catholic high schools, or are home-schooled. Applications are available at the East Hampton High School guidance office.

Applications are due April 30.

### Proposed Town, School Budgets Presented

By Michael Sinkewicz

First Selectmen Bernie Dennler and Superintendent of Schools Daniel Sullivan presented their respective proposed budgets to the public Tuesday at Town Hall.

As Dennler unveiled his \$18.08 million spending plan – a \$984,702, or 5.75%, increase over the current year's budget - he told the Board of Finance and residents in attendance that the town must "avoid going backwards," and that his proposal was privatized "stability

The proposed increase, he noted, was primarily the result of wage inflation, and there were no new positions added to the budget. Instead, he said wages climbed due to contractual obligations, and funding was allocated to account for overtime expenses in the fire department.

'Ultimately, I think our goal is the same as it really always should be, which is to work together to identify reasonable savings and an appropriate, affordable mill rate that provides services of value to our residents," Dennler said.

Representatives from Colchester Public Schools and the Board of Education also walked through the 2025-26 school budget proposal, which is slated at \$47.93 million — a \$2.35 million, or 5.16%, increase over the current year.

The amount, which was advanced by the BOE earlier this month, is a tick higher than the initial budget Sullivan pitched to the school board last month. On March 4, the school board injected \$59,766 into the proposal, which was the net sum of a series of modifications.

The BOE agreed to add a facilities maintainer to the budget, costing \$98,766. It also decided to delay the demolishing of the portables at Bacon Academy, saving \$90,000, and effectively offsetting the cost of the new position.

Lastly, the BOE reduced the fees for pay-to-

**Community CPR** 

Colchester Fire & EMS, located at 52 Old Hartford Rd., will hold a Community CPR and 'Stop the Bleed' event on Monday, April 28, from 6:30-9 p.m.

In this free Family and Friends CPR class, learn CPR and relief of choking in adults, children and infants. Use of an AED (automated external defibrillator) is also included in the training, and participants will receive a student manual for ongoing reference.

Future dates are: Friday, Aug. 22, from 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; and Wednesday, Nov. 12, from

To sign up for one of the classes, contact Fire Headquarters at 860-537-2512 or firedepartment@colchesterct.gov.

These classes are for Colchester residents only.

RTC Pasta Dinner

The Colchester Republican Town Committee invites all to a Pasta Dinner, for the annual RTC fundraising event, on Friday, March 14, at 6 p.m., at St. Joseph's Polish Society, 395 S. Main St.

A pasta dinner, salad and dessert will be provided. There will also be a raffle and door prizes. Cost is \$25 to attend. Tickets can be bought online by going to www.Colchester-Republicans.org and click on 'donate.'

Vendors Wanted for **Spring Bark** 

The Colchester Dog Park Committee is looking for vendors that sell dog-related items for their 11th annual "Spring Bark for the Park."

The event will be held on the Town Green on Sunday, May 18, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., with a rain date of Sunday, June 1. The event will include 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 slot, email tagnobark@gmail. com by May 9.

#### **Veterans Coffee House** Meetup

All Colchester military veterans are invited to join the monthly Coffee House gathering on Saturday, March 15, from 10 a.m.-noon. This meeting will be held at the new Senior Center on Louis Lane, and veterans will be given a tour of the new facility as well as information regarding the programs and services being offered there.

play with sports programs and for student parking, cutting revenue by \$51,000.

A major question mark remaining in the budget proposal is in regard to the amount of money Colchester will receive from in state through Education Cost Sharing. For now, based on the governor's proposed budget, the town is set to lose approximately \$500,000 in ECS funding, which would significantly impact the mill rate, according to Dennler.

As is stands, with loss of ECS funding, along with a reduction to the town's Grand List, the 2025-26 mill rate would increase by 2.26 mills — a leap the first selectman said the community would "really struggle with."

However, Dennler expressed that the governor's budget may change, and urged residents to lobby their state representatives to help preserve Colchester's ECS allotment. If it was held harmless, the mill rate would go up by 1.93 mills.

Dennler outlined a third option, which was that in addition to ECS funding not being cut, the town would also offset the budget by \$500,000 by tapping into its unassigned fund balance account. In that scenario, the mill rate would increase by 1.62 mills — but Dennler cautioned that using fund balance had draw-

"We need to make sure that whatever we do doesn't just kick the problem to next year," he said. "There's a balancing act that we're going to have to strike here."

Along with increases to wages and employee benefits, Dennler identified a new expense linked to the new senior center, which opened at the end of last year. Because the facility is much larger than its predecessor, electricity

Pierogies for Sale

St. Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church in Colchester will have pierogies for sale on Saturday, March 15. There will be about 200 dozen freshly made pierogies available

To place your order, call Brenda at 860-365-0281. First-come, first-served.

#### **Bikers Against Child Abuse**

The nonprofit organization Bikers Against Child Abuse meets monthly at Saint Joseph's Polish Society, 395 South Main St., Colchester.

Meetings take place the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. Next month's meeting will be held April 7.

Bikers Against Child Abuse, Inc. is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that exists to provide aid, comfort, safety, and support for children who have been sexually, physically, and emotionally abused.

For more information, call 860-420-7388 or email info@ct-ct.BACAworld.org.

#### First-Time Homebuyer Seminar

Do you have questions about buying your first home - such as if you need a down payment, what a mortgage preapproval is, what home inspections are needed, or other questions?

If the answer is yes, then you may be interested in a free First-Time Homebuyer Seminar on Saturday, April 5, at 392 South Main St. in chester. There will be two classes; choose either the 11 a.m. or the 1 p.m. slot.

Speakers will be Carol Ryall, Realtor with Carl Guild & Associates; Hayley Horzepa of Total Mortgage; and Ryan Hartman of Anchor Home Inspections.

To reserve a seat, call Ryall at 860-514-5333.

#### Dean's List

Aiden Hosford of Colchester made the fall 2024 Dean's List at the Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston.

#### **Dean's List**

Rhys Snow of Colchester, a senior majoring in electrical engineering, made the fall 2024 Dean's List at the College of Engineering at Villanova University in Villanova, Pa.

Snow will graduate in May.

#### Dean's, President's Lists

The following Colchester residents made the fall 2024 Dean's List and President's List at the University of Hartford:

Samantha Ciaglo, Jade Hostetler, Lexi Magrey, Kaylie Marvin, Arie Nair and Sokheta Nguon.

costs spiked by roughly \$45,000.

On the school side, the presentation emphasized "return on investment." District administrators highlighted a variety of accolades, including with college readiness and athletics.

Throughout their education experience, our students are supported, challenged and given opportunities to excel both the classroom and beyond, and showing that they're ready to succeed in whatever path they choose," said Assistant Superintendent of Schools Jessica Kuckel.

Sullivan acknowledged that the year-overyear increase was "more than we anticipated." He explained that originally, the budget was expected to rise by \$1.74 million, or 3.8%, but a number of factors affected the bottom-line. One of the largest spikes, he said, came after Lockton informed the district that its health reserve was underfunded, resulting in that line increasing by \$400,000.

The school budget includes a new elementary school teacher, two nurses and an additional school safety officer/director. Currently, the district has an attendant stationed at the front door of all four schools, who each monitor visitors and security camera footage.

Bacon Academy also has two unarmed safety officers; the other three schools each have one officer. An armed school resource officer splits time across the district.

