

RIVEREAST

## News Bulletin

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

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## Senior Center Marks One Year in New Home

By Toriana Williams

Senior centers play a vital role in communities, offering far more than recreational activities for older adults. They are hubs of connection, health and support that help people age well, remain engaged and stay independent. The Colchester Senior Center is a powerful example of this mission in action, especially as it marks the one-year anniversary of its new, standalone facility.

While the Colchester Senior Center itself is not new, its current building represents a major milestone. Director of Senior Services Patty Watts said that the organization has been serving residents for decades, explaining, "The Colchester Senior Center has been in existence since September of 1978."

For the vast majority of that time, the center operated out of the Bacon Academy Arts and Sciences Building on Norwich Avenue. As years passed, however, both the senior population and the range of services expanded beyond what that shared space could support.

Watts explained that the previous location was eventually outgrown as demand increased. The town responded by forming a building committee tasked with working alongside architects and builders to create a dedicated senior center designed to meet current and future needs. That vision became a reality when the new facility officially opened in December of 2024.

Looking back on the first year in the new building, Watts described the growth as nothing short of remarkable. "We have been busier than ever," she said. Membership surged dramatically, with more than 2,700 registered members overall and an average of three new member registrations every operational day. Over the course of the year, the center gained more than



First Selectman Bernie Dennler stood with Colchester Senior Center staff members as they recently celebrated their first year in their new location on Louis Lane. Photo contributed by Colchester Senior Center.

750 new members, a level of growth that exceeded expectations.

Part of this success stems from the building itself. Watts noted that new facilities can spark curiosity and reduce hesitation among people who may not have previously considered visiting a senior center. She described how the new space helps challenge outdated perceptions, and said it has "served to remove some barriers that people might have ordinarily coming into a senior center, whatever they imagine that means." Once people step inside, they often discover a welcoming environment focused on wellness, activity and community rather than decline or

isolation.

The new facility also allowed the center to expand its offerings in meaningful ways. One of the most popular additions has been the fitness center, which allows members to work out on their own schedules. Watts noted that this amenity has been especially appealing to younger seniors who want flexible options for staying active. Fitness programming overall continues to be a cornerstone of the center's success.

Space has also transformed the center's ability to host events. Previously, special programs had to be capped at around 50 participants. With a large multipurpose room now available, at-

tendance can be nearly tripled before reaching capacity. Monthly special luncheons with entertainment have become particularly popular, regularly drawing around 75 attendees.

Beyond recreation, essential services have grown as well. Transportation has long been a key offering for Colchester residents, and the lunch program has expanded significantly in the new building. More people are taking advantage of the subsidized hot lunch program offered through the Thames Valley Council for Community Action. Daily engagement has nearly doubled, increasing from an average of about 115 people per day in the old building to approximately 225 people per day in the new facility.

This dramatic increase highlights the broader importance of senior centers in today's society. Watts emphasized that aging is often viewed negatively, associated with illness or loneliness, but senior centers help change that narrative. She explained that while illness cannot always be controlled, connection can be fostered. "When people engage with the senior center, they're making friendships. They're being with other people," she said, pointing to research that social engagement leads to better aging outcomes.

Quoting the National Council on Aging, Watts shared that, "Compared with their peers, senior center participants have higher levels of health, social interaction and life satisfaction." This research reinforced what staff and members witness daily: senior centers are preventative, proactive spaces that support both physical and emotional well-being.

*See Senior Center, page 7*

## Working to Preserve Lebanon's Camp Laurel

By Anne Lilburn

When East Hampton resident Ashley Hicks heard in 2021 that Girl Scouts of Connecticut had decided to sell Camp Laurel in Lebanon, she was heartbroken.

While she never attended the camp as a child, Hicks worked as a counselor there for several years, and even met her wife, Victoria, while they both worked as staff at the camp. Over the years, they had grown close with a whole community built around the camp, and now, they and others were trying to figure out what they could do to make sure it was saved.

"I feel like the whole camp community was really, really upset about it," Hicks said.

Lebanon native Katharine Lange, 29, didn't just attend Camp Laurel as a kid; she grew up just over a mile down the road from the camp. Lange said she started with day camp when she was five, and then later sleep away camp, before eventually returning as a counselor.

Both women described the camp as a special place that forged lifelong bonds among campers

and staff.

"It's a very important place to me," said Lange. "All of my best qualities, I think I gained through going there."

The camp also sits on an ecologically significant piece of land, encompassing 350 acres of pristine land that had long been preserved. The parcel includes a lake, forested land with miles of trails, and cabins, and once hosted both day camps and overnight camps, as well as other Girl Scout camping events. The idea that it might be sold to a developer, they both said, was disheartening, and along with other camp alumni, they worked to figure out how they might be able to save the camp, or at least protect its land.

Lange currently works as an environmental advocate in Massachusetts, and had worked in the past with conservation land trusts in Connecticut. She said she immediately reached out to anyone she knew in conservation world in the hopes that they could make something happen. Nearly five years later, she is finally hopeful

that things will work out.

A deal is currently in the works to preserve the land and guarantee public access to it. The Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national non-profit with a mission to improve public access to the natural world, is on track to negotiate a purchase of the land. If TPL can raise the total purchase amount by its March deadline, the land would then be owned and managed by the Avalonia Land Conservancy, a land trust that manages over 5,000 acres of public lands in southeastern Connecticut. The land would then be open to the public.

As part of the deal, a small portion of the land, 13 acres, would be retained by the Girl Scouts, with the remainder open to the public. Felicia DelGiudice, chief financial and administrative officer for the Girl Scouts of Connecticut, told *The Hartford Courant* recently that the Girl Scouts made the decision to sell the property in 2021 after an outside consulting firm evaluated

*See Camp Laurel, page 2*

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## Cover Story • Cover

★ *Camp Laurel, cont. from page 1*

its existing properties for potential sale. After the community rallied in support of saving the camp, she told *The Courant*, the scouts made the decision to retain a small portion of the property to be used for summer day programming. This last summer was the last year that the camp hosted an overnight camp.

TPL was instrumental in brokering the current deal, providing legal and fundraising support. Now, they are working to get the project across the finish line.

"Conservation projects take time," said Hon- or Lawler, senior project manager at the Trust for Public Land's Connecticut office, "because what we do is, we negotiate with landowners and then we do everything, soup to nuts, to put the conservation deal together and come up with a funding strategy, [along with] complete due diligence, appraisals, and surveys."

She noted that in this case, funding had been a challenge. To date, TPL has raised \$2.3 million for the project – and \$1.365 million of that came from the state's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program. The town of Lebanon also contributed \$200,000 to the purchase price, which Lawler noted was extremely generous, given that it is a rural community without a large commercial tax base. The remainder came from public and private donations and smaller grants.

For the camp alumni, there may still be some

sadness that the camp will no longer exist in its current form, but knowing that the facilities will continue to be used, and that the land will still be open to the public, provides some relief.

Both Hicks and Lange said they appreciated that they would be able to visit the land, noting that they had fond memories of the camp and its welcoming atmosphere.

"You could be as strange or weird or whatever, as you wanted, and like, there was always somebody you fit in with," said Hicks.

Lange agreed.

"You could mess around," she said. "You could be whoever you were. You were free from whatever social structures you were experiencing at school, and you could just play and totally be who you were."

Currently, the purchase effort stands about \$150,000 short of its final funding goal. TPL's Lawler said they need to raise that final amount by March in order to close the deal. She said anyone looking to contribute could reach out to the Trust for Public Land. Contact information for their Connecticut office is available at [www.tpl.org/state/connecticut](http://www.tpl.org/state/connecticut). Contributions of any size, Lawler said, are welcome.

"It's all helpful," she said, "and at the end of the day, it could come from one or 200 people, and as long as we get there, you know, that's all that matters."

## Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover

**Scholarship Opportunity Announced**

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, Coven- try, East Hartford, East Windsor, Glastonbury, Manchester, Middletown, Vernon, Storr 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 consid- ered.

**Congregational Church News**

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

**Children's Church:** Is provided. **Choir:** At 9 a.m. Sundays in the sanctuary.

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

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

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

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

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

## Caregiver Support Group to Meet

The support group for caregivers will meet Thursday, Jan. 29, at 7 p.m., in the Andover Public Library on Route 6.

This gathering will feature eldercare attorney and Probate Judge, George Baker, who will discuss health care directives, power of attorney, organizing important documents, and preparing for probate before death. The meeting will conclude with its usual "Show and Tell" segment, where participants share handy tips, tools, or gadgets that assist in caregiving.

The meeting provides a safe and welcoming space for individuals who are navigating the challenges, stresses, and rewards of caring for loved ones.

This support group is designed to bring to-

## Library Friends Annual Appeal and Membership Drive

Library Friends acting president Julie Victoria and membership chair Gretchen Stein announce the launch of the annual appeal and membership campaign in support of the Andover Public Library. They call on all community members, including already lifetime members, now 72 in number, to consider joining, renewing and giving generously.

Established in 1989, the Library Friends provide ongoing financial support for regular, large print and audio books, DVDs, children and adult programming, a \$1,000 educational scholarship for an Andover high school senior, a free summer concert, subscriptions, equipment, supplies and facility enhancements beyond the library's current budget.

Again this year, there is no increase in fees. A donation is all that is required to become a member of this 501(c)(3c) nonprofit organization: \$3 senior or student, \$5 individual, \$10 family, \$25 business, \$150 lifetime, \$500 patron.

## Bingo & Basket Raffle

Andover Congregational Church, 359 Route 6, will hold the first Bingo & Basket Raffle Night of 2026 on Friday, Jan. 16, starting with dinner at 5:30 p.m. The game starts at 6:30 p.m.

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

## Therapy Dog and Lego Fun

Come Visit Sheena the Therapy Dog and Do a Fun Lego Activity at Andover Library. On Saturday, Jan. 10 from 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Sheena, Queen of the Jungle, Therapy Dog will be at Andover Library with her handler, Andover Friends of the Library member Dr. Jenifer Nadeau. Come read to Sheena or just visit her!

Also on that date, Maryann Fusco-Rollins, Extension Educator in 4-H and Youth Development from Tolland County, will help youth make a LEGO marble maze in which they will design a maze using LEGO building blocks. Then they will exchange mazes and try to safely make their way through other designers' creations.

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## Community & Senior Center Happenings

dates and times please contact Joan Soucy 860-208-3226.

**Birthday Bingo/Lunch:** Wednesday, Jan. 7, 12: p.m. \$5. Light Lunch and celebration with cake. Bingo to follow. Call Linda to reserve your ride!

**Luncheon:** Wednesday, Jan. 14, 12 p.m. \$5. Catered by Cheney Tech Culinary School. Special Guest Speaker Erin Congdon from Collaborative Natural Health emphasis on healthy living and the benefits of drinking tea.

**Bingo/Lunch:** Wednesday, Jan. 21, 28, 12 p.m. \$5. Light Lunch and Prize Bingo to follow. Call Linda to reserve your ride!

**Chair Massage with Linda:** Wednesday, 1/7, 1/21 | 3:30-5:30 PM | \$32. Relax with a rejuvenating chair massage! Appointments are 30 minutes. Sign-up is required—call Linda Derick at (860) 655-4409.

**Senior Art Class with Kim:** Thursday, Jan. 15, 10-11 a.m. \$8. Watercolor & Sea Glass Unwind and get creative in their new Community Art Program! Explore watercolor painting and create beautiful mixed-media pieces using sea glass and shells. Space is limited, so sign up soon! Supplies are provided. Feel free to bring your own special pieces. To Sign up call 860-742-7305 x4510

**Open Sew & Stitch:** Thursdays, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. Calling all makers! Whether you quilt, knit, crochet, or cross-stitch, join the center for a relaxed afternoon of creativity and connection. Bring your own supplies and a snack—come for the stitching, stay for the good company. Transportation is available. Call Linda to reserve your ride! **Community Yoga:** Thursdays, 5:45-6:45 p.m. \$10. Enjoy a community-based yoga class. Drop-ins are welcome. For more information, contact Linda Derick at (860) 655-4409.

**Gentle Yoga:** – Friday, 8:30-9:30 a.m. \$10. A slow-paced yoga practice suitable for all levels. Drop-ins are welcome. For more information, contact Haley Proto at (203) 645-4933. Transportation is available. **Strong & Steady – Resistance Band Workout:** – Fridays, 10-11 a.m. \$7. Improve your strength and balance with this resistance band workout—supplies provided. For more information, contact Haley Proto at (203) 645-4933. Transportation is available.

**Coffee & Crafts:** Friday, Jan. 16, 12:30 p.m. Free. Craft will be decorating Gingerbread houses. Sign-up is necessary. Transportation is available. Call Linda to reserve your ride!

**Community Art Class with Kim:** Friday, Jan. 9, 6-8 p.m. \$35 | 1 CLASS

Watercolor & Sea Glass – Ladies night out or just unwind and get creative in their new Community Art Program! Explore watercolor painting and create beautiful mixed-media pieces using sea glass and shells. Space is limited, so sign up soon! Supplies are provided. Feel free to bring your own special pieces. To Sign up call 860-742-7305 x4510

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

**Travel In Time Club:** 1/16 | Study Group | Free. Based on "Travel in Time in Connecticut", by local author and teacher Dan Blanchard. This is another great intergenerational Partnership with Andover Elementary School. Students and Seniors will be working on stories and interviews.

# WOOD & WOOD

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## From the Editor's Desk

# Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

As I sat late last week and pondered what to write about in this, my first column of the new year, I had the idea of writing about the first 25 years of the 2000s – all of the many highs and dreadful, horrifying lows that have occurred in the 25 years since the ball made its Times Square plunge on Dec. 31, 1999.

This was going to be my *masterpiece*. My magnum opus. You'd have laughed, you'd have cried, you'd have been moved to hug your fellow man. This was the column that would have fetched me my Pulitzer. (And if there wasn't a Pulitzer category for "best column in a free weekly newspaper," then, doggone it, they'd have created one.)

Then it occurred to me: I'm a year too late. The first 25 years of the 2000s wrapped *last* year, on Dec. 31, 2024.

So, that was that. Ah well; easy come, easy go. Nonetheless: Happy new year.

And a gracious thanks to Toriana Williams for filling in for me as editor the last two weeks. The time allowed me to spend the holi-

days with my family in New York City.

The immediate Thompson family is a rather spread-out bunch. My sister lives in Connecticut, but my brother lives in California, and my dad is down in Alabama. After my mom passed away in 2022, no one's felt much like doing Christmas at the old family homestead in Manchester, so we try to gather at a different place each year. This year, we chose to splurge on an extended stay in The Big Apple. And it was a blast.

I try to spend a weekend in New York City a couple of times a year, but I'd never been down there over Christmas. I expected it to be amazing – and it did not disappoint. Midtown Manhattan in particular was just beautiful. All of the festively-decorated storefronts, the various fun holiday markets (bring your pocketbook – and your appetite!), and the gorgeous Christmas trees. Yep, there's more than just the Rockefeller Christmas tree down there; there are a couple other resplendent

**Editor's Desk continued on page 6**

## Bulletin Board

Poking through my assortment of yellowing news clippings in yet another unsuccessful attempt to "clean up that mess," I happened across an old article about some guy's wife who ran him over with the car after church.

Some of you might wonder why anyone would go to the trouble of saving an article like that. Others (my soulmates) will only wonder how you couldn't. I mean, what could be funnier than emerging from church services and proceeding to run over your husband with the family car? On purpose. With malice aforethought.

Okay, lots of things could be funnier. But you've got to admit, it's right up there on the Bizarre Meter.

According to the clipping, the wife, 22-year-old Sedonia M. of Covington, Louisiana, caught her husband, Tushaun Jamel T., looking at another woman in church one lovely Sunday morn. I'm not sure just what Tushaun was looking at or how he was looking at it or if it involved an excess of saliva or what, but Sedonia apparently had no doubts and she was less than pleased... so less than pleased that as Tushaun strolled down the street after services, she tried to run him over with her station wagon. Twice.

Tushaun alertly jumped out of the way both times. But when Sedonia came around for a third pass, our brave voyeur, who apparently suffered from an excess of testosterone, an abundance of religious faith, or an astonishing lack of good sense, stood there in the street, arms crossed, glaring at the oncoming car. Tushaun Jamel T. was done running.

And of course she ran him over.

My father, a veteran of World War II, once advised me that there is a difference between lunacy and courage and I'd be wise not to confuse the two. Tushaun's experience demonstrates the validity of that little survival tip. I mean, life really isn't like those movies where bold heroes almost always triumph. Not most of the time, anyway.

I am happy to report that Tushaun managed to survive the encounter with minor injuries. Even someone as warped as myself will concede that this kind of thing loses much of its comic appeal when the fire department has to power wash someone's mangled remains down a storm sewer. For her part, Sedonia, apparently satisfied with her handiwork (or maybe the car stalled), was taken into custody and charged with attempted murder.

I see a number of morals to this story, not the least of them being that I'd rather be a live squirrel cowering in the bushes than a dead lion parked under the wheels of the family station wagon. On the other hand, any guy who goes to church for the sole purpose of checking out the gams on the choir should probably consider himself lucky to escape with only a set of tire marks across his Sunday suit. It is church, after all. And we all know from Biblical references how the Big Guy responds to affronts, what with visitations of blood-sucking frogs, boils, lightning bolts and similar inconveniences all firmly on the record. Under the circumstances, Tushaun might concede that chewing on a set of Michelin's wasn't the worst thing that could have happened, had his alleged offense been passed up the chain of command.

Of course, had Tushaun been a quicker thinker, he might have escaped unscathed instead of nearly becoming road pie, to wit:

Sedonia: "What are you looking at Tushaun?"

Tushaun: "Have you seen my hymn book?"

Sedonia: "Your hymn book?"

Tushaun: "Yeah, I can't find my hymn book."

Sedonia: "You think it maybe it fell down that woman's cleavage?"

Tushaun: "What woman?"

Sedonia: "That woman over in the next pew that you've been mooning over all morning while you were supposed to be repenting your multitude of sins."

Tushaun: "That's a woman?"

Sedonia: "What did you think it was, you pervert?"

Tushaun: "Uh, an overstuffed chair with a bedspread thrown over it?"

Sedonia: "Don't you gaslight me, boy."

Tushaun: "Okay, I was having uncharitable thoughts. I admit it."

Sedonia: "What kind of uncharitable thoughts?"

Tushaun: "I was waiting for that bird to fly out of her hair. I know I should have told her she had a bird in her hair but I had to see what it would do."

Sedonia: "That bird is part of her hat."

Tushaun: "No way! Honest, baby, I thought it was real. It's been staring at me with its beady little eyes all morning."

Sedonia: "It's a hat."

Tushaun: "Wow. I'll be dam... I mean, go figure. A hat. Say, how about we go visit your mother after church?"

Sedonia: "My mother? Really?"

Tushaun: "Sure. We can bring her some donuts."

Sedonia: "Why, that would be wonderful."

Tushaun: "And honey?"

Sedonia: "Yes, Tushaun?"

Tushaun: "I'll drive."

Jim Hallas

## Rivereast Hours of Operation

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



**Funds for Food and Fuel...** The Colchester Business Association recently presented the Colchester Food Bank and the Colchester Fuel Bank with \$3,000 each, made possible through the proceeds from the CBA's annual Holiday Auction.

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

## Questions for Town Meeting

To the Editor:

This is an open letter to the Town Council and the citizens of Hebron.

There is a special town meeting scheduled for Jan. 29 at 7 p.m., calling for citizens to approve the purchase by the Town of Hebron of 13.24 acres from private landowners using \$210,000 from the town's unassigned fund balance.

I would ask the following questions at the special town meeting but the format of the public meetings does not allow for questions to be asked.

I would ask, in person, the following questions of the Hebron Town Council but I am unsure if I can keep my questions within the allowed three minutes.

Therefore, I request the Town of Hebron to explain what the purchase of this land is for. I also request the Town of Hebron publish how much acreage the town owns outright or in partnership with other governmental agencies and what function these lands are planned to fulfill. I ask for these answers to be published with the legal notification.

Given the large bond issues that we, as citizens of Hebron, are going to be asked to approve this year, it is my hope that all efforts be expended to ensure citizens are aware of pending and possible expenditures of taxpayer monies.

This concern was reinforced after looking at last year's tax bill, which amounted to a 7% increase of my property taxes. The projects that we are looking at this year will dwarf that 7% increase of last year.

I know that the Hebron Town Council struggles with communication and it is hard to overcome the systemic problems with the current

scheme of input to Hebron's boards. I've worked hard, as a citizen, to keep myself informed and have struggled, quite often unsuccessfully, to ask questions that enlighten me to the point I feel I can make an informed choice.

This letter is another attempt at communicating a question that might elicit an answer.

Respectfully,  
Terence McManus  
Hebron

## Affordable Housing

To the Editor:

Although primarily seen as an issue for large cities, affordable housing is a growing issue in towns throughout Connecticut. Communities are struggling to find affordable rental housing situations as wages remain stagnant while the price of housing increases.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), Connecticut only has about 33 affordable rental homes for every 100 extremely low-income households. Due to this shortage, many residents are forced into spending over half of their income on rent. Connecticut Public reported that this shortage of affordable housing is constraining families into doubling up, moving further away from jobs and schooling, or facing homelessness, all consequences that detract from our community.

Despite many factors leading to these repercussions, one tangible component are the zoning laws limiting the construction of multi-family housing. I've personally participated in local zoning meetings, and can attest to the extreme difficulty of getting zoning plans to pass, even for normal residential areas. Restrictions on home construction leads to housing supply

## RIVEREAST

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## Reader Forum • Reader Forum

remaining low, and continually rising prices as demand increases. Although Connecticut law requires towns to create affordable housing plans, the Connecticut Mirror reports that in recent years, many towns have not followed through with requirements. As of early 2023, 36 towns had still yet to submit their affordable housing plans by the deadline, causing a delay in action.

As a resident and student of Colchester, I believe that more emphasis needs to be placed on the affordable housing crisis. Updated zoning laws to create more leniency towards making housing affordable, in addition to following state housing requirements would create a sentiment leading to important change. If towns within Connecticut want to remain welcoming, change needs to happen.

Sincerely,  
George Stula  
Colchester

## Support the EH Senior Center

To the Editor:

This is a shout-out to the extraordinary work the East Hampton Senior Center (SC) is doing on behalf of folks 55 years and older and to support adding a full-time staff member to the SC team. The number of programs and services the SC provides daily is impressive, and it continues to add innovative programs to meet the growing and diverse membership. This is why I am encouraging the East Hampton Town Manager, Town Council, and Board of Finance to allocate funding for one additional full-time staff member in the upcoming 2026-27 budget.

I have seen firsthand the positive impact the senior center has on our community. The Senior Center offers a wide range of programs and services in nutrition, transportation, education, travel, crafts, health and wellness, and other social and recreational activities. Four part-time staff, volunteers, and one full-time director cannot sustain excellent service delivery as membership increases each month. Currently, the senior center's budget is less than 0.5% of the town's total budget. Supporting older adults in East Hampton as they "Age in Place" requires a vibrant, effective senior center. I urge all of our town officials to make the senior center a top priority by adding funding for an additional FTE.

