

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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‘Miss Constitution State’ Advocates Mental Health



Christa Steiner of Hebron holds the title of Miss Constitution State 2026, and will compete for Miss Connecticut in June. The 27-year-old is a staunch advocate for mental health, LGBTQ+ visibility and accessibility to community resources.

By Toriana Williams

When Christa Steiner of Hebron answered the phone on a quiet weekday afternoon, her warmth came through immediately. “Hi, I’m well! How are you?” she responded cheerfully. Moments later, she added, “I have as much time as you need.” It set the tone for a conversation with a woman who is as open, grounded and driven as her crown suggests.

Steiner, 27, holds the title of Miss Constitution State 2026. Living in Hebron and working as a music teacher at the Community Music School in Essex, Steiner has become a vibrant advocate for mental health recovery, LGBTQ+ visibility and accessibility to community resources – all while preparing to compete for Miss Connecticut this June at the Rockwell Theater in Bristol.

Her path to her current title was unconventional. “It’s a little bit different than how I’ve competed in pageants in the past,” she explained.

The Miss Connecticut organization now permits participants to be granted titles directly, so Steiner contacted the board to express her interest. Rather than going through the typical competition, she was allowed to select her own title. She felt it was a great opportunity, and because the title appears on the license plate, “That’s the one I wanted,” she said.

But the reasoning behind her return to pageantry goes far deeper than aesthetics or tradition. She explained that she had participated in pageants when she was younger, but this year would be her last due to the Miss America organization’s age limits. “I really wanted to do something that highlighted my story and could prove inspirational to other people,” she said.

That story includes overcoming a life-altering diagnosis. “I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder two and a half years ago, and since those two and a half years, I’ve recovered and gotten to do some amazing things,” Steiner shared. “I really want to show people with mental health conditions they can do anything.”

Her advocacy work isn’t abstract – it’s active, intentional and grounded in service. Her Community Service Initiative, titled *Out of the Dark*, focuses on making mental health resources accessible and understandable, especially for young people.

“A lot of the journey for me in my own recovery was navigating resources, navigating information,” she explained. Through her initiative, she visits schools in partnership with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), giving presentations that explain what mental health is, describe various conditions and show what they can look like in real life. Steiner also collaborates with organizations including PRISM and the MJK Foundation, which provide therapy, crisis support and recovery navigation to individuals with mental health conditions and are a part of the LGBTQ+ community.

One moment in particular has stayed with her.

“I was doing a presentation at a school,” Steiner said, “and this young girl raised her hand ... asking, ‘What if you think you have a mental health condition, but you’re too scared to tell anybody?’”

Steiner paused during the interview, her voice softening.

“I felt really humbled that I could be there in that moment to tell her that it’s okay, and that I am living proof that it does get better,” Steiner said.

Steiner’s emotional transparency often surprises people – a reminder of the stereotypes

See ‘Miss Constitution State’, page 3

Council Opts Against Opposing Housing Bill

By Anne Lilburn

In a tight 3-3 vote, the East Hampton Town Council late last week opted not to call on Gov. Ned Lamont to veto the state’s recently passed affordable housing bill, HB8002.

The council met for a special meeting last Friday, Nov. 21, to discuss a proposed resolution opposing the bill. The meeting happened on short notice, and public comment was not allowed.

Council member Ted Hintz, a Republican, took issue with the lack of public comment. “I do find it very troubling,” he said, noting the engagement of community members on the issue. Council chair Dean Markham, a Democrat, responded that special meetings of the council traditionally had been considered “business of the council,” with no public comments allowed.

Discussion was at times heated among council members, with Hintz and Democratic council member Joelyn Leon sparring on both specifics and generalities of the new law.

Council member Jack Solomon, a Democrat, expressed discomfort with the bill, citing concerns with loss of local control, including his concerns about the regional council of governments (COG) potentially setting goals for individual towns, and also about housing development potentially bypassing local planning and zoning commissions. At the same time, he acknowledged that affordable housing was a regional challenge, and said that East Hampton was already trying to address it.

“The East Hampton Housing Authority has over 70 units of affordable housing and it’s well-run,” he said, adding that he believed that ten of those units were deed restricted affordable

housing, meaning that they were governed by tenant income guidelines and maximum rent restrictions.

Solomon said that there was a current waiting list that was about 80 housing units long, with 34 of those on the list current East Hampton residents, and noted that he hoped that the town would be able to add additional units.

With that said, Solomon said he was “not in favor of the bill,” but would not vote for the resolution against it because he did not feel it would accomplish anything.

Hintz ran through a long list of concerns he had with the bill, from infrastructure concerns — including wastewater and sewers, which he worried could cost residents money — to the lack of parking spot requirements for residents.

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WINTER MUSIC SERIES

NOV

FRIDAY 21ST
SATURDAY 22ND
SATURDAY 29TH

Rickie Louise Miller
Bonnie Jacobson Trio
Karaoke Night

DEC

FRIDAY 5TH
SATURDAY 6TH
FRIDAY 12TH
SATURDAY 13TH
FRIDAY 19TH
SATURDAY 20TH
FRIDAY 26TH
SATURDAY 27TH

Kick'n' Back
Bruce John Genre Jam
Jeff Wieselberg
Closed for private event
Davey Blues
J.C. & Tim
Carrie Faye
Paradis & Dionne

JAN

FRIDAY 2ND
SATURDAY 3RD
FRIDAY 9TH
SATURDAY 10TH
FRIDAY 16TH
SATURDAY 17TH
FRIDAY 23RD
SATURDAY 24TH
FRIDAY 30TH
SATURDAY 31ST

Chris Marolda
Tongue & Groove
Dillon & Cooper
BeBobalouBob
Justin Vendette
Brandt Taylor
Chris John
Tino & Malone
Driving Route 9
Roy & Lou

FEB

FRIDAY 6TH
SATURDAY 7TH
FRIDAY 13TH
SATURDAY 14TH
FRIDAY 20TH
SATURDAY 21ST
FRIDAY 27TH
SATURDAY 28TH

Borderline Genius
The Critics
Miller & Cooper
Valentine's Day with Jeff Wieselberg
Bob Aresti
Armentano Duo
Davey Blues
Justin Vendette

MAR

SATURDAY 7TH
FRIDAY 13TH
SATURDAY 14TH
TUESDAY 17TH

Brandt Taylor
Bruce John Genre Jam
Mass-Conn-Fusion Trio
St. Patrick's Day Celebration with Chris John from 4pm to 8pm
Yes We're Twins
The Locomotives

Tito's
HANDMADE VODKA

Tito's Espresso Martini

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving – and that you’ve got some wonderful leftovers you’re going to spend the weekend picking away at.

With Turkey Day in the books, it’s now Christmas season. Oh, I know some people have been decking the halls for a while now – there’s a house I pass on my drive into work that’s had its Christmas decorations out since Nov. 2 – but I always wait until after Thanksgiving to turn my attention to the holly and the ivy.

If you were also waiting until Thanksgiving had passed to get in the yuletide mood, and are now looking for Christmasy things to do, you might want to zip down to Montville this weekend.

Especially if you like dinosaurs.

The delightfully-named Dino-Lights holiday festival will come to The Dinosaur Place in Montville on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, starting tomorrow, Nov. 29, and running through Jan. 4, from 4-8 p.m. each night.

The celebration features: an illuminated trail where guests can walk alongside lights, music & dinosaurs; a giant Lighted T-Rex Tower – a 2.5-story Playscape designed for children ages 2-12 to climb and explore (Spinosaurus Spiral, a climb-and-slide playscape, will also be open); dozens of festive photo opportunities; and more. Also, Santa will be present, and there will be hot chocolate to keep spirits warm.

Admission is \$25/person. Check out the map of the event and reserve your tickets at NaturesArtVillage.com/dino-lights. The Dinosaur Place is located at 1650 Hartford-New London Tpke., on Route 85 in Montville.

On a related note – as it’s a commonly-held belief that dinosaurs evolved into birds, after all – the Mattabesock Audubon Society (MAS) will hold its 51st annual Salmon River Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, Dec. 14. All

Rivereast amateur bird-watchers are welcome.

This is part of National Audubon Society’s Christmas Bird Count, which is the longest-running community science bird project in the country. The data obtained provides information about bird populations over time and ultimately helps to inform environmental policies on a national and international level.

MAS’s 11 captains will lead their teams into the field to count all individual birds and bird species they see. The society said it is always looking for new people to join us in this annual tradition. The team captains enjoy sharing their wisdom with birders of all experience levels. There will also be binoculars that can be borrowed.

Even if you can’t go out into the field you can still help. Folks whose homes lie within the 15-mile count circle centered around the Comstock Covered Bridge in East Hampton are asked to keep track of the backyard birds throughout the day and night of Dec. 14, so that their data can be included in the society’s final tally numbers.

If you’re interested, visit www.audubon-mas.org or send an email to co-compilers@rsdell.comcast.net or Sharon Dellinger at rsdell@comcast.net or Doreen Jezek at dajezeke@gmail.com.

Lastly, the CT Hurricanes Drum and Bugle Corps will host an Open House Sunday, Nov. 30, from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., at Amity High School, 25 Newton Rd., Woodbridge.

The Corps is open to all ages and openings are in all sections including drum major, brass, drum line, front ensemble, and color guard. Woodwind players are encouraged to join and will be taught to play a brass instrument. Previous drum corps, high school or college marching band experience is recommended but not required.

Members are from throughout Connecticut – including local schools, colleges, and

Editor’s Desk continued on page 5



Lions Induct Officers... The Marlborough Lions Club recently elected members for the upcoming year. Attending the Officer Induction Ceremony were, from left, Megan Lloyd (Past President), Tom Reiser (Treasurer), new Lion Member Doug Zybrands, Jennifer Greloch (Second Vice President), Ken Hjulstrom (Secretary), Kevin McNally (First Vice President), Jean Paul Bolduc (President) and Kathy Randal (Global Membership Chair) who conducted the ceremony. Not pictured is Rob Gnocci (Membership Chairman). The club thanked Past President Megan Lloyd, who served the club in that position for five years. If interested in joining the club, call president Jean Paul Bolduc at 860-798-2054 or secretary Ken Hjulstrom at 860-490-9116.

Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum

Correction

A story that appeared in last week’s Rivereast on page 25 stated at the end that Colchester First Selectman Bernie Dennler shared at a recent Board of Selectmen’s meeting that he had been partially deaf as a child. This is incorrect; he shared that his father had been partially deaf as a child. The Rivereast regrets the error.

Thanks for Your Trust

Portland Residents:

I am deeply honored and grateful to have been elected to serve on the Portland Board of Selectmen. Now that the elections are over it’s time for me to get to work.

Thank you for placing your trust in me.

Sincerely,
Vincent Pitruzzello
Member, Portland Board of Selectmen

Thank You, Portland

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of you that came out to support me on Election Day. I am honored to serve the Town of Portland as a member of the Board of Selectmen. I would also like to thank all of my fellow candidates – their time and energy given to running is a testament of their dedication to the Town of Portland. I am truly honored to continue serving my community in this new capacity. Again, thank you, the residents of Portland.

Sincerely,
Dave Kuzminski
Member, Portland Board of Selectmen

Thank You Ted Hintz!

To the Editor:

East Hampton is lucky to have Ted Hintz Jr. on the Town Council. He stuck his neck out for the town this past week, and drafted a resolution opposing HB 8002, a housing bill that that abdicates our town’s authority to shape it own destiny through local zoning. Hintz sought bipartisan support from the Democratic majority on the Town Council, with the intent of sending the resolution to Gov. Lamont, and urging him to veto this terrible bill that will negatively impact not only East Hampton, but every town in Connecticut.

Thankfully Hintz’s efforts were supported by his fellow Republican council member Tim Feegel and managed to get a small measure of bipartisan support from Democrat council member Rich Knotek, who begrudgingly followed Hintz’s lead. I appreciate all three of these men for their willingness to take a stand on this important matter.

The rest of the Town Council Democrats either acknowledged HB 8002 was “unacceptable” or sung its praises, but none of them voted to take a formal stand on behalf of East Hampton taxpayers. After a tied vote, three in favor and three against, the resolution did not pass, as rules state at least four members must support it in order for the resolution to pass. Town Council member Karen Wanat, who during her election campaign often spoke out against development in town was not present for this important meeting, so there was no tie-breaker, nor did she ever make an official public statement on where she stands on all of this.

Elections certainly have consequences.

Bridget McLennan -- East Hampton

Bulletin Board

There was an item on the news the other day about folks relying more than usual on bus and train travel these days due to the long waits and canceled flights plaguing the airline industry.

I used to ride the bus a lot in my younger days, back and forth to boarding school outside of Boston and later – until I scored a \$400 1963 VW Beetle that had barely survived some sort of catastrophic backseat upholstery fire – to and from college in upstate New York. The biggest inconvenience I can remember from those days (excepting the oddities lurking in the men’s bathroom at the Boston bus terminal) was the possibility that some big-boned individual would settle into the seat next to me, gradually leaking into my space until I was either pushed halfway out into the aisle, or, if I happened to be in an interior seat, pressed up against the window like a bug-eyed herring in a too-small jar.

(Apologies to my bigger-boned fellow Americans, but it is a simple law of physics that skinny people, while frequently quite annoying in their own right, take up less space than big-boned ones. This does not represent a moral pronouncement of any kind on my part, so please keep any threatening cards and letters to yourself and invest the money in jelly donuts or something.)

I suppose that many of the people traveling the long-distance bus lines in those days (the late ‘60s, early ‘70s) were students and people much like myself, but I do not recall it that way. Mentally reviewing dozens of bus rides, I am able to summon up mostly a wide assortment of dwarves, alcoholics, wheezing senior citizens, squalling brats, people with crutches and certain women whose cologne was so liberally applied, it overpowered the disinfectant smell of the bus itself. Oh yes, and practically all of them smoked.

In one of my darker periods, blessed with a girlfriend who dressed largely in black and bombarded my feeble mind with the philosophies of Sartre, Camus, Kafka & Co. and similar minions of despair, it occurred to me that a long-distance bus ride would make a great setting for an existentialist play. Hurling down the highway in a haze of cigarette smoke, the unsuspecting passengers would chat about their troubled lives before realizing they were bound for hell—or maybe they were already in hell...I forget the details. I do remember that when I mentioned this brainstorm to my melancholy girlfriend, she observed with considerable disdain that the idea had already been taken, only the setting was a train instead of a bus.

I think it was shortly afterwards that I made the mistake of referring to one of her moody poems as “a limerick” and it was our relationship, not the bus, that went straight to hell. I’m not saying I took it hard or anything, but it would amuse me to find out she married a dentist and ended up driving her kids to soccer practice in a van with one of those “family scene” decals (complete with dog) pasted in the back window.

I exaggerate of course. Further rumination reminds me that I also have many pleasant memories of bus travel: winding through picturesque towns in the Berkshires when snow was falling; enjoying a book in the glow of the overhead reading light as we traveled down the highway on a rainy night; trying to find common ground with a newly minted infantryman, scarcely older than myself, who was bound for a classroom far more lethal than anything in my immediate future (I hope he made it); and passengers who, for the most part, treated one another courteously, offered help when help was required and recognized the difference between small inconveniences and real trouble.

It was, I think, a slice of America largely invisible to those of us who have come to look at the world from the isolation of our own cars. We forget sometimes that, as they say, “we’re all in the same boat.” Or maybe it’s a bus.

Jim Hallas

Rivereast Hours of Operation

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Thank You, Lions

To the Editor:
I just want to thank the Lions Club for giving us non-perishable food. They do so much for us.
Roseanne Amenta
Chatham Acres

Thank You Oz ‘N Bones BBQ

To the Editor:
On behalf of all the Colchester Scout Troops and Cub Scout Pack, I would like to thank all of you for donating the biodegradable bags used during our last “Scouting For Food” drive . The donation of 12 boxes of biodegradable bags help us to quickly approach most homes in Colchester with our request for donations to the Colchester Food Bank. This year we collected 16,767 pounds of food and other needed materials. It was our most successful food drive ever.
Your kind donation contributed to this year’s Scouting for Food’s success. Please accept our sincere thanks for your support to Colchester residents.
Thank you for your investment in Colchester’s scouting community.
Alphonse Letendre
Scouting For Food Coordinator

Ashamed of Your Views

To East Hampton Town Council:
I would like to give a special thanks to Ted Hintz for speaking up for the town of East Hampton and the citizens. I am very displeased with Dean Markham and Jocelyn Leon for adamantly supporting the HB8002 bill that in no way makes East Hampton a better place to live. Your beliefs and comments are against what the town and the residents want. You showed us where you loyalty is and it is not for the people of this town. As a lifelong resident and taxpayer, I am ashamed of your views and beliefs. It would be a blessing to the town and citizens if you would step down as members of the Town Council.
Joseph A. Sorvillo – East Hampton

Celebrating Thanksgiving

To the Editor:
As we gather around our Thanksgiving tables and reflect on the year behind us, I’m reminded of something beautifully simple: aging is not just about growing older, it’s about growing into ourselves.
Every November, we see a natural shift toward gratitude. But for older adults, gratitude is more than a seasonal feeling. Research shows it can boost mood, support heart health, and even improve sleep. It’s one of the most powerful (and free!) tools we have for healthy aging.
In our senior community, I witness this every day, people discovering new hobbies, building friendships, learning technology, dancing, laughing, and proving that purpose doesn’t retire. Connection keeps us young, curiosity keeps us energized, and kindness keeps us grounded.
This Thanksgiving season, I want to offer a gentle reminder for all of us:
Healthy aging isn’t something that happens to

us, it’s something we practice.
It’s choosing movement, even a little bit.
It’s sharing a meal or a conversation.
It’s learning something new, even if it feels intimidating.
It’s allowing ourselves joy, rest, and community.
And most importantly, it’s realizing that aging is not a decline, it’s a deepening. A deepening of relationships, wisdom, self-awareness, and appreciation for moments that truly matter.
As we move into the holiday season, I encourage every resident young, older, and in-between, to check in on an older neighbor, invite someone to coffee, or simply slow down long enough to say, “I’m grateful for you.” Community is the heart of healthy aging, and we each have the power to strengthen it.
Wishing everyone a warm, joyful, and connected Thanksgiving.
May we all continue to age with intention, curiosity, and plenty of laughter.
Warmly,
Sarah Elliott-Caratasios, LMSW
Director and Municipal Agent of
Portland Senior Center

Many Thanks

To the Editor:
The Colchester Garden Club would like to thank all of the people who stopped by the “Garden Club Shop” at the Colchester Senior Center’s Holiday Fair on Saturday. It was a great way to kick off the holiday season. Your purchases support the Colchester Garden Club’s beautification efforts in Colchester (gardens and town planters), youth activities, educational programs, craft programs with Seniors, our Colchester Farmers Market booth, and so much more.
We also want to extend our appreciation and thanks to Patty Watts, Jodi Savage, and the whole Colchester Senior Center staff for inviting us to participate in this event and their continued support of our efforts through the years. Their Holiday Fair is a wonderful community event supported by so many volunteers and donors.
And, of course, we are very grateful to all of the Colchester Garden Club members who volunteered to make items, donated items and volunteered their time to make this a great event for all.
Very soon, we will have ‘Holiday Homecoming’ the tree lighting event on the Colchester Town Green and Colchester Garden Club members will be decorating the town planters to add to the festive look in town. Decorating that wouldn’t be possible without the generous donation of tree cuttings by Evergreen Acres on Windham Avenue.
On behalf of the Colchester Garden Club, we are extending a wish to all for a very happy Thanksgiving weekend and a wonderful holiday season.
Joan Aubin and Mary Spalter
Co-Presidents, Colchester Garden Club

Thanks to the Town

To the Editor:
As we close out another year, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Colchester community. Your enthusiasm, support, and involvement have made 2025 an incredible year for our Recreation Department.
From summer camps and sports leagues to concerts on the green and family events, every program was successful because of you – our residents, volunteers, local businesses, and partners. Your willingness to participate, lend a hand, and share ideas truly reflects the spirit of Colchester.
We are proud to serve a community that values connection, wellness, and fun. Thank you for trusting us to create opportunities for recreation and togetherness. We look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead and continuing to make Colchester a place where everyone feels welcome and engaged.
On behalf of the entire Recreation Department, thank you for making this year so special. Here’s to an even brighter 2026!
Warm regards,
Tiffany Quinn
Recreation Director
Town of Colchester

