

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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**Teacher Wins National Award...** Bacon Academy teacher David Mason was recently honored with the Milken Educator Award, a national award that celebrates outstanding educators across the country with a cash prize of \$25,000 for their dedication and innovation in the field. From left are Connecticut State Department of Education Program Manager Ashley Wright, Milken Educator Awards Senior Vice President Jane Foley, Connecticut Commissioner of Education Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Mason, Bacon Academy Principal Amy Begue, and Colchester Superintendent of Schools Daniel P. Sullivan. For a full story about Mason winning the award, see page 24. Photo contributed by the Milken Family Foundation.

## Veterans Honored At RHAM Event

By Toriana Williams

On Monday morning, the gymnasium at RHAM Middle School filled with the sound of applause, music and pride. The occasion was one of the most meaningful events of the school year – an annual Veterans Day celebration that has become a deeply rooted tradition.

“We start in the morning,” said eighth-grade teacher Karl Jancis, who has organized the event for nearly two decades. He explained that the day begins with a recognition ceremony in the gym, where the entire student body gathers to welcome the veterans. The guests are greeted with enthusiastic applause as the school band performs a series of military marches. The chorus then leads everyone in the national anthem, followed by students reciting the Pledge of Allegiance alongside the veterans, and lastly, one of the visiting veterans delivers a speech.

This year’s speaker was Rob Mendulo from the local American Legion. He offered a few words and heartfelt remarks, setting the tone for a day that would be about gratitude, understanding and connection.

In total, a little more than 50 veterans attended the ceremony. Each one represented a different story of service – from recent deployments to long-ago wars – and each was met with appreciation by the school’s students and staff.

RHAM Middle School Principal Michael Seroussi, who has been at the school for about 18 years, said that the event is a highlight of the year.

“It’s a fantastic program and [Jancis] does a fantastic job coordinating it every year,” Seroussi said.

He shared that what means the most to him is hearing from the veterans afterward. He said they truly enjoy visiting the school – both the recognition they receive and the chance to share their experiences – and it’s clear from their expressions, as well as the students, how much the event is valued and appreciated.

“It’s one of those events that sort of tugs at your heart,” he added.

After the assembly, the event became more personal. Jancis said “the important part of the day” is when veterans are divided among different student teams and visit classrooms to talk directly with the students.

“They have small discussions where they’re able to talk about their service and the things they did and why they served and why it’s important,” Jancis said.

Students listened closely, often asking thoughtful questions about what life in the military was like. “Middle school kids have a lot of energy,” Jancis said with a laugh.

He noted that students listen with full attention as the veterans speak, and many eagerly raise their hands to ask questions about the veterans’ experience. “It really is a time where the kids and the veterans are able to bond together.”

Jancis began the tradition around 20 years

See Veterans Honored, page 3

## New Coalition Aims to Tackle Food Insecurity

By Anne Lilburn

A newly formed group of East Hampton community members are working together to take on the issue of food insecurity and hunger.

Motivated by concern over the interruption of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) food benefits during the recent federal government shutdown, the group has been meeting to pool ideas and figure out how to collaborate and keep residents and community members informed of local resources.

Organizer Kim Clouser said she was already involved in fighting food insecurity in the area as a volunteer at the Epoch Arts Food Pantry. When she heard that the government shutdown might interrupt SNAP benefits, she became very concerned that East Hampton residents might be affected.

At the same time, other groups were having similar concerns and trying to figure out their own creative solutions. Clouser organized an initial meeting of 24 concerned citizens and gathered them at East Hampton Congregational Church to discuss how various people could collaborate to ensure community members

didn’t go hungry during this time.

One of the people Clouser invited was Janet Royce, who is a co-administrator of the Buy Nothing East Hampton Facebook group. The Buy Nothing group had recently launched a project, which it is calling the “Buy Nothing East Hampton Food Fight,” to collect and distribute food in ways that Royce said were in keeping with the “hyper-local, neighbor-to-neighbor gifting” that is the founding spirit of the Buy Nothing East Hampton community. East Hampton residents can fill out an online Google form where they anonymously indicate that they need food and provide their address. From there, Buy Nothing community members contribute to fill the need.

Royce emphasizes that she is not trying to start a new food pantry. As of now, she has been storing much of the donated food in her living room, and volunteers have been coordinating to make sure that food gets where it needs to go. She says she knows that’s not sustainable in the long term, but she hopes that it’ll help get anyone in need through the current rough times.

Over at Epoch Arts’ food pantry, where Clouser volunteers, artistic director and food pantry lead Elizabeth Namen said she hasn’t seen a ton of increased need yet, but she has seen a lot of fear.

Namen said her food pantry has its origins in providing food to students in Epoch Arts programs who were facing hunger or food insecurity, and emphasized that Epoch’s food pantry did not require any formal proof of need for people to receive aid. She said that they scheduled appointments for clients to get food, and also hosted meals for students on a regular basis.

The group that Clouser organized that first night set out on a plan to bring awareness to the resources that currently exist in East Hampton, and they have since launched a website, The Belltown Food Hub ([www.belltownfoodhub.com](http://www.belltownfoodhub.com)), where those looking for food resources can find links to either seek out support, or to volunteer to help themselves. The page contains links to the town food bank and local food pantries, as well as a link to the Buy Nothing group’s

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★ Veterans Honored, cont. from page 1

ago, alongside his fellow teacher the late Dawn Mallory. He explained that the idea began as a discussion about ways to help students become more aware of and involved in their community. He said he and Mallory realized that veterans were a group often overlooked or not well connected with the students, so the event was created to help bridge that gap and show that veterans are an important part of everyday life – people who live and work among them as teachers, public employees, barbers, truck drivers and more.

“These are everyday people of a community, including their own parents and grandparents, that they don’t often recognize or realize,” Jancis said.

When the event first began, it was a modest effort involving only a single team of students and a handful of veterans. The overwhelming appreciation from both sides inspired Jancis and Mallory to expand it to the entire middle school.

To this day, RHAM’s Veterans Day celebration remains a hands-on learning experience. Students create thank-you notes for attending veterans, write to their own family members who have served and even make paracord bracelets that are shipped out to first responders and military personnel across the country.

Another favorite tradition among students is the working dog demonstration, a returning feature from the National Guard.

“We have a working dog group that comes and they show how the dogs work and their training,” Jancis explained. “To be honest, it’s one of the highlights for the kids.”

He mentioned that students are naturally

fond of animals, so having the working dogs visit the school is always a big hit with them. These military dogs are trained for demanding tasks – detecting explosives, guarding and assisting their handlers.

“They’re members of the military,” he said. “They really have a strict training protocol, so not all dogs actually make it to service.”

This year, the school added a special new gesture. RHAM presented plaques and display cases to the American Legion and National Guard’s working dog group as a token of appreciation.

The plaques had been handcrafted years ago by substitute teacher and veteran Kurt Munson, then refurbished by the school’s woodshop and art department.

“We sanded them down, coated them and had members of the art department paint them,” Jancis said. “We were able to present them as a ‘thank you for your service.’”

For Jancis, the annual Veterans Day event is more than a school tradition – it’s a lesson in empathy and citizenship.

“It’s one of the most important days during the year,” he said, noting that it’s one of the events that students tend to remember most even after they move on to high school. “It’s one of those opportunities for them to really learn lessons that are outside of school books.”

What began as a small, simple idea has grown into one of RHAM Middle School’s most meaningful traditions. It has built a bridge between classrooms and community, past and present. As the applause fades each year, what remains is a sense of connection that no textbook could ever teach.

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

AHM News & Notes

AHM Youth and Family Services has announced the following programs. Registration is required, at [ahmyouth.recdesk.com](http://ahmyouth.recdesk.com).

**Open Arts & Crafts Studio:** Wednesday, Nov. 19, 6 p.m. This workshop will include a variety of projects and supplies, including seasonal and holiday-themed crafts. Participants select DIY projects of their choice. All materials will be provided. All ages are welcome.

**Kids Yoga “Thankful & You Know It”:** Thursday, Nov. 20, at 5:15 p.m., for “fall yoga” centered around gratitude and love. Kids will

practice maple breathing and then head out to the “forest” for a sweet Friendsgiving themed yoga adventure while learning a variety of animal-themed yoga poses. Class will end with a few mindful games and a relaxing savasana. This class is geared toward children 4-10. All levels are welcome.

Holiday Bazaar & Artisan Fair

Congregation Kol Haverim, located at 1079 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, will hold its annual Holiday Bazaar & Artisan Fair Sunday, Nov. 16, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Buy local and handmade from 30+ artisans. There will be the Judaica Gift Shop, specialty foods, candles, winter wear, pottery, jewelry and more. Also, you can enter to win 30+ raffle prizes.

There will be free parking and free entry.

Giving Tuesday is Dec. 2

AHM Youth and Family Services is gearing up for #GivingTuesday on Dec. 2.

AHM is aiming to raise \$10,000 to fund youth and family mental health support through our outpatient clinical program, student support services at all schools in the towns AHM serves, as well as outreach through its “HERE 4 YOU” mental health initiative.

All donations are welcome. For more information, visit [ahmyouth.org](http://ahmyouth.org).

RHAM Alumni Soccer Game

Attention all former RHAM boys and girls soccer players – including graduating RHAM seniors! The seventh Annual Jim Fromme Memorial RHAM Alumni Soccer Game will take place at 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 29, at Oakwood in Glastonbury. Drinks and pizza will follow.

If able to attend, email Pam at [pam-fromme1@gmail.com](mailto:pam-fromme1@gmail.com) or call 860-478-0772 to confirm attendance. But if your plans change at the last minute, just show up!

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From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

You’ve likely heard by now: last Tuesday, people from coast to coast showed up in large numbers to cast their ballots and make their voices heard. In many places across Connecticut, that also rang true – but here in *Rivereast*-land, the results were more mixed.

Don’t get me wrong; the turnout was still great, for a municipal election anyway. Yes, not even half the number of registered voters cast ballots, but still, anytime it’s above 35% in a town election, I’m pleased. Turnout *should* be higher than this, of course; municipal elections are frankly more likely to have a direct impact on you than a presidential one or even a state one. But they just don’t carry the same juice; it is what it is.

For example, according to the secretary of the state’s website, the statewide turnout for this election was 36.1%. While that’s up from the 33.7% in 2023, and up even more from the 32.1% turnout in 2021, it’s still not even half of the 76.2% that showed up for last year’s presidential election – and also markedly down from the 57.6% voter turnout in the 2022 state election.

Still, 36.1% is up from the past two municipal election cycles, and thus something to be celebrated.

If you do a deeper dive into the closer-to-home numbers, you’ll see the results here are rather, like I said, mixed.

According to *CT Mirror*, voter turnout this year was 42.6%, up from the 37% in 2021. On the flipside, though, Colchester saw a 40.2% turnout this year – a marked decrease from 47.5% in 2021. And in Portland – where, granted, the first selectman was running un-

opposed – turnout was way down; 41.4% this year versus 54.9% in 2021.

Yes, when you look at the state as a whole, more towns went up than down this year. For example, my hometown of Manchester saw a turnout 8% higher than in 2021 – and Deep River and Lyme saw huge increases of 33.7% and 31.2%, respectively.

What does all of this numbers analysis mean? Turnout was good this year, in some cases very good, but it’s just a reminder that when you hear terms like “record-setting,” “astronomical” and “turned out in droves,” look closer. Things may not always be what they seem.

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This was also the first municipal election to feature the early voting option in Connecticut. I certainly took advantage of that; did you?

According to *CT News Junkie*, 170,920 Connecticut residents participated in early voting. Of those, Democrats were definitely the majority; 83,479 Democrats voted early as opposed to just 36,525 Republicans. (About 50,000 of the early voters were not affiliated with either party.)

It’ll be interesting to see how the early voting trends continue in the future. Personally, I think it’s a wonderful option. It certainly makes the process of casting a ballot a lot more convenient.

\*\*\*

Yes, while technically the next major holiday is Thanksgiving, we know the one that’s on the majority of folks’ minds – Christmas. You’ll see a ton of Christmas-related events



**First-Place FC...** Belltown FC rounded out its fall season with a 3-1 victory over East Windsor. An undefeated 4-0-1 league record secured a first-place finish. Match after match the boys displayed a solid defense accompanied by strong attacks. The team is anxiously awaiting the spring season. Pictured are, back row, Coach Omer Beristan, Sawyer McCarty-Nowak, Ollie McCarthy-Nowak,Ravin Perera, Kade Sheehan, Xavier Carillo, Captain Charlie McCarthy-Nowak, Eli Mitchard, Hunter Supinski, Ben Kennedy, Aiden Pierson, Coach Will Nafis; front row, Jeffery Walitynski, Gavin Ladue, Mitch Bombaci, Liam Twiss. Missing in photo Eli Laplant, Joel and Nolan Zavattero, Hudson D’Elia, Macklin Davis.

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Thank You, Hebron

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who took the time to vote in this election and for the trust you’ve placed in me to continue serving on Hebron’s Planning and Zoning Commission.

It’s been an honor to work alongside so many dedicated residents who care deeply about our town’s future. Together, we’ve shown that thoughtful planning, respect for our land, and a strong sense of community can guide Hebron forward in a positive way.

I’m grateful for your support and look forward to continuing the important work of keeping Hebron a wonderful place to live, work, and call home.

With appreciation,  
David Sousa – Hebron

*Note: Sousa is vice chair of the Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission but said he is writing as an individual.*

Hunger Has No Place  
In Marlborough

To the Editor:

The outpouring of support from voters on 11/4 for our food bank shows who we are—a community that cares.

While Connecticut has stepped up to fund SNAP through November, the hardship won’t end on Nov. 30. Our neighbors, families, veterans, military families, furloughed federal workers, and seniors still face rising food prices, higher healthcare premiums, and increased fuel costs as campaign promises go unfulfilled at the federal level. These vital SNAP benefits help, but they can’t meet every need.

Now is the time to continue to give back – please donate, volunteer, and check in on those who are struggling. Because in our town, no one should ever go hungry.

With gratitude,  
Karen Wilkinson – Marlborough

Bulletin Board

A couple of weeks ago, my good friend A.W., a masterful gardener among other qualities, asked me if I’d like a bunch of carrots from his bumper harvest. Never one to refuse a free anything, I said yes and returned home with a huge bunch of beautiful carrots which I presented to my wife with a suitable flourish.

“Don’t say I never gave you anything,” I said magnanimously.

While not perhaps as overjoyed as if I’d handed over a pair of diamond earrings or the keys to a brand new Lexus or something, she was suitably impressed with the vegetables of my friend’s labors. “I’ll have to peel them,” she said.

“Peel them?” I said. “Who peels carrots?”

“Everybody,” she replied.

“My family never peeled carrots,” I said. “I distinctly remember my father taking carrots out of the bag in the refrigerator and just eating them. I’m sure he didn’t peel the things. He was about as likely to stand at the sink and skin a carrot as he was to put on a tiara and roller skate down Main Street.”

She gave me one of those “don’t blame me for your peculiar childhood” looks and reiterated, “You’re supposed to peel them.”

“Why?” I said.

“Because they grow in the dirt.”

“So do potatoes,” I said. “You can still eat the jackets.”

“You wash potatoes,” she said (like that explained anything).

“So wash the carrots.”

She sighed. “Just take my word for it. You’re supposed to peel them.”

“Must be an Italian thing,” I muttered to myself (I thought).

“It is not,” she retorted.

A couple of days later, I saw A.W. and after thanking him again for the carrots, I remarked, “Let me ask you something. My wife says you have to peel carrots.”

“Of course you have to peel them,” he replied.

“I don’t get it,” I said. “Why on earth would you have to peel a carrot? I remember my father....etc. etc. etc.”

If I’d expected support or understanding I was about to be sadly disabused—or abused as it were.

“I can’t believe you are how old?” he observed. “An adult male, married with children, functioning in society all this time, masquerading as a stalwart and mature member of the community and you don’t know that you’re supposed to peel carrots.” (I’m paraphrasing a bit here, but you get the idea.)

“My wife says it’s because they grow in the dirt,” I said.

“Right,” he said.

“So do potatoes,” I argued.

He just shook his head and went on with some sort of malarky about how everybody knows you’re supposed to peel carrots by which time I’d stopped listening because that’s what I typically do when someone contradicts me. It’s a gift I’ve had since childhood.

Anyway, when I got home that day I Googled “Do you have to peel carrots?”

The answer, it turns out, is NO. No you do not have to peel carrots. Especially if you’re just going to eat them raw. It’s a good idea to peel them if you’re going to cook them because the skins can turn a little bitter and dry when they’re cooked. However, according to JUST ONE OF SEVERAL BILLION ADVISORIES, “As long as you wash and scrub the root vegetables before chopping, dicing or otherwise preparing them for a recipe, you’re likely okay.”

I promptly e-mailed this revelation to my friend A.W. who replied something to the effect that you can find any kind of idiocy on line if you look hard enough.

This indicates to me that I’m not the only one who stops listening when he’s contradicted.

Anyway, I’ll concede that it’s probably a good idea to peel carrots when you plan to cook them. As for eating them raw, I’ll start peeling carrots when I see Bugs Bunny standing at the sink with a paring knife.

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](mailto:bulletin@glcitizen.com).

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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](mailto:bulletin@glcitizen.com). All letters must include the writer’s town of residence and daytime contact phone number. Letters focused solely on 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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**Wreaths Across America**  
To the Editor:  
Please sponsor Wreaths Across America program to honor our veterans. On Dec. 13, wreaths will be placed on veterans’ graves in Townsend Cemetery, Olde Andover Burying Ground Cemetery, and at the Andover Congregational Church Cemetery to honor our veterans. This is an excellent program that will take place on the same day across the nation.  
Visit [www.wreathscrossamerica.org/ct1070](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/ct1070) to honor our veterans.

Thank you,  
Cathy Palazzi – Andover

**Thank You, Hebron Friends and Neighbors**  
To the Editor:  
I am deeply honored and grateful for your support during the recent election. Thank you for taking the time to vote and for placing your trust in me to represent the RHAM community’s students, families, and educators.  
I am committed to providing every student with the opportunity to succeed. I am committed to listening to your voices, working collaboratively with fellow board members, and making thoughtful decisions that reflect the best interests of our schools and community.

To all who voted, to the DTC Chair, Cris Lawrence, to the DTC members and fellow candidates, and to those who offered encouragement along the way – please know how much I appreciate you. Your engagement and dedication make a real difference!  
With sincere gratitude,  
Jessica Hall – Hebron  
Member-Elect, RHAM Board of Education

**Hand Count Needed**  
To the Editor:  
The municipal elections are the elections where the voice of each citizen is the loudest. The decisions made by those governing our town tend to impact our lives more quickly than those at the state or federal level. Thank you to all of you who decided that voting in this election was important. Hebron had an unusually high showing this year. Congratulations to all of the candidates who won their seats.  
There is a bit of a dark cloud looming over the process leading up to the election as well as some of the early voting days where statutory protocols were not followed. The exclusion of the Republican Registrar from several of the planning steps, including the scheduling of the tabulator machine testing is an important process. State statute requires one day’s notice (State Statute 9-244) to both the Republican and Democratic Town Committees so that they can get the word out to interested individuals. This year the notice was essentially not provided. The Democratic registrar unilaterally made the appointment arrangements. The Republican registrar, under the impression that Thursday or Friday were the target days, inquired about the arrangements during a Republican Town Committee meeting on Monday, 10/27 at 7:30pm+/-.

The Democratic registrar stated that 10/28 is the test date and stated that the time was not known. The provided date was a surprise to all in attendance at our meeting, including the Republican registrar. The lack of detail was unsettling.  
The testing of the tabulators was done at the polling location for Early Voting which automatically removes the opportunity for any candidate to observe the process. There is little to no way for us to know who actually observed the process, who handled the tabulator machines once tested, nor how the machines were handled since observers were effectively blocked from the process.  
One way to salvage the integrity of this elec-

tion and reestablish trust in the process is to have a hand count of this municipal election in order to verify that the machine results match the results attained with the hand count. I see no other solution available that would significantly impact the trust of our voting population.  
Thank you,  
Jason Guidone, Chair  
Hebron Republican Town Committee

**An Honor to Continue**  
To the Editor:  
I would like to thank the Andover voters who turned out in last week’s election, and appreciate those who selected me for reelection to our Planning and Zoning Commission. I enjoy this position and take it seriously. It is an honor to be able to continue.  
Leigh Ann Hutchinson – Andover

**Hall of Fame Thanks**  
To the Editor:  
On Friday, Oct. 24, at Blackledge Country Club in Hebron, the East Hampton Athletic Hall of Fame celebrated its 19th year by inducting 2002 graduate Blake Helveston, 2008 graduates Tyler Wosleger and Nicole Muhlberg, 2014 graduate Marvin Gorgas, and the 2014 Boys Soccer team that were Co- State Champions.  
The nomination committee congratulates our newest inductees. Since 2006, the Hall of Fame has inducted 44 athletes, seven coaches, eight teams, and five athletic contributors.  
The nomination process is now open for 2026 nominations. Please visit our website [ehahof.wixsite.com/bellringer](http://ehahof.wixsite.com/bellringer) to obtain a nomination packet, learn more about the Hall of Fame and the selection process, and check out the past inductees.