The proposal would add another safety officer to the district staff, and one of the officers would become an in-house director of school safety, which would be a new title and replace an outside security consultant.

#### **Grand List Update**

Prior to the budget presentation this week, the Board of Selectmen on March 6 approved a motion enabling the town enact a local option made possible by an emergency bill passed by the state legislature and signed by the governor, which modifies the way motor vehicles are as-

Previously, ahead of this year's budget season, the state changed the methodology of how motor vehicles were assessed, which resulted in the town's total motor vehicle assessment decreasing by nearly \$26 million. And overall, the Grand List went down by \$21.45 million, or

However, Chaponis said many municipalities were struggling with the new methodology: "A bunch of cities and towns were really nervous and scared about raising the mill rates so significantly and they pushed the legislature to act."

"It's unprecedented, but they came up with an emergency certification bill," he added.

The bill gave towns the option to adopt a modified methodology, which would alleviate some of the losses it otherwise would've experienced. Chaponis said that in Colchester, the town recouped about \$17.5 million of the amount it lost.

"It's still a Grand List reduction, but it brings you closer to where we were last year," Chaponis

#### **Senior Center Upcoming Trips**

Colchester Senior Center has announced a pair of trips coming up in May. Trips are available to 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. For more information or to register, call 860-537-3911 or email csc@colches-

Dancing Dream - ABBA Tribute Band at Aqua Turf Club: Thursday, May 15, 10 a.m. This tribute act will take you back to the days when Swedish disco group ABBA ruled the music world with their pop hits such as "Mamma Mia," "Dancing Queen" and "Fernando." Ticket includes performance, coffee, doughnuts, and family-style menu of pasta, chicken cacciatore & baked scrod with vegetable, potato, rolls and dessert. The cost is \$129 per person.

Ragtime the Musical at Goodspeed: Featuring lunch at the Gelston House. Wednesday, May 28, 10:45 a.m. Set in the volatile melting pot of turn-of-the-century New York, Ragtime weaves together the stories of three fictional families striving for the American Dream. The Tony Award-winning score which blends ragtime, blues, jazz and showtunes. Cost is \$100 per person and includes senior bus transportation, meals, and tickets to the show. Space is

Newport Flower Show: Friday, June 20, 9 a.m. Rosecliff Mansion provides a backdrop for this show. Stroll through the first floor of the mansion filled with floral arrangements, and then continue out to the ocean view lawn to enjoy the displays and shopper's market. After leaving the mansion you will have free time on your own to explore downtown Newport with all of its shops and restaurants on Bowen's and Bannister's Wharf. Cost is \$115 per person. Sign up before May 20 or until the trip is ful.l



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### Membership of Bacon Building Committee Finalized

The members of a consequential new Colchester committee have been finalized.

Last week, the Board of Selectmen unanimously appointment the membership of a Bacon Academy Athletic Complex Renovation Building Committee — a new group established at a town meeting in January.

Moving forward, the committee will administer a potentially massive overhaul of the high school's athletic facilities, which may include the installation of new artificial turf fields.

The new group will oversee the project both leading up to and after a community-wide referendum is held to officially approve the potentially multimillion-dollar endeavor. Prior to a crucial referendum, it will be tasked with developing the exact scope and pricing for the work at Colchester's flagship school.

During its meeting on March 6, the BOS selected seven full-time members: Matthew Parsons, David Emery, Scott Elliot, Suzanne Salemi, Adam Rettig, Phil Theriault and Chris Pianta. Additionally, the board picked two alternate members: Mitchell Koziol and Jonathan McNulty.

It was unclear when the new committee would begin meeting or what its schedule would be, but First Selectman Bernie Dennler previously speculated that a referendum on the project could be held later this year.

The creation of a new building committee came after the town's Recreation Needs and Coordination Ad Hoc Committee explored the

#### **Lions to Host Comedy Show**

All are invited to join the Colchester Lions Club for an evening with "Coconuts - Boomer Humor Comedy Rock Band Party" on Saturday, March 22, at St. Joseph's Polish Society,

condition of Colchester's recreation assets over

a roughly nine-month period. Ultimately, in its

presentation to the BOS, it made several recom-

mendations that were deemed "critical," includ-

ing the installation of multiple turf surfaces at

A majority of the building committee is com-

prised of individuals who served on recreation

ad-hoc panel. Parsons and Emery were the

chairman and vice chairman respectively, while

Along with potential new artificial turf fields

Salemi and Pianta were regular members.

Doors open at 6 p.m., and the show starts

The Coconuts provide a special blend of

at both the main stadium and multipurpose/ baseball fields, the ad-hoc committee recommended renovations at the softball field that support natural turf, drainage and lighting improvements and accessibility upgrades throughout the complex.

Most of the Bacon athletic facilities have not been significantly revamped in over 30 years. The building committee will eventually work with an architect to develop a formal plan and design for the work. It will collaborate with the BOS to bring forward a referendum question.

**Abundant Life Church News & Notes** 

Abundant Life Church, a Christ-follower church that believes salvation through Jesus Christ, is located at 85 Skinner Rd. For more information, call the church office at 860-537-3082 or visit AbundantL.com.

Sunday Services: All are welcome. Service is at 10:30 a.m., preceded by an Adult Sunday School Class at 9:30 a.m.; there is prayer before service at 8 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. Children's church is also available for ages 4-11. The main service is also broadcast live each week on Facebook. Visit www.facebook.com/groups/abundantlifeCT or look for the church on Facebook. For more information, call the church.

Power of Prayer: If in need of prayer, call the church to be placed on the prayer list. You may also ask about the various days and times the prayer groups meet and come at that time.

Small Groups: The church has various small groups for men and women that meet at different days/times/locations of the week. Call the

395 South Main St.

music and humor that includes hilarious parodies, sing-alongs, comedy numbers, and good old rock and roll from the '50s, '60s and '70s.

Outside beverages are not permitted, but snacks are welcome.

Tickets are \$25 each and can be purchased by emailing the Colchester Lions Club at ColchesterLionsComedy@gmail.com.

#### Senior Center News & Notes

Colchester Senior Center, 15 Louis Lane, 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-

Monday, March 17: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Lucky Bingo; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 11 a.m.-noon, Fitness Orientation by appointment; 12:30 p.m., Mah Jongg, Bridge; 12:45 p.m., Setback.

Tuesday, March 18: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1:30 p.m., Bingo.

Wednesday, March 19: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Walking Group; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Sit & Be Fit; 11 a.m., Shamrocks & Shenanigans Luncheon; 1 p.m., Sew-cial Time; 1:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming 1; 2-3 p.m., Fitness Orientation; 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming 2.

Thursday, March 20: 9 a.m., Exercise w/ Anne; 9:30 a.m., Live Well Workshop; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling; 10 a.m., Card-Making with Barbara; 11 a.m., Yoga; noon, Chair Massage, Senior Benefits Counseling; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes; 1 p.m., Knit & Crochet.

