

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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Area Towns Buried By Snowstorm

By Toriana Williams

Connecticut's recent snowstorm did not arrive quietly. It came with deep drifts, long hours and the kind of snowfall totals that make even seasoned New Englanders pause mid-shovel.

Despite the volume of snow, town officials consistently described the storm not as a disaster, but as a test – one their communities largely passed with flying colors.

According to National Weather Service estimates compiled in the storm's aftermath, Colchester received roughly 12 inches of snow, while nearby communities like Andover saw about 15 inches, Hebron about 14 inches and Marlborough around 16 inches.

In Hebron, Town Manager Andrew Tierney said the town "fared very well," noting there were no reported power outages and no storm-related catastrophes.

Tierney credited the outcome to preparation, experienced crews and public cooperation. He said residents staying off the roads made a noticeable difference, allowing plow operators to repeatedly clear routes as snow continued to fall.

That pride was echoed – and expanded upon – by Hebron Director of Public Works Paul Forrest, who described the storm as a throwback to earlier years.



The Rivereast towns were utterly buried by Sunday's massive snowstorm. Rosalie Breiding shared this photo with us of one of her neighbors in their Bobcat, helping to dig out cars, and making paths, in the London Park neighborhood of Hebron on Monday.

experience, Forrest said the event "felt like the good old days," though he clarified it did not rival the historic storm that took place over 10

years ago. Preparation, Forrest explained, began well before the first flakes fell. Trucks are checked, fuel

and salt supplies are verified and residents are notified of parking bans. Hebron supplemented its workforce with five additional employees for the storm to help in delegating the workload.

And then there was the moment that best captured the spirit of the response: Forrest proudly explained that Hebron's plow operators compete in snowplow rodeos and have even brought home trophies.

In Marlborough, Town Manager David Porter reported a similarly smooth experience. He said the town's public works and fire crews worked long hours with minimal rest to keep roads clear and safe.

"I'm really proud of our crew and the good work that they did," he shared.

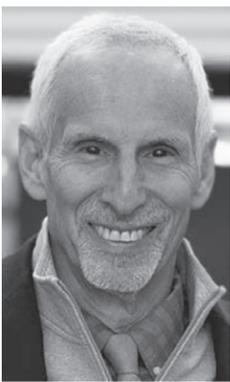
Porter described the snowfall as "a lot." From a budgetary standpoint, he said the town plans annually for major storms, and this event, though significant, did not jeopardize Marlborough's winter operations budget.

See Snowstorm, page 7

Needleman Seeks Fifth Term in State Senate

By Anne Lilburn

Democrat Norm Needleman has officially launched a reelection campaign for his fifth term in the State Senate.



Needleman

Needleman said that for him, running again is an opportunity to serve. He is the founder of Tower Labs, which makes effervescent pharmaceutical products, and said he takes no salary in

his state senate role.

"I'm blessed to be able to do it," he said. "I'm very grateful for the opportunity to serve. I love serving the public, and it starts with my ability to be thoughtful."

As senator, "I may not be right all the time," he said, "but I bring a level of moderation, thoughtfulness, and stability to our caucus on a lot of issues."

Needleman said the State Senate brought with it a lot of opportunity, but also a lot of frustration for someone who sees himself as a moderate and a policy wonk who likes to get things done.

"I really don't like the politics part of it," he said. "I kind of dread it."

So why run again? Needleman said he finds satisfaction in what he's able to accomplish for his constituents.

"Helping individual constituents, helping the

constituent towns in my district, all 12 of them, is very important to me," he said, noting that the district was not a monolith.

"The towns range in size," he noted. "I don't touch any cities in my district. It's progressive to conservative. It kind of reflects my personality, which is, let's talk to each other and figure out what I can do to help."

Needleman said he was proud of what he's accomplished in the seven years he's been in his state position. He's served as Chair of the Energy and Technology Committee and has been active on issues concerning the state's power grid and regulations on utility companies.

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**Take Your Child to the Library Day!**

On Saturday, Feb. 7, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., children and their caregivers are invited to stop by to do a fun activity to get to know your library, receive a small gift, and sign up for a library card if you do not have one. Call the library with any questions, at 860-742-7428.

**Cute and Cuddly Meet and Greet!**

On Tuesday, Feb. 17, Andover Public Library will welcome Xen's Critters, who will offer the opportunity for children to visit with several small animals in a "drop-in" style meet-and-greet. Please note that this program will not be held at the library but at the Andover Town Hall Community Room. Stop by between 11 a.m. and noon. The last entry is at 11:50 a.m. Call the library with any questions, at 860-742-7428.

**Congregational Church News**

Andover Congregational Church, UCC, located at 359 Route 6, invites all to worship, held Sundays at 10 a.m. All are welcome. The service also streams live on the church's Facebook page (First Congregational Church, Andover, CT). For more information, call the church office at 860-742-7696, email andoverctchurch@gmail.com or visit www.andoverctchurch.org.  
**Children's Church:** Is provided. **Choir:** At 9 a.m. Sundays in the sanctuary.  
**Food Pantry:** Mondays from 5-7 p.m. Bring your own bags. The **Foodshare Van** comes to the church every other Wednesday from 8:30-10 a.m.; **Senior Pantry** is on the opposite Wednesdays.  
**AA Meetings:** Saturdays and Mondays, 7 p.m.  
**Sonshine Stamps:** Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m.

**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, Coventry, East Hartford, East Windsor, Glastonbury, Manchester, Middletown, Vernon, Storrs and Windsor Locks are also eligible for the scholarship. Applications with the submittal instructions are available at the guidance department of the attending school. All completed applications must be received by April 1 to be considered.

**Kindergarten Registration**

Andover Elementary School is registering kindergarten students for the 2026-27 school year. Andover's kindergarten program is full-day. Parents of children who will be age 5 on or before Sept. 1, 2026, are asked to contact the school office at 860-742-7339 to obtain a registration packet or access it at www.andoverelementaryct.org. Parents choosing to have their child attend an alternative kindergarten, not attend school until the following year, or who will be home-schooling are asked to inform the school of this decision.

**Sheena the Therapy Dog**

All are invited to come visit Sheena the Therapy Dog and do a fun valentine craft activity at Andover Library on Saturday, Feb. 7, from 11 a.m.-noon. Sheena, Queen of the Jungle, will be at the library with her handler, Andover Friends of the Library member Dr. Jenifer Nadeau. Come read to Sheena or just visit her! Also at that time, Maryann Fusco-Rollins, extension educator in 4-H and youth development from Tolland County will be there helping youth make a paper woven heart basket for Valentine's Day. Call the library with any questions, at 860-742-7428.

**Preschool Openings**

Andover Elementary School Early Learning Center is accepting applications for preschool students for the 2026-27 school year. Andover's preschool program is full day. Before and after-school care is available. Children who will be age 3 on or before Dec. 31, 2026, are eligible to attend at the start of the year. The Andover Elementary School Early Learning Center receives funding for reduced tuition rates from two state grants: Early Start CT and the Smart Start Grant. Call Taylor Parker for more information or contact the school office at 860-742-7339 to obtain a registration packet. You may also download one from www.andoverelementaryct.org.

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### Community Garden Offering Plots for 2026

The Andover Community Garden Committee is currently looking for Andover residents who would like to have their own garden space. All ages and abilities are welcome and the spaces are free of charge. There spaces being offered on a first-come, first-serve basis for the 2026 growing season.

Bed owners will be responsible for planting approved vegetables, flowers, and herbs of their choice. They will also need to be able to commit to the scheduled watering and caretaking responsibilities of their bed as well as the end-of season bed cleanup. There are tools available for use by the committed garden-

ers and there is an on-site watering system. Members of the committee can be available to help with gardening questions you may have or problem solve with any difficulties you face during the gardening season. The community garden's growing season begins in mid- to late May and may end in late September.

To request a garden plot for 2026, volunteer, or for more information, feel free to message the Andover Community Garden Committee on their Facebook page "Andover (CT) Community Garden" or send an email to gardenandovercommunity@gmail.com.

### 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.

Donations of any amount are appreciated and can be mailed to: Andover Friends of the Library, P. O. Box 117, Andover, CT 06232.

Membership forms are emailed to current and former members and are also available by visiting the library at 355 Route 6, or by calling 860-742-7428. For a copy of the form online, visit [tinyurl.com/457f2e4w](http://tinyurl.com/457f2e4w).

Included on the form is a section to volunteer, from baking, gardening, book sales and tech support to serving on a committee or sharing a talent or hobby via a program. The Library Friends welcome ideas and suggestions by emailing [andoverfol@gmail.com](mailto:andoverfol@gmail.com)

Library hours are Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. For library news, updates and photos, visit [www.andoverconnecticut.org/library](http://www.andoverconnecticut.org/library) or look for the library on Facebook at [facebook.com/AndoverPublicLibrary.CT](https://facebook.com/AndoverPublicLibrary.CT).

### Community & Senior Center Happenings

The Andover Community and Senior Center, located at 25 School Rd., is open daily from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. The lounge is open for cards, games and puzzles anytime, and coffee is always on. All are welcome. For all senior-related events, call Director Tess Grous at 860-798-6862.

The center's monthly newsletter is available at [www.andoverconnecticut.org](http://www.andoverconnecticut.org). Copies are also available at the center, Town Hall, and Andover Public Library. To receive the newsletter by email each month, ask for Haley at the center, at 860-742-7305.

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

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

**Holiday Closing:** Monday, Feb. 16, in honor of Presidents Day.

**Regular Weekly and Monthly Programs:** For a list of regular weekly and monthly events, such as Movies, Luncheons, Yoga, Dominos, Knitting, trips to the library and the food pantry, Open Sew & Stitch, and more, see the monthly newsletter.

**Special Upcoming Events: Shopping Trips:** Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. Shop Willimantic 2/10 and 2/24, and shop in Manchester on 2/3 and 2/17. Transportation is available; contact Linda to reserve your ride.

**Senior Art Class with Kim:** Thursday, Feb. 19, 10-11 a.m., \$8. Theme is Watercolor & Sea Glass. This class is perfect for all skill levels. Space is limited; supplies are provided. To sign

up, call 860-742-7305 x4510.

**Puzzle and Pizza:** Thursdays, Feb. 5-26, noon. Cost is \$3. There is a variety of puzzles to choose from. To sign up, call 860-742-7305 x4510.

**Foodshare Truck:** Wednesdays, Feb. 11 and 25, 9 a.m. Free transportation to Andover Congregational Church is available; contact the center. For more information on other available dates and times please contact Joan Soucy at 860-208-3226.