We would also like to thank our sponsors. We would not be able to run the ceremony and banquet without them. They are Ken Barber & Associates, Chatham Property Services, George Mantikas, D.M.D., Mark’s United Auto Parts, American Distilling, Dickinson’s Witch Hazel, Classic Auto, Center Package Store, Loco Pero, Ace Hardware, Paul’s & Sandy’s Too, Blackledge Country Club, Two Brothers Cafe, and Rule of 3 Brewing.  
The Hall of Fame is also looking for those interested in becoming members of our committee. If interested, email me at [seidlts@sbcbglobal.net](mailto:seidlts@sbcbglobal.net).  
Sincerely,  
Tom Seidl  
East Hampton Athletic Hall of Fame

**Thank You for Your Support**  
Dear Hebron Residents:  
I am deeply honored to have been elected to serve on the Board of Finance. I want to sincerely thank each and every one of you who took the time to vote, share your thoughts, and participate in this election. Your support and confidence mean a great deal to me.  
I am grateful for the opportunity to represent our community and to work alongside my fellow board members to ensure that our town’s finances are managed responsibly, transparently, and with the long-term interests of all residents in mind.  
Public service is strongest when it reflects the voices and values of the people it represents. I look forward to listening, learning, and working collaboratively to make sound financial decisions that sustain and strengthen our community.  
Thank you again for your trust and support. I’m excited to get to work and to serve you with integrity and dedication.  
With appreciation,  
Brian O’Reilly – Amston  
Member-Elect, Hebron Board of Finance

**Guilt Must Be Proven**  
To the Editor:  
Back on May 23, Jim Hallas published a Bulletin Board piece on the Karen Read trial. In it, he made clear that he believed Read was guilty, even going so far as to call her attorneys an obnoxious collection of toads and trolls. I wanted to respond at the time, but budget season and then an election kept me busy.  
According to prosecutors, Karen Read backed her SUV into her boyfriend, Boston Police Officer John O’Keefe, killing him and shattering her tail light in the process. It sounded straightforward enough – until you looked closer.  
Once you dig into the evidence, that story collapses. The state’s own medical examiner ruled O’Keefe’s cause of death undetermined, not homicide. Prosecutors couldn’t produce a single medical expert willing to say his injuries matched a car strike. Aside from a skull fracture, O’Keefe had no broken bones, no bruising



– nothing consistent with being hit by a vehicle. How could a tail light shatter from impact when the supposed victim shows no corresponding injuries? It couldn’t. The crash never happened, and defense experts proved as much through detailed reconstructions.  
On June 18, a jury found Karen Read not guilty of killing John O’Keefe. And this wasn’t a close call or a “benefit of the doubt” verdict. Several jurors have since spoken publicly, describing her as flat-out innocent. They may not know exactly what happened that night – but they are certain it wasn’t a car accident.  
Karen Read is finally free, though the path there was far harder than it should have been. Meanwhile, the O’Keefe family may never get real answers, largely due to a deeply flawed investigation – one led by Massachusetts State Police Trooper Michael Proctor, who has since been fired. Now, other cases he handled are under review for possible misconduct.  
Thankfully, we live in a country where guilt must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt – not merely declared by the state. One can’t help but wonder what Mr. Hallas thinks of the case now.  
Michael Dubreuil – Colchester

**Food Drive Thanks**  
To the Editor:  
Every year I write how thankful I am for the generosity of the residents of Portland who donate to our yearly food drive and this year is no different than the rest. This year we asked for 1,000 bags of food to honor my brother Shaun, and we received 1461 bags and \$700 in donations! I am overwhelmed by the outpouring of support for the food bank and our community members in need.  
I would also like to thank all the volunteers that came out to deliver and pick up the bags as well as empty the bags and mark the food.  
Most of all I would like to thank Kevin Backman and his volunteers that keep Portland Food Bank running every week.  
Happy Thanksgiving,  
Kelly Mainetti  
See Letters, page 6



CIT7-3-25

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CIT6-10-21



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★ *Letters cont. from page 5*

Thank You

To the Editor:

I want to thank all Colchester citizens that took the time to vote in our town’s municipal election! I am truly humbled by those that cast their vote for me to serve on the Board of Finance. Thank you for not only trusting me to serve but to serve with my fellow Democrats elected to BOF, Sean Gillespie and Jillian Vinci! We are ready to do the hard work ahead and please stay connected with your local government!

Krista Kardys  
Member-Elect, Colchester Board of Finance

Thank You, Portland

To the Editor:

I would like to thank everyone who came out to vote on Tuesday November 4th! It was wonderful to see so many residents turn out! I would also like to thank all the candidates who ran from both parties. They volunteer their time and energy to help make our town better for everyone. I appreciate your support and will work hard on the Board of Assessment Appeals and look forward to serving a third term for the residents of Portland.

William Donahue, Member  
Portland Board of Assessment Appeals

Heartfelt Thanks

To the Editor:

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the residents of Andover for your overwhelming support and votes in this year’s election. I am truly honored and humbled to serve as your new town clerk.

Your confidence in me means so much, and I’m deeply grateful for the encouragement, kind words, and trust you’ve shown throughout this process. I look forward to continuing the strong tradition of friendly, knowledgeable service that Andover residents have come to expect and deserve.

To celebrate and connect, I invite everyone to an Open House at the Town Clerk’s Office on Monday, Nov. 24, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., at Andover Town Hall. This will be a wonderful opportunity to stop by, say hello, and share your thoughts and ideas for the future of our community. Light refreshments will be served, and all are welcome.

Thank you again for your incredible support. I’m excited to begin this new chapter and to continue serving the town we all love. I look forward to seeing many familiar faces and meeting some new ones on Nov. 24.

Sincerely,  
Roberta Dougherty  
Andover Town Clerk

Thank You, Hebron

Dear Hebron Friends and Neighbors:

Thank you for voting. And thank you for your vote of confidence in me – and my entire team – as we look ahead to Hebron’s future in our new roles. I’m honored that you have decided to elect me to another term on the Board of Selectmen, and I get to serve this next term alongside my newly elected colleague, Jan Lawrence, and current board members Keith Petit, Claudia Riley, and Sean Fitzgerald – all wonderful colleagues and friends. We are ready to work on behalf of all of you.

Whether you voted for me – or didn’t vote for me – I am going to be your selectperson (soon to be councilor). I’m here to listen to your concerns and get answers to your questions. Work will begin soon on the things we talked about on the campaign trail – researching a home-stead exemption, working on housing choices, and responsible business development in our downtown.

It takes a team, which is why I’m so proud of everyone on Row A that was elected: Town Clerk, Board of Finance, Planning & Zoning, and both Boards of Education. I’m also grateful for the many volunteers on our campaign who came together with a common cause under a great leader in Cris Lawrence. We are so excited for this opportunity, because we’re your neigh-

bors, and we care about the same things you do. Again, thank you, and let’s get started.

Sincerely,  
Tiffany V. Thiele – Hebron

*Note: Thiele is a member of the Hebron Board of Selectmen but said she is writing this letter as an individual.*

Preparing Your Home for Aging

To the Editor:

When we think about growing older, it’s easy to assume that if we’re healthy and active today, we don’t need to worry about the “what-ifs.” But the truth is, life can change in an instant. A fall, an illness, or a sudden shift in mobility can make even the simplest daily tasks more difficult. That’s why it’s so important to plan ahead — to make your home safe and ready for the years ahead, even if you don’t need those changes just yet.

Simple adjustments such as better lighting, grab bars in bathrooms, or reducing clutter can make a big difference. Thinking proactively about your home environment helps you maintain independence and gives peace of mind to you and your loved ones.

To support our community in aging safely and confidently at home, the Portland Senior Center will be hosting a series of local educational sessions featuring real-life residents and professionals who understand the challenges and solutions firsthand. These conversations will cover everything from practical home modifications to resources available right here in town.

If you’d like to stay informed about upcoming events, sign up for our newsletter or check the Portland section of the *Rivereast News Bulletin* for details. Together, we can create homes that help us live well not just for today, but for all the days ahead.

Sarah Elliott-Caratasios, LCSW  
Director and Municipal Agent, Portland  
Waverly Senior Center

Letter of Appreciation

To the Editor:

I am writing to express my appreciation for newly elected Republican registrar, Michele May. Throughout our time working together, I found Michele to be dedicated, hardworking and attentive to every detail of her work. She provided timely updates at every meeting and maintained consistent communication with the secretary of state’s office.

Michele demonstrated a welcoming attitude toward new participants, offering encouragement and support to those entering the process. She also showed great care and consideration for all the pole workers, ensuring their needs were met and their efforts valued. With constant transparency and her willingness to share her knowledge and information with anyone interested have set an excellent example of leadership and public service. I applaud her for her professionalism and dedication to her role.

Brenda Nicolo – Hebron

Thanks to Hebron Voters!

To the Editor:

I wanted to extend a heartfelt “Thank You!” to everyone who participated in the recent election.

First, thank you to the voters who took the time to cast a ballot, whether via early voting or on election day. The turnout in Hebron was amazing – nearly 3,000 people came out to make their voices heard.

I’m also very grateful to the poll workers, the volunteers, the candidates of both parties, and their families. Our democracy would not be possible without your hard work and dedication. Thank you for stepping up.

To everyone who supported me for the Hebron Board of Finance, and to those that supported the Hebron Democratic slate, thank you for your trust and confidence. I will be honored to do my part to serve our community. Whether you voted for us or not, we continue to welcome your thoughts, ideas, questions, and concerns at [dems@hebrondems.com](mailto:dems@hebrondems.com).

Finally, I wanted to give a personal thank you to all the members of the Hebron DTC for your partnership, encouragement, and tireless hard work. I’m proud to work alongside such a dedicated group of neighbors.

There’s a lot to do, but I’m looking forward to partnering with all the boards and residents to Make Hebron Stronger, Together!

Sincerely,  
Adam Ockman  
Member-Elect, Hebron Board of Finance

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**An Enormous Thank You!**  
To the Editor:  
I want to send an enormous thank you to the voters of Hebron for coming out and making your voices heard in this year's municipal election. You really can make a difference when you show up and vote, and this election proved it. It's that kind of community spirit that keeps Hebron such a great place to live.  
I also want to congratulate all of our candidates on their wins! I'm so proud of the work they put in, and I know they'll do a great job in their new roles helping move our town forward.  
**Cris Lawrence, Chair  
Hebron Democratic Town Committee**

**A Tremendous Honor**  
To the Editor:  
I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the voters of Hebron for turning out in record numbers and for electing me to serve on the Hebron Board of Selectmen. It's an incredible honor to have your trust and support, and I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to represent our community.  
Congratulations to my running mate and colleague, Selectman Tiffany Thiele, and to every Democratic candidate on our slate — all of whom were elected! Together, this team brings a wealth of experience, dedication, and community spirit that will serve Hebron well in the years ahead.  
A special thank-you goes to our amazing volunteers and supporters who worked tirelessly throughout the campaign. Your energy, encouragement, and belief in our shared vision for Hebron made this success possible.  
As I begin this new role, I remain committed to keeping Hebron a place where families can thrive, local voices are heard, and thoughtful decisions guide our town forward. I look forward to working collaboratively with residents, fellow board members, and town staff to serve our community with transparency, respect, and dedication.  
Thank you again for this tremendous honor — and congratulations to the entire Hebron Democratic team on a historic win!

**Sincerely,  
Jan Lawrence – Hebron**  
***Note:** Lawrence is a member-elect of the Hebron Board of Selectmen but said she is writing as an individual.*

**Hebron Election**  
To the Editor:  
Hebron experienced record voter turnout for this municipal election, which is a wonderful sign of our community's engagement and commitment.  
We are very pleased with the introduction of the new ES&S tabulators. They performed well overall, though we encountered a few challenges related to the "newness factor." The machines take more time to scan and evaluate each ballot, providing voter feedback as needed. To improve efficiency, one possible solution is to run two tabulators for in-person voting. Since Hebron has seven machines available, I recommend using two going forward.  
We also ran out of Election Day ballots. Again, ordering ballots is never an exact science as it is based upon fluctuating voter turnout trends and history. We solved this problem by implementing the unused Early Voting ballots.  
To explain further, because each tabulator is programmed for a specific ballot type, switching between Election Day and Early Voting ballots initially caused an error message. Our team quickly identified a solution by bringing the Early Voting tabulator back online for use following its use for merely tabulating Early Voting results. This allowed us to continue processing ballots, albeit less smoothly than we would have liked. Ultimately, we had to exit out of the previous tally of early votes to start over with the in-person tally. Effectively the machine count read zero because we started at zero at the switch over. Our ES&S technician commended our team for the prompt and effective workaround.  
Looking ahead, I recommend the following steps:

- Use two tabulators for in-person voting.
  - Increase the number of ballots ordered, anticipating continued voter growth.
  - Hire additional poll workers to maintain efficiency and reduce wait times.
- It remains a privilege to serve the voters of Hebron. We're committed to continuous improvement and look forward to an even smoother process in future elections.  
**Sincerely,  
Michele May  
Republican Registrar of Voters  
Hebron**

**I Am Grateful**  
To the Editor:  
In spite of the recent overall losses experienced nationwide by the Republicans, I owe everyone who came out to vote, to express their views and exercise their constitutional right, a thank you. Yes, you selected me to sit on the Board of Finance and to you, I am grateful. For those who didn't choose me, I will serve you as well as I possibly can too.  
I will advocate a reduction in costs overall and insist on efficiency as well as cost-effectiveness in our small-town governance. I will remember the words that I heard about your property taxes going up and getting basically nothing in return, especially for those who have no offspring in the school system. Taxation will never be "fair" but we can make it a wee bit more palatable. That bill is a killer for most and I too feel in concert with you.  
I will write to you via the Rivereast, so stay tuned on occasion asking for your opinions and input regardless of whether we agree or not, I will still listen. And thank you once again for the privilege of serving the town on the Board of Finance.  
**Alison Walck  
Member, East Hampton Board of Finance**

**Election Day Thanks**  
To the Editor:  
Marlborough's municipal elections are over, and newly elected members of boards and commissions will be settling into their roles, each committed to doing their best to serve the community that put trust in them.  
A safe and successful election cycle is dependent on many people who have not always been recognized for their effort. Their commitment is not dependent on their party but on their devotion to community. The registrars of voters, Sandy Adams and Michelle Kacy, have had to work tirelessly for long hours, through trainings, technology, endless questions and concerns. Former ROV, Ann Kilby, has stood by to offer support and assistance as needed. For two long weeks, volunteers from both parties have sat through early voting days assuring everyone the opportunity to vote. On Election Day, moderator Russ Salvador again demonstrated the calm, ever present support to ensure efficient voting and integrity.  
I write of another factor: the non-partisan enjoyment of working together among people who often are only in the same place at the same time during an election. Enjoyment is an hon-

est word here. It is friendly, supportive, and respectful. It is all different ages, beliefs, and political leanings, working together for democracy's greatest foundation: the right, and responsibility, to vote.  
Yet a further demonstration of our small-town values is the bipartisan support of Marlborough's Food Bank. Food and money were collected at both party's tents, and again later at the Dems' after party, in support of our food bank and its value to our community. We are fortunate to live in Marlborough.  
**Ann Terezakis – Marlborough**

**Thank You, Voters**  
To the Editor:  
Election Day has come and gone but the sentiment remains clear. Colchester residents are pleased with the progress that Bernie Dennler has brought to town since taking office two years ago. Earning 69% of the votes cast, Bernie, along with the entire Democratic team, secured a solid victory last Tuesday. Congratulations to them all. They can be proud of having run a positive campaign rooted in their common love for Colchester and the desire to do what is right  
*See Letters, page 8*

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★ *Letters cont. from page 7*  
for our town.

Thank you to the voters of Colchester, no matter how you voted, for making it to the polls. Our turnout was 40% and shows that our citizens are interested in being part of the process. Please stay involved by attending meetings, staying informed, continuing to exercise your civic duty in the voting booth, and even serving on a volunteer board or commission. Your participation is critical to our collective success. To those of you who spoke to us at your doors to share your ideas, the pleasure was ours.

As DTC chair, I cannot thank the people who contributed to this campaign in any way enough. Your passion, dedication, support, and teamwork made this happen. Every letter, word of encouragement, yard sign, effort to mobilize voters, and donation made a difference. The involvement of wonderful volunteers, alongside tenacious candidates, made this happen.

Speaking on behalf of the Democratic candidates, we thank you for placing your trust in the Democratic team. The newly elected officials are ready to stand up and deliver to keep Colchester moving forward.

**With gratitude,  
Monica Swyden, Chair  
Colchester Democratic Town Committee**

Thank You Everyone!

Dear Citizens of Colchester:  
I wish to thank everyone who supported me throughout my run as a Democratic candidate for Colchester Board of Education There are so many to thank: Monica, Bernie, Rosemary, Denise, Gussie, my dear sons Keith and Kyle, my wonderful sisters Gail, Joan and Karen, dear friends, the DTC team, every volunteer, my neighbors, everyone who wrote letters of support, and strangers that I met along the way. Thank you for believing in me as I could not have been successful without each and every one of you.

It was an experience that I never thought I would have, especially at this point in my life. I am so pleased to have learned so much about running for office, from what goes on behind the scenes that I had no knowledge of, to the more obvious. The team worked extremely hard and we were successful in securing seats in every area. It was a hard but fun run. Thank you to the entire team of candidates- you were fantastic!

Lastly, thank you to the citizens of Colchester for placing your faith in me your new representative on the BOE. I am excited to serve you and to have a role in making sure that our schools are the very best they can possibly be.

Thank you everyone!

**Sincerely,  
Nancy Nelson  
Member-Elect,  
Colchester Board of Education**

Hebron DPWY

To the Editor:  
Last week I shared information on the Hebron Department of Public Works Survey of 2022, where 68.57% of respondents said, “Keep Public Works at Old Colchester Road.” I thought it might be helpful to share some of the reasons why these results came to be. The importance of keeping Public Works at Old Colchester Road centered around two significant issues, the value of drinking water and the environment, and the value of historic preservation.

The environmental significance is documented in two major environmental studies, The Mableridge Farms study of 1992 and the Central Business District study of 2000. These reports were compiled by a State of Connecticut Environmental Review Team and focused on the properties flanking Kinney Road. Both studies identified a series of fractures in the underlying bedrock that are the source of drinking well water for nearby homes. The 2000 CBD reports on page 9, “A corollary to increased water supply, greater fracture density also suggests increased permeability and faster rates of groundwater dispersal and also faster rates of dispersal of potential contaminants that may enter the groundwater system. Dispersal direction of the NNW-SSE lineament fractures will likely be towards the SSE and Kinney Road...” These findings were confirmed in December 2022 by William Warzecha, CT DEEP specialist in groundwater contamination, who reported, “Given the likely threat of pollution to ground water and domestic wells on Kinney and Millstream Roads... It is not environmentally conscious to locate the facility in an area that represents a significant risk to drinking water quality.”

The issues centering on historic preservation included the facts that Kinney Road is home

to active 300-year-old agricultural fields and a truly unique series of stonewall laneways. The value of these laneways were confirmed by UConn professor Robert Thorson, the nation’s leading expert in stonewalls. After a visit to the area in May 2023, Professor Thorson reported, “I have never seen a series of stonewall laneways like this. It took the planning and effort of the community to create them... This is a beautifully preserved community landscape... Envision the ellipse of good soil that is Hebron. At the top is the town center. To the west is historic Church Street, the main transportation route... To the east are the residual fields and laneways. These three elements go together to define historic Hebron.”

I urge all residents and officials to please support the current plan for the DPW project.

**Sincerely,  
Kevin J. Tulimieri – Amston**

Dementia Talks No. 37

To the Editor:  
I think I know what the mom’s out there felt when their kids cooled to giving out hugs. Much of the caregiver journey for a loved one with dementia is like rewinding the clock, the calendar and life. At some point in our lives, we didn’t know how to tie shoelaces, or zip up a coat; or how to greet people in different situations (work, family, friends, spouses).

We learn how to do things and how to act in social settings over time ... over a lifetime. Then enters Alzheimer’s on to center stage. Time seems to goes in the reverse – like the movie *Back to the Future* – but in slow motion. Social filters are stripped away; skills disappear never to return and social interactions change.

Some time ago, I experienced the “No Hug for You” chapter of this journey. For context, when I get ready to leave Mom – I put out my hands, she puts her hands in mine, she will stand, we will hug and I will scoot out the locked door. Not today. Today my quest for a hug, turned into a game of avoidance for Mom and she relished in it. She put her legs out straight while I was holding her hands – as to keep me away. She held my hands and moved them left then right then flicked them up and away. “No Hug for You”!

So, I let her know she won the “game”; I leaned down and gave her a hug.

In that moment she realized the game was really over and I was really leaving. Then the barrage of questions came like a tsunami ... “Are you leaving?” “Where are you going?” “When will you be back?” She was back to needing me.

I know that our journey will continue to evolve. I know that I won’t be ready for everything that comes my way, her way, our family’s way. I just hope that I will continue to engage with grace, empathy, compassion and meet her right where she is in that given moment. Even when I am not ready, I hope I respond that way that makes her feel safe and loved.

Know you are not alone.

**With much love and peace,  
Tonya Maurer – Amston  
Alzheimer’s Hot Line 1-800-272-3900**

We Can and We Do

To the Editor:  
Last week’s article “A Near-Clean Sweep for Andover Democrats” revealed some Republicans are newly considering Trump’s impact on their brand. Republican Town Committee Chair Carol Barton admitted, “Maybe people were upset about certain things because it’s Trump and all that.” But then she complained, “You can’t blame us for what Trump is doing”.

But yes, we can and should blame them. The fact is that Republicans across the nation voted for Trump. They handed the keys to a known liar, narcissist, racist, misogynist, egotistical crime lord so he could enrich himself by billions of dollars, as he has now done, while driving our country and world off a cliff.

At least most Republicans voted for Trump, excluding a tiny minority that still hopes the Republican Party can return to its former glory days of wise Republican stewardship under Dwight Eisenhower, Teddy Roosevelt, U.S. Grant and Abraham Lincoln. Unfortunately, those days are long gone.