Friday, March 21: 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., AARP Tax Aide; 10 a.m., Sit & Be Fit, Quilt Share

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church office for more information. & Tell; 10:30 a.m., Senior Serenaders Choral

Group; 10:45 a.m., blood pressure clinic; 11

a.m., Yoga; noon, Tech Time with Harry; 12:30

p.m., Ham Radio Meeting; 1:30 p.m., Bingo. Unleash Your Joy - Happier Healthier Thinking: Monday, March 24, 10 a.m. All are invited to come to this monthly workshop focused on finding joy and happiness in everyday life. The topic for March is "Happier Healthier Thinking." Senior center member Deb Fitzgerald will share ways your mind can distort your thoughts into inaccurate or irrational thought patterns, and how to challenge these thoughts. This is a free program. Registration is required.

Ham Radio: Friday, March 21, 12:30 p.m. Come learn about the craft, how to get licensed, and the senior center's equipment broadcasting site. Open to all that are interested.

Candy-Making Class: Wednesday, March 26, 9 a.mn. Senior center member Deborah Howard will teach how to make chocolate-covered cherries and pretzel rods. Participants will make one dozen cherries that will be ready to eat by Easter and four chocolate-covered pretzel rods. White, dark and milk chocolate will be available to choose from. This is a 3-hour class and will require the participant to stay the entire time. The cost of the class is \$15 per person. Space is limited. Registration is required.

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#### Westchester Church News

Westchester Congregational Church, located at 98 Cemetery Rd., holds worship Sundays at 10 a.m. All are welcome to attend. The church choir always welcomes new members. Services are also available on Zoom; visit www.westchestercongchurch.org for login information. Sunday School for children meets during the worship service.

Twelve-Step Meetings: Al-Anon meets in Canney Hall Wednesdays at 7 p.m. AA meets in Canney Hall Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

**Scouts:** The church sponsors two Scout BSA units: Troop 109 and Pack 109. During the school year, Troop 109 meets on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. and Pack 109 meets twice a month on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.

Outreach and Other Opportunities: Knitting Group meets Thursdays at 10 a.m. The Blessings Box is at the end of the church parking lot and contains donations of non-perishable food, personal care, and other items for those in need. Take what you need; donate what you can. Also, the church sponsors the Wounded Warrior Project, a donation opportunity to help

Hall Rental: The church hall is available for event rental. Email bookingwcc@gmail.com for

For more information, visit westchestercongchurch.org, email westcongchurch@gmail.com or call the church at 860-267-6711. Pastor Ron Lake can be reached at 860-428-3460.

#### **Students to Sell, Plant Saplings**

Students from Bacon Environmental Club are partnering with the nonprofit Tree-Plenish to sell saplings – and the deadline to place orders

Tree-Plenish is a student-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the mission of empowering students to create a more sustainable and equitable future through community treeplanting. The organization plans to sell and plant 125 saplings on Saturday, April 26, to offset the school's paper consumption from the past academic year.

Saplings are \$7 and residents can choose between Eastern Redbud, Flowering Dogwood, Paper Birch, and Red Maple saplings. These are bare root saplings ranging in height from 2-3 feet. All trees are native to our region and not only help sequester carbon but provide needed resources for pollinators and migrating bird species. Orders for trees must be placed by March 26. See the website listed below for more information on each tree species.

Residents of the Colchester community can order a sapling to be planted in their yard or sign up to volunteer to plant saplings on the day of the event. This is not a fundraising event.

Saplings can be picked up at Bacon Academy on Friday, April 25, between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., for people who prefer to plant themselves, or who do not live in Colchester. For more information, or to order a sapling,

visit www.tpevents.org/school/4021, or contact Jill Levasseur at jlev412@colchesterct.org with any questions.

#### Ahavath Achim Schedule

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

Services: Fridays at 6:30 p.m., live and on Zoom; Saturdays at 10 a.m., live and on Zoom.

Classes on Tuesdays: Folklore of the Talmud at 6 p.m., followed by Talmud at 6:30 p.m., and Kabbalah at 8 p.m. - all on Zoom.

Upcoming Events: Children's Program and Hamantaschen Making on Friday, March 14; Second Night Passover Seder on Sunday, April 13.

For more information, or links to the services or classes on Zoom, call 860-537-2809. Office hours are Wednesday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Fish Fry Fridays

The Colchester Fish and Game Club is holding its annual Fish Fry dinners every Friday during Lent, running through and including Good Friday, April 18.

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

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.

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#### A Guide to Long Distance Grandparenting

The Colchester Commission on Aging will host Garrison Leykam, author of Heartstrings Across the Miles, at the Colchester Senior Center on Monday, April 7, from 10-11:30 a.m.

Leykam is a seasoned writer, career coach and public speaker, with a deep commitment to fostering meaningful relationships across generations. His personal experiences have inspired Heartstrings Across Miles, which offers practical insights and creative strategies for building and sustaining relationships with grandchildren, even when miles apart.

In addition to his writing and coaching, Leykam is known for his work as a thought leader on careers and the future of work, blending generative AI tools with practical career advice. His books, workshops, and talks have reached audiences around the world.

To register for this event, call Colchester Senior Center at 860-537-3911.

#### **Memorial Day Parade Notice**

On Sunday, May 25, Colchester will hold its annual Memorial Day Parade.

The parade is a community effort and the local groups are encouraged to participate to make this event a success. Each contingent willing to march or bring a float will be able to obtain an application form online from the first selectman's office at Town Hall after March 31.

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

The theme of this year's parade will be "Cel-

#### **Colchester Cares to Meet**

Colchester Cares, a giving group that supports various causes in Colchester, will meet

Members, who have committed to donating \$100 a quarter, get together each quarter to present current needs in town and then vote on where to send the group's collective donations.

Colchester Cares always welcomes new members who would like to give back to the community. The group's next meeting will be held at Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave., on Wednesday, April 2, at 7 p.m.

For more information, visit www.colchestercares.org or follow the group on Facebook.

#### **Ukrainian Catholic Church News**

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

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

ebrating the 50th Anniversary of the End of the Vietnam War," which was ended in 1975. Many local veterans were part of this historic event.

also be a grand marshal and guest speaker who will soon be nominated. Residents of Colchester can offer suggestions to the parade com-

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

#### Community Baby Shower

The Collaborative for Colchester's Children (C3) will host a free Community Baby Shower for Colchester residents who are expecting, or have an infant up to three months old, on Monday, April 7, at 6-7:30 p.m., at Cragin Memorial

The event will include free gifts, community resources, refreshments and games. Families should register at ColchesterC3.org.

> **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. Bible Study for Women: Tuesdays at 10 a.m.

Community Bible Study and Prayer: Wednes-

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



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Marvelous Mathletes... William J. Johnston Middle School MathCounts team members Alex Courtemanche, Ava Sykes, and Delaney Scholl participated in the Eastern Regional competition - and finished among the best of 101 mathletes attending. Alex and Delaney then moved on to the Connecticut State competition at Yale on Feb. 28 - where they're pictured above with eighth grade math teacher Andrew Bakoledis. The MathCounts Program has 4 levels of competition—school, chapter, state and national. Each level of competition is comprised of 4 rounds the Sprint, Target, Team and Countdown rounds. Under the guidance of Bakoledis, Alex and Delaney got to compete with some of the best middle school math students from the state.

### Shredding Old Tax and Personal Records Residents and businesses of Colchester and or staples.

area towns can safely shred their financial records on Saturday, April 26, from 9 a.m.-noon, at the Town Hall parking lot.