Portland Votes

To the Editor:
The 2025 municipal election cycle is over with 41% of registered voters casting their votes for elected positions in Portland. Letters of appreciation from the individuals that received the highest votes have been published in the *Rivereast*. Candidate Vin Pitruzzello has gone above and beyond in his campaign, including holding a ‘thank you’ sign on a chilly November morning in which earned him a seat on the Board of Selectmen
The results showed 32% of voters did not vote for the First Selectman running unopposed and Democrats swept the seats on all boards. In prior election years, former First Selectman Ryan Curley, running unopposed, and First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, running with opponents, received more than 68% of votes with a higher voter turnout.
Over the past year, town voters have noticed that two businesses quietly closed on Main Street this fall joining other vacant properties downtown and along Rt 66. Private business development has been claimed as political accomplishments, as small businesses and homeowners struggle.
On Nov. 5 the BOS quietly pushed through another Supplemental Appropriation of \$85,000 for another plan on the school renovation project. This brings the total money spent over the

past 6 months, which was not included in last year’s budget, to \$2.6 million, excluding \$350K for boilers at BIS. This vote occurred after the school superintendent announced at a BOS meeting in September that there was a surplus of \$205K from last year, in which he has spent at his discretion. Voters are tired of the spending as their taxes are rising.
Thanks to volunteers, progress has been made along the riverfront next to Telcon, and unpaid board members and citizens have scrambled to keep the town operating as leadership is at an experience deficit.
Presently, the Town Plan of Conservation is being updated that will set town goals over the next 10 years. A Main Street and Riverfront volunteer committee is working on the best use and vision for the downtown and riverfront area.
Now is the time to form an independent committee to open the Town Charter and begin discussions on restructuring leadership to incorporate a town manager working with a full finance board to manage Portland under goals and vision set by the Plan of Conservation and Development that grows the town with taxpayer benefits to make Portland a thriving town again.
Time is of the essence.
Rose Aletta – Portland

Thankful in Hebron

To the Editor:
I would like to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. I hope your holiday was filled with peace and joy. There is a lot to be thankful for here in Hebron; we live in a remarkable town full of natural beauty and engaging history. I am thankful for a strong family, group of friends and active neighbors who have contributed so much effort defending the place we live, our environment and our shared heritage. I am thankful for all the volunteers serving on our boards and committees who have given their time maintaining the quality of life we enjoy.
This was particularly true during the Oct. 23rd Board of Selectmen meeting. Questions were raised regarding the Department of Public Works Action Committee’s tremendous progress towards building a new Public Works at Old Colchester Road. Unfounded suggestions that the project may find a low-cost alternative at another site were pressed forward. Fortunately, the issue was met head on by the DPWAC and the BOS. As noted by DPWAC member Jody Leary, “I think it would be a disservice to go back to just broad estimates as a comparison... it needs to be as comprehensive a consideration as all the work that we just did. That would be very expensive...”
BOS Chair Keith Petit reiterated that the DPWAC has put in significant work and expense to
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Editor’s Desk continued from page 4

communities – as well as from other states.
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★ Letters cont. from page 5
make the Old Colchester Road plan the best option available, “We need to educate the voters so that they understand that when we present plan A, it’s the best plan A that we could get for them, and plan B is no substitute. ... I think that altering our focus or splitting our attention from driving to the lowest price best option possible will be detrimental...”
The conviction to keep the focus on Old Colchester Road was reinforced by BOS member Claudia Riley, “I want to ask the public to remember, don’t have amnesia about what we already went over more than two years ago, with respect to 17 Kinney Road. We’ve been down that road and made our decision... we need to stay steadfast on course with the plan at hand.”
Perhaps most significantly, as Chair Keith Petit polled every member of the BOS the decision was unanimous, with every single member stating, “keep the focus on Colchester Road.” I am truly thankful for this clarity in pursuing the most fiscally, environmentally and historically responsible option available.

Sincerely,
Kevin J. Tulimieri – Amston

A New Day?

To the Editor:
I have noticed a couple of letters from Colchester republicans this fall about how the Colchester Republican Town Committee (RTC) has changed for the better. Before the election (Oct. 10 edition), one of their candidates wrote about “a new generation of Republican leadership - one grounded in kindness, community, and commitment.” Last week (Nov. 21) came a letter from a different writer discussing how the RTC is now planning “to become a party that is not attempting to divide Colchester but to do their best to work in a bipartisan manner to advance their vision for our town and unite all voters.”
I’m having trouble reconciling these letters with what I’ve seen locally over the last couple of months, though. In the weeks leading up to Election Day, I saw Republicans holding local candidate signs on the green wearing MAGA hats and gear. On Election Day, they were holding signs outside town hall wearing Trump sweatshirts. As long as our local RTC continues to align itself directly with the national Republi-

can Party and the disastrous leadership of Donald Trump, I can’t believe anything has really changed.
Trump’s policies and actions are seriously harming citizens right here in Colchester, and Republicans know that. You can’t have it both ways – you can’t be seen as the party of “kindness” if you don’t denounce the incompetent policies, cruel actions, and hateful rhetoric of the national party. It seems like the RTC needs to dig a little deeper in their self-reflection before they can claim a “new day” for their party in Colchester. I wish them the best in this important work.

Susie Milner – Colchester

Dems Choose Hartford Over Constituents

To the Editor:
At a special East Hampton Town Council meeting on Friday, Nov 21, Republican council member Ted Hintz Jr. introduced a resolution urging Gov. Ned Lamont to veto HB 8002, a state housing bill that would largely negate local zoning authority and allow unelected, Hartford-appointed officials to override town planning decisions and downward direct unwanted overdevelopment.
Hintz called for bipartisan opposition to the bill, emphasizing the loss of local control. The resolution received support from fellow Republican Tim Feegel and a small measure of bipartisan support from Democrat member Rich Knotek, who begrudgingly followed Hintz’s lead.
The rest of the Democratic majority, however, declined to support the measure on behalf of East Hampton residents.
Council member Jack Solomon called the bill “unacceptable” but refused to vote for the resolution, saying it “wouldn’t accomplish anything.”
Council member Joelyn Leon expressed full support of HB 8002 and suggested the town should just roll over for Gov. Lamont because, “Your gonna have to do it anyway, it’s gonna happen...”
Council Chair Dean Markham blocked public comment at the meeting, stating, “It’s a special meeting, and business of the council.” To which Hintz asked, “You don’t think it’s the business of the taxpayers?” Markham replied,

“That’s correct, this is business of the council tonight.”
Democrat Karen Wanat, who campaigned heavily on preserving local control and limiting overdevelopment, did not attend or participate in the meeting. Her absence prevented a tie-breaking vote and ensured the resolution’s defeat.
East Hampton Democrats ran on pledges of responsible, locally driven growth and repeatedly told voters they would protect the town’s character. By refusing to oppose a bill that transfers zoning power to state bureaucrats – or in some cases actively supporting it – they have broken those promises and left residents without a voice against top-down mandates from Hartford.
During the election, Democrats said, “We’ve got your back,” weeks after the election, they stabbed us all in the back and chose Democrat elites in Hartford over their constituents.

Bryon Turner – East Hampton

Donate to Our Ambulance Service

To the Editor:
This Giving Tuesday, Dec. 2, support the East Hampton Ambulance Association and help keep our community safe.
Over the past year, our EMT team has answered over 1,250 calls, maintained an excellent response time, and provided dependable 24/7 care.
We are asking every household in East Hampton to consider an annual donation of \$100. Every gift, large or small, ensures our skilled and compassionate EMTs are ready when you need them most.
If you or a loved one has ever relied on our service, you know the difference it makes. Your support keeps vital emergency care available for everyone in town.
Donate today: EHAA, P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424
Thank you for helping us protect our community.

Board of Directors, East Hampton Ambulance Association
Debra Mayer, President;
Nancy Brown, Vice President;
Lori Lanzi, Secretary; Alan Hurst, Treasurer;
Members at-Large Kevin Kiely, Liz Whitty, Gregory Pugatch

Urgent Need

To the Editor:
Flu vaccination is extra important now due to a new variant with seven new mutations that make it more contagious and virulent than the usual influenza virus. This influenza A (H3N2, subclade K) has caused outbreaks in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Japan, and accounts for half of the cases in the European Union. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) last week, it already causes 38% of U.S. flu infections.
The CDC recommends that everyone ages 6 months and older get an annual influenza vaccine. The vaccination reduces severe disease, hospitalization, and death. People at higher risk for severe disease include those aged 65 and older, and people with chronic metabolic, lung, heart, and neuromuscular disease, pregnancy, and immunodeficiency. Flu vaccination is covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and almost all health insurances.
The CDC also notes that prescription antiviral medications can treat flu illness, and should be started as soon as possible. They are especially important for those at high risk for flu-related complications.
Please do yourself and family a favor, and get vaccinated!

Eric Rosenberg, MD
Retired Internal Medicine Physician
East Hampton

Note: Rosenberg is chair of the East Hampton Commission on Aging, but said he is speaking as an individual.

Great Strides

To the Editor:
Last week we covered a basic timeline for Hebron’s new Public Works. It’s been a bumpy 20 years, but the time has come for a new facility and 550 Old Colchester Rd. is the best location. The relatively new Public Works Action Committee has made great strides towards breaking ground at 550 OCR. Not coincidentally, several members, of this committee, are also longtime members of Hebron’s Public Building Committee. They’ve spent years looking at multiple alternate locations and have returned to OCR.
If you’re new to Hebron, upset about this location or in need of a price comparison between two sites, before you go much further, read-up on the project’s history including research, expert testimony and meetings, from the past two decades by visiting hebronct.com and SaveHebronCenter on Facebook. You can also listen to meetings and public testimony online. Groundwater pollution is an expensive long-term problem everyone is trying to avoid. Hebron is situated on a watershed. This is both a blessing and a curse, depending on your expectations. But don’t we all expect safe water? Don’t we all expect town hall to look out for our health, safety and well-being? Yes, and this is what the Action Committee is trying to do.
Hebron is long overdue for rebuilding the PW. We can try building new developments, that people seem to want, but without PW, you are up a creek without a paddle because PW keeps any town going.
The time is now. The on-site testing is being done. So far, the most financially and environmentally responsible location is 550 OCR. The project’s costs will sound terrifying. However, when broken down, like a mortgage, and shared with approximately 3500 households, the numbers are not so bad. Not free...but not terrible. Many families are still adjusting to post Covid real estate tax increases. We’re all facing increased living expenses and health insurance questions. However, without a safe PW facility we’re also facing other serious issues, including the ongoing safety of employees.
This is not an easy topic and it’s going to be a complicated rebuilding process. However, by working together, for the betterment of town employees, residents and our natural resources, it’ll go quickly and life can return to some semblance of normal. Hebron needs to rebuild the PW but they can’t do it without public support.

Jean Tulimieri – Amston

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Dementia Talks No. 38

To the Editor:

Have you received the “fall call” yet? Have you had to make a “fall call”? There are all kinds of emotions that can be connected when your loved one takes a tumble to the floor – regardless of where they are.

There are many reasons a loved one might fall – they may have a UTI which makes them a little dizzy, may shuffle their feet and a foot gets “stuck” for a nano second – just enough to take a tumble, they may simply reach down to pick something up off the ground and lose their balance. So many reasons.

Take stock when your loved one falls, document it somewhere with the date, time, what happened to the best that you can. The log is helpful when talking to doctors.

I received a ‘fall call’ this past week and am grateful that a nurse heard Mom yelp. The nurse was able to get mom up, settled into a chair, then distracted with the *what*. I stopped in to checked her out – got her ready for bed, tucked her in and watched a little TV until she was snoozing away. She is fine; we are lucky.

I inquired about when a trip to the ER would happen – the nurse was careful to say that it depends on the situation, the person and if there are injuries. An understandable response. In Mom’s case, I was thankful that an ER visit wasn’t needed; our theory is she likely tumbled to the floor because she was attempting to pick something up off the carpet after a very long day (holiday event and change in the routine = she was tired).

In the case of someone with dementia that falls – have a plan. Meaning, know who you will call if you need help; have legal documents handy if an ER visit is needed (we have a packet on the refrigerator for quick access).

If you are in a community with your loved one, and they fall, leverage the staff as they have the expertise to assess the situation and if all is well, they have the skills to help your loved one get up off the floor.

Know you are not alone.

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

Improvements Needed

Dear Colchester:

It has been an honor and a privilege to work with a wide variety of individuals and groups the past two plus years, first on the Ad-Hoc Recreational Needs Committee and now on the Athletic Complex Building Committee. I am a strong advocate for youth sports and activities, both in and beyond Colchester. In addition to my committee work, I volunteer as a board member for multiple youth sports organizations in and around Colchester. With 20 years of experience as a high school teacher, I firmly believe that students are at their best when actively engaged in extracurriculars such as athletics, music, theater, or any number of different groups. These experiences help support individual growth while teaching teamwork and fostering community.

Through my involvement with multiple youth sports organizations in and around Colchester, I have listened to concerns from parents and players about the condition of the Bacon athletic fields and the growing sense of embarrassment about their current state. I commend our Public Works Department for the improvements made at the RecPlex, which has never looked better. Unfortunately, the Bacon athletic fields remain outdated, under maintained, and overused, leading to unsafe playing conditions and frequent cancellations.

Artificial turf has been thoroughly researched and proven to be a safe and effective solution in countless school systems across Connecticut and the country. Upgrading the fields at Bacon, as well as improvements to the RecPlex, would enhance our town’s appeal and provide significant benefits to current and future families. High school coaches throughout the ECC frequently express concern, even mockery, regarding the current state of our athletic fields.

In addition to the Bacon fields, the tennis

courts at both locations, pickleball courts, and splash pad are in desperate need of upgrades and renovation. Many local residents and groups have already begun turning to newer or better maintained facilities in surrounding communities. This shift not only affects our local programs but also results in lost revenue for Colchester businesses. I look forward to our upcoming meetings and encourage the community to review the recommendations from last spring’s Recreational Needs Committee and the information posted on the Athletic Complex Building Committee page. Together, we have an opportunity to make meaningful improvements that will benefit our community for years to come.

Thank you,
Matt Parsons
Vice Chair, Athletic Complex Building Committee
Chair, Ad Hoc Recreational Needs Committee

Note: Parsons said he is speaking as an individual.

Candlelight Vigil Dec. 7

To the Editor:

All *Rivereast News* communities are invited to a candlelight vigil sponsored by TACT Indivisible on Sunday, Dec. 7, from 4–5 p.m. at Glastonbury’s Town Center (Hebron Avenue/ Main Street) – a time for community members to stand together in peaceful reflection. The gathering is intended to shine a light for democracy and the values that guide the nation: respect for one another, participation in community life, and the belief that the country’s future is strongest when people stand united. Once assembled, participants will walk together in quiet unity to reaffirm a shared hope and responsibility for the future of the country. The

event is family-friendly, and children are warmly welcome.

Attendees are encouraged to bring a flameless candle or other light, dress warmly, and, if possible, wear reflective clothing for visibility and safety. Above all, participants are asked to bring their community spirit. For questions, please email TACTIndivisible@gmail.com.

Karen Wilkinson – Marlborough

More Censorship from Town Council

To the Editor:

Last week, in a Town Council special meeting regarding HB 8002, a new housing bill that has very little support in East Hampton, council chair Dean Markham (Democrat) defended the fact that the voters were not permitted to make public comments at the meeting.

Markham stated, “It’s a special meeting, and business of the council.” To which council member Ted Hintz (Republican) responded, “You don’t think it’s the business of the taxpayers?” Markham responded, “That’s correct, this is business of the council tonight.”

This is not the first time Markham has put a wet blanket on free speech at Town Council meetings. Prior to the election, he cut off a local resident who was giving public comments at one of the meetings via Zoom when she offered well-founded criticism to the Town Council.

The meeting on Nov. 21 initially wasn’t going to permit voters to participate and observe via Zoom until a number of people put pressure on the town to correct this. Let’s hope this trend of blocking the voters from fully participating in these meetings does not continue.

All this from the party who ran on transparency!!

Alannah Coshow – Middle Haddam





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RE11-28-25

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Residents Offer Thanksgiving Reflections

By Toriana Williams

As Thanksgiving approaches, Andover residents are taking a moment to reflect on what gratitude means to them – from the quiet acts of kindness that keep the town connected to the personal experiences that shape how they view the holiday season.

Two local officials, each with their own perspective, shared what they are most thankful for this year, offering a glimpse into the values that anchor the community.

'A Time to Be Grateful'

Amy Orlomoski, director of the Andover Public Library, began by describing Thanksgiving as a time to pause and take stock of life's blessings.

"It's a time to be grateful ... take stock of what you have and what you've accomplished over the year," she said, noting that her own holiday traditions usually involve a low-key but meaningful day with family. She added that gratitude, for her, is less about celebration and more about acknowledging the people who make her work rewarding.

That sense of appreciation extends to the library itself, which she says embodies the spirit of togetherness year-round.

"We like to think we're always thankful and grateful when folks use the library and visit," Orlomoski said. "We do like to try to help them

where we can. All they have to do is just ask, and we'll see what we can do."

She expressed particular gratitude for her staff, volunteers and the library's patrons. "Everybody genuinely loves the library, and I think that's a great thing. It's wonderful," she said. Their commitment, she explained, keeps the library vibrant and welcoming.

Community support is also essential to the Friends of the Library, a nonprofit fundraising group that Orlomoski calls the library's "fundraising arm." This year, the Friends group is once again hosting their annual basket drawing – a popular event that has become a seasonal staple.

"We have our Friends of the Library big fundraiser [which started Nov. 25]," she said. "We haven't officially counted how many baskets we have, but more than 30 at this point." The offerings range widely, from children's toys to specialty honey, makeup sets, a Red Sox-themed bundle and more. Residents can purchase tickets and enter for whichever baskets they like, with winners drawn on Dec. 22.

Funds raised through the event support library programming and upcoming improvements, including expanded access to e-books. The Friends are also sponsoring a December concert, "Christmas in New England," held at a local church on Dec. 18.

The Power of Faith

While Orlomoski's reflections centered on community and the energy of the library, another Andover official shared a deeply personal and spiritual perspective of gratitude. Gerard Cremè, a member of the Board of Education, is currently recovering in a rehabilitation facility after sustaining a recent injury due to his Parkinson's disease. He spoke openly about his faith – a guiding force in how he understands Thanksgiving.

"Thanksgiving means being thankful for all that God has given us," Cremè said. "I have a strong faith, and God reveals himself to us through different things that happen to us."

Even his recent hospitalization and rehabilitation, he explained, have been moments of spiritual clarity.

"Everything that I thought was bad I've learned something from, and realized that it was God working in my life to establish and continue a relationship with me," he said.

He emphasized kindness, respect and service as core values – ones he sees reflected in the work of local boards, volunteers and Andover Elementary School staff. From the superintendent to classroom teachers, he said is grateful for the dedication of those who commit their time and energy to Andover's children.

"I'm thankful for the people in our town who serve in the different capacities of the different boards, of the school, of the town," Cremè said. "I'm thankful for what they do for our children.

I'm thankful for people who care," he shared, and added that, "caring is important."

For Cremè, gratitude is inseparable from his relationship with God.

"I'm thankful to God ... for what he brings – even pain that draws me closer to him," Cremè said.

At 71 years of age, Cremè explained, his perspective has grown more reflective, rooted in a lifetime of faith and a desire to serve others. "I think that that's one way you do that in today's world – as you reach out and help other people," he said.

Although his approach to Thanksgiving is less about food or tradition, he does celebrate with his "small family," including his daughter, her husband and their extended relatives. Still, connection – not the menu – is what matters the most to him.

