



Ho Ho Ho... Santa waves merrily at Portland Parks & Rec and Portland Youth & Family Services' annual Holiday Tree Lighting and Parade. Photo contributed by Cara MacDonald.

A \$700 “Christmas Miracle” from Hebron

By Toriana Williams

A Hebron couple said a routine stop after church turned into an unexpected test of character - and what bank employees later described as a rare event.

Christian and Brianna Mejia were out together when Brianna discovered an envelope containing \$700 outside a Dollar Tree in the plaza near the Buckland Hills area. The money was still inside a bank envelope and included withdrawal slips, providing a way to trace it back to its owner.

“We had just left church, too,” Christian said. According to Christian, Brianna was the one who initially spotted the envelope when returning to the car. “She came in the car and she was like, ‘Oh, my God, babe, look what I found,’” he said. “And she said, ‘an envelope with money.’ And she just like pulled out a stack of cash.”

Inside the envelope were withdrawal slips, though no name was visible, and Christian said the account number was blocked out except for the last four digits. The couple immediately discussed what to do next and concluded the best option was to return the money to the bank listed on the paperwork.

“The best thing I can think of is going to the bank,” Christian said, and explained that trying to track the owner through the store or security cameras did not seem realistic.

Brianna later confirmed she researched whether the reference number on the withdrawal slip could be used to identify the rightful owner. She learned that each reference number is unique to a specific transaction and can be traced even if the withdrawal occurred in a

different state. “So even if the transaction happened in Florida, and I found it in Connecticut, we still would have been able to get it back to the original owner,” she said.

The following morning, Brianna packed up the couple’s children and went to the Glastonbury branch of the bank listed on the withdrawal slip. She said a teller named Jay assisted her and had never encountered a situation like this before. “He had never dealt with this before,” Brianna said. “He had thanked me, like, profusely when I walked in.”

According to both Christian and Brianna, the situation drew attention inside the branch. The branch manager came out and told them she had never seen anything like it. “She was like, ‘Explain what happened, ‘cause I’ve never seen this before in my 20 years of banking,’” Christian said. Brianna said she was surprised by how uncommon the act seemed to bank staff. “I thought that there are more kind-hearted people that would ... return the cash if it could have ended up back with the person that originally took it out from their own bank account,” she said.

Bank employees were able to identify the owner of the money and contact her. Brianna left her own contact information and later received a call directly from the woman whose cash had been lost. “She ended up calling me to thank me,” Brianna said. “We had a good con-

See “Miracle” for Hebron , page 23

Inside...

Regional Letters to the Editor	pg 5
Portland BOS Approves Water Deal, Waiver	pg 7
Portland Book for “Sandwich Generation”	pg 9
East Hampton 91-year-old Works Out	pg 15
Regional Obituaries	pg 22

Crossword Puzzle...Pg 20
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EHHS Alum Marching in Rose Parade

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton High School alum Tori Kelpen said she always loved watching the Rose Parade on TV every year on New Year’s Day, so when the opportunity came up to march in the parade this year, she knew she had to do it.

Kelpen will be marching this year as a part of The Band Director’s Marching Band. It’s a project organized by the The Michael D. Sewell Memorial Foundation and made up of a group of band teachers and directors from all over the country who applied to march in the famous parade in Pasadena, Calif. Kelpen herself teaches fourth through sixth grade band here in Connecticut in the Region 4 school district that serves Deep River, Chester and Essex.

Kelpen said she’s excited about the opportunity, both because she’s always been fond of the parade, but also because she believes it’s a great opportunity to celebrate music education, which is something she’s been passionate about

since high school.

Kelpen always knew she wanted to be a music teacher, but she never thought she’d be working so close to home. After attending Nazareth University’s School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., she said she thought she would likely end up teaching somewhere in New York state, but after working as a substitute teacher in East Hampton when she was home on break, she started seeing the benefits of being close to where she grew up. She particularly loves being able to lean on her old band teacher, Andrew Groves, and chorus teacher, Ehren Brown, for advice.

“I’m honestly a lot happier with coming back to Connecticut and getting to work with some of my teachers as a colleague and get more advice from them,” she said. Kelpen said that she believed she got an excellent music education in East Hampton, and credits it with her decision to pursue the career that she did. “Music

has always felt like a very comfortable feeling for me, very welcoming and open,” she said, “and I really wanted to replicate that for my students.”

One career decision that surprised Kelpen was her focus on fourth through sixth grade band. She said she originally thought she’d focus her career either on general music at the elementary level or middle school band. Elementary school band, she said, sounded a bit intimidating at first. She said that the hardest thing about teaching instrumental music to that age group is “trying to keep them engaged.”

“My colleagues said something the other day,” she said, “to remind them that they’re making music, not noise. There’s a lot of noise going on in the world, so I think trying to make that distinction for them is really important.”

Kelpen said that one of the things she is looking forward to about the Rose Parade is the op-

See Rose Parade, page 23



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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 Stammers: Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m.

Children are invited to the library for a Spanish read along and activity for Día de Los Reyes Magos (Three Kings Day/Epiphany) on Saturday, Jan. 3, at 11 a.m. Children will be creating their own basket with construction paper and “hay” for the camels (hopeful that they may receive a gift from the Magi on the 6th).

This program is offered by Andover’s in-

Registration appreciated but not required; please call the library at 860-742-7428 with any questions.

The East Hartford Garden Club has announced the availability of one \$1,000 scholarship to any full- or part-time student who is a resident of Andover and is majoring in horticulture, floriculture, landscape design, conservation, forestry, environmental concerns, botany and other allied subjects.

Students from Bolton, Bloomfield, Coventry, East Hartford, East Windsor, Glastonbury,

Manchester, Middletown, Vernon, Storrs and Windsor Locks are also eligible for the scholarship.

Applications with the submittal instructions are available at the guidance department of the attending school. All completed applications must be received by April 1, 2026 to be considered.

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Andover School Food service Wins Healthy Meals Award

By Toriana Williams

The Coventry and Andover School Food Service Program has received national recognition through the Healthy Meals Incentive Award, specifically in the category titled “Innovation in Nutrition Education.” The award acknowledges actions taken within school cafeterias, meal programs and nutrition education efforts that promote student wellness and informed food choices. The award highlights sustained and structured efforts implemented during the 2024-2025 school year.

The program serves all Coventry Public Schools as well as Andover Elementary School. Abby Dubois, the Coventry and Andover Farm to School Coordinator, works within the School Food Service Department and plays a central role in the initiatives recognized by the award. Dubois explained that responsibilities include outreach to local farms for sourcing food, coordinating cafeteria taste tests and supporting nutrition education efforts across multiple settings.

The Healthy Meals Incentive Award evaluates how school districts incorporate nutrition education into everyday student experiences. One key component involved monthly cafeteria taste tests, during which students were offered locally sourced foods during lunch periods. Students were then asked to provide feedback by voting whether they “loved it, liked it, or tried it.” These taste tests were designed to expose students to

new foods while giving them a structured way to express preferences. The initiative reached large numbers of students simultaneously, making the cafeteria a central venue for nutrition education.

In addition to cafeteria-based initiatives, the program extended nutrition education into broader school community events. For the past two years, DuBois and School Food Service Director Beth Pratt have incorporated local food sampling into school open houses across Andover and Coventry. DuBois explained, “This practice of bringing local food samples to events that students, parents, and school community members will be together has been hugely successful in how we’ve informed about our work and the importance of Farm to School.” These events served both educational and outreach purposes by connecting families to the farms supplying school meals. “A wonderful full circle moment can build here when students and families are interested in purchasing from the farms themselves, thereby building up our local economy and supporting our lovely farmers,” DuBois said.

As for specific examples of foods served at open house events, one year featured apple crisp parfaits made with honey vanilla skyr from Woodstock Valley Creamery and apples from Karabin Farms. Another year focused on 100%

locally sourced salads, incorporating produce from several Connecticut farms. “The salad ... featured ... lettuce, tomatoes, and peppers from farms including Cloverleigh Farm, Handel Family Farm, Cobblestone Farm ... [and] dressing sweetened with honey from Drew’s Bees.” These examples illustrated how local sourcing was integrated into both food service and educational messaging.

Nutrition education was also embedded into daily cafeteria interactions. “Many students purchase school lunch, and our cafeteria staff are all educated on how to engage with students,” she said. Cafeteria staff received training on engaging students in conversations about food, encouraging them to try new items and explaining the nutritional value. DuBois noted that while taste tests occurred periodically, they created significant engagement opportunities and reinforced familiarity with healthy foods over time. “Taste tests encourage students to try new foods, we provide resources and recipes that they can bring home, and they allow students to provide their opinions about the school meals, local foods, and new foods,” DuBois added.

DuBois emphasized that the award reflected collaborative effort rather than individual achievement. She credited Beth Pratt for creating the Farm to School Coordinator position

and maintaining a focus on local sourcing and nutrition education. She also acknowledged support from district superintendents, administrators, educators and kitchen staff across both school systems.

The Healthy Meals Incentive Award did not include financial funding. Instead, recognition came in the form of national acknowledgement, participation in a two-day virtual training and the receipt of a plaque and banner. DuBois described the award as confirmation that the program’s direction aligns with broader nutrition education goals. “This award is a validation that we are on the right track.” The recognition underscored the district’s continued focus on student health, local food systems and experiential learning through school meals and nutrition education initiatives.

As DuBois is someone directly involved in serving taste test samples, collecting food from local farms and observing students eat produce they have grown themselves, she explained the effects of this work are visible on a daily, community-based level. Recognition such as the Healthy Meals Incentive Award helps demonstrate to both the school community and the broader public that student health is a serious priority and that this commitment will remain in place over the long term.

Community & Senior Center Happenings

The Andover Community and Senior Center, located at 25 School Rd., is open daily from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. The lounge is open for cards, games and puzzles anytime, and coffee is always on. All are welcome. For all senior-related events, call Director Tess Grous at 860-798-6862. The center’s monthly newsletter is available at www.andover-connecticut.org. Copies are also available at the center, Town Hall, and Andover Public Library. To receive the newsletter by email each month, ask for Haley at the center, at 860-742-7305.

Holiday Closings: The Center will be closed Dec. 24, 25, and 26.

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

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

Weekly Programs: The senior center offers a variety of weekly programs, including: Yoga, Food Pantry Trips, Movie Mondays, Knitting, Wednesday Lunches (with bingo every other Wednesday), Sewing, Various Exercise Programs, and more. For a full schedule of all weekly offerings, contact the center.

Upcoming Special Events: Transportation available for all programs. For full event descriptions, call the senior center or see the on-

line newsletter.

Shopping Trips: Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. – to Willimantic on Dec. 30. Contact Linda to reserve your ride.

Hair Care with Helen: Monday, Dec. 29, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Cost is \$20. Need a trim? Sign up for a dry haircut. Hair must be clean and dry before your appointment. Transportation is available if needed. Space is limited; call the center at 860-798-6862 to reserve your spot.

New Year’s Eve Brunch: Monday, Dec. 31, 11 a.m. Join the celebration with food, friends and fun, and a countdown to noon toast. Call the center to sign up.

Special Luncheon: Wednesday, Jan. 14, noon. Cost is \$5. Lunch catered by Cheney Tech Culinary School. Special guest speaker Erin Congdon from Collaborative Natural Health will discuss healthy living and the benefits of drinking tea.

Vacancies on Community Fund

The Andover Greater Together Community Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is accepting applications to fill vacancies on its Greater Together Community Fund committee.

The Andover Greater Together Community Fund Committee is responsible for selecting and distributing funds awarded by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to local nonprofits to assist in projects that will help enhance and benefit the residents of Andover. In June, the Hartford Foundation awarded over \$40,000 to seven local nonprofit organizations recommended for funding by the Andover Greater Together Community Fund Committee.

For more information on the Andover

Greater Together Community Fund, go to www.hfpg.org/andoverctf.

The Andover Greater Together Community Fund committee meets monthly via Zoom. Application forms can be found on the interested volunteer page of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving website, www.hfpg.org/gtcfvolunteer, or by emailing the committee at andover@hfpgcommunityfunds.org.

Please note: elected officials, individuals campaigning for office, or their immediate family members are not eligible to serve on this committee. Volunteers must be at least 14 years of age to serve.

Interested community members should apply by Jan. 2 to be considered.

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 Art-ist Open Studios of Northeast CT.

For more information, visit aosct.org.

Residents Sought for Search Committee

The Andover Board of Selectmen seek two registered voters of Andover that are interested in serving on the Town Administrator Search Committee (TASC).

Pursuant to the town charter, the TASC is charged with the recruitment, screening, and presentment of candidates for the position of town administrator to the Board of Selectmen. Interested voters cannot hold any public office or serve on any other board or commission.

Please submit statements of interest no later than Dec. 19 to adminassistant@andoverct.org or by mail to administrative assistant, 17 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232.

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Homework Club

A Homework Club for students in grades 6-10 will be offered Tuesdays, 3-4:30 p.m., through Dec. 30, at the Andover Community and Senior Center, 25 School Rd.

Students are invited to a free space to complete assignments, study and build strong habits. Staff and volunteers will be on hand.

Consent forms are required. Call the center for more information, at 860-798-6862.

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From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Toriana Williams

If this week’s paper seems a little chaotic, that’s because the lovely *Rivereast* editor Mike Thompson is on vacation and, in what is most likely the greatest lapse of judgment in all of recorded history, handed me the reins.

For those who don’t know me, my name is Toriana Williams, and I’m a reporter for the *Rivereast*. I cover the towns of Andover, Colchester, Hebron and Marlborough, as well as the entire “Regional” area, which I still get a bit confused about. I started here in August, and I have loved working at the *Rivereast* ever since.

Not that anyone asked, but here is a little background on myself. I was born on a fall morning in 1999 in a town called Sevierville and was raised running barefoot through the Appalachian Mountains of East Tennessee. After a few years of jumping out of trees and driving my 2009 Hyundai Elantra far too fast, I went off to college to major in journalism, having discovered at a young age that I had a bit of a knack for writing. At least, that’s what my teachers told me.

In September of 2024, I moved to Connecticut on more or less a whim. “Why here?” people would ask. “Usually it’s the other way around,” they’d say, implying that people from Connecticut tend to flee south. You think that unless you’re from there. The very next thing I’d hear still makes me laugh, because it’s always one of two phrases: either, “I can hear your accent,” or, “You don’t have an accent.” Then they both giggle when I say “y’all” or “oil.” That’s alright, though. I will never stop laughing when I hear northerners say “pee-

cans,” which is wrong, by the way. It’s “puh-kawns.”