Boy Scout Troop 72 will have a certified shedding company, "File Shred," in place to accept and safely shred your financial and personal records. You can actually watch the items being put into the shredder and destroyed. Old personal documents, tax information, business records and medical records, etc. will be accepted. There is no need to take off paper clips

Cost is \$6 for a bag the size of a plastic grocery bag and \$12 for a box the size of a case of copy paper. A bulk price can be negotiated for larger quantities of records.

Troop 72 will also be accepting cans and bottles for recycling during this event.

Funds raised will be used to reduce the cost of programs like monthly camping and the cost of going to summer camp.

Contact Al Letendre at letendrej@sbcglobal. net for more information.

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21 Ledgebrook Drive Mansfield **394 West Center Street** Manchester



of Connecticut



### Salem Man Arrested for OUI, Weapon in Vehicle

A Salem man was arrested and charged last week with operating a vehicle while under the influence and having a weapon in his car, according to state police.

At 12:26 a.m. on Thomas March O'Shaughnessy, 24, was O'Shaughnessy pulled over by police after

being clocked traveling 81 m.p.h. near exit 22 on Route 2 in Colchester. According to state police, O'Shaughnessy's blue Chevrolet Cruze sedan was also swerving between lanes.

During the stop, Troopers noticed a "strong odor of an alcoholic beverage" in the sedan

THE FUTURE OF REAL ESTATE

and from O'Shaughnessy's breath. They also noted that his eyes were "red and glossy," according to the incident summary.

O'Shaughnessy was asked to perform Standardized Field Sobriety Tests, which "he did not perform to standard" and was placed under arrest, according to the summary. Police then searched the sedan and found a 12-inch katana-style blade on the floorboard.

According to state police, O'Shaughnessy was charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs; failure to drive in right-hand lane; failure to maintain the lane; speeding; and having a weapon in a motor vehicle.

O'Shaughnessy was released on a \$5,000 bond and is scheduled to appear at Norwich Superior Court on March 25.

#### **Colchester Federated Church News**

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

Worship: Sundays at 9 a.m. The service is also broadcast via Facebook Live. Worship videos are at www.colchesterfederatedchurch.org under the Worship tab. Updated information is on the church's Facebook page.

**CLT Upcoming Hike** 

Colchester Land Trust (CLT) has announced an upcoming hike at the Bulkeley Hill Preserve. To register and for updates/cancellations, visit www.colchesterlandtrust.or. CLT is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization working to permanently protect open space in Colchester.

Beaverland Walk: Saturday, March 22, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. See the construction and habitat created by the resident active beaver community. Learn the history of how beavers impacted the waterways and climate, facts about their activities, and information about co-existing with them. The walk will be on a dirt trail, totaling two miles, and is "basically easy," CLT said, with the roots, rocks and terrain expected in trail walking. Good walking shoes/boots, appropriate clothing, and water are suggested. This is a family-friendly hike, but may be longer than younger children can handle. Also, no dogs allowed. For GPS, use the mailbox at 243 Bulkeley HIll Road, Colchester, CT. The parking lot is directly across from that mailbox. Contact

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

Stage Room every Monday at 7 p.m. from Sep-

**Boy Scout Troop 72:** Meetings are held in the

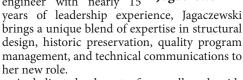
Room and AA meets in the Stage Room.

tember through June.

#### New Hire at Marketing Firm

Golden Egg Concepts, a Colchester-based marketing communications consultancy with a niche focus on the architectural, engineering and construction (AEC) industry, recently announced the addition of Amy Jagaczewski, P.E., to its team, as Senior Project Manager.

A licensed structural engineer with nearly 15 Jagaczewski



A dedicated advocate for small and midsized professional services firms, Jagaczewski celebrates the achievements of those nestled between Boston and New York City - a part of Golden Egg's growing national client base. As senior project manager, Jagaczewski will

Sarah at sslevine1954@gmail.com or 860-908-

6079 for more information.

lead the preparation of customized RFP responses, informative stakeholder presentations, strategic marketing and business development plans, and technical communications.

"Amy's journey from engineering to communications to quality program management brings a dynamic perspective to our mission: helping clients build better relationships, better projects, and better outcomes," said Lindsey Mathieu, owner/principal, Golden Egg. "Her expertise will not only strengthen our consulting foundation but also expands our ability to meet the unique needs of AEC firms."

Egg is celebrating 15 years in business. For more information, visit goldeneggconcepts.



#### **Upcoming Programs at Library**

Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave., has announced the following upcoming programs. For more information, or full program descriptions, call 860-537-5752 (Adult Department), 860-537-7201 (Children's Department), or visit www.craginlibrary.org. All programs are free and sponsored by Friends of Cragin Memo-

Seed Library Restocked: Visit the Seed Library in Cragin's our Adult Department to pick up seeds to grow at home. The Seed Library is a partnership with the Colchester Garden Club.

Adult Program: Writing Club: Saturday, March 15, 2-3 p.m. Join us for an hour each month devoted to relaxing and writing. Bring whatever you're working on and hang out.

Free Play: Dress Up: Tuesday, March 18, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Best for ages 2-5. Come for dress-up time and play.

Lifesize Candy Land: Grades 6-12 are Wednesday, March 19, from 3-4 p.m.; Grades K-2 are Thursday, March 20, from 3:45-4:15 p.m.; and grades 3-5 are Thursday, March 20, from 4:30-5 p.m. Come for a sweet life-size game. Candy included. Registration is required.

Stop by the Children's Desk or call 860-537-

7201 to register.

Baby Free Play: Thursday, March 20, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Best for ages up to 2 years old.

All Ages Lobby Craft: Rock-Painting: Saturday, March 22, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Stop by the lobby to make paint a rock. This program is a partnership with the Colchester Garden Club Youth Division.

Super Sensory Saturday: Saturday, March 22, 2-2:30 p.m. Best for ages 2 and up.

Teen Snack Time: Wednesday, March 26, 3-3:30 p.m. Come hang out with your friends at the library, and snack and chat.

Half-Day Gaming: Thursday, March 27, 1-2 p.m. Celebrate your half day with board games, some Mario Kart, and snacks.

Free Play: Supermarket: Saturday, March 29, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Best for ages 2-5.

Cragin Book Club: Monday, March 31, 6 p.m. New members are always welcome. Copies of the book will be available at the Adult Circulation Desk. This month, read North Woods by Daniel Mason.

CBSL Registration
Colchester Baseball and Softball League registrations are now open for the 2025 spring season. The league is for Colchester students ages 4-16. Tryouts for Rookie and above, as well as spring training dates, are available when regis-

For more information and to register, go to www.cbsl.org.

#### **Colchester Choir and Orchestra Winter Concert**

The Colchester Choir and Orchestra Winter Concert is Sunday, March 23, at 3 p.m., at Bacon Academy High School, located at 611 Norwich

The concert will feature a special guest, New York-based cellist Sam DeCaprio, originally from Lebanon. DeCaprio will perform "Kol Nidrei," a composition by Max Bruch. Admission is free but donations are welcome.

The Colchester Choir and Orchestra is always welcoming new membership for singers and musicians. No auditions are necessary. New members can register on the Colchester Parks & Recreation website, at www.colchesterct.gov/ colchester-choir-orchestra.

#### **Dean's List**

Samantha D'atri of Colchester made the fall 2024 Dean's List at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta.