Sincerely,  
Mariann Mankowski  
East Hampton

## Portland's Riverfront Access is Coming Soon!

To the Editor:

For the past three years, the Portland Riverfront Access Committee has worked hard with our past first selectmen, current First Selectman Mike Pelton, and our town engineers to get to this point. Working in tandem with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection all environmental studies have been completed and approved. A request for proposals was advertised and contractors for the road and fence installation have been chosen. Sen. Needleman and Rep. Carpino have secured state grant funding for this project and the Rockfall Foundation supported this project with grant funding covering some of the surveying costs. The signage marking the new parks location on Airline Avenue was donated by Hartford Sign & Design.

We have confirmation that construction will commence this month and if all goes well, a ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place this May. As you can see there has been a collaboration of many stakeholders in moving closer to the finish line.

In fine-tuning this project, additional funding will be needed to construct pollinator gardens, installing picnic tables, planting of trees and bushes that attract native wildlife and a designated fishing area. Rick Sharr, co-chairman of the Riverfront Access Committee has offered to extend the donation match through January. To date the fundraising challenge has raised \$6,800. If you would like to contribute to this project, Rick will match dollar for dollar up to \$10,000. Checks can be made out to the Brownstone Quorum with a memo note designating the Riverfront Access. Send to P.O. Box 402, Portland, CT 06480.

If you prefer to make a donation through an employer sponsored plan or Donor Advised Fund please contact Rick Sharr at 860-836-8496 for further information. To learn more about our progress or join us for a river access event, please attach your email to your check.

Thank You,  
Portland's Riverfront Access Committee

## Year-End Thank You

To the Editor:

As the year 2025 ends, the Portland Food Bank would like to thank everyone who has made this as successful as it was. First of all, we couldn't do what we do without our tireless volunteers.

Also, we need to thank the local churches, the local Knights of Columbus, the people who adopted a family for the holiday, as well as those people and organizations who donated toys for children. A big thank you to Don Snyder for his donation of turkeys and hams for the holiday dinners plus toys for the children. We need to thank Jeff Myjak and his Cans-for-a-Cause for his ongoing support.

We are eternally grateful to the people of Portland for their support of the Portland Food Bank with weekly donations of food. If we have forgotten anyone, please know we are grateful for your support.

Kevin Bachman and Jim Tripp  
Portland

## Hebron's 250th

To the Editor:

Last week's "Holiday Love Letter to Connecticut" by Greg Fruthey provided a fitting "kick-off" to the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Mr. Fruthey captured the essence of Connecticut's 250 guideline – the "Power of Place" and adroitly illustrated how local history is a vital part of state and national identity.

"Governor Peters' Farm" (#17 Kinney Road) has been the focus of much controversy arising from plans made without following the State Historic Preservation Office's recommendation requiring an in-depth title search. If this had been done, there would have been a greater understanding of the land's historic importance. For instance:

An Indigenous encampment flourished around Hebron Center after farming was adopted 1000 years ago. Two Indigenous grinding mortars stood nearby.

In 1702, the Town Proprietors divided the town into marketable home-lots. The unique stone laneways delineate home-lot boundaries and the shift from communal land use to individual profit.

During the 1700s, this site supported a tannery allowing Hebron to ship meat to the West Indies and provision troops protecting Connecticut from French Canada. David Barber owned much of the land. During the Revolutionary War, he became an insolvent patriot.

In April 1775, sixty Hebron men marched to Lexington and Concord. In the spring of 1781, the multiethnic "French" troops marched by this land to the last battle of the Revolution – Yorktown. Today, #17 Kinney Road is the largest surviving stretch of Revolutionary War landscape they passed in Hebron.

During the early 1800s, part of the land was home to Levi S. Backus, the world's first deaf newspaper editor.

Gov. John S. Peters also began to reassemble the Barber farm, one of the earliest land preservation efforts in the United States. Both Governor Peters and Sylvester Gilbert ran their profitable farms by hiring local African-Americans. These African-Americans earned enough to

live in a middle-class lifestyle along side of their Yankee neighbors. Across from Kinney Road, John Hovey (Howie) one of Hebron's earliest immigrants built a house as he prospered.

Today the land is still farmed celebrating the central role farming has played in Hebron's development. However, some still feel #17 Kinney Road must be developed despite the failure of John Horton Boulevard.

Perhaps, the best way to celebrate Hebron's "pursuit of happiness" is not with a generic shopping mall, but in connecting with a place's history and ecology.

Thank you, Mr. Fruthey for suggesting this.

John Baron  
Hebron

## Highly Recommended!

To the Editor:

Over the holidays I stopped into Ark Distillery in Colchester for the first time and it was amazing! I had not been in before because I thought it was a place for people to sip straight, hard liquor – not my thing – but to my surprise it is so much more than that. It's a comfy hangout with a loungey feel. You can bring in your own food (falafel take-out from right next door!) and the drinks are great! It was a cold night so we had hot cider and hot chocolate drinks with different spiced alcohols – plus there is craft beer and wine. This is the place to bring your take-out pizza or your chips & guac... it's not pretentious and the owners are super friendly. Highly recommended and we will be back!

Maribeth Abrams  
Colchester

## Hebron's Lovely Letter

To the Editor:

Wow. I was blown away to see the full-page spread, "A Holiday Love Letter to Connecticut" by Gregory Fruthey, published in last week's *Rivereast*. The connection made between the natural and historic beauty that surrounds us today and the actions of the people of the past was so eloquently stated. It is an undeniable truth that "the clean water, verdant farmland and rich history... are the valuable, tangible, quality-of-life-enhancing assets any community would be happy to inherit. They constitute the kind of irreplaceable riches which ought never be squandered. Because once they've been lost

you never get them back."

I remember Mr. Fruthey attending a Walking Tour of Kinney Road, clearly it left quite an impression. His vivid recollection of the details of the tour through 17 Kinney Rd., including the glacial soil, stone wall laneways, Native history and the story of Cesar Peters, captures a few of the important highlights. I totally agree with the feeling Mr. Fruthey noted, "Experiencing firsthand the silence and power of these still farmed and freshly cut fields, the very ones first occupied over 12,000 years ago, felt almost sacred." There is indeed something truly special about this location.

Interestingly, these same feelings were shared by Professor John Demos of the Yale University Department of History following his visit to the site, "There are so many different parts: geology, environment, indigenous people, colonists, enslavement, even the present. It could well be a history park, an outdoor museum... That Peters landscape has a real aura about it..." I am sure this distinctive and ethereal quality is among the reasons why this area was central to Indigenous, colonial and early American settlement.

I have been hosting the walking tours of Kinney Road since 2021 and I look forward to hosting more this spring. Please stay tuned to Save Hebron Center on Facebook for notifications and all the news as we continue to share this special place. I believe that if you experience this unique landscape for yourself, you will understand the importance of preserving this valuable asset. It is not only Hebron's past, it is Hebron's future. #Save17

Sincerely,  
Kevin J. Tulimieri  
Amston

## New DPW – \$28 Million!!

To the Editor:

The long-awaited estimated cost is in for the new DPW on the Old Colchester Road Site. Yes, it came in at \$27,800, 501, or, for simplicity's sake, let's just call it \$28,000,000.

Plan B - As a Reference, the cost of the original, simpler project, now referred to as "Plan B", planned for the 17 Kinney Rd Site, was estimated in 2018 around \$8,725,000 (BL Architects). It is estimated in today's (2026) dollars, escalated at 5% per year, to be about \$12,900,000 or more

See Letters, page 6

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

ones to check out as well. Of course, we saw the Rockefeller one too – complete with the adjacent skating rink full of bundled up kids, patient parents, and lots of holiday cheer.

The weather was cooperative for most of the time we were there. Aside from a little bit of drizzle the day of our arrival, it was sunny skies and temperatures that, while seasonably chilly, weren't the unbearable degree of cold that we dealt with in Connecticut earlier in December.

There was a bit of a snowstorm our last night there. I say "a bit" because while the storm was hyped up as possibly producing as much as 9 inches, we got about 4. And I have to say, I was very impressed with how the city dealt with it!

It was my first time being in NYC during any type of snow event, and the clean-up was impressive. Where my family and I were staying, on the Lower East Side, the sidewalks were still fairly messy on Saturday morning, but once we got to Midtown, the pathways were nice and clear. Walking down the sidewalk and crossing streets were not a problem at all. I know it's New York City, the biggest city in the world, so I wasn't overly surprised, but still very impressed. It allowed my family and I to take in one more day of sightseeing before we all scattered to our respective corners of the country.

And I have to admit: while I've made no secret of my hatred of snow, seeing the trees and awnings and parks all blanketed with a fresh coat of white was very pretty. Gorgeous, even. It was enough to, briefly, make me reconsider my stance against all things snow.

I haven't yet mentioned the crowds, but boy were they there. Not a huge shock, given that it's New York City at Christmastime, but it was definitely notable. Lots of scrunching together on the sidewalks, particularly in Midtown. (The Lower East Side was a little calmer.) But everyone seemed very happy to be there! There was no anger, no shoving, no "move it along, Mets fan!" exclamations when certain somebodies would stop to take photographs.

Even the subways were pleasant. One particularly enjoyable ride featured a trio of people were walking through the car playing "Feliz Navidad" on the guitar and accordion.

They were looking for money, of course, but at least it was a fun and festive way to ask for it.

All in all, spending Christmas in New York City was just a fantastic experience, and it made for a wonderful vacation.

\*\*\*

The University of Hartford features the Presidents' College Lifelong Learning program. The program offers lectures, mini-courses, and events for adults who want to keep learning. The courses are on the campus in West Hartford, but the program also features events at places like the Hartford Stage, Theaterworks, the Bushnell, and numerous other venues throughout the Greater Hartford area.

UHart tells me there are students from Marlborough, Portland and even Amston who feel the program is worth the drive – so I figured I'd share an announcement about its winter and spring offerings.

The Presidents' College Lifelong Learning program features "snackable" size 1.5-hour lectures, discussions, and mini-courses, open to adults of all ages. There is no membership fee; pay only for what you take. Topics include the arts, history, current events, literature, science, and engineering.

During the winter/spring semester, you can ponder the role of money in college athletics with "How Big Time College Sports Went Wrong," explore "AI's Hidden Environmental Costs," or learn about how packages (and people!) will be "Getting Around Town...In the Air."

You can also take an adult lens to children's literature with "Bringing Grimm's Fairy Tales to Life." Meanwhile, "Hamlet: Ghosts, Broken Promises & Shakespeare's England" will delve into one of the Bard's best. The course "Food and Culture of Ancient Rome" will let folks partake in a Roman-style feast at Metro Bis in Simsbury.

And that's just a sample of all the Presidents' College Lifelong Learning program offers. Go to [hartford.edu/pc](http://hartford.edu/pc) for a full listing, and to register for courses. Happy learning!

\*\*\*

Once again, happy new year to all, and I hope you had a wonderful holiday season. See you next week.

**\* Letters cont. from page 5**

than 50% below the cost of rebuilding at the Old Colchester Road site.

What changed? Well let's look!

Old Colchester Road Site:

- It's a very difficult and hilly site
- Existing Transfer Station and Bulky Waste to be demolished and rebuilt.

- Existing salt shed and sand shed to be demolished and rebuilt.

- Existing DPW facility to be demolished and rebuilt.

- The DPW functions for a year and a half will have to be accomplished elsewhere somehow

(not included in their estimate).

- New septic system(s) (no sewer)

- New well (No town water)

- Transfer Station and Bulky Waste will have to be done by the town at extra costs until the new facility is rebuilt (not included in the estimate).

Plan B – 17 Kinney Rd. Site (Horton Property – town purchased the 86 acres a few years ago for \$600,000):

- Shovel-Ready – as they say in construction.

- Site was purchased by the town specifically for town use.

- Much more manageable site conditions.

- Construction could easily start this year.

Utilities available at Kinney Road (but not at the Old Colchester Road Site):

- Town Sewer Available

- Town Water Available

- Natural Gas nearby

- 3-Phase electrical in the street (needed for EV vehicles).

Options open to 17 Kinney Rd. Site (to save money):

- Leave the Transfer Station and Bulky Waste alone as is.

- Leave the salt and sand shed at OCFS for south end of town; one exists at north end of town.

- Use the existing structures for cold storage of equipment etc. Demo the ones that are past useful life span.

We should demand the Town Council have the architects revisit the 2018 Plan B, 17 Kinney Rd. site design and rework the estimate as a comparison for the referendum.

**David Foster AIA  
Hebron**

**Dementia Talks No. 44**

To the Editor:

Sometime ago I wrote about the first time Mom indicated that she didn't know who I was – she asked if I had seen her two daughters lately. It was July 2024. Quickly she came around to knowing who I was.

I've shared before that my sister and I don't ask her who she thinks we are. We know that it doesn't matter, because our love will always surround her.

This past week a painful arrow struck my heart, but the realization of what happened hit me after I left.

You see, I stopped by for a Mom-visit. She was focused on an activity. After the activity ended, I scooted down in front of her and said 'hi' with a bright smile. She looked at me square in the eyes and asked "who are you?" I didn't bat an eye and said "I'm a visitor here. Would you like to go for a walk?" Mom looked at me, looked behind me checking for permission, then looked back at me and paused. I shared that the activity was over and it was OK for her to go for a walk and we would be back for snack-time. She was agreeable, took my hands, hoisted herself out of her chair and we walked down the hall, hand-in-hand.

We had a nice visit. I said my goodbyes, pecked Mom on her head, said "I love you." I can't recall if she returned the gesture. Climbed into my car to leave and felt the arrow in my heart.

This was real. This was different.

The part of Mom's brain where my face lives as an infant through to, I'm not sure when, is fading. The face I arrive with for our visits is growing old and changing; it doesn't always match the picture in the part of her brain that remains.

I have seen videos of people in full-on fits of tears that have had that realization. I felt the pain, then it was gone. I write this essay without a tear shed. I know the tears will flow; I don't know when and I won't be ready. But I will let them come.

Hold your loved one close to your heart. Let them know you are there. That you care. That is the control we have over this disease.

Know that you are not alone.

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

**Still Cause for Hope and Joy**

To the Editor:

At a time when there seems to be so much despair and discontent, and people are so busy rushing around, I am grateful to have been the recipient of the kindness of my younger neighbors, some of whom I barely know past a wave and a brief "Hello," in passing.

It is these neighbors who have seen this older woman out shoveling, and who have graciously insisted on coming to help, despite my insistence that I could manage, knowing they have yet to finish their own yards! In their kindness, they have renewed my hope and given me joy, and their kindness has meant more than they will ever know. My prayer for this new year is that we can all be inspired to be more aware of those around us and to extend small kindnesses wherever we can.

**With a grateful heart,  
Donna Daly-Atherton  
East Hampton**

**Promoting Cannabis?**

To the Editor:

I recently saw the commercial that the state put out promoting the use of cannabis. Yes, "promoting." And I quote, "There is a place for getting high but it's not behind the wheel." Really? And they interviewed several people who talked about the great feelings and creativity they experience from using pot!

While our kids struggle with mental illness and we try to keep them away from drugs, while our schools are seeing an increase in drug abuse, this is what our state is promoting? How is this helping our community?

Yes, I get it that they want to keep drug users off the road. But using drugs causes you not to think straight so you will do drugs and drive.

Yes, my own town sells cannabis and that is very upsetting!

Where is the wisdom in all of this? Why aren't our politicians protecting us?

I'm really glad this is an election year. Time for some changes in leadership!

**Shirley Ellis  
Colchester**

**Don't Disrespect Pharmacy Staff**

To the Editor:

When is it acceptable to treat pharmacy staff with disrespect? Never.

Patients may become frustrated or raise their voices, often due to the high cost of prescriptions. However, it is important to recognize that pharmacy personnel have no control over employer-sponsored insurance plans, the coverage options selected by patients, co-pay structures, or the manufacturer's pricing of medications.

What pharmacists and pharmacy technicians do control is a critical responsibility: safeguarding patient safety. This includes reviewing medication histories, identifying potential risks or drug interactions, and proactively contacting prescribers to clarify details that may have been overlooked. Obtaining timely responses from physicians' offices can be as challenging for pharmacy staff as it is for patients.

It is also unrealistic to expect that medical offices prioritize and transmit every new prescription immediately upon writing it. Pharmacies receive prescriptions throughout the day and must process them alongside numerous other responsibilities.

Pharmacy staff are dedicated professionals navigating the same workplace challenges many of us face: chronic understaffing, heavy workloads, and modest compensation. Like anyone else, they have personal lives and external stressors. Consider this perspective: How would you respond if a customer or colleague addressed you in the same manner that some patients address pharmacy staff? Most of us would find such treatment unacceptable – yet pharmacy teams are frequently expected to absorb frustration and hostility without recourse.

While illness, anxiety, or discomfort can understandably heighten emotions, these factors do not justify disrespectful behavior toward professionals who are working diligently to assist you.

One additional note: In most workplaces, employees are entitled to a meal break. Pharmacy staff typically take a 30-minute meal break from 1:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please plan your visits accordingly.

Patience and kindness go a long way. Pharmacy staff are on your side, committed to ensuring you receive safe and timely care.

**Paul Dichele  
Marlborough**

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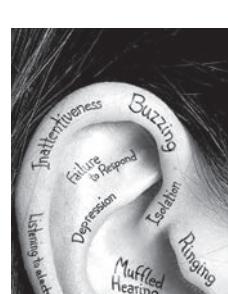
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## Cover Story • Cover Story

## ★ Senior Center, cont. from page 1

Another misconception Watts addressed is the idea that senior centers are only for the very elderly. The Colchester Senior Center serves adults 55 and older, encompassing a wide range of ages, abilities and interests. Some members are highly active and energetic, challenging stereotypes and inspiring others. Watts stressed that people often misunderstand "what a senior center is missionally, what it is we do and what we're about."

Behind the scenes, the center's success relies heavily on people. Despite the surge in participation, staffing levels have remained the same. Watts credited her team's dedication, and said she could not have made it through the year without their hard work. Volunteers are equally essential. The center has more than 100 registered volunteers who answer phones, teach classes, assist in the kitchen and deliver Meals on Wheels, among many other roles.

Community partnerships also play a major role. With more than 40 partners collaborating on programs, educational events and sponsored activities, the center benefits from shared resources while partners gain meaningful engagement with the community. These relationships

help expand programming and enhance the overall experience for members.

The journey to the new building was not without challenges. Watts noted that the project required two successful community-wide referendum votes and took six years to complete. Like many municipal projects, it came with obstacles, but persistence paid off. She emphasized that keeping focus on the end goal made the effort worthwhile, especially seeing how warmly the community has embraced its new center.

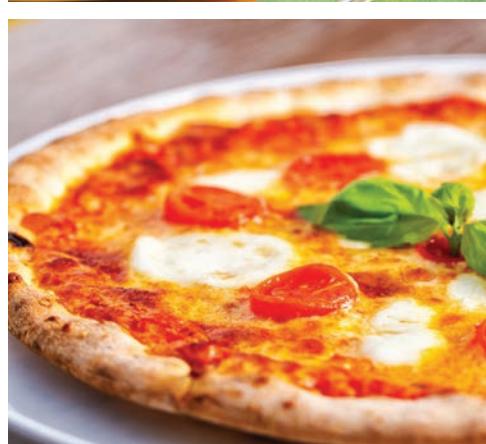
Looking ahead, Watts hopes to continue evolving services and staying at the forefront of aging-related programming. Her goal is to ensure the center remains relevant and deeply integrated into community life. For residents interested in getting involved, opportunities abound. Membership is free for Colchester residents and affordable for non-residents, and volunteers of all ages are welcome.

As the Colchester Senior Center celebrates one year in its new home, the building stands as more than just a physical structure. It represents connection, dignity and opportunity at every stage of later life, demonstrating why senior centers remain one of the most valuable resources a community can offer.



Colchester Senior Center recently marked one year at its new home on Louis Lane. In this throwback photo, here's a scene from the ribbon-cutting ceremony held for the new center in December 2024. From left are Marilynn Turner, vice chairman of the Senior Center Building Committee, Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz, First Selectman Bernie Dennler, Selectman Rosemary Coyle, Senior Center Building Committee Tony Tarnowski (behind Coyle), and Senior Center Director Patty Watts.

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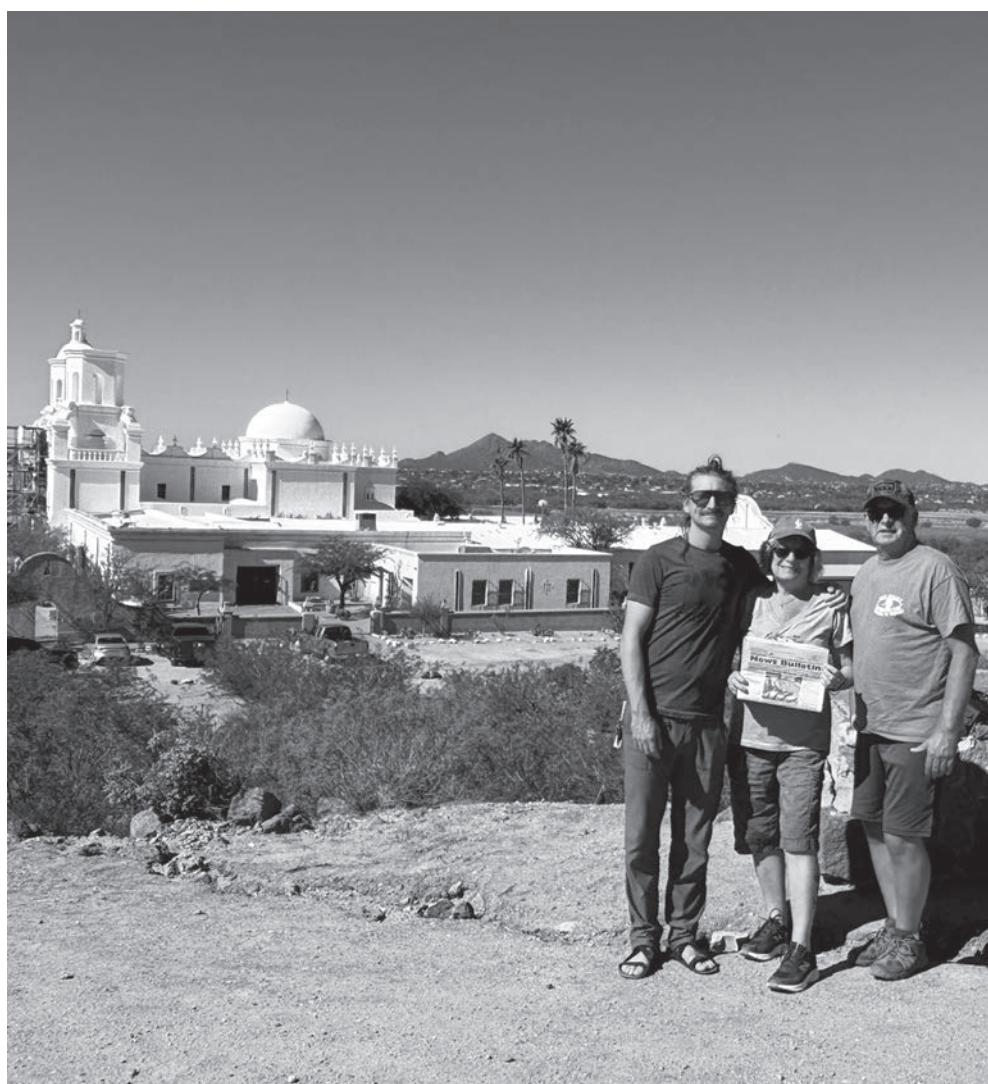
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## Where in the World is the *Rivereast*?