Since moving here, I’ve learned that Connecticut is a state of quiet intensity. No one raises their voice much, but everyone cares deeply - about their town, their meetings, their budgets and especially their roads. In Tennessee, if someone says something is “just down the road,” it usually means five minutes. In Connecticut, it usually means half an hour, which tends to make me suffer as I am no longer a speed demon. I’ve also learned that every town is absolutely convinced it is nothing like the town next to it, despite sharing the same Dunkin’, the same stoplight and occasionally the same last names.

Fall, I have discovered, is not just a season here - it’s a sport. There is leaf peeping, sweater planning and an unspoken competition over who has resisted turning on their heat the longest. Winter, meanwhile, is approached like a military operation. Snow is not merely forecasted; it is analyzed, debated and emotionally processed well in advance. I have watched grown adults argue passionately over inches, plow routes and whether a storm “counts.”

There’s also the persistent misunderstanding that southerners “can’t drive in the snow,” which I’d like to politely dispute. It’s not that we can’t drive in it - it’s that we do it on roads that feel personally offended by winter. In places where snow is consistent, there are salt trucks on standby and snowplows that appear almost instantly, and the roads themselves are mercifully straight and reasonable.

Bulletin Board

With the arrival of Christmas and the abundance of seasonal tunes on my car radio I find myself moved to more spiritual musings (as opposed to wondering what’s for dinner and if it will include gravy).

Theologians and philosophers through the ages (along with countless pot-smoking college students) have pondered the mystery of God and His relationship to man. The questions are puzzling indeed. If God is benevolent, why is there pain and suffering in the world? If God is just, why does He allow injustice?

And then, of course, there’s my own personal favorite religious enigma: how many angels can you fit on the head of a pin? Do they have their wings open or folded? If they’re that small are they in danger of being mistaken for mosquitoes or gnats and smashed to a pulp when they come to earth with some divine message? Could that be why we’re in such a mess down here?

I admit that the pin question particularly appeals to me because it reminds me of college students packing themselves into phone booths (remember phone booths?) or a VW bug in an effort to establish a new world record. I have visions of zillions of giggling angels cramming themselves onto the head of a pin, some of them teetering on one foot along the edge as they beckon to colleagues, hovering overhead, to join the crush in hopes of establishing a new pinhead record.

I’m sure there is some greater theological significance to the whole question of angels and pinheads, but since such musings give me a headache, and since I’m not compelled to write a term paper on the subject, I prefer to think of the thing as a sort of angel frat party fueled by whatever angels drink in lieu of cheap beer.

I don’t mean to diminish the importance of these eternal questions regarding God, the nature of man and the relationship between the two. After all, an entire industry of clerics, theologians, writers and lay people has grown up over the centuries in an effort to interpret and understand questions which far transcend my own rather mundane earthly concerns—the greatest of which these days seems to be what to have for lunch.

Gabriel’s trumpet could be blowing, the clouds could be catching fire, the dead could be rising from their graves and I’d be standing there (on my knees, for all in all I prefer to err on the side of caution) debating whether to order a tuna fish grinder with provolone, or the Philly cheese steak. (Under the circumstances, I suppose the wise course of action when confronted with the Apocalypse would be to order whichever could be provided most quickly.)

Among the mysteries facing those whose business it is to explore such things, is the question: does God have a sense of humor? (Actually, considering how this particular column is developing, this question may one day be of personal interest to yours truly when my good intentions are weighed against my transgressions.)

That I proceed here is indicative of my confidence that 1) yes, God does indeed have a sense of humor, and 2) the Spanish Inquisition no longer reviews newspaper columns, so it is unlikely that someone will drop by to pull out all my fingernails with hot tongs, at least not in this mortal world. As evidence of God’s humor, I encourage you to just look up from this page at any of your co-workers—or your extended family if you happen to be at a holiday gathering. Try not to laugh.

Further evidence that God has a sense of humor is that age-old frustration: why don’t you ever need something until after you throw it out? Why is it that two days after you discard that old coffee can you just knew would come in handy someday, you desperately need a container for a bunch of old nuts and bolts? Why is it that as soon as that old lawnmower wheel disappears into the back of a garbage truck you need that very same wheel to build a mini wheelbarrow for your grandson? Why is it that only hours after you discard that box of pins, ten zillion giggling angels show up at your front door looking for some place to hold a dance? And do any of them even ask to see that worn-out old Bible you’re afraid to throw out for fear of being struck by lightning? Of course not.

And you think God has no sense of humor?

No, my friends, be not afraid. That’s not thunder in the distance. It’s God chuckling to Himself. At least I hope He’s chuckling.

Jim Hallas

Rivereast Hours of Operation

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



A Winter Wonderland... A beautifully snowy view at Longo Farm in Glastonbury, where the clouds that stretch across the sky look reminiscent of the snow that blankets the ground. Contributed by Marlborough resident Danny Veilleux.

Where I’m from, salt rarely touches the backroads, which are arguably the most important ones, and snowplows don’t stray far from main roads. Driveways become their own winter sport, especially when yours is 100 yards long and steep enough to suggest a future in space travel. I remember one year when my dad was driving us home and, just before we made it, the car slid right off the road into our neighbor’s yard - not because we were reckless, but because the road was a sheet of ice and help was never coming. We got out, laughed a little and walked the rest of the way, which I think qualifies as both snow survival and driving competence.

Covering four towns and a region that may or may not be a place has also taught me many things. I’ve learned acronyms that everyone else seems to have known since birth. I’ve learned that walking into a town meeting as the youngest person in the room by several decades will earn you polite smiles and, occasionally, suspicion. I’ve learned that being the one taking notes while everyone else argues is a strange kind of power - one I wield carefully.

There are moments when I sit in meetings and think about how wildly different my life looks now compared to the one I imagined for myself growing up. I did not foresee my-

self spending my evenings listening to discussions about septic systems, zoning regulations or whether a motion needs to be amended before it can be withdrawn. And yet, here I am, scribbling notes, trying to keep names straight, and learning, slowly, how these towns work.

In my short time here, I’ve learned a few important things. I’ve learned that Dunkin’ is not optional, even though Starbucks is superior. I’ve learned that everyone knows everyone, even if they pretend they don’t. I’ve learned that “regional” is a word that means different things depending on who you ask. I’ve learned that New Englanders may seem reserved, but give them a microphone and an agenda item, and you will see true passion emerge.

Despite the confusion, the accents and the ongoing pecan debate, I’m glad I landed here. These towns have welcomed me, corrected my pronunciations and trusted me to tell their stories - even when I’m still figuring things out myself. So while Mike is away and the reins are briefly in my hands, I promise to do my best not to burn the paper down. And if things feel a little chaotic this week, well, now you know why. See you next week too!

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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Letter Writers: Letters must be 400 words or less, and must be submitted by **Monday** at noon. Email is preferred; send to bulletin@glcitizen.com. All letters must include the writer’s town of residence and daytime contact phone number. Letters focused solely on national issues or national public figures will not be published. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters are subject to editing for grammar, spelling and clarity, and are also subject to fact-checking. No bullying or name-calling will be tolerated. There is no guarantee that all letters will be published.

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Early Deadline

Due to the New Year's holiday, the deadline for next week's *Rivereast* will be **noon Monday, Dec. 29**. All copy – news items, letters to the editor, event listings, press releases – must be submitted by that time. No exceptions will be made.

Happy New Year from all of us at the *Rivereast News Bulletin*.

Dementia Talks #41

To the Editor:

Back in November I was grateful to share time with mom and apparently 2 new moms!

Mom and I walked a lap or so, and brought some photo albums to the dinner table. We had fun going through the pictures that ranged across decades.

It was literally a walk-through time. Several of mom's table-mates joined us. It really was fun. While sitting at the table one of the table-mates leaned over to me. She asked me about my dad and if "they" were on the road. And asked if my brother was with him. In an instant I was adopted! I followed her questions & answered to the best that I could hoping that my responses gave her comfort.

Then the table-mate across the way beckoned me over. I went to her, and she gave me a very polite scolding for not letting her know I was stopping by. In another instant I was adopted yet again. I let her know I would do better going forward. That helped, she sat back down and began to enjoy her dinner.

Mom enjoyed her dinner, especially the dessert, and I just relished in sharing time with her and those that feel comfortable enough to fold me into their reality.

To those reading this essay, I send you gratitude. These writings are my gift to you as much as a gift to myself knowing I find relief from "living" grief through the process of writing about what is "stuck" in my mind and heart.

Wishing you well during the final weeks of 2025, however the moments show up for you, your loved one, your family and friends. May you feel surrounded by warmth and comfort knowing that you are not alone.

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

Support Athletic Complex Project

To the Editor:

Colchester residents, I encourage you to support the proposed Athletic Complex project. Renovations include significant improvements to the athletic fields at Bacon Academy High School, including synthetic turf fields, lights at the stadium field, and rebuild of the tennis courts. At the RecPlex, renovations include a rebuild of the tennis courts, new, expanded PickleBall courts, and renovation of the SplashPad with concession stand and bathrooms in a more central location. All of these improvements will further highlight and enhance the wonderful town that Colchester is.

This project has been in the works for over two years. It started with the identifying that the Bacon Academy fields are nearly unplayable, that the damage sustained to the fields over decades of heavy use and minimal maintenance created safety issues for student athletes and that the fields were beyond repairs town personnel can provide. The Board of Selectmen, therefore, created an Ad Hoc committee to review the athletic fields and outdoor space usages throughout the town and to make recommendations on what needs immediate attention. A year ago, the Ad Hoc committee finished their work and presented their recommendations. We identified the Bacon Academy fields and tennis courts, and the RecPlex tennis, pickleball and basketball courts as areas in need of immediate attention.

At Bacon Academy, we recommend moving to synthetic turf fields to handle the heavy usage demand, provide for community sports league access, and provide fields that can be maintained by current town staffing with minimal to moderate financial constraints to the town (as compared to natural turf fields). We believe rebuilding the tennis courts at Bacon Academy is important in providing quality educational opportunities to all students. At the RecPlex, we recommend building quality PickleBall and tennis courts to meet the community needs. Building a centrally located concession stand, with more bathrooms, at the RecPlex, and renovating the SplashPad will continue to be a huge asset to our town.

The Athletic Complex Building Committee is holding a Public Hearing on the proposed

project on Jan. 7. Please visit our website on the Town's website to learn more about the project. Come to the public hearing, or email us, if you have any questions. Encourage the boards of selectmen and finance to send the project to Town Meeting (and ultimately referendum) to let the townspeople decide if this is the right thing for Colchester.

Suzanne Salemi
Secretary - Athletic Complex Building Committee

Thank You for Your Service

To the Editor:

As we celebrate the holidays, I hope we take a moment to think about the young men and women from our community who are serving in the military and have answered the call to serve our country.

While we are busy with family, food, traditions and celebrations, many of them are spending the holidays on duty, often far from home. These are people we know - who grew up here, went to our schools, worked in our local businesses, worshiped at our churches, and shared everyday life in Colchester.

It is easy for us to get caught up in the holiday season, but remembering them matters. A kind thought, a prayer, or a simple thank-you can mean more than we realize - not just during the holidays, but throughout the year.

Wishing our service members safe holidays and hoping they know how much their hometown is thinking of them. May we never take lightly the freedom their service helps protect. Thank you for your service!

Madelyn Starkey - Colchester

EDC Thanks Rokap

To The Editor:

The East Hampton Economic Development Commission would like to express sincere thanks to David and Seth Kaplan of Rokap, Inc., a graphics and design company in East Hampton. They deserve huge thanks for their hard work and donation of service to encourage the support of local businesses throughout this holiday season. Rokap is a local firm that specializes in business marketing, custom signage and more.

Their design services helped the EDC to develop and print signs temporarily posted around town, saying: Today & All Season - Shop, Eat Local and Support Local Businesses. To readers who see these signs around town this season, please remember to stop in and support our neighbors who are doing business locally. Together we can all make a difference when we shop and eat at local businesses.

With Sincere Thanks,
Mary Milewski Economic Development Commission, Chairperson



Happy New Year



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Thank You, Lions Club

To the Editor:

On behalf of the residents and staff of the East Hampton Housing Authority, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Lions Club of East Hampton for their steadfast and continued support of our senior community.

The Lions Club has consistently demonstrated what it means to be a "community first" organization. Their dedication to improving the lives of our seniors – whether through their generous donations, service projects, or consistent presence – makes a tangible difference in the quality of life for those who live here.

In a world that can sometimes feel disconnected, the Lions Club serves as a vital bridge, ensuring our seniors feel seen, valued, and supported. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a dedicated group of volunteers working to make East Hampton a better place for all generations.

Thank you, Lions, for your heart and your hard work.

Sincerely,
F. David McGovern Jr
Tenant Commissioner of
The East Hampton Housing Authority

Why the Pledge of Allegiance Is Important

To the Editor:

After reading recent *Rivereast* articles regarding Marlborough's Board of Selectmen (BOS) debate as to whether board members should recite the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of meetings has inspired me to research the subject and share what I have learned and my thoughts.

The Pledge is a brief (15-second) declaration of loyalty to America and serves as a reminder of shared principles, values and national identity. Its recitation connects individuals to a broader sense of community, reinforcing a sense of belonging within the nation and encourages an understanding of the rights and duties that accompany citizenship.

The words recited have core symbolic meanings such as "and to the Republic for which it stands" which highlight the nation's governmental structure, where power resides with the people and is exercised through elected representatives. The phrase "one Nation, under God, indivisible" underscores the concept of national unity, the belief in a supreme being, and emphasizing that the country is a unified entity despite its diverse population. Finally, "with liberty and justice for all" articulates the aspirations for freedom and fairness for every individual, regardless of background, as foundational principles of our society.

The Pledge also serves an educational and for-

mative function instilling civic values and providing an opportunity to teach and remind all of us, especially younger generations, of the principles of citizenship and respect for national symbols.

The concerns raised by some of our local leaders about reciting the Pledge at meetings seems somewhat baseless and unfounded to me as it pertains to constitutionality and having an undesirable impact on people's feelings. The U.S. House of Representatives and Senate participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance at their meetings and this practice has endured the test of time. So why such concern at the local government level?

The solution is simple (in my view) and most obvious: Voluntary participation. Before reciting the Pledge, the BOS chair would make an announcement specifying standing and reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance is strictly voluntary and no one is under any obligation to participate. Many towns throughout our nation have made similar accommodations for their constituents and it works just fine.

Lastly, and for me personally, it is an honor to recite the Pledge of Allegiance for it represents a deep sense of American pride and love of country and a way of giving tribute to the many men and women who sacrificed so much for our country to secure its freedoms. Remember, it only takes 15 seconds to recite.