**Travel In Time Club:** Feb. 20. This free study group is based on *Travel in Time in Connecticut*, by local author and teacher Dan Blanchard. This is an intergenerational partnership with Andover Elementary School. Students and Seniors will be working on stories and interviews.

**CT Flower Show:** Friday, Feb. 20, 9:30 a.m. Cost is \$10. Head to the CT Flower Show in Hartford. Bus leaves the center at 9:30 a.m. There will be breakfast and then the show. Space is limited. To sign up, call 860-742-7305 x4510.

### Souper Bowl Grinder Sale

Andover Congregational Church, located at 359 Route 6, will hold its 34th annual Souper Bowl Grinder Sale on Sunday, Feb. 8.

Chili will be sold in quarts. Grinder selections are ham, turkey or tuna – all for \$15 each. Garden salads also available. All options include chips and a soda.

Pick-up will be on Feb. 8 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Pre-order is requested to make sure there is enough for everyone. Leave a message at the church at 860-742-7696.

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## From the Editor's Desk

# Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

*They say we're young and we don't know  
We won't find out until we grow  
Well I don't know if all that's true  
'Cause you got me, and baby, I got you  
Babe*

*I got you babe; I got you babe.*

Film buffs of a certain age know those lyrics aren't from just any old 1960s hit; they're from the song Bill Murray wakes up to over and over again in the 1993 classic *Groundhog Day*.

I'm sure the movie will be in heavy rotation on cable channels over the next few days, as Groundhog Day is fast approaching. In fact, it's this coming Monday – and if the little bugger knows what's good for him, he better not see his shadow.

After this past Sunday's massive snow-storm, I'm pretty much done with winter. I'm good with never seeing another flake for the rest of 2026. Something tells me I won't be that lucky, but hey, a boy can dream.

That was one monster storm we got. And the extreme cold that's followed will ensure the white stuff will stick around for a long time. A long time. Peering out around snow-banks before making a left turn, dealing with the fact that the grocery store or shopping plaza down the street has about half as many spaces as before – well, we better just get used to it, folks.

And if you've run out of places to put all the snow, you may need to get creative in the coming days.

You'll know more when you read this on Friday, but as I write this Tuesday night the weather prognosticators are all saying there's a chance we could get hit with a blizzard on Sunday. True, there's a greater chance that we could get dealt a "glancing blow" – but even that could yield several more inches.

So yeah, you all would understand why I'm hoping the groundhog doesn't see his shadow

on Monday – which, as the completely unscientific and totally unreliable lore tells us, will mean spring is just around the corner.

And if you do see your shadow, Chuckles, just lie, and tell us you didn't.

We could all use the break.

\*\*\*

If you're headed out next Friday, or even if you're staying in and having a pajama day, be sure to wear red.

It's for a good cause.

Feb. 6 is National Wear Red Day, and the American Heart Association's Go Red for Women movement urges Connecticut to join the fight against cardiovascular disease – which is the leading cause of death for women in the United States.

On National Wear Red Day, people and landmarks across the nation will "go red" to raise awareness of the disease.

In particular, the American Heart Association is working to raise awareness that heart disease and stroke can happen at any age – and that nearly 45% of women over age 20 are living with some form of cardiovascular disease.

On National Wear Red Day, the association urges everyone to join the Go Red for Women movement in championing better health and well-being for all women by wearing red and spreading awareness. You can join the conversation online by sharing on social media using #WearRedDay, #WearRedAndGive and #GoRedforWomen.

"National Wear Red Day is about more than kicking off American Heart Month; it's about everyone coming together to support the health and well-being of our mothers, daughters, sisters and the people who love them," said American Heart Association Board Chair Francine LoRusso, who is also

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



**Margaret's Magnets...** Margaret Gibbs, a member of Gilead Congregational Church, repurposes beverage cans into handcrafted magnets. Over the past year, she has sold her creations at local craft fairs, directing all proceeds to Gilead Congregational Church, Gilead's Helping Hands, and the Connecticut Food Bank – with nearly \$1,000 contributed to the Food Bank to date.

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

## Evening Syncocize

To the Editor:

Staying active as we age is about so much more than exercise. It is about being with others, feeling connected, and having a reason to show up for ourselves. At the Portland Senior Center we are always working to make those opportunities accessible for more people in our community.

Sue's Syncocize class has always been a fun and uplifting group that brings music, movement, and laughter into the building. We recently moved the class to Tuesday evenings at 5:00 PM. This small change made a big difference. It allows those who are still working during the day or who have daytime caregiving responsibilities to participate. It also opens up an option for those who prefer evening activities or cannot attend programs earlier in the day.

Healthy aging is not just about the physical benefits, although those are important. It is about social connection, confidence, and belonging. When people have a place to go each week where they feel welcomed and supported, it strengthens their ability to age in place and remain active in community life. We see friendships forming, people cheering each other on, and a sense of joy in simply moving together.

Sue brings so much positive energy to her class. Participants always leave smiling, not just because they got a good workout, but because

they shared space with others who understand the value of staying engaged as we grow older.

Syncocize meets every Tuesday at 5 p.m. at the Portland Senior Center. We welcome those who want to add more movement, more connection, and more fun into their week. Healthy aging is about adding life to our years and community plays a big role in that.

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

## Thank You, Toriana

To the Editor:

This is a thank you note to Toriana Willams regarding the reporting in the *Rivereast News Bulletin* for Jan. 23, entitled "Tension Erupts Over Colchester BOF Vote." Not only was the article insightful and written well, she wrote with (what I believe) unbiased facts as illustrated when she wrote "...preceding the vote reflected strong feelings on both sides..." which she captured quite well in the article.

I only wish that the people involved could act with such unbiased feelings instead we (the people of Colchester) are left with what Toriana ended the article with: "... the events surrounding Antonacci's appointment underscored ongoing political tension with the Board of Finance and among town residents..."

**Ralph Bianco**  
Colchester

## Bulletin Board

"I just looove Josh Allen," my wife remarked.

In the event you don't follow football teams that have never won a Super Bowl, Josh Allen is the beloved (in Western New York, anyway) quarterback of the Buffalo Bills. My wife, who hails from Rochester, is a charter member of the so-called "Bills Mafia"—a fan base that makes Islamic militants look like choir boys.

Our conversation on "love and football" took place as the Bills were preparing to battle the Broncos in the playoffs earlier this month.

"You don't even know Josh Allen," I sourly observed in response to her declaration of undying love.

"I don't care. I love him."

"He has beady eyes," I said.

"He does not. He does not have beady eyes. He has great eyes."

"For a mole."

"You're just jealous."

"Well, you're right about that. Except for getting repeatedly slammed into the frozen ground by 300-pound homicidal maniacs, I wouldn't mind making umpteen million dollars a year for throwing a ball around. As long as I didn't have to play in cold weather. Or when it's raining. Or snowing. And I'd want summers off."

Decked out in her Buffalo Bills pajamas and sipping coffee from her Buffalo Bills mug, she replied, "Josh doesn't care about all that. He just wants to win. That's why I looove him. We all looove him." (The "all" may have referred to her, her three equally infatuated sisters and my own Son #2 whom they wickedly enticed from the Football Path of Righteousness – or it might have referred to the known universe – I was not sure.)

I groaned. "Don't be silly. You do not actually love Josh Allen"

"You love Tom Brady," she said. "And those cheating Patriots."

I ignored the cheating allegation. That's the sort of thing losers always say about winners. We get used to it.

"Admit it," she said. "You love Tom Brady."

"I do not love Tom Brady," I replied. "I loved watching Tom Brady play. I loved watching the Patriots repeatedly win Super Bowls. I respect and admire his talent. But no, I do not love Tom Brady personally. I do not embarrass myself by sitting around mooning over Tom Brady."

"Liar."

"I am not. I love you. I love lobster rolls (with butter, not mayo). I do not love Tom Brady."

She snorted.

"Though I will say that Tom Brady does not have beady eyes," I added.

She scowled at me.

"Furthermore," I continued, "the Patriots now have a new winner in the form of quarterback Drake Maye, the 23-year-old phenom who is leading us into a new era."

"Oh yes, he would be the only one on the team without an arrest record," she retorted.

"Don't be ridiculous," I said.

"What about—"

"Ooops! Hey, the game is starting! Broncos vs. Bills! You don't want to miss the kick-off!"

"Go Josh!" she exclaimed.

Of course the Bills lost. Again. The referees made sure of that, my wife says (and I have to agree with her this time). Meanwhile, the Patriots are bound for the Super Bowl, having beaten the team that beat the Bills.

I don't want to say my wife is resentful, but it appears I'll be watching the Super Bowl alone. I'm thinking of going out and buying myself a set of Patriot pajamas.

**Jim Hallas**

## Rivereast Hours of Operation

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

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### News Bulletin

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

(860) 633-4691 — [bulletin@glcitizen.com](mailto:bulletin@glcitizen.com)

Reader Forum • Reader Forum

### Colchester Isn't Served By Storming Off

To the Editor:  
Here in Colchester, the pattern has become hard to miss. Republicans vote for a Democrat. Angry Republicans walk out. Democrats try to vote for a Democrat. Angry Republicans walk out. Democrats vote for the "wrong" Republican. Angry Republicans walk out. Different votes, same reaction. Walk out, cry foul, claim the process is broken, and refuse to engage with an outcome they don't like. Democracy doesn't guarantee your side always wins. It requires showing up, voting, and accepting the result even when it's not what you wanted. Walking out isn't a protest. It's opting out of the job. At some point, participation has to mean more than just showing up when you're sure of the outcome.

**John Farrell  
Colchester**

### Thank You, Portland Food Bank!

To the Editor:  
We often see letters of thanks FROM the Portland Food Bank but I would like to offer a heartfelt thanks TO the Food Bank! Like many of you readers, I have regularly donated to the food bank but I have never had the privilege to see my contributions put into action – until recently. In the past few weeks I offered to help some people in need of food who couldn't physically get to the food bank themselves. When I went in to inquire if I would be able to access food for these people, I was met with an inviting smile from Iris who said that I could absolutely pick up food for them! Before I knew it, Deb and Debbie, Anita and Carol, Kevin and several other volunteers (sorry that I didn't get their names) had cheerfully filled grocery bags with protein rich foods, snacks, laundry detergent and paper goods. Adams Hometown Market had donated tables full of bread and rolls and pastry items. I was in awe of the work that is done by the worker bees down in the basement of our Senior Center. It's said that "it takes a village" and our small town of Portland comes through in a big way to help people in need. Please continue to give generously to the Food Bank and know that your donations are being used wisely and with grace to bring care to those in our community who need it most.