Short quiz for Republicans. Can you connect which of these former Presidents were the leaders that accepted war with the Confederacy to save the nation? That devoted a military career to destroying Hitler and fascism? That led our Connecticut boys in deadly battles against the Confederacy? That was known as the “Conservation” President who preserved 150 National Forests, 51 Federal Bird Reserves, 18 National Monuments, 5 National Parks and 4 National

Game Preserves? And if you can, then explain why you voted for Trump, the antithesis of these former leaders? How do you ignore Trump being the go-to choice for Confederate revisionists and insurrectionists? Those biased against Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans and empowered women? Those embracing increased oil, gas and coal extraction?

But let’s skip the history lesson and refocus on how the national Republican Party is currently destroying our economy, our world standing, our world leadership, and all so many of our own Constitutional norms. Accessing any of our readily available mass media organizations, those that have won innumerable journalism awards, will cure you of your ignorance. But you spend your ‘research’ time with Fox News, OAN, Newsmax and other conservative radio and print media outlets. Which I believe to date, combined, have yet to win a single prestigious journalism award.

Conservatives love imaging themselves the standard bearers of all things truly ‘American’. But they are not, and now must be voted out of office, at every level of government.

**Edmund Smith – Andover**

Thank You for Your Confidence

Dear Colchester Residents:  
On Nov. 4, you made a choice to elect a hard-working slate who will work to make Colchester the best it can be. Thank you for your vote, thoughts and confidence that we can work together for the interest of Colchester. The outcome was evidence that the town saw all the improvements Bernie Dennler and his team has brought to Colchester.

I know as a Colchester resident that the Democratic slate has the knowledge to make decisions based on needs and budget to move our town forward. We look forward to serving you.

I also want to thank all who worked hard, knocking on doors, writing postcards, putting up signs, organizing dinners, driving candidates, sign waving and more to show the people the qualities of the team. The Democratic Town Committee is supportive.

Monica Swyden, Democratic chairperson, has amazing skill, energy and compassion. She worked endlessly to share the skills of the team with the people. Bernie Dennler is a gifted person who loves Colchester and supported his whole team in the election. Thanks to you two and the whole Democratic Town Committee for the inspiration to run and work hard to get our platform and ideas out to the people.

It is an honor to have been selected to be on the Board of Education and I thank you all for your votes and confidence that we will work in the best interest of our students to make the Colchester school system the best it can be for all students.

**Gussie Gilberti  
Member-Elect,  
Colchester Board of Education**

Election Day Thanks

To the Editor:  
Election season is a time for voters to take notice of the candidates — their backgrounds, education, and experience. In Marlborough, the Democratic slate was exceptionally well-prepared to continue, or begin, lending fresh energy and broad experience to the decision-making process at Town Hall. Congratulations to all 18 Democratic candidates.

Less well understood or appreciated is the outstanding care and attention devoted to how our elections are set up and run. Election Day itself is a marathon for poll workers, registrars, and moderators. They set up the day before, return at 5:15 a.m. on Election Day, and from the moment the polls open at 6:00 a.m. until they close at 8:00 p.m., they remain careful and vigilant to ensure that every rule and regulation is properly followed. Marlborough’s election ran smoothly, and results were reported promptly. Thank you to all our poll workers.

This year brought new challenges as early voting was implemented statewide. Once again, Marlborough rose to the occasion with professionalism and care. Thank you to everyone who worked tirelessly during early voting, from October 20 to November 2.

A particular shout-out goes to Sandy Adams, our Democratic Registrar of Voters, who succeeded longtime registrar Ann Kilby. This position required a year of mentoring under Ann, a series of trainings over an 18-month period, a high level of technical expertise and communication skills to train poll workers. Bravo to Sandy for her determination and dedication in carrying out this critical role in our democracy.

Finally, recognition is due to Head moderator Russ Salvador. As the Chief Polling-Place Official, the Moderator bears enormous responsibility: supervising election officials, maintaining order and compliance, and overseeing pre-election setup as well as the opening and closing of the polls. Mr. Salvador was an exemplary moderator as well as moderator Aileen Vrooman—Marlborough was truly in good hands during two weeks of early voting and on Election Day.

Thank you, Russ, Aileen and Sandy and everyone who helped make our elections fair, efficient, and well-run.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Dianne Dunn – Marlborough**

***Note:** Dunn is a Marlborough Democratic Town Committee executive board member, but said she is speaking as an individual.*

Early Political Thinkers

To the Editor:  
This week, I wanted to do something a little different. Rather than share my own opinions, I’m sharing a few quotes from some of the early political thinkers who helped shape the ideas behind our nation and its government. They’re presented in no particular order but feel as relevant today as they did centuries ago. I hope readers find them thought-provoking, or at the very least, worth reflecting on.

“History will teach us...those men who have overturned the liberties of republics the greatest number have begun their career, by paying an obsequious court to the people, commencing Demagogues and ending Tyrants.” - Alexander Hamilton, as Publius, in The Federalist No. 1, 1787

“The accumulation of all powers legislative, executive and judiciary in the same hands, whether of one, a few or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.” - James Madison, as Publius, in The Federalist No. 47, 1788

“The moment the idea is admitted into society that property is not as sacred as the law of God, and that there is not a force of law and public justice to protect it, anarchy and tyranny commence.” - John Adams, 1787

“A wise and frugal Government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government, and this is necessary to close the circle of our felicities.” - Thomas Jefferson, Inaugural Address, 1801

“Wherever the real power in a Government lies, there is the danger of oppression. In our Governments, the real power lies in the majority of the Community, and the invasion of private rights is chiefly to be apprehended, not from the acts of Government contrary to the sense of its constituents, but from acts in which the Government is the mere instrument of the major number of the constituents.” - James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 1788

“There cannot any one moral rule be proposed whereof a man may not justly demand a reason. Every man has a property in his own person. This nobody has any right to but himself. The people cannot delegate to government the power to do anything which would be unlawful for them to do themselves.” - John Locke, 1689

**Jason LaChapelle – Colchester**





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# Marlborough Steps Forward to End Alzheimer’s

By Toriana Williams

The Greater Hartford Walk to End Alzheimer’s brought together thousands of people united in support, remembrance and hope during its annual event held on Oct. 19 at Rentschler Field in East Hartford.

Among the walkers this year was a group led by the head of the Marlborough Senior Center.

The walk is one of six hosted across the state by the Alzheimer’s Association Connecticut Chapter, a tradition that, as Director of Communications Kristen Cusato stated, has deep roots -- “Our first walk in [Connecticut] was held more than 30 years ago in Fairfield County.”

Cusato explained the scope of this year’s Hartford event, noting, “There were an estimated 2,000 people at the Walk in Hartford this year, with 260 teams raising about \$430,000.”

Participants came from varied backgrounds but shared a single goal: supporting families

affected by dementia and advancing the fight against Alzheimer’s Disease.

**Strength in Connection**

Cusato emphasized how the walk serves as a powerful gathering point for people affected by the disease in different ways. Caregivers, patients, families and supporters all come together in solidarity, “to put forth the message that you do not have to go through this journey alone.”

The event serves to educate, connect, inspire and empower, she said.

Sponsors attend to back families, local leaders provide helpful resources and the Alzheimer’s Association highlights education, community support and volunteer opportunities for those affected by the disease.

“The connection made at a walk ripples through for years after they are made,” said Cusato.

That support is needed now more than ever,

she shared, as the disease affects growing numbers of families.

“There are an estimated 80,000 people in [Connecticut] living with Alzheimer’s and 7.2 million in the United States,” Cusato said.

Because of that, she said the organization works to ensure people know where to turn when a diagnosis comes.

**Marlborough Joins the Fight**

Among the many teams represented was one led by the Marlborough Senior Center. Team captain Shoshana Merced attended her first walk this year. She shared she was “very excited to see everyone,” she said.

Merced, who serves the town as the director of human and social services and the municipal agent for the elderly, expressed how meaningful the experience already has been while preparing for the event.

Her team’s unique fundraising idea -- a homemade human slot machine game – made its debut at Marlborough Day in August.

“We did a human slot machine that we made in house,” she said. Their efforts paid off. “We raised \$181 from that event ... that goes to our team and then that goes to the overall fundraising efforts from this walk.”

Five members made up her team, and while Merced is the only one connected to the senior center, she said their participation represents a broader community commitment to healthy aging and dementia support.

Merced said her drive to participate is both professional and personal.

“I had a grandmother who lived with dementia at the end of her life, [and] as a senior cen-

ter director, I’m very committed to spreading awareness and any programming and support for family members and caregivers.”

Merced said she has already seen what makes the walk such a powerful community-builder, having noticed teams from home health organizations, local businesses and assisted living facilities, making it “a really great opportunity” for those personally affected by Alzheimer’s and professionals in the field to come together and connect.

**Awareness, Support and Continued Action**

Even after the walk, there are still many ways to stay involved. Cusato said, “People can register and donate through Dec. 31, 2025, also start a team for next year in January of 2026 or volunteer or share your story.”

She hopes participants walk away with a message that stays with them long after the day ends.

“We hope people realize they are not alone,” Cusato said. “There are thousands of people in our state who have gone through this journey or are going through it right now. There is strength in hearing from others who are ‘on the other side’ so to speak and have so much to share with people who are in it right now.”

As the organization continues expanding outreach, she said increasing awareness will always be central to their mission, and Cusato encouraged anyone in need of information, guidance or emotional support to reach out.

“Our resources are free and available 24/7,” she said. “If you have any questions about Alzheimer’s or any other form of dementia, call our 24/7 Helpline at 1-800-272-3900 or go to our website alz.org/ct.”

### St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Church is located at 30 Jones Hollow Rd. Pastor is the Rev. George S. Mukuka, 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 stjohndfisher30@yahoo.com. The church website is www.stjfc-church.org.

**Liturgical Celebrations: Weekend Masses:** 4 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday. **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.

**Faith Formation Programs:** Classes are underway for this season, with registrations still accepted. Cindy Bryan, Eileen Gilles and Helena Thomas lead the programs for grades K-10, to include a high school youth group. For more information, access the church website.

**Ministry, Social and Parish Commu-**

**nity Events:** An adult choir practices weekly (though is on break in the summer months); 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 to include the Thanksgiving Food Drive underway for November. Bags with specific shopping lists are available at the Masses. Sandwich-making and collection continues the last Thursday of the month for St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown. Other scheduled service opportunities can be found in the weekly bulletin.

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

## 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 at Marlborough CT Senior Center.

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

**Shopping Trips:** Monday, Dec. 1, the bus will go to N. Windham Walmart. Depart the senior center at 1:30 p.m. and return at 4 p.m. Call to reserve ride. Additional holiday shopping trips on 12/8 (Marshalls/HomeGoods) and 12/15 (Ocean State Job Lot or Ollie’s).

**Thanksgiving Lunch:** Nov. 21, noon-2 p.m. There will also be a music performance by MES, and free raffles. Cost for lunch is \$10, exact cash or check. Must RSVP by 11/14.

**Open Enrollment:** Dec. 2, by appointment only. Change prescription plans, switch between traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans.

**Technology Assistance:** Thursday, Dec. 4, 9 a.m.-noon. One-on-one appointments with Richmond Memorial Library technology specialist. By appointment only.

**Blood Drive:** Thursday, Dec. 4. For more information or to make an appointment to donate, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or sign up online at redcrossblood.org with sponsor code “Marlborough”.

**Encore Club:** Wednesday, Dec. 10, featuring holiday music by Bill Naughton Jr. and light refreshments. RSVP by 12/3.

**Ugly Sweater Party:** Wednesday, Dec. 17, noon-2 p.m.; RSVP by Dec. 10.

**Free Holiday Gift-Wrapping:** Thursday, Dec. 18, 2-3 p.m., and Friday, Dec. 19, 9-11 a.m. Bring your gifts; they’ll be wrapped for free. Call if interested.

**Regularly Scheduled Programs:** For full descriptions, call the senior center. **Billiards:** Mondays and Fridays, 10 a.m.-noon; **Bingo:** Mondays, 1-2 p.m. Each card costs \$1 and additional cards after are 50 cents; **Cards:** Monday, 2-3:30 p.m.; **Wednesdays** and **Fridays**, 1-3:30 p.m.; **Chair Massage:** Free 15-minute massages are offered Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Appointments required.

**Blood Pressure Checks and Chatham**

**Health Education Presentation: Second Monday of each month. BP checks from 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m., and presentation from 12:15-12:45 p.m.**

**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 coffee.

**Birthday Club:** Tuesday, Nov. 25, 1-2 p.m., with cake. Open to all friends and family. It does not have to be your birthday month to celebrate. However, if it is, please RSVP.

**Not Just Quilters:** Wednesday and Friday from 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

**Parkinson’s Exercise:** Visit www.beatpdtoday.com/class-schedule or call 860-918-9594 to register and for more information.

**Mahjong:** Wednesdays, 1:30-3:30 p.m., at Fire Station No. 2, 200 West Rd., and the second Friday of every month from 12:30-2:30 p.m. at Marlborough Bakery, 8 Independence Drive.

**Tap:** Wednesdays, 5-6:30 p.m.

**Social Services: 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: canned vegetables (corn, green beans, peas, carrots), jam/jelly, fruit cocktail, and canned fruit. The food bank is open to qualified residents in need.

**Meals on Wheels:** Provides meals and daily visits for people 60 years of age and over, and their spouses or caregivers. Apply directly with CRT by calling 860-560-5848, or call the senior center for a referral.

**Energy Assistance and Eversource Discounts:** Income-based. Contact the center for an appointment.

**Transportation:** Rides to medical appointments, employment, essential services, the Senior Center and recreation activities are available to seniors and people with disabilities. Transportation is available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Rides must be reserved two business days in advance. Call 860-295-6209 for more information. Visit the town website, www.marlboroughct.gov, for the complete Transportation Policy, which took effect Nov. 1. There will be no transportation Tuesday Nov. 25.



The Marlborough Lions Club recently received a private donation of \$200 in memory of longtime member Dennis Schultz, who passed away in 2024. Dennis’ wife, Jo Schultz, is seen here with Lion Kevin McNally (left), who accepted the donation on behalf of the Connecticut Lions Low Vision Center.

## Lion Receives Donation for Low Vision Center

The Marlborough Lions Club received a private donation of \$200 in memory of longtime member Dennis Schultz, who passed away in 2024. Dennis’ wife, Jo Schultz, was on hand to acknowledge the donation on behalf of her late husband.

Marlborough Lion Kevin McNally accepted the donation on behalf of the Connecticut Lions Low Vision Center, with which he is associated.

The Connecticut Lions Low Vision Center

has developed a partnership between the Lions Club and Hospital for Special Care, where individuals with low vision may now receive a formal Occupational Therapy evaluation. They will receive education in the skills needed to gain independence in activities of daily living and obtain magnification and low vision equipment.

For more information on the Connecticut Lions Low vision Centers, please visit www.lionslowvisioncenters.org.

## Correction & Clarification

As a result of faulty information provided by the town, it was falsely reported in Friday’s Rivereast that Louise Concodello lost her bid for a seat on the Marlborough Board of Education. She actually won.

The Rivereast regrets the error.

Also last week, comments by Marlborough Republican Town Committee chair Judith Kelley were received by the Rivereast in time to be included in the story about the election, but inadvertently were omitted. Here is what should have ran, under the subheading “Republican Reaction”:

Kelly congratulated all the winners and thanked the candidates who ran under their

endorsement.

“It was a hard run,” she said. “We look forward to working on our slate for 2027’s election.”

Kelly thanked voters for their support and showing up to make their voices heard. “It was [an] incredible turnout for a municipal election,” she said – noting that, in addition to voting, many who showed up on Election Day also contributed to a local cause.

“The Republican Town Committee was able to raise \$1150.00 in donations plus food donations for the food bank,” she said. “Pretty successful night for us in regards to helping the community.”



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The Marlborough Lions recently donated \$500 to the American School for the Deaf. Pictured from left are the school’s chief financial officer, Jenn Pizzoferrato, Marlborough Lions President Jean Paul Bolduc, and the school’s assistant superintendent, Paula Morabito.

Lions Donate to School for the Deaf

The American School for the Deaf, which is situated in West Hartford, held a dinner recently in appreciation for support from the many Lions Clubs around Greater Hartford. The Marlborough Lions Club donated \$500 this year and was among the many regional Lions Clubs recognized for donations to the school.

The American School for the Deaf, which was founded in 1817, provides on-campus and off-campus opportunities for 166 students from preschool through high school as well as services for adults. Students come from Connecticut and 17 other states.

The ASD recently initiated an Autism Program, which currently serves 17 students from elementary to high school age.

The Marlborough Lions meet the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. New members are always welcome. For additional information on the club, call president Jean Paul Bolduc at 860-798-2054 or secretary Ken Hjulstrom at 860-490-9116.

New Watercolor Classes at Arts Center

Marlborough Arts Center, located at 231 N. Main St., will offer a pair of watercolor classes on Saturday, Nov. 15.

The first class will be an Intro to Watercolor class, running from 2-5 p.m. This is a class for a beginner or a refresher for a slightly more experienced painter. Demonstration of watercolor techniques and emphasis on brush strokes in painting lemons and leaves from reference photos will be a fun way to build skills in this medium.

The second class, Watercolor and Illustration, will be held also on Saturday, Nov. 15, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. This class is designed for adults with an understanding of basic watercolor techniques and will focus on building skills to accomplish a completed painting. Using graphic illustration, anemones in a vase will provide a fun way to learn to paint with the tip of a brush.

Both classes are taught by Marika Hahn, an illustrator from New York City who creates nature inspired art with watercolor. She is a graduate of the Fashion Institute of Technology and has a beautiful and varied portfolio including books and magazines. To see examples of her work go to marikahahn.com.

Each class is \$65. To register go to [www.marlbrougharts.org](http://www.marlbrougharts.org). Online registration is preferred but mail in is also possible. For more information call 860-467-6353.



Billiard Table Repaired... The Rotary Club of East Hampton and Marlborough were the original donors of the Marlborough Senior center’s billiard table, and the club recently donated \$1,500 for much needed repairs and maintenance. The table is used multiple times a week and has been central to a core group of players over the years. The Billiards Club is always looking for new members of all skill levels; the club meets Mondays and Fridays, from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Pictured from left are, front row, Pete Strickland, Rotary Treasurer; Shoshana Merced, Director of Human and Social Services; David Quast, Chair of Giving Committee Rotary Club; Carolyn Bernarto, Marlborough Member of Giving Committee Rotary Club. From left, back row, are Senior Center Billard Club members Ross Dmochowski, John Ayer, Mark Paul and Roger Paradis (absent: Al Harmon).



The East Hampton/Marlborough Rotary Club will hold its annual Breakfast with Santa Saturday, Dec. 6, at East Hampton High School cafeteria. Pictured at last year’s event is Greyson Wolf from Marlborough.

Free Breakfast with Santa

The East Hampton/Marlborough Rotary Club will hold its annual Breakfast with Santa Saturday, Dec. 6, from 7:30-11 a.m., at the East Hampton High School cafeteria, located at 15 North Maple St.

As in the past, free breakfast will be served to all that attend and the children will be able to have a picture taken with Santa Claus as a keepsake. There will also be face-painting and other children’s activities provided by the East Hampton High School Interact Club.

While breakfast is free, those planning to attend are asked to consider donating non-perishable food items for the East Hampton and Marlborough food banks. Monetary donations to support the food and fuel banks in each town will also be accepted.

For more information, call Kyle at 860-455-3192 or follow on Facebook at East Hampton/Marlborough Connecticut Rotary Club.



The Key of H – made up of Marlborough resident Jim Henderschedt and his four children, Emma, Owen, Rosie and Lucy – will perform at Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., on Friday, Nov. 21.

Key of H Concert at Arts Center

The Henderschedts, Marlborough residents and members of The Key of H, are performing at the Marlborough Arts Center’s 4th Friday at the Arts Café on Friday, Nov. 21, at 7:30 p.m., at the center, 231 North Main St.

The group is made up of Jim Henderschedt and his four children, Emma, Owen, Rosie and Lucy. This family has been making music all of their lives. As a child, Jim Henderschedt played guitar and sang in his father’s church. As he grew up, married and had a family, his children and he would gather for family sing-alongs, chorus concerts, musical shows and the children’s choir at the local church.

Owen plays the piano, Emma, Lucy and Rosie sing in harmony, with father Jim playing the guitar. Jim and eldest daughter Emma have performed numerous times on Sadler’s patio during the summer season. At their gig at the arts center, it is expected that the audience will hear a mix of musical genres.

Admission to this program is free, subsidized by a grant from the Marlborough Greater Together Community Fund of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

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 Marlborough Arts Center is fully accessible.

Marlborough Arts Center is a nonprofit regional center for the arts. Visit [www.marlbrougharts.org](http://www.marlbrougharts.org) or email [info@marlbrougharts.org](mailto:info@marlbrougharts.org) or 860-467-6353 for more information.

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Resident Nominated for Award

Kyle Wood of Marlborough was recently nominated for an award, following a successful run of an original Halloween production by the Emmanuel College Theater Arts Program.

The program, titled “Theatre Macabre: Dreamscape,” is now a finalist for invitation to the Kennedy Center American College Theater festival. Selections for the festival will announced in December.



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### 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, full program descriptions or to register, call 860-295-6210 or visit richmondlibrary.info.

**Babytime:** There will be a baby-centered storytime with songs, rhymes, lap bounces, and a

story on Fridays at 10:30 a.m. through Dec. 19. For children up to 24 months, with their caregivers. Held in the Storytime Room.

**Crafty Kids:** Wednesdays at 4 p.m. through Dec. 17, for kids ages 4 and up. There will be two projects on hand each week to choose from, or kids are welcome to use our supplies to create their own projects. Registration is not required.

### Parks and Rec. Programs

Marlborough Parks & Recreation has announced the following. For full program descriptions or to register, visit [www.marlboroughct.gov](http://www.marlboroughct.gov). For more information, call 860-295-6203.