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



**From Andover to Antarctica...** Carroll Blake and Patricia Kelly of Andover recently took a cruise to Antarctica, where they stepped on their 7th continent. They saw colonies of Gentoo, Chinstrap and Adelie penguins, seals and whales. Antarctica is the largest desert in the world, with many icebergs, glaciers, ice sheets, and ice shelves. The continent has no government, no military, no currency and 52 countries have signed a treaty to keep it clean and pristine. Scientists from all over the world study there often, sharing their data about climate change, Blake and Kelly said.



**History in Arizona...** While visiting their son Travis in Arizona, Carol and Peter Revicki of Portland visited The San Xavier Del Bac Mission. It was founded by Padre Kino in 1692 and is considered a masterpiece of Spanish Colonial architecture.



**All Smiles in Stonington...** Freemont Dickerman and Cinde Smith of Higganum brought the *Rivereast* with them when they went out to eat at the Dog Watch Café in Stonington!



**Life is What You Bake It...** Valerie LaVake of Hebron and Lori Vadnais of Manchester went to the King Arthur Bakery class in Vermont and stayed at the Norwich Inn.

Where  
in the  
World?

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## VITA Seeks Volunteers

Since 2009, the Middlesex VITA Coalition has helped thousands in Middlesex County file their taxes at no cost. As part of the IRS-sponsored Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, the coalition is seeking volunteers to help continue the mission.

Middlesex VITA specializes in maximizing tax credits for families and individuals with incomes under \$70,000. No prior tax preparation

experience is required, as training is provided. You will collaboratively prepare client returns, ensuring you're never working alone.

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

Training begins in early January. If interested in volunteering, email MiddlesexCT.Vita@gmail.com, or connect on Facebook at "Middlesex CT VITA."

## Zion Lutheran News & Notes

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

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

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

**Giving:** Pull tabs are collected year-round

## St. Mary Church News & Notes

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

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

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

**Bereavement Support Group:** All are invited

## First Congregational Church News

The First Congregational Church of Portland, UCC, located at 554 Main St., holds worship Sundays at 10 a.m. All are welcome. Pastor is the Rev. Judith Cooke. This Sunday, Jan. 11, Cooke will preach on the topic "New Creation."

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

For more information, call 860-342-3244 or visit [firstchurchportlandct.org](http://firstchurchportlandct.org).

## Quilt Guild Meets Monthly

The Heart of the Valley/Greater Middletown Quilt Guild welcomes new members. Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at Portland Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave., from September through June.

For more information, call 860-670-5351.



Amelia Mattesen

## Pilot School Graduate

Amelia Mattesen, a Portland native, graduated from the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School (USNTPS), Class 167, on Dec. 11, 2025.

Mattesen, a Portland High School graduate (Class of 2014) is now part of an elite group of professionals that play a vital role in shaping the future of aviation. USNTPS trains pilots, flight officers, and engineers for developmental test and evaluation of aircraft and airborne systems.

Mattesen will continue to work full-time for Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md., as the F-35 propulsion flight test team lead.

## From the First Selectman's Desk

Happy New Year Portland! Hope everyone had a relaxing and stress-free holiday and here's my first town update for 2026 that covers several critical town business items that may impact our residents and businesses alike. Some of the active projects include:

**Route 17 Well Project:** The town approved a referendum in November 2024 to begin the process of becoming water independent by sourcing a water supply and building a well. We've found a great water supply under the Route 17 Park and will be building a pump house and the connecting infrastructure to our existing water system over the next 2-3 years. During that time, we'll need to continue our relationship with MDC and we've secured a 3-year extension MDC that cover us during that transition. The next step is issuing a request for proposal (RFP) to build the pump house and infrastructure to connect it to our existing system, which will help stabilize water costs and allow for expansion.

**Portland River Bend Landing/ River Access:** Construction on the Airline Avenue project officially starts next week and will last three to four months. This small but important project will provide residents with free access to the river for the first time in many years. A supplemental fundraiser is ongoing, with local resident Rick Sharr offering to match donations up to \$10,000 until the end of January. Please consider donating to a great cause! Reach out to my office for details. My phone is 860-342-6715.

**Brainerd Place:** The first apartment building is near full occupancy. The second building should begin leasing its top two floors in early February. The historic Brainerd House and Hart-Jarvis homes are coming along nicely, and Sage House will soon house an early learning center business. The entire \$50+ million project is estimated for completion in 2028 and will include a Jersey Mike's, Chipotle, a roof-top restaurant, assisted living apartments and more.

**Nordic Spa:** This large multimillion-dollar project on Brownstone Ave will overlook the Brownstone Quarry and is a wonderful addition to Portland. Foundations are now complete for each building and the framing is underway. The target opening date is still November of this year – can't wait til it's open!

**BIS Boilers:** New boilers for Brownstone Intermediate School are being installed in a few weeks.

**School Consolidation and Town Budget:** A proposed school consolidation plan is being finalized and involves renovating Gildersleeve and Valley View schools, making capital improvements to the High School/Middle School complex, and investing in the Brownstone Intermediate School (BIS). Updated cost estimates are expected next week and will be shared with the town before the referendum on May 11th, which is also the date the town will vote on the new budget. This is a huge project and you'll hear much more about it in the weeks ahead!

The 2026-27 budget season is also here with the suggested budget submission targeted for March 2nd. Public open sessions will follow and residents are encouraged to participate. It's your tax money and we welcome your input and suggestions!

**Police and Community Updates:** December was a busy month for the Portland Police Department with 21 arrests and 428 incidents. Our Fire Department responded to 17 fire calls and our EMS teams responded to 52 calls.

### Other town news includes:

- An abandoned 1969 Thunderbird boat is available with bidding starting at \$1! Highest bidder gets and \$\$ goes to the Portland River Bend Landing project.
- Fire Ring Farm is assisting the town with composting and organic recycling and we appreciate their help and commitment to Portland.
- We recently filled two key positions in town - Supervisor of the Sewer Department and our new Building Official. Both are essential as we continue to grow in the months and years ahead!

Thank you for all the support and encouragement over the last year and I look forward to a great 2026 ahead!

Michael Pelton  
Portland First Selectman



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## From the Committee on Solidarity

In 2025, the Committee on Solidarity helped educate our community about Portland's Black History through the Voices of Portland collaboration, co-sponsored discussions on homelessness and Japanese American mass incarceration, welcomed two student representatives, participated in Middletown's Pride March, co-hosted Portland's seventh annual Juneteenth Celebration and met with residents at the summer concerts and the Portland Fair. We have also enjoyed increased public outreach about the work of our committee and look forward to welcoming new members in the upcoming months.

As we enter 2026 and prepare to mark our nation's 250th anniversary, we are called to reflect – not only on who we have been, but on who we are becoming. In years past, whether it was a 9/11 terrorist attack or a mass shooting in some other part of the country, we stood together, shared the pain and grieved as one – our race, our nationality, our gender or who we love didn't matter. It only mattered that we hurt and that the support of others helped to ease our pain. We had compassion, resilience, and leaders who supported and inspired us. As we bid goodbye to 2025 – a year filled with unanticipated cruelty, unimaginable harms and countless preventable deaths – there have been no public prayers or shared moments of national grief. Do we recognize that we've changed? We hope and pray for a better 2026 but what seems absent is the collective compassion, the grief over those we have lost (or will lose) and any kind of reassurance that together, we will get through these dark times. We must now, more than ever, look to ourselves and to each other.

On Jan. 15, we celebrate the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., a great American leader from our past. Perhaps his words can help to provide us some inspiration. In a 1965 Selma, Ala., speech, Dr. King told us that "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." Let us not allow 2026 to be the year we fell silent. Refusing silence may be the most important act of solidarity we can now choose.

We look forward to engaging with our community in 2026, starting with our Pride Workgroup's Art & Craft Supply Swap at Portland Library on January 17 from 1-2:30. Learn more at [portlandct.org/solidarity](http://portlandct.org/solidarity).

We also invite the public to join us for our monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of every month at 7pm. You can join us either in person at the Waverly Senior Center or online at [www.portlandct.org/zoom](http://www.portlandct.org/zoom), Zoom B (ID: 352 700 8408, password: 113ct). Agendas, minutes, and general information can be found at [portlandct.org/solidarity-task-force](http://portlandct.org/solidarity-task-force). If you are interested in the committee and its workgroups, email [portlandctsolidarity@gmail.com](mailto:portlandctsolidarity@gmail.com).

Portland Committee on Solidarity

## Vocal Chords Seek Altos, Tenors and Basses

The Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords (MHVC), directed by Samuel Tucker and accompanied by Alan Dougherty's 10-piece orchestra, are searching for men and women to join their alto, tenor and bass sections. No auditions or prior experience are required.

Rehearsals start on Tuesday, Jan. 20, from 6:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at St. Francis Church's Msgr. Fox Parish Hall, 10 Elm St., Middletown, as they prepare for their spring concert on Saturday, May 2 at Portland High School.

New members may join until Feb. 3.

You do not need any affiliation with Middlesex Health to become a member. For more info, visit [vocalchords20.org](http://vocalchords20.org) or call 860-342-3120.

## Trinity Episcopal News

Trinity Episcopal Church, 345 Main St., invites all to services on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Bible Study starts at 8:30 a.m. each Sunday. The church schedule can always be located at [trinitychurchportlandct.org](http://trinitychurchportlandct.org).

The church is open for prayer and meditation, and the church office is open, from 2-4 p.m. each Friday. Anglican Prayer beading sessions are held at this time as well; all are welcome.

Check [trinitychurchportlandct.org](http://trinitychurchportlandct.org) for more information. If you have any prayer requests to lift up, email the church office at [trinitychurchportlandct@gmail.com](mailto:trinitychurchportlandct@gmail.com).

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RE6-20

## Friends of Portland Library Book Collection Day

As new year resolutions to declutter and organize are underway, the Friends of Portland Library will welcome donations of gently used books, puzzles, CDs, DVDs and games on Saturday, Jan. 10, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Donated items stock the Friends' on-going book sales and the Fall Book Sale. Proceeds from these sales support the wide variety of programming that helps make the Portland Library exceptional. Donated items must be in

sellable condition: no dirty, moldy, or items in poor condition please. Also, the Friends cannot accept textbooks, business books, computer books, VHS videos or magazines.

Donations must be dropped off at the library side-door, and volunteers will be available to help. Donations are tax-deductible and acknowledgement forms will be available. Visit their website at [www.friendsofportlandlibrary.org](http://www.friendsofportlandlibrary.org) for more information.

## Senior Center News & Notes

The Waverly Senior Center, 7 Waverly Avenue, announces the following. **Registration is required for all programs** unless noted; for more information or to register, call 860-342-6761. Senior center hours are Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Friday, 9 a.m. to noon. Visit [www.portlandct.org/senior-services](http://www.portlandct.org/senior-services) for more information.

**Mobile Food Pantry:** The Food Share Mobile Pantry comes to the Food Bank every other Monday. The next date is Jan. 12.

**Weekly Programs:** Unless noted, all programs are free. **Monday, 1/12: Light Aerobics**, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

**Tuesday, 1/13: Bears on a Journey**, 9:30-11 a.m. – to donate light fleece for making teddy bears for cancer patients, call 860-342-0809; **Congregate Meal**, noon. Cost is \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: Asian-glazed turkey burger on a bun, sesame ginger coleslaw, sweet potato wedges, string cheese, orange cup; **Coupons for Troops**, 1-4 p.m.; **Setback**, 1 p.m.; **SyncOCize**, 5-6 p.m., fee is donation to instructor.

**Wednesday, 1/14: Light Aerobics**, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; **Chair Yoga with Gia**, 10:30-11:15 a.m., fee is a \$5 donation to instructor; **Rug Hooking Group**, noon – whether a seasoned pro or looking to pick up a new skill, this group is for all. Call the center for more information. **Bridge**, noon-4 p.m.

**Thursday, 1/15: Tone & Stretch**, 9:30 a.m.; **Knit & Stitch**, 10 a.m.; **Congregate Meal**, noon. Cost is \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: kielbasa, pierogies, sauerkraut, string cheese, pineapple cup; **Mahjong** (FULL), 12:30 p.m.; **Scrabble**, 1 p.m.

**Friday, 1/16: Light Aerobics**, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; **Mah Jongg**, 10 a.m.; **Chair Yoga with Gia**, 10:45-11:35 a.m., fee is a \$5 donation to instructor.

**January Special Events:** Unless noted, programs are free and registration is required. **Monday, Jan. 12** – Lower Valley Care Advo-

cates Donuts and Talk. Join Physical Therapist Aaron Morales for an informative and hands-on presentation on falls, balance, and basic PT exercises. 11:30 a.m.

**Tuesday, Jan. 13** – Bingo with Sean from Ageless Insurance. 1:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, Jan. 13** – Aging Boldly: TED Talk and Coffee Social with Sarah Elliott-Caratasios. "We're not getting older - we're getting bolder!" 2 p.m.

**Thursday, Jan. 15** – Pharmacy Hop & Lunch! Trip to Walgreens in Portland and Stop & Shop and CVS in Glastonbury, followed by lunch at Ken's Corner. Leave the Center at 10 a.m., \$5 Ride Fee, Pay for your own lunch.

**Monday, Jan. 19** – Closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**Wednesday, Jan. 21** – Trip to New Britain Museum of American Art: Norman Rockwell Exhibit. Leave Center at 10 a.m., \$15 Admission, \$5 Ride Fee.

**Thursday, Jan. 22** – Shopping Trip to Noel's Grocery and Stop & Shop in Colchester. Leave Center at 10 a.m., \$5 Ride Fee.

**Friday, Jan. 23** – The Gentlemen's Table Group: A Men's Only Lunch Outing at The Beamhouse. Leave the Center at 11:30 a.m., \$5 Ride Fee, Pay for your own meal. Registration Required.

**Monday, Jan. 26** – Hair by Jessica – Jessica is a travelling hairstylist who will be at the Center each month to fix up your do! Mens/Womens shampoos, cuts, styling. Call Jessica to make your appointment at 860-751-9215.

**Monday, Jan. 26**: Technology training presentation at 11 a.m. A range of technology topics will be discussed and we need your input to help create an engaging and helpful learning experience.

## Parks and Rec. News & Notes

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

**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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- Vote in national and local elections to ensure your elected officials share your vision of public safety.
- Donate to organizations, campaigns and initiatives who are committed to racial justice.



Let's come together to take action against racism and fight for racial justice for the Black community. Visit [lovethatnolabels.com/fightforfreedom](http://lovethatnolabels.com/fightforfreedom)

CT9-12-20



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## Mardi Gras Festival

The First Congregational Church of Portland (located at 554 Main St.) will hold a Mardi Gras Festival Saturday, Jan. 31, from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., in the church's Fellowship Hall.

A variety of activities and treats will be available, with one highlight being the Mardi Gras Café, featuring a luncheon of authentic red beans and rice as well as chicken and andouille gumbo, both for eating in and taking out. This food is the "real deal," prepared by church member Jeffrey Froulino and his kitchen helpers. Several New Orleans inspired desserts including New Orleans bread pudding with vanilla sauce and chocolate pecan pie will top off the delicious luncheon.

The event will also feature a basket raffle

with 19 overflowing themed gift baskets that will include one called "Malloves' Memories," donated by Malloves Jewelers of Middletown whose business recently closed.

The hall will also be filled with home-baked goods and candies, a gift table that will include jewelry, church made greeting cards, and specialty gifts that would be great for Valentine's Day. A photo booth complete with Mardi Gras props to create a photo to cherish will also be available.

A portion of the proceeds will be donated to World Central Kitchen, a not-for-profit organization that provides meals in response to humanitarian and climate crises.

## Portland Library News & Notes

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

**Hours:** Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., - Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., - Saturday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. **Holiday Closings:** The library will be closed on Monday Jan 19 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

**Inclement Weather Procedure:** If Portland Public Schools have a delayed opening or are closed for the day due to inclement weather, the library will not run morning storytimes. Afternoon and evening programs will be decided on an individual basis that day, and registered participants will be contacted through email as soon as possible if the program will be canceled. Call the library if you have any questions on whether programs will be held.

**Children's Programs: Winter Reading is AFOOT!**: Runs through Saturday, Feb. 28. Visit the library and you'll find a series of challenges. Register to become an official detective and check out the bulletin board each time you visit to see what mysteries are in need of solving. Complete the challenge and update your badge. If you complete at least three of the six challenges, you'll receive a small prize. The library will also offer a number of mystery-related programs in the winter months.

**Write Like a Founding Father:** Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. Jan. 15, 22, 29. Grades 3-7. Join the library for a three-week program to learn cursive. This program is designed to teach the basics of cursive writing. The library will provide take-home practice sheets each week and end the program with a craft to bring home.

**Jigsaw Puzzle Competition:** Saturday, Jan. 24 from 10:30 a.m.-noon. The library is looking for teams of 2-4 people to compete in this third annual competition. Team up with friends and

## 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.

## Mahjong Practice Group

A meet-up for learning and practicing Mahjong meets weekly on Tuesdays from 7-8:30 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church, 345 Main St, Portland.

All player levels, including novice, are welcome. The game is played by NMJL rules.

For more information, contact Ginger LaBella at [gingerlabela@gmail.com](mailto:gingerlabela@gmail.com) or 860-759-0935. Novices requiring instruction should notify LaBella before attending so she can plan accordingly.

## Kindergarten Registration

Valley View School has announced kindergarten registration for the 2026-27 school year.

Parents/guardians whose children will be five years of age on or before Sept. 1, 2026, should contact Valley View School at [kregistration@portlandct.us](mailto:kregistration@portlandct.us) to indicate if you will be registering your child for kindergarten. Please provide your child's full name, date of birth, phone number, address, and parent's names.

Further information regarding kindergarten registration will be provided once you contact the school.

family to solve a 500-piece puzzle, and reserve your spot in this relaxed morning event. Registration is limited to seven teams. Coffee, tea and hot cocoa will be available. Space is limited to 7 teams so register early.

**Adult Programs: Winter Reading Is Afoot:** Runs through Saturday, Feb. 28. Visit the library on or after Jan. 2 and the library will give you some magnifying glasses to fill in with the books you read. Once you've read 6 books, you will have completed the challenge and will win a small prize. Everyone who completes the challenge will be entered into a drawing. The winner will select a book (up to a \$40 value) to be added to the library's collection.

**Solidarity Committee Art & Craft Supply Swap:** On Saturday, Jan. 17, 1 p.m., bring unwanted, gently used craft or art supplies and "shop" for FREE new-to-you supplies. You do not need to donate in order to "shop", and you may donate without picking anything new up. Registration is not required but is strongly encouraged. Co-sponsored by the Committee on Solidarity's Pride Workgroup, and the Portland Public Library.

**Art Exhibit Reception – Portland Perspectives by Nancy Brault and Sarah Weeden:** Saturday, Feb. 21, 1 p.m. A study of Portland's walking trails, riverfront, bridge, Main Street, and other unique views of everyday Portland. Since Brault's retirement, she has been involved with community colleges to rediscover the ever-changing world of digital photography. She attained an undergraduate degree in photography from the University of Bridgeport before beginning a career in public health. Brault has shown her work through galleries at CT State Tunxis and Manchester. A restaurant owner, Weeden has an undergraduate degree in photography from Southern Connecticut State University and worked briefly in newspapers before entering the culinary world. She has shown her work, which she describes as "rediscovering my life through the camera lens," at numerous shows throughout Connecticut. This exhibit runs Jan 14 – Feb 28.

**Weekly Knifty Knitters Group:** Saturdays, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Adults of all experience levels are welcome. No registration required; simply drop in. Come chat with the crafters who created the flock of emotional support chickens that were auctioned off this month to benefit the Friends of the Library.

**Movie:** Wednesday, Jan. 14, 1 p.m. *Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale* (2025; rated PG) will be shown. Run time is 123 minutes.

**Book Clubs:** Mystery Lovers Book Club: Tuesday, Jan. 20, 1:00 p.m. *The Twyford Code* by Janice Hallett will be discussed. Talk About Books: Tuesday Feb. 3, 1 p.m. *Mercy House* by Alena Dillon will be discussed. 1st Thursday Night Book Club: Thursday, Feb. 5, 6:30 p.m. *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi will be discussed.

## Exchange Club Bingo Night

The Portland Exchange Club will hold its next Bingo Night Thursday, Jan. 22, at Concentric Brewing, located at 91 Main St. Card sales start at 6 p.m., and the games start at 7 p.m.

Admission is \$20 for four cards to be used for all 10 games with prizes for the winner of each game. Cash, credit and debit cards will be accepted. Proceeds from the night will go towards the Portland Fuel Bank.

For more information, go to [www.portland-exchange.org](http://www.portland-exchange.org).

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**New Members...** The Portland Exchange Club inducted five new members to the club at its annual Holiday Party. They are (from left) Doug Guerin, Craig Bradshaw, Brett Giglio, Ryan Crafa and Mary Pelton. At the party, the Exchange collected over \$1,000 in donations from its members towards the Portland Fuel bank, The Exchange will match the donation. Also, proceeds from both of Exchange's Bingo Nights in January will go to the Fuel Bank.

## Benefit Dinner for Fitzkee Family

Freestone Council 7 Knights of Columbus is hosting a dinner to support the Fitzkee family on Friday, Feb. 6, from 4-8 p.m., in the hall at the Church of Saint Mary on Freestone Avenue in Portland.

Dinners can be ordered to-go or dine-in, and will include pasta, meatballs, sausage and peppers, garlic bread, and sala. Tickets are \$15 and \$30 for a family of four. Contributions can be sent to Freestone Council, PO Box 7,

Portland CT 06480. Your tickets will be held for you at the door.

Tickets are also available at Town Hall, St Mary Church, and many local Portland businesses.

The dinner will benefit the family of Courtney Fitzkee, who was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer at 33, less than a year after her daughter Isla was born.

## Garden Club Seed Swap Event

Celebrate National Seed Swap Day with the Portland River Valley Garden Club on Saturday, Jan. 31, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the Waverly Center, 7 Waverly Ave.

Bring labeled seeds saved from your garden – or unopened packets from last year – and exchange them for new varieties to grow this season.

Enjoy free demonstrations on making seed

bombs, winter sowing and growing microgreens. Visit River Bend Bookshop's vendor table and learn about the Portland Library's Seed Library.

Admission is free; food bank donations are encouraged.

For more details, visit [portland-river-valley-garden-club.blogspot.com](http://portland-river-valley-garden-club.blogspot.com).

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RE-9-26

# Radon Gas: A Silent Killer, but Testing Can Save Lives

By Anne Lilburn

January in National Radon Action Month, and health experts say that if you've never tested your home for radon, now might be a great time to do so.