**With gratitude,  
Faith Fraulino  
Portland**

### DPW – The Sunken Cost Fallacy

To the Editor:  
The sunken cost fallacy happens when past spending drives present decisions. It's the impulse to "throw good money after bad," to keep investing simply to justify earlier choices. This is an emotional reaction, not a rational one, and it often leads to escalating losses. The DPW site debate is a perfect example. The initial mistake, walking away from the Kinney Road site without a viable alternative, has spiraled into a chain of costly missteps. Now we're staring at higher taxes, inflated project costs, and an extended dump closure. Yet some insist that because money has already gone into studying Old Colchester Road, we should push ahead. That is exactly the trap the sunken cost fallacy sets. A plan should succeed or fail on its merits, not on the need to defend past errors. And honestly, who believes this plan is strong? I have observed that most people fall into one of four camps:  
1. Kinney Road supporters;  
2. Politicians eager to move on without having to come up with fresh or new ideas;  
3. Workers who understandably want improved facilities; and  
4. Residents exhausted by years of mismanagement who just want closure. The first three groups are already committed and unlikely to shift. But for residents still weighing the facts, a 'no' vote is the only way to break this cycle of poor decisions and demand a plan that actually makes sense. The best solution will be realized by spotting when something isn't working and choosing change over comfort, clarity over clinging, and courage over complacency. Vote no and revisit Kinney.

**Rob Poudrier  
Amston**

### DPWAC Update

To the Editor:  
Last week's *Rivereast* had multiple letters as well as a half page article regarding the DPW project. There was also a lengthy Facebook post, with 27 likes and 89 comments. This is the most back-and-forth conversation and involvement that I think I have seen. The post was about "re-visiting Kinney Road." We as a town and as residents lost the narrative regarding the use of the Horton Property site years ago. I, for one am happy to see the involvement and the interaction. Multiple people have stated things like "it's time to get this done," "we can't keep kicking the can down the road." There were comments about the price tag for the rebuilding of the Old Colchester Road site. Everything that I have learned over the last 2+ years is that building a public building is not cheap. Way different than a garage in your backyard. With that said the conservative number to build on the Horton Property was 17 to 18 million dollars with building a road and running all of the utilities. That was in 2018. The transfer station was never slated to be moved. Fast-forward 7 years and going through COVID we all saw the price of everything go up a lot. Building costs were not excluded!

Walking my tight rope, not advocating for or against, in order to revisit the Horton Property, we would need to allocate another 1.5 to maybe 2 million dollars to again hire an architectural firm to do all of the same work we are paying for now. This whole process of having a town meeting, voting to approve the funds to hire the architect took almost a year. By the time the current Old Colchester Road site is rebuilt (if passed at referendum) it won't be ready for use until 2028 best case. If we use 17.5 million and add 5% per year we would be at 24.5 million dollars today. If we spend another 1.5 for additional architectural fees we are at 26 million. The time to set up a town meeting, have the vote, hire architects and move forward will be another 2 to 3 years. 26 million at 5% per year for just 2 more years will be 28.6 million.

I believe that most residents are on board with the fact that our current facility is old, unsafe and inadequate and our employees deserve better.

**Sincerely,  
Todd Habicht, Vice Chairman  
Hebron DPWAC**

### Additional Staff Member Needed

To the Editor:  
The continued growth of programs and participation at the East Hampton Senior Center makes the addition of another full-time staff member essential. The center has only one full-time employee, senior center director Holly Marrero, and four part-timers – a staffing level that has stayed the same while the number of members and programs have multiplied. Since August of 2024, the membership at the senior center has increased by about 300, including members in the 55-to 60-year-old range as well as those over 60.

The services provided include meals, public benefits counseling, health and fitness programs, and transportation as well as social and recreational activities, arts and crafts, and opportunities for travel and volunteer and civic engagement.

Studies show that older adults who have opportunities to socialize, get proper nutrition, stay fit and continue to learn stay healthier longer.

Dr. Eric Rosenberg, chairman of the Commission on Aging, said that another full-time employee would enable the senior center to offer expanded hours. The center now is only open on weekdays until 4 p.m. Younger working members would like access in the evenings. In addition, having another full-time employee would ensure greater continuity of services from day-to-day if the director has a day off or has to attend meetings.

The town has 3,400 adults aged 55 or older, but the senior center accounts for less than half a percent of the town budget.

For the past eight years, the director has requested a second full-time employee, in addition to the part-time staff, but those requests have been denied. In December, the Commission on Aging voted unanimously to support this senior center request.

We hope this year, the town will approve this request.

**Thank you,  
Kathy Megan, Member  
East Hampton Commission on Aging**

### Deep Concern Regarding Comment

To the Editor:  
As a parent, taxpayer, and the inaugural Parent Ambassador of the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood and EASTCONN's Local Governance Partners Early Roots Collaborative, I am writing to express deep concern regarding a comment made during a recent Andover Board of Education meeting. During a public budget discussion, an elected board member stated that "every 2yearold is a Special Ed kid." This remark was not only inaccurate, but dismissive of the children and families who rely on early childhood and special education systems every day. Public officials carry significant responsibilities. They are entrusted with modeling professionalism, respect, and ethical conduct. They are expected to make informed decisions grounded in data, best practices, and the needs of the community. And they are responsible for representing the district with integrity in all publicfacing forums. When comments fall short of these expectations, it raises serious concerns about readiness for public service, understanding of early childhood development, and awareness of legal obligations under IDEA and Connecticut's BirthtoThree system.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the Board to pursue targeted professional development, including training in IDEA, BirthtoThree, and early childhood education; governance and publicmeeting etiquette; disability awareness and inclusive language; and the rural social determinants of health that shape outcomes for Andover's children. These are not optional competencies—they are essential for anyone charged with making decisions that affect young learners, especially those with disabilities.

As someone who has lived these systems personally and professionally, I was troubled by the audacity and privilege reflected in the comment made. There is a meaningful difference between being misinformed and speaking from a place of prejudicial assumption. Misinformation can be corrected with education. Prejudicial privilege, however, causes harm – particularly when expressed in a public forum where accuracy and

*See Letters, page 6*

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**PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING**

**State Project No. 0172-0550  
Traffic Control Signal Replacements in  
Eastern Connecticut  
(Groton, Killingworth, Ledyard, New London,  
Norwich, Plainfield, Preston, Stonington, Windham,  
and Woodstock)**

**Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.**

**Learn More & Register:  
portal.ct.gov/DOTEasternCT0172-0550**

The purpose of this meeting is to provide the community with an opportunity to learn about the proposed project and allow an open discussion of any views and comments concerning the proposed improvements. A Q&A session will immediately follow the presentation.

The purpose of this project is to replace aging traffic control signal infrastructure with modern equipment to current standards in order to maintain reliable operation at project intersections throughout Eastern Connecticut.

Right-of-way impacts are expected to be minimal around new signal equipment and newly installed sidewalks at some project intersections.

Construction is expected to start in spring 2028. The estimated cost is \$14 million with 100% state funds.

The public can submit comments and questions during the two-week public comment period following the meeting. Please direct comments and questions by Tuesday, February 17, 2026, to **DOTSignalReplacements@ct.gov** or (860) 594-2189.

**ACCESSIBILITY**

Non-English language closed captioning will be available on Zoom. The recording will also be posted following the meeting in CTDOT's public meeting playlist at **portal.ct.gov/ctdotVPIArchive**.

For limited internet access, call (877) 853-5257 with Meeting ID 852 7548 4418. Project information can be mailed within one week by contacting Kaethe Podgorski at **DOTSignalReplacements@ct.gov** or (860) 594-2020.

For hearing/speech disabilities, dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). Request language assistance from CTDOT's Language Assistance at (860) 594-2109 at least five business days before meeting.

Reader Forum • Reader Forum

★ *Letters cont. from page 5*  
respect are nonnegotiable.

I want to acknowledge that our superintendent and principal continue to lead with purpose, best practice, and a family-centered vision. Their professionalism at recent meetings helped redirect harmful assumptions and ground the conversation in facts. That leadership matters.

I urge the board to reaffirm its commitment to inclusive, evidence-based, and respectful governance. Malinformation has no place in shaping the future of Connecticut's children. Our young and vulnerable learners deserve leaders who understand the systems that serve them and who honor their dignity in every public conversation.

Our children, families, and educators deserve nothing less.

**Doris Maldonado Méndez – Andover  
Parent Ambassador, OEC/EASTCONN  
Early Roots Collaborative**

### Trash Talk

To the Editor:

The Marlborough Board of Selectmen is being asked to consider committing to Phase 1 of the WasteZero program. Board members were told that Marlborough would receive a \$108,621 grant to cover the costs of the first exploratory phase. The board was told that due to the grant, the first phase would be "free" to the town, but we tend to forget that grant money is not "free." The last time I checked, the State of CT does not have a grove of money trees.

The board was told that they would be free to decide after the first phase about moving forward with the program. But we all know what happens when government starts a new program. There is no such thing as an end.

Residents would be required to use special bags, and if the Town moved forward after the trial period, we would need to purchase these

bags for use when taking our trash to the Transfer Station.

The board was being pressured to make a decision, but they pushed the decision off until their next meeting. But, why the rush? Will there be an informational session to solicit public input before a decision is made?

I understand that the cost associated with trash disposal has gone up substantially due to the closing of the 40+ year old trash to energy plant in Hartford, but I want to hear more about how the WasteZero plan will impact our taxes and my household costs.

What really concerned me was the pressure being applied to make a quick decision. The last time I was subjected to such a hard sell was when I ended up with a Kirby vacuum.

**Ken Hjulstrom  
Marlborough**

*Note: Hjulstrom is a member of the Marlborough Board of Finance, but said he is speaking as an individual.*

### More Misinformation in Hebron

To the Editor:

It was exciting to see so many letters in last week's Rivereast discussing Hebron's Public Works project. However, I would again urge writers and readers alike to embrace the facts and avoid misinformation. One "Unacceptable" letter offered significantly incorrect information on the 2023 efforts to "assess town interest," stating only 92 people responded. If this refers to the Public Works Survey, the number of involved people and the results were drastically different. At the time, the Board of Selectmen hoped that 400 people would take the survey. In fact, 725 people participated with the overwhelming results; 69% said keep Public Works at Old Colchester Road, 16% said use the Horton Property and 10% said use the Horton

Property with the salt shed elsewhere. The number of participants is statistically significant and the results were just as clear.