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**15** Key

20 Kind of diver

22 Geriatrics focus

23 Dieter's no-no 26 Like notebook

paper

27 Triumphant cry

**29** Male hormone 31 Rock Hudson flick, "\_ Come

Back" 33 Willing to go

along 37 Haiku, e.g.

**38** Long suit

40 Molten rock

41 Toothed wheel 43 Up and about

44 Producing tears

**47** Bit of advice

48 Use an SOS pad **51** College life

53 Carl Sagan series **55** "Thinking Out

Loud" singer Ed 58 Pick up speed

61 Jazz singer Simone

62 Pained sound

63 Zealous

64 Places for props

**65** Component 66 Bodega, for one

67 Qatar's continent

**DOWN** 

1 In the thick of 2 Thorn in one's

side **3** Candy in a roll Copyright 2025 by The Puzzle Syndicate

4 Wed secretly

7 Rope-a-dope

**5** Urban bird

6 Cuba, e.g.

8 Surfing site

9 Palindromic

10 Busch Stadium

emperor

team

13 Sharp-19 Corby of "The

21 Capone

24 Severe

11 Flu variety

12 Barely burn

Waltons"

trademark

Like it Hot"

27 Mont Blanc's

28 Kind of skirt

32 Compensation

34 AA and AAA

35 57, to Caesar

range

30 "Scram!"

25 1959 film, "

boxer

**36** Tombstone lawman

38 Dog registry org. 39 Red Cross

42 Actress Channing

43 On the calm side 45 Tony, to Jeannie

46 Cleave 48 Rascal

49 Winter drink 50 Acting award

**52** Brainy bunch 54 Matches, as a

**56** Pro's opposite

57 "Hidden Figures" org.

59 Squeal (on) **60** Long \_\_\_

Answers to Previous Crossword:

В	Α	R	Е		Α	Τ	L	Α	S		S	L	Α	M
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Е	Υ	Е	D		Р	Α	R	Т	S		Е	W	Е	R

Crafters, **Farmers Sought** 

Colchester Federated Church's annual Spring in Bloom Market is coming up on Saturday, May 3 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. This fair showcases local crafters, vendors, farmers and more.

If you would like a table at the fair to sell your goods, reach out to Renee Misbach at rouillette01@snet.net for more information.

#### WWII Military **Veterans Wanted**

The State of Connecticut Department of Veteran Affairs, the Town of Colchester, VFW, American Legion, and Honor Guard are working to identify all living World War II Military Veterans in order to include them in an 80th Anniversary Commemoration event being planned in May.

Names and contact information are sought for any Colchester WWII military veterans still living who served honorably in any branch of the service between Dec. 7, 1941 and Dec. 31, 1946. Contact the Colchester town clerk's office at 860-537-7215 or townclerk@colchesterct.gov with any information.

#### Obituaries -

**Portland** 

#### Joan Hughes Celebration of Life

previously an-As nounced, Joan Biermacher Hughes, 88, of Portland, passed away Nov. 13, 2024.

There will be a Celebration of Life on Saturday April 12th, 2025, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., at First Congregational Church in Portland (554 Main St., Portland). Joan's friends

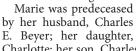


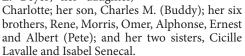
and family are invited to stop by for light refreshments and to share stories and memories. For event information, visit pp.events/joan.

East Hampton

#### Marie R. Beyer

Marie R. Beyer of East Hampton, and a longtime resident of Laurel Estates, N. Fort Myers, Fla., passed away peacefully Wednesday, March 5, at the age of 102. Marie was born Aug. 6, 1922, in Wauregan, to Clement and Elizabeth Deloge.





Marie, a beloved matriarch and vibrant spirit, lived a fulfilling life, dedicating her years to family and community. She was a lifelong member of St. Patrick Church in East Hampton, as well as a member of the guild. Marie was well-known for her love of the Boston Red Sox and never missed an opportunity to play a game of cards.

Marie will be dearly missed by her son, Clement, and his wife Prudence; her three grandchildren, Clement E. and his wife Jennifer, Caron Beyer-Csejka and her husband Steven, and Jason and his wife Michelle; along with several greatgrandchildren and many nieces and nephews. Her infectious love of life touched everyone she met.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated Saturday, March 22, at 11 a.m., at St. Patrick Church, 47 W. High St., East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society.

Marie leaves behind a legacy of love, kindness and cherished memories that will live on in the hearts of her family and friends.

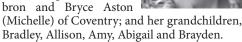
To leave online condolences, please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

#### Lorraine M. Aston

Lorraine M. Aston (Grippo), 77, of Colchester, passed away Wednesday, March 5. She was the daughter of the late Leonard and Francelia Grippo.

She is survived by her brother Leonard Grippo (Denise) of Northport, Fla.; her two sons, Brett Aston (Stephanie) of He-



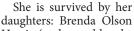
Lorraine's love for her family will forever remain in the hearts of those who knew her.

There will be a Celebration of Life for Lorraine at a later date.

Colchester

#### Patricia Anne Olson

It is with deep sorrow that we announce Patricia Anne Olson, aged 80, of Colchester, passed away Sunday, Feb. 9. She was born Jan. 8, 1945, in Queens Village, N.Y., and was the daughter of the late Harry and Anne Cannavotto.



Harris (and granddaughters Kacie [and greatgrandson Kameron], Tonie and Piper Harris) of Middletown; Mary Olson (and grandson Eddie Olson) of Portland; and Catherine Olson Monsanto (husband Reggy and grandsons Nicholas [and wife Kylie] and Nathan Monsanto) of Ormond Beach, Fla.; as well as numerous friends.

She fondly recalled the many years spent residing on Amston Lake with her daughters, as well as her time employed by Jefferson X-Ray in Hartford. She was a devoted member of St. Andrew parish in Colchester and firmly believed in the virtue of giving over receiving. Patricia was a loving mother and grandmoth-

er, known for her generous spirit and willingness to assist anyone in need. She had a natural ability to engage in conversation and share stories with anyone she encountered. She will live on the hearts and memories of everyone she

A celebration of life is being planned at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester, for Saturday, June 7, at 10 a.m.

To share an online condolence, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com









Joan C. Dauber, 80, of Colchester, passed away peacefully at St. Francis Hospital on Saturday, March 8. She was born in Middletown June 18, 1944, to Stephen and Clara Dobrowolsky.

Colchester

Joan grew up in Cromwell and Middletown. She was a graduate of Middle-

town High School and Framingham State College. Upon graduating, Joan began her career as a dietitian in the U.S. Army Medical Specialist Corps. In 1967, she completed her internship as a dietitian at Brooke General Hospital in San Antonio, Texas. Joan was then stationed at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., where she met her husband, James Dauber. She married James on June 6, 1969, and was discharged from the US Army on July 13, 1969.

Joan C. Dauber

Joan and Jim moved to New Rochelle, N.Y., where their daughter Holly was born. In 1972, they moved to Newington and in 1976 to Glastonbury, where they spent the next 40 years. Joan and Jim have lived in Colchester since 2017.

Joan worked as a registered dietitian for Mt. Sinai Hospital and then St. Francis Hospital for over 40 years. Early on in her career, Joan became acutely aware of the food insecurity that her patients and much of the community experienced. In 1976, she started stocking food and other essentials in a closet in her office. That closet expanded to larger spaces overtime and eventually became the St. Francis Emergency Food Bank. It was the first food bank in the nation located in a hospital setting.