**Special Event: Safe at Home – Grades 4-6:** Wednesday, Nov. 19, 5-6:30 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Participants will learn skills to prepare them to be safe when home alone. Registration fee is \$65/resident, \$70/non-resident.

**Horseback Riding Lessons:** Ages 5 and up, English or Western style instruction. The lessons are private and are an hour in length. The lessons days and times are flexible. Fee is four lessons for \$200/residents, \$205/non-residents.

### New Grief Share Session Underway

A Grief Share support group will run Tuesdays through Dec. 16, from 5-6:30 p.m., at Fellowship Community Church, 24 South Rd. The group started Sept. 16, but people can join at any time.

The group consists of videos and discussion sessions, with the last session being a Celebration of Life to honor your loved one. There is a \$20 one-time registration fee, which includes the workbook. You will get the workbook at the

first session. If you have already paid the \$20 registration fee from the previous Grief Share program, you will not need to pay again.

For more information, call 860-338-1060 or email [shopgirl53@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shopgirl53@sbcglobal.net). Registration is on GriefShare.org. Click ‘Find a Group’ and look for Fellowship Community Church. You may register there to see the schedule for the sessions and other information pertaining to Grief Share.



RHAM Girl Scouts will hold their annual Children’s Holiday Craft Faur Dec. 6. Pictured at last year’s fair are members of Marlborough Girl Scout Troop 61097.

### Girl Scouts Holiday Craft Fair

RHAM Girl Scouts will hold their 31st annual Children’s Holiday Craft Fair Saturday, Dec. 6, from 9 a.m.-noon, in the Marlborough Elementary School community room.

Scouts are busy putting the finishing touches on their unique, handmade items that will be available for purchase at the fair.

Open to the public, the fair is the ideal holiday shopping destination for ages 2 to 102. All items are priced at \$10 or under, and each purchase comes with free gift wrapping.

The Children’s Holiday Craft Fair is Connecticut’s only event where young children can shop for gifts, on their own, for their favorite people and pets. Older Girl Scouts will be ready to assist the youngest shoppers with gift selections and financial transactions. Children should

bring a list of who to buy for and some money to purchase holiday presents for their friends and loved ones. Shoppers of all ages are always proud to purchase gifts on their own for their favorite people.

Family members can watch from afar or relax in the cafeteria while young shoppers pick out the perfect gifts. There will also be a bake sale in the school cafeteria with a selection of baked items for shoppers and their families to enjoy. Free drinks will also be available. This year, the Girl Scouts will also be collecting non-perishable donations for the Hebron and Marlborough food banks to help members of the community.

All craft fair proceeds go directly to the local troops for activities and community service projects.

### Resident Named to Board of State Organization

Marlborough resident Kevin McMillan, CPA, has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau (CT-MEETINGS) – the state’s official meetings and sports event sales and marketing organization. McMillan also was elected as CTMEETINGS’ new treasurer.

“We are pleased to welcome Kevin McMillan to our Board and as our organization’s Treasurer,” explains Robert Murdock, president of CTMEETINGS). “His accounting expertise in a variety of industries and professions will be invaluable as we expand our work to generate business and funds for the State and the regions where the events take place.”

Kevin McMillan is director of accounting services at Fiondella Milone & LaSaracina LLP (also known as FML) in Glastonbury, Conn. He brings more than a dozen years of public accounting experience, as well as three years working internally at a Fortune 500 corporation in the aerospace and advanced manufacturing industry. McMillan has been with FML for more than seven years and works within the firm’s accounting services practice – specifically with not-for profit, professional service, technology, and manufacturing industries, along with companies in the early stages of operations. He previously worked within FML’s audit practice, an experience that allows him to evaluate client needs in a comprehensive manner.



Kevin McMillan

McMillan earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in accounting from the University of Connecticut, and is a member of both the Connecticut Society of CPAs and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. He lives in Marlborough with his wife, Crystal, and their two sons.

### Holiday Craft Fair

American Legion Post 197 in Marlborough will host a Holiday Craft Fair Saturday, Nov. 29, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., at the post, located at 128 East Hampton Rd., Route 66.

All are invited to come support local vendors for some holiday shopping. There will be raffles, snacks, and refreshments for purchase.

### Congregational Church News & Notes

**Sunday Worship** 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.marlconchurch.org](http://mcc.marlconchurch.org) and recorded for later viewing. Church pastor is the Rev. Valerie Seaver.

Childcare for infants and toddlers is provided downstairs in the nursery but children are always welcome at the worship service. Sunday school is open to all children in the community for children ages 3 through grade 8. Contact Elizabeth Kukich at [ekukich@marlconchurch.org](mailto:ekukich@marlconchurch.org) for more information.

**Nov. 16:** The service will feature the Joyful Blue Bluegrass Band who will lead parishioners in handclapping, sing-along music along with a special musical piece performed by the group. The service will be led by Seaver.

**Bible Study** is led by Seaver and meets Thursdays at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. upstairs in the lounge. All are welcome.

**AA:** The church sponsors three weekly meetings: Wednesdays at noon and Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Room and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Fellowship Hall. **ACA** meets Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in the Youth Room.

**Stretch and Strength** for seniors, led by certified instructor Barbara LeBlanc, is held Fridays at 9:45 a.m. upstairs in the Thienes

Lounge. The weekly drop-in fee is \$25.

**Outreach:** The church collects non-perishable food items year-round for Marlborough Food Bank with a basket located in the narthex for Sunday worshippers to bring donations. A luncheon for Florence Lord Housing residents is held monthly. The church-sponsored Drive Thru Café, for Marlborough Food Bank clients and their families, will be Sunday, Nov. 30. Free tickets are available at the food bank.

**Second Blessings Thrift Shop,** located on the ground floor with easy access from the parking lot, is open for sales and donations Fridays from noon-3 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. The eBay store is open year-round at [bit.ly/MCCebay](http://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, but free-will giving boxes are found by the doors in the sanctuary; people can also donate via a QR code in the pew racks or through the church website. For more information on the church or its programs, call Seaver’s direct line at 860-295-0432, email her at [pastorval@marlconchurch.org](mailto:pastorval@marlconchurch.org), or contact the church office at [office@marlconchurch.org](mailto:office@marlconchurch.org).

### Classical Guitarist and Student Concert

Classical guitarist Gustavo Fernandez and sixth-grade instrumental students from Marlborough Elementary School, under the direction of Donna Arseneault, will present a concert on Thursday, Nov. 20, at 6 p.m., at Marlborough Arts Center, 231 North Main St.

Donations will be accepted at the door.

Marlborough Arts Center is a nonprofit regional center for the fine arts, performing arts, and fine crafts.

Veterans/Seniors  
Thanksgiving Dinner

American Legion 197 will host the Veterans/Seniors Thanksgiving Dinner 2025 on Sunday, Nov. 23, from 1-3 p.m., at American Legion Post 197, located at 128 East Hampton Rd. (Route 66) in Marlborough.

All veterans and seniors from East Hampton and Marlborough are welcome. RSVP is required by Thursday, Nov. 20, by calling 860-295-7810.

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**The Winning Ticket...** East Hampton Lions Club Scholarship Chairman Tom Denman and Lions District 23C Cabinet Secretary Teri Schlosser hold the winning ticket to this year's raffle. The East Hampton Lions say thanks to all who bought tickets.

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](http://easthamptonpubliclibrary.org).

**Hours:** Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Adult Programs:** **LibrarYoga:** Tuesday, Nov. 18, 6:30 p.m. Yoga 200 Certified instructor Amie Meacham leads an hour of gentle yoga for adults in the Library Community Room. All levels welcome; bring your own mat if you have one and wear comfy clothes.

**Book Club:** Wednesday, Nov. 19, 6:30 p.m. Copies of the current month's book are available at the circulation desk. This month's book is *My Side of the River* by Elizabeth Camarillo Gutierrez.

**Teen Programs:** **Teen Advisory Board: Grades 8-12:** Tuesday, Nov. 18, 6 p.m. Take a leadership role in shaping how the library serves teens. Help plan programs, improve the Teen Space, and more.

**Children's Program:** **Animal Hybrids with the GIANT Room!:** Saturday, Nov. 15, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. The library will partner with the GIANT Room to combine STEM skills and creativity in this hands-on workshop where you'll design your own animal hybrids and turn them into real, printed trading cards. Cards will be available for pickup a few weeks after the event. Registration is required, but families can drop in any time to participate. Please register just one member of your family; this program is for all ages and your registration covers the whole group.

**Read to a Therapy Dog: Grades K-3:** Tuesday, Nov. 18, 4:30 p.m. Readers will be assigned a 15-minute time slot between 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. to read to Jovie, a certified therapy dog.

**STEMtastic: Recycle City for Grades 1-5:** Monday, Nov. 24, 4-6 p.m. Grades 1-5 are invited to this drop-in program all about recycling, featuring hands-on activities.

**DIY Days for Grades K-8:** Saturday, Nov. 29, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Children and families in grades K-8 are invited to create a different toy, game, or treat together. No registration required; just drop in.

Rotary Participating in Thanksgiving Drive

For 22 years, the Liberty Bank Rotary Club Thanksgiving Drive has helped local families during the holiday season. That tradition continues as Liberty Bank, the Community Foundation of Middlesex County and 41 rotary clubs again team up to raise money for the cause. This year's drive will end Nov. 17 at 3 p.m.

The East Hampton/Marlborough Rotary Club is among the clubs participating.

In addition to providing warm meals this

Thanksgiving, donations made to the drive will help stock local food pantries for the winter months. Monetary donations can be made online at [www.middlesexcountycf.org](http://www.middlesexcountycf.org), or by mailing a check to the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, 49 Main St., Middletown, CT 06457. Please include the name of the rotary club that will benefit from the donation in the memo line.

Free Breakfast with Santa

The East Hampton/Marlborough Rotary Club will hold its annual Breakfast with Santa Saturday, Dec. 6, from 7:30-11 a.m., at the East Hampton High School cafeteria, located at 15 North Maple St.

As in the past, free breakfast will be served to all that attend and the children will be able to have a picture taken with Santa Claus as a keepsake. There will also be face-painting and other children's activities provided by the East Hampton High School Interact Club.

While breakfast is free, those planning to attend are asked to consider donating non-perishable food items for the East Hampton and Marlborough food banks. Monetary donations to support the food and fuel banks in each town will also be accepted.

For more information, call Kyle at 860-455-3192 or follow on Facebook at East Hampton/Marlborough Connecticut Rotary Club.

New Puppy Training Program

Paws-n-Heel Dog Training Center in East Hampton is administering a new American Kennel Club (AKC) training program geared towards puppies and their owners.

The AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Program rewards responsible owners who take the time to train and socialize their new puppies. S.T.A.R. stands for Socialization, Training, Activity and a Responsible owner, all things a puppy needs to have a good life.

The AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Program teaches dogs and their owners the first important steps to becoming responsible members of the community, said Michelle Larson.

"It is our hope to diminish the number of dogs relinquished to shelters through the education offered by the AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Program," Larson said. "Early training and socialization are key to having a well-behaved dog."

To get started, owners enroll in the Puppy Kindergarten class instructed by Paws-n-Heel Dog Training Center. Classes will include training tips for puppy-owners – such as how to housetrain and lessons on practical skills for puppies such as coming when called. The program is open to all dogs.

At the end of the course, the instructor will administer the test and upon passing, owners and their puppies will be enrolled in the AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Program and will receive the Puppy Package including a certificate, Puppy Medal, Puppy Handbook, and more.

To sign up for classes, visit: [paws-n-heeldog-training.com](http://paws-n-heeldog-training.com). For more information on AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy, see: [akc.org/starpuppy](http://akc.org/starpuppy).

Community Supports TANGO2 Research at Banquet

The fifth biennial TANGO2 Banquet & Auction, held recently in Cromwell, brought together families, friends, and supporters for an evening of connection, remembrance, and hope in the fight against TANGO2 Deficiency Disorder (TDD).

With 170 attendees and more than \$50,000 raised, the event advanced critical research and strengthened support for families affected by this rare disease.

The banquet was hosted by Kasha and Mike Morris, who founded the TANGO2 Research Foundation in late 2017 after their then-16-year-old son Ryan was diagnosed with a rare genetic disease called TANGO2 Deficiency Disease (TDD). Ryan Morris is a 2020 graduate of East Hampton High School.

A TANGO2 angel mom who traveled from Texas, reflected on the meaning of the gathering:

"It's my third time attending the banquet, and I feel there is a lot of love here. I appreciate that they never forget my son Sammy. He may not be here, but when I show up in that room, it makes me feel like he is. And that's why I show up for the Morris family."

This year marks the Morris family's eighth year leading the TANGO2 Research Foundation, which recently surpassed \$1 million in direct research funding. These grants have supported more than 30 researchers across 18 countries.

Recent milestones include expanded support for the TANGO2 Natural History Study, the creation of a TANGO2 Clinician Hotline, and new partnerships with the Baylor College of Medicine. Looking ahead, the foundation will host the first-ever TANGO2 Innovation Summit in 2026 in Houston, Texas – bringing together experts from around the world to collaborate on care guidelines and future research.

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### Helping Hands

Helping Hands is open again on the first and third Saturdays of each month, from 9-11 a.m., at 27 Skinner St.

Helping Hands offers free clothing, household items, toys, books etc. to anyone in need.

Donations are only accepted on the Saturdays Helping Hands is open, from 9-11 a.m., and on the Thursdays of the week it is open, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

For more information, call Beth Cunningham at 860-365-1054.

### Christmas Bazaar

The Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam, at 52 Middle Haddam Rd., Middle Haddam, will host its annual Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Bazaar offerings will include baked goods, peanuts, Rada cutlery, a silent auction and Christmas tag sale items.

A light lunch of sandwiches, desserts, coffee, tea and punch will also be served.

### Art on Display

Local artist Valerie Stockburger will display her oil paintings at Town Hall during November.

Stockburger is a member of the East Hampton Art Association, the Glastonbury Art Association, and Gallery 53 in Meriden.

All are invited to stop by for a viewing of her art display during Town Hall hours.

### EHMS Basketball and Cheerleading

East Hampton Middle School student/athletes who are interested in trying-out for boys' basketball, girls' basketball or cheerleading teams can register online through Arbiter Sports Registration.

Athletes must have a physical within a 13-month period in order to try out. The deadline for registration is Sunday, Nov. 26.

For further information, call EHMS athletic director Michael Mercaldi at 860-463-6837.

### 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 at 6:30 p.m. There are cash prizes.

Pre-order a fresh homemade sandwich to eat or a drink in the bar to be served during intermission.

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### Veterans Sought for American Legion

In an effort to save one of the oldest military organizations in East Hampton, American Legion Post 64 is inviting any interested veteran to join. Young or old are eligible; all you need to have completed is basic training. The purpose of this organization is to provide outreach to veterans, offer scholarships to new recruits, and support the Rocky Hill State Veterans Healthcare Center.

Post 64 currently meets bi-monthly at the East Hampton VFW at 20 North Maple St. Its next meeting is Wednesday, Nov. 19, at 7 p.m.

### Diecast Collectors Unite!

On Sunday, Nov. 23, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., at VFW Post 5095, diecast enthusiasts from across the region will gather for a day of collecting, trading, buying, and browsing.

Vendor set-up begins at 7 a.m., with tables available at \$20 per spot. Spectators can join in on the fun after 9 a.m. for a \$2 entry fee.

The kitchen will be open, serving breakfast sandwiches and a selection of lunch items. Meanwhile, the Post Canteen will serve drinks from 9 a.m. until close.

Proceeds from the show will benefit local veterans and VFW Post 5095.

For additional information, vendor reservations, or general inquiries, please contact Tommy Cruz at 203-600-9635 directly.

### 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. To connect electronically, go to [www.christchurchmiddlehaddam.com](http://www.christchurchmiddlehaddam.com) for directions. The Holy Eucharist will be celebrated with the Rev. Diana Rogers, priest-in-charge.

**Donations:** Food items for the East Hampton Food Bank may be placed in the black totes at the rear of the church.

**Returnable Bottles and Cans:** Are collected in cans by the shed.

**Bible Study:** Contact Bobette Reed Kahn at [bobette@khan.com](mailto:bobette@khan.com) if you are interested in participating.

**Celebration Coffee Hour:** A special coffee hour will be held to celebrate the end of the Stewardship drive after the worship service on Nov. 23.

**Thanksgiving Baskets:** Food items for the four Thanksgiving baskets are due Nov. 23. There is still time to sign up to bring a donation. Check the sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall.

**Information/Assistance:** Contact Senior Warden Donna Hryb at 860-633-0472 or [donnaadubehryb@gmail.com](mailto:donnaadubehryb@gmail.com) for more information.

### Wreaths Across America to Return

Fowler-Dix-Park Post & Auxiliary 5095 is looking for sponsors for its Wreaths Across America wreath-laying event in December. Sponsorships are due today.

Wreaths Across America is a worldwide event honoring veterans with the laying of a wreath on their headstone or marker. East Hampton's ceremony will take place at the Book of Names Memorial, located across the street from the VFW Post at 20 North Maple St., on Saturday, Dec. 13, at noon. Seventeen wreaths are placed during the ceremony, one for each branch of the service, a Prisoner of War/Missing in Action, one in memory and honor of Governor William O'Neil, one for each of the Auxiliary's 'adopted' eight forgotten soldiers who are buried in the Middletown State Veterans' Cemetery.

The VFW Auxiliary is asking the public to sponsor additional wreaths to be placed at various soldiers' gravesites in all 12 cemeteries in town. Sponsors are asked to donate \$17 per wreath to help provide as many wreaths as possible. As volunteers place a wreath on a soldier's grave, they repeat the soldiers' name aloud.

One can sponsor a wreath by sending a sponsorship form to VFW Auxiliary 5095, 20 N. Maple St., East Hampton, CT 06424. Checks should be made out to "VFW Auxiliary 5095" with "WAA" on the memo line. Forms can be found at the Post and East Hampton Public Library. In lieu of a form, send name, address, phone, email, the number of sponsored wreaths at \$17 each with a check to the above address.

All forms should be returned by Nov. 11.

To learn more about Wreaths Across America, visit [www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org).

### 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.

**Foster Child Gifts:** The collection of gifts for foster children must be done by Dec. 7. The gifts must be new in its original packing and not wrapped.

**Operation Christmas Child:** This is a project of Samaritan's Purse that delivers shoeboxes filled with school supplies, hygiene items, toys, and sports equipment to children who live in difficult circumstances. The church welcomes community participation in this project. The boxes are available in the church office and need to be returned by Nov. 16.

**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:** Children's Ministry, for children in kindergarten through fifth grade, is held in Fellowship Hall during worship. The theme is "Friends with God" and is taught through Bible stories where the characters are friends with God. A toddler nursery is also available. All are welcome.

**Vocal Choir:** Rehearsals are held Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. New members are always welcome.

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

**Women's Fellowship:** The next gathering will be Thursday, Dec. 11, from 1-3 p.m., at Mary's.

**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 [www.hn-covenantchurch.org](http://www.hn-covenantchurch.org).

### Thanksgiving Dinner for Local Seniors

VFW Post 5095 invites East Hampton seniors to a festive Thanksgiving Dinner on Sunday, Nov. 16, beginning at 1 p.m. The celebration will be held at the Post Hall, located at 20 North Maple St.

Sign-up sheets are available at the following locations: East Hampton Senior Center; Chatham Acres and Bellwood Court senior housing; VFW Post 5095; and Town Hall

For questions or to sign up directly, call the post at 860-267-8837.

### Veterans/Seniors Thanksgiving Dinner

American Legion 197 will host the Veterans/Seniors Thanksgiving Dinner 2025 on Sunday, Nov. 23, from 1-3 p.m., at American Legion Post 197, located at 128 East Hampton Rd. (Route 66) in Marlborough.

All veterans and seniors from East Hampton and Marlborough are welcome.

RSVP is required by Thursday, Nov. 20, by calling 860-295-7810.



The works of East Hampton resident Betsy Rich – including the ones seen here – will be displayed at Middle Haddam Public Library all month, with an artist's reception planned for next Friday, Nov. 14.

### Resident's Art on Display

Lifelong East Hampton resident Betsy Rich has her artwork currently on display at the Middle Haddam Public Library. The exhibit will run through November, with an Artist's Reception on Friday, Nov. 14, from 4-6 p.m.

Rich began painting at age 6 and knew she was on to something when she won an ice cream sundae as a prize for one of her paintings from a local dairy. She has been painting ever since.

Rich holds two associate's degrees, in commercial art and fine art, from Middlesex Community College and a Bachelor of Science degree in graphic design from Charter Oak College. Her subjects include nature/landscapes and animals – mostly her beloved pets. She enjoys painting with oil and watercolors.

### 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](mailto:middlehaddamlibrary@gmail.com), visit [middlehaddamlibrary.com](http://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.

**Knit So As To Turn Water: The History of New England's Maritime Knitting:** Saturday, Nov. 15, 5 p.m. Presented by the Dirty Blue Shirts, an experiential history collective of living historians, scholars, and artists from eastern Connecticut. Call the library to register.

**Open Mic Night:** Friday, Nov. 21, from 6 to 8 p.m. Share your talent or just come and listen to music. Performers, call the library to register.

**Chatham Community Chess Club is Back:** Wednesdays, Nov. 19, Dec. 6 and Dec. 17, 6-9 p.m., for all ages and skill levels welcome; lessons available. For more information, contact [pjhoffmani@juno.com](mailto:pjhoffmani@juno.com)

**Mahjong:** Mondays, 10:30 a.m. All levels of experience welcome.

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

**Saturday CommuniTea:** Is on hiatus, but stop by during regular library hours and staff will put the kettle on.

**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](mailto:tensummitst@gmail.com).

**Saturday Family Yoga with Kathleen:** 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](mailto:zenlotus860@yahoo.com)

**Chair Yoga with Kathleen:** This 'gentle yoga' program is held Fridays at 9 a.m. Cost is \$15 per class. Register by emailing [zenlotus860@yahoo.com](mailto:zenlotus860@yahoo.com) or calling 860-638-9097.