The reoccurring claim that only a small group of residents have altered the town's plan for placing public works on Kinney Road is utterly unfounded. In fact, what began as a group of families concerned for our quiet neighborhood quickly grew to a community-wide effort and beyond. Early concerns over ground water pollution were confirmed by a groundwater specialist named William Warzecha of Norwich, a 36-year veteran of Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. Two letters by Mr. Warzecha were submitted to the Town of Hebron, dated September 16, 2022 and December 22, 2022. They can be found in Town Records and are also posted on Save Hebron Center on Facebook. Mr. Warzecha offered expert testimony clearly stating, "the Town is using poor judgment in locating the public works facility on Kinney Road and the facility should not be built in that location." Mr. Warzecha's opinion was confirmed by a detailed report to the Selectmen by their own sub-committee, the Hebron Green Committee, dated May 1, 2023.

As outlined last week by Hebron historian John Baron, Connecticut's State Historic Preservation Office has instructed the town to complete research to confirm preliminary findings that 17 Kinney Rd. has tremendous historic value. Neither Mr. Baron nor SHPO are residents of Kinney Road.

I understand the significant cost of a new Public Works facility is daunting. However, as well-articulated in Keith Petit's letter, it is a necessary project and Old Colchester Road is the best and most cost-effective location. Please attend meetings and learn the facts, we can do better than misinformation.

**Sincerely,  
Kevin J. Tulimieri  
Amston**

### Finish the Work Before We Vote

To the Editor:

One of the hallmarks of responsible decision-making is knowing when a project is not ready. Sometimes the most prudent choice is to pause, complete the necessary work, and then move forward with confidence. Colchester's athletic field improvement project has not reached that point, and the responsible choice for voters is to vote 'no' – not to stop progress, but to give the project the time it needs to succeed.

The concerns with the proposal fall into two clear areas: the design is incomplete, and state funding has not been secured.

A key part of any design phase is compliance with local regulations and state law. That process is still underway. The project would result in significantly increased stormwater discharge into the Sherman Brook wetlands, yet no biological studies have been completed to evaluate potential impacts on plants and wildlife. Without that information, neither decision-makers nor voters can fully understand the long-term environmental effects. Proceeding before this work is finished creates unnecessary risk and undermines public confidence in the review process.

The second issue is funding. While no one welcomes higher taxes, state and federal grants exist specifically to help communities undertake major infrastructure projects. These programs reduce the burden on local taxpayers and are a normal part of responsible municipal planning.

To date, Colchester has not received state grant funding for this project and did not apply for annual grants because the project was not considered shovel-ready.

That is precisely the point.

A 'no' vote allows the town to finish the design, complete required environmental studies, pursue available grants, and return to voters with a fully developed proposal. At that point, residents can evaluate the project based on complete information and make a decision with confidence – supporting a project that is truly ready for success.

Finish the work, get the grants, then vote.

**Michael Dubreuil  
Colchester**

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

the senior vice president and executive director of Heart & Vascular Services at Yale New Haven Health. "This is a great example of people across the country, not just here in Connecticut banding together to unite for women's health and the health of our communities."

Find resources to support women's heart health at every age and stage of life at GoRedforWomen.org and learn more about National Wear Red Day at WearRedDay.org.

And for more information about local activities connected with the Go Red for Women movement, contact Adria Giordano at adria.giordano@heart.org or visit www.heart.org/Connecticut.

See you next week.



Cover Story • Cover

★ **Snowstorm, cont. from page 1**

ages were anticipated at the time. Marlborough Fire Chief Kevin Asklar confirmed the storm itself was relatively quiet from an emergency response perspective. The department handled one car accident and one fire alarm, both with minimal impact. Asklar explained that winter storms typically produce low-speed accidents, which tend to result in fewer injuries.

Fire crews prepared by adding extra sand and salt to their vehicles and coordinating closely with public works. In some cases, he said, plow trucks will escort or even plow fire apparatus into emergency scenes when conditions are severe. Fortunately, that level of intervention was not required during this storm.

Colchester officials also reported a strong response. First Selectman Bernie Dennler called it the biggest storm in several years and praised public works crews for working continuously from Sunday morning into Monday evening. He emphasized that the town budgets with extended snow events in mind and maintains a snow reserve fund to handle harsher-than-average winters.

“Our guys worked just as part of this initial cleanup from 7 a.m. Sunday to 6 p.m. Monday,” Dennler said. “That’s 35 hours straight of working. ... From a human perspective, that’s a lot of time, a lot of labor.”

Dennler added that he felt gratitude towards the public works department for “showing up and being out there for as long as they were.”

Dennler also highlighted improvements made to Colchester’s public works department in recent years, including full staffing and increased experience among crew members. He said those changes directly contributed to the town’s ability to manage the storm effectively and safely.

Colchester Fire Chief Steve Hoffmann described the snow as light, dry and fluffy – snow

that piled high but avoided many of the hazards associated with heavier, wetter storms. He said the department responded to five calls during the event, most of which were medical in nature. Two furnace malfunctions prompted carbon monoxide check, but no dangerous levels were detected and CO detectors were provided to residents as a precaution.

Fire stations remained staffed and open as warming centers, though no residents needed to use them. Hoffmann noted that crews spent time after the storm digging out fire hydrants, particularly in downtown areas where snow storage space is limited. He compared the storm to 2013 but said this one was easier to manage due to the snow’s light consistency - even joking that, at times, it could be moved with a leaf blower.

In Andover, Interim Town Administrator Jim Bellano said the storm marked the first major plowing event of the winter, following weeks dominated more by salting than snow removal. He acknowledged statewide concerns about salt supply but said Andover remained in good shape and prepared to handle the season’s demands.

Across towns, the pattern was consistent: long hours, careful planning, interdepartmental cooperation and a surprising amount of good humor. From snowplow trophies to leaf blower-friendly drifts, the storm tested systems and stamina – but it also highlighted just how practiced Connecticut has become at digging itself out.

For residents still staring down snowbanks taller than their cars, that may not make shoveling any more fun. But it does mean that, behind the scenes, a lot of people were doing their jobs very well – sometimes proudly, sometimes tiredly and occasionally with a sense of humor buried somewhere under two feet of snow.

Cover Story • Cover

★ **Needleman, cont. from page 1**

challenge proposed rate increases. This past year, he also led passage of the Ratepayers First Act, which promised to cut consumer electricity bills.

Needleman said his work on energy regulation was part of a bigger picture problem, tackling what he said is the biggest issue he hears about in his district: affordability.

“Certainly, the political moment speaks to affordability,” he said, adding that “there’s sort of this overriding concern that Connecticut has two economies” — one for the very rich, he said, and another for everyone else. He said that spans party divides.

“I represent a district that goes from very blue to reasonably red,” he said. “Everybody has issues and problems that they would like input and help on trying to solve. I have never gotten a call from somebody who said they needed help and asked them, ‘What’s your party affiliation? What are your politics?’”

Needleman said that much of the work by the state legislature, and the Democratic caucus, this year will involve stepping up to make up for the recent loss of federal funding, citing the recent loss of health insurance subsidies as an example.

“But you know, when it’s the state versus the federal government, we’re bringing a knife and they’re bringing a gun,” he said. “They’re actually bringing a cannon, and we have limited ability to make up for all of the losses.”

Needleman described himself as both a “progressive” and a “moderate,” and said he often sees eye to eye on some issues with Republican colleagues.

“I don’t think government can solve all problems,” he said, “but I think that when you get around to basic necessities – shelter, food, health care – you know, these are basic necessities

that I think in a modern society are a right. Not an unlimited right, but a right.”

At the same time, he said, “on economic issues, I tend to be prudent and thoughtful and believe that balancing budgets makes sense,” adding that he did not believe that “taxing people in an unlimited way is going to solve anything.”

Needleman was cautious on the topic of affordable housing. He voted for the controversial housing bill HB8002 that passed along party lines this past November, and at the time, he told The Rivereast that the bill was a “good-faith effort” to solve what he described as “a housing crisis.”

Needleman said that “there’s a difference between affordable housing, which is a legally defined term, and housing affordability, which is a broader concept,” adding that “if you don’t have enough housing units, you need to construct new housing.”

He emphasized the shifting demographics in the state and said that, without new housing that residents can afford, the real estate market was “frozen” with younger people unable to find places they can afford and older homeowners wanting to downsize and unable to find places to move into.

Needleman said politics was a very divided place these days, and said he tried to be a “moderating force on a lot of ideas.”

“Everything doesn’t have to be drama,” he said, “and I’m an example of somebody who tries to get the drama out and tries to find common ground.”

“Democracy doesn’t work if it’s my way or the highway,” he added. “It just doesn’t. It’s going to fall apart. If you don’t have enough people who are not calling each other names and trying to figure out common ground, then it falls apart.”

RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM

# ENTERTAINMENT

### Youth Lacrosse Registration, Clinic

RHAM Youth Lacrosse has opened registration for its spring 2026 season for boys and girls in grades K-8 who reside in Hebron, Marlborough, Andover and surrounding towns that do not offer a youth lacrosse program.

Families can learn more and register at [www.rhamyouthlacrosse.com](http://www.rhamyouthlacrosse.com), with the registration deadline set for Sunday, Feb. 8, 2026.

In addition, RHAM Youth Lacrosse will host a free “Try Lacrosse” clinic on Sunday, Feb. 8, at RHAM High School, for players in grades K-8 who are interested in learning the game. No experience or equipment is required, and current players are also welcome to attend. The clinic is intended to provide a fun, low-pressure opportunity for children to be introduced to lacrosse and build skills.

For questions, families may email [rhamyouthlacrosseregistrar@gmail.com](mailto:rhamyouthlacrosseregistrar@gmail.com).



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### AHM News & Notes

AHM Youth and Family Services has announced the following items of interest. For more information or to register, visit [ahmyouth.recdesk.com](http://ahmyouth.recdesk.com).

**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)

**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.



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Join us for \$10 Bottomless Pasta Every Thursday starting at 5PM w/bread and salad.  
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### “The Big Game” Sunday Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>

More cheering. Less cooking!



See our catering menu at our Facebook page for game day food ideas! Pre-order by Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>.

### “Romancing the Moment”

Valentine’s Day Catering Menu available online at our Facebook page.  
Call 860-295-9521 to order, pre-order by 11AM on Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>.



WINTER HOURS: Grill open weekdays til 4PM for Breakfast & Lunch - Bakery Open Til 5PM • Saturday and Sunday - Grill & Bakery Open til 3PM.

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# Where in the World is the *Rivereast*?