With Respect to Marlborough's Citizenry and Town Leaders, Robert Ragusa – Marlborough

Why Ambulance Association Fundraising is Important

To the Editor:

Some residents have questions about why the East Hampton Ambulance Association (EHAA) held a fundraiser in October 2025 when the town provided financial support. As the Board of Directors, we want to explain clearly why fundraising is necessary.

In September 2022, the Holdsworth Group—hired to review our ambulance system—recommended transitioning from a fully volunteer model to a paid staffing model. This change was driven by rising call volume, increased training requirements, and a national decline in available volunteers. This recommendation was adopted and while it improved service reliability & patient care it also increased operating costs.

Today, EHAA is a fully paid professional ambulance service. Unfortunately, the state regulated reimbursement system for EMS has not kept up with the actual cost of care. Federal and state reimbursements do not cover what it costs to respond to an ambulance call, leaving us with an annual operating deficit.

EHAA currently relies on its cash reserves to cover this annual operating deficit, but those re-

See Letters, page 6

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★ *Letters cont. from page 5*

serves are limited. Without additional revenue sources and continued Town support, the current system will not be sustainable in the future. Emergencies and unforeseen expenses are inevitable, and preserving them is essential to ensuring reliable emergency care of the future.

Recognizing this challenge, the Town Council created the Ambulance Task Force in May 2024 to study the future of EMS in East Hampton. This exhaustive study found that EHAA is not unique. Town based ambulance associations across the state and across the country are faced with the same financial challenges. The Task Force’s report emphasized that long-term sustainability requires multiple revenue streams, including appropriate fees, town financial support, fair reimbursement for services, and fundraising.

The town helps fund our operations, but it does not cover 100% of the cost. No single funding source can support a fully paid ambulance service. Fundraising is a standard, responsible practice for EMS agencies across Connecticut.

Our fundraiser was held to strengthen our financial stability, preserve our limited reserves, and ensure that East Hampton continues to receive high-quality 24/7 emergency medical care for years to come.

**East Hampton Ambulance Association
Board of Directors**

Holiday Cheer

To the Editor:

“Come dance with the west wind and touch on the mountain tops.
Sail o’er the canyons and up to the stars.
And reach for the heavens and hope for the future
and all that we can be, not what we are.” -John Denver and Mike Taylor

We’re seeing bald eagles on Kinney Rd, both north and east. Why they’re here, and not in their rocky homes above the Connecticut River, is anyone’s guess. We also see golden eagles, red tail hawks, ravens, vultures and more. Maybe, like so many people, eagles appreciate the quiet landscape, abundant water supplies and private hunting grounds on the Raymond Brook Watershed. Or maybe they’re attracted to gnarly trees,

half rotten, but still breathing life into our world while nursing younger trees and hoarding water. Old trees make great lookout spots for owls and birds of prey. Many a time you can look right at trees and still fail to notice the wildlife hiding in plain sight. Kinney Rd has hidden in plain sight for generations, and she’s a gem.

When first I visited Amston, I knew nothing about Hebron. I stopped at Xtra Mart and parked alongside a beat-up Volvo. That well worn car was a sign of intelligent life. The house I saw that day was intelligent by design too. An article in the final Hebron Views touched on a 25 year plan, still in place, to strive towards keeping Hebron healthy. This important plan is based on sound values, values that we all benefit from. However, if we don’t defend what we value, more land will be paved over.

Keeping Public Works off the RBWatershed and rebuilding on Old Colchester Road benefits not only eagles and present day humans, it benefits generations of wildlife and people yet to come. Rural living offers a rich way of life. Imagine your great grandchildren walking the same, unchanged acres we now enjoy in Hebron and seeing bald eagles for the first time. Imagine if you had played a part in saving the historically soggy tracts of land known as 17 Kinney Rd. This can only happen if we put our ambitions and differences aside and do what’s best for this watershed property. However, this will require more than hope. It will require a concerted effort from everyone.

As 2025 winds down, #save17 wishes readers a safe and Happy New Year.

Jean Tulimieri - Amston

Hebron’s Historical Present

To the Editor:

Thank you to the Hebron Historical Society for the creation of a new QR Code Tour hitchhiking post for “The Raymond Brook Preserve / #17 Kinney Road.” Located at the Kinney Road parking lot in the Preserve, next to the Pollinator Garden, the QR Code Tour offers an exciting new way to experience history. Just take a photo of the code with your smart phone and follow the link, and you will be transported back in time.

The journey starts over 600 million years ago

with the bedrock geology and the impact, literally, of the supercontinent Pangea. Discover the world of the Laurentide Ice Sheet that was over a mile thick as it slowly shaped the landscape we know today. Find out how the deposit of Glacial Lodgment Till soil left behind between 100,000 and 12,000 years ago still influences life in Hebron center today. Follow in the footsteps of the first Indigenous inhabitants, the Paleoindians, that arrived more than 10,000 years ago. Look around and you will see the same landscape that Attawahood, the son of the Mohegan Sachem Uncas, granted to the first colonial settlers in 1675.

As you walk into the Federal era of the late 1700s and early 1800s, you will find out just how unique the stonewall laneways are in the Kinney Road area. It is a perfect place to reflect on the diverse history of Hebron and the development of the thriving Free Black Community of skilled farmers in the 1820s and 1830s. Slowly you will find yourself back in the present day and the active agricultural fields used by the Bissell, Hilding, Megson and Baribault families. Reading history is one thing, experiencing it in a living and vibrant landscape is another thing altogether.

To have the Hebron Historical Society recognize the value of the Kinney Road area is a major step forward. Special thanks to historian John Baron for all his remarkable work on this fantastic project. The QR Code Tours are spread throughout Hebron center, including Marjorie Circle, around the Green, on Wall Street, Church Street, and St. Peter’s Field. The new QR Code Tour of the Raymond Brook Preserve and 17 Kinney Road is an exciting way for the community to embrace this pristine landscape and experience the amazing potential for education and sustainable economic development through eco-tourism and agri-tourism. For more information, please visit Save Hebron Center on Facebook.

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

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What My Grandmother’s Recipes Taught Me About Aging
To the Editor:

Aging boldly is not something to fear or hide from, but rather, it is something to be honored. With time comes wisdom, perspective, and stories shaped by deep roots. I often think of my grandmother, an expert baker whose kitchen carried the flavors and traditions of her Maine upbringing. Many of her recipes were family heirlooms, passed down through generations, each one holding a piece of our history. Standing beside her, I learned that aging is not about losing relevance, but about carrying forward what matters.

Today, I still bake from those well-worn recipes, a reminder that the gifts of aging live on through connection, memory, and shared experience. Aging is not an ending, but a continuation, an opportunity to grow, form meaningful friendships, and find belonging. Our communities, including senior centers, are places where stories are valued, support is found, and aging is celebrated. Growing older isn’t about slowing down, it’s about deepening our roots and continuing to thrive together.

**Sarah Elliott-Caratasios LMSW
Director & Municipal Agent
Portland Senior Center**

Cato Corner Concern

To the Editor:

I must say the best part of Cato Corner Road recently being newly paved was the slowdown of traffic and speed. I see my neighbors and myself trying to turn into our driveways with vehicles following too closely. Which is a hazard. We all know Cato Corner Rd. is used as a cross over from Rt. 149 to Rt. 16 both ways.

Cato Corner Rd. is a residential road with posted speed limits which need to be followed.

I personally feel unsafe crossing the road to my mailbox. I have repeatedly requested the town of Colchester to install speed readers on Cato Corner Rd. to slow down traffic. This has not been done.

Please slow down for everyone’s safety.

**A Concerned Resident
Nancy Piella, Colchester**

Dear Portland Neighbors

To the Editor:

As 2025 comes to a close, the Portland Library Board of Directors would like to take a moment to express our gratitude to those who make our public library such a vital part of our community.

We would first like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our remarkable staff and to our indefatigable Library Director, Jenn Billingsley, for all they do to make our library such a special place. Over the past year, Jenn and the entire team have worked diligently to expand services and programming that meets the evolving needs of our community, while continuing to ensure that the library remains a friendly, welcoming, and inclusive space for all. Their commitment, creativity, and care are evident every day the doors are open.

We would also like to express our deep gratitude to the Friends of the Portland Library for their steadfast partnership and generous support. Their funding makes possible so many of the offerings our community values—programming for all ages, museum passes, summer reading, and many other resources that enrich lives and strengthen our community. Our library truly would not be what it is without the Friends’ ongoing dedication.

To our community: thank you for your continued patronage throughout 2025. Every visit, program registration, and borrowed book is a reminder of how much this library matters. We warmly encourage everyone to stop by in 2026—whether you are a lifelong patron or a first-time visitor—to see all that your library has to offer.

On a personal note, after eight years of service, I will be resigning from the Library Board of Directors at the end of the month. It has been a true honor to serve alongside such compassionate, hard-working, and dedicated board members—Olenka Castelli, Don Eiler, Myra Finkelstein, Betsy Graziano, Melissa Kelley, Jade Richardson, and formerly Margot Chapman and Melissa Woodward. I am profoundly thankful for each of them and their commitment to and support of our incredible little library. In many ways, communities are powered by volunteers, and this group of volunteers is pretty darn great. I am very excited to welcome Ralph Zampano to the board as he steps in to continue this important work. Wishing you a beautiful and joy-filled holiday season.

**With gratitude,
Laurel Steinhauer
Chair, Portland Library Board of Directors**

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Portland Author Publishes Book for Caregivers

By Anne Lilburn

Portland resident, social worker and Senior Center Director Sarah Elliott-Caratasios always knew she wanted to work with older people - she even minored in Gerontology in college - but she said her job often has her working as much with seniors' families as with the seniors themselves.

That, along with her own personal experience caring for her parents and in-laws while raising four children of her own, has inspired her to write a hybrid memoir-advice book titled "When Love Becomes Care: Real Talk for the Sandwich Generation."

"I guess you could say the inspiration really and truly is to help others that are going through the emotional challenges, and the stressors, of being in a sandwich generation," she said, "and to provide support and education to let people know that they're not alone."

Elliott-Caratasios said many people she talks with aren't familiar with the term "sandwich generation." It's a term that's long been used by social workers and gerontologists, having been coined in 1981 by two social workers, Dorothy Miller and Elaine Brody, who wrote of the chal-

lenges faced by women struggling to care for both younger children and aging parents.

Elliott-Caratasios said that just because people don't know what the sandwich generation is doesn't mean they don't instantly understand it at a visceral level once she explains it to them. "They don't know what it is, but they know they're in it," she said.

Elliott-Caratasios said she herself is familiar with the burdens of being in the sandwich generation at a personal level as well. "I've been doing it for years and years with my own parents and in-laws," she said, noting that her in-laws have required substantial support that's required her to navigate complicated state and federal funding challenges to get them the care they need.

Elliott-Caratasios said one of the biggest pieces of advice she can offer, both as someone who has been there and as a social worker, is to ask for help. "The biggest thing is letting someone help you," she said. "Typically, individuals in the sandwich generation, they don't. They're just, I would classify it as 'on autopilot.'"

When someone gets accustomed to not ask-

ing for help, she said, it can be harder for them to even consider where they might go to ask for help. She said that's one thing she's hoping to provide with this book. She hopes it will be a resource for people to find support and ideas for places to turn to for help, and she also hopes that her own personal stories that she shares might help people feel less alone.

"It's just a tricky situation, and people don't really know how to navigate it," she said, "and they feel like they're alone, so that's why I wrote this book ... to ... really let them know that they're not alone, and here's what you can do, and not only to just let them know they're not alone, but provide resources."

Elliott-Caratasios said the sandwich generation experience can be very isolating, because while caring for others, caregivers can become isolated from friendships, leaving them without time to socialize. She said she wrote about the challenge of maintaining friendships in the book, adding that it can be hard when others aren't experiencing the same challenges in their lives. She encourages people to seek out support in online communities when they can, and adds that she's developing online courses on the topic herself.

"When Love Becomes Care: Real Talk for the

Sandwich Generation" isn't Elliott-Caratasios' first book. She has written three children's books as well: "I Love You As Much As...", "The Adventures of Nibbles Munk Munk," and "Grammie Sally and the Browns Head Lighthouse." She is also working on another children's book with her 7-year-old daughter titled "How Do Dragons Breathe Fire?"

In addition to writing books and working for the town of Portland, Elliott-Caratasios also spends time helping out with the family business, Tommy's Pizza Palace, which was founded by her father-in-law 60 years ago. Anyone looking to purchase her new book locally can find it there. It can also be purchased on Amazon.

"When someone picks up this book, I want them to feel like they've finally found someone who understands the things they've been afraid to say out loud," she said. "Caregiving can be beautiful, but it can also be isolating. No one should feel alone in it."

First Congregational Church News

All are welcome on Sunday, Dec. 28, at 10 a.m., as we celebrate the first Sunday after Christmas. Louise Wright will be the guest preacher. Also, at 10 a.m., elementary aged children will meet for Church School in the newly renovated classroom, and the middle school class will meet in the youth room. Infant - Pre-K children experience loving care as they enjoy playtime and an appropriate age lesson.

FCC is located at 554 Main Street. For more information, go to <https://firstchurchportland-ct.org/> or call 860-342-3244.

Bereavement Support Group

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

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

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

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.

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.



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Cromwell/Portland's Football Season Ends in Playoffs



Senior Tyler Cipolla looks towards the fans during the start of the fourth quarter. The home team lost to the Lions from West Hartford, 31-21, in the quarterfinals of the Class S playoffs.

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Diggin' the Dalles... Here with the *Rivereast* are George and Alannah Coshow with Doug and Tammy Mackeown, at The Dalles on a Columbia River cruise.

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!



Rivereast Goes to Missouri!... The team from Central K9 Dog Training Facility in Colchester recently were in Springfield, Mo., for the National Dock Diving Championships. Dogs and people had a great time! The *Rivereast* traveled with the paper.



Above the Clouds... Michael Chotkowski of Marlborough is pictured on the 154th floor of the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Burj Khalifa is the tallest building in the world.



Visiting Ireland... Barbara Falcha of Portland is shown at one of the estimated 30,000 castles and ruins in beautiful Ireland. Specifically here, she's in Killiney. Barbara was in Ireland with three of her many siblings (10) and mom (in spirit).

Where in the World?

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

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Standout Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

Here are the *Rivereast* Standout Athletes of the Week for the week of Dec. 15 – 21:

Jameson Grant - Bacon Academy (Wrestling): Grant took the top spot at the Haddam-Killingworth Tournament in Haddam on Dec. 20. Grant, a sophomore, won the 126-lbs. bracket after pinning Anthony Valenzuela of Danbury in the title match. On the girls side, Charlotte Grant placed 2nd in the 132-lbs. weight class and Kendall Grant placed 3rd in the 107-lbs. weight class.