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# Turkey Plunge Raises over \$47K for Food Bank



Over 100 plungers took to the waters at this year’s East Hampton Turkey Plunge on November 8. Photo Credit: Kristen Keska

By Anne Lilburn

Over 100 people took to the chilly fall waters of Lake Pocotopaug last Saturday for the 16th annual East Hampton Turkey Plunge, and together they raised more than \$47,000 in donations for the East Hampton Food and Fuel Bank.

The event was founded 16 years ago by East Hampton’s Crean family during a time when they had high school-aged kids. Several years ago, with their children now grown, the family handed over the role of organizing and managing the event to the local Rotary Club and East Hampton High School’s Interact Club, which is a service club for teens that is affiliated with Rotary.

East Hampton High School teacher and Interact Club advisor Kristen Keska has been involved since the first year. These days, she says she organizes the event with a lot of help from some very motivated students, who were there to help her by picking up donations, choosing T-shirt colors, and putting up signs, all while fundraising themselves for the event.

Keska said that, in addition to the Interact Club students, other student groups also formed fundraising teams, with different clubs or classes working together to collect donations and compete to raise the most money. Forty-five

students got in the water, she said, and the top student fundraiser was Juliana Ware, who raised \$500. The top over-18 fundraiser was Pete Evans, who Keska said raised \$3000, in the form of cash, gift cards and sponsorships.

Overall, plungers had raised \$38,000 by the day of the event, and sponsor Liberty Bank made a 25% matching donation to put the total over \$47,000. With that said, Keska said that donations were still trickling in even after the event.

Keska said the whole school community got involved. She said she was one of at least seven EHHS teachers in the water, and while over 100 people got in the water, an even bigger crowd gathered to cheer them on and support the cause. The mood was one of fun and celebration, even as they raised funds for an important cause.

Participants ranged in age from the youngest attendee, a 2-year-old boy named Colt, who won the “Littlest Gobbler” award and whose entire family dressed as pilgrims, to the oldest plunger, 77-year-old Lynn Miller, who won the “Most Overcooked Turkey” prize.

East Hampton residents and friends Margaret Wilcox and Maria Tralongo attended the event for the second time this year, and came dressed



As they did last year, Maria Tralongo and Margaret Wilcox took the Pocotopaug plunge – and this time they were dressed as pilgrims.

as pilgrims.

Tralongo said it was an upgrade from the turkey costumes they wore last year, because they got to “show off our buckles,” she joked.

“It’s always good to have a buckle as an accessory,” she added.

Tralongo said she enjoyed being able to have fun at an event that was also worthwhile.

“In this time where so many families are having trouble making ends meet,” she said, “it’s such a good feeling to see the community come together.” She added that East Hampton was

“little, but mighty.”

Wilcox agreed with her friend, and said she had brought her grandsons, who are three and a half and six years old, to the swim. And while she said she had fun seeing them get involved, Wilcox noted that she was even more inspired by the young people she saw who were a bit older than her grandkids.

“There were so many young high schoolers [there],” she said, adding that “It’s rewarding to see the younger generation embracing community giving.”

## Ag Science & Tech Open House

Middletown High School boasts the public school choice program Middletown Agriculture Science & Technology – and applications are now being accepted for the 2026-27 school year.

In addition, there will be an Open House for prospective students on Wednesday, Nov. 18, at 6:30 p.m. at the Agriculture Science & Technology Center at Middletown High School, 200 LaRosa Lane, Middletown. The program will feature a presentation followed by an interactive, guided tour of the Ag facility.

The Middletown Agriculture Science program

offers an individualized, hands-on learning experience with all the benefits and academic rigor of a comprehensive high school education. The curriculum offers instruction in animal & veterinary science, plant science, natural resources, and agricultural engineering & mechanics.

High school students from the *River east towns* of Portland and East Hampton are eligible to apply for the program. All tuition and transportation costs are provided by the sending town.

For more information about the Middletown Agriculture Science and Technology Program, call 860-704-4594, email [nescim@mpsct.org](mailto:nescim@mpsct.org), or visit [mhs.middletownschoools.org/o/mhs/page/ag-sci](http://mhs.middletownschoools.org/o/mhs/page/ag-sci).

## Congregational Church News & Notes

East Hampton Congregational Church is located at 59 Main St. Sunday services are at 10 a.m. The Rev. Robin Blundon is the interim minister. Sunday School is provided for children and coffee hour is directly after service for fellowship.

For more information about the church and its activities, visit [cc-eh.org](http://cc-eh.org) or call the church office at 860-267-4959. Office hours are Monday and Wednesday, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

## PTO Meets Monthly

All are invited to attend the monthly East Hampton Elementary PTO meetings. Meetings are on Mondays at 5:30 p.m., and childcare is provided. The schedule for the 2025-26 school year is: 12/15, Center School; 1/12/26, Memorial School; 2/9/26, Center School; 3/16/26, Memorial School; 4/20/26, Center School; 5/18/26, Memorial School.

More members are always needed, whether it’s helping with decorations for celebrations such as dances or stepping up ceremonies, organizing fundraisers, volunteering at events, supporting our teachers, staff and admin or sharing ideas and making change.

There is no need to sign up; just come when you can.

### Bethlehem Lutheran Church News

Services at Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, located at 1 East High St., are held Sundays at 10 a.m. There is Sunday school every week following the sermon.

The church sanctuary is handicapped-accessible by using the lift.

**Upcoming Events:** Tuesday, Nov. 18, Thanksgiving service, 6-7 p.m. Bring an item

for the Food Bank.

Jingle Bell Craft Fair and Stuff-A-Cruiser: Saturday, Dec. 6, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Christmas Carols: Sunday, Dec. 14, 6 p.m.

For more information, call 860-267-1248 or visit [www.facebook.com/BethlehemEH](http://www.facebook.com/BethlehemEH) or [www.bethlehemeh.org](http://www.bethlehemeh.org).

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# Veterans Share Experiences with PHS Students

## Trinity Church Holiday Fair

Trinity Church, located at 345 Main St., will hold its annual Holiday Fair Saturday, Nov. 22, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Seasonal crafts and baked goods, pies and treats, children's crafts and activities, crown jewels (costume jewelry) and raffles. Also, visit with Santa and take a photo.



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# Burke Brothers Twinning and Winning

By Josh Howard

Breckin and Hayden Burke have been racing since day one.

The identical twins were born about a minute apart with Breckin entering the world first and Hayden making his appearance moments later.

Now seniors at Portland High School, the all-state runners continue to race towards finish lines.

Isha Murphy, the cross-country coach at Portland High School, said the brothers have “elevated each other to a higher level of success every year.”

“They came from eighth grade with a strong work ethic and had some early success as freshman, and they have just continued that,” added Murphy, who also coaches track and field at PHS.

The Burkes recently wrapped up their high school careers on the cross-country trails with a memorable championship season in which they finished first and second at the Shoreline Championship (SLC) championships on Oct. 16.

Racing at Hammonasset Beach State Park, Breckin won the conference clash with a time of 16:13 and was followed by Hayden with a time of 16:20.

“Shorelines were a really good experience,” recalled Breckin. “It’s a really good reminder of all the work we’ve done. It’s good to know that all of our work paid off.”

At the Class S Division Championships on Oct. 25, Breckin placed 2nd and Hayden was 4th. It was a similar finish at the State Open as Breckin (26th) and Hayden (28th) crossed the finish line within a few seconds of each other.

Prior to the championship season, Hayden won both the Harry Geraghty Invite and the Wickham Invite, while Breckin placed as the runner-up in both races.

“I’ve told them several times that there is no shame in finishing runner-up to your brother,” noted Murphy, who also taught the two at PHS. “It didn’t matter if Breckin was winning or Hayden was winning, they were both pushing each other to be their best. They brought out the

best in each other.”

With speeds that are nearly identical, the brothers said they are competitive with the rest of the field, but not necessarily each other.

“We both know that we can push each other to be better,” noted Breckin.

Along with going stride for stride in races, the Burkes do most of their training together with the duo logging 50-60 miles per week during peak summer training.

Hayden said the two “fuel” one another, noting that distance running is about keeping “good mindset”.

“It’s just about believing in yourself and putting in the work,” he added.

Originally born in Middletown, the Burke family moved to Portland when the twins first entered grade school.

The long-distance running trait is something they inherited from their mother, Becky, who was a college athlete and a marathon runner.

After playing soccer and basketball during their formative years, the brothers joined the running teams in middle school and never looked back.

Deb Rooth, who coached the speedy siblings at Portland Middle School in both cross-country and track, called the twins, “Very coachable and an absolute pleasure to work with.”

Rooth joked, “My biggest hurdle with them was telling them apart.”

Once on the trails, the brothers quickly worked up the leaderboards and became Rooth’s pack leaders for two seasons at the middle school.

“Obviously they are very talented, but these are the kind of kids that make coaching worthwhile,” added Rooth. “They never complained and they did exactly what I asked them to do.”

The success in middle school allowed the Burkes to hit the ground running at PHS where they each competed in the division championships the past four years and the State Open the last two.

Along with earning hardware on the trails,



Portland High School seniors Breckin Burke (left) and Hayden Burke are standout runners for the Highlanders running program. Photo: Ron Knapp, MySportsResults.com.

they have also been standouts during the indoor and outdoor track seasons where they are specialized in distances and have etched their names in the record books several times, most recently joining forces as part of the record-breaking 4x800 relay team last spring.

The brothers’ personalities also fit the community, noting that being from a small town has its benefits.

“We get a lot of people congratulating us after races,” explained Breckin. “It’s a great feeling to know that we are representing our school.”

Hayden added, “We have a good team bond

and we feed off the energy being the underdogs.”

Next up are the indoor and outdoor track seasons, which will be the Burkes last chance to compete for the Highlanders.

Both noted that as their time in Portland is winding down, they are feeling nostalgic about leaving the area that allowed them to take their passion for running to new levels.

The long-term plan is to compete in college, but the destination is still undetermined.

But one thing is for certain, the twins plan to continue competing side by side at the collegiate ranks.

## Plan Now for Festival of Wreaths

The Portland Historical Society is planning its 14th annual Festival of Wreaths, “Jingle & Mingle,” for the weekend of December 6 and 7.

With holiday decorations already in the stores, members and friends of the society are encouraged to keep their eyes open for “trinkets” that will make for a unique and special wreath for this year’s festival. Last year over forty wreaths and tabletop decorations were donated. The possibilities for the wreaths are endless, the decoration can range from traditional to innovative, from sophisticated to child-like.

Individuals, families, businesses, clubs and organizations are invited to donate a decorated wreath for this “tea cup” style raffle. Wreaths can be real or artificial, can be a size and shape of your choice and can even be made from other materials — shells, pinecones, scrapbook papers, candies. It can have a theme, e.g., “Glistening Snowflakes” or “Forest Wonderland,” or be decorated to attract a particular audience — Legos or Crayolas for the younger boys and girls or cookie cutters for the home baker. A gift card or certificate for a service can be attached as part of your decoration.

All wreaths should be pre-registered by Thursday, December 4 by sending an email to: PortlandCThistory@gmail.com.

## Bereavement Support Group

St. Mary Church, located at 45 Freestone Ave., invites all to attend the Bereavement Support Group.

The evening session of the group meets the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the church hall. The afternoon session meets the fourth Tuesday at 2 p.m. in the church rosary room.

Call Susan Bongiorno to register at 860-685-1966.

## Coat Drive

Zion Lutheran Church, located at 183 William St., will hold its second annual coat drive to support Amazing Grace Food Pantry on Saturday, Nov. 8, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Located in Middletown, Amazing Grace Food Pantry services 8 towns, including Portland.

Prior to Nov. 8, gently used or new coats, vests or heavy sweaters of all sizes may be dropped off at the church. Contact the church office at 860-342-2860 or Kathy Richards at 860-982-7624 to make arrangements for drop-offs.

If you would like to participate but don’t have time to create a wreath, for a donation of \$30.00 an Historical Society “elf” will decorate one for you. Your name, business or organization will be listed as the donor. Email PortlandCThistory@gmail.com to make arrangements for a Society elf to “work” for you. If you prefer to make a financial donation, your name will be posted as a supporter during the event.

For the second year, the Festival of Wreaths will be at the Grange Hall located at 17 Sage Hollow Road. All decorations must be dropped off by their creators on Thursday, December 4 or Friday, December 5. The festival will be open for the public on Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 pm at the Grange Hall. On Saturday at 3pm, the Portland High School Acapella group under the direction of Samuel Tucker will entertain us with holiday songs.

All proceeds from this event will be used to further the society’s mission to preserve Portland’s history and to fund educational projects for the community.

## First Congregational Church News

The First Congregational Church of Portland, UCC, located at 554 Main St., holds worship Sundays at 10 a.m. All are welcome. Pastor is the Rev. Judith Cooke.

This Sunday, Nov. 16, will feature the Celebration of Gifts. Cooke will preach on “Blessed and Blessing.”

Also at 10 a.m., elementary aged children will meet for Church School in the newly renovated classroom, and the middle school class will meet in the youth room. Infant - Pre-K children will enjoy playtime and an age-appropriate lesson.

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



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### Zion Lutheran News & Notes

Zion Lutheran Church is located at 183 William St. All are invited to participate in worship. Sara Stall-Ryan is pastor.

**Worship Notes:** Zion offers Sunday worship each week at 9 a.m.

**Learning:** Sunday School classes, for children ages 3 through 8th grade, meet the first and third Sunday of each month, from 10:15-11:15 a.m. For more information, call Sylvia LeShane at 860-342-0658.

The Adult Education group is continuing its review of *The Chosen* video series. Episodes are viewed on the first and third Sunday at 10:30

a.m. Discussions will be held the second and fourth Sundays at 10:30 a.m. Contact the church for details.

**Giving:** 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](mailto:zion.lutheran@snet.net), or visit [zionlutheranportland.org](http://zionlutheranportland.org).

### Middle School Honor Roll

Portland Middle School has announced the honor roll for the first marking period of the 2025-26 school year.

**High Honors, Grade 8:** Dylan Arnold, Avery Berard, Timothy Bolstridge, Sadie Campbell, Cora Chenier, Miriam Clements, Leo Dean, Maya Finkelstein, Whitney Gatto, Luz Glick-Grappo, Lillian Hallinean, Rowan Kirsche.

**Honors, Grade 8:** Arianna Aquino, Caiden Bouchard, Aleah Brown, Audrey Burton, Charlotte Carroll, Rory Connelly, Joshua Corriveau, Lucas DeYoung, Rocco Glick-Grappo, Kristina Gonzalez, Alexa Goodrich, Jack Grover, Amaya Huff, Hannah Lamson, Aiden Lawrence, Justin Lin, Noah MacDonald, Jude Matterfis, Ana McMicken, Christine Morse, Gabriel Ngunjiri, Griffin Poach, Anthony Quiles, Amani Reynolds, Mason Richey, Larissa Rossi, Evaliyah Salcedo, Taylor Sobieski, Carmelo Spada, Juliette Srb, Kyrinn Stone, Danica Strayhorn, Evan Warner, Abel Wells, Easton Yardis.

**High Honors: Grade 7:** Hailey Briggs, Cartier Brockers, Marshall Clarke, Lauren DeMerchant, Booker Edie, Gavin Hungerford, Kenzie Kroeber, Ella Libera, Emma Maronde, Juliana

### 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 Share Mobile Pantry** comes to the Food Bank every other Monday; the next pantry visit will be Nov. 17.

**Weekly Programs:** Unless noted, all programs are free. **Monday, 11/17: Light Aerobics,** 9:30-10:30 a.m.

**Tuesday, 11/18: Bears on a Journey, 9:30-11 a.m., Help make fleece teddy bears for cancer patients. Bears on a journey are seeking donations of light fleece (one yard or more) for making teddy bears for cancer patients throughout CT. If you would like to donate, please contact 860-342-0809; Watercolor Class, 9:30 a.m., for more info please contact Bivenne at [bivenne@yahoo.com](mailto:bivenne@yahoo.com); Congregate Meal, noon. Cost is \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form) Menu: sliced turkey with gravy, green bean casserole, stuffing, roll & butter, milk, cranberry sauce; Coupons for Troops, 1-4 p.m.; Setback, 1 p.m.; SyncoCize, 5-6 p.m.**

**Wednesday, 11/19: Light Aerobics,** 9:30-10:30 a.m.; **Chair Yoga with Gia,** 10:30-11:15 a.m., fee is a \$5 donation to instructor; **Rug-Hooking Group, noon.**

**Thursday, 11/20: Tone & Stretch,** 9:30 a.m.; **Knit & Stitch,** 10 a.m.; **Congregate Meal,** noon – cost is \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: meatloaf with gravy, roll and butter, peas, smashed potatoes, milk, melon; **Mah-jong (FULL),** 12:30 p.m.; **Scrabble,** 1 p.m.

**Friday, 11/21: Light Aerobics,** 9:30-10:30 a.m.; **Mah Jongg,** 10 a.m.

**Upcoming Events:** Unless noted, all events are free. **Live Well Workshop:** Mondays through Dec. 1, 2-4:30 p.m. This workshop began Oct. 27, and focuses on gaining the knowledge and skills needed to live well with ongoing health conditions. Connect with others weekly and explore planning and problem solving, working with providers, healthy lifestyle choices and more. Registration required as limited space is available; contact Heather to register.

**Bingo with Sean from Ageless Insurance:** Monday, Nov. 17, 1:30 p.m. Free event, but registration recommended.

**Live Well, Age Well: A Free Diabetes Sup-**

### Turkey Shoot

Portland Fish and Game Club will hold its annual Turkey Shoot Sunday, Nov. 23, from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., across from the Exchange Club Fairgrounds.

This is a perfect opportunity to have some fun and maybe take home your Thanksgiving turkey! The cost is \$3 for one shot or two for \$5. Food and drinks will be available. Families are welcome.

## Fatal Crash Closes Arrigoni Bridge

By Anne Lilburn

A head-on two-car collision on the Portland side of the Arrigoni Bridge on Tuesday night killed one and closed the bridge for several hours.

Portland Police Sergeant Dan Knapp said that the department received a call about the accident at 8:43 p.m. on Nov. 11. The crash involved a red Subaru, traveling westbound, and a black Ford Escape, traveling eastbound. The driver of the Subaru, a 70-year-old man who was a Middletown resident, was pronounced dead on the scene. The other driver, a 31-year-

old Portland woman, was transported to Hartford Hospital, where police said she was “treated for potential serious injuries based on the mechanism of the crash.”

The accident closed the bridge for approximately five hours while police investigated. The bridge reopened Wednesday morning.

Portland Police reiterated that the crash is still an active investigation, and that anyone with information about the crash should call the department, at 860-342-6780.

### St. Mary Church News & Notes

St. Mary Roman Catholic Church, located at 45 Freestone Ave., invites all to attend its services and events. For more information, visit [www.stmaryportlandct.org](http://www.stmaryportlandct.org).

**Worship:** Weekday Masses are Monday and Tuesday at 8 a.m., and Friday at 12:10 p.m. Weekend Masses are Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

**Reconciliation:** Saturdays between 4 and 4:45 p.m. Call 860-342-2308 to make arrangements.

**Bereavement Support Group:** All are invited to attend. The group meets each month on the second Monday at 6:30 p.m. in the church hall and every fourth Tuesday in the church library

### Parks and Rec. News & Notes

Portland Parks and Recreation offers various programs for adults and children. For a complete list, full course descriptions and costs, or to register, visit [portland.recdesk.com](http://portland.recdesk.com) or call 860-342-6757. Advanced registration is required.

**Annual Tree Lighting and Tree Lighting Parade:** Save the date! Saturday, Dec. 6, at Brownstone Intermediate School. Watch for more info. Also, **Vehicles Are Sought** for the parade! Parks and Rec. is inviting people to decorate their ATV, tractor, truck or car and show their holiday spirit! Individuals and businesses welcome. Register to participate via [portland.recdesk.com](http://portland.recdesk.com) or by calling 860-342-6757.

**Skyhawks Basketball Clinics (K-2):** Saturdays, Jan. 3-Feb. 7, at Gildersleeve School.

**Men’s Drop-In Basketball:** Tuesdays through June, from 7:30-9 p.m., at Portland Middle

### 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](http://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 all day Thursday and Friday, Nov. 27 and 28, for Thanksgiving.

**Children’s Programs: Cooking with Italian Flair:** Thursday, Nov. 18, 3:30 p.m., for grades 3-5. A staff member from Food Explorers will teach how to make two different Italian-inspired dishes: pizza naans and cannoli croissants.

**Mad Science Presents: The Science of Superheroes:** Monday, Nov. 24, 2 p.m. Children will explore the science of flight, how science can make things invisible, and how Spiderman might walk up walls using fun, high-energy experiments.

**Drop-In Crafternoon:** Tuesday, Nov. 25, 1-3 p.m., for grades K-5. Drop in on this half day of school and see what you can make with the items the library has on hand. Registration not required for this program.

**Family Craft Night: Gingerbread Houses:** Monday, Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m. Use your imagination to create a house to bring home with you using graham crackers, frosting and other edible supplies. This activity has steps that are appropriate for all ages, but a parent or guardian must be with children to help with supervision. Registration will open Monday, Nov. 24, at 10 a.m. Space is limited.

### PHS Class of 2015 Reunion

The Portland High School Class of 2015 is organizing a 10-year reunion for Saturday, Nov. 29, at Terrazza in Portland. It will start at 7 p.m. and include dinner and a cash bar.

Contact Erica Backus at 860-719-7058 or join the Facebook page for additional details.

at 2 p.m. Call Susan Bongiorno at 860-685-1966 for additional information.