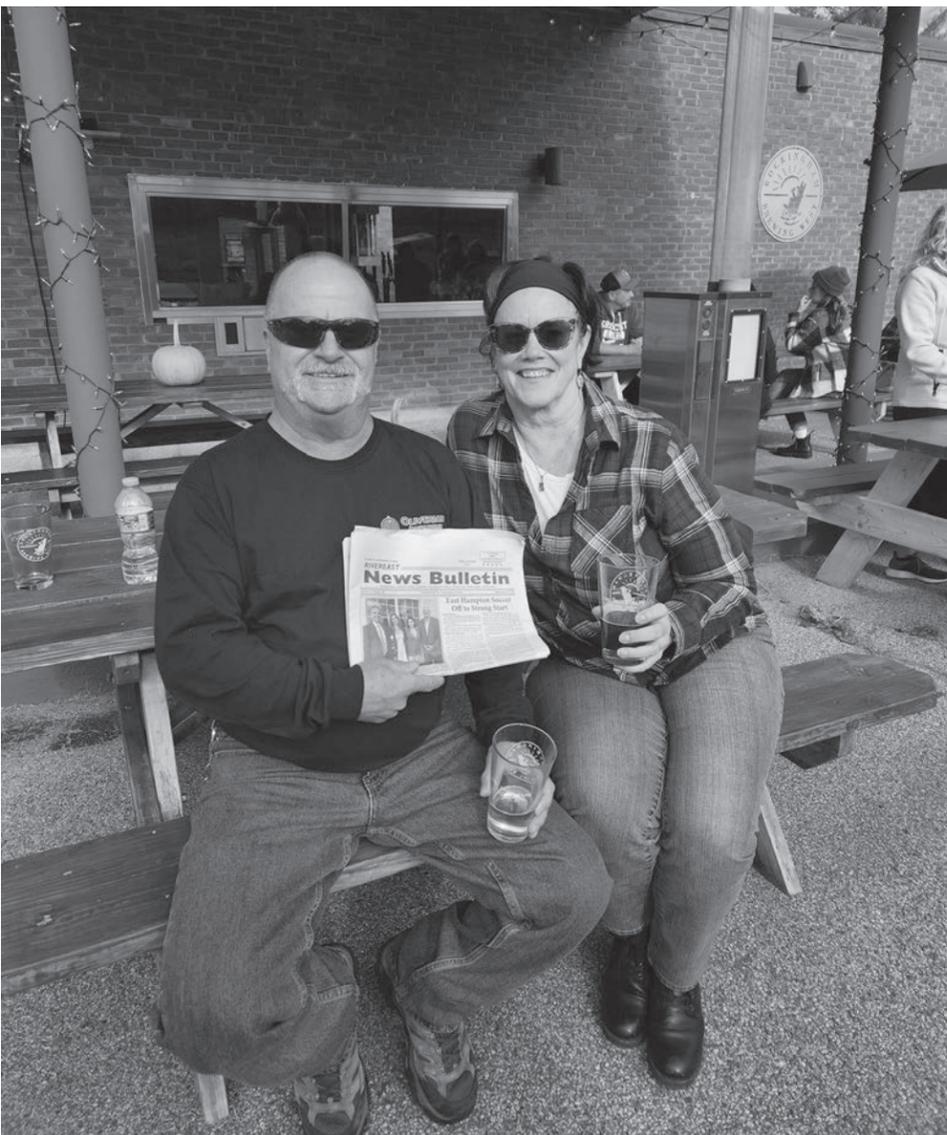
Taking a vacation or a day trip soon? Or simply going out to dinner? Bring the *Rivereast* with you! Whether it's across the globe or across town, we want to see where you've been! Simply snap a photo with the *Rivereast*, send it to [bulletin@glcitizen.com](mailto:bulletin@glcitizen.com) and, if printed,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



**Marvelous Maui...** Nancy Xeller (right) and her son Colin Gartner brought the *Rivereast* with them on a recent trip to Maui, Hawaii. The restaurant behind them is named after the longest word in the Hawaiian language. It is located at the Grand Wailea Resort. Nancy said she and Colin had a fabulous time on their trip.



**Festival Fun...** Jeanne Bishop and Jane Muskatallo, both of Portland, took the *Rivereast* to the Saint Sebastian Festival during a recent trip to Old San Juan, Puerto Rico.



**Relaxing with the *Rivereast*...** Paul and Toni Talbot of Colchester stopped for a cold one after leaf peeping in New Hampshire last fall.



**Checking In at the Cape...** Ashley Hicks and Victoria Lugli of East Hampton recently traveled with Victoria's mother, Valerie Seery of Colchester (taking the picture) to Cape Cod. The trip was to check on Valerie's summer rental cottage, the Salty Mermaid in Dennis. They enjoyed dinner and live music at O'Shea's Olde Inn, and finding sea creatures washed up on the beach.

## Where in the World?

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

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

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

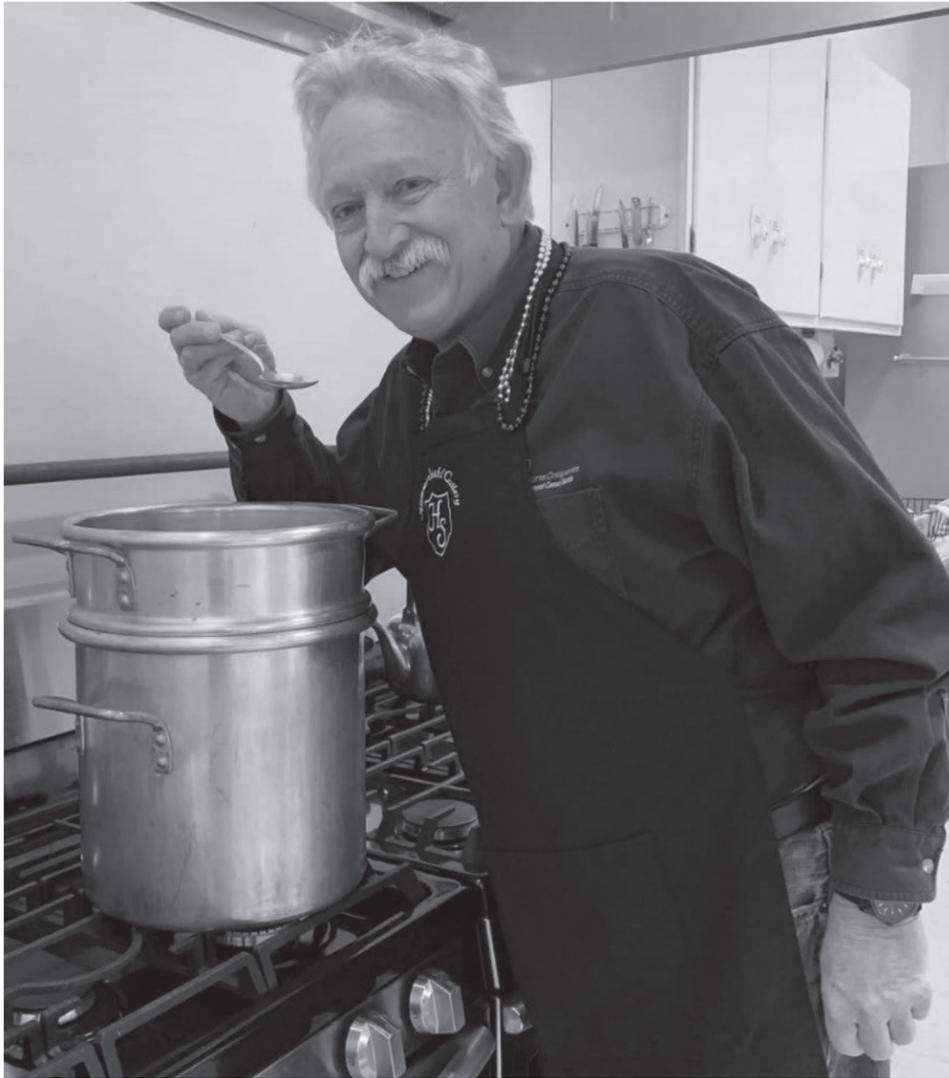
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**First Congregational Church member Jeffrey Fraulino will once again serve up red beans and rice, chicken and andouille gumbo, and more when the church holds a Mardi Gras Festival this Saturday, Jan. 31, from 11 a.m.-2 p.m.**

**Mardi Gras Café at Portland Church**

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

One highlight of the festival will be 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 Fraulino 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.

Fraulino is no stranger to the kitchen and preparing New Orleans-style meals is one of his passions. His career in commercial real estate afforded him many opportunities to eat all over Louisiana and actually find himself in the kitchens of Emeril Lagasse, John Besh and others. Fraulino notes, "No shortcuts, a proper roux, and authentic ingredients such as Camillia red beans, a New Orleans staple, and Jacob's andou-

ille from LaPlace result in a great outcome. I do skip the okra as I have found it to be an acquired taste up here in the Northeast."

If you haven't eaten these dishes in New Orleans and don't plan to go there anytime soon, plan to head down to First Congregational Church for authentic Louisiana cuisine. Servings will be \$10 for a pint container. The gumbo will be topped with rice.

The Mardi Gras Festival chairperson is Faith Fraulino, who is assisted by many church members. 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.

**'Chill for Change' Returns Feb. 28**

The Northern Middlesex YMCA and Camp Ingersoll will hold the 12th annual Chill for Change, a winter fundraiser benefiting camp scholarships and life-changing camp experiences, on Saturday, Feb. 28.

Chill for Change challenges participants to "Chill" by jumping into the icy waters of Jobs Pond – and create "Change" by raising funds that provide camp scholarships for children who otherwise could not attend.

YMCA Camp Ingersoll is a 77-acre outdoor center located on the shores of Jobs Pond in Portland, at 94 Camp Ingersoll Rd.

All jumpers must preregister, and must be age 14 or older. Awards will be given for: Best Costume, Best Team Theme, Biggest Pig Sty (most funds raised by a team), and Biggest Piggy Bank (most funds raised by an individual).

The top individual fundraiser will receive a free session of camp – which can be redeemed by your own family or gifted to someone else.

Register, donate, or form a team at [camping-ersoll.org](http://camping-ersoll.org) – click on 'Chill for Change.'

For more information, contact Ben Silliman at [bsilliman@midymca.org](mailto:bsilliman@midymca.org) or 860-342-2267, or look for YMCA Camp Ingersoll on Facebook.

**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.

**Co-Ed Drop-In Volleyball:** Tuesdays through April, from 6:30-8 p.m., at Gildersleeve 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.