Kelsey Desmarais and Nikki D'Amora – Portland High School (Basketball): Desmarais and D'Amora combined for 26 points as the Highlanders opened their home schedule with a 40-33 victory over Old Lyme in front of a standing room only crowd on Dec. 18. Desmarais, a junior captain, posted a double-double by scoring 16 points and hauling down 12 rebounds. D'Amora, a freshman, scored 10 points and had a pair of steals in her first ever game playing at the high school. The Highlanders return to PHS on Tuesday, Jan. 6 to host Coginchaug at 7 p.m.

Meredith Weir - RHAM High School (Volleyball): Weir was named as the 2025 MaxPreps

Player of the Year after leading the Raptors to the state championship. Weir, a senior, eclipse 1,000 career kills during the championship march and put an exclamation point on her career with a 26-kill performance in a five-set victory over Joel Barlow to capture the Class M state title. She was named the Most Valuable Player of the championship match, along with bringing home All-Central Connecticut Conference (CCC) and Class M All-State honors this past fall.

Liana Salamone - East Hampton/Ethel Walker: Salamone is averaging 21.6 points and 11.1 rebounds through the first seven games of her senior season at The Ethel Walker School in Simsbury. Salamone, who helped lead East Hampton High School girls to a state championship in 2024, transferred to the private, college preparatory school last winter and has led the Wildcats in scoring and rebounding in each of the last two years.

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.



Bacon Academy sophomore Jameson Grant (center) is pictured after placing first in his weight class at the Haddam-Killingworth tourney last week.

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Bipartisan Bell Ringing... Recently, Representatives Jill Barry (D-31) and Steve Weir (R-55) participated in the Salvation Army's holiday collection in Glastonbury. Both noted that it's good to work together both inside and outside the House Chamber.

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Congregational Church News & Notes

East Hampton Congregational Church, located at 59 Main St., will share the annual all-church Christmas pageant Sunday, Dec. 21, at 10 a.m., along with Christmas carols to be sung. After the pageant there will be a luncheon for all to enjoy downstairs in Fellowship Hall. Office hours are Monday and Wednesday,

9 a.m.-2 p.m., and the telephone number for church is 860-267-4959. Pastor Robin Blundon is usually available at that time for anyone's needs. **Calendar:** Sunday, 7 p.m., AA Meeting; Monday, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Cub Scouts; Tuesday, 7-8 p.m., Scouts.

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.

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. For more information, call 860-267-1248 or visit www.facebook.com/BethlehemEH or www.bethlehemeh.org.

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.east-hamptonrec.com. **Wolf Pack Tickets Now Available:** At PeoplesBank Arena in Hartford (formerly XL Center) on Saturday, Jan. 10, from 6-8 p.m. Tickets are \$25 each and are in the lower level, Section 109. Register online.

EHMS Volleyball Registration

East Hampton Middle School student/athletes in grades 7 or 8 who are interested in playing for the boys or girls volleyball teams can register at arbitersports.com. Athletes must have a physical within a 13-month period in order to participate. Registration is limited to the first 60 girls registered. Deadline for registration is on Sunday, Jan. 25. For more information, call EHMS athletic director Michael Mercaldi at 860-463-6837.

Local Art on Display

Local artist Tom Swimm has an oil painting titled "Afternoon at the Griswold" as part of the Lyme Art Association "Inside Story" exhibit. The show will run until Jan. 1 at the Lyme Art Association, 90 Lyme St. in Old Lyme. For more information, please visit lymeartassociation.org.

Winter Classes at Epoch Arts

Epoch Arts is offering a variety of classes and programs this winter. Students in grades pre-K through 12 can register online to take classes like art, ceramics, theater, improv, theater productions and more. Classes begin the week of Jan. 5, and will be held at Epoch, 27 Skinner St. For full class descriptions and to register, visit www.epocharts.org/classes-registration.

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.



Merry Christmas from East Hampton... East Hampton residents light up the town with Christmas cheer with a slew of dazzling lights and holiday displays found only at Scrivano Christmas Lights, who are accepting donations to their Venmo @scrivanolights. Photo contributed by Eric Scrivano.



New Trustee... Fowler-Dix-Park VFW Post & Auxiliary announced that Judy Barnes was recently elected and installed to a six-year term as VFW National Home District 2 Trustee, representing Connecticut, Europe, New York and Vermont. Barnes is a 40-year volunteer at the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs Skilled Nursing Home. She said she is excited to help the VFW National Home grow, bringing her energy and passion for service to new projects and transformations.

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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.

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.

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.

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.

Teen Programs: Library Lunch Bunch Holiday Break Bonanza: Grades 6-8: Tuesday, Dec. 30, 2-3 p.m. Drop by the library for a relaxed midday break. The library will have games, crafts, and lively book chat to make your holiday break a little brighter.

Magic: the Gathering Grades 7-12: Saturday, Jan. 3, 3:30-5 p.m. Come play Magic: The Gathering! Whether you already know how to play the card game, or want to learn, come together and play with people of all skill levels. Bring your own decks or use one of the library’s decks.

Snack Lab: Grades 6-12: Wednesday, Jan. 7, 3-5 p.m. Learn how to make microwave treats perfect for after school, movie nights, or when you just need something fun to eat!

Children’s Programs: Pokémon Party!: Grades K-6: Saturday, Dec. 27, 2-3:30 p.m. play games, create crafts, and enjoy Pokémon-themed snacks.

New Year’s at Noon: Tuesday, Dec. 30, 10:30 a.m. Ring in the New Year with the Library. Magician Ed Popielarczyk returns with another interactive performance. Stick around after the show for the big balloon drop at noon.

LEGO at the Library: Grades K-6: Tuesday, Jan. 6, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Come join the library as they build with LEGO! All materials provided.

STEM Storytime: Ages 3-5 Years: Friday, Jan. 9, 10:30 a.m. Join the Library for a story followed by some messy and fun science experiments. Please wear clothes you don’t mind get-

ting messy.

DIY Days for Grades K-8: Saturday, Jan. 10, 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.

STEMtastic: Arctic Adaptations: Grades 1-5: Monday, Jan. 12, 4:30 p.m. Explore the adaptations animals developed to survive the arctic in cool, hands-on art projects.

Read to a Therapy Dog: Grades K-3: Tuesday, Jan. 13, 4:30 p.m. Readers will be assigned a 15-minute time slot between 4:30-5:30 p.m. to read to Jovie, a certified therapy dog.

Adult Programs: Paint & Pastries: A Winter Morning: Adults and Grades 8-12: Monday, Dec. 29, 11 a.m. Join the library for a winter morning filled with pastries and painting. No experience needed.

Cookbook Club: Tuesday, Jan. 6, 6:30 p.m. This month’s theme is Citrus Celebration. Bring a prepared dish, 12 copies of the recipe to share, and come hungry! Food should arrive ready to eat; the Library will provide the plates and forks. Register or drop in.

Tech Help: Thursday, Jan. 8, 2-4 p.m. Basic technology help for phones, laptops, tablets, and e-readers. Drop by the Library during their dedicated Tech Help times and let them lend a hand in figuring it all out. No registration required, just bring your device with you.

Cabin Fever History Series: True Tales of New England with Monica Peterson: Saturday, Jan. 10, 11 a.m. Travel back in time to meet a heroine of the American Revolution, see the Ghost Ship of New Haven, and laugh at the antics of a town’s battle against a bunch of bullfrogs. *An America250 program.*

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.

Clothing Donations: The church is collecting clothing for the area unhoused in conjunction with FOOD4LIVES. Please check your closet for surplus warm clothing in good condition; adult sizes only. A box will be placed in the Parish Hall for donations.

Information/Assistance: Contact Senior Warden Donna Hryb at 860-633-0472 or donnadubehryb@gmail.com for more information.

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.

Makers Market: Stop by the library during regular hours for a pop-up makers market featuring locally made soaps, simmer pot kits, fire starters and woven runners, placemats and tea towels. You may also fill a free bag with used books.

Featured Artist for December: Phil Barlow, a watercolor artist.

Intention with Erin Day: Monday, Dec. 29, 6 p.m. Day, who leads yoga classes at the library each week, will offer a discussion on finding and focusing on intentions during yoga practice. Setting an intention in yoga means choosing a

focus or quality to guide your practice.

Book Talk: Sunday, Jan. 4, 2 p.m. *Hartford Courant* columnist Dom Amore will give a talk on his collaboration with retired UConn men’s basketball coach Jim Calhoun, titled *More Than a Game: How the UConn Basketball Dynasty Was Built on a Culture of Caring*. Please call the library to reserve a seat.

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

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

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.

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.

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.

Holiday Closing: The senior center will be closed Jan. 1 in celebration of the New Year’s holiday and will be open on Jan. 2.

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.

Trailblazers Walking Group: Monday, Dec. 29, 9 a.m., at Air Line State Park, 69 Smith St. All paces welcome.

Chatham Health Chat: Tuesday, Dec. 30 at 11:30 a.m. featuring a talk on Mental Health with a representative of Chatham Health.

Tai Chi with Ming: Fridays at 2 p.m. from Jan. 2-March 6. Join instructor Ming Zhao for this new session. Tai Chi is a Chinese mind-body practice that combines a gentle form of

moving meditation that combines slow, flowing movements, deep breathing and focused awareness. Cost is \$20.

Linefit: Mondays, Jan. 5 and 19, at 2 p.m. This is a low-impact line dancing class. The instructor is Mariana Sigleski. Fee \$3 per class.

Trips: Lunch for Seniors at Windham Tech: Wednesday, Jan. 14 leaving the Senior Center at 10 a.m. for an 11 a.m. seating. Enjoy a delicious lunch prepared by Windham Tech Culinary students. Cost is \$19 and includes lunch and transportation.

Friendship Tours Irish Celebration with Andy Cooney: March 10, at the Danversport Yacht Club, Danvers, Mass. Depart from Stop & Shop at 7:30 a.m. Enjoy the sounds of Ireland with Andy Cooney, special guest comedian George Casey, the Guinness Irish Band and Emerald Fire Irish Dance. Choice of Scrod or corned beef. Cost is \$185.

Friendship Tours Fairytale Lunch: Held at Pickity Place, Mason, N.H., on May 7. Visit the 1786 cottage for lunch followed by time to stroll the grounds and shop. You can also visit the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, N.H., for a guided tour. Cost is \$167.

Volunteer Opportunities: Volunteers are needed to answer phones and grocery shop for senior center members. Stop by the center Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., to fill out the volunteer form. Call 860-267-4426 for more information.

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91-Year-Old Makes Fitness a Daily Habit

By Anne Lilburn

Just before she turned 90 years old in Oct. 2024, Rita Milardo said she started noticing something as she watched people out for their daily walks near where she lives in East Hampton's Senior Housing. She said she'd see the same neighbors every day.

"They go from walking," she said, "[and] next thing you know, you see them with a cane, and then you see some even go to a walker."

Milardo said she had always been very active throughout her life, but recently, she had found herself spending many of her days sitting on the couch and watching TV, struggling to get out the door to the car. She had recently retired at the age of 89 from her job as a cashier at Adams Hometown Market, and she decided she had to do something, because she wanted to stay active.

"I said, that's it. There's no excuse. I'm going down to the gym." She did go to the gym, joining Team Fitness in East Hampton for free through her insurance's Silver Sneakers program. She's been going almost daily ever since. Milardo said

that when she first started, she would just use the treadmill for 30 minutes and leave, but she was getting bored, and it was starting to show. Some of the other gym patrons whom she had befriended took notice.

"They said, 'Rita, if you don't mind me saying so, are you thinking about quitting?'" she recalled. They understood that she was losing motivation, and Milardo said they told her to keep going. She said they told her, "Either you're going to be true to it or you're not."

After a few more weeks, Milardo said another gym goer asked her why she always just used the treadmill and never tried out any of the weight machines, and when Milardo confessed she didn't know how to use them, she showed her how.

The next thing she knew, she was part of a regular workout group, she said, made up of people ranging from their 50s all the way up to their 90s, though she admits she may be the only 90-something regular. Milardo said there are about 20 of them who regularly work out in

the mornings, and they provide each other with advice and encouragement. "We have so much fun," she said, "and of course, all the guys, they said, 'Boy, Rita, you're our inspiration,' because they're in their 70s and 80s, and they say, 'Now we know we got longer to go by watching you.'"

Milardo said she's gotten stronger in ways that are important to her. That trip from her couch to her car doesn't seem imposing anymore, and she said she now has an easier time with household tasks, like opening and closing a heavy window, carrying laundry or lifting objects.

Milardo said that she knew strength work was particularly important at her age, given the rate of muscle loss in one's older years, but she also said she's not looking to make big gains in how much weight she can lift right now, because she also has to be careful not to overdo it. She said

she, along with her doctors, worried that she might be losing too much weight, so she made some changes to her routine. She changed her diet to give herself more calories and protein, cut down on her treadmill cardio, and held steady on her lifting regimen.

Milardo said she has no intention of quitting any time soon, saying she loves that she has "more freedom" when she works out regularly. "It keeps you young," she said, "because then you can interact with people and do things, and it keeps your mind young when you can do those things."

She said she's even taken to giving fitness advice to her own doctors these days.

"My doctors, they said, we want to be like you," she said. "Well, I said, get off your duff, and the earlier you start the better."

Taxes Due Jan. 1

The second installment of real estate, personal property, motor vehicle taxes over \$500, and supplemental motor vehicle taxes on the Grand List of Oct. 1, 2024 is due and payable on Jan. 1. Payments made or USPS-postmarked by Feb. 2 will be considered on time.

Real estate and personal property taxes are billed at 39.71 mills; motor vehicle and supplemental motor vehicle taxes are billed at the

state-capped rate of 32.46 mills. Supplemental motor vehicle bills will be mailed on or about Dec. 12.

Late payments accrue 1.5% interest per month (18% annually) with a \$2 minimum, as required by state law. A \$20 returned-check fee applies. Failure to receive a bill does not exempt taxpayers from payment or interest.

Checks should be made payable to Town of East Hampton. Payments may be mailed to: Collector of Revenue, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424. Payments may also be made online at www.easthamptonct.gov.

If dropping off in person, hours of collection are: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Tuesday, 8 a.m.-6:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Email taxcollector@easthamptonct.gov with any questions or concerns.

Christmas Tree Pick-Up

Christmas Tree Pick-Up by East Hampton Boy Scout Troop 8 will conduct a Christmas tree pick-up on Saturday, Jan. 10. Reserve a pick-up at: www.troop8.net.

After registering online, place the tree at the end of your driveway by 7 a.m. on Jan 10. Suggested donation is \$15 per tree. Check or cash can be left in an envelope and taped to your door. Checks should be made out to Boy Scout Troop 8.