Under Joan, the food bank grew and evolved based on the needs of the community she served. Realizing that many individuals in the community lacked access to diapers, the food bank partnered with The Diaper Bank of Connecticut to provide diapers for families with young children. In 2012 the food bank was renamed the Joan C. Dauber Food Bank.

Joan retired in 2019 but continued to volunteer and support the food bank. Just prior to her passing, Joan and other volunteers were working on organizing an annual diaper drive that would benefit a multitude of families that receive care through St. Francis Hospital.

Never one to sit still, Joan could be found in the kitchen baking cookies, cakes and muffins that she rarely ate, but gave to her neighbors, friends and family. Food was the way she expressed gratitude, caring and love to those around her. She enjoyed knitting blankets as she watched the UConn women's basketball team on TV. Even at 80 Joan was hard to keep up with, and slowing down wasn't part of her plan.

Joan is survived by her husband of 56 years, James Dauber; daughter, Holly Dauber; grandsons, Nathaniel and Samuel Laird; and 11 other

A funeral Mass will be celebrated today, Friday, March 14, at 11 a.m., at Guardian Angels Parish in St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial will be at the convenience of the family. Friends called Thursday, March 13, at Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave.,

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Joan C. Dauber Food Bank, the American Red Cross, or St. Jude Children's Research Hos-

For online condolences, please visit www. mulryanfh.com.

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The early stages of

you know the signs.

#### Portland

#### Patricia L. Weidl

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of our beloved mother, Patricia L. (Cashman) Weidl of Cocoa, Fla., who passed away peacefully Tuesday, Jan. 28, in Palm Bay, Fla. Patricia was born Dec. 23, 1939, in Middletown, and raised in Portland.



She was the loving mother of her four children: James Weidl and Douglas Weidl, both of Ellington; and Pamela Gust (Andrew) of Port St. Lucie, Fla.; and infant son, Timothy Weidl. She is also survived by her grandchildren, Joey Weidl of Ellington, and Alex and Olivia Gust, both of Port St. Lucie, Fla.; her sister, Susan Lavoie of Merritt Island, Fla.; and her godson, Cliff McMeken of Portland, along with many nieces and nephews.

Patricia was predeceased by her infant son, Timothy Weidl; her parents, James and Muriel Cashman; her sisters, Maureen Prout and Kathleen McMeken; and her beloved dog, Lil' Beau, who she adored.

After graduating from Portland High School in 1957, Patricia went on to work at Travelers Insurance Company in Hartford before settling in Enfield, where she raised her family. She eventually retired from Hamilton Standard in Windsor Locks, before moving to Florida in 1991, where she became a caregiver in the medical field.

Patty, as her friends called her, was a devoted and loyal friend to many. She had a zest for life and enjoyed world traveling with her high school girlfriends, spending time at the beach, cruising the islands, and singing bad karaoke with the Cashman Four sisters during the holidays. She will always be remembered for her high-pitched voice, caring thoughtful nature, and warm comforting smile.

Her family would like to thank all her caregivers and friends at Westminster Abbey, Hospice House, and especially her niece, Danielle Lavoie Cottrill, who was there to give a helping hand to her.

Although she is no longer with us, Patty's memory will live on in the hearts of many who knew and loved her.

A graveside service will be held Monday, March 17, at St. Mary Cemetery, 261 Marlborough St., Portland, at 11 a.m.

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

#### East Hartford

#### Doris M. Livingstone

Doris M. (Batchelor) Livingstone, 90, passed away Sunday, Feb. 16, peacefully at home in her favorite reclining chair. She was the beloved wife of Thomas E. Livingstone for 56 years.

Doris was born during a blizzard at home in East Hartford on Feb. 20, 1934, daughter of the late Dearden Batchelor Sr. and Mary (McLaughlin) Neales. She was raised in East Hartford and attended East Hartford High School.

Doris was a loving mother and grandmother who enjoyed cooking, baking, reading and going for rides, and most of all spending time with her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Besides her husband, Thomas, she leaves her son, Anthony Gary Cardoza and his wife Andrea of North Windham; daughter, Tammy Fazzino and her husband Scott of East Hampton. She also leaves her grandchildren, Brandon Marselli, Michael, Matthew and Joshua Fazzino; great-grandchildren, Mia Marselli and Michael Fazzino Jr.; sister, Patricia McCabe and her husband George; several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by son. David Lee. doza; sister, Ann B. Massengill; and brother, Dearden (Buzzy) Batchelor.

The family would like to thank Middlesex

See Obituaries, page 32



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Aurora-McCarthy has built our reputation on professionalism, service, attention to detail and most importantly, on the trust you place in us.

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#### When Family Matters... Planning Ahead Matters, Too.

- ◆ Pre-planning and information is provided free of charge.
- ◆ Previously pre-planned funeral arrangements can be transferred to Aurora-McCarthy. Call our office for information and assistance.
- ◆ Pre-need funeral funding is sheltered in trusts with "Cooperative Funeral Fund, Inc."



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www.AuroraMcCarthyFuneralHome.com



#### Obituaries cont. —

Home Care for the compassionate care and concern provided.

There will be no calling hours. Private graveside services will be scheduled at the family's convenience.

To leave online condolences, please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

#### Marlborough

#### James Grabowski

When most people look at scraps, remnants and cast-offs, James "Jim" Grabowski saw possibility. A true artist, Jim - who passed away on Wednesday, Feb. 26 spent his 80 years transforming the ordinary into something extraordinary. While best known for his



bold abstracts and serene landscapes on canvas, Jim saw potential in everything - sea fans, fabric, wallpaper, gold foil, magazine clippings, and random objects he found on the side of the road. Trash to most, treasure to Jim.

Born June 6, 1944, in New Britain, ingenuity and hustle ran in his veins from an early age. As a young caddy at Shuttle Meadow Country Club, Jim would carry two golf bags for 18 holes, pause to sell homemade sandwiches, and then caddy all over again. After work, Jim would scour the course for lost balls, clean them up, and sell them from the trunk of his car. It was this drive and resourcefulness that led him to earn both his BFA (1966) and MFA (1968) from Central Connecticut State University. Though he taught art for several years, painting was his true calling. For over 40 years, Jim dedicated himself to his craft in his home studio in Marlborough.

Jim and Mary's love story was anything but conventional. Set up on a blind date, it was

Mary's then 5-year-old daughter, Dina, who fell for Jim first. By Aug. 1, 1981, Jim and Mary and Dina made their bond official - not just as husband and wife, but as a family. The three made their home in Marlborough filled with laughter, love and many (many) roadside "finds" for nearly four decades.

Beyond his artistic talent, Jim was a man of quirks and humor. He never learned to use a computer and got his first (and only) cell phone in 2022 which he called his "walkie talkie" and promptly never used. He loved listening to Roy Orbinson, ABBA, Enva and Cat Stevens tunes, grilling year around (he would shovel a path to the grill in the winter), and he would add corn salsa on, well, everything. He had both a sweet and salty tooth and could often be found snacking on Junior Mints and salt and vinegar potato chips - both with a frosted mug of Coke.