A Shared Commitment

Both officials, though speaking from very different experiences, captured a similar truth: Thanksgiving in Andover is a blend of gratitude for community and appreciation for the people who nurture it. Whether through library programs that bring neighbors together or the quiet resilience of residents who continue serving even while facing personal challenges, the town reflects a shared commitment to kindness, support and togetherness.

Recreation

Commission Vacancy

Any Andover elector interested in serving on the Recreation Commission for a term ending June 30, 2027 should send an email to clee@andoverct.org.

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.

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.

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.

Food Pantry: Mondays from 5-7 p.m. Bring your own bags. The **Foodshare Van** comes to the church every other Wednesday from 8:30-10 a.m.; **Senior Pantry** is on the opposite Wednesdays.

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

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

Amston Artists in Local Show

From now through Dec. 28, Amston artists Elizabeth Dougherty and John Ros will have an exhibition of mixed media works entitled "Over Here" at Over Andover Barn-tique, 415 Route 6, Andover, as part of Artist Open Studios of Northeast CT.

Artist open studio hours will be 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 28, and 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 29 and 30 and Dec. 6 and 7.

There will be an artist reception Saturday, Dec. 6, from noon-3 p.m.

For more information, visit aosct.org.



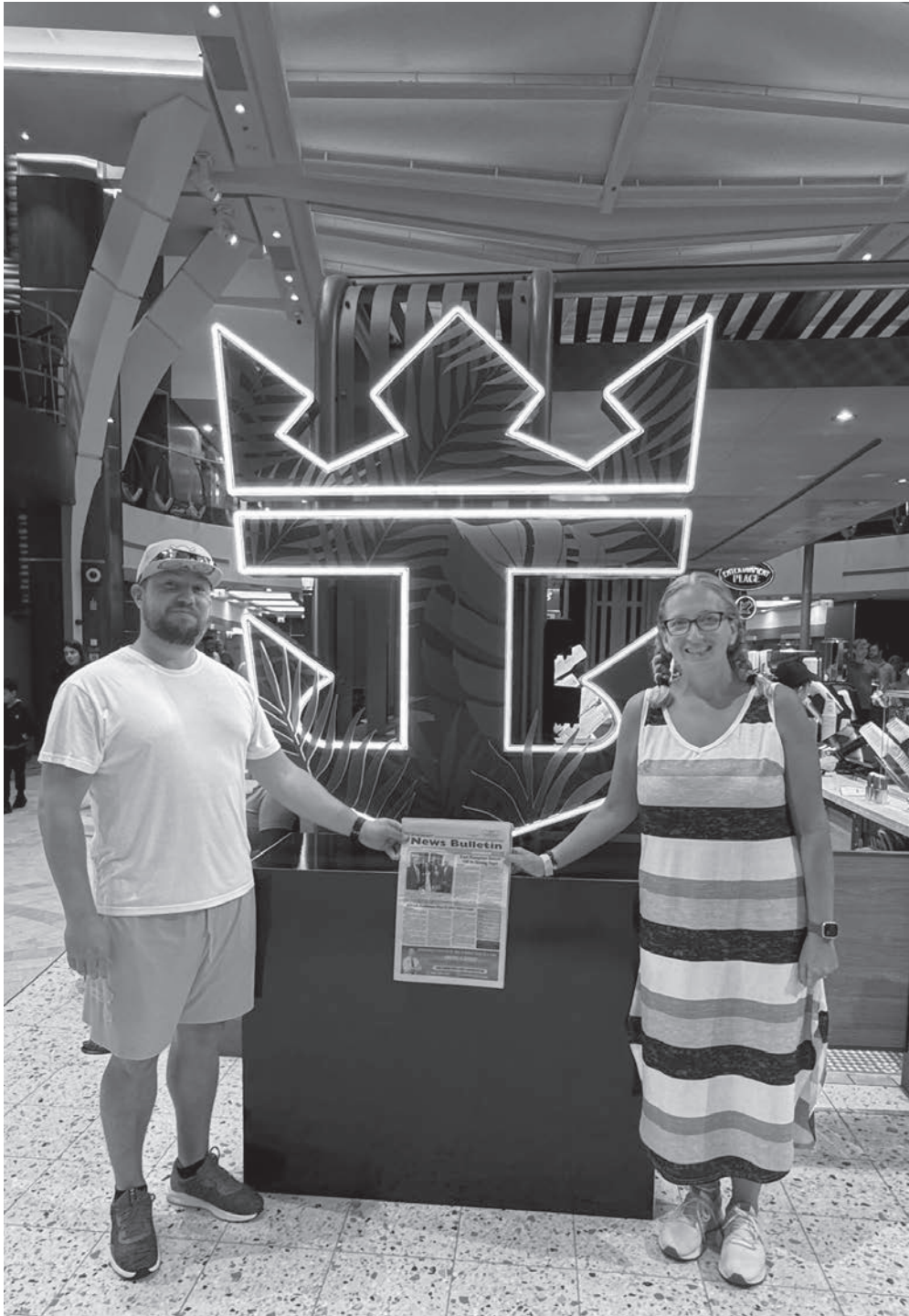
Cemetery Clean-Up... The Olde Andover Burying Ground recently saw a fall cleanup, thanks to members of the OABG Committee. Pictured are, from left, committee members Bob Post, Michael Kurdzo and Jim Harlow.



Funds for Food Bank... The Hebron Lions recently donated \$2,000 to Andover Food Bank. Pictured from left are Lion Louise Hamburger, Andover Food Bank Director Joan Soucy, and Hebron Lions Charities Director Chris Doyle. Soucy was thrilled to receive the check and will use the funds to help keep the shelves stocked during this time of great need.



And That Makes 50!... Cheryl and Russell Blow of East Hampton had visited 49 states – and made it to number 50 in August, when they visited North Dakota. Seeing all 50 states “only took 30 years,” Russell quipped.



Cruisin’ to the Bahamas... Ashley and Travis Wolf of Marlborough brought along the *Rivereast* on a Utopia of the Seas cruise to the Bahamas!

Where in the World is the *Rivereast*?

Taking a vacation or a day trip soon? Or simply going out to dinner? Bring the *Rivereast* with you! Whether it’s across the globe or across town, we want to see where you’ve been! Simply snap a photo with the *Rivereast*, send it to bulletin@glcitizen.com and, if printed, you’ll receive a gift card to Campagna Restaurant in Portland! Further details are listed below. Happy travels!



A Day at the Zoo... Philip and Jessica Dills from Colchester recently went to visit her niece and her husband in San Diego, Calif. They brought along the *Rivereast* to the San Diego Zoo. It was a beautiful day, they said, and they saw lots of different animals. From left are Mike Poe, Sara Poe, Jessica Dills (holding paper) and Phil Dills.



Down on the Farm... Jeanne Bishop from Portland and Mary Ann Wall from East Hampton went on a trip to Lancaster, Pa with the Seniors from East Hampton and Wallingford. They visited Riehl’s Farm and Quit Shop in Intercourse, Pa., and brought the *Rivereast News Bulletin* with them.

Where in the World?

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Residents Challenge BOS on Pledge Decision

By Toriana Williams

The newly seated Marlborough Board of Selectmen covered a wide range of issues during its Nov. 18th meeting – and one in particular proved quite controversial with the public.

The board's newly elected chair Susan McFarland, a Democrat, called the meeting to order, and five selectmen were present, along with Town Manager David Porter.

After debate, the board voted – 4 to 1 – against adding the Pledge of Allegiance as a standing agenda item. Selectwoman Louise Concodello, a Republican, was the lone dissenting vote, stating she would like the pledge to be added to the meetings.

Anthony Bratz, a Democrat, argued he wanted to keep meetings “focused about town matters rather than national interests.” Fellow Democratic selectman John Rizza agreed with Bratz.

During a public comment period, residents spoke most prominently about the board's decision to not add the pledge. Multiple residents strongly objected to the board's vote, with Rob Fraulino first to raise the issue. He urged the board to reconsider, and said it “takes all about 5 to 10 seconds,” calling the pledge equal to the actual meeting taking place.

Ken Hjulstrom, a Republican Board of Finance member who noted he was speaking as an individual, said he was “really amazed” and “shocked” at the board's decision, adding that he “thought that it would be a no-brainer” to add the pledge to the beginning of meetings.

Judy Kelly, chair of the Republican Town Committee but speaking as an individual, echoed the same sentiment. “We teach our kids to do it,” she said. “It's a lifelong commitment to the flag as an American.”

Holiday Open House at Thrift Shop

Second Blessings Thrift Shop, located at Marlborough Congregational Church, 35 South Main St., will hold its annual Holiday Open House Friday, Nov. 28, from noon to 3 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 29 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Light refreshments will be served, along with a free drawing. Everything Christmas and winter will fill tables and shelves, all priced to sell. Items include jewelry, handbags, small furni-

This week, in a comment to the *Rivereast*, Asklar clarified that he did not mean to oppose adding the pledge to the beginning of meetings, and “misunderstood the motion.”

He said he intends to suggest adding it at the next meeting – and noted that “we used to do it” when Republican Greg Lowrey was first selectman. “It's not new,” Asklar said.

In regard to meeting procedures, a few items were discussed. Porter presented a draft resolution for special meetings, where the board debated how to handle scheduling, quorum requirements and situations in which the chair declines a requested meeting. Ultimately, they left the language allowing a meeting to be called even if a quorum cannot be reached – “a safety net,” as Bratz described it.

The board agreed to add the phrase “Board of Selectmen may vote to engage” to clarify when members may directly respond to public commenters. The board also agreed to specify that vacancies must be advertised in the “next available local *Rivereast News Bulletin*.”

In response to the mechanism allowing the BOS to “vote to engage” with speakers, Ross Dmochowski asked for clarification. The board attempted to explain the adopted rule. Bratz, a Democrat, responded, summarizing the mechanism approved.

“I can engage you, the chair can stop engaging, and if I want to continue I can pull up a vote,” he said. “If two others join me, I continue my engagement with you.”

Dmochowski challenged the idea that individual selectmen could be prevented from responding during comments and stated, “Why

ture, children's books and toys, baking, decorating, gift-giving and more. Second Blessings gift certificates will also be available.

The shop will be open Fridays from noon-3 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., through Dec. 20. The shop will reopen Feb. 6, 2026. The shop accepts donations during shopping hours. Second Blessings sells year-round through eBay at bit.ly/MCCebay.

would you ... silence him? That isn't right.”

During the town manager updates, Porter reported two significant grants: \$348,224 Community Connectivity Grant to extend sidewalks from Cheney Road to Denler Drive and a \$108,621 Sustainable Material Management Grant supporting composting and unit-based waste pricing. He explained the “pay-as-you-throw” system, in that residents would use official town bags, encouraging waste reduction and compost separation.

A major infrastructure concern emerged when Connecticut Water discovered a large void under the concrete base of North Main Street. Porter stated, “Oh my gosh, this is bad.” Temporary repairs have been added to ensure the roads are safe to drive on and permanent repairs are expected to be completed in the spring.

Scheduled for Dec. 6, Marlborough's Gathering on the Green event is expected to draw 1,500 to 2,000 attendees and more than a dozen participating fire departments. Republican selectman Joe Asklar, who is also the town's fire marshal, noted, “Within the family of firefighters, this is the best event that they could come to.”

A new trophy for “best decorated fire truck” will be judged by local youth, an exciting addition to the festivities.

During the public comment session, residents

Gathering on the Green!

The town's annual Gathering on the Green celebration will be Saturday, Dec. 6, from 4:30-6:30 p.m. All are invited to this festive night celebrating the holiday season.

The gathering will feature a lighted fire truck parade, tree lighting, pictures with Santa, refreshments, music and a fireworks display. Rain date is Sunday, Dec. 7. A collection box will be available for anyone wishing to donate non-perishable food items to the food bank.

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 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 for more information.

Nov. 30 is the First Sunday in Advent with an Advent reading and the lighting of the Advent candles along with a performance by the church bell choir. There is no Sunday School on Nov. 30, but nursery care will be available.

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.

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 with tickets, will be Sunday, Nov. 30. Operation Christmas Stocking, for youth ages 13 to 17 at Albert J. Solnit Children's Center in Middletown, has begun. Handmade Christmas stockings with giving suggestions are

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.

American Legion Auxiliary Holiday Craft Fair

American Legion Post 197 in Marlborough, located at 128 East Hampton Rd. (Route 66), will host a Holiday craft fair Saturday, Nov. 29, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

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

raised issues ranging from meeting accessibility to vacancy postings.

Hal Whitney brought concerns about audio for remote participants, saying that although Zoom is not required, he appreciates it because it “opens up the meetings and makes it a lot more transparent.” He requested the town to “make a small investment” in more microphones, including a fixed microphone for public speakers.

Fraulino spoke about how the town advertises openings, challenging the interpretation that the charter required newspaper publication and suggested the town advertise on the town website. “It doesn't say anywhere ... you have to go through any sort of newspaper,” he said.

Deb Bourbeau, a previous member of the Board of Selectmen, responded with a different perspective – and stressed the importance of the *Rivereast* as a universal communication tool.

Many residents still rely on print rather than digital media, she said, as “not everybody in town knows how to use a computer.”

She noted that, when she was on the Board of Selectmen, “we agreed as a group that everyone receives, in this town, a free paper once a week.” Because of that broad reach, she said the board concluded that the *Rivereast* should remain the primary method for publicly announcing vacancies.

The Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department has started a GoFundMe page for residents wishing to donate to the fireworks show. Checks can also be mailed to: MVFD, P.O.Box 237, Marlborough, CT 06447.

Event timeline: 4:30-5 p.m., holiday music, refreshments, snacks; 5-5:15 p.m., Lighted Fire Truck Parade and arrival of Santa; 5:15 p.m., Santa lights tree; 5:15-6:15 p.m., pictures with Santa and Christmas carols with the RHAM choir; 6:15 p.m., Fireworks.

available at the church. Filled stockings will be delivered the week of Dec. 15.

Second Blessings Thrift Shop is holding its annual Thanksgiving weekend Christmas Open House this Friday, Nov. 28, from noon to 3 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 29, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., with free registration for a door prize and free refreshments. The thrift shop rooms are filled with many new arrivals for this event and for the holiday season. Follow the shop through Facebook at Second Blessings Thrift Shop, Marlborough CT. The shop sells year-round through eBay at bit.ly/MCCebay.

General Information: Marlborough Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming faith community and all are welcome. The church does not pass a collection plate, but free-will giving boxes are found by the doors in the sanctuary. Donations can also be made through the church website, or mailed to the church at P.O. Box 57, Marlborough, CT 06447. For more information on the church or its programs, call Seaver's direct line at 860-295-0432, email her at pastorval@marlconchurch.org, or contact the church office at office@marlconchurch.org.

Children's Holiday Christmas Party

American Legion Post 197 in Marlborough, located at 128 East Hampton Rd. (Route 66), will hold its annual Children's Holiday Party and lunch with Santa Sunday, Dec. 14, from noon-2 p.m.

Children up to 10 years old are invited to come for cookie decorating, face-painting, pizza, and a gift from Santa. Come and have a free photo taken with Santa.

All attendees are asked to bring a non-perishable food item to be donated to Marlborough food Bank.

If you plan to attend, call the post at 860-295-7810 with the age and number of children no later than Dec. 13.

Cancer Community Gatherings

A self-led group of cancer patients, survivors, caregivers and loved ones get together at Marlborough Senior Center, 17 School Dr., to share openly about their experience with cancer. Sharing is done voluntarily and held in confidence.

The next meeting is Dec. 3, from 7-8:15 p.m. For more information, contact Lindsay Padula at hlclindsay@gmail.com.

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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 who 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 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. 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.

Parks and Rec. Programs

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

Adult Programs: Zumba – Fall Session: Tuesdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee: \$50/residents, \$55/non-residents, or a \$12 drop-in fee.

Pickleball: Wednesdays and Thursdays, 9-11 a.m., at the Blish Park tennis courts. No fee for this program.

Adult Volleyball: Thursdays, 8-10 p.m., at Marlborough Elementary School. Registration fee is \$5 per week.

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

Driveway Reflective Number Signs Available: The cost of the sign is \$50. Help emergency services personnel find your home without delay. Vertical sign is double sided 8" x 24" with 4" numbers on blue highway reflective metal. Order forms are online and at Town Hall.

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.

12 Days of Holiday Cheer Annual Silent Auction: The Friends of the Richmond Memorial Library group is holding its annual holiday silent auction through Monday, Dec. 8. Outside of their membership campaign, this is the library's single largest fundraiser and proceeds help the library pay for programming and to purchase new materials or add items to its library of Things. Some items in this year's auction include a Beem Light Sauna gift card for a five-session package, ticket vouchers for theater performances, gift cards to local restaurants, themed gift baskets, and more.

Dungeons and Dragons Fungeon: Tweens and teens (ages 10-16) are invited to enjoy a single-session *Dungeons & Dragons* game on Mondays, Dec. 8 and 22, at 5 p.m. All supplies provided but you will need a Level 4 character (made using 2014 rules). If you do not have one, the library will have some prepared for you to choose from.

Medicare Updates, Changes, and Benefits: Come and learn the ins and outs of Medicare and the differences between original Medicare and Medicare Advantage with Mark Macrina, a local insurance agent, on Wednesday, Dec. 3, at 3 p.m. or 6 p.m. This is strictly an informational seminar, and no individual health will be discussed.

American Job Center: Tuesday, Dec. 2, 5-7 p.m. The American Job Center will offer drop-in (no appointments needed) assistance with resumes, job search assessment, career coaching, computer literacy, mock interviews, and on-the-job training programs.

Yule Celebration: Yule is almost here and Rachel, the Replanted Witch, will help celebrate the season Saturday, Dec. 13 at 11 a.m. Hear the story of the Ivy King and the Holly King, make your own Yule log to take home, and create pine

cone bird seed offerings to hang outside to honor nature. This program is for teens and adults.

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.

Nutcracker Wonder Dance: Ages 3-6 are invited for a dance adventure with Little Leaps Dance on Wednesday, Dec. 10, at 2 p.m. Using the *Nutcracker* story for inspiration, dancers will learn ballet skills, participate in movement activities, and explore their creativity.

Pajama Storytime with Yoga: Thursday, Dec. 18, at 6 p.m., for children of all ages. Enjoy a couple stories and then practice some calming yoga. Wear comfy pajamas and bring your favorite stuffed animal or blankie.

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.

Read to the Dogs: Monday, Dec. 15, 6-7 p.m. Young readers are invited to come in and read to a certified Reading Education Assistance Dog. Register for a 15-minute time slot to secure your child's spot. Limit two children per time window (one per dog).

ECHS Honor Roll

Four Marlborough residents made the East Catholic High School honor roll for the first quarter of the 2025-26 school year.

Honors with Distinction: Grade 12: Lucy DeCorleto; **Grade 11:** Kalli Bevans, Kamden Bevans.

Second Honors: Grade 10: Alexander O'Brien.



The annual Nativity Festival will return to Marlborough Congregational Church next Friday, Dec. 5.

Nativity Festival Next Week

Marlborough Congregational Church will host its fourth annual Nativity Festival Friday, Dec. 5, from 6-8 p.m., in the meeting house of the church, 35 S. Main St.

All are welcome to view a collection of nativities shared by members of the church and community, while being serenaded with

Christmas music on harp and organ by Jason Castonguay and Ron Hughes.

A free will offering will be donated to World Central Kitchen, an organization that has provided meals in response to humanitarian, climate and community crises since 2010. For more information, visit wck.org.

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 stjohnfisher30@yahoo.com. The church website is www.stjfishchurch.org.

Holy Day and Christmas Mass Schedule: Dec. 8, Celebration of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Mass at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 24, Vigil Masses at 4 p.m. and 9 p.m., and Thursday, Dec. 25, at 9:30 a.m.

Advent Extended Reconciliation Schedule: Saturday, Dec. 20, 2-3:30 p.m. and Monday, Dec. 22, 5-7 p.m.

Advent Events Schedule: Advent begins the last weekend in November, with the outdoor Christmas tree blessing & lighting after the 4 p.m. Mass on Nov. 29. Also, there will be a Christmas Pageant on Friday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. A Christmas Giving Program supporting six organizations will accept requested unwrapped gifts by Dec. 14, and there will be Caroling at the Marlborough Healthcare Center on Sunday, Dec. 14, at 2 p.m.