If not able to register online please send an email message with name, address and phone number to trees@troop8.net

No wreaths or garland will be accepted. Also, this pick-up is available to East Hampton, Middle Haddam and Cobalt addresses only. Registrations are due Jan. 5.

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.



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HOLIDAY MENU WILL BE SERVED ON NEW YEAR'S EVE

APPETIZERS

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Zuppa D' Mussels Sautéed in fresh tomato sauce or white wine sauce
Fried Mozzarella Topped with marinara sauce

PASTA COURSE

Penne Aglio Olio • Penne with garlic and oil • Penne Marinara
Penne Alla Vodka Asparagus, sun dried tomatoes in a vodka blush sauce

SOUP OR SALAD

Cup of soup of the day or garden salad

DINNER CHOICES

Chicken Parmigiana
Eggplant Rollatini Rolled eggplant stuffed with ricotta, prosciutto and roasted peppers
Chicken Marsala Sautéed with mushrooms, shallots in a marsala wine sauce
Stuffed Pork Chop Stuffed with broccoli, gorgonzola cheese and ritz crackers in a brown cognac sauce
Stuffed Sole Crab meat stuffing served over spinach

Balkan Meatballs Beef meatballs sautéed with scallions, roasted red peppers, grape tomatoes in a marsala cream sauce

DESSERTS

— Ask your server for our selections

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Bowling Champs... The three Senior Bowling Leagues combined to play in the 2025 Winter Bowl Tournament at Kickback n’ Bowl on Dec. 17. The winning team from left Jan Bruetsch, Gerry Hill, Andy Folcik, Dan Kowalchik and Teresa Tacinelli. The next senior bowling leagues start Jan. 5. Contact Jack Anderson jackande52@aol.com for more info.

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Colchester Federated Church News

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

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

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.

Public Safety Announcement - Always Call 911 First

Colchester Fire & EMS has noticed an increase in residents contacting local fire stations directly instead of calling 911 when they need emergency help. This can create delays that endanger lives. In any emergency - whether fire, medical, or public safety - always dial 911. When you call 911, you are connected with a trained dispatcher whose sole job is to get help to you quickly and efficiently.

Calling the fire station directly: May go unanswered if personnel are out on another emergency, can result in slower dispatching of critical resources, and does not connect you to trained dispatchers with real-time situational support able to get you the resources needed to mitigate the emergency.

Calling 911 ensures that: Trained professionals immediately take your information, the correct response units are dispatched without delay, and you may receive life-saving instructions while help is on the way.

If it's an emergency - dial 911 immediately. Your action can mean the difference between life and death, and ensures help is dispatched as quickly as possible. When in doubt whether it's an emergency or not, CALL 911 so a trained dispatcher can assist in prioritization and appropriate resource deployment.

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.

Historical Society Calendars Available

The Colchester Historical Society's 2026 calendars are now available.

The 2026 calendar presents a monthly historical overview of Colchester's Town Green and surrounding landmarks through photographs and descriptions, highlighting changes in the landscape, buildings, and community activities over time.

Calendars cost \$12 each and can be purchased at the Colchester History Museum on Sundays from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., or at Nathan Liverant and Son Antiques, 168 Main St., Mondays through Saturdays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

To purchase or learn more, contact the society at 860-537-3240 or mail@colchesterhistory.org.

Christian Life Chapel News

Christian Life Chapel, located at 392 S. Main St., holds worship in person at 10 a.m. Sundays. Follow the church on Facebook for the livestream. For more information, call Pastor Don Rivers – the church's bi-vocational pastor, who also serves as president for "Racing with Jesus, Inc." – at 860-398-9119 or visit 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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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. There is also a brief meeting for pre-service prayer on Sundays at 10:15 a.m.

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

Children's Church: Meets Sunday mornings after worship service.

Call the church office at 860-537-3082 for more information, questions, or even if you just need prayer. You can also visit AbundantL.com.

Senior Center News & Notes

Colchester Senior Center, 15 Louis Lane, has announced the following. Unless noted, registration is required for all programs. Credit Cards are currently not accepted. For full descriptions of programs and to register, call 860-537-3911, email csc@colchesterct.gov, or for a full list of activities, visit www.colchesterct.gov.

Monday, Dec. 29: 9:00 Making Memories; 9:00 Exercise w/ Anne; 10:00 Sittercize; 10:30 Unleash Your Joy; 11:00 Learn to Sign; 11:00 – 12:00 Fitness Orientation by appointment; 12:00 Gift Wrapping; 12:30 Mah Jongg; 12:30 Bridge; 12:30 Set Back.

Tuesday, Dec. 30: 9:00 Making Memories; 9:45 Tai Chi; 10:00 European Christmas Traditions; 10-12 Holiday Box Deliveries; 12:30 Pi-

nochle; 1:00 Cornhole; 1:15 BINGO; 4:00-8:00 Wellness Nights.

Wednesday, Dec. 31: 9:00 Making Memories; 9:00 Walking Group; 10:00 Adult Coloring; 10:00 Hand and Foot Card Game; 10:00 Sit & Be Fit Video; 10:00 New Year's Eve Brunch & Bash- Pre registration required; CSC Closes at 12:00 for New Year's Eve Holiday.

Thursday, Jan. 1: CSC Closed for New Year Holiday.

Friday, Jan. 2: 9:00 Open Art Studio; 9:00 Seasonal Crafting; 10:00 Sit & Be Fit; 10:30 Choral Group; 11:00 Yoga; 1:15 BINGO.

Visit us on the town website at www.colchesterct.gov or call 860-537-3911 for more information.

Parks and Rec News & Notes

Colchester Parks & Recreation has announced the following. For full program descriptions or to register, www.colchesterct.gov. For more information, call (860) 537-7297.

Craft Supply Sale: Saturday, Jan 17, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., at the Colchester Senior Center. This is a place to find what you are looking for and sell what you no longer need. You can register as a vendor to sell your unused craft supplies - or you can shop to find craft supplies you need. All supplies must be "like new", or in good working condition. Register for a booth at <https://colchesterctrec.recdesk.com/Community/Home> by Jan. 8.

Puzzlepalooza: Fridays, Jan. 23, Feb. 20, March 20, April 24, from 6- 8 p.m., at the Colchester Senior Center. How fast can you complete a puzzle? Register as a team or single, singles will be paired with others. All teams get the same puzzle and the first one to finish wins a prize. Each team gets to bring the puzzle home. A max of 10 teams compete to complete the same puzzle. No more than 4 people per team and only one person has to register for their team. Children can be included on a team, but there must be at least two adults on each team. Cost is \$24 per team per day. Preregistration is required.

Yoga Mantras and More: Wednesdays, Jan 7-28, afterschool until 4:30 p.m., at Colchester

Elementary School. Each class will be centered around one mantra and theme. Children will participate in age-appropriate activities such as yoga poses, breathing and focusing exercises, learning strategies for self-regulation and relaxation and building social skills. This class is for children at CES in grades K-2. Instructor Susie Hawkins will meet students at dismissal and walk them to the yoga class. Parents/Guardians will pick up their child at 4:30. Please have your child wear comfortable clothes and bring a water bottle. Yoga mats will be provided. Cost is \$50.

5K Resolution Run

The Youth First Coalition and Colchester Youth and Social Services will hold the 19th annual New Year's Day 5K Resolution Run at Town Hall Thursday, Jan. 1, starting at 10 a.m. Registration and bib pick-up begin at 8:30 a.m.

Pre-registration is \$35 and same-day registration is \$45. All participants will receive medals. Register at raceroster.com or visit the Facebook page @ Youth and Social Services Town of Colchester.

Proceeds benefit youth scholarships and youth center upgrades.

For more information, contact Marquis Lawson at Colchester Youth & Social Services at 860-537-7255 or mlawson@colchesterct.gov.

Bacon Establishes Hall of Fame

Bacon Academy has established a "Hall of Fame" to recognize contributions to athletics, academics, associated student body activities (the arts, student government, clubs), and community service.

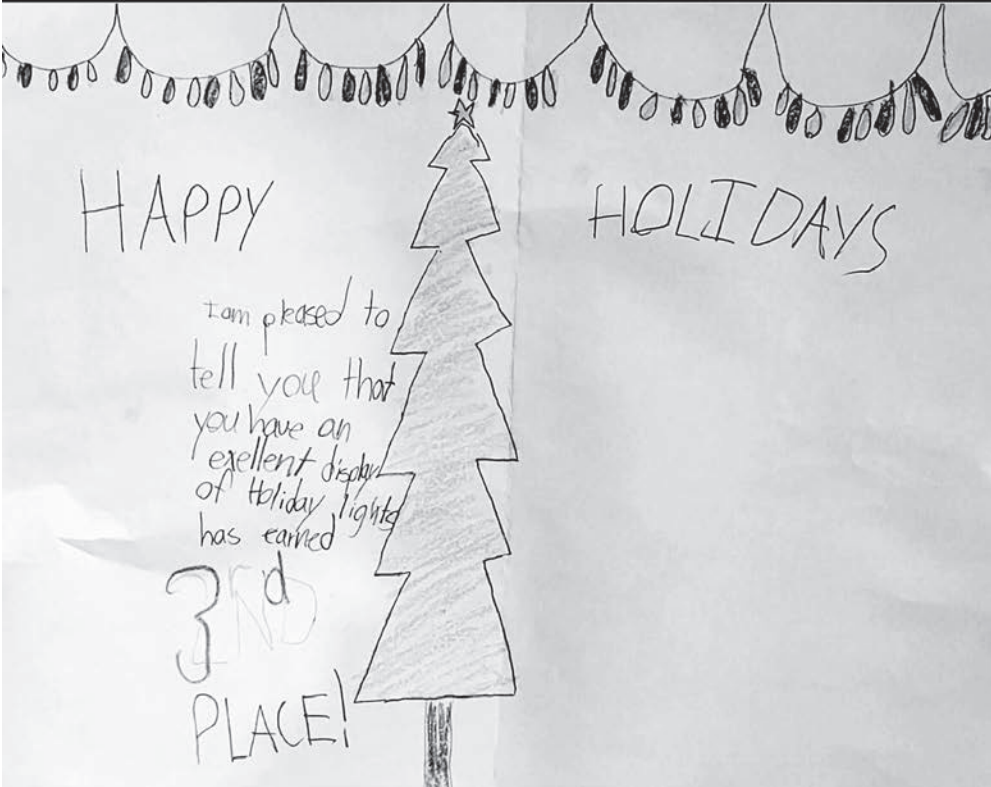
Recognition is also given for career contributions and accomplishments. Inductees include alumni who have graduated, employees who have retired from Bacon Academy, retired coaches and individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to Bacon Academy and may or may not have been an alumnus or employee of Bacon Academy.

Nominations are being accepted until Monday, Jan. 12, with a Hall of Fame induction in spring of 2026. The nomination form can be found at ba.colchesterct.gov/halloffame.

Senior Center Upcoming Trip

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.

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. This is a small group tour (only 24 people in total on the tour) so space is limited. For more information visit <https://gatewaygocollette.com/link/1346389>.



Cutest Christmas in Colchester... Imagine receiving an anonymous, handmade award in your mailbox for the decorations you put up for the holiday season. Curious though, who won first and second place? Photo contributed by third place winner Joe Sands.

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We are thrilled to announce that Paul Holden has joined the Holmgren Subaru family!

Paul began his distinguished career in 1980, selling Subarus with great passion. For the past 32 years, he has been a true fixture of the Subaru brand in Southeastern Connecticut, earning the trust of generations of customers and consistently championing Subaru's commitment to community investment.

His wealth of experience, deep knowledge of the brand, and unwavering dedication to customer care make him a tremendous asset to our team — and an even greater resource for our customers.

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Yummy In My Tummy... An Eastern Bluebird gobbles up bright red berries, gearing up for this winter season. Although, maybe smaller bites would go down more easily. Contributed by Tom Dugdale.

Marlborough Arts Center January Classes.

Start the New Year with a fun and easy class at the Marlborough Arts Center 231 North Main Street. On Saturday, Jan. 10, there are two watercolor classes for beginners and advanced beginners. These are part of a series of classes to introduce different techniques in watercolor.

For those who are more advanced in watercolor, there is a six week workshop series starting on Thursday, Jan. 15. Alan James will be focusing on an impressionistic approach to watercolor landscapes, urban scapes, and seascapes.

For those who want to explore the relaxing and uncomplicated art of Zentangle drawing, we will start a Zentangle club on the third Sunday of the month, Jan. 18.

For course descriptions, instructor bios and registration forms, go to www.MarlbroughArts.org. Online registration is preferred but mail in is also possible. For more information call 860-467-6353.

Kindergarten Registration

Marlborough Elementary School will accept registration packets for kindergarten students for the 2026-27 school year on Tuesday, Feb. 3 (9-11 a.m., 1-2 p.m. and 5-6 p.m.) and Wednesday, Feb. 4 (9-11 a.m. and 1-2 p.m.). All completed kindergarten packets should be dropped off at the school's main office located at 25 School Drive.

Children are eligible for kindergarten if they

Parks and Rec. Programs

Marlborough Parks & Recreation has announced the following. For full program descriptions or to register, visit www.marlbroughct.gov. For more information, call 860-295-6203. Note: Don't wait until the last minute to register! Most classes require a minimum registration and if that requirement is not fulfilled by a certain date, the program may be canceled.

Netto Indoor Soccer: Indoor soccer for fifth- and sixth-graders. Games will begin Jan. 7, and will be played from the end of school until 4:30 p.m. at Marlborough Elementary School. Fee for this program is \$75 and participants will receive a T-shirt.

Tiny Twirlers Dance Class: For ages 2-3 with caregiver. Tuesdays, Jan. 6 and March 24, from 5-5:30 p.m., or Saturdays, Jan. 10-March 28, 9:30-10 a.m. Children will be introduced to basic dance moves, work on their motor skills, and develop a sense of music. Class is held at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Registration fee is \$150.

Sparkling Spinners: For ages 3-6. Thursdays, 4:30-5 p.m., Jan. 8-March 26. Classes held at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Registration fee is \$150.

Kids Klub: For ages 4-7. Saturdays, 11:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m., Jan. 10-March 28. If your child has an interest in a variety of dance styles, movement, and the arts, this is the ideal class for them. Class is held at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Registration fee is \$150.

Kids & Family Sewing (Microwaveable Lovey): For ages 7 and up. Thursday, Jan. 29, 5:30-7 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Participants will create a stuffed animal with flax seed and lavender that you can warm up for aches and pains. Registration fee is \$55/resident and \$60/non-resident.