**Baptism:** Call Sue Ferraiolo at 860-342-2308 to make arrangements.

**Marriages:** Contact the office at 860-342-2328 to make an appointment with the Rev. John Antonelle.

**Holy Hour Benediction:** First Friday of every month following the 12:10 p.m. Mass.

**Blessed Mother Mass:** First Saturday of every month at 9 a.m.

**Hours of Operation:** Church hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. Office hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Friday.

School. This program is free to Portland residents and has a one-time fee of \$20 for non-residents. Registration is required for all participants. The program does not take place on days when the school is closed or has early dismissal.

**Bench and Tree Donation Program:** Parks and Rec. is now accepting donations for benches and trees at the Portland Recreational Complex. If you’re interested in dedicating a bench or tree, call Andy for more information at 860-342-6757.

**Tai Chi for Long Life:** At Riverfront Park Wednesdays, 9:30-10:15 a.m., and Saturdays, 10:30-11:15 a.m.

**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. Registration is now open.

**Celebrate Hanukkah!:** Monday, Dec. 1, 4 p.m. Portland residents Barbara Sequenzia and Liz Hibino will present stories, songs, games and latkes. This program is geared towards kids and their families, but all are welcome – whether you celebrate Hanukkah or not. Registration is open now.

**Holiday Storytime:** Tuesday, Dec. 16, 10:30 a.m. Kids birth to 5 and their caregivers are invited to come for a morning of holiday stories, songs and activities. A craft will be offered at the end of the program. Registration will open Monday, Nov. 24, at 10 a.m. Space is limited.

**Teen Program: Gingerbread House Party!** Monday, Dec. 8, 3:30 p.m. Students in grades 6-12 are invited to build and decorate their own gingerbread house. All supplies will be provided by the library as well as holiday music and snacks. Registration will open Monday, Nov. 24, at 10 a.m. Space is limited.

**Magician Ed Popielarczyk:** Tuesday, Dec. 30, 1:30 p.m. Magician, balloon sculptor, flea circus master, and storyteller Ed Popielarczyk will return to the library in an interactive show for ages 3 and up. Registration will open Monday, Nov. 24, at 10 a.m. Space is limited.

**Adult Programs: 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.

**Museum Passes:** The library has several printable museum passes that can be checked out including The American Clock & Watch Museum in Bristol, the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass., and more.

**Book Clubs: Mystery Lovers Book Club:** Tuesday, Nov. 18, 1 p.m. *Whose Body?* by Dorothy L. Sayers will be discussed. **Talk About Books:** Tuesday, Dec. 2, 1 p.m. *Christmas Bells* by Jennifer Chiaverini will be discussed. **1st Thursday Night Book Club:** Thursday, Dec. 4, 6:30 p.m. *The Humans* by Matt Haig will be discussed.

**Movie:** Wednesday, Dec. 10. *The Family Stone* (2005; rated PG-13) will be shown. Run time is 102 minutes.



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### 2025 Leaf Pickup

The Town of Portland Department of Public Works will conduct its annual leaf pickup beginning Monday, Dec. 1.

Leaves must be placed in paper bags at the curb so as not to cause a sight line issue. Leaves must be out no later than Nov. 30. Plastic bags will not be picked up.

Residents who do not place their leaves at the curb can bring them to the transfer station (permit required). Leaves not in paper

bags must be emptied by the resident in an area at the transfer station designated by the attendant.

Public Works requests that homeowners refrain from blowing or raking leaves into the roadway as blocking the storm drain inlets may cause flooding and create safety hazards.

For more information, call Public Works at 860-342-6733.

### Vocal Chords Holiday Concert

“Winter Musical Celebration” will be presented by the Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords (MHVC) on Sunday, Dec. 7, at 2 p.m., at Portland High School, 95 High St. The concert will feature 90 voices, directed by Samuel Tucker, and a 10-piece orchestra, directed by Alan Dougherty.

The program will feature pieces that have a pop rock feel, bells ringing with spirit, fast swing, Venetian music by Vivaldi, and more.

The MHVC will perform “Light One Candle” recorded by Peter, Paul and Mary and arranged by local music educator Jack Zaino, honoring those who fought for freedom, along with a choral medley from *Polar Express* and many other holiday favorites.

Tickets to the event are \$25 and can be purchased from any member or by calling Joyce at 860-342-3120 or Diane at 860-347-2787. For more information, go to [vocalchords20.org](http://vocalchords20.org) or visit MHVC on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.



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## Kenneth Barber & Associates, LLC Welcomes New Attorney: Lauren DeCaprio

Kenneth Barber & Associates, LLC is pleased to announce the addition of Attorney Lauren DeCaprio to the law firm.

Lauren has called Portland home for the past 13 years, where she lives with her blended family. Being deeply committed to her community, Lauren has served on the Portland Board of Education from 2020–2022, the Portland Equity and Inclusion Coalition and was elected to the Zoning Board of Appeals, for a term beginning in 2026. She continues to remain an active participant in many local civic organizations.

Lauren holds both her Master’s Degree in Music Education (summa cum laude) and her Bachelor’s Degree in Music (magna cum laude) from the University of Hartford’s Hartt School and before pursuing her legal career, Lauren was an elementary school music teacher.

Her passion for service led her to Quinnipiac University School of Law, where she excelled academically and professionally. Lauren graduated in May 2025 with her Juris Doctor degree. She attended on a full merit scholarship (Dean’s Fellows Scholarship), and has received multiple awards including the 1L Award for Oral Advocacy and Best Closing Argument in the intramural mock trial competition. She has competed at the national level as a member of Quinnipiac’s Mock Trial and Society for Dispute Resolution teams.

Lauren’s prior experience includes impressive legal internships with the United States Attorney’s Office in New Haven, and multiple placements with the Connecticut Office of the Attorney General, gaining experience in litigation, privacy and data security, as well as courtroom proceedings.

“We are thrilled to welcome Lauren to the firm,” said Attorney Kenneth Barber. “Her intelligence, work ethic, and commitment to community service align perfectly with our mission. She brings a unique blend of legal skill, creativity, and compassion for our clients.”

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### AARP December Holiday Luncheon

The Colchester-area Chapter 4019 of AARP is having its annual holiday luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 2, at Papa Z's, located at 173 Middletown Rd. in Colchester.

Any Colchester-area senior is encouraged to attend this gathering and also to learn more about our local AARP chapter. The gathering will begin at with cocktails from 12:30-1 p.m., followed by a 1 p.m. luncheon. The meal is a buffet with Chicken Francaise, baked stuffed shells, ziti with marinara sauce, eggplant rollatini, tossed salad, coffee/tea. Door prizes and a holiday game are part of the celebration.

The cost is \$30 per person which includes tax & tip. Reservations and payment must be made in advance with Colchester AARP by Monday, Nov. 24. Checks are payable to "Colchester AARP #4019 Luncheon."

Any inquiries about Colchester AARP or the luncheon can be made by email to [dupwat@gmail.com](mailto:dupwat@gmail.com).



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RE 10-10-25



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**Turkey Basket Drive**  
Rotary's Turkey Basket drive is in full swing – and donations are sought to help the Rotary achieve its goal of providing for those in need. Please consider purchasing a turkey leg in any amount at the registers at both Noel's and Westchester markets. Those who wish to donate by check can send to "Honor Rotary," P.O. Box 775, Colchester, CT 06415.

**Holiday Fair & Open House**  
The Colchester Senior Center, located at 15 Louis Lane, will hold its annual Holiday Fair and Open House Saturday, Nov. 22, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Explore the new senior center while you shop a wide assortment of handcrafted items, Colchester Garden Club's handmade wreaths, the Gift Basket Raffle, Homemade Bake Sale and the Holiday Café with breakfast and lunch items on sale.  
All sales benefit the Colchester Senior Center's programs and services or the Colchester Garden Club.  
For more information, please call 860-537-3911.

**Donations Sought for Wreaths**  
This year's Wreaths Across America ceremony will take place at Westchester Cemetery Saturday, Dec. 13, starting at noon sharp. The 55 service members buried there will be honored with the placement of live, balsam veterans' wreaths.  
Donations are welcome in the form of purchasing a wreath for a soldier and laying wreaths at gravestones. Each individual \$17 sponsors a fresh balsam wreath that will be placed on a veteran's headstone on Dec. 13. To learn about event details, visit [www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/CTWCCC](http://www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/CTWCCC). You can also send your contribution to Wreaths, c/o Joanne Rioux, 219 Lakeview Dr., Colchester, CT 06415.



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# Air Line Trail Toastmasters

The Air Line Trail Toastmasters Club meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month, from 6:30-8 p.m., at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave., or via Zoom.

Discover the art of communication and leadership with the Toastmasters program.

For more information (including the Zoom link), email [contact-6976@toastmastersclubs.org](mailto:contact-6976@toastmastersclubs.org). The club can also be found at [airlinetrail.toastmastersclubs.org](http://airlinetrail.toastmastersclubs.org).

# 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.

For more information, or Zoom links, call 860-537-2809. Office hours are Wednesday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



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# Ripples of Reflection in Steve Caron’s Koi Pond

By Toriana Williams

Steven Caron has lived in Colchester since 1988, but his story began in the small town of Baltic, where he spent his childhood surrounded by hard work and quiet perseverance. Now 70 years old, he sits by his koi pond – the same one that inspired his new book – and remembers how an ordinary backyard project transformed into something extraordinary.

The idea for *Koi Pond Reflections* started not with a plan to write a book, Caron said, but simply from moments of stillness. He had what he referred to as a “problem backyard,” filled with gravel and small hills and decided to landscape the area by adding a waterfall and koi pond. What surprised him most was what happened next.

“I’d find myself sitting by the pond. I’d have a cocktail, some music, the fish ... and a memory would come to me.” A long-lost one at that, he said. “Once it would come to me, my brain would focus on it – they were connected to my heart – and then I would write about that.”

Those writings, first shared on Facebook among friends, became a healing ritual. He titled each post *Koi Pond Reflections*, never expecting it to grow into a published book. “There was no intention,” he said.

But family and friends began urging him to preserve the stories permanently. Then, Madi Balman from Skellydog, a marketing company located in Groton, approached Caron and offered to help produce it. For three years, Caron and his small team organized, edited and designed what would become *Koi Pond Reflections* – a collection of essays on memory, loss and wisdom.

Caron’s reflections span decades, covering everything from his days as a police lieutenant to his role as a caregiver, a father and a man trying to make sense of the quiet moments life offers. He described the writing process as cathartic, emotionally challenging and deeply fulfilling.

One reflection, he said, “took me 60 years to write.” That story, titled “You’re Not Smart Enough,” was born from an experience in eighth grade, when a teacher told him he wasn’t intelligent enough to succeed.

“My classes are for smart kids, and you’d never get in there,” Caron recalled the teacher saying. Decades later, Caron saw things differently. He realized that intelligence could be measured in more ways than academics. He learned how

to build strong teams, empower others and lead with empathy.

“Just embrace your own intelligence,” he said. “Be the best you can be using who you are.” Taking that advice to heart, Caron continued to share openly – and others soon connected with his honesty.

The people who read his reflections online often approached him unexpectedly, telling him how much his writing meant to them. One woman in Wisconsin reached out after reading about a time when Caron, then running a tree service, quoted a struggling young family \$400 for work.

“I felt like \$400 for me was different than for them,” he explained. “So after I got the tree work done, I said, forget the bill.” The mother of the family began crying, and Caron remembered his own struggles when money was tight. That story, like many in his book, demonstrates the quiet acts of compassion that have shaped his life.

Caron’s stories also confront loss. He wrote about caring for his mother through years of dementia, and about his daughter, Jennifer, who passed away at age 37 after battling cystic fibrosis and enduring a double lung transplant. Writing those reflections, he said, was “like my own therapy.”

Jennifer had faced her death with grace, arranging her own funeral, selecting her music and headstone and even writing her eulogy with a friend. Caron said she found joy in her final months, not despair. “She was amazing,” he said. “It was a relief for her... She was actually joyful that the struggle was coming to an end.”

Her memory remains central to his book. “We all die twice,” Caron said. “The first time when your soul leaves the body. The second time, when nobody says your name again.”

In *Koi Pond Reflections*, there is a section dedicated to Jennifer – his effort to ensure her name is never forgotten. He still visits her gravesite regularly to spend time with his daughter.

“I read a reflection to Jennifer at her gravesite,” he said. “Then I have a discussion with her. It’s healing for me.”

Caron’s professional life was as layered as his personal one. He spent over two decades in law enforcement, rising to the rank of police lieutenant. Later, he managed public safety at the University of Saint Joseph and worked in bio-terrorism and pandemic planning. Throughout



Steven Caron flips through the pages of his book, pausing at a photo of his late daughter, Jennifer - a moment of remembrance and reflection captured in his story.

those roles, he believed that giving people dignity – especially those with the least – was the truest form of leadership. “The people who have the least in life,” he said, “you give them a little dignity, show them a little respect and they’ll take the shirt off their back for you.”

His lessons often found their way into speeches. He used to tell nursing students about envy – how it grows from comparing your life to others’. “You can look at other people and say, I wish I had what they have,” he said, “but when you find out what’s behind the scenes, there’s no way you’d want to be in their shoes.”

Now retired, Caron continues to write. He said plans to republish *Koi Pond Reflections* through the online self-publisher IngramSpark to support independent bookstores, and has even considered an expanded edition. He’s also begun inviting readers to visit him by the pond

that started it all.

“I’m hoping everybody finds their koi pond,” he said. He added it doesn’t have to strictly be a koi pond, but rather “a place where they can center themselves and make those connections.”

When asked what he would tell his younger self if they could sit together beside that pond, Caron didn’t hesitate.

“The worst critic you’re ever going to face is when you’re looking in the mirror,” he shared. “Have confidence... don’t be too harsh... and live your life in a manner of joy.”

For Caron, peace is found in reflection – quiet water, golden fish and the echoes of memory. His koi pond is more than a backyard feature; it is a mirror to the past, a sanctuary for the heart and a reminder that even in loss, there is beauty in remembering.

## Abundant Life Church News & Notes

Abundant Life Church, a Christ-follower church that believes in salvation through Jesus Christ, is located at 85 Skinner Rd. Worship is in person at 10:30 a.m. Sunday.

**Adult Sunday/Bible School:** two classes, Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

**Bible Study for Women:** Every Wednesday at 10 a.m. at Sweet Aroma, Colchester.

**Healing Bible Study:** Every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. prayer meetings – Thursdays, 10 a.m.

## Dog Park Fundraising Photo Shoot

The Colchester Dog Park Committee is hosting a fundraising pet photo shoot with Santa. Children and families are welcome too. The event will be held at Colchester Fish & Game Club on Sunday, Nov. 30, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

The committee will sell digital images, 5x7 and 8x10 photo prints, Christmas cards and ornaments. All orders will be available for pickup at Park & Rec by Dec. 12. Cash, check and Ven-

mo are accepted.

**Men’s and Women’s Breakfast:** Meets once per month on Saturday mornings.

The church also has many other things to offer. Unless otherwise noted, all groups/studies are held at the church. Call the church office for more info on the groups.

For more information, call the church office at 860-537-3082 or visit AbundantL.com.

## Senior Center Upcoming Trips

Colchester Senior Center has announced a trip coming up. 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@colchesterct.gov](mailto:csc@colchesterct.gov).

**Majestic Cities of Central & Eastern Europe:** Oct. 4-17, 2026. Explore Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest and Krakow. This 14-day, 13-night trip includes airfare, hotels, and meals (12 breakfasts, one lunch, and six dinners). Cost is \$6,499 per person for double occupancy, if booked before Feb. 26, 2026. This is a small group tour (only 24 people in total on the tour) so space is limited. There will be a trip presentation at the Colchester Senior Center on Monday, Nov. 17; no registration required. For more information visit <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1346389>.

**Newport Playhouse – A Twisted Christmas Carol:** Tuesday, Dec. 2, 9:15 a.m. A *Twisted Christmas Carol* is a Texas spoof of Charles Dickens’ classic *A Christmas Carol*. It’s Christ-

mas Eve in a small west Texas town, and cantankerous barbecue joint owner Buford Johnson is visited in a dream by ex-business partner Hank Walker, who takes Buford on a journey like Scrooge’s. The cost is \$160 per person and includes a huge buffet dinner and cabaret style performances. Space is limited.

**Discover the Canadian Maritimes Coastal Wonders:** May 23-June 2, 2026. This 11-day, 10-night trip includes airfare, hotels and meals (10 breakfasts, two lunches and four dinners). Cost is \$4,299 per person for double occupancy, if booked before Nov. 23. For more information or to register for this trip, visit [gateway.gocollette.com/link/1346736](http://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1346736).

## 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.

## 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](mailto:cfc06415@gmail.com).

**Worship:** Sundays at 9 a.m. The service is also broadcast via Facebook Live. Worship videos are at [www.colchesterfederatedchurch.org](http://www.colchesterfederatedchurch.org) under the Worship tab. Updated information is on the church’s Facebook page.

**Advent Schedule:** Sunday, Nov. 30, First Week of Advent: Hope; Sunday, Dec. 7, Second Week of Advent: Peace; Sunday, Dec. 14, Third Week of Advent: Joy; Sunday, Dec.

21, Fourth Week of Advent: Love & Annual Christmas Pageant.

**Christmas Eve Services:** Tuesday, Dec. 24: 5 p.m., Family Service; 9 p.m., Lessons & Carols.

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

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

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# Colchester Teacher Wins National Milken Award

By Toriana Williams

Bacon Academy technology teacher David Mason received the surprise of his career this fall when he was recognized with the prestigious Milken Educator Award – an honor often referred to as the “Oscar of Teaching” by the Milken Family Foundation.

The award, which comes with an unrestricted \$25,000 cash prize, celebrates exceptional early-to-mid career educators who are improving education in innovative and meaningful ways nationwide.

The surprise assembly was organized under the guise of recognizing Bacon Academy’s strong performance in college and career readiness measures. Mason said he believed the school gathering was to acknowledge the state Department of Education ranking Bacon Academy as the number one public school in the state for college and career readiness for the 2022-23 school year.

“At the time, I was under the impression that the assembly was to celebrate all the wonderful things Bacon Academy has achieved,” Mason said. He added that the announcement took him completely off-guard.

Mason shared that when Milken Educator Awards Senior Vice President Jane Foley called his name, “I was in complete shock. It was surreal, and the support our students and staff were giving was something I will forever cherish.”

Mason is the only Connecticut educator to receive the Milken Award during the 2025-26 cycle and is the state’s 104th recipient since the program began recognizing Connecticut teachers in 1988.

The award highlights not only what Mason has achieved in his career so far, but the promise of what he will continue to accomplish with expanded opportunity and national recognition.

Mason emphasized the significance of joining a group of distinguished educators.

“I know that the winners of this award are top tier educators who make a profound impact on their school and students,” he said. “To be named into this group is an honor that I never expected and feel a deep sense of gratitude to my colleagues and students.”

### Transforming Manufacturing Education

Mason leads Bacon Academy’s manufacturing program – now one of the largest and most respected in the region. The program has grown into a four-year career pathway, with high enrollment and diverse opportunities for students to earn credentials while still in high school.

“Our manufacturing program at Bacon has been intentionally structured to provide students with a pathway into the field after high school if they wish,” Mason explained.

The program offers students the ability to earn college credits and 150 pre-apprenticeship hours through the state Department of Labor. Coursework spans a wide range of high-demand industrial skills including blueprint reading, welding, metal fabrication, machining, forging and CNC plasma cutting.

During his time at Bacon, Mason has helped secure grants that brought state-of-the-art industry equipment to the school, ensuring students gain real-world experience with technology they will see on the job.

“The exposure to this makes it real for them and the learning curve once they enter a job is smaller,” he said. “Students can leave Bacon with a solid knowledge base and skill set in a variety of processes that makes them well prepared to enter the work force.”

Mason also credits the school’s strong partnerships with workforce development organiza-

tions and major employers across eastern Connecticut.

“The other factor that has helped improve our program is our partnership with the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) and its Director of Operations, David Allard,” Mason said. “Allard has been instrumental in aiding the growth of our program and ensuring that our students have the connection and resources they need after high school to land jobs.”

These industry ties have made Bacon Academy a state model for manufacturing career pathways. Students regularly move into internships and full-time work with companies such as Electric Boat, Pratt & Whitney, Westminster Tool and more.

### Changing Lives Through Opportunity

For Mason, the most rewarding outcomes are his students’ successes - especially those who faced challenges before discovering a passion for skilled trades.

He recalled one student whose future once appeared undetermined. “His future was uncertain and he didn’t know what he wanted to do, but he wanted to work,” Mason shared.

With guidance and hands-on learning, that student ultimately entered the Manufacturing Pipeline Program and was hired by Electric Boat before graduation. “He is now three years into his career at EB and is currently a Quality Inspections Supervisor.”

Dozens more alumni have stepped directly into high-skill careers thanks to the foundation Mason’s program provided. He said these accomplishments fuel the work.

“I would say all those success stories are what motivate us to keep our programs going. The trades are highly valued again and seen as a viable option for students instead of the traditional college or military routes.”

### Deeply Meaningful Moment for Growing Family

Mason said the award came at a particularly exciting – and busy – time in his personal life, as the Mason family recently welcomed home another baby girl.

As for how the \$25,000 award will be used, the family hasn’t made any decisions yet – but it will almost certainly support their children in some way.

For now, though, Mason said he is still processing the honor – and the national recognition it brings for Bacon Academy and its students.

“Receiving the Milken Award certainly was a surprise, and I am beyond honored to be the recipient of it this year,” he said.

As one of only 30 educators nationwide selected this season, he will join his fellow recipients in Washington, D.C. next summer to collaborate with leaders in education and the national Milken Educator Network.