Regular 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 un-

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

Community Outreach and Service: Food drives are held weekly for the Marlborough Food Bank. 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.stjfishchurch.org, or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church).

Holiday Closings

Marlborough Town Hall, Senior Center, and Public Works will be closed today, Friday, Nov. 28, for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Discovery Zone learning Center



45 Pendleton Dr.
Hebron
860-228-3952

152 Hebron Rd.
Marlborough
860-295-8003

2 Orlando Dr.
Columbia
860-228-8885

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Epoch Arts’ teen theater company has written an original theater production, *Unsung Heroes*. Pictured here, playing a mother, is Maddy Stojak.

‘Unsung Heroes’ – An Original Epoch Arts Production

Epoch Arts’ teen theater company has written an original theater production, *Unsung Heroes*, and the play will be performed Friday and Saturday, Dec. 5 and 6, at 7 p.m. both nights, at Epoch, 27 Skinner St.

The play focuses on a variety of heroic people and their stories, and shows the traits that it takes to step up, face difficulties and make a difference. The cast members are taking on real life characters from different time periods, and play several different character roles throughout the production. Many of the stories have not been heard of, aren’t necessarily in history books and are not in the mainstream media.

The play tells the stories of heroes such as Mercy Otis Warren, a woman activist, poet and playwright who urged her fellow colonists to resist British rule; Stacey Bess, who taught children in homeless shelters; and Martin Couney,

an advocate and pioneer for neonatal care for premature babies. Other unsung heroes’ stories are told throughout the play.

Tickets are \$12. Reserve tickets by emailing elizabeth@epocharts.org. For more information, visit www.epocharts.org.

Library Friends Book Fair

All are invited to join the Friends of the East Hampton Public Library at Rule of 3 Brewing, 201 West High St., on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 2-5 p.m., for a curated used book fair.

The Friends will sell books in like-new condition and other fun swag. Beverages will be available for purchase from the brewery, with a discount available for those who show their library card at the bar.

For more information, email friendsofephpl@gmail.com.

Art Association to Meet

On Wednesday, Dec. 3, at 7 p.m., the East Hampton Art Association will meet in the Community Room of the East Hampton Public Library, 105 Main St.

Karen Williams will be the guest demonstrator for the evening, working in acrylics. Williams has been an art teacher in Cheshire and now West Hartford at the Ben Bronze Academy for over 25 years. She is the creator and busi-

ness owner of Art with Karen, offering painting instruction to individuals, private parties and events. She and her husband are avid cyclers and cat-lovers.

East Hamptopn Art Association meetings are open to the public for \$5 per person and are always free to youth. The annual membership fee is \$20 per person; \$25 per family.

Light refreshments will be served.

Nominations Due for Humanitarian of the Year

Nominations are due Monday for the East Hampton Lions Club’s 2026 Humanitarian of the Year, who will be honored at the Lions District 23-C Annual Humanitarian Banquet in January.

Each year, the East Hampton Lions recognize an individual who exemplifies compassion, generosity, and a strong commitment to serving others. The nominee must either live in East Hampton or have performed humanitarian acts that have made a meaningful impact within the East Hampton community.

Community members are invited to submit

a one-page letter explaining why they believe their nominee deserves to be recognized as this year’s Humanitarian of the Year.

Nomination letters should be mailed to: East Hampton Lions Club, P.O. Box 153, East Hampton, CT 06424.

Letters should include the nominee’s name, contact information, and a description of their contributions or service that demonstrate why they should be honored.

The deadline for submissions is Dec. 1.

For additional information, call Lion Mary Krogh at 860-977-5760.

Gingerbread House Decorating Contest

The Village Center merchants present the fourth annual Village Center Gingerbread House Decorating Contest. East Hampton Public Library is proud to once again support the effort by serving as the drop-off and display location and helping to promote the contest to the community.

Participants may drop off completed gingerbread houses at the library between Dec. 1–6. Community voting will take place Dec. 8–19, with winners announced Dec. 20. Prizes will be awarded in two age groups – under 15 and 16+.

The contest is made possible through local businesses, who contribute prizes ranging from restaurant and activity gift certificates to retail

merchandise and more. The collaboration between the merchants and the library helps spotlight these businesses during a key shopping season.

Space in the contest is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Major guidelines include the use of edible materials and a maximum base size of 12” x 12”. A complete list of rules is available on the Library’s website, www.EastHamptonPublicLibrary.org.

Families who would like to build their gingerbread creations at the library may join a special Family Gingerbread House Decorating Program on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 10:30 a.m.-noon. Registration is required for this program.

East Hampton Library News & Notes

East Hampton Public Library, 105 Main St, has announced the following. For full program descriptions or to register for a program, call 860-267-6621 or visit easthamptonpubliclibrary.org.

Hours: Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. **Holiday Closing:** The library will be closed Friday, Nov. 28.

All Ages: Village Center Gingerbread House Contest: Winners will receive amazing prizes from local businesses. Drop off your gingerbread house at the library any time during normal hours from Dec. 1-6. Then vote for your favorite house between Dec. 8-19. Prize winners will be announced on Dec. 20 at 2:30 p.m. Open to all ages; check the library website for contest rules.

Jingle Bell Parade: Friday, Dec. 5, 4:30 p.m. Enjoy tunes from the East Hampton High School Jazz Band, sip hot cocoa from the Friends of the Library, snack on cookies from Parks & Rec, and write your letter to Santa. At 5:15 p.m., follow Santa downtown for the annual Christmas tree-lighting on the green. East Hampton Social Services will be collecting donations of new, stocking-stuffer sized items at the event.

Adult Programs: Cookbook Club: Tuesday, Dec. 2, 6:30 p.m. This month’s theme is Cookie Swap. Bring one to two dozen of your favorite cookies, and 12 copies of the recipe to share. Food should arrive ready to eat; the library will provide the plates and forks. Register or drop in.

LibrarYoga: Tuesday, Dec. 9, 6:30 p.m. Yoga

200 Certified instructor Amie Meacham leads an hour of gentle yoga for adults in the library’s Community Room. All levels welcome; bring your own mat if you have one and wear comfy clothes.

Local Author Event: When Magic Happens: Wednesday, Dec. 10, 6:30 p.m. Local author and artist Mindy Maynard will share stories from her book, *When Magic Happens*, celebrating East Hampton and the holiday season, along with a showcase of her original artwork.

Teen Programs: Crochet with Keri: Grades 5-12: Tuesday, Dec. 9, 6 p.m. Gather together in the Teen Space each month to create a tiny crochet project. All supplies and basic instruction included.

Magic: The Gathering (Grades 7-12): Saturday, Dec. 13, 1-3 p.m. All skill levels welcome. Bring your own decks or use one of the library’s.

Children’s Programs: 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.

Lego at the Library – Winter Edition: Grades K-6: Tuesday, Dec. 2, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Help yourself to the materials provided and build a winter-inspired creation. The library will display the final creations in its display case for those who are interested.

Family Gingerbread House Decorating!: Saturday, Dec. 6, 10:30 a.m.-noon. Work together as a family to build and decorate a gingerbread house. Take it home with you after the program or leave it at the library to enter it into the Village Center Gingerbread House Contest. All supplies provided; one house per family. Registration is required, but, once registered, families can drop in anytime between 10:30 a.m. and noon to participate. Please register just one member of your family; your registration covers the whole group.

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. Early Bird Bonanza will be at 6:20 p.m., with regular game play starting at 6:30 p.m. There will be a progressive jackpot and cash prizes.

The Auxiliary Café will be open before games and during intermission, offering hot snacks.

Summer Cultural Trip to France for Students

This is an opportunity for high school students from East Hampton to participate in a nine-day guided educational tour to Southern France and Paris from June 22 to June 30. It is run by Jumpstreet Tours and chaperoned by certified Connecticut teachers

If interested, email Scott Minnick at tripto-france26@gmail.com ASAP to get more information and a detailed itinerary.

CHS Honor Roll

East Hampton residents Marie Doran and Brent Cattanaach each made the East Catholic High School honor roll for the first quarter of the 2025-26 school year.

Doran, a 10th-grader at the school, and Cattanaach, an 11th-grader, each earned First Honors.

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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 who 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

Middle Haddam Public Library News

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

Library Hours: Mondays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; Tuesdays and Fridays, 3-6 p.m.

Featured Artist for November: Betsy Stickley Rich of East Hampton. Her subjects include nature, landscapes, and animals. She paints with oil and watercolors.

Featured Artist for December: Phil Barlow, with a reception Friday, Dec. 12, from 4-6 p.m.

Holiday Gathering: Sunday, Dec. 7, 4:30 p.m. If you are so moved, bring an appetizer or dessert to share, or perhaps a bottle of your favorite beverage.

Mattabeset String Collective: Sunday, Dec. 14, 2 p.m. All are invited to hear an eclectic mix of bluegrass, blues, country and rock, all in a string band style. Call the library to register, as seating may be limited.

Open Mic Night: Friday, Dec. 19, 6-8 p.m. Share your talent or just come and listen to some music.

Senior Center News & Notes

East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., announces the following. **Registration is required for all programs** unless noted; register at myactivecenter.com or by contacting the center at 860-267-4426 or seniorcenter@easthamptonct.gov. Senior center hours are Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Visit www.easthamptonct.gov/east-hampton-senior-center for more information and a list of regular weekly and monthly activities, including games, quilting, Bible study, monthly men's and women's groups, and more.

Closing: The Senior Center will be closed to members through Dec. 1 for the new carpet installation.

Are You 55?: The new minimum age to join the East Hampton Senior Center is now 55. Stop by to join, take a tour and learn about programs and services.

Lunches: Served Monday through Friday, to ages 60 and up. Call to reserve a meal or sign up online. Reservations for the next day's meal are due by 10:30 a.m. the day before. Meals are free; a \$3 donation is requested. A Form 5 document must be completed before registering for lunch; stop by the senior center to complete and submit the form.

Upcoming Events: Trailblazers Walking Group: Monday, Dec. 1, 9 a.m., at Air Line State Park, 69 Smith St. All paces welcome.

Ugly Sweater Day: Wednesday, Dec. 3, 10 a.m. Wear your favorite "ugly" holiday sweater to get the holiday season started.

Tips from a Personal Trainer: Thursdays starting Dec. 4, at 11 a.m. Mary Henderson will work one on one with you to create an exercise plan. Cost is \$25 for four weekly sessions. Limited to three participants. Please register in person.

Design & Create: Thursday, Dec. 4, 1:30 p.m. All are invited to an afternoon of creating. Check with a staff member for more information.

Bike Rides for Seniors: Friday, Dec. 5, 10 a.m., at 506 Church St. in Amston. Bring your bike, helmet and a water bottle. Hosted by Air-Line Cycles and led by Kim Clouser.

AARP Safe Driving Class: Friday, Dec. 5, 11:30 a.m. Course is designed for drivers 50 and older. Cost is \$20 for AARP members, \$25 for

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.

Performers, please call the library to register.

Chatham Community Chess Club is Back: Wednesdays, Dec. 6 and 17, 6-9 p.m., for all ages and skill levels welcome; lessons available. For more information, contact pjhoffman1@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.

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

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 or calling 860-638-9097.

Local Potter to Hold 50th Annual Open Studio Event

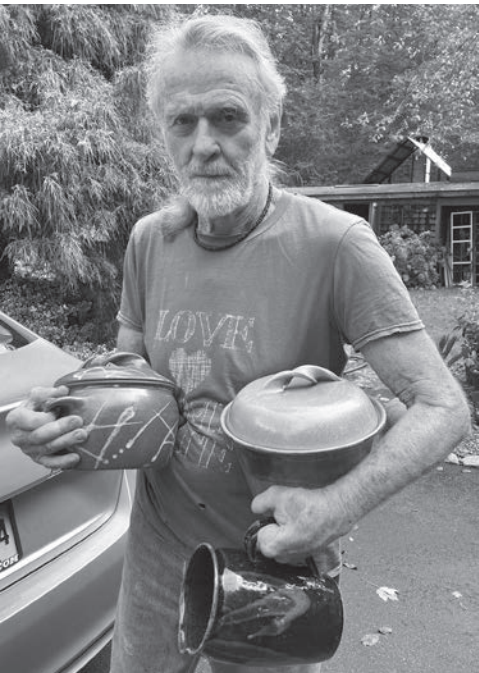
Local potter John Macomber will celebrate a significant milestone this December as he hosts his 50th annual Pottery Open Studio at Greenleaf Stoneware. The event will take place over two weekends, Dec. 6 and 7 and Dec. 8 and 9, with hours from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. each day at 1 Aarons Way, East Hampton.

Macomber, known for his functional stoneware and distinctive glazes, began offering open studio weekends five decades ago as a way to welcome the community into his workspace and provide direct access to his handcrafted pottery. Over the years, the event has become a holiday tradition, drawing both longtime collectors and new visitors.

Guests attending the open studio will have the opportunity to view a wide selection of handcrafted pieces, including bowls, mugs, serving ware, and decorative items. Visitors can meet the artist, tour the working studio, and learn about the techniques Macomber uses in his wheel-thrown and hand-glazed work.

The anniversary year holds special meaning for Macomber, whose pottery has been a fixture in the region's arts community since the early 1970s. Many attendees return annually to purchase gifts, add to their collections, or support local craftsmanship during the holiday season.

The event is open to the public with no ad-



John Macomber

mission fee.

For additional information, call 860-528-6090 or visit greenleafstoneware.com.

Ag Science & Tech Program

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.

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 *Rivereast* 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@mpscct.org, or visit mhs.middletownschoools.org/o/mhs/page/ag-sci.

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.

Advent: This Sunday, the first Sunday in Advent, the Bell Choir will play "The Holly and The Ivy" and "O Sing a Song of Bethlehem."

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.

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.

Choir: Vocal Choir rehearses Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Bell Choir rehearses Wednesdays at 5 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.





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Local bowler Hailey Guiheen has qualified for the 2026 Junior Gold Championships! She’s pictured with coach Becky Godwin and tournament directors Brett and Aubrey Dubeau.

Local Bowler Qualifies for Championships

Ray’s Rebels bowler Hailey Guiheen, daughter of Patrick and Rebecca Guiheen from East Hampton, has qualified for the 2026 Junior Gold Championships. Hailey participated in the Connecticut River Travel Tournament on Nov. 16, with 15 other teammates, to compete. Only the top bowlers were selected move on to the 2026 Junior Gold Championships, which will be held in Minneapolis, Minn., next July. Hailey will represent the Ray’s Rebels, who bowl out of Kickback ‘N Bowl in East Hampton.

Santa is Coming to Town

Santa Claus is coming to the Haddam Neck Community Tree-Lighting on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 4-6 p.m., with a rain date of Dec. 7. All are invited to attend. This family event will be held in the church field at 17 Haddam Neck Rd. in East Hampton and will include a decorated tractor parade, Christmas tree-lighting, a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus, a puppet show, Christmas carols, a children’s craft table, and people can decorate Christmas cookies. This year there will also be a really great magician who interacts with the kids and also does balloon art. Enjoy s’mores at the fire pits, popcorn, hot dogs, chili, hot cocoa and hot cider. Please bring a donation of non-perishable food or personal hygiene items for the East Hampton Food Bank.

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—Kevin James

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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: 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 or www.bethlehemeh.org.

Police News

11/16: Leo Ouellette, 62, of Southington, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, East Hampton Police said. 11/17: Caleb Sonnichsen, 36, of East Hampton, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said. 11/21: Jessica Martin, 44, of East Hampton, was arrested and charged with failure to respond to a payable violation, police said. 11/21: Jay Watkins, 34, of Hartford, was arrested and charged with use of drug paraphernalia, possession of a controlled substance, possession with intent to sell/dispense narcotics, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating a motor vehicle without insurance, police said. From Nov. 17-23, officers responded to 17 medical calls, five motor vehicle crashes and seven alarms, and made nine traffic stops, police said.

St. Patrick Church News & Notes

St. Patrick Church, 47 West High St., is a member of St. John Paul II Parish, along with St. Bridget Church in Moodus. Masses are celebrated Saturdays at 4 p.m. at St. Patrick and 5:30 p.m. at St. Bridget, and on Sundays at 7 and 11:30 a.m. at St. Bridget and 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. at St. Patrick. During the week, Masses are celebrated at 8 a.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays at St. Patrick, and on Wednesdays and Fridays at St. Bridget. Christmas Bazaar: St. Patrick Church is hosting a Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, Nov. 8, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at St. Patrick Parish Center. Come and shop for all kinds of Christmas items. Take a chance on the many basket raffles, browse the display of jewelry and treat yourself or a neighbor at the bake sale or come for lunch.

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 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 if you are interested in participating. Christmas Gifts for Children in Need: The Missions Team is coordinating with the church’s Covenant to Care-matched DCF social worker to provide gifts for ten children on their caseload this Christmas. See the sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall to sign up to help a local child. Information/Assistance: Contact Senior Warden Donna Hryb at 860-633-0472 or donnaadubehryb@gmail.com for more information.

National Audubon Society’s Christmas Bird Count

The Mattabesec Audubon Society (MAS) will hold its 51st Annual Salmon River Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, Dec. 14 – and participants are welcomed. This is part of National Audubon Society’s Christmas Bird Count, which is the longest-running community science bird project in the country. The data obtained provides information about bird populations over time and ultimately helps to inform environmental policies on a national and international level. MAS’s 11 captains will lead their teams into the field to count all individual birds and bird species they see. The society said it is always looking for new people to join in this annual tradition. The team captains enjoy sharing their wisdom with birders of all experience levels. There will also be binoculars that can be borrowed. Even if you can’t go out into the field you can still help. Folks whose homes lie within the 15-mile count circle centered around the Comstock Covered Bridge in East Hampton are asked to keep track of the backyard birds throughout the day and night of Dec. 14, so that their data can be included in the society’s final tally numbers. If you’re interested, visit www.audubon-mas.org or send an email to co-compilers Sharon Dellinger at rsdell@comcast.net or Doreen Jezek at dajezek@gmail.com.

Parks and Rec News & Notes

East Hampton Parks and Recreation has announced the following items of interest. For full program descriptions or more information, or to register, call 860-267-7300 or www.easthamptonrec.com. Holiday Wreath Workshop: Monday, Dec. 1, at Jessica’s Garden in Marlborough. There are two sessions to choose from: one from 4-5:30 p.m. and one from 6:30-8 p.m. Fee is \$35. Gather your friends and design a holiday wreath. Parks and Rec. will have a curated selection of fresh evergreens, pinecones, ribbons, accents, and holly for you to adorn your wreath to your own style. All materials are provided. BYOB and snacks. Belltown Holiday Market: At Town Hall Thursday, Dec. 4, 5-8 p.m. This community event brings together local crafters, artisans, and food vendors. Discover one-of-a-kind handmade gifts, explore seasonal treats to take home, and enjoy the warm spirit of the season. Admission is free. Twinkle & Spice Water Candle Kit Workshop: At Town Hall Thursday, Dec. 4, from 5-7:30 p.m. During the Belltown Holiday Market, stop by the craft table to create your own glowing water candle filled with citrus, star anise, cinnamon sticks, pine greenery and festive berries. Pre-registration is required. Cost is \$10. Wolf Pack Tickets Now Available: At PeoplesBank Arena in Hartford (formerly XL Center) on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, from 6-8 p.m. Tickets are \$25 each and are in the lower level, Section 109. Register online. Afterschool Programs at Memorial School (Grades K-3): Holiday Build A Puppy Stuffy: Tuesday, Dec. 2, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Make your very own cuddly stuffed pup that barks. Cost is \$30.

Handel’s Messiah Concert

The Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam at 52 Middle Haddam Rd. will host the annual Handel’s Messiah Concert, presented by the New England Chamber Choir, on Sunday, Nov. 30, at 4 p.m. The concert is open to the public and admission is a free will offering. Light refreshments will directly follow in the handicapped-accessible lower hall.