**Youth Virtual Golf Clinics at Chris Cote's Golf Shop:** One-night clinics are offered on Wednesdays, Feb. 11, Feb. 25 and March 11, from 5-6 p.m. Clinics taught by PGA Golf Professional Kevin Telford.

**Adult & Youth Dance Classes with Miss Alicia:** Various programs are available for participants as young as 13 months old.

**Winter Break Art Program by Abrakadoodle:** Tuesday, Feb. 17, 9 a.m.-noon, in the Buck-Foreman Community Center. Kids ages 5-12 are invited to come create a penguin and snowman celebration.

**Kids' Blast:** This is an afterschool (3-6 p.m.) child care program available to students enrolled in grades K-6 in the Portland Public School System. Membership registration is now open for the 2025-2026 school year.

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

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

**Plug Into Your Imagination Art Program by Abrakadoodle:** Mondays, March 9-30, at the Buck-Foreman Community Center. Kids ages 5-12 are invited to explore new media such as video game art, rice painting, newspaper watercolor and a sculpture made with straws.

**Little League Trivia Fundraiser**

Portland Little League will hold a Trivia Fundraiser Friday, Jan. 30, at 7 p.m., at Concentric Brewing, 91 Main St. Tickets are \$20 and are available at [tinyurl.com/4bujwfb6](http://tinyurl.com/4bujwfb6).

Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

For more information, email [ksbelieve@gmail.com](mailto:ksbelieve@gmail.com).



Portland • Portland

### 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, Feb. 1, Cooke will preach on the topic "Career Changes."

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.

**Mardi Gras Fest:** Sunday, Jan. 31, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Enjoy food, raffle baskets, and more.

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

### 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 [www.trinitychurchportlandct.org](http://www.trinitychurchportlandct.org).

**Service Projects:** This season, the community is collecting monetary donations to assemble gift bags filled with goodies and a gift card for older children in DCF care. The church is also gathering diapers in support of the Episcopal

Church in Connecticut's annual diaper drive.

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 [www.trinitychurchportlandct.org](http://www.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).

### 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.

Thanks to sponsors Burpee Seeds, Harts Seeds, NE Seed, MI Gardener, and Baker Creek Seeds, the club has a large selection of seeds available for people to take and swap. You can also bring labeled seeds saved from your garden or unopened seed packets from last year.

Club members will be offering demos on

making seed bombs, winter sowing and growing microgreens. Plant basil or chive seeds to take home. Visit River Bend Bookshop's pop-up garden-themed book fair and learn about the Portland Library's Seed Library. Delicious comfort food and refreshments will be available.

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).

### Portland Library News & Notes

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

**Hours:** Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., - Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., - Saturday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. **Holiday Closing:** The library will be closed Monday, Feb. 16, for Presidents 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.

**Take Your Child to the Library Day:** Saturday, Feb. 7. There will be crafts, a special scavenger hunt - and a Bubble Poppin' Boogie from singer Joy Blooms at 11 a.m. Designed for children ages 1-8 (and their grown-ups). Registration for Bubble Poppin' Boogie is required.

**Snow Day at the Library:** Tuesday, Feb. 17, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Drop in during the day for a variety of snow day fun. Practice ice skating, have a snowball fight, create some winter-themed crafts, and sip on some hot cocoa. No registration is required. Also, the Portland Lions will be on site to conduct free KidSight Vision Screenings at the library from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. - no appointment required.

**Family Craft Night: Kiss-ing Booths:** Monday, Feb. 9, 6:30 p.m. Do some building, painting, decorating, and possibly snacking as you create (Hershey's) "Kiss-ing booths." This activity has steps that are appropriate for all ages, but a parent or guardian must be with children to help with supervision. Registration is required and opens Monday, Feb. 2, at 10 a.m.

**Crimelab!** Friday, Feb. 13, 11 a.m., for grades 3-6. Learn the basics of forensic science as you decode fingerprints, examine soil and analyze ink composition. This program is presented by the Children's Museum of West Hartford. Registration is required and opens Monday, Feb. 2, at 10 a.m.

**Wildlife Detectives:** Thursdays at 3:30 p.m., Feb. 12, 19 and 26, for grades K-2. Each week in this three-week series will feature a new way of learning about animals. Explore camouflage and why it's important, dissect owl pellets to learn about a predator's diet, and the CT Science Center will stop by for a Picnic Capers program, during which you'll examine track marks, feathers, bite patterns, and even scat to identify which animal has left behind a mess. Registration is required and opens Monday, Feb. 2, at 10 a.m.

**Teen Program: Cupcake Wars with Britt's Baking Company:** Monday, Feb. 23, 3:30 p.m. Learn about frosting styles and designs. Each participant will then be given three cupcakes and three decorating challenges. Who will be crowned the cupcake champion? Registration is required and opens Monday, Feb. 2, at 10 a.m.

**Adult Programs: Winter Reading Is Afoot:** Runs through Saturday, Feb. 28. Visit the library throughout January and February 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.

**Book Clubs: 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. **Mystery Lovers Book Club:** Tuesday, Feb. 17, 1 p.m. *The Long Call* by Ann Cleaves will be discussed.

**Movie:** Wednesday, Feb. 11, 1 p.m. *Fly Me to the Moon* (2024; rated PG-13) will be shown. Run time is 132 minutes.

**Art Exhibit Reception - Portland Perspectives by Nancy Brault and Sarah Weeden:** Saturday, Feb. 21, 1 p.m. This photo exhibit is a study of Portland's walking trails, riverfront, bridge, Main Street, and other unique views of everyday Portland. The exhibit runs through Feb. 28.

### KoC Basketball Free-Throw Contest

The Portland Knights of Columbus Freestone Council 7 will hold its annual youth basketball free-throw contest on Friday, Jan. 30, at the Brownstone Intermediate School gymnasium, located at 314 Main St.

Girls and boys ages 9 through 14 can participate in the event. Registration opens at 6:45 p.m. and the contest begins at 7 p.m.

Scoring will be kept for age and gender groups based on most baskets made from 15 free-throw attempts. The top finishers for each gender and age groups are eligible to participate in the Knights of Columbus state finals in February.

### 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, P.O. Box 7, Portland CT 06480. Your tickets will be held for you at the door.

Tickets are also available at 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.

### PHS Class of '76 50th Reunion

The Portland High School Class of 1976 50th Reunion will take place Saturday, June 13, at Terrazza Quarry Ridge Golf Club, located at 9 Rose Hill Road in Portland. Cocktail hour will begin at 5 p.m.

Also, there is an optional opportunity to attend graduation for the Class of 2026, to celebrate the Bicentennial class with the Class of 2026's Semiquincentennial ceremony. Graduation is scheduled for Monday, June 15.

Anyone with contact information for classmates Betsy Bransfield Rose, Alex Castelli, Carol Clausi Karnilowicz, Marc Coman, Amy

Dooley Lockmer, Richard Kearney, Laura Kl- emba, Michael Munrow, Richard Pawowicz, Mark Pierini, Frank Sanchez, Thomas Savage, Cameo Thorne Smith, Kevin Tolman or Mary Unikjewicz Opalacz is asked to email Mary Linda Eccles/Reitz at [mlreitzphs76@gmail.com](mailto:mlreitzphs76@gmail.com) or message her on Facebook: Portland high class 76.

Classmates can also verify current contact information and obtain information by contacting Reitz.

### AARP Tax Return Prep

AARP Tax Return Preparation will be available by appointment every Wednesday from Feb. 4 to April 8 at the Portland Waverly Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave. This service is free and open to everyone, not only to senior citizens.

Bring your tax return from last year, an ID, and your Social Security card if you have one. Additionally, fill out and bring form 13614-C to your appointment - copies of this form are available for pickup at the senior center. Make sure you have all your paperwork before scheduling your appointment. All appointments are on Wednesdays from 9 a.m.-noon.

If there is inclement weather conditions and Portland schools are closed, you will be contacted to reschedule. Call 860-342-6761 to schedule your appointment.

**New this year:** Due to IRS changes, refunds will only be issued by direct deposit; paper checks will not be given.

### 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 are Tuesdays from 6:45-9 p.m., at St. Francis Church's Msgr. Fox Parish Hall, 10 Elm St., Middletown. MHVC is currently preparing for its 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.

### Dean's List

Allison Mailhot of Portland made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Delaware Valley University in Doylestown, Pa.

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### 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.

Regional • Regional

# Rivereast Standout Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

**Adam Dean – Portland High School (Wrestling):** Dean captured his 100th varsity win as the Highlanders hosted the Arrigoni Classic Duals on Jan. 24. Dean, a senior, defeated Glastonbury's Tyler Tummillo and New Canaan's Stone Milligan at the annual multi-school meet at PHS. A season ago, Dean placed fourth overall in his weight class at the Class M state championships and will be looking to improve on that when the state tournament rolls around in February.

**Conor Sullivan and Brady Topulos – RHAM High School (Basketball):** Sullivan and Topulos, both senior captains, combined for 30 points and each made an impact on both ends of the court as the Raptors upended Amistad 56-53 on Jan. 24. Sullivan scored 17 points, grabbed seven rebounds and had a pair of assists, while Topulos scored 13 points to go along with his three rebounds, two assists, and two steals. The victory improved RHAM to 7-5 overall with a trip to Glastonbury High School scheduled for tonight (Friday, Jan. 30) at 6:45 p.m.

**Aiden Niderno – East Hampton High School (Basketball):** Niderno posted consecutive double-doubles as the Bellringers defeated Westbrook on Jan. 16 and Cuginchaug on Jan. 19. Niderno, a senior, has been a rebounding machine this winter, hauling down 11 in the road victory at Westbrook (81-43) and another 12 in the home win over Cuginchaug (55-49). The two victories were part of a three-game winning streak for the Bellringers, bringing their overall record to 5-8. East Hampton will next travel to Portland High School to take on the Highlanders tonight (Friday, Jan. 30) at 7 p.m.

**Troy Johnson – Bacon Academy (Basketball):** Johnson scored a career-high 26 points as the Bobcats outlasted Waterford 66-58 at Bacon Academy on Jan. 23. Johnson, a senior, scored eight of the team's 11 points in the extra session as the Bobcats never trailed in overtime. Saw-



Adam Dean, a senior from Portland High School, earned his 100th career victory as the Highlanders hosted the Arrigoni Classic last Saturday.

yer Nauss and Ty Wissler each added 11 points as the team improved to 5-6 overall this winter. Next up, is a road date at Montville on Saturday, Jan. 31 (11:30 a.m.) before they return to Bacon Academy to host Tourtellotte on Tuesday, Feb. 3 at 6:30 p.m.