Jim is survived by his only daughter Dina, son-in-law Ted and his two grandchildren, James and Eva; as well as his brother Donald and his wife Christine and two nephews, Jeffrey (Amanda) Grabowski and Bryan (Katherine) Grabowski. Jim is now reunited with his wife and favorite art critic, Mary (Grondin) Grabowski, as well as his parents Leo and Sophie "Sally" (Jaworski) Grabowski.

We will forever be able to look at Jim's paintings and remember his tremendous talent and unique personality. His legacy is one of color, positivity, humor and the ability to see beauty in the unexpected. We will miss Jim every time we see a found object and wonder, "What would Iim have made with this?"

A celebration of life for Jim will be held at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home on Sunday, March 16, from 4-6 p.m. All are welcome to join in a brief prayer service at 6 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Jim's memory may be made to the Marlborough Arts Center.

East Hampton

#### David Edward Shulman

David Edward Shulman 78, of East Hampton, passed away peacefully with his family by his side on Sunday, March 9, of non Hodgkin's lymphoma. Born Oct. 23, 1946, in Worcester, Mass., he was the son of Stanley L. Shulman and Zelda Shulman



Dave was the former president and founder of Middletown-based Suburban Stationers in 1979, which he helped grow into the largest independent office product company in Connecticut. Dave previously was the district manager for the Medi-Mart drug store chain and also taught at various high schools and colleges prior to that. Dave was a graduate of American International College, where he was named to the "Who's Who in American Colleges" in 1968. He was also a member of the Tau Epsilon Fi fraternity and president of the council his senior year.

A devoted member of the East Hampton Rotary Club, Dave has served as club historian and past president, as well as chairman of the Rotary Club Foundation. He was the founder of the Rotary Interact Club at East Hampton High School, which has become one of the most popular extra-curricular clubs of the school. He is currently the longest tenured member of the East Hampton Rotary Club. He has been awarded four Paul Harris Fellows awards, along with several other awards and commendations.

Dave has served as the treasurer and finance committee chairman of the Middlesex Red Cross, and served as a board member for 25 years, as well as the finance director for the East Hampton Ambulance Association, and countless other boards and committees of charitable organizations and nonprofits.

His accolades include the Distinguished Citizen Award from the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce, Dealers Advocate Award, Friends of Education award from the East Hampton Public Schools, Volunteer of the Year from the American Red Cross, Humanitarian of the year by the East Hampton Lions Club as well as the East Hampton Rotary Eaton A. Smith Award recipient.

David leaves to mourn him his wife of 48 years, Teresa Sheehan Shulman of Hartford: his son, Robert A. Shulman and his wife Lauren of Plymouth; his daughter, Elizabeth M. Shulman of East Hampton; and his brother, Steven Shulman and his wife Jean of Omaha, Neb.

There was a funeral service for Dave at Congregation Adath Israel, 8 Broad St., Middletown, on Tuesday, March 11, followed by burial at Lakeview Cemetery in East Hampton

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Dave can be made to East Hampton Rotary Foundation, P.O. Box 368, East Hampton, CT 06424; East Hampton Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424; Community Foundation of Middlesex County, 49 Main St., Middletown, CT 06457; or Lymphoma Research Foundation at www.lymphoma.org.

To leave online condolences, please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.





#### Where in the World is the *Rivereast*?

Taking a vacation or a day trip soon? Or simply going out to dinner? Bring the *Rivereast* with you! Whether it's across the globe or across town, we want to see where you've been! Simply snap a photo with the Rivereast, send it to bulletin@glcitizen.com and, if printed, you'll receive a gift card to Campagna Restaurant in Portland! Further details are listed below. Happy travels!





The Garden Girls... Jeanne Bishop and Jane Muskatallo, both of Portland, with Beth Longo of Glastonbury and Karen Mills of Cape Elizabeth, Maine, visited the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens while on a Girls Weekend in Maine last summer.



Bulletin in Brisbane... On a recent South Pacific cruise, Kayleigh Kinsella visited the Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary in Brisbane, Australia, one of the ports of call.

# in the World

### Going on a trip? Bring along the Bulletin!

Submit your travel photo holding the Rivereast News Bulletin, and you will win a \$25 Gift Card to Campagna Restaurant if your photo is one the four entries selected!

To enter, email your photo and address to: bulletin@glcitizen.com



#### Cover Story • Co

#### ★ Hebron Maple Fest,, cont. from page 1

Still, along with a new injection of volunteer support, Habicht credited TTCP Vice President, Wendy Weingarten, and TTCP board member, Candice Deguzis, for putting in thousands of hours leading up to the festival to ensure that it was on schedule.

What to Expect

Typically, Wenzel attends all of the Maple Festival meetings, but was unable to attend the last one leading up to the event; luckily, he had a good excuse.

After an "extremely slow" stretch, the weather warmed up and the sap began to flow.

"It's a good feeling," Wenzel exclaimed, and a good reason to miss a meeting. He also reported that it's been a "very good year" and a "fun year" he's excited to share all about it this weekend.

One of the positive aspects of the event that TTCP is looking to continue this year is a strong lineup of activities. By having a subcommittee dedicated specifically to activity planning, it's been able to "hone in on the activities that we got a lot of feedback on last year."

Some of the highlights include the UConn Woodsmen — booked for both days at Woodyacres. Skillet-tossing is also back again, along with axe-throwing, which will be held at Brain Freezers, along Main Street.

Maple By Moonlight — a fundraiser hosted by TTCP — will take place tonight at Colebrook Village at 6:30 p.m., featuring delicious food, cocktails/mocktails, music and dancing.

After the scheduled festivities are concluded, St. Peter's Episcopal Church is hosting a St. Patrick's Day cabaret and dinner, including a per-

**LEGAL NOTICE** 

MARLBOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION

**PUBLIC HEARING** 

Public Hearing, Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at 7:00 PM at the Town

2020 Plan of Conservation & Development Update - Resiliency

Written testimony will be received at the public hearing and written testimony can be sent to the Building/Land Use Department at the

Town Hall ahead of the public hearing.

Copies of the regulations are available in the Town Clerk's office

and on the Town website Marlboroughct.net/Planning Commission Mark A. Stankiewicz, PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR 2TB 3/14.

TOWN OF COLCHESTER

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION** 

LEGAL NOTICE OF DECISION

At its Regular Meeting of March 5, 2025, the Colchester Planning & Zoning Commission made the following decision (s):

PZC2025-001 Westchester Eyecare, LLC - 715 Middletown

Road (MBL 03-17/51A-00) – Site Plan Modification application

for parking lot expansion. Zoning District: Westchester Village

The Marlborough Planning Commission will hold the following

Affordable Housing Plan 2022 Implementation Update

Hall, 26 North Main Street

Climate Change & Hazard Mitigation

(WV). APPROVED with conditions. Planning & Zoning Commission Joseph Mathieu, Chairman

& Sustainability

LEGALS

formance by the "The Callithumpians." Marcia and Chuck Eaton, who attended last week's maple meeting on behalf of St. Peter's, celebrated the festival's attention to local enti-

"I think the local community really said, 'We got to take control of this," Chuck expressed.

The Douglas Library parking lot will be packed with different vendors offering a variety of products — including many, many maple treats. There will be live music outside the library through the weekend. Inside the library is the "Hebron's Own" expo, featuring local artisans and businesses. The final event of the festival is the annual tractor parade, which will commence at 2 p.m. on Sunday afternoon.