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First Place!... Local artist Tom Swimm received the First Place Award for his oil painting titled “Afternoon At The Griswold” at the Lyme Art Association “Inside Story” exhibit. The show opened Sunday, Nov. 23, and will run until Jan. 1, 2026, at the Lyme Art Association, 90 Lyme St. in Old Lyme. For more information, please visit lymeartassociation.org.

Schools Receive \$50K Grant

The state Department of Agriculture recently announced \$837,900 in CT Grown for CT Kids Grant funding, which will support 21 innovative farm-to-school projects across the state – including in East Hampton. East Hampton Public Schools will receive \$49,515 for its Field to Fork Project, an initiative that connects science and culinary students as they grow and prepare local food using hydroponics and raised garden beds. The project also partners with local farms to teach sustainable practices and strengthen the region’s farm-to-school pipeline. “This is a wonderful investment in hands-

on learning, healthy food access, and real agricultural education,” said state Rep. Irene Haines (R-34), whose district includes East Hampton. “The Field to Fork Project brings real-world skills directly into the classroom and deepens students’ connection to Connecticut-grown food. I’m proud to see East Hampton included in this important state-wide effort.” Haines added, “Congratulations to East Hampton Schools and everyone involved in bringing this project to life. Programs like this make a real difference for students, families, and our agricultural community.”

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.

Quilt Show Save the Date

Save the date for the 37th annual Haddam Neck Congregational Church Quilt Show, coming up April 11, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and April 12, 2026, from noon to 4 p.m. at the church, 408 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck. Submit a patriotic-themed or red white and blue quilt for the show, to celebrate the country’s 250th year. Donations of fabric and notions are being accepted for the show’s Bits and Pieces sale. Tea room, raffles and dozens of handmade quilts featured. Suggested donation is \$8. Call 860-993-5311 for more information, or email mapionzio@comcast.net.

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.

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Amy Meisner was diagnosed with MS in 1997. For someone who has always danced, MS would seem like the end. But for Amy, it means the start of a new chapter. She'll never leave the floor, still dances from her wheelchair, and is a great choreographer. Embracing Amy's undying passion, the National MS Society teamed up with LaTonya Swann to create an entirely new and inspired dance experience through virtual reality. See their experience and find out how you can share yours at WeAreStrongerThanMS.org.

Together We Are Stronger.

National Multiple Sclerosis Society



Girls on the Run... The Girls On The Run team at Jack Jackter Intermediate School created kid’s birthday boxes for Colchester Youth and Social Services. Thirty-eight boxes were stuffed with cake mix, frosting, candles, balloons, sprinkles and birthday surprises. They also wrote birthday cards and tucked them inside each one. GOTR is a nonprofit after school group that meets in Colchester.

Applications Sought for BOF Vacancy

The Colchester Board of Finance is seeking applicants for a Republican-held vacancy. Per the town charter, applicants must be registered voters, and the seat must go to a member of the same political party as the individual who has vacated the seat. The appointment will serve until November 2027. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until the position is filled. Interviews are expected to begin on Wednesday, Dec. 10. By charter, the Board of Finance shall make an appointment within 60 days of the vacancy, which became effective on Nov. 16. Applications can be found at ColchesterCT.gov and must be returned to the first selectman’s office. They can be emailed to TScott@ColchesterCT.gov, mailed, or dropped off in person at Town Hall.

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 Army vs. Navy football game and Toys for Tots 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.

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. and Fridays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. **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.

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.westchesterconchurch.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 westchesterconchurch.org, email westconchurch@gmail.com or call the church at 860-267-6711. Pastor Ron Lake can be reached at 860-428-3460.

Ukrainian Catholic Church News

All are invited to worship each week at St. Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, 178 Linwood Ave. The church offers Eastern Rite Divine services. Church doors are open for Divine Liturgy on Saturdays at 4 p.m. and Sundays at 9 a.m.; the Sunday service is bilingual. For more information, call the church at 860-537-2069.

ECBS Honor Roll

Colchester residents Alexander DiBenedetto and Ryan Curry each made the East Catholic High School honor roll for the first quarter of the 2025-26 school year. DiBenedetto, a ninth-grader at the school, earned First Honors, and Curry, a 12th-grader, earned Honors with Distinction.

Artist Exhibit Runs Through Holidays

ARK Distillery is hosting an exhibit by fine artist Sylvina Rollins throughout the holiday season. All are invited to come visit and view Rollins’ original oil paintings and other fine art offerings inspired by farm life, color, gardens and pets. ARK Distillery Is a woman owned establishment launched early this year. It is located at 200 Lebanon Ave. Rollins’ paintings compliment the restored historic building, which once housed a feed and grain store. ARK stands for Acts of Random Kindness. For hour, visit arkdistillery.com, and for more on the artist, visit sylvinarollinsart.com.

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Supporters, Skeptics Speak Out On \$14.5M Proposal

By Toriana Williams

As Colchester prepares for a winter referendum on a sweeping proposal to overhaul the athletic facilities at Bacon Academy and the Town RecPlex, residents and local officials are voicing sharply contrasting views. The proposal – estimated at roughly \$14.5 million – has been years in the making, but recent board meetings show a community divided over turf fields, environmental concerns and how much the town should spend.

A Proposal Focused on Safety, Usability

The plan centers on replacing Bacon Academy's deteriorated athletic fields with artificial turf on the stadium, baseball and softball fields, as well as rebuilding the high school tennis courts, which have been closed for years.

Athletic Complex Building Committee Chair Dave Emery, who has worked in athletic field management for more than 35 years, said the benefits of turf are clear.

"The artificial turf allows a greater capacity of usage," he said. "You can play on it relatively quickly after a rain event."

Emery added that turf provides "consistent playability" and reduces maintenance demands. Although studies vary on safety, he explained that the current conditions at Bacon pose far more immediate risks. Fields have "bare dirt," exposed rocks and drainage issues that become hazardous after storms. He noted that some visiting teams "have refused to play" at Bacon – and that some referees have even gone so far as to say, "Nope, we're not playing on this."

The decision to rebuild Bacon's tennis courts is equally pressing. "They are not playable. They're locked up at this point," stated Emery.

The RecPlex portion of the project would use "20%" of the estimated cost to add a new six-court pickleball complex with lighting, reconstruct tennis and basketball courts, enhance the splash pad and upgrade concessions and bath-

rooms.

Emery said the community deserves facilities "to be proud of, rather than be ... the laughing stock of athletic conferences."

Two Years of Research

First Selectman Bernie Dennler, a Democrat, emphasized that the proposal is the result of long-term planning rather than a rushed initiative. He said the process is "the culmination of a more than two-year process," involving surveys, site visits and extensive committee work. Residents have been raising concerns about Bacon's fields for years, he said, and the town finally has a comprehensive plan and financial stability to address them.

Dennler described the current conditions bluntly, in that Bacon's fields are "essentially built in a swamp with drainage that failed years ago," and improving the safety of those fields is "a pressing concern." At the RecPlex, he said, the tennis courts "either need to be replaced or closed. We can't safely continue patching them."

Environmental concerns raised by residents at recent meetings will be formally reviewed. Dennler confirmed the project "will be presented to the Conservation Commission for review of wetlands impact" and that drainage reports are being verified by an independent engineer.

The Recreation Needs Committee, which included both turf advocates and skeptics, also evaluated turf versus natural grass two years ago. Dennler said the group concluded turf was the appropriate choice for Bacon, while the RecPlex would remain grass.

"There is no right or wrong answer on this," he said, emphasizing that a referendum is the fairest way for residents to make the final decision.

Dennler said the town's improved financial position – Including an AA+ bond rating - helps minimize the impact on taxpayers. His model-

ing shows that for the average homeowner, the cost increase "would be about \$3 a month in the first year," with the rest phased in over about five years.

Vaillancourt: 'I Hate Turf'

Not all town leaders are convinced. Newly elected selectman and former Board of Finance member Tim Vaillancourt, a Republican, has emerged as the proposal's most vocal opponent. He stated his position plainly, "I hate turf. I think it's a terrible idea."

Vaillancourt pointed to the global soccer community's rejection of artificial surfaces.

"All the greatest soccer teams all over the planet require natural grass," he said. "They're insisting that all these fields that have fake turf put down grass fields on top of them."

Vaillancourt said he supports addressing Bacon's football field and its drainage problems, and added he personally would "love to see lights put on at Bacon Academy." But he rejected the overall package on cost and scope. He said spending "\$11 to \$15 million is just exorbitant," and argued that many residents would not be able to afford the resulting tax increase.

He also believes the project is being pushed forward too quickly. "It feels completely rushed to me in an effort to get it out to voters," he said, adding that in referendum scenarios, supporters of large spending tend to vote while opponents often don't. That dynamic, he suggested, could allow an unpopular project to pass.

Environmental concerns also play a role in his opposition. Residents downstream of the wetlands area worry about runoff from turf fields, and Vaillancourt said that when he asked

whether an environmental study had been completed, "I was told that it had not."

But one of his strongest objections relates to long-term costs. The town would bond the project over 25 years, but turf fields typically require replacement after a decade, according to Vaillancourt. "How are we going to bond something for 25 years, and then halfway through ... we're going to have to redo the field? It makes absolutely no sense."

Instead of tackling every improvement simultaneously, Vaillancourt advocated prioritization.

"We just went, 'Well, we just want everything, and we're going to do it all at once.'" He said the town should focus on needs first, then save toward wants, just as it does with its capital improvement plans for vehicles.

Next Steps

The proposal will be formally presented to the Board of Selectmen on Dec. 4, the Board of Education on Dec. 9 and the Board of Finance on Dec. 10. A public hearing with Q&A will follow on Jan. 7 before the town schedules a referendum later in the winter.

Dennler said residents should keep in mind that "every element of this proposal came from the public" and that improved recreation facilities benefit both youth athletes and the local economy. Vaillancourt, meanwhile, hopes voters take a harder look at cost, environmental impact and long-term financial sustainability.

The debate is far from settled – but soon, the voters of Colchester will decide the future of their athletic fields.

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.

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 for additional information. Visit 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.

Revaluation is Coming

State statute mandates that the Town of Colchester must implement a town-wide revaluation of all real estate within its corporate limits effective for the Oct. 1, 2026 Grand List.

Revaluation is required by state law and each town must implement revaluations according to the state mandated schedule. Colchester last implemented revaluation for the 2021 Grand List and now must complete our next revaluation for the Oct. 1, 2026 Grand List, which will be completed in January of 2027.

It is a common misconception that revaluation brings in more tax dollars to the town. The town passes a budget with an approved amount of money to raise from location taxation. Then we divide Grand List total (a tax list containing the assessed values for everything taxable in town) into the approved budget amount in order to strike a mill rate that will produce that exact budgeted amount.

Real estate in Connecticut is taxed based on its value. The town explained that the reason revaluation is mandated is because over time, property values change, and they change differently for different classes of properties (i.e. retail, apartments, industrial, vacant land, condos, single family, multi-family, etc.). They also change differently based on location (i.e. state highways, arterial roads, subdivisions, waterfront, etc.).

Over time, the town said, those disparities move further away from fair and equitable taxation as one section of town, or one class of property, may have appreciated a higher percent than other properties, which means they are no longer being treated the same. Revaluation returns everyone to a starting place where all property is valued as of the same date (Oct. 1, 2026) and being taxed based on its current value, the town said.

While most towns go out to bid for a vendor to perform the entire project, in an effort to both reduce costs and ensure quality control, Colchester staff will work alongside its vendor on a hybrid project with inhouse staff performing many of the functions.

Colchester went out to bid for revaluation services in September and "acting and awarding" the revaluation services contracts was on the Thursday, Nov. 20, Board of Selectman agenda.

The first phase of this project will include reimagining all the real property in town.

"The entire town has not been reimaged at the same time in more than 15 years," Town Assessor John Chaponis stated. "Our office gets about 900-1,000 building permits per year, and we do attempt to update images as we go on those inspections, so while many properties may have newer photos, many do not."

Chaponis added, "Current updated images will result in greater uniformity and accuracy in the valuation phase."

Colchester staff will begin next week driving the town and taking new photos of each property in town. Residents can expect to see vehicles driving down each street taking new photos. Assessment staff will have signs on the vehicles stating they are from the assessor's office and the employee's names & vehicle information will be posted on the assessor's page of the town website. All employees have official town personal identification and anyone with questions is encouraged to call the assessor's office directly at 860-537-7205.

There is both a Q&A as well as a revaluation update that will be posted on the assessor's webpage throughout the duration of the project. The page is located at www.colchesterct.gov/assessor/pages/forms-documents.

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, or for a full list of activities, visit www.colchesterct.gov/senior-center.

Monday, Dec. 1: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize; 10:30 a.m., Unleash Your Joy; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 11 a.m.-noon, fitness orientation by appointment; 12:30 p.m., Mah Jongg, Bridge, Setback.

Tuesday, Dec. 2: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10 a.m., Movie Time – Santa Baby; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 4-8 p.m., Wellness Nights.

Wednesday, Dec. 3: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Walking Group; 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Reflexology by Appointment; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Hand and Foot Card Game; 10:30 a.m., Life Review; 1 p.m., Sew-cial Time today; 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming.

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

Friday, Dec. 5: 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Open Enrollment by appointment only; 9 a.m., Social Service Hours, Open Art Studio; 10:30 a.m., Choral Group; 11 a.m., Yoga; 1:15 p.m., Bingo.



Kim Talarczyk, co-founder of Colchester Cares, recently presented Patty Watts, Director of Senior Services, a check for \$1,900 for grocery cards for seniors facing food insecurity.

Colchester Cares Makes 4th Quarter Donations

Colchester Cares, a giving group that supports various causes in Colchester, recently made its fourth quarter donations totaling \$5,700.

The group voted to give \$1,900 each to the Colchester Food Bank, the Colchester Schools for outstanding lunch balances, and the Colchester Senior Center for grocery cards for seniors facing food insecurity.

Colchester Cares members, who commit to donating \$100 a quarter, present current needs

in town and then vote on where to send the group's collective donations. The group was established in 2020 and since its inception has donated over \$70,000 to Colchester causes.

Colchester Cares always welcomes new members who would like to give back to the community. For more information, please visit www.colchestercares.org or follow the group on Facebook.

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Burroughs Banks Six Scores, Bobcats Retain Rail



Riddick Burroughs, a senior quarterback at Bacon Academy, threw for three touchdowns and ran for three more as the Bobcats defeated RHAM to win the Battle for the Rail.

By Josh Howard

Bacon Academy/Lyman Memorial starting quarterback Riddick Burroughs saved his best performance for his last on the local fields.

Playing his final football game, the senior signal caller totaled six touchdowns as the Bobcats beat RHAM High School, 46-28, at Bacon Academy on Nov. 22.

Bacon Academy head coach Sean Ladyga said Burroughs’ six score sendoff is a credit to his quarterback’s instinctive playmaking ability and work ethic.

“He works harder than anyone. If we work out in the weight room, he goes home and does a second lift at home,” Ladyga said of his field general.

Burroughs dazzled the home crowd from the opening whistle to the last, rushing for 148 yards and three touchdowns and throwing for 178 yards and three scoring strikes – all to fellow senior Joey Gignac.

“We wanted to win this for our seniors. There are 17 of us and we’ve all been playing football together a long time,” said Burroughs, whose uniform was covered in mud following the 18-point home win. “We wanted to end on a high note.”

It was the second straight year that the Bobcats won the annual “Battle for the Rail”, blanking the Raptors 23-0 in last year’s showdown at East Hartford High School. RHAM still holds a 10-9 advantage in the annual series that dates back to 2006.

In the latest installment, the neighboring rivals played a first quarter full of fireworks as the team traded touchdowns on five straight possessions.

Four minutes into the game, Bacon Academy senior Lucian Dean sparked the scoring party with a 53-yard touchdown run down the left sidelines before he had to exit the game with an injury.

RHAM responded on the following possession when Hudson Burkhardt rumbled in from 17 yards out and the ensuing two-point conversion from Cayden Caplette gave the visiting Raptors an 8-6 lead with 3:08 to play in the first quarter.

On the following offensive play, Bacon regained the lead when Burroughs rolled to his right and connected with Gignac, who turned up field and raced for a 51-yard touchdown.

A 60-yard touchdown pass from Jeremy Rodrigues to Angelo Caccamo and a two-point conversion from Burkhardt gave RHAM a 16-13 advantage in the first quarter, but Burroughs again countered three plays later when he ran for a 40-yard score down the left sideline to provide the home team a 20-16 advantage on the first play of the second quarter.

It marked the final time the lead would change hands.

“We had a couple losses in a row and it was our last game, so I really wanted to make it a

good game for all of us,” noted Burroughs, who knew he’d have to pick up the slack once Dean was injured in the first quarter. “When my friend Lucian went down, I wanted to turn it on – we wanted to win this for him.”

With 8:32 to play in the third quarter, Burroughs connected with Gignac for the duo’s second scoring strike, this time from 21 yards out. Senior lineman DJ Medina made a big block that sprung Gignac for the score.

Burroughs then rushed for consecutive touchdowns (43 and 5 yards) to expand the Bobcats’ lead to 40-16 with less than a minute left in the third quarter.

In the fourth quarter, the dual-threat quarterback sustained a knee injury that forced him to miss a few plays before he had his Matthew Stafford moment when he returned to the field to complete his touchdown six-pack, tossing a 20-yard scoring strike to Gignac with 5:52 left in the game.

“He’s as tough as they come; this is what he lives for,” Ladyga said of Burroughs, a three-starter behind center.

Despite his knee stiffening up, Burroughs said he didn’t want to finish his final game on the sidelines.

“I just wanted to tough it out,” added Burroughs. “I could still move and nothing was broken, so I wanted to get back out there and put this team away.”

Gignac, who finished with six catches for 166 yards and the three touchdowns, said his chemistry with Burroughs blossomed this fall.



Senior Joey Gignac eyes the end zone for the first of his three touchdowns as Bacon Academy won 46-28, retaining ‘The Rail’ for a second straight season.

“It showed how much we’ve grown together,” added Gignac, who also caught a two-point conversion. “This means so much. It was the last game ever for me in football, and as a team we really came together.”

The win wrapped up a 5-5 regular season for the Bobcats and marked the end of year one under Ladyga.

Ladyga replaced Bill Chaffin, who stepped down following the win over RHAM a season ago after leading the program for three seasons. Ladyga had previously served as an assistant under Chaffin in 2023 and returned to take over the reins this fall.

“Today we were able to put a full game together,” expressed Ladyga, whose team eclipsed 40 points for the second time this fall. “We’ve struggled all year putting points up in the beginning of the game, but today we knew we would have some advantages with their defense.”

The Ladyga era started with three straight wins (Oxford, Amistad, and Windham) before

the team dropped five of the next six games prior to the season finale victory.

The victory over RHAM ended the high school careers for the 17 seniors, who departed after helping the program win the most games since 2019.

“This senior class is super close,” noted Gignac. “We’ve been together since youth, so winning The Rail and bringing it back again means a lot.”

Ladyga said that his Class of 2026 players set a standard for the next generation of Bobcats to follow.

For Burroughs and the departing of the seniors, retaining The Rail is a legacy they are happy to be leaving.

“I’m proud of us for how far we’ve come,” noted Burroughs. “We wanted to show the underclassmen what it’s like to win against a rival. We lost The Rail a couple of years back and it’s good to get in back two years in a row, and hopefully they’ll get it back for a third.”





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A Daisy Donation... On Nov. 16, Daisy Girl Scout Troop 63139 presented a hand-made donation box to Ray of Light Farm, filled to the brim with food to help care for the farm’s animals. The troop then spent the day meeting the animals and learning about their daily care. Future visitors can now add their own donations to support the farm when stopping by for a visit.

Holiday Homecoming Returns Dec. 6

The Colchester Parks & Recreation Department invites all to its annual Holiday Homecoming, taking place Saturday, Dec. 6, beginning at 4 p.m., on the Town Green.

This event will feature: Santa’s Grand Arrival on a fire truck at around 4:30 p.m.; the annual Tree-Lighting Ceremony at 5 p.m.; live holiday music from the Bacon Academy Chorus; Family Activities: Letters to Santa, ornament sales, and a toy drive; Seasonal Treats: Cookies, cider, and hot cocoa; and a bonfire and caroling under the winter sky.