But even as his influence expands beyond Connecticut, Mason remains focused on the future careers being shaped inside his classroom – the ones holding welding torches, designing blueprints and preparing to build the state’s workforce. Because at the heart of this award is what he values most: A teacher changing lives – one student at a time.

## 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.

**Women’s Bible Study:** Tuesdays, 10-11:30 a.m., studying the book of Revelation.

**Community Bible Study:** Wednesdays at 7 p.m. All are invited.

## Color House Ornament Trail

This holiday season, The Color House Art & Pottery Studio is inviting the community to join in a brand-new tradition: the first annual Color House Ornament Trail.

Running Dec. 1-21, 100 handcrafted ceramic ornaments created by artist Tina Parsadanov and her team at The Color House will be hidden all around Colchester, from local parks to small businesses. Each ornament is unique, and free for whoever discovers it.

Participants are encouraged to visit partici-

pating Colchester businesses to collect stamps in their Ornament Trail Digital Passport. Even if an ornament has already been found at a location, visitors can still stop in to scan the business’s unique stamp.

For every five stamps collected, participants will earn an entry into grand prize drawings featuring handmade pottery and gift cards from town favorites. Visit [www.co-hoct.com/ornamenttrail](http://www.co-hoct.com/ornamenttrail) for more information and to register.

## CCT to Hold Auditions for Musical

Auditions are coming up for the Colchester Community Theatre’s production of *Sister Act*.

Based on the hit musical, which was in turn based on the hit 1992 Whoopi Goldberg movie, *Sister Act* is a celebration of music, friendship, and finding your voice.

Auditions will be held Friday, Nov. 14, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 15, from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Bacon Academy High School cafeteria, 611 Norwich Ave. Please prepare 32 bars of a song in the style of the show (pop, disco, soul, or gospel). An accompanist will be provided. No a cappella or backing tracks please. Sides from the show will be available at auditions. All auditionees should be prepared to move. Please

bring comfortable clothes and appropriate footwear (jazz shoes or sneakers) to learn a brief dance combination.

To sign up for auditions and receive additional information regarding the musical, please visit [www.colchestercommunitytheatre.com](http://www.colchestercommunitytheatre.com). CCT is seeking a diverse and talented cast ages 16+ including BIPOC roles to bring this story to life on stage. For more information, email [info@colchestercommunitytheatre.com](mailto:info@colchestercommunitytheatre.com).

Show dates for this production are Feb. 13, 14, and 15, 2026. Anyone who is unable to attend the auditions on the above dates must contact CCT before Nov. 13 to make other arrangements.

## Festival of Lights Fundraiser

The Bacon Academy Board of Trustees will launch a new annual holiday tradition, the Festival of Lights, on Thursday, Dec. 5, at 6:30 p.m., at Historic Bacon Academy, 84 Main St.

The event will showcase locally decorated tabletop holiday trees and wreaths donated by community members, all of which will be auctioned to support the ongoing restoration efforts at the historic school.

Tickets are \$25 and include a wine tasting from Priam Vineyards, cider or hot chocolate, and hors d’oeuvres. Each guest will have the opportunity to vote for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in both the tree and wreath categories. A silent auction will offer attendees the chance to bring home one of the artistically decorated pieces.

The evening will also feature festive perfor-

mances by the Bacon Academy Choir and Jazz Combo.

Event proceeds will support Phase 2 of the Trustees’ preservation plan, which includes installing an ADA-compliant ramped entrance and a first-floor restroom, helping ensure that Historic Bacon Academy remains accessible and vibrant for the entire community.

The decorated trees and wreaths will also be open to the public on Friday, Dec. 6, from 4-6 p.m., during Holiday Homecoming on the Colchester Town Green. The Trustees will host an open house and offer guided tours of the building for all who are interested.

Tickets may be purchased by emailing [info@baconacademytrustees.org](mailto:info@baconacademytrustees.org) or visiting [baconacademytrustees.org/festivaloflights.html](http://baconacademytrustees.org/festivaloflights.html).



**All That Jazz...** Jazzercise-Colchester instructors Jennifer Collingwood and Kelly Ouellette recently celebrated 10 years of teaching Jazzercise. They bring high energy and fun to the Jazzercise-Colchester studio, located at 188 Norwich Ave. This dance-based fitness program combines cardio, strength training and stretching for a full body workout appropriate for all fitness levels. To learn more about Jazzercise, go to [Jazzercise.com/studio/ct/colchester-ct](http://Jazzercise.com/studio/ct/colchester-ct).



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**Scouting for Food a Success...** On Nov. 8, scouts, leaders and family members of Troops 13, 72, and 109 and Pack 13 in Colchester collected thousands of food and personal care items and delivered them to the Colchester Town Hall where items were sorted and stored for distribution to those in need. *Photo by Alice Csere.*

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.westchestercongregationalchurch.org](http://www.westchestercongregationalchurch.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 Scouting America Troop 109. During the school year, Troop 109 meets on Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

**Outreach and Other Opportunities:** Knitting Group meets Thursdays at 10 a.m. Many

knitted, crocheted, and quilted items have been sent to Native American reservations, hospitals for babies, and other places to help those in need. 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 veterans.

For more information, visit [westchestercongregationalchurch.org](http://westchestercongregationalchurch.org), email [westcongregationalchurch@gmail.com](mailto:westcongregationalchurch@gmail.com) or call the church at 860-267-6711. Pastor Ron Lake can be reached at 860-428-3460.

Christmas Polka and Toy Drive

The St. Joseph's Polish Society of Colchester, located at 395 South Main St., has announced a pair of upcoming events. For more information, call 860-537-2550.

**Christmas Polka:** Sunday, Dec. 14. Hors d'oeuvres will be served from noon-1 p.m., with Christmas music by The Snowman Buddies. Dinner will be served from 1-2 p.m., with your choice of roasted pork or chicken. Dennis Polisky and The Maestro's Men will perform from

2-6 p.m. for your dancing pleasure. Tickets are \$25 per person.

**Toy Drive:** The club is hosting its fifth annual fundraiser Saturday, Dec. 13. Watch the football game in the hall on the big screen TV. Doors open at 2 p.m. and kick-off is at 3 p.m. There will be a buffet and raffle prizes. Please bring a new unwrapped toy or a \$15 donation per person to attend this event.

CLT Upcoming Events

The Colchester Land Trust (CLT) is hosting the following upcoming events, and all are invited. For more information on any of the events, to register, or for info on CLT in general, visit [colchesterlandtrust.org](http://colchesterlandtrust.org).

**Hike The Babcock Wildlife Management Area:** Dec. 14, 10 a.m.-noon. As a wildlife management area, Babcock provides 1,500 acres of forest, swamps and ponds. It contains miles of unmarked hiking trails. The hike is approximately four miles long, mostly on a logging road and open paths. Adults, children and leashed dogs are welcome.

Directions: From Route 16/Middletown Road in Colchester, turn on Bulkeley Hill Road, follow approximately two miles to Bulkeley Hill Preserve. The wood sign post and the entrance to the gravel parking lot will be on your right. For GPS use the mailbox across the street from the lot, 243 Bulkeley Hill Road, Colchester.

From Route 2 eastbound, take Exit 16 and turn right onto Route 149 South. Go approxi-

mately one mile and take left onto Cato Corner Road. Follow Cato Corner Road to intersection of Cato Corner and Route 16. Go straight across onto Standish Road, off Route 16. Bear right at first stop sign. Turn right onto Red School House Road, and park in the cul-de-sac at the end of the road.

Route 2 westbound travelers, take Exit 16, turn left onto Route 149 South and follow directions above. Email [foundersway10@gmail.com](mailto:foundersway10@gmail.com) for additional information. Visit [colchesterlandtrust.org](http://colchesterlandtrust.org) for updates on the hike.

The fee for this hike is free to members of the CLT, \$5 per non-member adult, and free for all children under 18. The hike will be rain or shine, and is not stroller-friendly; trails are not groomed and have rocks and roots and wet areas. Advanced registration strongly suggested. Wear appropriate footwear and clothing for the weather and terrain. Bug and tick protection strongly suggested. Dogs are welcome on leash, but bring waste bags to dispose of off property.

Project Graduation Fundraiser at Marlborough Big Y

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

Project Graduation has a goal of selling 200 bags.

The mission of Bacon Academy Project

Graduation is to enhance drug and alcohol-free awareness by providing safe and healthy graduation events for all graduating seniors of Bacon Academy. Direct donations are always welcome. Visit [baconacademyprojectgrad.org](http://baconacademyprojectgrad.org) for more information, or follow on Facebook at Bacon Academy Project Graduation.

Senior Center News & Notes

Colchester Senior Center, 15 Louis Lane, has announced the following. **Unless noted, registration is required for all programs.** For full program descriptions and to register, call 860-537-3911, email [csc@colchesterct.gov](mailto:csc@colchesterct.gov), or for a full list of activities, visit [www.colchesterct.gov.senior-center](http://www.colchesterct.gov.senior-center).

**Monday, Nov. 17:** 9 a.m., Making Memories, Commission on Aging meeting, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize; 10:30 a.m., Majestic Europe Trip Presentation; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 11:30 a.m., TVCCA lunch served early; 11 a.m.-noon, fitness orientation by appointment; 12:30 p.m., Mah Jongg, Bridge, Setback.

**Tuesday, Nov. 18:** 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10:30 a.m., Book Club; 10:30 a.m., Floral Tablescapes Class; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 12:30 p.m., In the Know; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 4-8 p.m., Wellness Nights.

**Wednesday, Nov. 19:** 9 a.m., Making Memo-

ries, Walking Group; 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Reflexology by Appointment; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Hand and Foot Card Game, Sit & Be Fit; 11 a.m., Friendsgiving Luncheon; 1 p.m., Sew-cial Time; 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming; 2:30 p.m., CSC Staff Meeting.

**Thursday, Nov. 20:** 9 a.m., Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling, Card-Making with Barbara, Bereavement Group; 11 a.m.; Yoga; noon, Benefits Counseling; 12:05 p.m., Chair Massage by appointment; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes; 1 p.m., Knit & Crochet; 4-8 p.m., Wellness Nights.

**Friday, Nov. 21:** 9 a.m., Social Services Hours, Open Art Studio, Seasonal Crafting; 10 a.m., Sit & Be Fit; 10:30 a.m., Choral Group; 11 a.m., Yoga; 11:30 a.m., AARP Driver Safety; no Bingo today; noon-4 p.m., Holiday Fair Set-Up.

**Saturday, Nov. 22:** Senior Center Holiday Fair & Open House, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

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The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Exotic berry
- 5 Feverish fits
- 10 Give off, as light
- 14 Springsteen title word
- 15 Audacity
- 16 Aria singer
- 17 Detergent additive
- 19 "The Traitors" host Cumming
- 20 NBA star Kirilenko
- 21 Medical career
- 23 Consideration
- 26 Voucher
- 29 Type of tea
- 30 Stop suckling
- 32 In the clear
- 34 Chatty bird
- 36 Psychic ability
- 37 Crooked cowboy
- 39 "Am \_\_\_\_ believe ...?"
- 40 Leans (on)
- 42 Animal trainers
- 44 Virtual people in a video game
- 45 Pizzazz
- 46 Functions
- 47 Some campaign workers
- 50 Cavalryman
- 52 Tabby intoxicant
- 56 Baptism, for one
- 57 You don't want to be in it
- 60 Computer brand
- 61 Bridal accessories
- 62 Part of CPU
- 63 Whodunit discovery
- 64 Circular path
- 65 Leave in the dust

DOWN

- 1 "Waterloo" singers

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- 2 Toe woe

3 Dry-as-dust

4 Ungrateful one

5 Like Norton software

6 Word for Wally Cleaver

7 Ashes holder

8 Tied, as a score

9 Fluid with antibodies

10 Lead voice in "Up"

11 Fighting groups

12 Dr. Pavlov

13 Zingy taste

18 "If only \_\_\_\_ listened ..."

22 Finder's payoff

24 Frosts a cake

25 Burns

26 "Strong Enough" singer

27 Fire engine gear

28 Involved in, as a crime

31 \_\_\_\_ Dame

33 Central California city

34 Seven Sundays after Easter

35 Turn's partner

38 Glasgow gal

41 Figurative writing

43 Lascivious

45 More madcap

48 Swedish auto

49 Flying Brits

50 Dull color

51 Puerto \_\_\_\_

53 Spanish boy

54 Blue flower

55 Tennis's Sampras

58 Pen point

59 Peyton's brother

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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★ New Coalition, cont. from page 1

"Food Fight" and a map showing "tiny pantry" locations where residents can find donated food.

Clouser says that while the situation with SNAP benefits may seem more optimistic than it did a couple weeks ago when the group first formed, everyone involved knows that the problem of hunger will not be going away any time soon. Both Royce and Namen mentioned that their organizations did not ask for proof of income or SNAP eligibility in part because they know that there is a wide range of reasons for

someone to feel worried about where they will get their next meal, especially during a time of rising grocery prices.

Royce and Namen, along with Clouser, said that while they hoped that the fear many people felt around where they might get their next meal would subside in the coming weeks, they knew hunger would not go away. Clouser said, moving into the future, she hoped the website could be a continuing resource for the community.



## 'Greenkeeper's Revenge' Returns to Blackledge

And in Hebron, where tradition runs as deep as the roots beneath those fairways, the story of Blackledge's Country Club continues – through every swing, every season and every passing generation.

Contact Karl (860-781-0293) with questions.











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# Kid Governor Bus Brings Civics to Life

By Toriana Williams

A blast of excitement rolled into Andover Elementary School last Thursday, Nov. 6, when the Kid Governor bus made a special stop, turning civics education into a real-world celebration.

The Kid Governor program – a statewide initiative promoting hands-on civic learning – has become a cornerstone of the fifth grade curriculum in Andover. Fifth grade teacher Lisa Hopkins explained that it is a program designed to introduce civics to elementary-age students, especially those in fifth grade, “and get them immersed in the whole process of becoming a governor.”

Created in 2015 by program director Brian Cofrancesco at the Democracy Center in Hartford, it mirrors the real responsibilities of running for governor, from campaigning to leadership development.

Hopkins has been leading the program locally since its early years, and she said it gives students both purpose and voice. They study voting history, examine leadership qualities and choose a community issue that matters to them. After researching, each student develops a three-point platform and a speech, then campaigns in front of peers.

The program is “very much like [what] an adult would go through to become governor of a state,” she said. “They have to do some research and they choose a community issue that is important to them, one that fifth graders could work on.”

Once students present their speeches, the fifth grade votes to select a school-wide nominee. That candidate then advances to the state-level

contest, where finalists appear on a statewide ballot and the winner becomes Connecticut’s Kid Governor for a one-year term.

### Small School, Big Participation

This year, enthusiasm was unmistakable, said first-year Andover fifth grade teacher Maureen Sullivan. “We had nine or ten” students decide to run for Kid Governor, she shared, which is just under half of the entire grade.

Sullivan said the program is designed for meaningful student engagement. “It’s fantastic. It’s geared toward fifth grade, so it’s very developmentally appropriate,” she said.

All students participate in lessons on government branches, elections and real responsibilities of leadership – whether they choose to run or not.

The process is rigorous, Sullivan shared.

“It requires organization and analytical thinking,” she said, adding with a laugh, “It requires public speaking, which, yikes, right?”

But, Sullivan said, every student rose to the challenge and made her proud.

Through campaign speeches and a formal ballot vote, students ultimately elected nominee Eli Clark, whose platform focused on school safety.

“School safety, which is really interesting,” Sullivan said. “The kids ... really connected with that.”

### Bringing Civics to the Front Door

Just one day before the statewide vote, the Kid Governor bus arrived at AES - one of only a handful of schools selected for the in-person rally.

Hopkins described the bus as unmistakable and full of energy. “It is decked out for Kid Gov-



Students at Andover Elementary School gathered for a special visit from the Kid Governor and program representatives, who arrived aboard the colorful Kid Governor Bus for an inspiring rally.

ernor. You know when you see the bus that it is a Kid Governor bus,” she said.

The event included the current Kid Governor, Keudy Martinez of Waterbury, several cabinet members and program staff who poured out of the bus with a loudspeaker in hand to kick off the rally. The cabinet members are composed of students that made it on to the ballot but were not elected for the governor position.

Sullivan called the visit “fabulous,” saying the school had prepared students in advance without revealing too much – heightening anticipation.

She said, “The bus pulls up and out comes ... the Kid Governor, his cabinet ... and the kids all knew who this was. It was fantastic. So they were just thrilled to see him.”

Students answered questions such as the three branches of government to earn prizes, while learning more about the candidates they’d be voting on the next day.

“It was clearly a big deal,” Sullivan said. “Here was the real Kid Governor on a real coach bus.”

Hopkins agreed the rally pumps up excitement for civic engagement.

“They are just getting the kids excited about civics, teaching them about the new people that

are on the ballot,” she said

### Advocating for the Future

Hopkins said she has seen firsthand how transformational the program can be. In 2023, AES student Scarlet Beaulieu even served a one-year term on the Kid Governor cabinet. Hopkins recalled that Scarlet “thanked me, saying that she was a better writer, a better speaker and it was all because of the Kid Governor program.”

Hopkins said she believes every district should participate.

“I am such an advocate for this program that literally, whenever I meet a fifth grade teacher, I’m like, do you do Kid Governor?” she said. “I absolutely think it makes a difference.”

Sullivan echoed that it empowers children to feel their voices matter.

“It really has to organically be from them,” she said. “It’s extremely student driven, and I think there’s a lot of power in that.”

As Andover’s fifth graders wait to learn which student will become Connecticut’s next Kid Governor, their teachers say they already see the most important victory: young people discovering their ability to lead.

“It really teaches them the way of the world,” Hopkins said.

### Need Holiday Assistance?

Does your family need help with gifts this holiday season? Do you know an Andover family who could use a little help?

Please reach out to either Roberta Dougherty, Town Clerk & Social Services/ Municipal Agent, at 860-742-7305 ext. 4218 or townclerk@andoverct.org, or Tess Grous, Community & Senior Center Director, at 860-742-7305 ext. 4510 or tgrous@andoverct.org.

### Townsend Cemetery Fall Clean-Up

Residents are asked to remove any personal items and decorations from the Andover Townsend Cemetery prior to Saturday, Nov. 15.

All items found to be in violation of cemetery rules and regulations or a hindrance to maintenance will be removed. These items include pots, shepherd hooks, glass objects, cans and any items in front of the stone. Please remove and take home any item you plan to use next season.

### Christmas Fair & Bake Sale

Andover Congregational Church, 359 Route 6, will be hold its annual Christmas Fair & Bake Sale on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. There will be vendors, raffle baskets, silent auction, baked goods, and Grandma’s Attic items.

If you are a vendor and are interested in renting a table, they are \$20 and include a six-foot table and two chairs. Call the church to reserve!

If you have any questions, leave a message at the church, at 860-742-7696.

### Meet Andover’s New Town Clerk

The Town of Andover invites residents to an Open House Monday, Nov. 24, from 10 a.m.-6 p.m., at the town clerk’s office in Town Hall, 17 School Rd.

All are invited to come meet Roberta Dougherty, Andover’s newly elected town clerk. Light refreshments will be served.

This is an opportunity for residents to learn more about the services provided by the town clerk’s office. Avery will answer questions, and sharing her plans for continuing excellent service to Andover’s residents.

### Bingo & Basket Raffle

Andover Congregational Church, located at 359 Route 6, will hold a Bingo & Basket Raffle Night Friday, Nov. 21, 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.

### Fire Department Turkey Drive

The Andover Fire Department is holding its 2025 Turkey Drive. Donations will be collected Saturday, Nov. 15, from 9 a.m.-noon, at the firehouse on School Road.

The department has a goal of 100 turkeys for the Andover Food Pantry. The department is in need of turkeys, stuffing and monetary donations. Checks will also be accepted, made payable to Andover Food Pantry.

### 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 a.m. Sundays in the sanctuary.

### 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, call Director Tess Grous at 860-798-6862. The center’s monthly newsletter is available on the Town of Andover website, [www.andoverconnecticut.org](http://www.andoverconnecticut.org). Copies are also available at the center, Town Hall, and Andover Public Library. To receive the newsletter by email each month, ask for Haley at the center, at 860-742-7305 x4510.

**Volunteer Opportunities Available:** The center is looking for Cards & Games helpers, kitchen servers, appointment confirmation phone calls, art teachers, cooking/baking instructors and other volunteers with special talents willing to share with the community. Evening hours are available. Please call or stop by the center if interested.

**Transportation:** Call Linda at 860-498-2326 to schedule transportation. Provide one week’s notice for all requests. All seniors, veterans, and disabled are welcome.

**Upcoming Special Events:** Transportation available for all programs. For full event descriptions, call the senior center or see the online newsletter. And for a listing of all weekly programs, see the online newsletter.

**Food Pantry:** Wednesday, 8 a.m., Nov. 26.  
**Foodshare Truck:** Wednesday, Nov. 19, 8:30 a.m. Transportation to Andover Congregational Church, both the pantry and the truck, is available. For more information on other available dates and times please contact Joan Soucy at 860-208-3226.

**Lunch:** Wednesday, Nov. 26, noon, cost is \$5.  
**Bingo/Lunch:** Wednesday, Nov. 19, noon. This will be a free Friendsgiving light lunch with prize bingo to follow.

**Chair Massage with Linda:** Wednesday, Nov. 19, 30-minute appointments available from 3:30–5:30 p.m. Cost is \$32. Sign up by calling Linda Derick at 860-655-4409.

**Coffee & Crafts:** Fridays, Nov. 14 and 28, 12:30 p.m. Sign-up is necessary.

**Field Trip: UConn Rock & Roll Museum Exhibition:** Friday, Nov. 21. This is free.

**Art Display:** Artist Kim Desrosiers is our highlighted Artist of the Month. Stop by and see her work. Call the center if you would like to display your work in the upcoming months.