The odorless and invisible radioactive gas, which can be found in rocks, soil and groundwater, can seep into homes and build up to dangerous levels. According to the Centers for Disease Control, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States, behind only cigarette smoking. Typically, exposure to radon gas happens when people inhale it over many years.

For those looking to find out whether their home may have radon gas, the Chatham Health District is currently offering one free radon test kit per household, while supplies last, to those living within its communities, which include the Rivereast towns of Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, and Portland.

Russell Melmed, director of health at Chatham Health District, said that residents should test "the lowest living level" of their home, meaning that the readings from a basement would only really be relevant if someone was spending a significant amount of time there, as they might in finished basement. Radon risk is cumulative and adds up over the years.

"It's a chronic exposure situation," he said. "Years and years of exposure to radon gas is what is going to lead you to increase risk of lung cancer, so anything you can do to reduce that exposure over years will make a difference."

"You can be exposed to it through your well water," Melmed added, "but the primary exposure route is still inhalation."

Melmed said that parts of Connecticut have

an elevated risk of radon, due to the natural bedrock and soil composition of the area. He cited a survey map released by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in 1997. In particular, he said, parts of Portland have a high risk of indoor radon, as do nearby communities, including Middletown and Glastonbury. Parts of East Hampton, Marlborough and Hebron also have an elevated risk.

Melmed said that while well water is a potential source of radon exposure, radon testing is required of all new wells. He said that his department recommends testing well water every five years and including radon in that testing.

As for inhaled radon gas, Melmed said he recommends testing whenever you move into a new home, but also whenever you consider a finished basement renovation, or when you consider a lifestyle change that might involve someone moving into a basement or using a basement as a living or recreational space. He said people who use their basements only for things like storage and laundry can skip testing the basement level and instead test at the lowest level where they regularly spend time.

He said that people should also test any time they see cracks in their foundation or basement floor, and he emphasized that radon is a gas, which means it can seep in even through very small cracks.

He also said that residents should test any time there have been changes to the soil or bedrock in their area, including if there had been any seismic activity or blasting in the area. Even though people don't typically think of Connecticut as earthquake country, he said that the state does occasionally get small quakes, and noted

that if you feel an earthquake, it's a good reason to test for radon again. He also said that any nearby use of hydrofracking, a technique sometimes used to increase water yields in wells, could shift conditions and would be a good reason to retest.

Testing is a fairly straightforward process with the home kits provided by the health district. Users take a sample and mail it in for analysis, and the results get sent back to you directly. They do not become public information. If the levels are elevated, then Melmed said residents should then call a radon specialist to do more specific testing.

"If somebody comes back with a level that is elevated, and that would be above four picocuries per liter of air, ... you should consider lowering those levels," he said.

Melmed said that can include ventilation systems involving piping and fans that essentially vent the radioactive gas outside so it can't

collect in indoor spaces. He said that he knows that for some people, that option will be too expensive, and in that case, he recommends doing whatever people can to lower their exposure. In some cases, he said, that might mean not spending as much time on their basement level. He said less expensive mitigations may also involve adjusting an HVAC system to increase the amount of fresh air that it draws in, or even something as simple as opening windows in the warmer months.

While the Chatham Health District still has free tests, provided by the state's Department of Public Health, to distribute, similar tests can be readily purchased online or in hardware stores for under \$20. Melmed said they are well worth their price.

"These tests are very inexpensive," he said. "They're fairly reliable in terms of screening, they can save your life or the lives of people you love, and so why not do it?"

## Xavier Honor Roll

The following area students made the Xavier High School honor roll for the first term of the 2025-26 school year:

**Colchester:** High Honors: Sophomores Wesley Engleman and Noah Garvie; senior Corbin Engleman.

**East Hampton:** High Honors: Freshmen Patrick Adams and John Perez; sophomores Holden Hines, Jason Hurt, Gavin King, Nethum Nakandala and Hunter Steiner; seniors James Haslam, Andrew Hawk, Cael Lumbrum and Benjamin Romero. Honors: Freshmen Alex Beaulieu and Grady Ottone; sophomores Cameron Correa, Caden Lee, Jack Morrell and Worthington Zinkerman; junior Darren Schwedler.

**Hebron:** High Honors: Freshman Ryan Bush; junior Redmond Day. Honors: Junior Dylan Bligh.

**Marlborough:** High Honors: Junior Nicholas Palifka. Honors: Freshman Papa Yaw Okyere-Akoto; senior Colin Tracey.

**Portland:** High Honors: Freshmen Krystof Lukas and Owen Pandolfo; sophomores Alex Brown, Miles Matterfis, Ryan Nadolski, Finn O'Shea and Luke Thompson; juniors Max Bernard, Daniel Glezen and Danesh Raza; senior Andrew Sobieski. Honors: freshmen Brennan O'Connor and Ian Xiao; sophomores Ian Binnington, Lucas Bolstridge and Joseph LeCara; juniors Lucas Michalewski and Zain Raza; senior Chase VanDeventer.



Jason Revicki, a sophomore from Portland High School, placed 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Haddam Killingworth Invite last month. Revicki is flanked by head coach Mark Favale and assistant coach Dan Harding.

## Standout Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

Here are the Rivereast Standout Athletes of the Week since the start of the winter sports season:

**Jason Revicki - Portland High School (Wrestling):** Revicki earned a spot on the podium, placing third at the Haddam Killingworth Invitational on December 20. Revicki, a sophomore, secured the top-three spot by winning the 3rd place match in the 165 lbs. weight class. Through his first eight matches this winter, Revicki has posted a record of 7-1.

**Sawyer Nauss - Bacon Academy (Basketball):** Nauss scored a game-high 14 points as the Bobcats secured their first victory of the season, defeating Lyman Memorial 38-27 at Bacon Academy on Dec. 23. Nauss canned a pair of three-pointers during a game that was tied at the half before the Bobcats took control in the third quarter and then pulled away by using an 8-0 scoring run to open the fourth quarter.

**Landon Roy - RHAM High School (Wrestling):** Roy was named the Most Outstanding

Wrestler of the Casey Yates Tournament as the Raptors won the annual tourney as a team on Jan. 3. Roy, a senior, pinned Ledyard's Noah Caisse in the 132 lbs. championship bout to win his weight class and secure the tourney's top spot. He was one of five RHAM wrestlers to take first place in their respective weight classes as Miles Yorio (120 lbs.), Caden Bell (126 lbs.), Seth Dunko (175 lbs.), and Cayden Caplette (215 lbs.) also finished atop the podium.

**Luke Garcia - East Hampton High School (Track & Field):** Garcia placed second overall in the 600 meters as the Bellringers competed at the Elm City Coaches Meet at the Floyd Little Athletic Center on Jan. 2 and 3. Garcia, a junior, ran a personal-best 1:27.18 in the race, placing behind only Max Mattingly (1:26.69) of E.O. Smith and ahead of 60 other competitors at the multi-school event in New Haven.

To nominate an athlete as a Standout of the Week, email [joshhowardsports@gmail.com](mailto:joshhowardsports@gmail.com). Please include as many details about the athlete or performance as possible.



RHAM High School wrestling won the Casey Yates Tournament on Jan. 3. Pictured are the five individual Raptors that took top spots in their respective weight classes. From left, Seth Dunko, Miles Yorio, Landon Roy, Cayden Caplette, and Caden Bell. Roy was named the Most Outstanding Wrestler at the tourney held at Lyman Memorial High School.

## "PET OF THE WEEK"

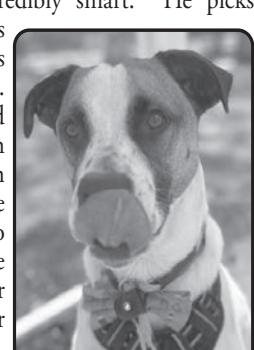
**Nutmeg and Pepper** were found snuggled together, sheltering under a car. Though the little orphans had a rough start, Nutmeg and Pepper, are now 12 weeks old, healthy, happy, growing and ready for their forever home! Pepper and Nutmeg are very people oriented having been

hand raised from 3 weeks old. A bonded pair, they seek each other out to wrestle, play and rest. Nutmeg and Pepper are interested in all household activities. They are used to grumpy adult cats, boisterous teenage boys and vacuums.



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RE 1-9-26



# School Board Considers Student Readiness

By Toriana Williams

In its final meeting of 2025, the Colchester Board of Education addressed a wide range of operational, policy and student-centered issues on Dec. 9. It included several agenda items generating extended discussion due to their long-term impact on district governance, facilities and early childhood education.

## Shift to District-Controlled Document Access

One of the most consequential discussions focused on the district's decision to discontinue its use of the BoardDocs platform and transition all board materials to the Colchester Public Schools website. The change followed a significant increase in the cost of the BoardDocs subscription, which administrators said rose from approximately \$3,000 to \$7,500 annually after the platform was acquired by a larger company.

"This has been a conversation for approximately six months of what to do or where to go about BoardDocs," said Instructional Technology Coordinator Barbara Johnson. She confirmed that the district had already canceled the subscription and that all agendas, board packets, minutes and videos were now housed directly on the district website.

Board members reviewed alternative formats for posting policies and meeting materials, with significant emphasis placed on accessibility, transparency and compliance with upcoming state and federal requirements. Administrators explained that documents hosted through Google-based platforms offer enhanced accessibility features such as text-to-speech, adjustable font sizes and screen reader compatibility.

Using Google Docs also allowed the district to maintain revision histories for policies, which

replaces older PDF watermark systems through BoardDocs. The Board expressed support for an accordion-style layout on the website, which would allow users to expand and collapse sections of the policy manual for easier navigation.

"We're trying to make it as easy as possible," said board member Cody McNeely.

Johnson noted that while the new format was more "labor intensive," it aligned with broader website design practices and improved user experience. No formal vote was required, and administrators were directed to proceed with implementation.

## Kindergarten Entry Waiver Discussion

A lengthy and data-driven discussion followed regarding the district's kindergarten waiver process, which allows families to request early entry for children who do not meet the state's Sept. 1 age cutoff. The issue has become more complex since the state requires districts to offer waivers but does not prescribe a uniform assessment process.

Principal Judy O'Meara of Colchester Elementary School outlined how the district evaluates readiness using the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL), which examines speech and language, motor skills, conceptual understanding and social-emotional development.

"All they said they said was that we had to offer that and that we had to provide a test to see if the children were ready," O'Meara said, referring to state guidelines. "What they did not put into their [regulations] was what that process would look like."

O'Meara shared that while not all students admitted through waivers struggled, district data

showed that a majority experiences difficulties in at least one area, particularly in reading, math, independence and classroom routines.

"The majority of students are below or well below on our benchmark assessments in both reading and math," she said. She added that many students also struggled with adjusting to classroom expectations and managing transitions.

Board members acknowledged the emotional and financial strain waiver denials can place on families, particularly when parents must pay for an additional year of preschool or childcare. In response, administrators discussed a proposed transitional kindergarten model that would provide an intermediate step between preschool and kindergarten.

"We are trying very hard to make sure that we are doing right by children," O'Meara said. "And making sure that our process is one that gives us good information."

Superintendent of Schools Dan Sullivan emphasized that readiness decisions must consider long-term outcomes, not just short-term academic performance.

"It's the long game," Sullivan said. "A student may have great skills when they're young ... but when you look at that overall growth [you need to ask yourself] 'has the social aspect kept up?'"

Several board members expressed support for exploring a transitional option as a way to balance child development, equity and parental expectations.

## JJIS Emergency Incident

The superintendent's report also included an update on an emergency facilities incident at Jack Jackter Intermediate School, where a sprinkler pipe burst in an electrical room late on a re-

cent Friday evening, triggering a brief fire event and extensive water damage.

"When the water hit the electrical equipment, we had a combustible event, which was quickly extinguished by the same sprinkler system," Sullivan said.

The incident led to flooding in multiple areas, including the gym, cafeteria and band room. Cleanup efforts extended throughout the weekend, with facilities staff, electrical contractors and the Colchester Fire Department working to dry equipment, conduct thermal imaging and ensure the building was safe for occupancy.

"If you've ever seen what sprinkler pipe water looks like, that's not drinking water," Sullivan said.

He noted that the fire marshal cleared the building for use and that insurance claims were underway to replace damaged electrical equipment, including a generator that remains out of service. Board members praised staff for preventing instructional disruption.

## Student Achievements, School Climate

Earlier in the meeting, the board recognized multiple accomplishments, including student-athletes who signed national letters of intent and a student author who recently published a novel. Student representatives also highlighted academic projects, spirit events and community engagement activities at Bacon Academy.

The board also received an update on the district's Safe School Climate Plan, which administrators described as an expansion of existing practices rather than a new initiative. District leaders emphasized prevention, data-informed responses and restorative practices as central components moving forward.

## 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](mailto:csc@colchesterct.gov), or for a full list of activities, visit [www.colchesterct.gov/colchester-senior-center](http://www.colchesterct.gov/colchester-senior-center).

**Monday, Jan. 12:** 9 a.m. CoA Meeting, Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m. Sittercize, Inspired by Art; 11 a.m. Learn to Sign; 11 a.m. – noon, Fitness Orientation by appointment; 12:30 p.m. Mah Jongg, Bridge, Setback.

**Tuesday, Jan. 13:** 9 a.m. Making Memories; 9:45 a.m. Tai Chi; 10:30 a.m. Unleash Your Joy; 12:30 p.m. Pinochle; 12:30 p.m. Choices Counseling; 1 p.m. Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 4-8 p.m. Wellness Nights; 7 p.m., SCBC Meeting.

**Wednesday, Jan. 14:** 9 a.m. Making Memories, Walking Group; 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Reflexology; 10 a.m. Adult Coloring, Hand and Foot Card Game, Sit & Be Fit Video; 1 p.m. Sew-cial Time; 1:30 p.m. Cardio Drumming; 2:30 p.m. Cardio Drumming

**Thursday, Jan. 15:** 9 a.m. Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m. Sittercize, Wii Bowling; 10:30 a.m., Shopping Trip; 11 a.m. Yoga, Living Your Best Life; noon, Senior Benefits Counseling; 12:05 p.m. Chair Massage; 12:30 p.m. Dominoes; 12:30-1 p.m. Knit & Crochet; 4-8 p.m. Wellness Nights.

**Friday, Jan. 16:** 9 a.m. Social Service Hours, Open Art Studio; 10 a.m. Sit & Be Fit; 10:30 a.m. Choral Group; 11 a.m. Yoga; noon, Tech Time with Harry; 1:15 p.m., Bingo.

**Movie Time:** *Mamma Mia* Tuesday, Jan. 20, 10 a.m. *A Mother, A Daughter, Three Possible Fathers*. A trip down the aisle you'll never forget. Join the center for this movie featuring the music of ABBA. Popcorn will be provided. This is a free program.

**Tips for Managing Uncertainty:** Thursday, Jan. 22, 10:30 a.m. This program will provide information and tips to manage uncertainty, followed by discussion with questions from audience members. Presented by Dr. Wendy Hurwitz, a graduate of Yale University School of Medicine and a former medical researcher for ABC News. Funding for this program provided by Brightstar Care of Central CT. This is a free program. Registration is Required.

**Healthy Food Series - Healthy Brownie**

## Ukrainian Catholic Church News

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

For more information, call the church at 860-537-2069.

**Bites:** Tuesday, Jan. 27, 10:30 a.m. The center is excited to offer a new Healthy Food series to their list of programs. Each month they will explore and focus on various topics of healthy eating and recipes through food demonstrations, cooking classes, and presentations by senior center members, staff and community partners. Member Diane Lavallee will walk participants through the process of making their own small batch of brownie bites to take home. The cost is \$5 per person. Space is limited.

**Elder Law Presentation:** Wednesday, Jan. 28, 10:30 a.m. Elder Law is a specialized legal field focusing on the unique needs of older adults, their families, and caregivers. Sheila Horvitz and Attorney Mark Pancrazio of the Safe Futures Elder Abuse and Elder Law Committee will lead a learning and discussion session on the planning issues needed to work on- financial, legal, and medical. This is a free program and open to all members and their family members. Registration is required.

**New Evening Programs:** Homemade Soap: Tuesday, Jan. 20, 6-7 p.m. Come make a bar (or two) of homemade soap which you can keep for yourself or give as a gift! The cost is \$5 and registration is required.

**Tech Time with Harry:** Thursday, Jan. 22, 4-7 p.m. Please sign up for a 30-minute one-on-one session. Bring your device and Harry will assist with any technical help you need. Registration is required.

**Documentary:** *Audrey* (2020, TV-14, 1h 40m) will be shown Thursday, Jan. 22, from 6-7:30 p.m. With rare footage and intimate interviews, this Netflix documentary examines the life, career and humanitarian mission of late Hollywood legend Audrey Hepburn. There is no cost. Registration is required. Snacks will be provided.

**Pizza & A Movie:** Tuesday, Jan. 27, 5:30 p.m. *Dog* is a comedy about an Army Ranger seeking a second chance and agrees to take an unruly Belgian Malinois named Lulu on a long road trip to her handler's funeral. From 2022, the movie is rated PG-13 and runs 1 hour, 41 minutes. The cost is \$7.00, and registration is required.

**Ultimate Bingo:** Thursday, Jan. 29, 6 p.m. Space is limited for this monthly game, where you pay to play and the prizes are bigger. The cost is \$10, and registration is required.

## Ahavath Achim Schedule

Congregation Ahavath Achim, 84 Lebanon Ave., has announced the following schedule:

**Services:** Fridays at 6:30 p.m., live and on Zoom; Saturdays at 10 a.m., live and on Zoom.

**Classes on Tuesdays:** Folklore of the Talmud at 6 p.m., followed by Talmud at 6:30 p.m., and Kabbalah at 8 p.m.

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

## Christian Life Chapel News

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

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

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

**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?

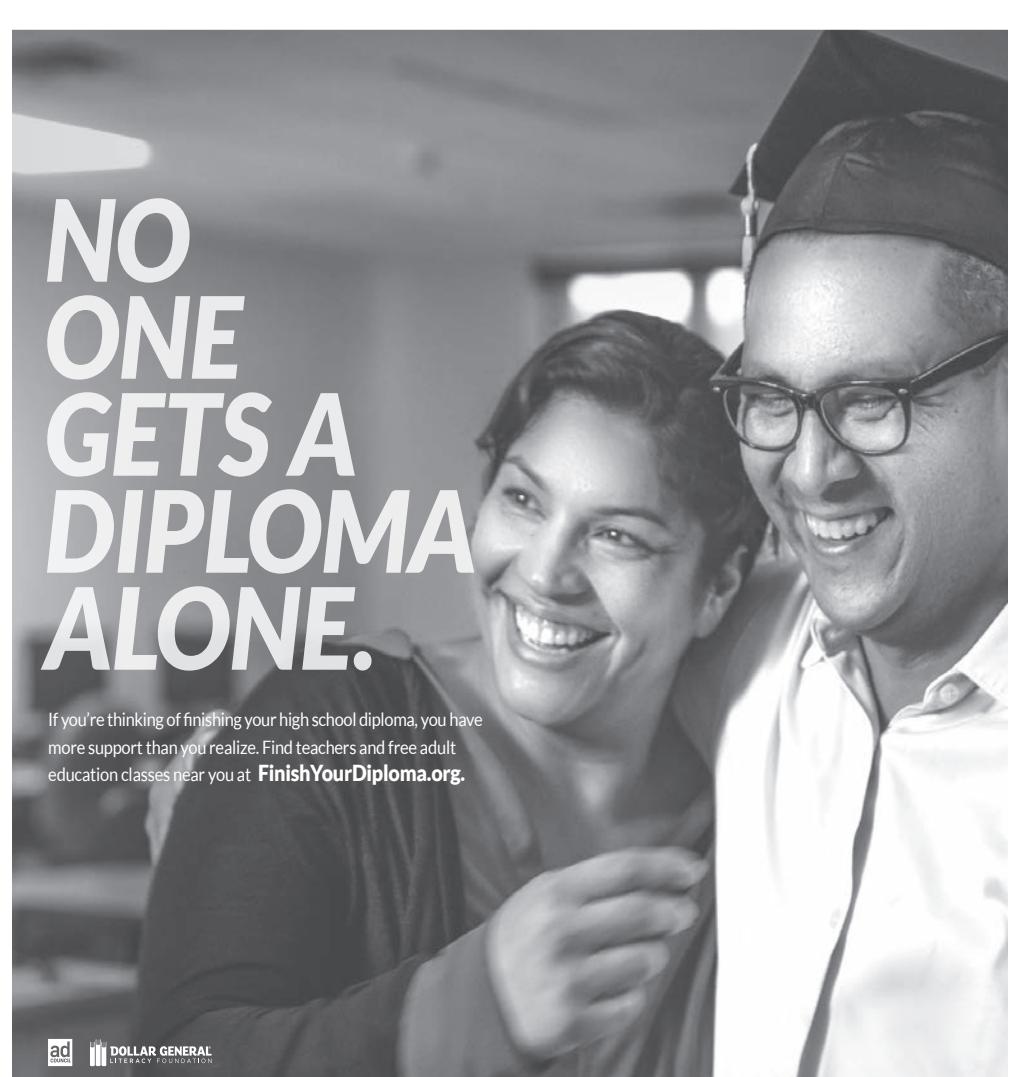
## Colchester Federated Church News

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

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

**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.



Colchester • Colchester

# Nominations Due Soon for Bacon Hall of Fame

By Toriana Williams

Nominations are due Monday for Bacon Academy's very first Hall of Fame induction class.

The Hall of Fame is designed to formally recognize individuals whose achievements and contributions have left a lasting mark on the school and the broader Colchester community.

According to the Bacon Academy website, the Hall of Fame was established to "recognize contributions to athletics, academics, associated student body activities ... and community service." Recognition will also be given for career accomplishments.

Inductees may include alumni, retired employees and coaches, as well as individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to Bacon Academy, even if they were never students or employees of the school.

Nominations must be submitted by Monday, Jan. 12, with the first induction class to be honored later in the spring.

Bacon Academy Principal Amy Begué said Tuesday the idea of creating a Hall of Fame has been discussed for some time, but this year felt like the right moment to move forward.

"We'd like to establish the Bacon Academy Hall of Fame to kind of recognize notable achievements by members of our community, whether or not they be students, staff, Colchester community members," Begué said. "Anyone who has ... ties to Bacon Academy that made positive impacts."

Begué noted that many other high schools have similar programs, and school leaders felt Bacon Academy's long and rich history deserved the same type of recognition. While conversations had taken place previously, she said this was the year the school committed to making the idea a reality.

Because this is the inaugural year, the induction ceremony itself is still being finalized, but

Begué said plans are already taking shape.

"Right now, because this is our inaugural year, the plan is to have an induction ceremony in our auditorium ... followed by some sort of reception or gathering off site at the conclusion of the induction," she said. The event is expected to take place in April, though an exact date has not yet been set.

Unlike some halls of fame that induct only one person at a time, Bacon Academy plans to recognize multiple individuals each year. Begué said the number of inductees for the first class has intentionally been left open. "We haven't pinned down a number for this particular year just because being the first time around, we weren't sure ... how many nominations we would actually get," she shared, adding that the final number will depend on the "quantity and quality" of nominations received.

Community response so far has been encouraging. Begué said the school has already received a fair number of nominations, including hand-written submissions.