“Holiday Homecoming is more than an event – it’s a celebration of community,” said Tiffany Quinn, Recreation Director. “We love seeing families and friends come together to share the joy of the season. It’s what makes Colchester so special.”

This event is free and open to all ages. In case of severe weather, updates will be posted on our website and social media channels.

For more details, visit www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department or call 860-537-7297.

Festival of Lights Fundraiser

The Bacon Academy Board of Trustees will launch a new annual holiday tradition, the Festival of Lights, on Friday, 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 performances 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 Saturday, 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 or visiting baconacademytrustees.org/festivaloflights.html.

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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 Venmo are accepted.

A new photo setting is available this year. Photography donated by SMS Photo of Colchester. For appointments, call Janice at 860-608-8489. Walk-ins will be accepted if time is available.

All proceeds will support the Colchester Dog Park. For more information, email tag-nobark@gmail.com.

Colchester Federated Church News

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

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

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: Wednesday, 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.

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. You can also send your contribution to Wreaths, c/o Joanne Rioux, 219 Lakeview Dr., Colchester, CT 06415.

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 participating 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 gift cards, wine baskets, pottery and other prizes.

Visit www.cohoct.com/ornamenttrail for more information and to register.

Community sponsors and participants in the event are: Family Pizza, Ooh La La Boutique, Sweet Aroma Coffeehouse, Studio E Dance & Acro, My Kids Place, Skyview Team at Carl Guild & Associates, Priam Vineyards, Paul Catalano at StateFarm Insurance, ARK Distillery, Gifts on the Green, Colchester Federated Church, Twisted Dog Yoga, Colchester Senior Center, Folklore & Fable, Coldspring Farm, Colchester Mill Fabrics & Quilting, and Purring Pottery.

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.

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 Christmas 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 buffet dinner and cabaret style performances. Space is limited.

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. For more information visit <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1346389>.

Pyrogy Sale

St. Mary Ukrainian Church in Colchester will have a Pyrogy Sale on Saturday, Dec. 13. To place your order, call Brenda at 860-365-0281 no later than Dec. 7.

Holly Fair Dec. 6

Colchester Federated Church will hold its annual Holly Fair Saturday, Dec. 6, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the church, 60 Main St.

There will be handmade crafts, baked goods and cookies by the pound, the White Elephant Room, paint-your-own ornaments, raffle baskets, and the Holly Café. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be there too!

All are invited to stop by.

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 christian-lifechapel.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.

Donuts with Don: Is back Fridays at 10 a.m. It’s an open discussion on the theme: How does God fit in this thing called life?



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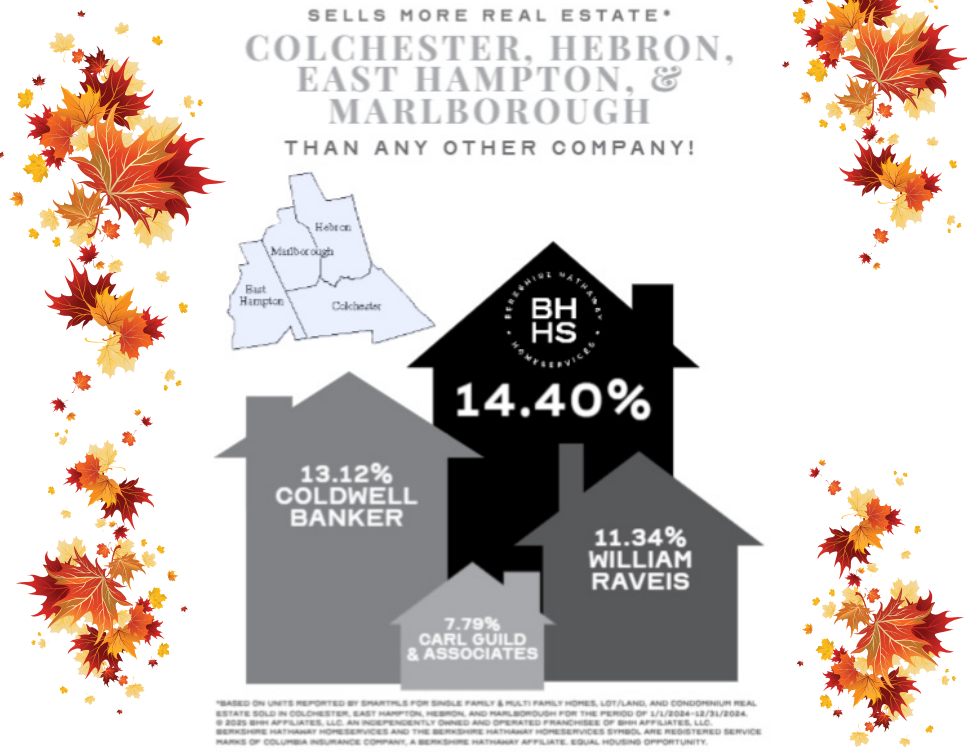
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Chester



Olivia
Crable



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Wojcik



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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. and Fridays, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

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](#).



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A Season of Thanks and Fresh Beginnings at Hope ACE Hardware

As Thanksgiving approaches, we're taking a moment to reflect with gratitude on the many things we're thankful for — and you, our valued customers, are at the top of that list. Your patience and loyalty during our recent store remodel meant a lot. We know that construction can be inconvenient, and we're truly appreciative of your understanding and continued support throughout the process.

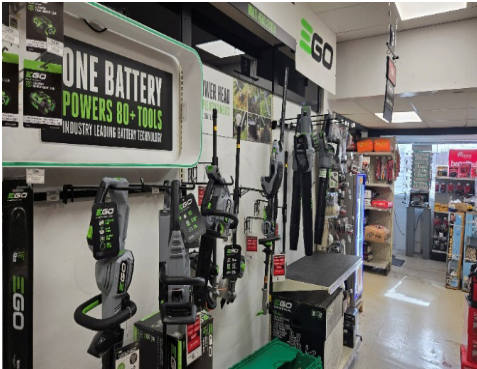
Now, we're thrilled to welcome you back to a new and improved shopping experience! Our refreshed layout was designed to make finding what you need easier than ever, and our shelves are now stocked with exciting new merchandise, including the latest tools, seasonal décor, and home improvement essentials.

To show our appreciation, we're also hosting a special **Post-Remodel Clearance Sale** — the perfect opportunity to take advantage of deep discounts on select items while exploring everything new in-store. It's our way of saying *thank you* for standing by us as we made these upgrades.

As we celebrate this season of gratitude, we want to express how thankful we are for your trust, friendship, and ongoing support. You are the heart of our business, and it's a privilege to serve this wonderful community every day.

From all of us at Hope Ace Hardware, we wish you and your family a warm, joyful, and safe Thanksgiving. We look forward to seeing you soon — and showing you all that's new!

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RE11-28-25

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Lighthouse Seafood Owners Pursuing Dream

By Anne Lilburn

For Lewis and Patricia Lara, owning a restaurant had been a dream for years, but it wasn't until Lewis retired from his career in construction, and Patricia from her job as a restaurant cook, that it became a dream that they were finally able to pursue.

The Laras are the owners of Lighthouse Seafood and Grill in Portland, which celebrated one year in business this past October.

The Laras' daughter, Patty Siegal, said her dad had been retired for almost two years and was itching to do something when they finally decided to make the restaurant a reality.

"My dad's not used to sitting still," she said.

When they saw a "for lease" sign off Route 66, in a familiar spot that Siegal said she remembers passing by on childhood trips to Nelson's Family Campground, the family knew, she said, that "we had found our spot."

The restaurant, located at 662 Portland-Cobalt Rd., has been taking shape ever since – and it's truly a whole family endeavor. Siegal works full time as a nurse, but she said when the restaurant first opened, she and her brother were

both waiting tables. These days, she has a new baby at home, but she still said she comes by on the weekends to help out, and her brother works there as a cashier.

The menu, said Siegal, was born out of the New England-style seafood that her parents love to cook, with her mom specializing in fried seafood and her father focusing on broiler dishes, like shrimp scampi, rainbow trout and cod.

"A lot of the dinners that we have, those are my dad's Sunday dinners that we grew up with," said Siegal. "Those are things that my dad has been cooking and experimenting with for years. We were like, well, if we love them, maybe other people will love them as well."

Lighthouse Seafood and Grill has plenty to offer people who don't like seafood as well, such as sandwiches and burgers, but Siegal said that both the seafood and beachy vibe of the restaurant was very appropriate for her family.

"We're ocean people," she said. "We like to go to the beach. That's the stuff that we did in the summer."

She said they were happy to be bringing seafood a bit further inland, so that people didn't



Lewis and Patricia Lara own Portland's Lighthouse Seafood and Grill, which celebrated its first anniversary this past October. Photo by Patty Siegal

Christmas Sweets and Treats Holiday Sale

The First Congregational Church of Portland, U.C.C., invites everyone to its annual cookie sale, which will be held Saturday, Dec. 13, from 9 a.m.-noon, in the fellowship hall of the church, located at 554 Main St.

A variety of Christmas cookies will be packaged by the half dozen. Other sweets including gingerbread men lollipops, Christmas-themed pretzels, and assorted candy will

also be available.

Besides cookies and candy items, there will also be inexpensive gifts, filled mugs and Christmas stockings, and gift baskets for sale. If you need a grab bag gift for your holiday party or a gift for that special someone in your life, you may find just what you need at this sale.

For more information, call the church at 860-342-3244.

Public Riverfront Access Progress

Portland's Riverfront Access Committee is looking for donations.

The committee announced that, since its groundbreaking ceremony in October, Butler Construction has cleared a pathway to the river, and will soon construct a roadway with a parking area near the water.

The committee said it has a state grant to cover most of the initial road costs – but is asking interested canoers, kayakers, paddleboarders, and water & fishing enthusiasts for donations to support the addition of picnic tables, signage,

a ramp, plus general completion and maintenance of the new park. Between now and the end of this year Portland resident Rick Sharr will match any donations, up to \$10,000.

Send your donations to P.O. Box 402, Portland, CT 06480 and make the check out to the Brownstone Quorum with the memo stating "Riverfront Access Park." Note: your donation is eligible for a federal income tax deduction, as this is a 501(c)(3)c organization. Also, if you are interested in Riverfront Access Park news, please include your email and address.

Festival of Wreaths Almost Here

Registration is still open for the Portland Historical Society's 2025 Festival of Wreaths, "Jingle & Mingle."

Clubs, organizations, businesses, schools, artists, decorators, individuals and families are invited to participate in the 14th annual Festival of Wreaths, to be held Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 6 and 7, in the Hemlock Grange Hall at 17 Sage Hollow Rd. All wreaths are welcome, as are tabletop decor and centerpieces.

All decorations should be pre-registered by next Thursday, Dec. 4. Decorated wreaths and tabletop decor must be brought to the Grange Hall at 17 Sage Hollow Rd. on Thursday, Dec. 4, from 4:30-6 p.m. or Friday, Dec. 5, from noon-2 p.m. If you would like to participate but don't have time to create a wreath, for a donation of \$30 a Historical Society "elf" will decorate one for you. Your name, business or organization

will be listed as the donor. To sign up to donate a wreath, send a quick email to PortlandCTHistory@gmail.com or leave a brief message including your name and contact information at 860-342-5455 and a volunteer will contact you.

The Festival of Wreaths will be open Saturday, Dec. 6, and Sunday, Dec. 7, from noon to 4 p.m. in the Grange Hall at 17 Sage Hollow Road. The festival is a teacup raffle. Tickets for the teacup-style raffle are \$1 each, or a full card of 24 tickets can be purchased for \$20. Tickets are placed in the gift bag for the decorations you would like to take home. Winners will be contacted after 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7.

On Saturday, Dec. 6, PHS A Cappella, a select group of Portland High School vocal students, led by director Samuel R. Tucker, will sing a collection of traditional carols at 3 p.m.

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

have to head to coastal areas to get that kind of food.

The restaurant is decorated with a lighthouse theme, including a prized painting of a lighthouse that her father has had for many years. It was gifted to him by an artist on Block Island.

This summer, they added an outdoor patio space for warmer weather, and Siegal said they are working on getting a liquor license so that patrons will soon be able to enjoy a glass of wine with their seafood.

She said they have a fireplace and a cozy ambience upstairs in their dining area that she hopes people will appreciate, and they'll soon be putting up a Christmas tree. With the holidays coming up, she said they are open to hosting bigger parties as well.

"It's just cozy," she said. "It's family friendly, owned by family. We just want to make you feel

like you're at home, I guess, and having a good meal."

While dining, Siegal emphasized, anyone who eats at Lighthouse will also be supporting her parents' retirement dream, and maybe even getting some inspiration.

"You know, retirement doesn't mean you have to sit at home and do nothing," Siegal said. "Retirement means that you can finally follow your dreams."

She said that that drive to keep moving is part of what defines her family, even when the work is hard — or when you're learning something new, like how to run a restaurant business.

"We're risk takers," Siegal said of her family. "You know, we do it because we want to thrive, but we [also] do it because when you have a passion, you have to seek it."

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 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 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

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.

Holiday Closing

Portland town offices will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday Friday, Nov. 28.

Toys for Tots

The Town of Portland Garage is assisting the U.S. Marines in its annual Toys for Tots campaign, which runs through Dec. 15.

All are asked to donate new, unwrapped toys to children in need. Donation location: Portland Town Garage, 505 Glastonbury Tpke.

PHS Alumni Game

If you are an alumnus of the boys or girls soccer teams at Portland High School, you're invited to come join all former players as they turn back the clock and step onto the pitch to showcase their skills, in the annual PHS Alumni Game.

The game will be played Friday, Nov. 28, at Portland High School. Women play at noon, followed by the men at 2 p.m. Please arrive a minimum of 30 minutes early to register for a jersey and warm-up.

For more info, contact John Discenza at johnnydis@sbcglobal.net.

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A Silo in Full Bloom

RE2-7-25

All grieving adults are welcome, whether your loss is recent or past, and you may come to one session or as many as you would like. This support group is non-denominational and brought to you by a collaborative effort of the Hebrew faith communities. There is no registration.

St. Peter's Donates to RHAM

The donation – a portion of the proceeds from

WAIM is open for clients to shop Tuesday-Thursday and Friday from 9 a.m.-noon, and is open for donations Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon. Monetary donations are accepted and used to assist those in need for housing and other assistance in a short-term financial crisis.

A luncheon featuring Chef Kraemer's famous clam chowder and corn chowder will

For more details, call the church at 860-228-3244 or visit www.StPetersHebron.com.

This Week's Scheduled Events/Meetings: Saturday, 11/29: Yoga at 9:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall; Sunday, 11/30: Worship Service with Youth Birthday Celebration at 10 a.m. (in-person in the sanctuary, as well as online and livestreamed); Sunday, 11/30: 'tover Sunday Coffee Hour at 11 a.m., Fellowship Hall; Sunday, 11/30: Community Chats and Hygiene Kit Assembly for Church World Services at 11:30 a.m.; Monday, 12/1: Bible study at 9:30 a.m., online via Zoom; Tuesday, 12/2: AA Meeting at 7:30

Save the Dates: Sunday, Nov. 30, Hygiene Kit Assembly at 11:30 a.m. for Church World Service – help pack essential supplies for those in need. Sunday, Dec. 14: Women's Fellowship Annual Cookie Sale at 11 a.m.; Sunday, Dec. 21: Children's Christmas Pageant during worship at 10 a.m.

Early Childhood Center (Daycare): Offers

Caring Shepherds Social Ministry Group: Open food pantry days held to distribute food staples, household and hygiene items as well as Bibles and prayers. All are welcome. For more information about donating or participating in food pantry days, call the church at 860-228-1152.

Weekly Virtual Coffee Hour: Wednesdays at

Recurring Meetings: Balance Class: Mondays, 10:30-11 a.m., \$5; **Connections:** Mondays at 2 p.m.; **Weekly Weeders/Garden Committee:** Mondays at 4 p.m.; **Choir:** Wednesdays at 6 p.m.; **Monthly Meetings:** Building and Grounds, Community Events planning, Finance, Liturgy, Pastoral Care and Vestry.

RE11-14-25

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DOWN

- 1 "Madam Secretary" actress
- 2 Baby eel
- 3 Give in a rope
- 4 "The View", e.g.
- 5 Kind of party
- 6 Makes worse
- 7 Dublin's home
- 8 Paw part
- 9 Bedroom pair
- 10 Perfect pass
- 11 In a watchful way
- 12 Horror film staple
- 13 Wowed
- 19 Cancels
- 21 "Crazy" bird
- 24 Like an Oscars gala
- 27 Word with birth or interest
- 28 Heath Bar alternative
- 29 Dull pain
- 30 Winter ride
- 31 Airport area

- 33 Period of time
36 Preparing, as
kimchi
37 Lawn improve-
ment process
39 Lace edging
40 Shopping mecca
42 Troops
44 Like B.B. King's
music

- 47 Horror or sci-fi,
e.g.
48 Notched, as a
leaf
49 Bishops' body
50 Ribisi series,
"Sneaky ____"
51 Nerve fiber
52 Insurable item
54 Rocky peak

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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Gilead Gets the Giggles...Gilead Congregational Church hosted a successful Funny 4 Funds comedy night on Friday, Nov. 21. With an enthusiastic audience and the strong support of local sponsors, the event raised over \$3,400 to further the church's mission. Gilead thanked all of the event sponsors.

Upcoming at the Library

The following events are taking place at Douglas Library. For more information, and list of all weekly activities, call 860-228-9312 or visit douglaslibrary.org.

Thanksgiving Closings: The library is closed today, Nov. 28, for the Thanksgiving holiday. It will reopen Saturday, Nov. 29, at 10 a.m.

Adult Programs: Medicare Info Session: Tuesday, Dec. 2, at 3 or 6 p.m. Learn the ins and outs of Medicare and the differences between original Medicare and Medicare Advantage with Mark Macrina, a local insurance agent with an office in Colchester.

Mahjong Group: Tuesday, Dec. 2, 11 a.m. The group is starting up again; all skill levels welcome.

Access Health CT: Thursday, Dec. 4, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Have questions about insurance? Turning 26 and will soon be uninsured? Come in and speak with Sabrina about enrolling in Access Health Connecticut Insurance.

Friday Film: Dec. 5, 1 p.m. *Flow* will be shown; the movie is rated PG-13.

Chair Yoga: Saturday, Dec. 6, 10 a.m., led by Karen Gomez. Registration required.

Hebron Holiday: Saturday, Dec. 6, 3-5 p.m. Celebrate the holidays with a kid's craft at the library, RHAM choir, Santa on the firetruck and the lighting of the Christmas Tree in front of the Old Town Hall.

Children: Lego Club: Every Monday, 4-5 p.m. All kids are invited to come build some Lego creations.

Storytimes: Every Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 10:15 a.m. Tuesday is ideal for ages 15 months to 3 years old. Thursdays are geared to ages 3-5 years old as we learn letters, numbers and colors. Siblings are always welcome at either session.

PJ Storytime: Every first and third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m.

Artist to Share Vibrancy At Local Library

The Hebron Creative Collective will proudly present resident Judith Podell's colorful work at the Douglas Library during the show opening on Dec. 3.

Podell's paintings, which exude bright colors in the form of flowers, will be showcased for all of December.

The event is free and light refreshments are hoped to be served.

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

★ Housing Bill, cont. from page 1

tial developments, to the bill's stipulations requiring towns to provide services for residents experiencing homelessness, including portable showers and restrictions on what the bill deems "hostile architecture," such as benches with armrests that prevent people from using them to lie down.

Leon spoke in favor of the housing bill, and against the resolution to oppose it.

"Connecticut faces one of the most severe housing shortages in the country," she said. "We [have to] address this problem; we can't just keep putting it off into the future."

Leon added that she believed that "it doesn't matter what resolution we pass here, the governor is signing this bill."

"I look at this [bill] as an opportunity for us to work together as a community and develop plans that work for East Hampton," she said.