**Chair Massage with Linda:** Wednesday, Nov. 19; 30-minute appointments are available from 3:30–5:30 p.m., cost is \$32, call Linda Derick to sign up at 860-655-4409.

**PAL Program: People Across Lifetimes:** This intergenerational pen pal program resumed Nov. 10. Call Grous for more details.

**Center Closed for Thanksgiving:** Thursday, Nov. 27.



# 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](mailto: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 Bulletin in the Badlands...* Deb Bourbeau of Marlborough is pictured at the Badlands National Park in South Dakota. She and friend Sally Robinson of Savannah, Ga., spent six days touring the Badlands, Black Hills, Mount Rushmore, the Crazy Horse Memorial and other scenic places in southwest South Dakota.



*What's Up, Chief?... Linda Nowotynski and Barbara Jarzabek were on vacation in Narragansett, R.I., and are shown here with a statue of Chief Cananquet (leader of the Narragansett in 1675) and a copy of the Rivereast!!*



*Enjoying the Island...* Barbara Hahn of East Hampton is shown here upon her arrival on Mackinac Island in Michigan. Mackinac Island is located on Lake Huron. Motorized vehicles (except for emergency) are not allowed on the island. In fact, Barbara added, if you call a taxi, it's horse-drawn!



*Hello from London!...* Tom and Janice Mori are shown on their recent trip to London prior to their transatlantic cruise. They are on the 37th floor of the Walkie Talkie building for dinner at Sky Garden with their son and future daughter-in-law.

## Where in the World?

### Going on a trip? Bring along the *Bulletin*!

Submit your travel photo holding the *Rivereast News Bulletin*, and you will win a \$25 Gift Card to Campagna Restaurant if your photo is one the four entries selected!

To enter, email your photo and address to: [bulletin@glcitizen.com](mailto:bulletin@glcitizen.com)

### \$25 GIFT CARD

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# Future Smiles Never Looked Brighter

By Margaret O’Callaghan

From the painted artwork on their windows to their friendly and compassionate staff Smiles for the Future in Glastonbury knows how to create a welcoming environment for young patients.

One of the largest pediatric dental practices in the state, Smiles for the Future has been providing inviting, quality care for its young patients for more than 50 years.

The team at Smiles – which includes six doctors, a half dozen dental assistants, eight hygienists and more than a dozen other patient experience specialists, orthodontic assistants and other staff – is willing to nerd out, talk sports, and listen to a typical school day while they provide each of their patients the best care possible.

Smiles for the Future – located at 379 Naubuc Ave. in Glastonbury – is a space where inclusivity is encouraged and thrives. Each doctor has come from a different path, allowing all sorts of perspectives to be utilized at the office.

Dr. Gary Schulman has a master’s degree in architecture, practiced historic preservation in Wilton prior to becoming a pediatric dentist and is an avid swimmer and cross-country skier. Dr. Lorin Sher likes to kayak, cook and practice yoga while Dr. Wenjie Jessica Yu is fluent in Mandarin.

Dr. Laura Borodic is into drawing, ballet and loves to read a good mystery while Smiles for the Future’s newest pediatric dentist – Dr. Caroline Wilson – holds a degree in chemical engineering, is a proud UConn Husky and Nittany Lion, is fluent in Spanish and has a black belt in the Korean martial art of Taekwondo.

While it’s important that all their young patients feel welcome when they come into Smiles for the Future, the team has made their office especially welcoming for children with special

needs and their parents. Schulman grew up with a brother who had special needs and has been inspired to create a safe environment for all who visit.

Smiles for the Future’s core values are simple: impeccable care and comfort, connections to community (especially education) and “providing care in concert” – meaning they strive to collaborate with those who could use the care for good.

Smiles for the Future’s mission goes far beyond simple dental care. Wilson recalled a saying her instructor gave while she was still a student. “We’re treating the whole patient,” the instructor explained. It’s a lesson that has stuck with her ever since.

Wilson always knew she was interested in the medical field, though it had taken her a while to decide to pursue a career in dentistry. She had always heard great praise about Smiles for the Future and is very glad to have joined the team.

Schulman had a similar experience. He was originally studying architecture but knew he wanted to take care of people and have an impact on the lives of children with special needs. He also is very involved in the Hartford Dental Society and continues to educate students at UConn.

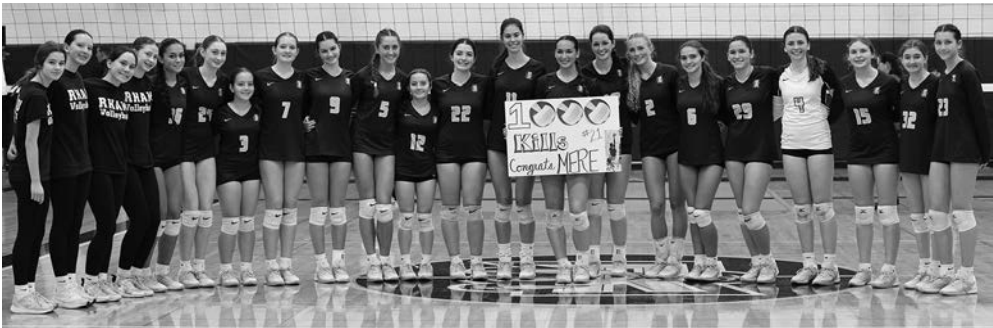
In addition to in person dental services Smiles for the Future also provides parents on their website with useful information on a wide range of topics including teething, a child’s first visit to the dentist and fluoride.

Smiles for the Future also now provides adult dentistry with the addition of Yu to the team. Smiles also offers orthodontic care.

For more information on Smiles for the Future, call 860-633-5246 or visit their website at smilesforthefuture.com.



The team at Smiles for the Future works hard to create a welcoming environment for all patients. Pictured from left are Carolyn Wilson, DMD, Gary S. Schulman, DMD, Magdalena Tauber, DMD, Lorin Sher, DMD Orthodontist and Laura Borodic, DMD. Not pictured is Wenjie Jessica Yu, DMD.



Meredith Weir eclipsed 1,000 career kills in the state tournament. Weir, surrounded by teammates and coaches, also broke the program-record for most career aces earlier this fall.

## Standout Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

Here are the *Rivereast* Standout Athletes of the Week for the week of Nov. 3 – 11:

**Meredith Weir – RHAM High School (Volleyball):** Weir, a senior, eclipsed 1,000 career kills as the Raptors beat Weston in the Class M state quarterfinals. Weir has had a memorable final season at RHAM, also breaking the program record in career aces when she tallied her 213th ace in October. The all-conference outside hitter leads RHAM in kills and aces this season and is second on the team in digs.

**Chelsea Ryan – East Hampton High School (Volleyball):** Ryan, a senior captain, put up monstrous numbers through the first three rounds of the Class S state tournament to lead the Bellringers to three straight victories. Ryan totaled 89 assists, 58 digs, 12 kills, and five aces in the three matches as East Hampton eliminated Oxford, Holy Cross, and Cromwell to reach the state semifinals. In the quarterfinals win over Cromwell, Ryan posted 32 assists and 32 digs as the Bellringers ousted their conference

foes at EHHS on Nov. 7.

**Allison Field – Bacon Academy (Volleyball):** Field, a sophomore, surpassed 500 digs this season as she served as a libero for a Bacon Academy squad that advanced to the second round of the Class M state tournament. Field powered a defense that helped the No. 22 seed Bobcats upset the No. 11 Wildcats of Seymour High School in five sets to open the state tourney on Nov. 4.

**Brody Quinn – Portland High School (Soccer):** Quinn, a senior captain, was named All-Shoreline Conference (SLC) second team after helping the Highlanders qualified for the state tournament. Quinn was joined on the all-conference team by junior teammate Brady Daggett, who earned honorable mention status. It was the second season in row that Quinn was selected All-SLC.

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

### Tri-County American Legion Baseball

Registration is open for those interested in being considered for one of the Tri-County American Legion baseball program’s 2026 summer teams. Deadline to register is Nov. 15.

Serious players who will be between the ages of 12-19 in 2026 – and who have a parent residing in Andover, Colchester, East Had-dam, East Hampton, Hebron, Lebanon and Marlborough – are eligible. This includes Little League players born before Sept. 1, 2014,

who could join one of the teams after their 12U season is complete.

Depending on interest, Tri-County can again form teams at all four levels of American Legion (19U, 17U, 15U and 13U), as well as teams to compete in Babe Ruth (13U-16U).

Interested players should register at [www.tcleague.com](http://www.tcleague.com) or contact GM Len Lampugnale at [Lampugnale@comcast.net](mailto:Lampugnale@comcast.net) or at 860-295-0437 for more information.

### AARP Tax-Aide Seeks Volunteers

For many years, the Senior Centers in Colchester, Hebron, Marlborough and East Hampton have hosted the AARP Tax-Aide Program, which provides free income tax preparation services for residents of these towns and surrounding communities.

Tax-Aide is the nation’s largest free volunteer tax program, offered in conjunction with the IRS. The Tax-Aide program is looking for compassionate and friendly people to join its volunteer team. You don’t need to be an

accountant or tax professional; volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds. Training and support are provided.

To apply to volunteer, go to [aarpfoundation.org/taxaidevolunteer](http://aarpfoundation.org/taxaidevolunteer) or call 1-888-AARP-NOW (888-227-7669).

If you’d like additional information before signing up, contact your local senior center and they will connect you with a local Tax-Aide volunteer.

### A Day of Fun, Family and Service

On Saturday, Nov. 22, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., the Lions clubs of District 23 (Eastern Connecticut) will host the Lions Service Carnival at Cromwell Town Hall & Library Complex Gymnasium, 41 West St., Cromwell.

The Eastern Connecticut District governor, Jim Tripp of Portland, welcomes all district residents; the district serves Middlesex, New London, Tolland, and Windham counties

The carnival invites families to spend National Family Volunteer Day engaging in various hands-on activities. At each of the 15 exhibitor stations, visitors can experience what it means to serve – from promoting vision health and en-

vironmental care to supporting mental wellness and veterans in need. Pick up a “service passport” Children can visit stations for “passport stamps” and earn a “Service Hero” cape for a selfie backdrop and for keeps.

The event will feature RJ and the On the Spot Jug Band (audience sing-along and percussion), balloon animals, face-painting, and a “Servant Hero” selfie backdrop. There will be free lunch for up to 75 participants between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

For updates, message the Lions through the District 23C Lions Facebook page.

### Top Sports Moments of 2025 Nominations

We are once again approaching “The Most Wonderful Time of the Year” and will soon be reflecting on the best sports moments from the area for 2025.

Nominations are being accepted through Friday, Dec. 19 for any team or individual athletic accomplishment from any level (youth, high school, or adult). The performance did not have to take place locally, but

must include a local team, player, or resident that accomplished the feat.

Submissions can be sent to [joshhowardsports@gmail.com](mailto:joshhowardsports@gmail.com) for consideration. Please include as many details (names, dates, statistics, scores, etc.) as possible.

The Top 25 Moments will be revealed in the Jan. 2, 2026 edition of the *Rivereast News Bulletin*.

## Volunteer.The Benefits Are Extraordinary!

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- **East Hartford facility** – Cats: clean & feed; socialization; medical & placement teams



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Obituaries

Colchester

Thomas Skylarr Concorde

Thomas Skylarr Concorde, 73, died unexpectedly Sunday, Nov. 2, at his home in Nelson, N.H., with his wife Carol Jane Concorde at his side. He died peacefully in his sleep due to heart complications. He was born July 7, 1952, in New Britain, the son of Stanley and Violet Chojnowski also of New Britain. Thomas attended New Britain High School, where he graduated in June 1970. He then attended the CT School of Broadcasting in Farmington.

Tom’s lifelong passion was writing original music lyrics and playing lead guitar. He was especially good at creating original rock music. In the early 1970s, Tom had the privilege of being asked to go on tour with the #1 rock band at the time: Pink Floyd. This tour was Pink Floyd’s *Dark Side of the Moon*. Along with Dennis Marturano and Peter Sheridan, Tom was responsible for Pink Floyd’s special sound effects, lighting and pyrotechnics, which are world-renowned.

Tom married his longtime girlfriend, Elizabeth Burrows of Colchester. They had a daughter on April 5, 1975, and named her Valerie. Tom truly loved being a father. Tom moved his young family to Newington, where he established his first recording studio in the basement of his large home. This enabled Tom, a very accomplished lead guitar player, to not only have his own band, but to write original music and record it. Tom had bi-weekly jam sessions in his basement/studio where he recorded some of his best original songs. The marriage ended when his daughter was approximately 16 years old; however, it was very important to Tom to keep a very close relationship with his daughter, his son-in-law and his two grandchildren, which he did until the day he passed away.

Tom married Carol Burt on May 22, 1999, and they were married for 26 years. Tom and Carol lived in Colchester, Palm Coast, Fla., and Nelson, N.H. They enjoyed their retirement together. Tom and Carol would garden, go to the beach, cook and take in the beauty of nature. Tom also enjoyed spending time with his grandsons. He talked with them about God, lifelong skills, family, music and preparing them for their bright futures.

While living in Newington, Tom held the position of department manager for a large retail store in Newington called Lechmere. Thereafter, he worked as an account executive for an audio equipment sales company, where he advised clients worldwide on what equipment was best for their purposes and sold it to them. This was followed by Tom establishing his own company called Thunder Lightning, where he, once again, sold audio equipment to many large bands on a worldwide basis.

In addition to his wife Carol (Burt) Concorde, Tom is survived by his daughter, Valerie Michelle Petocchi and her husband Raymond



Petocchi of East Hampton. Tom also is survived by his two grandsons, Ryan Petocchi and Devin Petocchi of East Hampton. Lastly, he is survived by numerous nieces and nephews, offspring of his predeceased sister, Violet Balicheski of Palm City Fla.

Tom is forever loved and his life song lives in eternity with Our Heavenly Father; Jesus! John 3:16.

Services are under the care of Cheshire Family Funeral Home, Chapel, and Crematories. For online condolences, visit [www.cheshirefamilyfh.com](http://www.cheshirefamilyfh.com).

Portland

Phyllis K. Jakubiec, 96, formerly of Portland and Middletown and wife of the late Dr. Frank J. Jakubiec Jr., passed away peacefully Tuesday, Nov. 4.

She was born in Enfield, daughter of the late Albert and Josephine (Szarowicz) Polek. Prior to her retirement, Phyllis was a receptionist while working for Covenant Village in Cromwell.

Phyllis is survived by her son Dr. Robert Jakubiec and his wife Dorothy of Middletown; daughter Catherine Archer and her husband Gregg of Portland; grandchildren Chris, Julie, Michael, Cheryl and Tommy; great-grandchildren Rylenn, William, Owen, Emily, Collins and Crawford; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her husband Frank and son Thomas Jakubiec, six brothers and five sisters.

Phyllis dearly loved her family and especially her six great-grandchildren who brought so much joy and love to her heart. She loved her birds and was an avid bridge player into her 90s. Phyllis loved gardening, the beach and sunsets and was a devoted UConn girls’ basketball fan. She was a gifted painter, as many now covet a precious treasure. Phyllis thoroughly enjoyed their getaway palace in Vermont spending hours just driving around the state while Frank took pictures.

Phyllis had another family. At Water’s Edge for Health and Rehabilitation everybody knew Phyllis, and she was dubbed “Best Dressed.” Before going to daily bingo she had to fix her hair and put on her makeup. She gave many staff members a hard time, and the compassion and love the staff and residents all showed Phyllis and her family on the day of her passing was truly heartwarming. The family extends its most sincere appreciation to Water’s Edge.

The funeral liturgy was held Saturday, Nov. 8, at St. Colman Church, Middlefield, with the burial following at Calvary Cemetery, Middletown. Family and friends gathered prior to the service at the Biega Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Mary Church, 45 Freestone Avenue, Portland, CT 06480.

To share memories or express condolences online, please visit [www.biegafuneralhome.com](http://www.biegafuneralhome.com).



TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
NOTICE OF ACTION

At the regular meeting on Wednesday, November 5, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall and via ZOOM, the East Hampton Planning and Zoning Commission took the following actions:  
PZC-25-012: Julia Henry, 27 Sillimanville Road, Special Permit for Accessory Dwelling Unit in Basement, Map 36/ Block 96/ Lot 1B. – Approved  
PZC-25-005: Lake Overlook Estates, Phase II Open Space Re-Subdivision and Special Permit. Map 03A/ Block 44/ Lot 23 – Approved with Conditions  
Kevin Kuhr, Chairman

1TB 11/14

TOWN OF COLCHESTER  
AQUIFER PROTECTION AGENCY  
LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Colchester Aquifer Protection Agency will hold a Public Hearing on November 19, 2025, beginning at 6:30 PM in the Colchester Town Hall Meeting Room at 127 Norwich Ave, Colchester, CT to revise the Town of Colchester Aquifer Protection Area Regulations.  
At this hearing, interested persons may be heard and written communications received. A copy of the draft revised regulations is located in the Land Use Department and Town Clerk’s Office, Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue, and may be inspected during regular business hours (8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday). The draft revised regulations are also available on the Colchester Aquifer Protection Agency webpage at <https://www.colchesterct.gov/planning-zoning-department/aquifer-protection-agency>.  
Joe Mathieu, Chairman

2TB 10/31, 11/14

TOWN OF PORTLAND  
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Portland Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, November 20th, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Buck Foreman Room (2nd Floor), 265 Main Street, Portland, CT.  
PZC Application #25-07: 862 Portland Cobalt Road. Request for Special Permit for a medical spa. Application of Jessica Blacato and property of Realejo Properties LLC. Map 31 Lot 23. Zone B-2.  
Dated at Portland, CT this 5th day of November 2025  
Robert Ellsworth, Chairman  
Planning & Zoning Commission

2TB 11/7, 11/14

LEGAL NOTICE  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
HEBRON, CONNECTICUT

The Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing at a meeting scheduled for Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 7:00 P.M., to be held virtually through the GoToMeeting Platform, on the following:  
I. **Petition 2025-23:** Petition of Stephen Kowalski, owner, for Special Permit to construct an accessory structure exceeding 900 square feet (2,592 sq. ft.) on a lot less than 5 acres (4.34 acres) in size in accordance with Section 2.E.8 of the Hebron Zoning Regulations at 389 Martin Road, Residence-1 District. Petition 2025-23 Kowalski Barn  
II. **Petition 2025-24:** Petition of Proud Light LLC for Special Permit for the sale of open alcoholic beverages at a miniature golf course in accordance with Section 5.O.1 at 290 Church Street, Neighborhood Convenience District. Petition 2025-24 Alcohol at Mini Golf  
**Planning and Zoning Commission**  
Nov 19, 2025, 7:00–10:00 PM (America/New\_York)  
**Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.**  
<https://meet.goto.com/866794845>  
**You can also dial in using your phone.**  
Access Code: 866-794-845  
United States: +1 (872) 240-3412  
**Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:**  
<https://meet.goto.com/install>  
Dated at Hebron, Connecticut, this 4th day of November 2025.  
Frank Zitkus, Chair

2TB 11/7, 11/14

TOWN OF PORTLAND  
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Portland Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, November 20, 2025 at a meeting to start at 6:00 p.m. in the Buck Foreman Room (2nd Floor), 265 Main Street, Portland, CT.  
**Application #25-02:** 381 Gospel Lane. Request for a variance from Zoning Regulation Table 3.17.C for the minimum distance from the street for a pool with a setback of 50 feet where 75 feet is required. Application and property of Alicia and Parker Strong. Assessor’s Map 68, Lot 10-18. Zone R-25.  
At this hearing interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications will be received. A copy of this application is available for public review in the Portland Land Use Department.  
Dated at Portland, CT this 5th day of November 2025.  
Joan Giesemann, Chair

2TB 11/7, 11/14

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CT11-12-23

MIDDLE HADDAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
THURSDAY, November 20, 2025  
6:30 P.M. AT TOWN HALL  
LEGAL NOTICE

Public hearing will be held to consider the following:  
Continued from Oct. 23, 2025: Application 615 for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Andrew and Heather Groeper of 8 Bates Drive, Middle Haddam, to install fencing from their house to the property line and then west to a stream. The fence would include a section of stockade fencing and another section of post and rail fencing with black wire.  
The foregoing application is available for public review at the East Hampton Town Hall. At this hearing interested persons may be heard and written communications will be received. 1TB 11/14

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE  
TOWN OF ANDOVER  
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2025  
7:00PM TO 9:00PM  
TOWN HALL COMMUNITY ROOM  
17 SCHOOL DRIVE

#25-14 ZBA APPLICATION OF STEVEN ROCKEFELLER SEEKING A VARIANCE  
Applicant is seeking relief from Sections 11.2 and 4.1.4 of the Andover Zoning regulations to merge lots within the Andover Lake District at 45 Lakeside Drive and 47 Lakeside Drive, demolish an existing residence on 45 Lakeside Drive, construct an addition to 47 Lakeside Drive and construct a workshop.  
The overall proposal intends to decrease rear yard and side yard non-conformities that currently exist. It will also require front yard and side yard variances for a proposed workshop. Interested parties may ask questions and/or offer comment, either verbally or in writing.  
Please contact the Building and Land Use Office a minimum of 24 hours prior to the hearing date @860.742.7305, X - 4220.  
William Desrosiers  
Zoning Board of Appeals - Chairperson 2TB 11/7, 11/14

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PCA NEEDED FOR: wheelchair bound female in East Hampton. Mon 7:30am-1:30pm, Thurs 8am-2pm, Fri 7:30 am- 10:30am, & Sun 8am-12pm & back-up coverage possible. \$22/hr. Please call 860-267-7012.

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RE10-24-25

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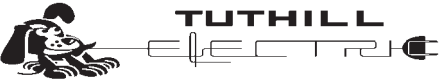
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