"I just received a lovely handwritten one in my mailbox [Monday] morning," she said. To make the process as accessible as possible, the school is accepting online nominations through its website, as well as paper and handwritten forms. Flyers with QR codes have also been distributed throughout the community, including at the Colchester Senior Center.

"Anybody," Begué emphasized, can submit a nomination. Students, parents, alumni and community members are all encouraged to participate. The goal, she said, is to ensure that no deserving individual is overlooked simply because someone thought they were not eligible to nominate.

Once nominations close on Jan. 12, a six-member Hall of Fame Committee will meet to review submissions and make final selections.

## Senior Center Upcoming Trip

**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://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1346389>.

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## Westchester Church News

Westchester Congregational Church, located at 98 Cemetery Rd., holds worship Sundays at 10 a.m. All are welcome to attend. The church choir always welcomes new members. Services are also available on Zoom; visit [www.westchestercongchurch.org](http://www.westchestercongchurch.org) for login information. Sunday School for children meets during the worship service.

**Twelve-Step Meetings:** Al-Anon meets in Canney Hall Wednesdays at 7 p.m. AA meets in Canney Hall Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

**Scouts:** The church sponsors Scouting America Troop 109. During the school year, Troop 109 meets on Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

**Outreach and Other Opportunities:** Knit-

ting 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 [westchestercongchurch.org](http://westchestercongchurch.org), email [westcongchurch@gmail.com](mailto:westcongchurch@gmail.com) or call the church at 860-267-6711. Pastor Ron Lake can be reached at 860-428-3460.

Begué said she is not a voting member of the committee but serves in a supporting role, assisting with logistics and historical research. Bacon Academy Athletic Director Kevin Burke is also supporting the process, particularly when it comes to athletics history.

Former Bacon Academy band director Tom Kessler, a retired educator and current member of the Hall of Fame Committee, said the initiative is deeply meaningful to him. Kessler spent 38 years at Bacon Academy and has a strong personal connection to the school's history.

"We are going to honor many individuals, and care for our history and our heritage and also so many of the great people who went through Bacon Academy," Kessler said.

Kessler believes the Hall of Fame will serve a dual purpose: honoring those being inducted and motivating current students.

"I think it's going to be fun and hopefully inspirational for students to see what other students have done," he shared.

He said he was eager to join the committee when invited, especially because he hopes to see someone from the school's past finally receive long-overdue recognition.

"There is someone from the past who needs to be recognized and ... I'm hoping that I can make that happen," Kessler said. While he declined to name the individual, his enthusiasm for the process was clear.

Kessler also highlighted Bacon Academy's long-standing legacy, noting that the school has more than 200 years of history. "There are so many schools that do this, and towns that do

## 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](mailto:mail@colchesterhistory.org).

## Dean's List

Colchester resident Reina Spearin made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Lasell University in Newton, Mass.

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# BOE Reviews Budget Pressures, Program Changes

By Toriana Williams

The RHAM Board of Education held its final meeting of 2025 on Dec. 15, with discussion centered largely on budget development for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, anticipated financial pressures and programmatic and staffing changes.

## 2026-27 Budget Outlook

The most detailed discussion was on the topic of the school's fiscal year budget. Superintendent of Schools Colin McNamara, emphasized that the budget was still under development and that no final figure was available at this stage.

Several cost drivers were identified as having a significant impact on the upcoming budget. Inflation was cited as a continuing concern.

"We're seeing an increased cost for goods, materials and services," McNamara said. Utility costs are also expected to rise, along with a projected reduction in state reimbursement for high-cost special education services.

"We're expecting a decrease in excess cost funding," he said, explaining that excess cost funding is state reimbursement for special education students whose services exceed a certain cost threshold.

Health insurance was identified as one of the largest anticipated increases. The district is currently budgeting for a 15% increase, estimated at approximately \$630,000. McNamara added that the percentage could change as additional claims data becomes available.

Debt service, which is the total cash flow required to pay down debt – covering both the principal and interest over a specific period – was discussed as both a constraint and a future opportunity. The district is nearing the end of long-term bond payments related to campus renovations. "This is our last year of paying," McNamara stated. He noted that this could allow the district to consider future bonding projects to address facility needs.

## Enrollment, Tuition Revenue

Enrollment figures were reviewed as part of the budget discussion. As of Oct. 1, the district

reported 1,021 enrolled students, not including 11 tuition students from Columbia Public Schools, which were brought in through the new partnership with Columbia Public Schools. McNamara expressed optimism that the partnership with Columbia could grow overtime and provide additional revenue.

## Anticipated Program, Course Additions

The board reviewed anticipated program changes at RHAM High School for the upcoming year. Five new courses are planned, including: firefighter training, AP business principles, AP cybersecurity, introduction to marine science and music sampler. McNamara described the music sampler course as an option for students who may not participate in traditional band or chorus programs.

"It's a class that they're going to try to design that would be an attractive option for students who maybe aren't going the traditional music route," he said.

The district also plans to reintroduce food and nutrition classes, which had been unavailable due to certification requirements. "We have a current staff member who worked to get cross-certified so that they can teach that class," he said.

## Personnel, Staffing Considerations

Among anticipated personnel changes, the district is considering adding an instructional technology integration specialist/coach position. The superintendent linked this need to challenges raised during public comments regarding artificial intelligence in classrooms.

Kimberly Kane, the teacher's union president, addressed what current staff considered to be the most difficult problem occurring in schools.

"What I hear most often is they are struggling with the ethical use of AI in the classroom," she said. "It's getting harder and harder to distinguish student work ... and we're looking for stronger policies at the high school level."

Kane shared that cell phone use is a contin-

ued issue that is also in need of stronger policies for student accountability. McNamara responded later in agreement and said, "We are certainly having conversations about that."

## Food Service Financial Report

The board reviewed the monthly food service report, which showed a net loss of \$78,964.87. Rising food costs were cited as a contributing

factor. The district has pursued grants to offset expenses, including funding through a local food partnership program.

"We have about \$10,555 thereabout," said McNamara, referring to grant funds primarily for purchasing beef from local sources. Efforts are ongoing to increase student participation and manage costs.



AHM Youth and Family Services recently received a \$5,000 grant from Liberty Bank. Pictured from left are Tressa Giordano, executive director at AHM, and Brenden Wheland, Liberty Bank's branch operations supervisor in Marlborough.

## AHM Receives \$5,000 Grant

AHM Youth and Family Services recently received a grant in the amount of \$5,000 from the Liberty Bank Foundation, to fund the youth service bureau's CHOREs program for area seniors.

The CHOREs program hires teens who help seniors maintain independence in the safety of their own homes. According to AHM, CHOREs fosters a community partnership between youth services and the local senior service departments of Andover, Hebron, and Marlborough.

The purpose of the CHOREs Program is for

## AHM News & Notes

860-228-0871 for more information.

**Prevention Survey:** AHM's Coalition for a Healthy Empowered Community (CHEC) is asking adults who live or work in Andover, Hebron, Marlborough and Columbia to complete a brief survey related to youth and adult behavioral health and wellness. The data collected from this survey will inform prevention programs for AHM Youth & Family Services and will be included in grant applications that aim to provide enhanced support for the community. All information collected will be anonymous, as an outside company will compile the data. The more input received, the better they can serve the residents. To access the survey, go to [www.research.net/r/AHMCommunitySurvey](http://www.research.net/r/AHMCommunitySurvey)

**Play and Learn PM:** Wednesdays, Jan. 14-March 11, 4:30 p.m., for children age Birth-5 and their caregivers. Children will engage in learning experiences including free play with a variety of materials, and a short story/circle time. This group is an opportunity for families to connect, children to build social-emotional skills, and to learn about child development in a relaxed environment. All families will be offered a free developmental screening for their child.

**Winter/Early Spring Programs:** AHM's winter and early spring programs are underway, and are open to residents of Andover, Hebron, Marlborough or Columbia. There is a variety of classes for all ages including Yoga, Macrame, and Art with Audrey. To sign up and for more information, visit [ahmyouth.recdesk.com/Community/Program](http://ahmyouth.recdesk.com/Community/Program). Printed programs are also available in the AHM offices, located at AHM 25 Pendleton Drive, Hebron.

## Info Meeting, 7th Grade Registration

Parents/guardians of current sixth-graders in Hebron, Andover and Marlborough should note there will be an inquiry program and parent/guardian informational meeting Tuesday, Jan. 13, at 6 p.m., at the RHAM Middle School media center.

Also registration for incoming seventh-graders opens online on Monday, Jan. 12.

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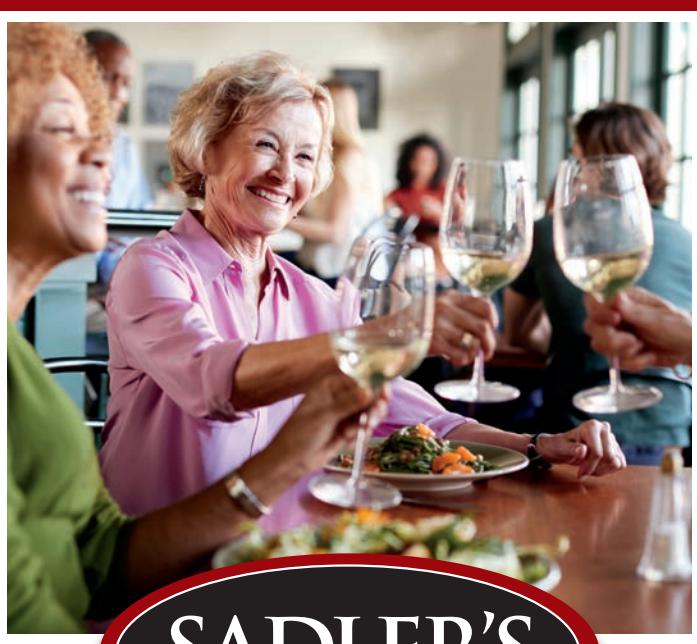
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# Local Artist Finds Inspiration Right in His Backyard



Local artist Tom Swimm says he finds inspiration in New England's natural beauty. He's shown here at work, alongside two of his paintings, "Blues in the Bay" and "Serene Snowfall."

By Anne Lilburn

When he was living in California, local artist Tom Swimm built a career out of painting coastal scenes: boats, seascapes, reflections off the water, piers at sunset. He said he often traveled to Italy, where he painted along similar themes, with boats in harbors and cafes at dusk.

The places those paintings reference seem a far cry from his new home in East Hampton, but just like when his studio was in Laguna Beach, Calif., and he walked to the beach, Swimm says he doesn't have to go far to find inspiration. He said that, since moving here in 2021, he finds scenes to paint "right around my house."

"Literally the first year I was here," he said, "when the [first] snow fell, we had a beautiful snowfall. I did a painting of our backyard."

Swimm said his years of specializing in winter scenes have prepared him well for his new climate.

"Snow is fun to paint, actually," he said, "because it's a lot like water, in that there's a lot of color in it. It's not just white, you know." He added that he liked "the shadows and the way

the shadows play on the snow."

This isn't the first time Swimm, who is now in his 70s, has spent a lot of time in the snow. He grew up in New York, outside of Albany, and later began a career in advertising, doing art direction for print advertisements, which led to his move to California in 1982. It was there that he began his career as a painter, eventually leaving advertising behind to devote all his time to his painting career.

"I don't have any formal art training. I basically taught myself to paint over the years just by experimenting," Swimm said. "I was influenced by artists like Van Gogh and Hopper. It was always my dream to be a fine artist and be in art galleries."

Over the years, Swimm said he built up a successful business. His artwork was in galleries, he took regular trips to Europe for scenic inspiration, and he made appearances at an annual festival which he said was always successful.

He and his wife, Rosemary, had always loved New England, and they had talked about leaving California before, but it wasn't until the COVID-19 pandemic that they seriously considered the move. Swimm said he realized that he could still work as an artist anywhere, and the east coast was appealing, in part because his son had settled in New York City, where he works as an actor.

In fact, it's his son's career that first led Swimm and his wife to this part of Connecticut. His son was appearing at a show at the Goodspeed Opera House and they went to see him perform.

"We came out here for a month," said Swimm,



He's shown here at work, alongside two of his paintings, "Blues in the Bay" and "Serene Snowfall."

"and we spent time in New England, and we really just fell in love with this area in Connecticut specifically, and we were down in Essex, and we had lunch one day, and I just said to my wife, 'That's it. Let's do it. Let's just move here to Connecticut.' She said, 'Okay,' she was all ready for it."

Since moving here in 2021, Swimm said he's enjoyed the change of scenery and the chance to continue to explore new ground even in his 70s.

"Art is geographical when it comes to art galleries and selling artwork," he said. "You know, when I was in Laguna Beach, I wouldn't be painting snow scenes in barns because nobody's going to buy a snow scene or a barn painting in California."

Here, he said, when he goes to a gallery, "people are painting snow scenes, and they're painting cardinals and birds and squirrels and things that are indicative of the New England landscape and they're painting fall color scenes."

Swimm himself said he finds fall inspiring, and loves painting covered bridges.

Swimm said he's also found plenty of opportunities nearby to continue his focus on coastal work. He said he recently spent time in Cape Cod, where he found himself drawn to the many lighthouses, and for the past couple years, he has done an artist's residency program at Mystic Seaport through the American Society of Marine Artists, where he spent two weeks in a studio painting and showing his work to passing tourists.

"[This area] has been very inspiring for me," said Swimm. "We absolutely love it here."

Those looking to see Swimm's artwork in person can find him at two upcoming exhibits. He will be at the Lyme Art Association's "First Impressions" show from Jan. 9 through Feb. 20 in Old Lyme, and also at the Thames River Gallery in New London in its current "Impressionism Then and Now" exhibit.

## 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.

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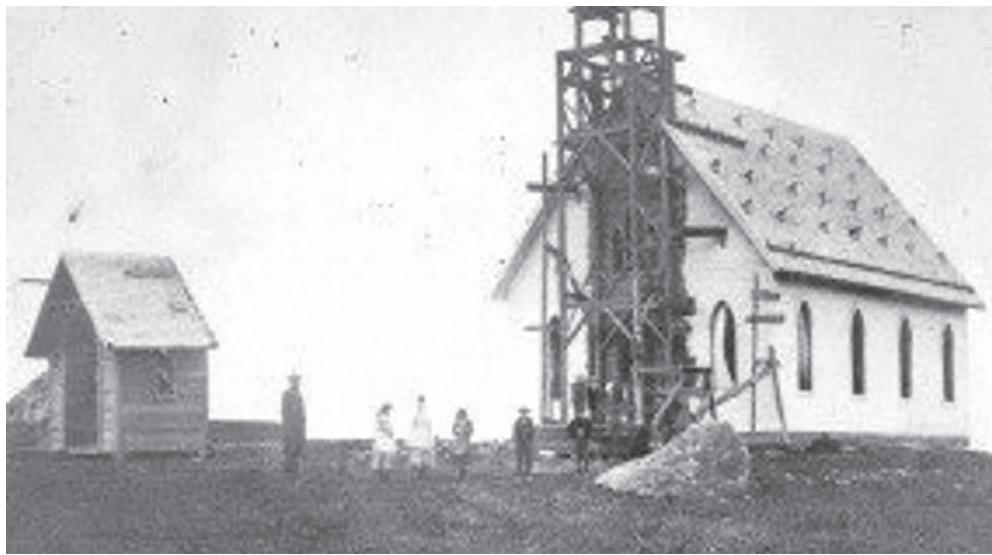
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**Haddam Neck in Pictures...** Save the date for a photo exhibit and talk on Haddam Neck in Pictures with Elizabeth Hart Malloy, director of the Thankful Arnold House/Haddam Historical Society. The talk will be Sunday, Jan. 25, at 2 p.m., at Haddam Neck Congregational Church, 408 Quarry Hill Road, Haddam Neck.

### 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. Communion will be served this Sunday. Refreshments are served after the service.

**Annual Meeting:** Saturday, Jan. 10.

**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 charac-

ters are friends with God. A toddler nursery is also available. All are welcome.

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

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

**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.hncovenantchurch.org](http://www.hncovenantchurch.org).

12/25: Robert Scott, 59, of Glastonbury was arrested and charged with second-degree larceny, East Hampton Police said.

12/25: After an investigation into a two-car motor vehicle crash on Middletown Avenue, Hanna Kirkpatrick, 30, of East Hampton, was issued a summons for evading responsibility, police said.

12/29: William House, 66, of East Hampton, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said.

12/31: Ernest Kirschner, 78, of East Hampton,

was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

1/1: Frederick Galvin, 62, of East Hampton was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended registration, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating a motor vehicle without insurance, police said.

From Dec. 22-Jan. 4, officers responded to 36 medical calls, four motor vehicle crashes and 13 alarms, police said, and made 37 traffic stops.

### Police News

### Middle Haddam Public Library News

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

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

**Featured Artist for the Month:** January's featured artist is William R. McDonald, from East Hampton. His watercolor landscapes and seascapes are on display during regular library hours. An artist's reception will be held on Friday, Jan. 23, from 4-6 p.m.

**Makers Market:** Stop by the library during regular hours for a pop-up makers market fea-

turing 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.

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

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

**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 [tensummit@gmail.com](mailto:tensummit@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](mailto:zenlotus860@yahoo.com) or calling 860-638-9097.

### Dean's List

Baylee A. Olzacki of East Hampton, a student in the Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences at the University of New Haven, made the fall 2025 Dean's List.

Olzacki is working on a Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice, with a concentration in Investigative Services.

### PTO Meets Monthly

All are invited to attend the monthly East Hampton Elementary PTO meetings. Meetings are on Mondays at 5:30 p.m., and childcare is provided. The schedule for the 2025-26 school year is:

1/12, Memorial School; 2/9, Center School; 3/16, Memorial School; 4/20, Center School; 5/18, Memorial School.

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

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

### 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.

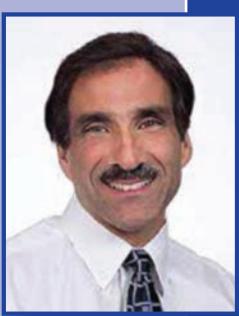
Masses are celebrated Saturdays at 4 p.m. at St. Patrick and 5:30 p.m. at St. Bridget, and on Sundays at 7 and 11:30 a.m. at St. Bridget and 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. at St. Patrick.

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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# Epoch Arts Founder Named Lions' Humanitarian of the Year

By Anne Lilburn

Epoch Arts founder and executive artistic director Elizabeth Namen said she grew up with a tradition of service in her family. Her father was a pastor in East Hampton, and Namen said he taught her to reach out to others and find connection, even with people whose lives were very different from hers.

These days, Namen puts those family traditions of service, outreach, and non-judgment to work at Epoch Arts. The organization's official mission is to "inspire creativity in our youth so they can engage in and build a more empathetic, creative and connected community."

What started in 1998 as a small youth theater group performing plays in the Haddam Neck Grange Hall has now grown into a full-scale youth arts organization, with classes, regular performances, summer camps, dinners and community events. She's also expanded beyond just arts programming with a food pantry and outreach to the regional homeless community.

For her work in the community, Namen is being honored by the East Hampton Lions Club's as its Humanitarian of the Year. She will be honored at a Lions Club banquet on Jan. 18 in New London along with others from the region.

Rachel Martin, the assistant artistic director at Epoch Arts, wrote the nomination letter for Namen.

"Over 27 years ago, Elizabeth saw a need. Youth in our community were struggling," wrote Martin. "Many felt alone and had nowhere they felt they belonged. There was a huge need for a healthy outlet and supportive community for youth where they could find help with the issues they were facing and be given opportunities to grow and be part of something productive and good."

"For her, it was never just about putting on a play or offering some fun art classes," Martin continued. "It was about showing kids they mattered, that they are valuable and loved, and

their voice is important. It was about giving youth the tools they needed to escape and break unhealthy and dangerous cycles of addiction, abuse, poverty, low self-esteem, hopelessness – to name just a few – which in turn helped break these cycles for many in our town."

Namen grew up nearby, in Haddam, in the same house where her mother was raised. Her father was a pastor in East Hampton, at the East Hampton Bible Church. She said the church did a lot of outreach, inviting less fortunate families from the region. At times, she said, there would be large crowds of people, and she felt at home meeting people from all walks of life.

Namen herself has charted an untraditional path, dropping out of high school before attending college at Middlesex Community College and later Trinity College. In the early days of Epoch, she was homeschooling her daughter, now 21, while also running Epoch.

Namen said she herself is in awe of all her organization has accomplished. She credits the work to her staff, mostly volunteers, and other community members who have helped along the way. When it comes to the East Hampton Lion's Club, she said the love goes both ways. The Lions, she said, have consistently been there to provide support.

"They're so amazing," she said. "They just support our programs. Our kids, our food pantry. They believe in our youth and they believe in our youth programs and obviously the food pantry, but I think too, something that's amazing is they've been inside our building. That's huge. They've taken the time to actually come and visit us and be there."

Epoch Arts has come a long way from its start.

Since 2005, the organization has been housed in its current location, a 42,000-sq. ft. former factory building on Skinner Street. It's been a labor of love for Namen, along with her husband, a carpenter, and other community members, as they worked to fix up the building, something she says is still a work in progress.

"It's funny because most people say, what was your business plan?" said Namen. "How'd you start this? We'd love to model something after this, you know? And I'm like, yeah, well, no, I didn't start out saying, 'I'm going to start a non-profit or a community art center.'"

Instead, Epoch Arts grew organically, and the result, both Namen and Martin say, is a place where the process is as important as the end performance. Youth who attend classes and workshops at Epoch write their own plays, and sometimes also perform plays written by Namen herself.

Namen said that perfection is never the goal, and that she wants every kid who participates to feel worthy, heard and celebrated. That, she said, is more important to her than having a professional-looking performance.

In her nomination letter, Martin said that that kind of approach is typical for Namen, who she said regularly goes out of her way to find both a need in the community and a solution.

"A true humanitarian isn't out for their own gain, status, or recognition," wrote Martin. "They are marked by humility and selflessness, putting others' needs above their own. And that is what I see in Elizabeth."

Anyone who is interested in attending the Lions Club Humanitarian Banquet can reach out to Mary Krogh at 860-977-5760.

## Paint-Along with Karen

materials fee plus \$5 non-member fee).

Williams was an elementary art teacher in the Cheshire Public School System for over 25 years. Now she teaches art and Spanish at Ben Bronx Academy in West Hartford – a school that specializes in students with learning disabilities. In addition to being the owner of Art with Karen, offering painting instruction to individuals, at private parties, and events, she also teaches painting at the East Hampton and Glastonbury senior centers.

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# Convicted Killer Appeals to Supreme Court

By Shawn R. Dagle

An East Hampton man convicted of killing his girlfriend and burying her body in a shallow grave in a wooded area in Glastonbury has appealed his case to the Connecticut Supreme Court.

Anthony Garofalo – who pled guilty to manslaughter and tampering with physical evidence in connection to the killing of his girlfriend in March 2015 – claims he had ineffective counsel during trial, that the prosecutor engaged in misconduct, and that his guilty plea under the Alford Doctrine was the result of mental coercion, according to court documents.