Leon also defended the language in the bill that related to the homeless community.

"Our homeless population is growing," she said. "Providing showers to people gives them an opportunity to have good hygiene, and be better prepared to go a possible job interview."

Leon mentioned that, as political director for the Connecticut AFL-CIO, she worked in the capitol, and was familiar with the goings on there. She said it was clear to her that the bill was going to be signed.

She also argued the bill was not, in her eyes, as onerous as others were portraying it.

"Towns already perform these functions. We're already required to have housing plans," she said, adding that she did not read this bill as saying that local planning and zoning would be completely cut out of the development process.

At this point, Hintz leapt at the chance to go after Leon's campaign funding from labor groups and her ties to Hartford, pointing out that the governor had attended some of her fundraisers during the campaign. Leon said she didn't believe campaign contributions had any bearing on her decision to support the bill.

"People supported me because they know how I stand on issues and I'm not going to back down on how I stand on issues," she said. "If you've known me, you know where I stand the majority of my adult life on the issues, and that has not changed."

She also noted that it was typical for state-level officials to support local candidates in their party, and said that under previous Republican administrations, Republicans at the state level had also supported local candidates.

Markham cut in and warned Hintz that he was "stretching it" and "making personal attacks."

In the end, the two council members, who were seated next to each other, came to a relatively peaceful conclusion.

"I think we're going to agree to disagree," said Hintz.

"We can agree to disagree," agreed Leon.

Republican council member Tim Feegel said that many of Hintz's points resonated with him, particularly when it came to concerns over infrastructure requirements (including sewers) and the impact of new development on schools and even the fire department.

"We all want to keep our little town like it is," said Feegel, "and I know it's growing. No doubt about it, we're going to have to accept some of this, but we also like to have something that's going to fit more into this town" than what he described as "cookie cutter" developments.

Council member Richard Knotek, a Democrat, said, "I think perhaps this legislation isn't as bad as some people think, nor do I think it's as good as some people may think."

Knotek said the bill was complicated and had a lot of components. He advocated getting input

from the town planner to better understand the ramifications of the legislation on East Hampton.

"I frankly am not in favor of legislation that I don't fully understand," he added, but noted that he agreed that the state had a housing crisis that required action.

Markham said he wasn't opposed to the bill because he saw it as an opportunity.

"I look at this as an economic incentive bill, and something vital for the state of Connecticut in the future. Without adequate housing, without safe and modern housing, many of our citizens are not going to succeed and many of our businesses are going to go out of business."

In the end, the council tied with a 3-3 vote on the resolution opposing the housing bill – with Hintz, Feegel and Knotek voting for it, and Markham, Leon and Solomon voting against it. Four votes would have been required to adopt the resolution, so it did not pass.

Council member Karen Wanat, a Democrat, was not present for the meeting due to a scheduling conflict. In an email to the *Rivereast*, she said she was not asked for her availability before the meeting, and was given only 24 hours' notice. She was directing a group of young students in a theatre production and said she immediately notified the council of her conflict.

Wanat had made clear her opposition to the bill, sharing with the *Rivereast* a letter she wrote to the governor the week prior urging him to veto the bill.

Hintz said he believed that if all members of the council had been present, the resolution would have passed.

"Unfortunately," he said, "the scheduling of the meeting was a challenge."

Going forward, both Hintz and Leon said in phone calls that they believed that the impending signing of HB 8002 meant that there would be a need for further discussion at the town level, but they took that to mean very different things.

Hintz said he hoped to organize with other town governments to put pressure on the governor and the state, and that he foresaw potential future court challenges to this bill. He also said that he thought taxpayers would have the opportunity to "vote down" any specific items required by the legislation at the town level.

Leon, on the other hand, said she hoped the legislation would be an opportunity for the town to tap into state-level incentives, and she thought the planning should start soon.

"We should begin now sooner rather than later," she said, adding that she thought the town should launch a "a task force or a commission" where citizens work together with the town planner to figure out how to maximize the benefits.

"You [can] come up with a plan," she said, "but it takes collaboration. It doesn't take sitting at a table and just yelling at each other or bashing people."

Wanat said that, while she continued to have concerns, she realized the bill would likely be signed and the town would need to proceed accordingly.

"With the likely approval of HB 8002," she wrote, "East Hampton must take a proactive approach to protecting our small-town character, natural resources, and infrastructure while listening closely to resident concerns."

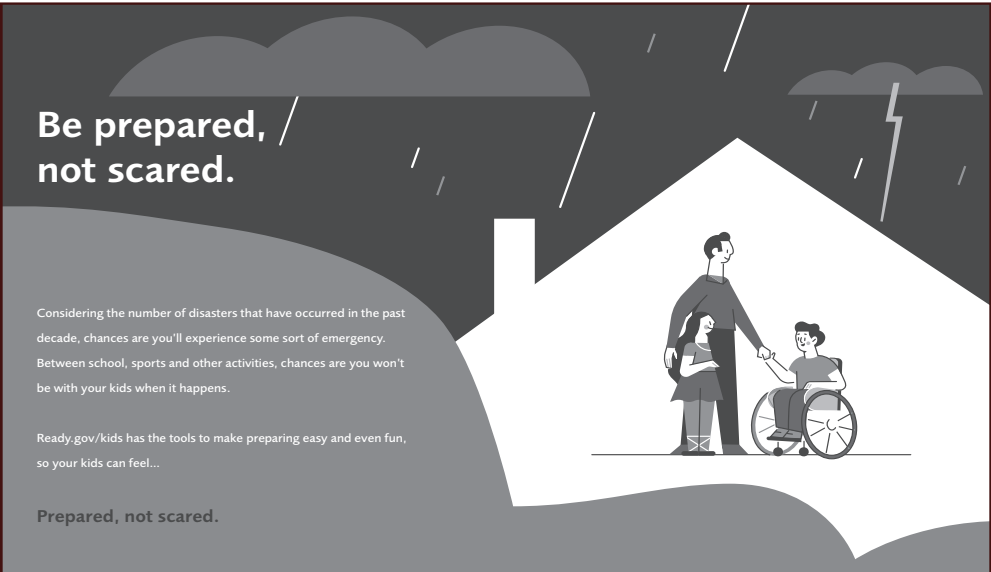
She advocated for the town to continue revising its Plan of Conservation and Development and said she hoped to "identify ways to comply with state planning requirements while preserving East Hampton's small-town feel," including identifying areas where "modest growth could occur without environmental or infrastructure strain."

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"PET OF THE WEEK"



Bo, 2 yrs, is a gentle giant who clearly wants love and attention, but he's uncertain, as if he doesn't quite believe he's entitled to such kindness. In the strangeness of the shelter, he's less interested in playing than in being petted and fussed over . We're not certain how Bo would be living with other cats. He has been fine with other respectful cats at the shelter, so it's possible that he would be fine living with a calm, respectful cat. But we think he'd probably enjoy having his people all to himself.



Hi, I'm **Cyrus**! I am a 4 month old purebred Havanese. I currently weigh 7lbs (I think I may be approximately 14lbs full grown!). I'm still learning about the big world, but am an active, mischievous, and adventurous guy who wants to get out and about with you! I don't know too much about a leash and harness yet, but I am doing my best and enjoy taking in every smell, sight, and discovery outside. I am a smart boy and am doing well with my housetraining too! I previously lived with and currently live with other small dogs in my foster home and would not mind sharing my space with another dog or two. Gentle children 6 years of age and older are in my wheelhouse as well!

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Obituaries

East Hampton

Patrick S. Aiello

Patrick S. Aiello, 36, of East Hampton, passed away Thursday, Nov. 20. Born Dec. 28, 1988 in Hartford, he was the son of Robert Aiello and the late Rosemary (Feeney) Aiello of East Hampton. Patrick was a 2007 graduate of East Hampton High School and had been a parishioner of St. Patrick Church. Besides his father, Patrick is survived by his brothers and their wives, Matthew and Kara Aiello of East Hampton and Daniel and Jezinia Aiello of East Hampton; along with his three nephews and his niece Ian, Nathan, Julian and Lailah. Funeral services will be private at the convenience of the family and burial will be in the family plot in Lake View Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please send a donation in Patrick's honor to shatterproof @ www.shatterproof.org. To leave online condolences please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



East Hampton

John Frederick Riley

It is with a heavy heart that we announce the passing of John Frederick Riley, who passed peacefully at his home on Saturday, Nov. 22, surrounded by his family. John was born March 4, 1942 to Richard and Jean Riley. John was the middle child with an older and younger sister, Pat and Sue. They loved him in life and will miss him dearly in death. John served his country in the Navy and Reserves for five years and during that time he met the love of his life and future wife, Linda L. La-Rochelle. They spent over 40 years together and even in passing in 2004, John continued to love his wife as much as the day they were married. He never remarried, always looking forward to the day they would be together again. John worked for more than 32 years at Pratt & Whitney and retired in the early '90s. In 1982, he and Linda were invited to stay at their close friends summer cottage in Phippsburg, Maine. They fell in love with the town and the people and from that moment until 2019 John spent every summer at the cottage, he and Linda purchased together in that small Maine town. They made friends with people that became family to both of them. John and Linda's Phippsburg family was an intricate part of their lives and will forever be their daughter's family too. John leaves behind his daughter, Darcy and grandchildren Joshua and Emily (of whom he is so incredibly proud); his sisters, Pat and Sue, nephew David and nieces Karen and Debbie. There will be a private memorial for John at the discretion of the family to be held in memory of John in both Connecticut and Maine. To leave online condolences, please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Colchester

Sharon Dorothy Canny

Sharon Dorothy (Welch) Canny passed away Monday, Nov. 17, at Colebrook Village in Hebron, where she made her home for the past five years. She was the beloved wife of the late Robert J. Canny. Sharon was born in Chicago on March 31, 1935, the only child of the late George and Dorothy Hicks Welch. She was educated at Catholic schools in Chicago and New York and received her BA at St. Joseph College in West Hartford. She went on to earn her MA in library services from Catholic University, and her lifelong passion was to bring the gift of reading to people of all ages and abilities. A woman of faith and a devout and lifelong Catholic, Sharon entered the Sisters of Mercy in 1957 and taught in elementary schools and at Lauralton Hall High School as well as summer courses at her alma mater, St. Joseph College. For 14 years, Sharon served as librarian and a teacher of religion and English at Mercy High School in Middletown. At Mercy she was known and loved for directing Drama Club and Children's Theatre productions and the Mercy/Xavier musicals. Following that, Sharon served as pastoral associate at Notre Dame Parish in Durham. In 1978, Sharon followed a new calling and married Bob, who was the executive director of Hospice Care in Rhode Island. During that time, Sharon was hired by the Dever School in Taunton, Mass., to establish a library for adults with intellectual disabilities, one of her proudest accomplishments. She went on to serve as children's librarian in North Smithfield, R.I. Following Bob's passing in 1987, Sharon moved back to Connecticut, where she enjoyed meeting and spending time with her neighbors and friends in Colchester, especially "the girls" on Fairway Drive, and at Colebrook Village. She was a very active parishioner and Eucharistic Minister at the Church of the Holy Family in Hebron. Sharon also found community at Glastonbury Abbey in Hingham, MA where she became an Oblate, faithfully made retreats and enjoyed many trips. Always a lady, gracious and well-dressed, Sharon enjoyed reading, theatre, shopping and especially a glass of wine and a good meal with friends. Sharon leaves behind her closest and dear friend, Sr. Patricia McKeon, RSM, and members of the Canny Family. Sharon had a special gift for making and keeping in touch with good friends at every stage of her life. Lifelong friends who were like family include Sr. Maryanne Malasics, RSM, Walda Woods, Sally Bailey and Rod Reck and his late wife Judy. Many thanks to those who supported Sharon over the years and especially during her final days, including Madelyn Starkey, the entire staff, caregivers and residents of Colebrook and the staff of Compassus Hospice. Sharon's funeral service was held Tuesday, Nov. 25, at the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St., Amston. Visitation took place at the church that morning. A reception at the church followed the funeral. Burial was private. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Glastonbury Abbey, 16 Hull Street, Hingham MA 02043 or the Residents' Happy Hour Fund at Colebrook Village, 55 John E. Horton Boulevard, Hebron, CT 06248, or a charity of your choice. Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester is in charge of arrangements.



East Hampton

Miriam Ewing

Miriam "Mim" (Seamon) Ewing, 89, of East Hampton, and Port Charlotte, Fla., passed away peacefully Wednesday, Nov. 19, at home. She was the widow of the late John K. Ewing, who predeceased her in 2002. She leaves behind her son and daughter-in-law, Christopher and JoAnn Ewing of East Hampton, with whom she made her home. More importantly to her, she was "Gram" to her two grandchildren, Colleen Ewing of East Hampton and Brian Ewing of Preston. She was predeceased by her daughter Deborah Ewing in 1983. She also leaves behind her sister, Brenda Endicott and her partner Clyde Young of Freeport, Maine; her brother-in-law, David "Donnie" Vale of South Windsor; her sister-in-law, Dawn Seamon of Buxton, Maine, and Hernando Beach, Fla.; and her sister-in-law, Sylvia Ewing of Youngsville N.C.; as well as many nieces and nephews she loved very much. She was predeceased by nine of her siblings and their spouses. They include Arlene (Palmer) Brimigian, Erma (Joseph) Grimaldi, Eleanor (Fred) Adams, Orland "Bub" (Lois) Seamon, Alton "Babe" Seamon, Laura Weber, Althea (Richard) Hoisington, Alice Vale, Leon Seamon, and her brother-in-law James "Jim" Ewing. She was also predeceased by nieces Cheryl "Cherry" Deshaies, Julie Seamon, Alta Seamon, and nephews Kevin Adams and Lyle Seamon. Miriam was born in Jay, Maine, on Christmas Eve in 1935; she was always annoyed by the fact that growing up, she only received one present a year for Christmas AND her birthday. She was the 8th of 11 children born to her parents, the late Twining and Nettie Seamon. She cherished growing up in a large, close-knit family. Life on the "Farm" in Maine revolved around her sisters, brothers, and her many nieces and nephews, with the farmhouse being the gathering place for the family's activities. After graduating from Jay High School, she moved to Connecticut, where she met John at a dance at the Polish National Home in Hartford. After their marriage in 1956, they lived in Wilson before moving into the home they built in New Hartford in 1962. There, they raised a family before retiring to Florida in 1996. For many years, she worked at Eddie's Luncheonette in Winsted, and also became a licensed real estate agent. She also had her own residential cleaning service for almost 15 years before her retirement. After her husband's passing in 2002, she continued to work on making the home they had recently built what they had planned on because, as she always said, she and John were a team, and she was going to finish what they had started together. She loved her life in Florida. One of her favorite pastimes was watching her Monarch butterflies hatch in the garden she planted for this purpose. Her friend Claudia dubbed her the "Monarch Midwife." She entertained often and enjoyed visits with family and friends over the years during the winters in Florida. She stayed busy, becoming a classroom volunteer in a local elementary school. She and her best friend Hannah volunteered with Meals on Wheels for several years as well. Even after suffering a stroke in 2020 and moving in with her family in East Hampton, she continued to enjoy returning to her Florida home and seeing the friends she had made there. Mim also became involved in the East Hampton Senior Center, where she was proud to volunteer with the meal program at the Cen-



ter. An avid reader, she also belonged to the Book Club, even though she liked to pick out her own books, John Grisham being her favorite author. Special thanks go out to the staff at the East Hampton Senior Center, especially Kecia, Cindy, and Melissa. Mim's family would also like to thank the other participants at the East Hampton Senior Center who welcomed her to the center openly and warmly. Per her wishes, no formal services will be held; only a private remembrance with her immediate family. A celebration of her life will be held in Maine at a later date. In lieu of flowers, a donation in her memory can be made to the East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

Colchester

Todd Andrew Charlebois

Todd Andrew Charlebois, of Colchester, passed away at home early Wednesday morning, Nov. 19. He was 32 years old. Todd was born in Middletown on July 16, 1993. He was a son of Timothy Charlebois of Middletown and the late Terri (Erdos) Charlebois. Todd married Ashya Lineberry on Aug. 25, 2019. The couple settled in Colchester where they made their home and raised their family. Todd was a self-employed arborist, owning and operating Todd's Tree Service. He enjoyed drag racing at the Lebanon Valley, N.Y., Dragway. Most of his favorite memories were made while camping with his family. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him, especially his wife, Ashya; young sons, Todd A. Jr. "TJ" and Tegan Charlebois; an honorary daughter, Maddie Kuritz of Salem; grandparents, Nancy and Lamont Charlebois of North Carolina; brothers, Jeffrey and Tyler Charlebois, both of Middletown; and many extended family members and friends. A celebration of life service will be held at a later date to be announced. The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with care of arrangements. For online condolences or to share a story of Todd, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Colchester

Susan R. Gunas

Susan R. Gunas, 83, beloved wife of David L. Gunas Sr. of Colchester, formerly of Hebron, passed away peacefully Monday, Nov. 17, at home, with her loving family by her side. Susan was born March 4, 1942, in Marlboro, Mass., daughter of the late Henry C. Ricker and Thelma Mae (Lyon) Ricker. Susan was born into a deeply musical, harmonizing family. In 1958, she joined her older sister, Trudy Holden McNamee, singing with the Marlboro Chapter Sweet Adelines in Massachusetts. Her brother, Henry Ricker, won multiple international gold medals over the years with his chorus, the Alexandria Harmonizers of Virginia. In 1962, Susan married David L. Gunas and moved to Manchester, where she joyfully sang for Vincent Zito and the Mountain Laurel Chorus. She later joined SONE in Bloomfield, CT, and in 1990, her daughter Heidi Adam joined her as well. Susan sang in several championship quartets over the years, even competing at Carnegie Hall in New York. In 1999, she became a founding member of Millennium Magic Chorus, where she earned two international gold medals and one international silver medal. With her dual chorus, Farmington Valley Chorus of Simsbury, she also earned an international bronze medal. A special highlight of her singing career was performing in the quartet Reminisce with Heidi Adam, Lorraine Rochefort, and Patricia Graber – 10 wonderful years together, filled with music, friendship, and memories. Through her 67 years as a Sweet Adeline, Susan did it all. She had an extraordinary ear for harmony, sang all four parts over the decades, and helped build Millennium Magic from its earliest days. What a life – and what a legacy. While raising their four children on the family farm, in Hebron, Susan ran the Hebron Little League Snack Shack and supported every mu-



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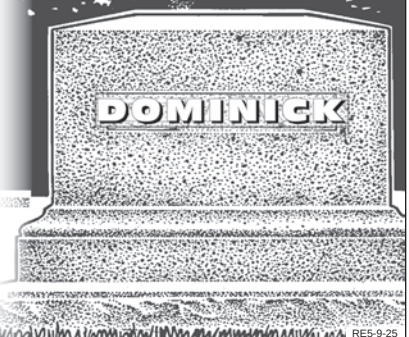
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Obituaries cont.

sical endeavor her children pursued. Even after suffering a stroke eight years ago that left her paralyzed, she remained active and determined. She folded towels at PerSNIPity, the family hair salon, knitted beautiful scarves one-handed on a loom, and created stunning diamond paintings that she loved gifting to others. Anything involving family—Susan was always at the center of it.

Susan is survived by her husband, David, of 63 years of marriage; her four children and their spouses: Lisa Yopp and her husband Crandall of Hebron, Heidi Adam and her husband Joseph of Glastonbury, David Gunas Jr. of Hebron, and Jason Gunas of Tennessee; her brother, Henry C. Ricker Jr. of Virginia; her grandchildren, Suzi, Rob, CJ, Tom, Taylor, David, Raegan, Jada, Cic-elea, Brittany, Jason and Joshua; and her great-grandchildren Lily, Pierce, Paxton, Grayson, Scarlett, Wyatt, Sawyer (arriving soon), Franco, Julian, Cristian, and Aria; as well as many cousins, nieces, nephews, and dear friends.

In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by her sister, Gertrude Holden McNamee. A celebration of Susan's life will be held at a later date.

Colchester
Thomas R. Garrity, Jr.