Crayola Imagine Art Academy – World of Design: Think It, Draw It, Make It!: For grades K-6. Tuesdays, Feb. 3-March 17, 3:15-4:15 p.m., at MES. Experiment with Crayola products and many art techniques like sculpting, storyboarding, collage, and mixed media. Discover design, careers like graphic design, universal design, urban design, and produce design. Fee is \$142/resident, \$147/non-resident.

Lego – Winter Wonderland Engineering: For grades K-4. Wednesdays, Feb. 4-March 11, 3:15-4:45 p.m., at MES. Explore your snowiest ideas and learn STEM concept, with the guid-

ance of an experienced Play-Well instructor. Fee is \$139/resident/\$144/non-resident.

Mad Science – Ready STEM Go!: For grades K-6. Thursdays, Feb. 5-March 12, 3:15- 4:15 p.m., at MES. Kids make mixtures and explore the science of motion and energy. Fee is \$142/resident, \$147/non-resident.

Kids & Family Sewing (Pet Snuffle): Ages 7 and up, Thursday, Feb. 12, 5:30-7 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Participants will create a pet snuffle stuffed animal. Fee is \$45/resident, \$50/non-resident.

Safe Sitter: For grades 6-8. Saturday, Feb. 14, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. This class is designed to help students learn to be safe when they're home alone, watching younger siblings, or babysitting. Fee: \$140/resident, \$145/non-resident.

Kids & Family Sewing (Reusable Bunny Bag Shaped Gift Bag): For ages 7 and up. Thursday, March 5, 5:30-7 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee is \$40/resident, \$45/non-resident.

Safe at Home: For grades 4-6. Tuesday, March 17, 5-6:30 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Participants will learn skills to prepare them to be safe when home alone. Fee is \$65/resident, \$70/non-resident.

Adult Programs: Adult Ballet: For ages 18 and up. Tuesdays, Jan. 6-March 24, 6:30-7:15 p.m., at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Fee is \$200.

Adult Tap: For ages 18 and up. Thursdays, Jan. 8-March 26, 8-8:45 p.m., at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Fee is \$200.

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

Beginner Tai Chi: Mondays, 6-7 p.m., beginning in January, at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee is \$40/resident, \$45/non-resident.

Zumba: Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee is \$50/resident, \$55/non-resident, or a \$10 drop-in fee. Class instruction provided by Anna Boose.

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

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

Arts Center Membership Drive Underway

Marlborough Arts Center has launched its annual Membership Drive for 2026.

The MAC's memberships are essential in promoting and sustaining its many offerings. They offer creative inspiring classes and fourth Friday live musical performances, as well as fine art, photography and sculpture shows, monthly email newsletters and more. The gallery and classroom are available for rental by the public. Members receive a rental discount.

Memberships start at \$25 with many benefits including: advance notice of popular classes that often fill up, solo shows at their second gallery inside the Marlborough Town Hall, opportunity to display and sell art at the annual member's show, and meeting new friends and network with other artists & art collectors.

Please visit www.marlbrougharts.org to easily join or renew securely online (debit/credit card or PayPal). Payment by check is available. Mail-in membership forms are on the website.

The MAC is a non-profit regional Arts Center located at 231 North Main St., Marlborough, CT. It has represented Marlborough and surrounding towns since 2007.

For more information please email info@marlbrougharts.org. Call the office at 860-467-6353 and leave a message. Go to our website www.marlbrougharts.org.

Senior Center News and Notes

Marlborough Senior Center, 17 School Drive, is open for activities. For more information about any senior center program, call 860-295-6209 or email socialservices@marlbroughct.gov.

Senior Center Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. **Holiday Closings:** On Dec. 31, the center will be open from 8 a.m.-noon, and it will be closed Jan. 1.

Note: As of Jan. 1, all events not regularly scheduled will require a RSVP.

Events: ClearCaptions Free Phone: Tuesday, Jan. 6, 11 a.m.-noon. Made possible by the Americans with Disabilities Act, ClearCaptions provides caption telephones and the captioning service nationwide at no cost to those with hearing loss. Internet service is required. There are also apps for iPhones and iPads, and soon for Android phones.

Coffee with a Cop: Monday, Jan. 12, 11 a.m.-noon. All are invited to welcome officer Mike Rhodes into his new role as director of public safety. A light brunch will be served.

Cookbook Club: Meets the first Monday of each month at the senior center from 6-8 p.m. Visit Richmond Library to pick your recipe from the month's cookbook and then bring your dish. Open to all ages 18+. Must RSVP through the Senior Center. Upcoming dates: Jan. 5, Feb. 2, March 2.

Intergenerational Music Making: Tuesday, Jan. 13, from 1-1:30 p.m., and Wednesday, Jan. 14, from 2:20-2:50. Relive the joy of music making with 5- and 6-year-olds at Marlborough Elementary School. No musical experience required. Must call the senior center to register.

Transportation: Rides to medical appointments, employment, essential services, the Senior Center and recreation activities are available to seniors and people with disabilities. Transportation is available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Rides must be reserved two business days in advance. Call 860-295-6209 for more information. Visit www.marlbroughct.gov for the complete transportation policy. There will be no transportation Dec. 22, 23 and 29.

Regularly Scheduled Programs: For full

descriptions, call the senior center. **Billiards:** Mondays and Fridays, 10:30 a.m.-noon; **Bingo:** Mondays, 1-2 p.m. Each card costs \$1 and additional cards after are 50 cents; **Cards:** Monday, 2-3:30 p.m.; Wednesdays and Fridays, 1-3:30 p.m.; **Chair Massage:** No appointments in December.

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

Coffee & Conversations: Meets the third Thursday of each month at 11 a.m. Each session includes a discussion on a particular topic of interest, activity and coffee.

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

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

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

Sweet Picks – Free Bakery Items: Monday and Tuesday mornings, local grocery stores donate bakery items (breads, desserts, etc.); delivery is between 8:30 and 9 a.m., Come take a look and take, in moderation, what you need. For senior center members only

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

Social Services: Food Bank: Located at 3 Wilhenger Drive, and can be reached at 860-295-6008. There is an open house Tuesdays from 10 a.m.-noon and 4-6 p.m. The food bank is in need of: canned vegetables (corn, green beans, peas, carrots), jam/jelly, fruit cocktail, and canned fruit. The food bank is open to qualified residents in need.

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

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

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Taxes Due

The second installment of taxes for the Oct. 1, 2024 Grand List for Real Estate, Motor Vehicles and Personal Property are due and payable on Jan. 1, 2026, and will be delinquent on Feb. 2, 2026. Also due are the Motor Vehicle supplemental taxes for the Grand List of Oct. 1, 2024. Supplemental bills were mailed in December 2025.

Failure to pay on time will be subject to interest of one and one-half percent per month reverting to the due date or 18% per year. If you do not receive a bill, please check online at www.marlboroughct.gov, bill look up (online tax payments), or contact the Tax Office at 860-

295-6205.

Tax payments can be mailed to Tax Collector, Town of Marlborough, P.O. Box 29, Marlborough, CT 06447; checks can be placed (no cash) in the drop box outside Town Hall; or payments can be made in person at Town Hall via cash or check only. (Credit card payments cannot be accepted in person.)

You may also pay online at www.marlboroughct.gov with Mastercard, Visa or ACH. Tax Collector hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Tuesday, 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.-noon.

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.

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.

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.stjfcchurch.org.

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 underway for this season. Cindy Bryan, Eileen Gilles and Helena Thomas lead the programs

Second Blessings Thrift Shop: The shop is closed until Friday, Feb. 6. Visit 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.

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.stjfcchurch.org, or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church).

Celebrate the Arts on New Year's Eve

Marlborough Arts Center, located at 231 N. Main St., invites all art lovers to attend a New Year's Eve party on Wednesday, Dec. 31, from 6-9 p.m.

This is the last opportunity to view the arts center's latest exhibition of six local artists in the main gallery while also celebrating the coming of the new year. Feel free to BYOB and a sweet or savory finger food snack to share if you wish.

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



Carl Guild, left, presents Missy Willard with the 2025 Agent of the Year award.

Missy Willard Awarded 2025 CGA Real Estate Agent of the Year Award

Carl Guild & Associates named Missy Willard its 2025 Agent of the Year, honoring her outstanding production, growth, and dedication to the brokerage and community.

Missy stood out this year for far more than a strong sales performance. Her recognition reflects a well-rounded combination of consistent production, meaningful participation within the brokerage, and an impressive level of effort and professional growth. Over the past year, she has also become a trusted mentor to fellow agents, generously sharing her knowledge, experience, and time to help others succeed.

Beyond her work in real estate, Willard is deeply involved in the local community. She is an active member of the Windham Chamber of Commerce, where she regularly participates in events and initiatives that support local businesses and strengthen community connections.

"Missy represents everything we value at our brokerage," said Carl Guild, Broker/Owner of

Carl Guild & Associates. "She works incredibly hard for her clients, she shows up for her colleagues, and she genuinely cares about the community she serves. This award isn't about one good year - it's about growth, consistency, and the kind of leadership that makes everyone around her better."

Missy credits her success to collaboration and support.

"I'm incredibly grateful for this recognition," said Willard. "Being part of a brokerage that truly values collaboration, growth, and community makes a huge difference. I'm proud to work alongside so many talented agents and thankful for the trust my clients place in me every day."

Carl Guild & Associates awards its Agent of the Year honor annually to an agent who exemplifies professional excellence, leadership, dedication to clients and colleagues, active participation in brokerage initiatives, ongoing professional development, and meaningful involvement in the community.

Preservation Society Calendars Available

The Marlborough Preservation Society has released the 2026 Calendar marking the America 250 Celebration by commemorating the Revolutionary War soldiers buried in Marlborough's historic cemeteries.

The cost is \$25 and can be purchased at the Richmond Memorial Library. All proceeds go to the America 250 Celebration planned for 2026.

For more information, visit www.marlboroughhistory.org.



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Holiday Closings

Marlborough Town Hall, Senior Center, and Public Works will close at noon Wednesday, Dec. 31, and will be closed all day Thursday, Jan. 1.

Resident Named to All-Academic Team

Troy Miller of Marlborough was recently named to the 2025 New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) fall All-Academic Team for men's soccer.

The recognition honors sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have maintained a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 or higher.

Miller is a sophomore at Hamilton College in Clinton, N.Y., and is a graduate of RHAM High School.



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Preschool Lottery Applications

The Hebron Early Childhood Center at Gilead Hill School is now accepting applications for eligible preschool students for the 2026–27 school year.

Parents/guardians of children who will be 3 or 4 years old by Sept. 1, 2026, and who wish to enter Hebron’s preschool lottery, should submit an application by Monday, March 9, at 3 p.m. The application can be downloaded from www.hebron.k12.ct.us. From the “Quick Links” portion of the page, click on “Preschool Program” and then “Preschool Lottery.”

The Hebron Early Childhood Center receives funding through the Early Start Grant, which provides reduced tuition rates based on household income.

Completed lottery applications must be returned to the Gilead Hill School office by Monday, March 9, at 3 p.m. Please include two forms of residency with your application.

The lottery drawing will take place on Thursday, April 2, at 11 a.m., at Gilead Hill School. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance or waitlist status by phone.

St. Peter’s News & Notes

St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, located at 30 Church St. (mailing address: P.O. Box 513) in Hebron. The priest is the Rev. Ron Kolanowski. The church is located on Route 85, a quarter-mile south of the intersection with Route 66, at 30 Church St. For more information on St. Peter’s, visit stpetershebron.com or search for St. Peter’s Hebron on Facebook.

Sunday Worship: Services are at 8 a.m. (Traditional Rite 1) and 10 a.m. (Rite 2 with music and choir). A coffee hour is held following each service. Sunday School is offered at the 10 a.m. service.

Weekly Virtual Coffee Hour: Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Connects parishioners and friends via Zoom for an online social gathering.

Outreach: This month, food donations go to the Columbia food pantry. A collection basket is in the church and outside the parish hall. St. Peter’s maintains a nature preserve in the center of Hebron for use by local non-profits. The church is also a supporter of Project Hope homeless shelter in Willimantic.

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

Christ Lutheran Church News and Notes

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

Worship Service with Pastor Matthew Hardaway: 9-10 a.m. Sundays. All are welcome.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: Wednesday, Dec. 24 at 7 p.m.

People unable to attend services in person can participate online at www.facebook.com/clchebron/live.

Bible Study: Sundays at 10:30 a.m., following service and fellowship time. All are welcome. A new **Men’s Bible Study** will begin in January, focused on “Seven Rules All Good Christians Should Break.”

Early Childhood Center (Daycare): Offers childcare, preschool, and before/after school care, and is open to all faiths. For more information, call director Jennifer Johnson at 860-228-5134. Application forms are at www.clec-chebron.org.

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.

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.

Holiday Closing: The library will be closing at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 31, and will remain closed until noon on Friday, Jan. 2.

Adult Programs: Red Cross Blood Drive: Tuesday, Dec. 30, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Shake up your holiday tradition and give blood. Receive a long sleeve t-shirt while supplies last. Register at RedCrossBlood.org.

Friday Film: 1 p.m. “When Harry Met Sally” Start your new year off with a comedy. Popcorn and water are provided.

Journeys: Boys of the Chinese Educational

Mission: Wednesday, Jan. 7, 6:30 p.m. In the 1870s, 120 boys from China came to CT for a cultural and educational exchange program, Hebron included. Presented by CT Museum of Culture and History staff.

Knit Wits: Mondays, 6 p.m. Bring your project or your questions for this friendly group of knitters and crocheters.

Mahjong Group: Tuesdays, 11 a.m. Stop in and play Mahjong no matter what your skill level is.

Children: Lego Club: Every Monday, 4-5 p.m. Calling all builders. Get creative and build some Lego creations.

Storytimes will not be held until the week of Jan. 5.

America250 Programs

Hebron Historical Society and Douglas Library of Hebron are continuing their America 250 themed programs in the new year. The January programs offer insight to Hebron’s earlier days and opportunity to learn to research your family or property.

Journeys-Boys of the Chinese Educational Mission - An 1870’s Qing dynasty educational program sent 120 Chinese boys, aged 10 to 14 to New England over a period of 9 years. Six of these came to Hebron. The Connecticut Museum of Cultural and History presentation will cover the story behind this initiative and how the students helped shape China’s future. Join

on Jan. 7, 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the library.

Utilizing Online Resources in Historic Research - Romano Ghirlanda of Marlborough Preservation Society will introduce free online resources. The program will cover resources available to all, ex. Library of Congress, Ct. Archives and resources available through the Ct. State Library, ex. Probate, Census and War records. Join on Jan. 17, 11:30 a.m. in the Community Room of the library.

No registration required. Donations appreciated!