In November 2024, an appellate court denied and dismissed Garofalo's claims and request for a writ of habeas corpus. Since that time, Garofalo has appealed to the Connecticut Supreme Court, which is still hearing his case.

According to prosecutors, on July 29, 2012, Garofalo reported to East Hampton police that his girlfriend Jini Barnum had left his apartment on Main Street in East Hampton the night prior and that he had not seen her since. He claimed he had tried to call her but could not reach her.

Police organized several search parties and used K9s to try and locate Barnum but were unable to do so. According to prosecutors, Garofalo did not take part in any of the searches.

When police interviewed Garofalo he told investigators that he and Barnum had a verbal argument the night prior after she came home drunk that evening but nothing physical occurred, prosecutors said.

Investigators interviewed neighbors who lived in the same multi-family apartment building as Garofalo who – while claiming they had not heard any screaming or yelling – did tell authorities that they had heard a lot of banging according to court documents.

Nearly two months after Barnum's disappearance – on Sept. 9 – a person walking their dog in a remote wooded area off Wickham Road in Glastonbury made a gruesome discovery. The person's dog came upon what appeared to be an arm protruding from the ground.

The dog walker called Glastonbury police and it was determined the dog had discovered a shallow grave with human remains. The remains were later determined to be Barnum's.

## 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 were mailed last month.

Late payments accrue 1.5% interest per month (18% annually) with a \$2 minimum, as required by state law. A \$20 returned-check fee

The Medical Examiner's Office determined that Barnum had died as the result of homicide – in particular traumatic asphyxia neck compression or from being strangled or choked.

At the time of his girlfriend's murder, prosecutors said, Garofalo was on parole after being convicted of luring a hearing-impaired woman back to his apartment and sexually assaulting her.

Investigators seized a key they found in Garofalo's possession that they subsequently were able to use to open a gate that would allow a vehicle to access the area where Barnum's body was discovered, said prosecutors. An FBI agent was also able to determine that Garofalo's phone pinged to a cell tower near where her body was discovered, according to court documents.

A cellmate of Garofalo's also told investigators that he had admitted to killing Barnum, prosecutors said.

Police were also able to obtain video surveillance from a Goodwill store in Middletown showing Barnum wearing a particular pair of shoes on July 28 that were later found in Garofalo's apartment and not with her body – leading police to believe Barnum never left Garofalo's home as he claimed according to court documents.

There was also a witness in the case who claimed to have seen a wallet in Garofalo's apartment following Barnum's murder. Barnum's wallet was not found with her body. Weeks later a Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection worker found her wallet in the Connecticut River. When the witness was shown Barnum's wallet, they identified it as the one they had seen in Garofalo's apartment following the murder.

Garofalo was sentenced in June 2015 to 20 years for manslaughter and 5 years for tampering with physical evidence, according to court documents. He pled guilty under the Alford Doctrine, meaning he did not admit guilt, but agreed that the state had enough evidence against him to get a conviction.

Following his guilty plea, Garofalo filed an appeal seeking a writ of habeas corpus, claiming in part that his attorney was ineffective during the trial.

In particular, Garofalo accused his attorney of



Anthony Garofalo of East Hampton is shown during a previous court appearance. Garofalo, who was convicted of killing his girlfriend Jini Barnum in 2012, is now appealing his case to the Connecticut Supreme Court.

failing to file a motion to suppress information provided by his cellmate who Garofalo claims has a history of making false statements and who he alleges was once arrested and charged for making a false statement. He also claimed the prosecutor in his case engaged in misconduct by using the cellmate as a witness.

In addition, Garofalo claimed he was threatened with mental coercion when told that if he didn't take a guilty plea he would be sentenced to 75 years in prison and never see his daughter again – making his guilty plea non-voluntary, according to court documents.

He also alleged his attorney was deficient in

## Troop 57 Bottle Drive

Troop 57 is having its next bottle drive Saturday, Jan. 17. Bring clean cans, plastics and glass to the American Distilling Parking lot (31 East High St., Route 66) from 9 a.m. to noon.

All redeemable containers are accepted; the only exception is milk containers. If you have any questions, contact Annette Kowalczyk at 860-267-2962.

## Jigsaw Puzzle Competition

The Friends of the East Hampton Public Library will host a Jigsaw Puzzle Competition Friday, Jan. 23, in the East Hampton Public Library Community Room, located at 105 Main St. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and competition starts at 7 p.m.

Registration is required; only one registration per team please. Teams should be made up of 2-4 players, and the fee is \$10 per player. Entry fees can be paid in cash or by check at the library's front desk, or via PayPal or Venmo. All proceeds support the Friends of the Library Scholarship Fund, awarded annually to local students.

Register online at [www.EastHamptonPublicLibrary.org](http://www.EastHamptonPublicLibrary.org). Feel free to bring your own snacks to enjoy while you puzzle. Prizes will be awarded.

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## 2026 Old Home Days Logo Contest

Old Home Days will return this summer, and organizers are kicking off the countdown with a logo contest!

This year's Old Home Days theme honors East Hampton's local history and the 250th anniversary of America's founding. The theme is: "Bells, Boats and Birth of a Nation."

Designs must reflect the theme, include the classic Old Home Days icon/logo, and be submitted in one-color digital format (perfect for

shirts, signage, and promotional materials).

The winning artist will receive a \$100 gift card to the East Hampton business of their choice and will be recognized as the official 2026 logo designer.

Deadline to submit: Feb. 1. For more details and to submit your entry, visit [cgalink.com/ohdlogo](http://cgalink.com/ohdlogo).

For questions, email Carl Guild at [carl.guild@gmail.com](mailto:carl.guild@gmail.com).

## 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](http://myactivecenter.com) or by contacting the center at 860-267-4426 or [seniorcenter@easthamptonct.gov](mailto: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](http://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.

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

**Monthly and Special Events:** **Wonderfully Wicked Women's Group (WWW):** First and third Mondays, 10 a.m. This is a low-key opportunity to meet others and share resources with the theme of Sisterhood.

**Mighty Magnificent Men's Group:** Meets every second and fourth Monday at 10 a.m. Join the center for a social hour of fun facts, sharing activities and snacks.

**Community Care Connection Program:** Tuesdays from 2 to 6 p.m. with Ria Irons, a certified community health worker, who will provide services on help with medication, communicating with healthcare providers, understanding care instructions

and connecting with local resources. Health insurance will be billed for this service when possible. Call for an appointment - 860-267-4426.

**Meditation with Eileen Higgins:** Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 10 a.m. Start the day with an hour of quiet reflection and meditation with an experienced meditation leader.

## East Hampton Library News & Notes

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

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

**Adult Programs: 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.

**LibrarYoga:** Tuesday, Jan. 13, 6:30 p.m. Yoga 200 Certified instructor Amie Meacham leads an hour of gentle yoga for adults in the Library Community Room. All levels welcome; bring your own mat if you have one and wear comfy clothes.

**Belltown Book Brunch:** Friday, Jan. 16, 11 a.m. Join the library at Belltown Book Brunch for a different kind of book club. Talk about what everyone is currently reading while enjoying coffee, tea, and a breakfast treat. Perfect for avid readers or anyone seeking recommendations. Register or drop in.

**Book Club: Wednesday, Jan. 21, 6:30 p.m.** Come together to discuss the monthly selection with other avid readers. This month's book is *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon.

**Teen Programs: Crochet with Keri:** (Grades 5-12): Tuesday, Jan. 13, 6 p.m. Gather together in the Teen Space each month to create a tiny crochet project. All supplies and basic instruc-

**Learn Mahjongg:** Thursday, Jan. 15 at 9:30 a.m. Beginners can enjoy a fun and social introduction to this classic tile game. No experience needed. Cost is \$5 for the series; \$15 for a preprinted card. Offered with the Marlborough Senior Center. Taught by Barbara Hahn.

**Tap Dance Returns!**: Thursdays at 11 a.m. Come dance with instructor Alicia Currier! Cost is \$3 per class.

**Design and Create:** Thursday, Jan. 15 at 1:30 p.m. Come create with staff member Cindy and make something wonderful together!

**The Script Society:** Thursday, Jan. 15 at 2 p.m. Come be part of this monthly program where stories are brought to life through readings. Whether you're a seasoned performer, curious, or prefer to listen, all you need is imagination and humor—no experience required! NO FEE.

**Family Tree:** Friday, Jan. 16 at 10:30 a.m. Want to learn more and document it? Never had the time? Ken Doney will introduce you to the how-to's of genealogy research. Please register on My Active Center. Bring your own electronic device to start your journey.

**Drum Circle with Mark:** Friday, Jan. 16 at 1 p.m. This interactive program uses only drums to create energizing beats and build a sense of community. No experience needed—just come ready to have fun and make some music! FEE \$5.

**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.

**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.

## East Hampton Library News & Notes

tion included.

**Snack Lab:** (Grades 6-12): Wednesday, Jan. 14, 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!

**Magic: the Gathering** (Grades 7-12): Saturday, Jan. 24, 1-3 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.

**Exam Prep & Plan:** Tuesday, Jan. 20, 3-8 p.m. East Hampton High School students are preparing for exams and the library will have snacks, supplies and self-care kits (prepared by the Teen Advisory Board) while supplies last. Sponsored by Teen Advisory Board.

**Teen Advisory Board: Grades 8-12:** Tuesday, Jan. 20, 6 p.m. Take a leadership role in how the library serves teens like you. You'll help plan programs, improve the Teen Space, and make a real impact.

**Children's Programs: STEMtastic: Arctic Adaptations for Grades 1-5:** Monday, Jan. 12, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Test the adaptations of various arctic animals!

**Read to a Therapy Dog:** (Grades K-3): Tuesday, Jan. 13, 4:30 p.m. Readers will be assigned a 15-minute time slot to read to Jovie, a certified therapy dog. This is a great opportunity to read aloud in a comfortable environment, which can help improve comprehension and confidence.

**Pokémon Party!: Grades K-6:** Saturday, Jan. 10, 2-3:30 p.m. Play games, create crafts, and enjoy Pokémon-themed snacks!

## Project Grad Seeks Members

East Hampton Project Graduation is looking for new members!

Do you have a future grad of any age? If so, you are invited to attend the monthly meetings to share your ideas and opinions.

Meetings occur the first Wednesday of every month during the academic year, at 6:30 p.m. in the East Hampton High School media center.

## Christ Episcopal Church News

Christ Episcopal Church, 66 Middle Haddam Rd., Middle Haddam, holds in-person and Zoom services at 10 a.m. on Sundays. All are welcome. To connect electronically, go to [www.christchurchmiddlehaddam.com](http://www.christchurchmiddlehaddam.com) for directions. The Holy Eucharist will be celebrated with the Rev. Diana Rogers, priest-in-charge.

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

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

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

**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.

**Bishop's Visit:** Bishop Jeff Mello will visit Christ Church Sunday, Jan. 11. He will conduct the worship service which will include a confirmation, a reception into the Episcopal Church, and a blessing of the church bell, which is to be named Page. Church will be followed by a festive coffee hour/lunch and an opportunity to meet and talk with the Bishop.

**Cobalt Lodge Service:** The monthly Cobalt Lodge Service will be held directly after church on Jan. 18.

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

## Cabin Fever History Series Celebrating America 250

As the nation continues to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the East Hampton Public Library and the Chatham Historical Society announce annual Cabin Fever History Series with "True Tales of New England," a storytelling performance by historian and storyteller Monica Peterson on Saturday, Jan. 10 at 11 a.m. at the East Hampton Public Library.

The East Hampton Public Library and the Chatham Historical Society invite community

## Library Friends Offer Scholarship

The Friends of the East Hampton Public Library is offering a scholarship, available to any East Hampton resident who is currently in his or her senior year of high school.

The student should intend to continue his or her post-secondary education in a formal manner, such as college, trade school, or a certificate program. The applicant should have had some involvement with a library that has positively impacted his or her life.

For applications, visit [easthamptonpubliclibrary.org/friends-of-the-library-scholarship-application](http://easthamptonpubliclibrary.org/friends-of-the-library-scholarship-application), or pick up a hard copy at the library or through your school's guidance office.

Submit your completed application form by April 10.

## Helping Hands

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

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

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

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

Marlborough • Marlborough • Marlborough • Marlborough • Marlborough • Marlborough



The Hierax Quartet, a saxophone quartet featuring Prescott Brown, Ben Levesque, Ashtyn Wolph and Evan Blitzer, will perform at Marlborough Arts Center on Friday, Jan. 23.

## Hierax Quartet Performing at Arts Center

Marlborough Arts Center, located at 231 N. Main St., will host the Hierax Quartet for the 4th Friday @ the Arts Café series on Friday, Jan. 23, at 7:30 p.m.

The Hierax Quartet is a saxophone quartet formed in fall 2024, composed of graduate students (Prescott Brown, Ben Levesque, Ashtyn Wolph, and Evan Blitzer) from The Hart School of Music in Hartford, under the direction of Professor Carrie Koffman.

The quartet said it is dedicated to redefining the role of the saxophone in the chamber music world. The group plans to play a collection of classical, contemporary, and popular songs.

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

Doors open at 7 p.m. and the concert begins at 7:30 p.m. BYOW and nibbles to dine on. Other non-alcoholic beverages are available. There is ample parking, and the Marlborough Arts Center is fully accessible.

For more information, visit [www.marlbrougharts.org](http://www.marlbrougharts.org), email [info@marlbrougharts.org](mailto:info@marlbrougharts.org) or call the center at 860-467-6353.

Marlborough Arts Center is a nonprofit regional center for the arts.

## Parks and Rec News & Notes

East Hampton Parks and Recreation has announced the following items of interest. For full program descriptions or more information, or to register, call 860-267-7300 or [www.easthamptonrec.com](http://www.easthamptonrec.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.

Marlborough • Marlborough

**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](http://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](http://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.

**St. John Fisher Church News & Notes****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.stjfisher.org](http://www.stjfisher.org), or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church).

**Senior Center News and Notes**

Marlborough Senior Center, 17 School Drive, is open for activities. For more information about any senior center program, call 860-295-6209 or email [socialservices@marlboroughct.gov](mailto:socialservices@marlboroughct.gov).

**Senior Center Hours:** Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. **Holiday Closing:** In observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the senior center will be closed Monday, Jan. 19.

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

**Events:** **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.

**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.

**Learn Mahjongg:** In collaboration with East Hampton Senior Center. Lessons are on Thursdays, Jan. 15-Feb. 26 in E Hampton. Fee is \$5. Transportation provided.

**Grief Lecture:** The center welcomes back Dr. Wendy Hurwitz on 01/23 11: a.m.-12 p.m. for a lecture on grief.

**Arbors of Hop Brook:** Arbors is an independent retirement, assisted living and respite care community. Join the center for a tour and lunch on Thursday, Jan. 29. Bus leaves at 10:30 a.m. You are welcome to meet the center there, however please still register.

**AARP Tax Prep:** Open to all Marlborough residents. Appointments on 02/12, 02/26, 03/12, 03/26. Call for appointment.

**Transportation:** Rides to medical appointments, employment, essential services, the Senior Center and recreation activities are available to seniors and people with disabilities. Transportation is available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Rides must be reserved two business days in advance. Call 860-295-6209 for more information. Visit [www.marlboroughct.gov](http://www.marlboroughct.gov) for the complete transportation policy. There will be no transportation Jan. 15.

**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:** Mondays, 2-3:30 p.m., and Fridays, 1-3:30 p.m.; **Chair Massage:** Free 15-minute massages are offered Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Appointment required.

**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: Feb. 2, March 2.

**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.

**Birthday Club:** Tuesday, Jan. 27, 1-2 p.m., with cake. Open to all friends and family. It does not have to be your birthday month to celebrate. However, if it is please RSVP.

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

**Parkinson's Exercise:** Visit [www.beatpdtoday.com/class-schedule](http://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. For energy assistance, the application deadline is May 29.

**Country Line Dancing Fundraiser**

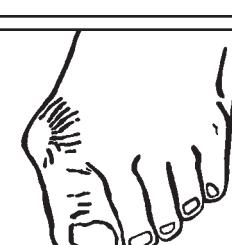
There will be a Country Line Dancing Fundraiser Friday, Jan. 9 from 6-9 p.m. at the Marlborough American Legion, 128 East Hampton Rd.

Aric Lemeieux of Sound Train Music will DJ and lead country line dancing. Cost is \$15, which includes a buffet and dancing. Open to the public.

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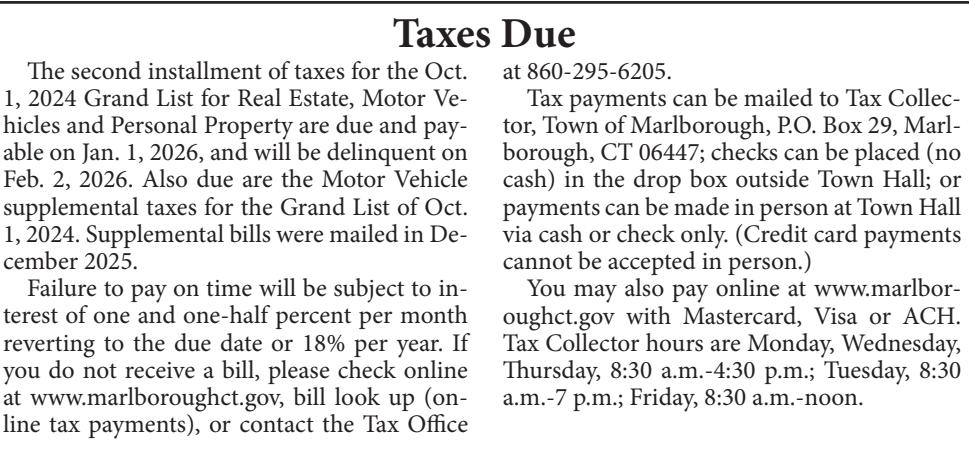
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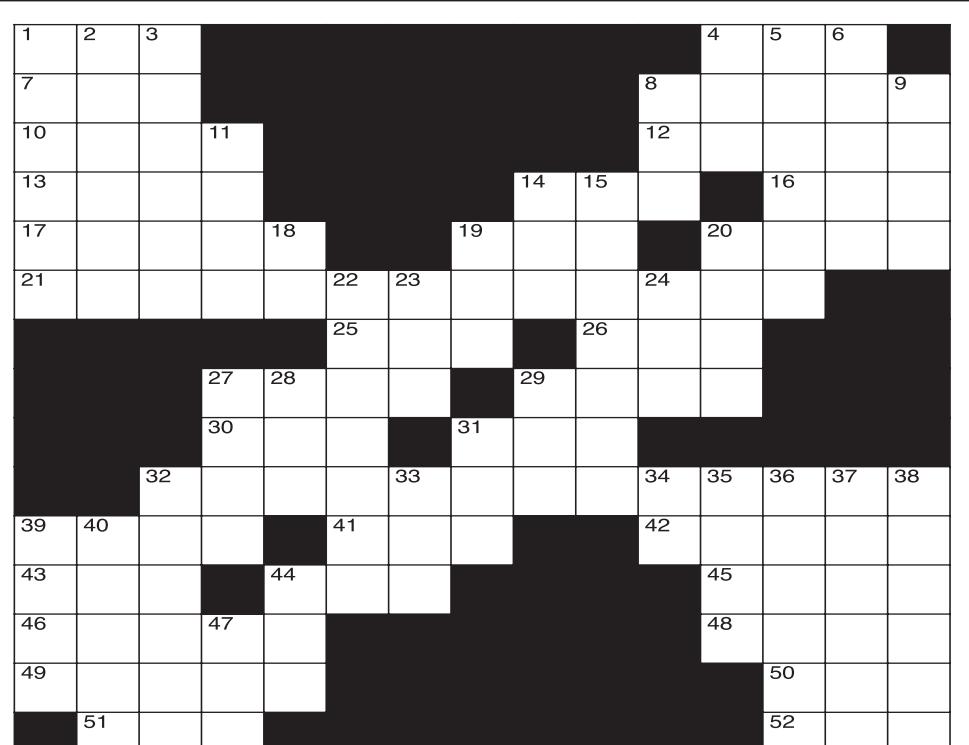
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**Puzzle solution page 29**

**CLUES ACROSS**

- Former CIA
- Language
- Constrictor snake
- Demand
- Rich man
- Short-tailed marten
- Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
- Superconducting super collider
- International group of countries within the Americas
- Sacred state for Muslims
- Shock therapy
- Engrave
- Localities
- Paddle
- Periodical
- Dishonestly gained money
- Gain possession of

- Actor DiCaprio
- High schoolers' test
- Mr. October
- Sign of healing
- One's grandmother
- Entrap
- One who simultaneously buys and sells
- Francisco
- Web-based data provider of marine life
- Type of snake
- Dark mark or stain
- Member of the Salii
- Former measure of length
- CNN's founder
- Witness

**CLUES DOWN**

- Acquire
- Console
- Hunting expedition
- Pie \_\_\_ mode
- Simple shoes for peasants
- Eurasian shrub
- Reciprocal of a sine
- Work together in harmony
- Grenade
- File extension
- Minute pores in a plant
- Medal of Honor
- Make a mistake
- Advance slowly, as if by inches
- Sandwich meat
- An awkward stupid person

- Strong tree
- Commoner
- Electroencephalograph
- Mahal
- Congressman
- Disorderly crowd
- 007's creator Fleming
- Atomic #55
- Part of a door
- Short-tail martens
- Baltimore ballplayer
- Cuddle
- Gang in "The Outsiders"
- Of Croatia
- Body cavity
- Get free of

Marlborough • Marlborough



**Making Holiday Music...** On Dec. 17, the Marlborough Elementary School Harmonia Choir performed at the Marlborough Senior Center, spreading holiday cheer through music. The choir is led by Julia Tackett, Harmonia's dedicated teacher, who prepared the students for this special performance. Pictured are Lily Ekstowicz, Connor Hoffman, Joey Kovac, Charlotte Trzcienski, Liam Vallera, Avery Colantonio, Joey Itteilag, Gemma Stachelek, Keria Olin, Lena Sena, Isabella Erba, Tiago Fernandez and Julia Sabourin.

## Upcoming Voter Canvass

CT State Statutes require Registrars of Voters to conduct a canvass of voters beginning in January of each year. The annual Canvass helps to keep voter registration records as up to date as possible. The Registrar office uses the National Change of Address Service to obtain lists of residents who have moved within town or out of town. If you have any questions about the Canvass or a letter you may have re-

ceived, please contact the Registrar of Voters Office at 860-295-6166. PLEASE return your Canvass form as soon as possible.

In Marlborough as of December 10, 2025, there are 4489 registered voters, of which 1335 are registered Democrats and 1248 are registered Republicans. 79 are registered in various minor parties and the remaining 1827 are Unaffiliated.

## 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.marlcngchurch.org](http://mcc.marlcngchurch.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@marlcngchurch.org](mailto:ekukich@marlcngchurch.org) for more information.

**Jan. 11** service will be led by Seaver, with the sermon given by church member Beth Alves. The service will feature the anthem by the Chancel Choir and the distribution of 2026 Star Words. Star Words are a prayer practice tied to Epiphany and the new year, inspired by the Magi following the star to Jesus. The words serve as a focus for reflection throughout the year, helping people notice how God moves in and around each life. After worship, all are invited to Coffee Hour in the Thienes Lounge. A table will be set up in the lounge for the sale of fresh floral arrangements, made and sold by Dorcas Women's Fellowship members, to support various mission outreach programs.