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of one of the greatest, Thomas R. Garrity, Jr. He battled with cancer towards the end of his life and passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his loved ones on Tuesday, Nov. 4. Tom was born July 30th and raised in the south end of Hartford to the late Thomas R. Garrity, Sr. and Lillian “Loretta” Garrity. Tom was a wealth of knowledge stemming from his time in the U.S. Navy, HFD, U.S. Postal

Service, and with his career as a sales rep for marine engines and boat sales at Dipietro Kay, who then became a second family.

From the time Tom was a kid he was always involved in sports, which trickled down to his kids, with hockey being his favorite. Later in life, golf became a sport he excelled in, which many took advice from him in. Tom had a great passion for cooking, which dubbed the household name “Garrity Gourmet.” From his homemade pizzas, pig roasts to all the holiday dinners with feasts of seafood. He did this with his own flair which was always outstanding.

Tom excelled in anything he did, whether it was working on his race cars which he shared this passion with his brother who also raced. A few big passions of his were boating and deep-sea fishing. Many knew that when you went out fishing with Tommy, you would be catching fish, and big ones at times. Tom was also an extra in the movie *Grease*, a story he shared with many.

Tom’s smile, striking blue eyes, knowledge, drive and his genuine heart will be missed by so many. Tom’s family and friends were the light of his life; he was so proud of the life and family he established.

Tom was predeceased by his sister and brother-in-law, Risa and Robert Berens; mother-in-law, Elizabeth Foley Michalik. Tom leaves behind his beloved wife, Monica (Michalik) Garrity, daughter and son, Stephanie and Anthony of Colchester, their family dog Lilly Elizabeth brother, Scott Garrity (Molly) of Florida, father-in-law, Walter F. Michalik (Lynn Wamester), sister-in-law, Linda Parady & family, Lisa Parady, Adam Moore, Eric & Julia Parady, sister-in-law, Cindy & Dr. Quirico Torres of Texas & family, Amy Torres & Marc Devens, Matthew, Hannah & Rylee Torres, brother-in-law Peter & Carole Michalik & family, Noelle, Elijah, Eva & Kyle Whalen, Helena. A special niece, Krista Berens Kelly, husband, Mike and their daughter, Kristina, and special nephew, Michael Berens, his partner Kristine and daughter, Madeline, a special cousin Kenneth & Jean Garrity of Florida. He also had a special place in his heart for our dear family friend Melissa Laribee.

Tom also leaves behind a host of dear friends with whom he shared many morning phone calls with which led to Tom always giving his advice and expertise. Many more that brought meaning during his life, especially Mike Walcott, The Mermigos, Migliore, Rivera, Bazzano, Grano, Shea and Willax families.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held Saturday, Dec. 6, at 11 a.m., in St Andrews Roman Catholic Church, 128 Norwich Ave. Colchester. Full military honors will follow after the Mass. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family.

A celebration of life to be hosted in the summer to honor Tom’s life and legacy.

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

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.

AHM News & Notes

AHM Youth and Family Services has announced the following items of interest. Fore more information or to register, visit ahmyouth.recdesk.com. **Giving Tuesday:** AHM is gearing up for #GivingTuesday on Dec. 2. The youth service bureau is aiming to raise \$10,000 to fund youth and family mental health support through its outpatient clinical program and student support services at all schools in Andover, Hebron, Marlborough and Columbia, as well as outreach through its HERE 4 YOU mental health initiative. **Virtual Book Discussion:** Tuesday, Dec. 2, 7-8 p.m., via Zoom. *Good Inside* by Dr. Becky Kennedy will be discussed. AHM staff will discuss Kennedy’s concepts in raising emotionally healthy children, how to set boundaries in a compassionate way, and parenting issues that may arise such as tantrums, sibling rivalry, and lying. This program is free, but it is necessary to register to get the Zoom Link. Register online; contact Becky Murray at 860-228-0871 or bec-

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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 ac-

countant or tax professional; volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds. Training and support are provided. To apply to volunteer, go to 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.

LEGAL

LEGAL NOTICE OF ACTIONS
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
HEBRON, CONNECTICUT

The Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission took the following action at their Meeting, which was held on Wednesday, November 19, 2025 at 7:00pm on the following:
Petition 2025-22 – 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. **Approved, with conditions.**
The video recording of the Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting can be seen using the following link:
<https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#!/s/8064c8340a7f9541973f93e84e80c5faeab92a9fcea95c92d0d174adeaa3f629>

1TB 11/28

MARLBOROUGH CONSERVATION
COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING

The Marlborough Conservation Commission will hold the following public hearing on Monday, December 1, 2025, at 7pm in the Town Hall, 26 No Main Street
APPLCATION #05-25 – Jeffrey Popham and Jennifer Carini (Application/Owner) 11 Old Cider Mill Lane. Addition and walkway
APPLCATION #06-25 -Town of Marlborough – South Road culvert replacement, adjacent to #258 South Road
Written testimony will be received at the public hearing and written testimony can be sent to the Building/Land Use Department at the Town Hall ahead of the public hearing.
YVONNE BOLTON, CONSERVATION COMMISSION CHAIR

2TB 11/21, 11/28

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, December 10, 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. **Continued from 11-19-2025.** Petition 2025-23 Kowalski Barn
Planning and Zoning Commission
Dec 10, 2025, 7:00–10:00 PM (America/New_York)
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Dated at Hebron, Connecticut, this 21st day of November 2025.
Frank Zitkus, Chair

2TB 11/28, 12/5

NEW ORDINANCE
LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF HEBRON
TOWN COUNCIL

On November 20, 2025, the Hebron Town Council adopted an Ordinance for Municipal Extension of Tax Relief Exemption for Permanent and Totally Disabled Veterans, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 12-65b, as amended, as follows:
Chapter 320 Taxation and Assessments
Article XX – Municipal Extension of Tax Relief Exemption for Permanent and Totally Disabled Veterans
\$320-44. Purpose; statutory authority
The purpose of this article is to provide additional exemption respecting property tax for any permanently and totally disabled veteran entitled to an exemption from property tax in accordance with Section 233 of Public Act 25-168.
\$320-45. Exemption for Disabled Veterans
In accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 12-81 (83) (A) as amended by Public Act 25-168, that fractional share of a dwelling, including a condominium, as defined in section 47-68a, and a unit in a common interest community, as defined in section 47-202, and a mobile home as defined in section 12-63a, that (l) belongs to or is held in trust for any resident of this state who has served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Air Force or Space Force of the United States and has been determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to be permanently and totally disabled based on a service-connected disability rating of one hundred per cent, or that is possessed by such a resident as a tenant for life or tenant for a term of years liable for property tax under section 12-48, or belonging to or in trust for the veteran's spouse or possessed by such veteran's surviving spouse as a life tenant or qualifying tenant of years and (li) that is occupied by such veteran as the veteran's primary residence is subject to a statutory tax exemption. The exemption does not include any portion of the unit or structure used by such resident for commercial purposes or from which such resident derives any rental income.
\$320-46 Municipal Exemption of Two Acres of Real Property
In accordance with statutory authority of Conn. Gen. Stat. § 12-81 (83) (E), a veteran qualifying for the exemption referenced in part 2 of this Ordinance shall also be entitled to an exemption of up to 2 acres of the property containing the dwelling subject to the exemption.
\$320-47. Application and documentation
To receive an exemption, an eligible veteran or their surviving spouse must file the appropriate application with the Assessor's Office to demonstrate compliance with all statutory obligations to qualify for the exemption including but not limited to documentation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs of the resident's determination of to be permanently and totally disabled based on a service-connected disability rating of one hundred per cent. If the United States Department of Veterans Affairs modifies an individual's determination to other than permanently and totally disabled based on a service-connected disability rating of one hundred per cent, the resident shall not qualify for the exemption under this Chapter.
\$320-48. Effective date
Any such exemption referred to in this section shall take effect on the first day of January next following the date on which the right to such exemption has been proved.
\$320-49. Repealer
All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.
\$320-50. Severability
If any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.
Dated this 20th day of November, 2025.

Tiffany Thiele, Chair
Jan Lawrence, Vice Chair
Keith Petit
Cladia Tejada Riley
Sean Fitzgerald

1TB 11/28

Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional • Regional

Trees of Giving Bring Holiday Cheer

By Shawn R. Dagle

Dozens of holiday trees decorated with themed gifts will be up for grabs in South Glastonbury next week, with the proceeds benefiting a worthy cause.

This year's Trees of Giving event will be held at Hops on the Hill on Dec. 5 (4-7 p.m.) and Dec. 6 (1-5 p.m.) The farm brewery is located at 275 Dug Rd. in South Glastonbury.

Fifty themed holiday trees will be featured in this year's event which the public will have the opportunity to win.

Both days, members of the public are invited to visit Hops on the Hill to check out each of this year's themed trees.

Raffle tickets costing \$1 (with a \$20 minimum) can be purchased. Use your raffle tickets on the tree or trees you like best and hope to take home. On Dec. 6 at 5 p.m., a drawing will take place in the large tent at Hops on the Hill to see who has won each tree. The drawing will also be livestreamed on Facebook.

Past themes have included everything from Hello Kitty to a baseball themed tree, Santa's Sweet Shop and the beach. Money raised during Trees of Giving will benefit Glastonbury Gives – the town's local food and fuel bank.

Glastonbury Gives is an initiative created by the town's social services department that assists

residents who are experiencing a crisis affecting their ability to pay for food, utilities, medical expenses and other critical needs.

Glastonbury Gives also funds the town's food pantry and is supported completely by donations from individuals, businesses community groups and charity events like Trees of Giving. According to the town 100 percent of donations go directly to residents in need.

Since its inception in 2022, Trees of Giving has donated more than \$43,000 to Glastonbury Gives.

Trees of Giving is hosted each year by the Keri + Sarah Team at William Raveis Real Estate. Sales associates Sarah Kimball and Keri Watkins saw the event as an opportunity to give back to their community and help those in need.

"Keri attended a similar event in New Haven and we thought it would be fun to bring something similar to Glastonbury," Kimball said. "We really love the idea of giving back to the town we live in. We know some of our neighbors need help now more than ever."

The first Trees of Giving was held in 2022. That year's event raised \$8,000 for Glastonbury Gives. Every year since, the event has grown in both popularity and the amount it has raised for charity. In 2023, \$14,568 was raised. Last year that number grew to \$20,614.



Fifty themed holiday trees will be up for grabs next week during this year's Trees of Giving at Hops on the Hill in South Glastonbury. Proceeds raised will benefit Glastonbury Gives, the town's local food and fuel bank.

Excitement about the event has continued to grow. According to Kimball, reaction to this year's upcoming Trees of Giving has been "amazing" both amongst sponsors and the public.

"[There's been] lots of community interest. People love this event and are excited to donate and attend," she said.

While attendance is not tracked, in past years it has been estimated that anywhere between 3,000 to 5,000 people attend the two-day event, which is typically held the first week of December each year. Approximately two dozen volunteers make the event happen.

This year will feature a change of venue. Last year's Trees of Giving was held at Glen Lochen. This year it will be held at Hops on the Hill.

Themes will include everything from Bruins tickets to theater, golf, summer camp at the Coder School and MacBook trees among many others.

As in past years Trees of Giving has attracted a wide variety of sponsors as well (the number of which have grown since the event's inception) including Speed Construction, Inspired Kitchen, iHeartRadio, Turner Construction and the *Glastonbury Citizen* to name a few.

The event is open to all ages and there is no cost to attend. "All proceeds benefit Glastonbury Gives," said Kimball.

On Dec. 5, there will be live music with guitarist Brett Trotier and on Dec. 6, from 2-3:30 p.m. there will be a visit by Santa Claus. Food trucks will also be on site both days.

Rivereast Standout Athletes of the Week



Olivia Correia, a junior soccer standout from East Hampton High School, was named all-state and all-conference.

By Josh Howard

Here are the *Rivereast* Standout Athletes of the Week for the week of Nov. 17 - 23:

Olivia Correia – East Hampton High School (Soccer): Correia was named Class M All-State by the Connecticut Girls Soccer Coaches Association (CGSCA) after posting 21 goals and 17 assists this fall. Correia, a junior captain, tallied 18 goals and 14 assists as the Bellringers posted an undefeated (13-0-2) regular season. She then added three goals and three assists in the postseason as the team advanced to the Shoreline Conference (SLC) championship game and the semifinals of the Class M state tournament. Correia was also named All-SLC first team, earning all-conference for the second straight season.

Riley Anderson – Bacon Academy (Swimming): Anderson won the 50 freestyle and the 100 butterfly at the State Open swim championships at Yale University on Nov. 16. Anderson, a senior who swims for the Manchester co-op, also won both events the previous week at the Class LL state championship, setting new state marks in each by posting a 22.20 in the 50 freestyle and 53.30 in the 100 butterfly. The record-setting state champion is a Duke University college swimming commit.

Molly Bellmore – Hebron/Plymouth State (Soccer): Bellmore etched her name in the Plymouth State University record books, break-

ing into the top ten list of goal scorers in program history. Bellmore, a senior with the Panthers in New Hampshire, scored her 24th career goal in the team's season finale this season, tying her for 9th on the program's all-time list. This fall, Bellmore finished with six goals and three assists, including tying a career-high with two goals against Nichols College on Sept. 6. Prior to Plymouth, Bellmore was an all-conference player for the Raptors before graduating RHAM High School in 2022.

Kayla LaMalfa – Portland/Eastern Connecticut State University (Cross-Country): LaMalfa placed fifth for her team and 39th overall at the Little East Conference Cross-Country Championship at Keene State College on Nov. 1. LaMalfa, senior co-captain for the Warriors team at ECSU, wrapped up her time on the collegiate trails by running a 25:52 (6:56 per mile) at the conference championships. Prior to ECSU, LaMalfa was a three-season running for all four years at Portland High School, where she was a captain and all-conference selection. The 2022 PHS graduate will now compete for the Warriors during the indoor and outdoor track and field seasons in the winter and spring.

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.

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 in-

clude a local team, player, or resident that accomplished the feat.

Submissions can be sent to 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*.

From the State Senator's Desk

It's hard to believe it's nearly the end of 2025, but as the holiday season springs to life and we join together to celebrate Thanksgiving with our loved ones, we're in the waning days of the year. What an impactful year it was, too.

At the State Capitol, lawmakers spent long hours and nights working on legislation intended to improve our state – and our efforts continued all year, resulting in more bills passing during a special session earlier this month. Balancing rapid changes in federal standards and unpredictable developments that impact day-to-day life in 2025 was more challenging than in past years, but we accomplished important steps forward.

Though there are questions about what our future will bring, this period of the year is one for reflection and thankfulness, and there is plenty I'm grateful for this year.

Chief among them is that our state is getting some of the recognition it has long deserved. In national rankings, surveys and metrics, news sources and organizations noted Connecticut ranks first in providing happy, healthy environments for children, second in providing high-quality public schools and third when it comes to having a low violent crime rate. In addition to these impressive metrics, our state ranked third nationally in the quality of its healthcare, fifth nationally both in residents' quality of life and education levels, and eighth nationally for the strength of its economy.

I'm also grateful that no matter where I'm headed in Connecticut, we have one of the most beautiful environments in the country, and our state continues to preserve this status. Thanks to continued work in recent years, Connecticut has preserved more than 500,000 acres of land, and that's only 75% of its intended goal. The next time you hike, drive or travel, be sure to keep your eyes open. There's plenty of beauty to see in our region.

As for me, what I'm most thankful for this year is the continued ability to represent and support the residents of Connecticut. It is not lost on me that I represent roughly 100,000 Connecticut residents at the Capitol. While I only have one vote, I have it because the people of our 12 towns selected me for that purpose. As a result, I will continue to listen to my constituents and make sure my votes represent the best for all of us.

With Thanksgiving here and holiday craziness starting, I'm sure we'll blink and 2026 will be here in moments. Until then, I hope you and your family end the year on the strongest possible note.



Needleman

State Sen. Norm Needleman
D-33rd District

Note: The 12-town 33rd District includes the Rivereast towns of Colchester, East Hampton and Portland.



Ladder safety should not be learned on the fly.

Climbing on a ladder might be the most dangerous thing you do all year. Foot and ankle fractures can result from unsafe ladder use. Make sure you have the balance and strength to use a ladder. Take the time to secure it properly. Don't stand above the marked level and always wear lace-up shoes or boots. Check our website for more ladder safety tips.

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LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON
IWWA ACTIONS

At the Regular Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency Meeting held on Wednesday, November 19, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. at the East Hampton Town Hall and via ZOOM, the following decision was made:
IW-25-029: Belittown 30 LLC, 30 Long Crossing and 201 West High Street, Drill 3 Test Wells for Future Community Water System in Wetlands and Upland Review Area, Map 12/ Block 36/ Lot 39 - Approved
Chairman Joshua Wilson

1TB 11/28

TOWN OF ANDOVER ZONING
BOARD OF APPEALS
NOTICE OF ACTION

At its regular meeting on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, the Andover Zoning Board of Appeals took the following action: application 25-14 ZBA, Steven Rockefeller 47 Lakeside Drive, request for a variance from section 11.2 of the Andover Zoning Regulations.
Approved with Conditions
Fred Oliver, Chairman

1TB 11/28

TOWN OF COLCHESTER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Colchester Conservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on December 10, 2025, beginning at 7:00 PM in the Colchester Town Hall Meeting Room 2 at 127 Norwich Ave, Colchester, CT, to hear and consider the following application:
A. W2025-3132 - 124 Wall St & 111 Old Hartford Rd; Center Village Development LLC - Applicant/ Owner; Assessor's ID 10-00/011-000 & 15-00/061-000, Proposed sewer line extension with direct impacts to a wetland.
At this hearing, interested persons may be heard and written communications received. A copy of this application 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). Application materials are also available on the Colchester Conservation Commission webpage at <https://www.colchesterct.gov/colchester-conservation-commission>.
Conservation Commission
Falk Von Plachecki, Chair

2TB 11/28, 12/5

TOWN OF PORTLAND
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
LEGAL NOTICE OF DECISION

At the November 20, 2025 meeting, the following actions were taken:
PZC Application #25-04: 94 Ames Hollow Road. Proposed 2 lot resubdivision. Application and property of Marth and Jay Swanson. Map 41 Lot 4-2. Zone R-25.
PZC Application #25-06: 956 Glastonbury Turnpike. Proposal to convert existing detached garage into accessory dwelling unit. Application of Kristen Champoux and property of William DeYoung. Map 127 Lot 12. Zone R-25.
PZC Application #25-07: 862 Portland Cobalt Road. Request for special permit for wellness spa. Application of Jessica Blancato and property of Realejo Properties LLC. Map 31 Lot 23. Zone B-2.
Dated at Portland, CT this 21st day of November 2025
Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission

1TB 11/28

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WANTED JUNK CARS: and unfinished projects. Contact 860-216-8144.

WANTED TO BUY: All antiques; toys, military, watches, advertising, jewelry, coins, clocks, signs, all musical instruments, guitars, saxophones, keyboards, trumpets, amplifiers, accordions, vintage electronics, hi-fi stereo, amplifiers, pro-audio, radios, ham equipment, tube type equipment, plus more. 1 item or entire estate. Call 860-707-9350.

WANTED: Individual firearms, collections & estates including, military & related items. Federally licensed firearms dealer. Appraisal. Richard Pleines. 860-663-2214.

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PART TIME: Office Assistant for a Mfg Company in Berlin. Looking for highly motivated person; candidate must be organized, able to multi task and must be computer-literate. Hours can vary 10-20 hrs/week, Mon- Thurs. \$20.00/hr to start, Email resume to libind@liberty-ind.com

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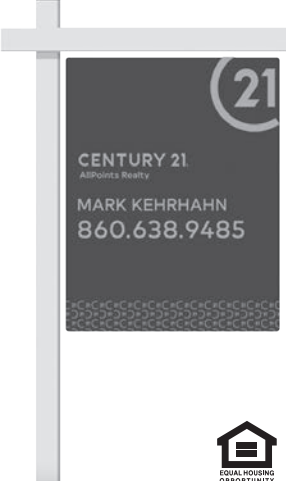
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