Senior Center News & Notes

Russell Mercier Senior Center has announced the following programs. For more information and full program descriptions, and to register, call the senior center at 860-228-1700. **Pre-registration is required for all programs unless noted.** For an online senior newsletter, visit hebronct.com/town-departments/senior-center.

Holiday Closings: The Senior Center will be closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 25 and 26 (Christmas) and Thursday, Jan. 1 (New Year’s Day).

Bus Trip: Lunch & Shopping – Cracker Barrel: Tuesday, Dec. 30, leaving at 11 a.m. and returning approximately 3 p.m. Space limited to 10 spots. Transportation cost is \$5.

RHAM Bingo: Monday, Jan. 12, 2:30-4:00 p.m.. FREE BINGO. The RHAM National Honor Society Students come and call the games, provide refreshments, and prizes. You can play up to 4 cards for free and they play a total of 8 games. Come support the students, meet some new friends, and have some fun. Upcoming dates are Feb. 9 and March 2.

Weekly Shopping Trips: Pre- registration is required by noon the day before the trip. Please call 860-228-1700. Closed Friday, Dec. 26, Friday, Jan. 2 Stop & Shop (pick-ups start at 11 a.m.), Friday, Jan. 9, Walmart (11 a.m. pick-up), Jan. 16, Big Y (11 a.m. pick-up), Jan. 23, Stop & Shop (11 a.m. pick-up), Jan. 30, Walmart (11 a.m. pick-up), Feb. 6, Big Y (11 a.m. pick-up).

Yoga - The month of January the class will be Tuesday and Thursdays. 9-10 a.m., Jan. 6 - Jan. 29, 8 sessions, \$24. Drop-in fee is \$5 per class. Instructor, Laurie Pasteryak, has extensive teaching experience in yoga. Her classes will be suitable for both the experienced and beginner yogis who can do their practice on either the floor or in a chair. To register, call 860-228-1700.

Exercise Class: Starting Jan. 14 - FABBS/ Flexibility, Agility, Better Balance and Strength. Join this exercise class that uses chairs, weights and exercise bands. It also incorporates integrated movements from body building, Yoga, Taijiquan, Ballet Stretch and Strength Training. Instructor: Hilary Celentano, who also teaches the Tai Chi class. New classes will be Wednesdays and Fridays 10:45-11:45 a.m. beginning Jan. 14 - Jan. 30, 6 classes for \$18.

AARP Income Tax Preparation - Certified AARP Tax Preparation volunteers will be at the Hebron Senior Center to prepare basic Federal and State tax returns on Tuesdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (first appointment at 9 a.m., last appointment at noon) on the following dates; February 3, February 10, February 17, February 24, March 3, March 11, March 17, March 24, and March 31. Sign-ups will begin starting TUESDAY, January 6th, 2026, call 860-228-1700.

Sound Healing - Wednesday, Jan. 28 1 p.m. FREE Presentation by Jeremy from The Residence at Glastonbury. Join the Senior Center for a Sound Healing Experience designed to calm the mind, relax the body, and restore inner balance. Come unwind, recharge, and let the healing sounds wash over you. Pre-registration is required, please call 860-228-1700 to sign-up.

Recurring Daily/Weekly Happenings: Some programs have a fee, and some are no-cost; most require pre-registration. More information in the monthly newsletter or at the senior center.

Monday through Friday: Exercise Equipment Room, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. – though from 9 a.m.-noon on Fridays.

Mondays: Enhance Fitness via Zoom, 9-10 a.m.; Massage, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. **Tuesdays:** Yoga, 9-10 a.m.; Knitting/Crocheting Group, 10:15-11:45 a.m.; Hand and Foot Canasta (cards), 12:45-3:15 p.m.; Card-Making, 1-2:15 p.m. **Wednesdays:** Enhance Fitness via Zoom, 9-10 a.m.; FABBS 10:45 a.m.-11:45 a.m. (start Jan. 14) **Thursdays:** Yoga, 9-10 a.m.; Sunshine Singers, 10:15-11:45 a.m.; Tai Chi, 10:15-11:15 a.m.; Chatham Health blood pressure screening, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month; Chatham Health Education Series, 12:15 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month; Massage, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Mahjong, 12:45-3:15 p.m.; Bingo, 1-3 p.m.; **Fridays:** Enhance Fitness via Zoom, 9-10 a.m, FABBS 10:45 a.m.-11:45 a.m. (starts Jan. 14)



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The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

1 Entry permit

5 Ming things

10 Comic-strip possum

14 Border upon

15 Insect stage

16 "Argo" setting

17 Faction

18 Disguise

20 Doesn't include

22 Orchestral section

23 Recruiter's objective

26 Solomon's strength

28 In truth

32 Atlas enlargement

33 Narnia's creator

34 Fish delicacy

35 Lumber along

36 "Bet you can't!" taunter

37 Twelve Oaks neighbor

38 Bud holder?

39 ____ City:

40 Busy places

41 Not localized, as a problem

43 Patio material

44 Smelly pranks

46 Fillion or Lane

49 Attributed

52 Thrill

55 Drug bust qty.

56 Salty drop

57 Emphatic refusal

58 Lab procedure

59 List anagram

60 Levels

61 Brings into play

DOWN

1 Hyacinth holder

2 Mountain goat

3 Those who follow

4 Showed up for

14

17

20

23

26

27

32

35

38

41

44

46

47

48

52

56

59

5 "Law & Order" extra, maybe

6 Accumulate

7 Elliott or Neill

8 Freudian topic

9 Tourist shop offering

10 Southwest workers

11 Spoon-administered

12 Smitten

13 Snake eyes

19 Parking penalties

21 Novel idea

24 Dwayne Johnson, familiarly

25 Yard machine

26 Diaper bag supply

27 Mosaic technique

29 Ludicrous distortions

30 Sophia of "Two Women"

31 Baker's need

33 Classical tongue

36 Like some traits

37 Far-off place, figuratively

39 Nickel or steel

40 Rope fiber

42 Concert memento

43 Rising stars

45 Dog to avoid

46 Trawling items

47 Skater's jump

48 Bangkok native

50 If all ____ fails...

51 Specks

53 Camping gear chain

54 Caesar's hello

Answers to Previous Crossword:

B	A	U	M		A	J	A	R		E	M	A	I	L
A	L	S	O		R	U	L	E		N	O	L	T	E
R	E	E	D	O	R	G	A	N		J	U	L	E	S
T	E	R	E	S	A		R	E	F	O	R	E	S	T
			S	H	I	M	M	E	R	I	N	G		
H	O	S	T	A	G	E		I	N	S	A	N	E	
O	V	A	L		N	I	E	C	E	S		T	U	N
L	U	C	Y		M	E	L	O	N		B	I	R	D
S	L	C		P	E	R	I	O	D		R	O	S	E
T	E	H	R	A	N			P	L	A	I	N	E	R
			A	E	S	T	H	E	T	I	C	S		
C	A	R	E	S	S	E	R		N	E	T	T	E	D
O	L	I	V	E		I	N	T	E	R	L			
S	A	N	E	R		R	I	B	S		E	R	N	E
T	R	E	S	S		S	E	A	S		S	N	A	P

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Gilead Hill Kindergarten Registration

Gilead Hill School is registering eligible kindergarten students for the 2026-27 school year. Parents/guardians of children who will be 5 years of age on or before Sept. 1, 2026, and are planning to have their child attend public school in Hebron, are asked to log into www.hebron.k12.ct.us by Friday, Feb. 27, to begin the registration process. From the “Quick Links” portion of the page, click “Registration” and complete the pre-registration form. A link will then be sent to you to complete registration. You will be required to upload your child’s birth certificate and two proofs of address. One must be a mortgage document, lease/rental agreement or property tax statement, and the other must be a cable bill, utility bill or Internet bill. You will also be required to upload a copy of your child’s medical form, including their physical and immunizations prior to the start of kindergarten. Call the Gilead Hill office at 860-228-9458 with any questions. Students currently enrolled in the preschool program do not need to register for kindergarten as this process happens automatically.

Parks and Rec News & Notes

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

Winter Solstice Yoga: Sunday, Dec. 28, 6:15-7:30 p.m., at Gilead Hill School. Donna Bellmore E-RYT with Wildflower Fitness will lead this yoga-barre blend class. Pre-registration is required. Please bring a yoga mat.

Hatha Yoga: Tuesdays, Jan. 6-Feb. 10, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at GHS. Start the new year with a Gentle Hatha Yoga Series with Shea including one Yoga and Sound Healing session with LB Healing.

Minds in Motion – Future Architects: Tuesdays, Jan. 20-March 3, at Hebron Elementary School. Kids will work on and take home their very own architectural design kit – and will construct everything from simple arches and domes to iconic landmarks like the Sydney Opera House and the Eiffel Tower. This is an after-school program, and runs from dismissal until 4:20 p.m.

Training for Greatness Volleyball: Wednesdays, 5-7 p.m., from Feb. 4-April 8, at RHAM Middle School. RHAM High School coach Tim Guernsey will lead this program. There will be a heavy focus on skills and drills with game play focusing on specific skills.

Karate: Mondays and Wednesdays, 5-6 p.m., at Gilead Hill School, for ages 6 through adult. These are six-week ongoing sessions. Must register for each ongoing session.

Church of The Holy Family News

The Church of The Holy Family (CHF), located at 185 Church St. (Route 85), celebrates weekend Masses Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 9:30 a.m.; and weekday Masses Tuesday at 7 p.m. and Thursday at 6:30 a.m. Visit www.goodshepherdct.org for more information. The church office can be reached at 860-228-3727. The Church of The Holy Family is yoked with St. Columba Church (STC) in Columbia, and together they are members of the Catholic Community of the Good Shepherd, with the Rev. Michael Phillippino serving as pastor.

Mary, Mother of God (Jan. 1 Holy Day of Obligation): Dec. 31, Vigil Mass at 4 p.m. at CHF; and Jan. 1, Mass at 9 a.m. at STC.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Phillippino is available for the sacrament at CHF on Thursdays at 7 a.m. and on Saturdays at 4 p.m., and at STC on Wednesdays and Sundays at 7 a.m., or by appointment (church phone ext. 110).

Praise Band and Choir Rehearsals: New members (voices and musical instruments) are welcome. Choir rehearsals are Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m., and Praise Band rehearsals are Thursdays at 7 p.m. For details, contact Nicole Bernier, Music Ministry, at music@goodshepherdct.org or see her after Mass.

“Neighbors Feeding Neighbors”: The Social Outreach Committee collects breakfast cereal on the second Sunday of each month for the benefit of the Covenant Soup Kitchen (CSK) in Willimantic. The next collection date is Jan. 11. However, cereal is most welcome any time. Place bagged donations in the oak collection box near the Robing Room.

Meatloaves for CSK: The parish also provides meatloaves to CSK each month. Parishioners are asked to deliver a cooked meatloaf to the freezer in the garage (use side entrance) closest to the Parish House or the freezer in the St. Columba church hall by the 4th Tuesday of

Local Artist on Display

The East Hampton Art Association is currently showing the oil paintings of Hebron resident Nancy Perkins at the Town Hall gallery through the end of January. Perkins is an artist specializing primarily in landscape scenes that evoke memories from her travels throughout New England, the western U.S. and Europe. Perkins holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in interior design from Iowa State University. She is a member of the East Hampton Art Association.

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- **East Hartford facility** – Cats: clean & feed; socialization; medical & placement teams

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Local Artists in Andover 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 Barntique, 415 Route 6, Andover, as part of Artist Open Studios of Northeast CT. For more information, visit aosct.org.

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Maple Festival Kick-off Meeting

The Hebron Maple Festival will be held during Connecticut Maple Weekend. One weekend in March, the 21 and 22, is where our entire state celebrates the agricultural phenomenon that is maple sugaring! The Town Center Project invites the Hebron community to meet at Douglas Library on Saturday, Jan. 3, 10 a.m. to discuss Maple Festival '26. This event brings upwards of 20,000 people to Hebron for the weekend! Lots of planning has to happen prior to the event, lots of coordinating

Creative Collective Seeks Members

The Hebron Creative Collective (HCC) is looking for new members. HCC, a committee of The Town Center Project, was formed to support local artists and to help create opportunities to promote, display and sell their work. The commitment to the group would include: an annual general meeting held midyear in the summer combined with a social event; participation in one major town event a year; and participation in subcommittees for events which will meet as the committee requires and determines. Attendance at monthly meetings is not required but is appreciated. The new year for HCC begins Jan. 1. Dues for membership are \$40 annually. High School students are welcome at a student rate of \$25 annually. The collective meets the first Monday of each month at 6 p.m., at the Russell Mercier Senior Center. All local artists are welcome.

Gilead Congregational Church News

Gilead Congregational Church, an Open and Affirming Congregation located at 672 Gilead St., has announced the following. For more info, see the bulletin at gileadchurchucc.updates.church, email gcc@gileadchurch.net, or call the Parish House at 860-228-3077. The church office is open at the GCC Parish House Monday-Thursdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

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

This Week's Scheduled Events/Meetings: Saturday, 12/27 – Yoga at 9:30 a.m. (Fellowship Hall); Sunday, 12/28 – Deacon-Led Worship Service at 10 a.m. (in-person in the sanctuary; online; livestreamed); Sunday, 12/28 – Coffee Hour at 11 a.m. (Fellowship Hall); Sunday, 12/28 – Community Chats at 11:30 a.m. (Fellowship Hall Classroom); Tuesday, 12/30 – AA Meeting at 7:30 p.m. (Social Hall); Wednesday, 12/31 – Yoga at 9:30 a.m. (Fellowship Hall); Wednesday 12/31 – Book Group at 10:45 a.m. (Fellowship Hall); Wednesday 12/31 – Choir Practice at 7 p.m. (Sanctuary); Thursday, 1/1: Church Administrator's Office Closed; Friday, 1/2 – Faith and Film Potluck at 6 p.m. (Fellowship Hall)

Popcorn & PJs: Have your kiddos dress cozy for worship this Sunday, Dec. 28. Youth will be watching a movie with popcorn and snacks during Sunday School.

Holiday Closing: The church administrator's office will be closed Thursday, Jan. 1, in honor of New Year's Day.

Monday Bible Study via Zoom will not meet Dec. 29, and will resume Jan. 5.

Faith & Film Potluck: Friday, Jan. 2, 6 p.m., in the church social hall. No RSVP necessary.

The Worship Center News & Notes

The Worship Center, a non-denominational Christian church, holds services and programs at 99 Marjorie Circle (unless noted). For more information and full program descriptions, visit theworshipcenterct.org and click on the 'events/calendar' link, or call 860-228-4442.