**Annual Meeting:** The 279th Annual Meeting of the Congregational Church of Marlborough will be held Sunday, Jan. 25, in the meeting-house, at 11:15 a.m. Agenda items for church members to vote include the Approval of the 2026 budget, 2025 Statistics, 2025 Report of the Treasurer, and vote for the Rev. Bob Faulhaber Jr. to be Pastor Emeritus of the church.

## 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 will be 5 years old by Sept. 1, 2026. Registration packets have been sent home to prospective kindergarteners. If you have an eligible child and have not received a registration packet, please contact the school office at 860-295-6220.

If you receive a registration packet and do not plan to enroll your child, please notify the school as soon as possible.

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## 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.marlbroughhistory.org](http://www.marlbroughhistory.org).



## Parks and Rec. Programs

Marlborough Parks & Recreation has announced the following. For full program descriptions or to register, visit [www.marlbroughct.gov](http://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.

**Tiny Twirlers Dance Class:** For ages 2-3 with caregiver. 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.

**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, storyboard, 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 guidance 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.

**Adult Programs: 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 run until the end of April.



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RE18-21

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# Turning Scraps into Stewardship

By Toriana Williams

Food waste is one of the largest – and heaviest – components of the municipal waste stream, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Yet, it is also one of the most easily diverted.

When food waste is recycled or composted instead of thrown away, it reduces landfill use, cuts pollution and transforms discarded material into a resource that nourishes soil rather than burdening the environment.

In Hebron, this concept has moved from theory into action, thanks to the persistent efforts of the Hebron Green Committee and the enthusiastic participation of Hebron Elementary School.

The Hebron Green Committee, formed in 2011, has focused much of its work on solid waste and recycling. According to committee chair Mike Harder, these issues are becoming increasingly urgent.

"There's a huge amount of waste that's generated around the world, and especially in this country," Harder explained, noting that disposal options are becoming fewer and more problematic. He added that Connecticut's past reliance on incineration, while permitted, still released pollutants into the air, making waste reduction and recycling the preferable path forward.

"The best way to avoid those negative effects is to either not generate the waste to begin with or to recycle it into something useful," he said.

Food waste, Harder emphasized, is a critical target. Because it contains so much moisture, it weighs more than most other trash. Removing it from the waste stream removes "a significant tonnage," he said.

To address this, the Green Committee has spent years educating residents and businesses, offering updated information on recycling practices and helping people navigate confusing or outdated guidelines. The committee has also worked with consultants from the Center for Eco Technology, who help organizations un-

derstand state requirements and design efficient internal systems for collecting food waste without disrupting daily operations. The committee even made funding available to encourage participation, drawing from so-called "nip funds" – money generated from a five-cent fee on small alcohol bottles, also known as nips, that are sold in town.

"For a small town like Hebron, we generate about ... \$8,000 a year from the sale of the nips," Harder explained. With approval from town leadership, the Green Committee is also able to decide how those funds are used to support environmental initiatives. One of the committee's priorities was helping large food waste generators offset the startup costs of recycling programs.

Despite those efforts, most local businesses have been hesitant to move forward – most likely due to not being legally required to recycle food waste, Harder speculated. That hesitation, he said, made Hebron Elementary School's decision all the more significant. While the school is not currently required to comply with state food waste recycling thresholds, administrators chose to act anyway.

Dean of Students Dana Mutch said the idea took root during a wellness committee meeting, when the Green Committee approached the school about participating.

"Composting was something I always wanted to try," she said, drawing on her experience growing up in a town where composting was routine. With encouragement and financial support from the Green Committee, the school partnered with Blue Earth Composting to launch the program.

What truly set the program apart, however, was how deeply students were involved. Hebron Elementary tapped into its existing student leadership culture, including participants in the state Kid Governor program.

"We thought this would be a great job for all

of [them]," Mutch said, explaining that students helped educate their peers and promote the program throughout the school.

Before the first compost bin ever appeared, students attended a school-wide assembly focused not just on what to do, but why it mattered. They learned how composting improves soil health and helps the planet. That foundation paid off quickly.

"They bought right into it," Mutch said. "It's something that helps keep our Earth a better place, and it's something kids at this age are very much into – doing their part."

The system itself is simple: during each lunch wave, students separate food waste into green compost containers. Custodial staff manage the bins at the end of the day, and Blue Earth collects them weekly. Initial concerns about added workload quickly faded.

"It turns out that we have less trash, obviously," Mutch noted. "The trash is lighter and we can fit more, and it's a lot easier."

Perhaps the most striking outcome has been how naturally students adapted.

"Some kids picked right up on it," Mutch said, describing how students remind one another what goes where. "They're very much on autopilot at this point. It's just part of their life now."

While it is too early to measure long-term behavioral changes beyond the school, the cultural shift inside the building is already clear. Composting has become embedded in the daily rhythm of school life, reinforcing lessons about responsibility, stewardship and community action.

For the Hebron Green Committee, the school's success represents both a milestone and a model. It is the first program in town to use nip funds for food waste recycling and the clearest example yet that cost, logistics and complexity need not be barriers. As Harder noted, "They just decided to do the right thing and implement. So it's to their credit."

Plans are already being discussed to expand the program to Gilead Hill School, and committee members hope the visibility of student-led success will encourage local businesses to follow suit. If children can so readily embrace change, the message is clear: sustainable habits are not only achievable – they are contagious.

In Hebron, yesterday's leftovers are becoming tomorrow's lesson in environmental responsibility, proving that when education and action come together, even small scraps can help grow a greener future.

## 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](http://gileadchurchucc.updates.church), email [gcc@gileadchurch.net](mailto:gcc@gileadchurch.net), or call the Parish House at 860-228-3077. The church office is open at the GCC Parish House Monday-Thursday, 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](http://www.bit.ly/GileadChurchUCC) and on Facebook at [tinyurl.com/GileadChurchUCC](http://tinyurl.com/GileadChurchUCC).

**This Week's Scheduled Events:** Sunday, 1/11 – Diversity and Inclusion Meeting, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday, 1/11 – Epiphany Star Word Sunday Worship Service with Communion at 10 a.m. (in-person in the sanctuary; Online; Livestreamed); Sunday, 1/11 – Board of Missions Meeting, 11:30 a.m.; Monday, 1/12 – Bible Study at 9:30 a.m. (Online via Zoom); Monday, 1/12 – Board of Christian Education Meeting at 7 p.m. (Parish House); Tuesday, 1/13 – Confirmation Class, 6-7:30 p.m. (Parish House); Tuesday, 1/13 – AA Meeting at 7:30 p.m. (Fellowship Hall); Wednesday, 1/14 – Book Group at 10:45 a.m. (Fellowship Hall); Thursday, 1/15 – Church Council Meeting at 7 p.m. (Parish House)

**Upcoming Events and General Announce-**

**ments:** **Sunday Services:** Please join Sunday's services in-person or online through YouTube or Facebook: YouTube: [www.bit.ly/GileadChurchUCC](http://www.bit.ly/GileadChurchUCC) Facebook: [tinyurl.com/GileadChurchUCC](http://tinyurl.com/GileadChurchUCC)

**Winter Hours:** Worship at 10 a.m.; Coffee Hour at 11 a.m.

**Military Whist Tournament:** The popular "Setback" -style card game returns Saturday, Jan. 31, at 5 p.m. Contact the church office to sign up.

**Card-Making with Gayle:** Join the church this Winter to create one-of-a-kind seasonal cards for \$15 with a portion of proceeds benefiting the CT Food Bank! The next class is Sunday, Jan. 25, at 11:30 a.m.

## Cemetery Association Meeting

On Monday, Jan. 19, at 7 p.m., the Gilead Cemetery Association, Inc. will hold a meeting at Gilead Congregational Church, 672 Gilead St.

The meeting is to make changes to the cemetery by-laws to update them to present time.

## Military Whist Tournament

in England in the 1700s.

In addition to the tournament, there will also be a potluck supper.

Attendance is limited to 40 players. Whist experience is not necessary, but some card play knowledge is helpful.

To sign up for this event, call the Gilead Church office at 860-228-3077. No reservations will be accepted after Friday, January 24.

## Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

who granted his permission for this adaptation.

A reception will follow the program in St. Peter's parish hall. It will feature hors d'oeuvres and a discussion with the Day of Tears director and cast.

Registration is requested since a larger than normal attendance is expected. To reserve your seat, use this link: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/day-of-tears-mlk-event>. Ticket costs are \$20 for adults and \$5 for youth.

## St. Peter's News & Notes

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, located at 30 Church St. (mailing address: P.O. Box 513) in Hebron. 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](http://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.

**Project Hope Dinner Assembly:** The Project Hope team will meet Saturday, Jan. 17, at 2 p.m. to prepare meals for the homeless shelter. Contact Candace O'Shea for more information.

**Day of Tears Performance:** Sunday, Jan. 18, at 3 p.m., in St. Peter's sanctuary. Based on the novel *Day of Tears*, the event will also feature a discussion and hors d'oeuvres following the performance. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at [code-diversity.org](http://code-diversity.org).

**Women's Club "Craft-a-Month":** Will be held in the parish hall Sunday, Jan. 25 at 1 p.m. All women are invited to attend and help create crafts for sale at the community events.

**S'mores and More Parish-Wide Evening Social:** Join the church on Friday, Jan. 16 and enjoy s'mores by their fire pit. There will also be games, music and snacks in Phelps Hall. Adults and children are welcome! See the Connect team for more information or contact the parish office.

**Potluck Luncheon and Annual Meeting:** Sunday, Feb. 1, following the 10 a.m. service. All parishioners and visitors are welcome to attend to learn more about the church's plans for 2026.

**Outreach:** Each month, the church donates to one of the local food pantries. A collection basket is in the church and outside the parish hall. Winter coats and other warm clothing are being collected to support Windham Area Interfaith Ministries (WAIM). Clothing donations should be bagged and placed in the back of the church or placed in 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.

The electors and voters of the Town of Hebron are hereby given notice and warned that a Special Town Meeting will be convened on Thursday, January 29, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room at the Douglas Library, 22 Main Street, Hebron, Connecticut, to consider and act upon the following: Be it Resolved pursuant to Section 303 C of the Hebron Town Charter the Town of Hebron approve the purchase from Stephanie Marie Dinnen and Vanessa Lyn Simiola of property which is approximately 13.25 acres of land known as Lot 29-6 on Hope Valley Road, Hebron, Connecticut and authorize Andrew J. Tierny, Town Manager, to enter into a purchase agreement and to take action necessary to acquire that land described as follows:

All that certain piece or parcel of land with all improvements thereon and appurtenances thereto situated in the Town of Hebron, County of Tolland and State of Connecticut, shown on a map entitled: "PROPERTY OF EDITH S. SMITH, HOPE VALLEY ROAD, HEBRON, CONNECTICUT PREPARED FOR: MARK SIMIOLA, PREPARED BY: CRISCUOLO ENGINEERING, 248 BRANFORD ROAD, NORTH BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT 06471 481-8749 SCALE: 1" = 40' DATE: 3-21-88 JOB NO. 4688 SHEET 1 OF 1 DRAWN BY:

EWF CHECKED BY: KAS", which map is on file or to be filed in the Hebron Town Clerk's office. Said parcel is more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at a point marked by a concrete monument on the westerly street line of Hope Valley Road, which monument marks the northerly bound of the subject premises; thence running N29° 01' 17" W, 134.33 feet; thence running N27° 17' 18" W, 99.33 feet; thence running N10° 24' 47" W, 104.24 feet; thence running N53° 25' 29" W, 29.43 feet; thence running N59° 40' 14" W, 92.12 feet; thence running N84° 39' 18" W, 66.53 feet; thence turning and running S84° 17' 49" W, 174.52 feet; thence running S83° 00' 53" W, 13.09 feet; thence running S82° 13' 39" W, 72.51 feet; thence running S55° 00' 51" W, 15.48 feet; thence running S35° 36' 57" W, 27.90 feet; thence running S00° 43' 47" E, 57.32 feet; thence running S03° 14' 16" E, 151.66 feet; thence running S04° 57' 38" E, 149.29 feet; thence running S04° 18' 16" E, 111.18 feet; thence running S02° 28' 36" E, 88.94 feet; thence running S06° 45' 51" W, 166.11 feet; thence running S01° 06' 37" E, 75.69 feet; thence running S08° 01' 46" E, 43.11 feet; thence running S14° 20' 56" E, 153.06 feet; thence running S19° 52' 53" E, 73.57 feet; thence running S40° 59' 10" E, 16.26 feet; thence turning and running N83° 32' 47" E, 167.31 feet; thence running S85° 52' 54" E, 32.07 feet; thence running N89° 04' 57" E, 96.61 feet; thence running N85° 47' 51" E, 46.58 feet; thence running again N85° 47' 51" E, an additional 145.00 feet to the center line of the Salmon River; thence turning and running in a generally northerly and westerly direction along the center line of the Salmon River as shown on said map, to a point; thence turning and running N28° 19' 41" W, 155.00 feet, more or less to a concrete monument; thence turning and running N57° 22' 51" E, 93.35 feet, to the point and place of beginning.

For a purchase price in the total amount of \$210,000; with funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance, as recommended and approved by the Hebron Town Council and Hebron Board of Finance. Dated at Hebron, Connecticut, this 18th day of December, 2025.

Hebron Town Council  
Tiffany V. Thiele, Chair  
Jan Lawrence, Vice Chair  
Keith Petit  
Claudia Riley  
Sean Fitzgerald

2TB 1/9, 1/16

Hebron • Hebron

## 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.com/community](http://hebronct.com/community) or call 860-530-1281.

**Minds in Motion – Future Architects:** Unleash your inner architect as you work on and take home your very own Architectural Design kit! After school program at Hebron Elementary. Tuesdays, Jan. 20 – March 3. Dismissal until 4:20 p.m.

**Training for Greatness Volleyball:** Hebron Parks and Recreation will be offering a winter

training program under the direction of RHAM High School coach Tim Guernsey. This high school program will run Wednesday evenings from 5-7 p.m. at RHAM Middle School. The program will start Wednesday, Feb. 4, and run through Wednesday, April 8.

**Karate:** Join for instruction in traditional Martial Arts. While Karate is mainly for self-defense, one that trains in Karate will build confidence, self-respect, and discipline. 6-week ongoing sessions. Ages 6+. Mondays and Wednesdays, 5-6 p.m. Gilead Hill School.

## 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](http://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](http://www.facebook.com/TheWorshipCenterConnecticut) and on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/@theworshipcenter9733](http://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 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

## 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](http://hebronct.com/town-departments/senior-center).

**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.

**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.

**Men's 'Golden Oldies' Social Activities Group:** If you are 60 or older and interested in participating in a social activities group with other men, contact social worker Dennis Farrar, MSW, at 860-228-1700, ext. 204 to register for the first get together on Friday, Jan. 23, from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**Monthly Blood Pressure Screening:** Monday, Jan. 26, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Public Health Nurse Vicki Han, RN from Chatham Health will offer free blood pressure screenings and educate you on how to monitor it at home and how to reduce your risks for heart attacks and strokes. No registration required. It is free.

**Caregiver Support Group:** Friday, Jan. 16, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. This group offers a safe place to discuss the stresses, challenges, and rewards of providing care for a loved one and learning about resources and ideas to assist you

## 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. People unable to attend services in person can participate online at [www.facebook.com/clchebron/live](http://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.clecchebron.org](http://www.clecchebron.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.

## Douglas Library News & Notes

Douglas Library, located at 22 Main St., has announced the following pieces of news. For more information, call the library at 860-228-9312 or visit [douglaslibrary.org](http://douglaslibrary.org).

**Note:** The main floor of the library will be closed for painting from Jan. 12-17. Staff will be available to assist over the phone and curbside pickup will be available for holds.

**Adult Programs: Knit-Wits:** Mondays at 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.

## Good Shepherd Parish News

The Church of the Holy Family (CHF), located at 185 Church St. (Route 85), Hebron, is yoked with St. Columba Church (STC) in Columbia, and together are members of the Catholic Community of the Good Shepherd, with the Rev. Michael Phillipino serving as Pastor.

**Mass Schedule:** Weekend Masses: CHF Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 9:30 a.m.; and STC Sunday at 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Refer to [www.goodshepherdct.org](http://www.goodshepherdct.org) for weekday Mass times and more information about the parish.

**Office Hours:** The church office can be reached at 860-228-3727 Monday-Friday, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation:** Phillipino 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:** Held at CHF. 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](mailto: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 CHF 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 CHF Parish House or the freezer in the STC church hall by the 4th Tuesday of the month. Meatloaves are delivered the next day. The next due date is Jan. 27. Contact Diane (860-508-9959) for more information.

**Youth Ministry:** This group for parish teens in grades 8-12 meets in the St. Columba Youth Center at 6:30 p.m. every second Saturday of the month from September through June (except for the third Saturday in May) for an evening of games, food and discussion. See the parish website for more info.

**Homebound Ministry:** The church ministers to homebound parishioners who wish to receive the sacraments. Call the church office (860-228-3727 ext. 106 or 110) to set up a schedule.

**Collection for Project HOPE, Inc. (Homeless Shelter):** The Social Outreach Committee is collecting the following items for the shelter: TP (greatest need); shampoo, conditioner & body wash; toothpaste (toothbrushes not needed); household cleaning products; sizes large & XL latex free exam gloves for cleaning; paper towels, 13- and 35-gallon trash bags (55-gallon no longer used); men's crew neck T-shirts & boxer briefs (great need; M,L,XL,2XL); women's briefs (sizes 6-10); hand and body warmers; men's & women's wool socks, warm hats and gloves; new or gently-used and clean winter clothing (no stains, tears or pet hair) and coats (no faulty zippers please); women's personal hygiene products; and laundry pods or liquid detergent and dryer sheets. Place bagged donations in the oak collection box next to the CHF Cry Room or the designated bin in the STC entryway. Call Monica McKerracher (860-228-4211) for more information.

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## Obituaries

## Colchester

## Vincent M. Masselli

Vincent M. Masselli, 85, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Thursday, Dec. 25, at Hartford Hospital. He was the beloved son of the late Dominick and Mary Masselli.

Vincent was born Oct. 11, 1940, in Middletown. After the passing of his parents when he was just 13 years old, he lived with his aunt and uncle until joining the United States Navy in 1957. He served honorably and carried that sense of duty and resilience throughout his life.

Standing 6 feet 4 inches tall with broad shoulders, Vinnie could appear imposing at first glance, but those who knew him well knew he had a heart of gold. He was blessed with many lifelong friendships formed during his school years in Glastonbury and Portland, as well as through his long-term employment with Balf Construction and Tilcon.

In 1972, Vinnie moved to Middletown, where he purchased his home and over the many years he lived there, built lasting friendships. Known for his deep passion for motor-homes and cars, he earned the affectionate nickname "Motorhome Vinnie," a nickname that stuck among his Middletown friends.

A man of many talents and interests, Vinnie enjoyed woodworking, fixing just about anything that needed repair, and cooking for those he loved. He treasured time spent at his cabin in Vermont, where he and friends snowmobiled during the winter months. A devoted history buff, Vinnie loved to travel and, during winter breaks from work, visited most of the states across the country, especially those rich in historical significance.

At the age of 62, Vinnie married the love of his life, Carole, with whom he shared 23 wonderful years, until his passing. He became especially close to Carole's daughter, Laura, whom he proudly called his best "girl." He also cherished his relationship with his son-in-law, Eric, and found his greatest joy in his grandchildren, Taylor and Gavin. During their overnight visits as youngsters, Vinnie delighted in making their favorite breakfast. He was immensely proud to watch them grow into the exemplary adults they are today.

In 2004, Vinnie and Carole moved to Colchester Commons, where he volunteered for many years as part of the maintenance crew. Vinnie formed many meaningful friendships within the 55-and-over community he cared for so deeply.

In 2005, Vinnie and Carole purchased a modest fixer-upper home in Bradenton, Florida. Through hard work and dedication, they transformed it into what their Florida friends lovingly called a "dollhouse." The home became a place filled with friendship, laughter, and countless happy winter memories until it was sold in 2014.

Vincent was predeceased by his parents, Dominick and Mary Masselli, and his brother, Joseph Masselli. He is survived by his devoted wife, Carole Masselli; stepdaughter Laura Engel-Peterson; son-in-law Eric Peterson; grandchildren Taylor Engel and Gavin Peterson; and several nieces and nephews.

The family would like to extend a sincere and heartfelt thank you to Vinnie's close friend, Mike Meucci, for his kindness, compassion, and devoted visits to Vinnie during his final days at the hospital.

Private funeral services will take place at a later date.



## East Hampton

## Robert M. Robinson

Robert Michael Robinson, 37, of East Hampton, passed away Friday, Dec. 12. Born in Middletown, he was the beloved son of Eddie E. Robinson and Sandra (Venturella) Robinson. Rob graduated from East Hampton High School and attended college at CCSU.

Rob loved music, was a self-taught composer, and a guitar player who was known as "Guitar Rob." He also raced BMX bikes, loved nature and art and had a desire to know about everything. Rob will truly be missed by those he touched in life.

Along with his parents, Rob is survived by brother Eddie Robinson, Jr.; a sister, Tammy Robinson; his fiancée, Page Post and her son Christopher; and several nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

To share memories or send condolences to the family, please visit [www.doolittlefuneralservice.com](http://www.doolittlefuneralservice.com).



## Colchester

## Marie Poulos

Marie F. Poulos (Stewart) of Colchester passed away peacefully Friday, Jan. 2, surrounded by love. She was born at Quincy City Hospital in Quincy, Mass., and grew up in a large family of ten, where strength and independence were learned early.

Marie is survived by her loving husband, Chris; her former husband, Ken; her children, Dawn, Jen, Nick, and Lindsay; and her beloved grandchildren, Cora, Aiden, Donald, and Maddie, who knew her as Nana. She is also survived by her siblings, Bernard Jr., James, Mary Anne, Maureen, Marilyn, Marla, Alan and Marissa; along with extended family and friends.

She was predeceased by her parents, Bernard and Agnes, and her brother Donald.

Marie attended Sacred Heart High School in Weymouth, Massachusetts, and continued her education at Northeastern University in Boston. She later earned her Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) certification through Windham Technical School and worked in assisted living and skilled nursing settings. A natural caretaker, Marie was known for her honesty, directness, and deep care for the people around her.

Marie loved the beach and treasured family gatherings, especially holidays and birthdays. She had a gift for feeding a crowd and making everyone feel welcome. With Scottish, Irish, and French-Canadian roots, she carried the spirit of a fighter – strong-willed, resilient, and fiercely devoted to her family. She will be remembered for her strong spirit, loving heart, and enduring devotion to family.

Calling hours will be held Friday, Jan. 9, from noon-2 p.m., at Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown. A service will follow at 2:30 p.m. at South Congregational Church, 9 Pleasant St., Middletown. A private burial will take place at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Marie's memory to the American Lung Association, 45 Ash St., East Hartford, CT 06108.