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.

## Radon Test Kits Available

January is Radon Awareness Month, and the Chatham Health District has acquired a limited number of radon test kits from the state Department of Health. Kits will be available to residents while supplies last.

One test kit is available per residence for those living within the district. Once the test is complete, you will need to mail the kit in for analysis at no charge to you. The results

will be sent to you and will not be public information.

Please only take a test kit if you are committed to following the directions and mailing it out. If you are interested in a test kit, please call 860-365-0884.

The Chatham Health District covers the Rivereast towns of Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough and Portland.

## CCSU Dean's List

The following area students made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Central Connecticut State University:

**Amston:** Dakota Babbitt, Michael Sliter.

**Andover:** Aria Adee, Logan Kanaitis, Samera Raza.

**Cobalt:** Davyan Burke.

**Colchester:** Sara Cote, Allie Donovan, Zack England, Tiffany Gallicchio, Allyson Hickey, Rebecca Magyarik, Tyler Nguyen, Bobby Obey, Mackenzie Purdell, Thomas Russell, Zach Tupper, David Wrinn, Zeek Zurita.

**East Hampton:** Crystal Barone, Sydney Blyler, Natalia Calvo, Austin Cuthbertson, Aiden Flood, Elizabeth Fortin, Patrick Gavrylchuk, Kaylee Gravel, Nicole Koval, Maximilian Laboy, Noelle Lavender, Jimmy O'Brien, Matthew

Penn, Konrad Piech, Mikaela Rich, Christopher Ruggiero, Katherine Searles, Jaelyn Taylor, Samantha Vincenzo, Devin York.

**Marlborough:** Addison Brown, Maxwell Czarnecki, Kara Goldstein, Izzy Henderson, Sean Kelly, Evan Maldonado, Isabelle Mondo, Jake Pantelone, Jake Soboleski, Sam Spinelli, Annalise Tyminski, Xaden Vardanian, Lana Wainwright.

**Portland:** Marie Agosto, Julia Capello, Molly Coleman, Sasha Connolly, Jenna Converse, Sabrina Czapiga, Aaron DeYoung, Bethany Doscher, Melina Ford, Matthew Hernandez, Owen McGinley, Katherine McGrew, Eldina Medunjanin, Bridget Reddington, Victoria Steele, Dan Stewart, Lillian Tabellione, John Thompson.

## UHart Dean's List

The following area students made the Dean's List and/or President's List for the fall 2025 semester at the University of Hartford:

**Amston:** Janina Howard – Dean's List and President's List; Lily Mota – Dean's List and President's List.

**Andover:** Jake Balula – Dean's List and President's List; Taylor Fitch – Dean's List and President's List; Kyle Eckert – Dean's List; Shannon McCarthy -- Dean's List.

Austin Dinsmoor of Colchester - Dean's List and President's List

**Colchester:** Caitryn Holt – Dean's List and President's List; Jade Hostetler – Dean's List and President's List; Lexi Magrey – Dean's List and President's List; Kaylie Marvin – Dean's List and President's List; Arie Nair – Dean's List and

President's List; Sokheta Nguon – Dean's List and President's List; Garrett Schuth – Dean's List and President's List; Taylor Gerst – Dean's List; Matthew Guerriere – Dean's List; Eddie Hageman – Dean's List; Kaitlyn Sierra – Dean's List.

**East Hampton:** Jordan Murphy – Dean's List and President's List; Jackie Laboy – Dean's List and President's List; Serenity Lachance – Dean's List and President's List; Sonja Venetianer – Dean's List and President's List; Andrea Berg – Dean's List; Jenna Murphy – Dean's List; Cheyane Nichols – Dean's List; Natalie Sherer – Dean's List; Kali Trapp – Dean's List; Connor Zmeskal – Dean's List.

**Hebron:** Kiera Braunwart – Dean's List and President's List; Nina Jobses – Dean's List and President's List; Amanda Simmons – Dean's List and President's List; Lauren Heffernan – Dean's List; Madison Pinto – Dean's List.

**Marlborough:** Angela Weese – Dean's List.

**Portland:** Abby Doncet – Dean's List; Marley Malanczuk – Dean's List; TJ Spada – Dean's List.

## Quinnipiac Dean's List

The following area students made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Quinnipiac University:

**Amston:** Zachary Bulkovitch, Christina Le-shak, Calvin Pancavage.

**Colchester:** Devin Burton, Julia Carrington, Jean-Paul Fougereuse, Malachi Kearns, Katelyn Macht, Michael Whipple, Benjamin Winicki.

**East Hampton:** Carys Dinunzio, Maya Dobson, Autumn Gardner, Danielle Healy, Emma Kelly, Madison Lockhart, Charlotte Pinaud, Sierra Selger, Neha Sidana, Kelsey Smith, Andrew Wagner.

**Haddam Neck:** Dylan Churyk.

**Hebron:** Olivia Chomick.

**Marlborough:** Kaden Hutchins, Megan Migliaro, Lily Murphy.

**Portland:** Clare Bankoski, Selena Shukis, Pierson Webster, Summer Wright.

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# Colchester Swimmer Commits to Duke

By Josh Howard

After setting numerous state swimming records locally, Bacon Academy senior Riley Anderson is set to test the waters at the highest level of college athletics.

Anderson, who competes locally for the Manchester co-op, has committed to Duke University, where she will swim for the Division I Blue Devils in the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC).

Duke was Anderson's first visit on her college tour and the campus in Durham, N.C., left an immediate impression on the Colchester native.

"It was gorgeous," Anderson said of the 8,600 acres in the heart of the Tar Heel state. "The coaches were just amazing and it felt a lot like home."

Anderson has been one of the state's best swimmers over the past four years, winning a number of state and conference titles throughout her time swimming for the Red Hawks in Manchester.

As a freshman in 2022, Anderson burst onto the scene by winning both the 50 Freestyle and 100 Butterfly at the Class S state championship and then won in the 50 Freestyle at the State Open.

She would continue to dominate over the next two years where she won both the 50 Freestyle and 100 Freestyle at the Class LL and State Open during her sophomore and junior years.

As a senior this past fall, the All-American swimmer took her times to another level where she won both the 50 Freestyle and 100 Butterfly at the Class LL and State Open, breaking the state records in both events (22.20 in 50-Free and 53.30 in 100-Butterfly) at the class level and setting a new State Open mark in the 50 Freestyle (22.39).

Justin Rivera, who took over the Manchester co-op girls swimming program this past fall, said that Anderson was one of the first ones to greet him once he arrived.

"What stuck out to me was how humble she is and how driven she is," added Rivera. "She is

very coachable too. She came in willing to work, willing to take any coaching, and you don't always get those kids – especially at her level."

Over the past three years, Anderson's efforts have helped the Red Hawks of Manchester average a top-ten ranking in Class LL.

When Anderson first entered the program her freshman year, the swimmers from Bacon Academy competed and were scored separately from the Manchester swimmers.

It was here that Anderson said she was able to earn all-state with the girls she grew up with, including her older sister Avery Anderson, who was a sophomore at the time.

The Anderson sisters teamed with Isabella Falkowski and Sophia Falkowski (also sisters) on a pair of relay teams that made the State Open. The four Bobcats brought home 2nd place in 200 Freestyle Relay and 4th in the 400 Freestyle Relay at the Class S championship.

"It was nice that we were able to do it together," stated Anderson. "It was the last chance, so it was nice to have that moment."

Swimming is also a family trait for Anderson, whose grandfather and father were both accomplished swimmers. Yet she admitted that she wasn't a fish to water when she first started in elementary school.

"I didn't like it at all; it was freezing," Anderson said with a laugh. "But as I got older, I got better at it and made friends, and now I obviously love it."

Along with competing in high school, Anderson has competed and won events outside the state with her club team.

Now, a decade after first testing the waters locally, she is set to compete with and against the best swimmers in the country.

During the recruitment process, Anderson said it was "overwhelming" and that she considered schools like UCLA, the University of Michigan, and the University of North Carolina before ultimately realizing that Duke offered



**Bacon Academy's record-breaker Riley Anderson has committed to swim for Duke University this fall.**

exactly what she was looking for from both an athletic and academic standpoint.

She is joining a Blue Devils team led by Brian Barnes, who has been the program's director of swimming and diving since 2023.

Rivera believes that Anderson's willingness to and "push herself" will suit her well with the Blue Devils.

"She is going from being the best to everybody else being better, but she has a drive to work hard and is always putting in extra hours outside of what she has to do," added Rivera.

One of the major benefits for Anderson at the next level will be that she will be within walking distance of the Taishoff Aquatic Center, the Blue Devils training and competition facility.

Anderson, who swam club locally for the West Hartford Aquatic Team, is used to driving 30 minutes or more to train and compete.

"It'll be so much easier – I'll have a lot more time on my hands," joked Anderson, who is ready to explore life outside her hometown. "I'm excited to be on campus and looking forward to being with the team."

## Colchester Federated Church News

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

**Worship:** Sundays at 9 a.m. The service is also broadcast via Facebook Live. Worship videos are at [www.colchesterfederatedchurch.org](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.

## Parks & Rec News & Notes

Colchester Parks and Recreation has announced the following programs and events. Registration required unless noted. For full program descriptions and to register, visit [www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department](http://www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department). Parks and Rec. can also be reached at 860-537-7297 or at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

**Self-Defense for Adults:** Ages 12 and up are invited to come try out Krav Maga and kickboxing to get a full body workout and learn practical self-defense. Class held Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m., from Feb. 3-March 5, at 360 Defense, 52 Mill St. Cost: \$120 (5 weeks, 2 classes per week). A minimum of one participant is needed, with a maximum of 12.

**Earring Making Class:** Make your own earrings using Wabi Sabi collage techniques. Wednesdays, Feb. 11 and 18, from 5:30-7:30 p.m., at Colchester Senior Center, for ages 15 and older. Cost is \$45/residents, \$50/non-residents. Minimum of five participants needed, with a maximum of 16 participants.

**Beginner Pickleball Lessons:** For new players only. Wednesdays, 7:30-9 p.m., Feb. 4-25, at Colchester Elementary School. Cost: \$55/resident, \$60/non-resident. Minimum of six par-

ticipants needed, with a maximum of 12.

**Make And Take Painting Nights:** Wednesdays, Feb. 4 and 25, 6 p.m., at Colchester Senior Center, for ages 13 and up. Theme for Feb. 4 is "Marsh Colors," and theme for Feb. 25 is "Highland Sheep." Fee per class is \$40 per person. Minimum of five people needed for each class, with maximum of 15.