Worship: Services are Sundays at 10 a.m. and are also broadcast on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TheWorshipCenterConnecticut and on YouTube at www.youtube.com/@theworshipcenter9733.

Adult Bible Study: Every Sunday at 9 a.m. The study, on the First Epistle of Peter, is led by Elder George Logan. The theme is “Standing Firm in Grace: A Call to Holiness in a Hostile World.” All adults are welcome to join in this study, where together they'll learn what it means to “stand firm in the true grace of God” (1 Peter 5:12).

Kingdom Women: Women's Bible Study: The study will be taking a break for the months of November and December. It will resume in January.

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

One-to-One Confidential Christian Care: Provided by Stephen Ministry to people in difficult life situations. If in need of help, call the church office; there are several new ministers trained and wanting to help.

TWC Upward Running Club: This 12-week class starting in January is designed to improve faith, fitness and fellowship within the community through a walking and/or running program custom made for your fitness level. Finish off the program by completing a 5k. Download the app, or contact the church office for more details.

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Obituaries

Portland

Phyllis Jean Cyr

Phyllis Jean Cyr, 87, passed away peacefully Sunday, Dec. 14, at Portland Care & Rehab. She was born June 13, 1938, in Fort Fairfield, Maine, to Katherine (Vaillancourt) Cyr and Simon Cyr.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Hector R. Cyr; her son, Roland H. Cyr, her sisters Anna Cyr, Yvette Palmieri, and Jeanette Fullerton.

She is survived by her daughter, Deborah Cyr; grandchildren, Robert Cyr, Brandi Beach, Jessica Jackson, Christopher Cyr; and great-grandchildren, Bexley Beach, Lachlan Beach, Kahleel Jackson, Kahleah Jackson, Jahleel Jackson, and Mahleah Jackson. She is also survived by her siblings, Simon Cyr, Simonne Cyr-Gould, Rita Keegan; and her niece, Kathy Cyr; her godson, Gary Donahue; and many other nieces and nephews.

Phyllis cherished all of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A woman of faith, she loved God and lived her life guided by that devotion. She will be remembered for her strong faith, devotion to family, her smile, love of jewelry, and reflecting the warmth she brought to those around her.

The family extends a special thank you to the compassionate staff at Portland Care for the loving care and support they provided her until the end.

A memorial Mass will be held Monday, Dec. 29, at 10 a.m., at St. Mary Church, Portland. Burial will be at a later date. There are no calling hours.

The Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, is in charge of arrangements.



East Haddam

George Alan White

George Alan White of East Haddam, son of the late George F. White and Violet Hoskin White, was born at home in Thompsonville (Enfield) on March 22, 1939. He died on Dec. 17, at his home at Lake Hayward in East Haddam surrounded by his family.

George attended Enfield schools and was a member of the Enfield High School class of 1958. George's first job following high school was as a tool and gauge maker, however in his words, law enforcement always held an attraction. He first served as a police officer in Windsor Locks and Enfield before eventually finding his way to the Glastonbury Police Department. George was with the Glastonbury Police Department for over 20 years before retiring as a Lieutenant in 1992.

During that time, he held various positions in the department. The role he favored most was that of a Youth Officer. He also served as the advisor to the Glastonbury Explorer Post. He impacted many young lives during his career. He was named Policeman of the Year by the Glastonbury American Legion in 1978. While at the Glastonbury Police Department he attended the FBI National Academy, Session #167. Following his retirement from the Glastonbury Police Department, he was appointed Chief of the Groton Long Point Police Department. He held that position for 12 years, entering his second retirement in 2004.

In retirement, he continued to enjoy skiing and flying radio control model airplanes. He might tell you he was a decent skier and a not so good RC pilot.

George was a loving and devoted family man, enjoying time on the lake, Vermont ski trips, and participating in the Thanksgiving Day Manchester Road Race with his wife, kids, granddaughters and extended family. He was a man of great patience having taught his wife, son, daughter and both granddaughters to ski. He was often described as a gentleman.

George is survived by his wife Marie (Keleher), his son James and Julie White, daughter June White and Jeff Haggerty, granddaughter Meaghan White and her fiancé John Pizzoni, his granddaughter Katelyn White and her fiancé Bradley Kempf. He also leaves a large extended family of Salisburys, Sloanes and Kelehers, and Jae Elder.

He was predeceased by his sister Jean Nelson, his sister Marilyn Triolo, sisters-in-law Jane Keleher and Lynn Keleher and brothers-in-law Tom Keleher and Andy Keleher.

Funeral service was held Monday, Dec. 22, at First Church of Christ, 250 Main Street, Wethersfield. Burial was private. Visitation was held on Sunday, Dec. 21 at Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Avenue, Glastonbury.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Grace Cottage Hospital, 185 Grafton Road, Townshend, VT 05353. For online condolences, please visit www.mulryanhf.com.



Marlborough

Peter Arthur Muzeroll

The beloved soul of Peter Arthur Muzeroll made his celestial transition on December 18, surrounded by his loving and treasured children. Peter, 89, of Marlborough was born to Arthur Muzeroll Jr. and Bernadette (DeRaps) Muzeroll on August 3, 1936, in Waterville, Maine. He was a 1954 graduate of Waterville High School and earned a bachelor's degree in Business and Economics from the University of Maine at Orono in 1958. Peter could command a room - his magnetic personality and leadership traits shone early, first by earning the rank of Eagle Scout, then as class president in High School and President of his fraternity, Delta Tau Delta.

Peter served as an officer in the U.S. Army Artillery and was stationed in West Germany from 1958 through 1960. He earned advanced degrees from the University of Connecticut in Storrs and taught mathematics in the secondary schools of Glastonbury for 18 years. He was then supervisor of mathematics education in Windsor for 15 years and ended his career at Central Connecticut State University where he taught math to educators.

During his retirement, Peter enjoyed music, running, travel, stamp collecting, cheering on the UCONN men's and women's basketball teams, spending time with family and summers at the family camp in Oakland, Maine. He was a member of three musical performing groups as a guitarist and vocalist and an active member of All Saints Episcopal Church in East Hartford.

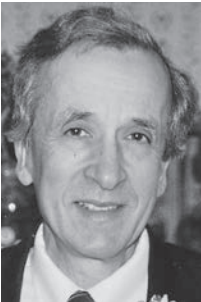
Peter leaves behind daughter and son-in-law Andrea and Anthony Hosier and wonderful grandson, Jamie Hosier, of Millbury, MA, daughter Kim Muzeroll, of Washington, D.C. and son Mark Muzeroll, of Salem, MA.

A devoted and supportive father and grandfather, Peter instilled in his children and grandson a love of family, music, nature, animals, education, facts, and dad jokes. His commitment, hard work and loving attention continue to be of tremendous benefit to his children and grandson. Father, friend, teacher, composer and musician, Peter was always ready with a riddle or a joke. He could coax a smile and a giggle from a stern stranger and filled every room he entered with the warmth of his down to earth silly and playful wit. He was truly one of a kind.

Peter will be joining in spirit with his parents, wife Charlotte Miller, partner in crime Leo DeRaps, longtime music collaborator Chuck Haller and many other family and friends who are lovingly awaiting his arrival.

His family would like to thank Eunice and Nashemma and all the staff at the Vernon Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center, The Village at Buckland Court and the Marlborough Health and Rehabilitation Center for all the excellent care they provided to Peter.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to All Saints Episcopal Church, 444 Hills Street, East Hartford, CT.



Hebron

Andrea L. Lattanzi

Andrea L. Lattanzi Lotreck passed away on Dec. 11, at the age of 67 in New Haven, Connecticut, surrounded by her family. She was a devoted wife and mother, a proud grandmother, and an active member of her community.

Born on Aug. 16, 1958, Andrea grew up in Madison and started her family in Bloomfield before settling in Hebron, her home for the last 28 years. There, she raised her family and built a career in Human Resources at Aetna for over 30 years.

She attended culinary school, developing a skill she loved to share with friends and family. She truly enjoyed cooking and entertaining, and had a talent for making people feel welcome through good food, a warm setting, and thoughtful details.

13 years ago, after her first experience with lymphoma, Andrea's focus shifted toward personal and community wellness. She viewed this time as an opportunity to keep learning and growing, eventually going back to school to complete her bachelor's degree in addition to becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant. Her natural compassion and kindness towards others brought comfort for those she cared for.

Andrea made friends easily and kept them for a lifetime. Her circle included childhood friends, teammates from her softball days, and the close-knit group she found at Ten Summit Yoga & Earth Based Wellness. She was also deeply involved in the Hebron Historical Society, which combined her love of history with her interest in genealogy. In addition, she worked to preserve the property at 17 Kinney Road. As a mother, she had a gift for planning celebrations and family vacations that always included a Red Sox game, visits to offbeat historical landmarks, and activities tailored to her children's interests.

When her grandson Oscar was born, she embraced being 'Ammma,' fostering his love of nature through visits to local farms and community events. She found great joy in nature and travel, but was happiest close to home, walking each of her rescue dogs on the Air Line Trail or spending time with family.

Andrea navigated her recent cancer diagnosis with courage and grace. She didn't let the illness change who she was; even in the hospital, she kept her quick wit and formed genuine connections with those who cared for her.

She is survived by her husband of 40 years, David Lotreck; her daughter Daria Thibodeau, her husband Michael, and their son Oscar; and her son Drew Lotreck and his partner Larisa Melinson. She also leaves behind her mother, Valerie A. Lattanzi; her sister, Valerie Lattanzi and Valerie's son, Mason Fibkins; and her brother, Albert A. Lattanzi. She joins her father, Edward C. "Skip" Lattanzi, and her brother, Edward K. Lattanzi, who passed before her.

A Celebration of Life will be held in the spring. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to a local animal shelter.

Colchester

Kathleen Ann Swider

Kathleen Ann Swider, of Colchester, passed away on Dec. 22. She was the daughter of the late Bernice Brown and wife of James Swider of Colchester.

Kathleen was born in Norwich on Jan. 16, 1950. She attended Norwich Free Academy, before earning her Bachelor's and Masters degrees from Eastern CT State University in Elementary education. She taught in the Norwich school system for 30 years in grades 4 and 5. She began teaching at Elizabeth Street and finished at Uncas Elementary school before retiring in 2002, which was the same year her husband retired from Cohanze School in Waterford, CT.

Kathy enjoyed walking several miles every day on roads near her house. She sold vegetables at Swiders Farm in Colchester. Kathy and Jimmy also liked to travel to historical locations in the United States. Kathy and Jimmy were married in 1973.

He survives her, along with her sister, Elizabeth Gernhard; nephew, Andrew Gernhard; niece, Lisa Oliver; and their families and other cousins. She was predeceased by a favorite aunt, Celeste Busch. A special thanks to her care giver, Lesley Perez, who cared for her for over a year.

Calling hours will be held at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester on Dec. 29 from 4 to 6 p.m. A Funeral Mass will be held on Dec. 30 at 10 a.m., directly at St. Andrews Catholic Church in Colchester.

For online condolences or to share a story of Kathy with her family, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



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LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF COLCHESTER
ATTENTION COLCHESTER
TAXPAYERS & RATEPAYERS

Notice is hereby given to the Town of Colchester Taxpayers & Ratepayers that the second installment of Real Estate taxes and quarterly water and/or sewer usage bills are due and are payable on January 1, 2026. The second installment bill for Real Estate Taxes was mailed in July 2025. No Additional bills for the second installment of Real Estate will be mailed. Payment not made in full on or before February 2, 2026, will be subject to interest of 1.5% per month or 18% per annum, from the due date, as required by Conn. Gen. Stat. 12-130, 145 and 146. Mail postmarked (US Postal Service postmark only) on or before February 2, 2026, will be considered paid on time. **Payments dropped in the town hall's drop box after 4:30 p.m. on Monday, February 2, 2026, will be considered as having been made on the following business day and will be deemed as paid late.** Failure to receive a bill does not invalidate the bill nor interest. Please contact the Tax Collector's Office if you have not received your bill. Water & Sewer Payments should be made payable to the Water & Sewer Commission. Please write your account number on the check. Real Estate Bills should be made payable to the Colchester Tax Collector. Payments can be made online through the town's website <https://www.colchesterct.gov/> - fees apply. OR: come into the Tax Office, use the Town's Night Drop, and/or mail payments to: Tax Office, 127 Norwich Ave, Colchester, CT 06415. If a receipt is desired, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope. Office hours are Monday – Friday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, and on Thursdays until 7 pm. Please note that the office will be closed on January 1 and January 19 in observance of New Year's and Martin Luther King Day. Questions concerning payments should be directed to the Tax Office, (860) 537-7210. Michele Wyatt, CCMC CCMO
Town of Colchester
Tax Collector

3TB 12/26, 1/9, 1/23

TOWN OF PORTLAND

Legal notice is hereby given to the taxpayers of the Town of Portland that the second installment of Real Estate and Personal Property taxes on the Grand List of October 1, 2024, and the Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes are due and payable on January 1, 2026. Taxes not paid in full on or before February 2, 2026, become delinquent and subject to interest at the rate of 18% per annum (1.5% for each month or fraction thereof) dating back to the original due date of the bill. Two months of interest will be due on February 3, 2026. Minimum interest charge is \$2.00. Quarterly water and/or sewer usage bills are due and payable January 16, 2026. Payment not made in full on or before February 17, 2026 will be subject to interest of 1.5% per month from due date. Payments are accepted in person at 33 East Main Street, Portland, CT or by mail: Portland Collector of Revenue, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480-0071. Payment can also be made online at www.portlandct.org or placed in the drop box. As a matter of law, the taxpayer is liable to the town for the tax installment(s) as they become due and payable. Therefore, failure to receive a bill does not relieve the taxpayer of the statutorily required interest when a payment is late. Office hours are as follows:
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday: 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Holiday hours:
Tuesday, December 23, 2025: 8:30a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday, December 24, 2025: 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Thursday, December 25, 2025: CLOSED
Friday, December 26, 2025: CLOSED
Wednesday December 31, 2025 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Thursday, January 1, 2026: CLOSED
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3TB 12/26, 1/9, 1/30

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1TB 12/26

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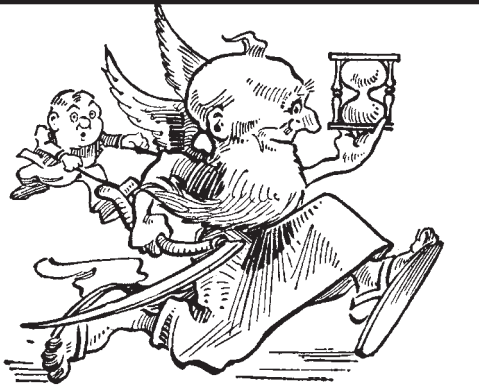
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