To share memories or send condolences to the family, please visit [www.doolittlefuneralservice.com](http://www.doolittlefuneralservice.com).



## Hebron

## David Hernandez

David Hernandez, 46, of Hebron, passed away peacefully Wednesday, Dec. 31, leaving behind a life remembered for his warmth, strength, and devotion to his family. Known affectionately as "Bobby," he was a loving presence whose kindness and steady spirit touched all who knew him.

Bobby was a devoted husband and father who valued family above all else. His quiet strength and dependable nature allowed his loved ones to always lean on him. He will be remembered for his loyalty, compassion, and the love he shared so freely with those closest to him.

Bobby was born on November 18, 1979 in Santurce, Puerto Rico. He resided in Hebron, Connecticut, for the last eight years of his life with his beloved wife and family. He graduated from Central Connecticut State University with an associate's degree in social work. Bobby enjoyed time in nature, walking with his family and dogs on rural trails in Connecticut.

He is survived by his wife, Corin Parade; his sons, Davion and Eli; his daughter, Flora; his mother, Norma Almodovar; his brothers, William Hernandez and Elliot Hernandez; his sister, Maritza Hernandez; his mother-in-law, Cindy Parade; his father-in-law, Steven Parade; and leaves behind a very large and loving family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to his children's educational fund at [go.fidelity.com/zkozms](http://go.fidelity.com/zkozms)

A memorial service will be held at Maranatha Hispanic SDA Church, 447 North Main St Manchester, on Friday, Jan. 9, at 10 a.m.

Bobby's memory will live on through the love he gave and the lives he touched. May his memory be a blessing.



## Haddam Neck

## Harriet Olsen

Harriet "Sue" Elizabeth (Smith) Olsen, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, sister and friend, passed away peacefully Wednesday, Dec. 10, after a brief illness. She was 87 years old.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Nov. 4, 1938, to William W. and Harriette Gillette Smith, Sue grew up in Haddam Neck, where she spent most of her life. She graduated from East Hampton High School in 1956 and soon after married her high school sweetheart, Walter Olsen, in 1958. Together they built their family home in Haddam Neck, completing it in 1960.

Sue's life was defined by her love of nature, creativity, and community. She raised a wide variety of animals – from goats and chinchillas to her cherished flocks of chickens – and tended her greenhouse and gardens with joy, always eager to try new plant varieties. A gifted knitter and crocheter, she created mittens, sweaters, scarves, and afghans that warmed generations of family and friends. As a founding member of the Haddam Neck Quilters, she welcomed visitors at the annual quilt show, and alongside Walt, crafted wooden items for fairs and gifts. Sue also served as director and president of the Haddam Neck Fair, helping to shape a tradition cherished by her community.

Her compassion extended into her professional life. Inspired by her work on the Middlebury ambulance in the 1970s, Sue earned her LPN license and devoted 25 years to night shifts at Middlesex Hospital. After retiring, she continued to give back, volunteering at Brainerd Library and assisting the town of Haddam during elections.



Sue is survived by her children Deborah (Bradley), Barbara, and David (Sandy); daughter-in-law Ellen; grandchildren Michael (Jennifer), Jared (Emily), Cassie, Sarah, MacKenzie (Mark), Connor, Cameron (Sara), Ian, Jessica, and Angelina; and great-grandchildren Mikayla, Mia, Miles, Ivy, and Wrenleigh. She also leaves behind her sisters Franky, June, Louise, and Gail, her brother Peter, and their families. She was predeceased by her parents, her daughter Mary, her son Paul, and her brother William ("Jig").

A memorial service will be held at Haddam Neck Congregational Church on Saturday, Jan. 17, at 11 a.m., followed by a reception at the church.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Haddam Neck Congregational Church, Brainerd Library, or Middlesex Hospice.

Sue's legacy of kindness, creativity, and service will live on in the hearts of all who knew her.

## Colchester

## Dorothy Joaquin Marvin

Dorothy Joaquin Marvin, 85, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Thursday, Nov. 27, surrounded by her loving family. She was the daughter of the late Manuel and Bridget (Roscoe) Joaquin of Colchester.



Born Aug. 31, 1940, Dorothy was a graduate of Bacon Academy, Class of 1958. She continued her education as a hairdresser, a skill she carried with pride throughout her life. Dorothy devoted herself to raising her two sons and spent her entire adult life living on the same road in Colchester, a testament to her deep roots and love for her hometown.

Affectionately known as "Dottie," she found joy in life's simple pleasures – endless cups of coffee, romance novels, and crocheting blankets for those she loved. She enjoyed duckpin bowling and later continued bowling with friends at the Colchester Senior Center. A stop at a tag sale or thrift shop was always welcomed, as there was invariably a treasure waiting to be found. Dorothy had a lifelong love for dogs and was never one to turn one away, cherishing several faithful companions over the years.

She is survived by her sons, James Marvin and his wife Carole, and Bert Marvin and his wife Corri; her grandchildren, Lauren (David Eiler), Megan (Pawel Bezubik), and Anthony Marvin; and her great-grandsons, Liam Eiler and Brady Bezubik. She will also be dearly missed by her sister-in-law, Joanne Joaquin, and many nieces, nephews, their families, and the close friends she held near to her heart.

Dorothy was laid to rest alongside her parents and brothers, Richard E. and Joseph J., at St. Bridget's Cemetery in Moodus. She was predeceased by her infant siblings, Phyllis and Donald, as well as the love of her life, Warren Holt.

## East Hampton

## Agnes Pawlich

Agnes (Lutton) Pawlich passed away Monday, Dec. 29. Agnes was born Sept. 5, 1932, in Paterson, N.J., to the late Kenneth and Agnes (Tierney) Lutton. She was predeceased by her beloved husband, Gerald Pawlich.



Agnes moved to East Hampton when she was 17 years old and after her marriage to Gerry they remained in East Hampton. Agnes spent her career working in the local bank (CBT, Fleet and BOA) until her retirement. She knew everyone in town through her roles as bank teller and assistant manager and always had a long line in front of her desk to specifically bank with Agnes. Agnes was a faithful parishioner at St. Patrick Church and upon retirement was asked to help count the collection money following Sunday Masses.

Agnes was predeceased by her sister, Virginia Holmes, and brother, Kenneth Lutton Jr., and sister-in-law, Barbara Pawlich. Agnes is survived by her children, Dawn (Damien) Walsh of Glastonbury, Mark (Laura) Pawlich of Rocky Hill, and Scott (Tina) Pawlich of Rochester Hills, Mich. She is also survived by her treasured grandchildren, Kevin (Shannon) Walsh, Megan Walsh, Ryan Walsh, Kailee (Frank) Sardelli, Madison Pawlich, Ethan Pawlich, Isabella Pawlich, Julia Pawlich and Jack Pawlich. Agnes has six great-grandchildren, Cameron, Cayden, Keira Walsh, and Lorenzo. Sebastian and Salvatore Sardelli.

She is survived by her very close friend and sister-in-law, Gail Lutton, brothers-in-law Richard Pawlich (Mary) and Ted Pawlich. Many years following Jerry's passing she began dating a former classmate, Woody Miner, whom she cherished as a wonderful companion. Additionally, she is survived by many nieces and nephews with whom she has a special bond.

We want to thank the staff at Buckingham Heights for demonstrating how to care for a person with Alzheimer's Disease with, compassion, dignity and respect. We as a family were truly blessed to have them by our side as we went through this journey with our mother.

Mom was our role model, cheerleader, confidant, and we are so very grateful to have called her our mother.

A funeral liturgy was celebrated Tuesday, Jan. 6, in St. John Paul II Church of St. Patrick, followed by burial in St. Patrick Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Alzheimer's Association at [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).

To leave online condolences please visit [www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

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*RES-9-25*

## Obituaries

## Portland

## Betty Kauffman Smedick



Betty Kauffman Smedick, 86, passed away peacefully Saturday, Jan. 3, at Middlesex Memorial Hospital. Born in Cromwell to Arthur Kauffman and Melba (Fredman) Kauffman, Betty lived a life defined by strength, independence, and deep care for others. A strong and determined woman, she raised her family of five children on her own, a role she carried out with resilience, devotion, and unwavering love.

Following 20 years of employment at the Portland Laundromat, Betty went on to work as a benefits specialist at the home office of Ames Department Stores in Rocky Hill, where she was known for her dedication and reliability.

Betty loved to sew and create various crafts, finding joy in making things by hand. She also enjoyed playing bingo, even though she never won – a fact she laughed about often. More than anything, Betty truly cared about people. Her home and her heart were always open, and many lovingly called her “Mom,” despite not being related by blood.

Betty is survived by her five children: Donald Smedick of Middletown, Bruce Smedick of Newington, Charlene Burrell of Suffolk, Va., Debra Walton of Walden, Vt., and Ramona Quinn of Portland. She is also survived by her grandchildren, Joshua Smazer, Richard Smazer, Amanda Smazer, Thomas Quinn, Deanna Smedick-Hale, Shane Burrell, Cody Burrell, and Angel Burrell, Jessica May; as well as six great-grandchildren.

She is further survived by her brother, Arthur “Sonny” Kauffman, and sister, Arlene Goodell. Betty was predeceased by several brothers and sisters.

A gathering of family and friends will take place at the Portland Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, on Saturday, Jan. 24, from 4-6 p.m.

## East Hampton

## Peter Thomas Morse



In loving memory of Peter Thomas Morse, 79, of East Hampton. Born March 28, 1946, he passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, on Thursday, Jan. 1.

Peter graduated from Glastonbury High School and became a member of the National Guard Band. He was employed by Canteen Corporation for many years. Following retirement, he pursued his passion to become a certified chaplain and served at UConn John Dempsey Hospital and many local nursing homes.

Peter cherished his family and faithfully ministered the love of Jesus. His passion was serving as an elder at his church, The Worship Center, in Hebron. He enjoyed sharing his jokes, vacationing at his family home on Little Cranberry Island, Maine, and playing many instruments. He was a car enthusiast, a talented photographer, and he also created his own woodworking business.

He is survived by his wife, Diana, of 58 years; his four children and their spouses, Paul (Amy) Morse, Jill (Neil) Swenson, Sarah (Mike) Osborne, and Steven Morse. His legacy lives on through his many grandchildren, Abbey, Patrick, Lauren, Patrick, Irene, Peter, Isaac, Gwen, Elodie and Teddy; and his great-grandson, Rodney. He is also survived by his siblings Anne, Terry and Tim, and was predeceased by his sister Maureen.

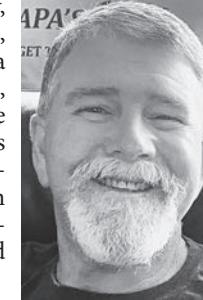
Calling hours are at Spencer Funeral Home Friday, Jan. 16, from 5-7 p.m. A Celebration of Life will be held at The Worship Center Church in Hebron on Saturday, Jan. 17, at 10 AM.

In lieu of flowers, we as a family encourage you to take a walk in nature and embrace God's presence.

To leave online condolences, please visit [www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

## Colchester

## Sean Edward O'Leary



Sean Edward O'Leary, 66, of Port Charlotte, Fla., beloved husband of Diana (Dee) O'Leary (Klemba), passed away in his home Saturday, Dec. 27. He was predeceased by his parents and brother Brian O'Leary, his in-laws, Robert (Kenny) Klemba and Josephine Lane.

Born in Hartford Jan. 28, 1959, to Cynthia (Melvin) O'Leary and John Edward O'Leary. He grew up in Wethersfield, with his parents and three siblings, Kevin, Brian, and Kathleen. Sean's impact began then, friendly to all and always “sticking up for little guy.”

He played football as a center at Wethersfield High, where he graduated in 1977. He continued his formal education at Springfield College for one year. His love of learning never stopped, and you would find him sitting with a large history book any chance he had.

He met the love of his life and center of his world Dee in 1980 and married her on June 8, 1985, at the Webb Barn in Old Wethersfield. They bought their first home in Cromwell before settling into Colchester in 1989, where they lived for 21 years in a tight-knit neighborhood where he made lifelong friends.

They adopted their two children, Matthew and Chelsea, in 1993. He was an incredibly involved Dad who was there for everything his children did, both in presence and in loving support. He became a Papa in 2017 and threw all of himself into being a part of his grandchildren's lives.

Sean had an unmatched work ethic. He worked for the Town of Wethersfield and The Old Town Cafe in his early years. The majority of his career was spent working as a telephone repairman. His coworkers became family at SNET. He got involved with the CWA union and fought passionately for what was right as a steward and then chief steward. He ended his working days doing something he loved, greeting people and surrounded by baseball for Charlotte County at the Tampa Bay Rays training facility.

Sean loved sports, but his true character shined through coaching in youth sports. In the town of Colchester, he spent 16 years coaching and volunteering. Baseball, soccer, Cougar Football, Bacon Academy Football, and the Parks and Recreation Commission. He cared deeply for all the kids—listening, supporting and being a role model. Everyone involved with him in those years knew his love for your families.

Sean continued his volunteer work helping start the Yellow Ribbon Commission in Colchester to honor the men and women in town who were actively deployed overseas.

After Sean retired and relocated to Florida, he finally had time to put towards another love, dogs. He began volunteering at the Animal Welfare League (AWL) of Port Charlotte, walking shelter dogs.

Sean is best known for his unwavering compassion for others. He was the man who would stop for strangers on the side of the road. The man who would hold your hand if you were afraid on an airplane. The man who would share tears for your loss. The man you could call for advice without judgement. The man who would reach out to you if a storm was coming to check if you needed help. The man who would give generously because “you can't take it when you go.”

Sean was devoted to the ones he loved and to being kind to every person he met. The world was a better place with him in it. His legacy will live on in every life he touched.

He leaves behind his wife, Diana (Dee) O'Leary; his children, Matthew O'Leary and Chelsea Siddiqui (O'Leary); grandchildren, Diana & Cynthia Siddiqui and Noah & Lucas O'Leary; children-in-law, Farooq Siddiqui and Shannon O'Leary; brothers-in-law, Bob, Ron and Ray Klemba; his very special sister-in-law Denise Klemba; his siblings Kevin O'Leary (wife Susan) and Kathleen O'Leary; sisters-in-law, Lori O'Leary and Debbie Ferrara; several nieces and nephews as well as many other family and friends.

A Celebration of Life for Sean will be held Saturday, Jan. 17, from 2-7 p.m., at Elks Lodge 771, 44 Maynard St., Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, the family is asking loved ones to donate to one of the charities Sean was passionate about to honor him: AWL-Animal Welfare League of Port Charlotte or the Wounded Warrior Project.

For online condolences, visit [www.LCCPG.com](http://www.LCCPG.com).

## LEGALS

LEGAL NOTICE  
TOWN OF PORTLAND  
AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Notice is hereby given that the Audited Financial Statements of the Town of Portland for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025, as prepared by Mahoney Sabo & Company, LLP Certified Public Accountants, are on file in the office of the Town Clerk of Portland, Connecticut, for public inspection.

ATTEST: Michael V. Tierney  
Town Clerk of Portland  
Dated at Portland, Connecticut, this 6th day of January, 2026

1TB 1/2, 1/9

LEGAL NOTICE  
Global Freestone LLC  
244 Middletown Ave.  
East Hampton, CT  
860.267.6623

Will sell or otherwise dispose of such personal property on Saturday January 10th 2026 at 8:00 AM  
Property previously owned by:  
C Komondy

2TB 1/2, 1/9

LEGAL NOTICE  
TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH  
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
PUBLIC HEARING

The Marlborough Zoning Board of Appeals will hold the following public hearing  
On Wednesday January 14, 2026, at 7:00 P.M. in the Marlborough Town Hall, 26 North Main Street.

APPLICATION #ZBA-01-25 – Anne Amodeo (Applicant/Property Owner) 92 Lakeridge Drive - is seeking variance of Article Three A.1, Minimum Requirements, Article Three A.3 Conformity of Buildings & Land, Article Three A.5 Reduction of Lot Areas or Minimum Required Yards, Article Three A.9 Minimum Required Yards, Article Six D.2 a Side Yard Setback, in order to construct a shed with a Front Yard Setback of 6.3 feet where 15 feet is required.  
Interested parties can review the application materials in the Land Use/Building Department during normal Town Hall hours. Written testimony should be sent at least 24 hours ahead of the public hearing date to [building@marlboroughct.gov](mailto:building@marlboroughct.gov), and oral testimony may be given during the public hearing.

2TB 1/2, 1/9

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON  
LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given, in accordance with §7-394 of the Connecticut State Statutes, that the audit of the financial statements of the Town of East Hampton for the year ending June 30, 2025 has been filed with the Town Clerk on January 5, 2026 and is available for public inspection in the Town Clerk's Office, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, Connecticut.

Attest: Patricia Burnham, CCTC  
Town Clerk  
Dated this 5th day of January 2026 at East Hampton, Connecticut

1TB 1/9

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## PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing at their January 21, 2026, 7:00 pm Meeting in the Andover Town Hall, 17 School Road and via ZOOM, to consider the following application:  
#25-15 ZBA APPLICATION OF CHRISTINE GOMES, Bausola Road parcel, Map 32 Block 48 Lot 53CB. Applicant is seeking relief from lot area requirements of section 11.2 of the Andover Zoning Regulations. The overall proposal intends to decrease non-conformities that currently exist.  
Interested parties may ask questions and/or offer comments, either verbally or in writing.  
Applications are on file with the Building and Land Use Department. Building and Land Use Office 860.742.7305, X – 4219 or email [zoning@andoverct.org](mailto:zoning@andoverct.org).  
Fred Oliver  
Zoning Board of Appeals - Chairperson

2TB 1/9, 1/16

LEGAL NOTICE  
TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON  
ATTENTION TAXPAYERS

Notice is hereby given to the taxpayers of the Town of East Hampton 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](http://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: 8:30 a.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  
Monday, January 19, 2026: CLOSED  
Monday, February 16, 2026: CLOSED  
Michele B. Nuhn, CCMC, CCMO  
Collector of Revenue

3TB 12/26, 1/9, 1/30

Legal Notice  
Andover Inland Wetlands and  
Watercourses Commission

The Andover Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission APPROVED the following applications at their Regular Meeting on January 6, 2026:

- Permit Application IWWC #25-15: Jim Bellano (Town of Andover), Long Hill Road. Replacement of existing Long Hill Road Bridge over the Hop River.
- Permit Application IWWC #25-16: Erik Johansen, Town of Andover Department of Public Works. Application for renewal of existing wetlands permit IWWC #23-01 – General Permit for work in and around various drainage systems in Andover.

1TB 1/9

LEGAL NOTICE  
TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH

All persons liable to pay the second installment for Real Estate, Personal Property, Motor Vehicle, and the Supplemental Motor Vehicle tax to the Town of Marlborough as levied on the October 1, 2024 Grand List are hereby notified that the taxes are due and payable on January 1, 2026 and will be delinquent February 2, 2026. Delinquent bills will be subject to interest of one and one-half percent per month reverting to the due date or 18% a year. Minimum interest is \$2.00. The Mill Rate for Real Estate and Personal Property for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year is 37.74. The Mill Rate for Motor Vehicles is 32.46.

Tax payments can be mailed to Tax Collector, P.O. Box 29, Marlborough, CT 06447, paid in person (cash or check) at the Tax Collector's office during normal business hours, placed in the DROPBOX at Town Hall, or paid online. Credit and Debit payments (Mastercard, Visa, or ACH) are only accepted online at [www.marlboroughct.gov](http://www.marlboroughct.gov). Tax Collector hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Tuesday 8:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., and Friday 8:30 a.m. - noon. Barbara Lazzari  
Tax Collector

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

LEGAL NOTICE  
TOWN OF ANDOVER REVENUE  
COLLECTOR'S NOTICE

To the property owners of the Town of Andover: The Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes listed on the October 1, 2024 Grand List becomes due and payable to the Town of Andover on January 14, 2026. Payments must be US postmarked, paid on line, or brought to Town Hall by February 16, 2026 to avoid an interest charge. Interest will be charged starting February 17, 2026 on all delinquent bills at a rate of 18% per year (1½% per month) from the due date of January 14, with a minimum charge of \$2 for each bill.  
View or pay taxes online at [www.andoverct.org](http://www.andoverct.org). Cash, check or money order payments are accepted at the Town Hall during business hours. Payments by check or money order may be mailed to the Tax Collector's office or placed in the drop box outside Town Hall. Typical office hours during collection months are Monday 8:15am-7pm, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:15 am-4pm. Please refer to [www.andoverct.org](http://www.andoverct.org) for updated office hours. The Tax Collector's office will be CLOSED February 5-22nd. Please plan accordingly.  
Failure to receive a tax bill will not invalidate the tax or any interest which may, by State law, accrue.  
If you have any questions, please contact the tax office at 860-742-4035 option 4.

3TB 1/9, 1/16, 2/6

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7-3-2025

# LEGALS

## TOWN OF PORTLAND PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Portland Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, January 15th, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Portland Public Library, 20 Freestone Avenue, to consider the following:  
PZC Application #25-10: 125 Bartlett Street. Proposed 2 lot subdivision. Application of Bari Winner and property of Rhea DeBari. Map 49 Lot 57, Zone R-25.  
Dated at Portland, CT this 22nd day of December 2025  
Robert Ellsworth, Chairman  
Planning & Zoning Commission

2TB 1/2, 1/9

## LEGAL NOTICE

TO ALL REGISTERED COLCHESTER REPUBLICAN VOTERS  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THERE WILL BE A CAUCUS OF ALL ENDORSED REPUBLICAN ELECTORS OF THE TOWN OF COLCHESTER ON JANUARY 13, 2026 AT 6:30 PM AT COLCHESTER TOWN HALL, 127 NORWICH AVENUE, TO ENDORSE CANDIDATES FOR THE REPUBLICAN TOWN COMMITTEE AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE CAUCUS.  
APPROVED BY  
JOHN THOMAS, RTC CHAIRMAN

1TB 1/9

## 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

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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## BUYING COLLECTIONS & ACCUMULATIONS, FREE REVIEW:

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

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

**WANTED TO BUY:** your sterling silverware, tea set, or any item made of sterling. Top cash price paid on the spot. I can come to your home or meet you at a place of your choosing. Call/text Dominic at 860-836-5013 or email [dmappraisal@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dmappraisal@sbcglobal.net).

## PET TRAINING

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**860-569-0722**  
[www.poainc.org](http://www.poainc.org)

## COLCHESTER ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS LEGAL NOTICE

The Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 7:00 P.M. via Zoom and in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 127 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415 to hear and consider the following petition:

**Application No. ZBA 2025-002** of Joseph and Maria Wilson (Owner/Applicant) – 9 Lakeview Drive (MBL #13-02/003-000) – Application for variance from Sections 3.4.4.A and 3.4.2.C of the Town of Colchester Land Development (Zoning) Regulations to reduce the front yard setback requirement from 29' to 10', and to increase the lot coverage from 24.4% to 24.6%. At this hearing interested parties may be heard and written communications received. A copy of this petition is available for public review in the Planning and Zoning Department at Colchester Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester CT 06415 and may be inspected during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Zoning Board of Appeals  
Laurie Robinson, Chair

2TB 1/9, 1/16

# Classifieds Pay

The Glastonbury Citizen & Riviera News Bulletin

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