To view a full list of the activities and vendors at the Maple Festival, visit TTCP's website www. thetowncenterproject.org.

Although residents can adventure through the heart of the festival along Main Street, there's a new pedestrian bridge connecting the library parking lot to Pendleton Drive, where patrons will be able to access even more offerings.

There will also be shuttle busses running both days for transportation. On both days, there will be a shuttle traveling along Main Street, that picks up residents at RHAM Middle School. Additionally, on Saturday, a separate shuttle will pick up people in front of Century 21 on Main Street, and drop them off at the Mapleleaf Farm, which is offering a tour of his site. That shuttle will also stop at Gilead Congregational Church's

#### TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION NOTICE OF ACTION

At the regularly scheduled meeting on March 5, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall and via ZOOM, the East Hampton Planton Plan ning and Zoning Commission took the following actions PZC-25-002: Adin Weatherley, 28 Old Chestnut Hill Rd., Special Permit to Place a 200SF Farm stand and add associated parking in R4 Zone, Map 13/ Block 33/ Lot 16 - APPROVED PZC-24-006: Proposed field changes to drainage basin and road grade for approved Lake Overlook Estates Open Space Subdivision - APPROVED with Conditions Kevin Kuhr, Chairman

#### **NOTICE OF ACTION TOWN OF ANDOVER ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (ZBA)**

ACTION(S) TAKEN: The Andover Zoning Board of Appeals took the following action at a Special Meeting held on March

Approved: Application ZBA-2501. Application of the Town of Andover (acting through the Andover Field Committee). Property known as Veteran's Field located at 30 Riverside Drive and owned by the Town of Andover. The ZBA granted relief of Section 11.2 of the Andover Zoning Regulations effectively reducing the front yard setback requirement from 50' to 30' so as to allow for the construction of a pavilion in accordance with their application as part of proposed upgrades to the existing

Please direct any questions to 860.742.7305, x4220. William Desrosiers

Zoning Board of Appeals

#### Cover Story • Co



Sophomore Kayleigh Engle scored a game-high 23 points as Bacon Academy girls basketball defeated Seymour in the state semifinals at Maloney High School on Monday. The victory earned the Bobcats a spot in the Class M state championship, set for Mohegan Sun Arena this Saturday, March 15 at 10 a.m.

#### ★ Bobcats cont. from page 1

After winning 18 of 20 games in the regular season, the Bobcats defeated three straight conference opponents to win the Eastern Connecticut Conference (CCC) Division I championships, defeating Norwich Free Academy 37-27 in the conference clincher at the Mohegan Sun Arena.

The team earned a first-round bye in the Class M tourney before ousting Wolcott, 55-30, in the second round. They then eliminated Wilcox Tech, 64-30, in the quarterfinals at Bacon

During the quarterfinals win on March 6, Novak scored a career-high 27 points as she surpassed 1,000 career points in her final home game. She became the 8th player in program history to reach the four-digit scoring mark.

After winning the ECC title, Novak said the team fully expected to be back at the championship venue at the casino where they will face a conference rival in Windham.

The Whippets of Windham have been equally impressive, winning 25 of 26 games this season. They too won an ECC title (Division II) at Mohegan and also dealt the Bobcats one of their two losses, a 42-38 defeat at Bacon Academy

Since that loss, the Bobcats have reeled off 17 straight victories, winning by an average of 24 points per game.

The rematch with Windham will now be for all the marbles.

"It was an enthusiastic performance by the entire team," Fannell said following the semifinal victory. "Hopefully we can duplicate it this weekend."

Bacon Academy is seeking the program's third state championship and first since beating E.O. Smith in 2012. Saturday's game will mark the Bobcats' eighth state championship appearance overall, last making the title game in 2022.



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#### **Public Notice to Transportation Operators**

The Town of Colchester is applying for a capital grant under Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities of the Federal Transit Act, as amended by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law legislation, to replace vehicles to be used in meeting the special transportation needs of seniors and/or individuals with disabilities in the Town of Colchester,

Any interested transit or paratransit operator in the proposed service area may review the proposed application by contacting Patty Watts, Director of Senior Services, 15 Louis Lane, Colchester, CT 06415 at 860-537-3911.

A public hearing will be held if requested by interested par

Any comments should then be sent to the Colchester Senior Center with a copy to the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, 5 Connecticut Avenue, Norwich, CT 06360. Comments must be received no later than seven (7) days following publication of the Legal Notice.

#### **LEGAL NOTICE Public Notice to Transportation Operators**

Town of Andover Senior Transportation is applying for a capital grant under Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities of the Federal Transit Act, as amended by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law legislation, to replace a vehicle to be used in meeting the special transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities in the Town of Andover and within a 35-mile radius.

Any interested transit or paratransit operator in the proposed service area may review the proposed application by contacting Tess Grous, 25 School Road, Andover, CT 06232, 860-742-

A public hearing will be held if requested by interested parties. Any comments should then be sent to Town of Andover Senior Transportation with a copy to the Capital Region Council of Governments. Comments must be received no later than seven (7) days following publication of the Legal Notice on

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CHURCH SEXTON WANTED: for First Congregational Church of Portland. The Sexton is responsible for maintaining the cleanliness and order of the church interior. Parttime, approximately 6 hours per week. Paid vacation and sick time offered. Please express your interest in the position, highlighting your experience either by email to office@firstchurchportlandct.org or by postal service to: First Congregational Church of Portland, CT 554 Main Street Portland, CT 06480.

MANAGER WANTED: at First Congregational Church of Portland. In addition to serving as an Administrative Assistant to the Pastor, the Office Manager is a principal business point of contact for the various teams, committees, and membership of the Church and vendors. The position requires excellent written and verbal skills, strong interpersonal skills, experience with Microsoft Office, contact management software, and web page creation. The successful candidate must be able to work with limited supervision. Part-time (20 hours per week, September-May and 12 hours per week, June-August). Paid vacation and sick days are offered. Please submit a short description highlighting your interest and experience, with your resume via email revjcooke@gmail. com.

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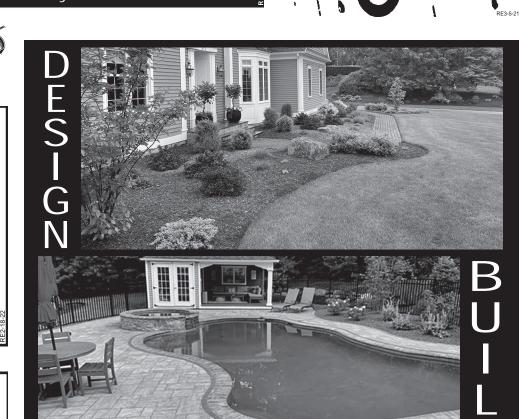


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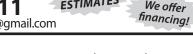
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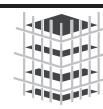


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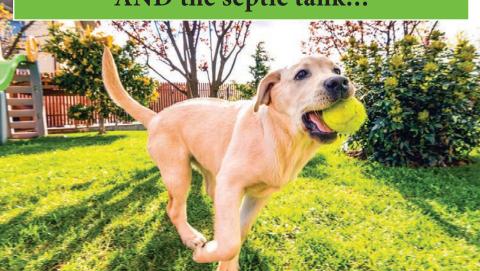
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