**Pinterest Crafting Class – Valentine's Cookie Decorating:** Wednesday, Feb. 4, 5:30-7:30 p.m., at Colchester Senior Center, for ages 15 and up. Cost: \$25 per person. A minimum of six participants are needed, with a maximum of 12.

**Puzzlepalooza:** Friday, Feb. 20, 6-8 p.m., at Colchester Senior Center, 15 Louis Lane. Cost: \$25/ team. Preregistration required. A maximum of 10 teams of four will be allowed (one person per team should register). Come with a team or come alone and Parks and Rec. will connect you with people. Additional Puzzlepalooza dates: March 20 and April 24

**Commit Dance Fitness:** Wednesdays through March 4, 6-7 p.m., at Jack Jacker Intermediate School. For ages 15 and up. Drop-ins are welcome, at \$12 per class.

## Abundant Life Church News & Notes

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

**Adult Sunday Bible School:** Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

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

**Healing Bible Study:** Every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

**Prayer Meetings:** Thursdays, 10 a.m. and Fri-

days, 6:30-8:30 p.m. There is also a brief meeting for pre-service prayer on Sundays at 10:15 a.m.

**Men's and Women's Breakfast:** Meets monthly on Saturdays at 8 a.m. The men meet the first Saturday of the month, and the Women meet the third Saturday of the month.

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

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

## Senior Center News & Notes

Colchester Senior Center, 15 Louis Lane, has announced the following. Unless noted, registration is required for all programs. Credit Cards are currently not accepted. For full descriptions of programs and to register, call 860-537-3911, email [csc@colchesterct.gov](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, Feb. 2: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 11 a.m.-noon, Fitness Orientation by appointment; 12:30 p.m., Mah Jongg, Bridge, Set Back.

Tuesday, Feb. 3: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10 a.m., Movie Time – We Are Marshall; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 5:30 p.m., Open Art Reception.

Wednesday, Feb. 4: 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; 10:30 a.m., Life Review; 1 p.m., sew-cial Time; 1:30 and 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming.

Thursday, Feb. 5: 9 a.m., Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling; 11 a.m., Yoga; noon, Senior Benefits Counseling; 12:05 p.m., Chair Massage; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes; 1 p.m., Knit & Crochet; 1 p.m., Heart Broach Workshop; 4-8 p.m., Wellness Nights.

Friday, Feb. 6 – Go RED Day: 9 a.m.-3 p.m., AARP Tax Aide by appointment; 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; 11:30 a.m., Lunch Bunch; 11:45 a.m., Go Red Group Photo; 1:15 p.m., Bingo.

Inspired by Art – Piet Mondrian: Monday, Feb. 9, 10 a.m. Each month you'll take an in-depth look at an artist, their work and their process, and then make a small art project using one or more of their artworks as inspiration. This month, the focus will be on Piet Mondrian, a Dutch painter and art theorist who played a key role in the development of abstract art.

His artwork will be used to create an abstract Valentine's Day tote bag. Don't like hearts? You can make your tote bag design in the shape of a square or circle. The cost is \$10 per person and includes all the materials to complete the project. Space is limited. Please register before Feb. 6.

**Aromatherapy Workshop:** Thursday, Feb. 12, 1 p.m. Reflexologist Susette Christiansen will share the basics of aromatherapy. All participants will create their own essential oil blend spray to take home. The cost is \$15 per person. Registration is required. Space is limited.

**Pizza & A Movie:** Tuesday, Feb. 17, 5:30 p.m. The Best You Can (2025; rated R) will be shown. Challenged by her husband's aging, a woman finds solace in an unexpected friendship with a drifting security guard that offers new perspective and hope. The movie runs one hour, 42 minutes. Cost is \$7, and registration is required.

**Happy Hour with Jay:** Thursday, Feb. 19, 6 p.m. Listen to all your favorites played by Jay on the piano and bring your requests. There is no cost for this program, but registration is required.

**Healthy Food Series – Sugar Alternatives:** Tuesday, Feb. 24, 10:30 a.m. This month, discuss the use of sugar alternatives in cooking and baking. Various recipes will be shared. This is a free program. Space is limited. Registration is required.

**Ultimate Bingo:** Tuesday, Feb. 24, 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.

**Oil Painting with Brianna:** Thursday, Feb. 26, 6 p.m. This is a beginner class. Every skill level is welcome. The cost is \$20 and registration is required.

## Dean's List

Colchester residents Luke Jenkins and Heather Marvin made the fall 2025 Dean's List at the University of New England.

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**All That Jazz... Lisa Reeve recently celebrated her 19th year of teaching Jazzercise in Colchester. Classes are offered every day of the week at 188 Norwich Ave. Find out more at Jazzercise.com.**

**Westchester Church News**

Westchester Congregational Church, located at 98 Cemetery Rd., holds worship Sundays at 10 a.m. All are welcome to attend. The church choir always welcomes new members. Services are also available on Zoom; visit [www.westchestercongregationchurch.org](http://www.westchestercongregationchurch.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 [westchestercongregationchurch.org](http://westchestercongregationchurch.org), email [westcongregation@gmail.com](mailto:westcongregation@gmail.com) or call the church at 860-267-6711. Pastor Ron Lake can be reached at 860-428-3460.

**Help Plan America250 Celebrations**

Colchester is participating in America250, the nationwide commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States – and the town is inviting residents, organizations, schools, and local businesses to help shape Colchester’s celebration by hosting events and activities.

America250, also known as the United States Semiquincentennial, encourages communities across the country to reflect on America’s past, celebrate the present, and inspire the future. Colchester’s efforts will highlight the town’s history, civic pride, and sense of community.

The town is seeking ideas for community-led events and activities. Some suggested activities include historical presentations, educational programs, cultural performances, exhibits, walking tours, service projects, student initiatives, and family-friendly celebrations that

showcase Colchester’s local history and community spirit. People are also encouraged to create an America250 theme for annual events.

Any person or organization planning an event is asked to send event and activity information (name/date/time/location) to [parksandrec@colchesterct.gov](mailto:parksandrec@colchesterct.gov) by Feb. 10, so that Parks and Rec can create a calendar of events that will be published in early March.

Planning the details can continue past the Feb. 10 deadline; Parks and Rec. said it is just asking for the basic information to include in a calendar. Events can be planned for any time between March 1 and Dec. 31.

For more information, or if you have any questions, call the Recreation Office at 860-537-7297.

**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?

**Senior Center Upcoming Trip**

Colchester Senior Center has announced a trip coming up. Trips are available to senior center members and their adult guests over the age of 18. Membership is free for Colchester residents aged 55 and older. There is an annual fee of \$15 for seniors residing outside of Colchester. For more information or to register, call 860-537-3911 or email [csc@colchesterct.gov](mailto:csc@colchesterct.gov).

**Majestic Cities of Central & Eastern Europe:** Oct. 4-17. 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 [gateway.gocollette.com/link/1346389](http://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1346389).

**Recycling Project**

Boy Scout 72 is continuing to accept recyclable containers from local residents. You can drop bags of recyclable containers on the left-hand side of the pavilion at the St. Joseph’s Polish Club at 395 South Main Street Colchester. Email [letendrej@sbcglobal.net](mailto:letendrej@sbcglobal.net) or text or call 860-917-8391, if you wish to schedule a pick-up.

Your donations will help scouts go to summer camp and enjoy other camping activities that they might have to miss due to a family’s ability to afford issues.

**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).

**Veterans Honor Guard Seeks New Members**

The Colchester Honor Squad meets the first and third Tuesday of every month from 7 to 8 p.m. at the American Legion Post Headquarters at 95 Norwich Avenue (old Colchester Senior Center). The 20+-member squad is actively looking for new members so the squad can continue to provide funeral honors to all departed veterans.

Most funeral honors are performed between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday to Saturday. If you are a veteran that can give a few hours during the week or on weekends, the guard would be happy to have you stop by and visit during their Tuesday meetings.

Contact Al Letendre at [letendrej@sbcglobal.net](mailto:letendrej@sbcglobal.net) or 860-537-6516 for more information.

**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.

**DTC Trivia Night**

All are invited to an evening of trivia sponsored by the Colchester Democratic Town Committee on Friday, Feb. 20, at St. Joseph’s Polish Club. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. in time for a 7 p.m. start.

There will be prizes. Bring your own snacks and plan to purchase drinks at the cash bar. Tickets are \$20 per person for tables of up to eight people. Purchasing tickets in advance at [secure.anedot.com/colchesterdemocrats/donate](http://secure.anedot.com/colchesterdemocrats/donate) is highly encouraged as seating is limited. Tickets will also be sold at the door.

Everyone is welcome to join, no matter the size of your group.

**Freezin’ for a Reason**

Fred Brown, Rob Suchecki and Greg Cordova are once again braving the cold to support the Colchester Fuel Bank, continuing a tradition that has become a cornerstone of community compassion.

The trio will set up camp on the Colchester Green beginning Friday, Feb. 13, at 2 p.m., spending two frigid nights in a tent before packing up at noon on Sunday, Feb. 15. Their goal is straightforward—but essential: raising funds to help local families heat their homes through the winter.

“This is year seventeen,” said founder Fred Brown. “I have a feeling it’s going to be lucky number 17 – though I say that every year. What really matters is that over the last 16 years, this community has helped us raise approximately \$192,000, and we’re committed to continuing

that impact.” Brown noted that the need for assistance continues to grow.

“2026 is shaping up to be another challenging year for many families,” Brown said. “With unemployment and underemployment still affecting so many, people are forced to make impossible choices—keeping the thermostat at a reasonable temperature or paying for groceries and prescriptions. Even when the weather is milder, heat isn’t a luxury. It’s a necessity.”

Rob Suchecki, a retired Colchester Police Officer, echoed that sentiment and spoke to his personal connection to the cause. “This town and its residents have been incredibly good to me,” Suchecki said. “Giving back just feels right. Helping neighbors in need is the right thing to do—especially when so many of us are only a few paychecks away from needing help ourselves.”

Donations will be collected in person on the Colchester Green throughout the weekend. Contributions can also be made at any M&T Bank branch or online via PayPal at [freezinforareason@yahoo.com](mailto:freezinforareason@yahoo.com). Checks should be made payable to ‘Freezin’ for a Reason.’

“We’re out here as a visible reminder that some of our neighbors are struggling to keep their homes warm,” Suchecki added. “With the community’s help, we really can make a difference.”

**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.

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### CCT Presents *Sister Act* Next Month

Colchester Community Theatre (CCT) will present *Sister Act* through special arrangements with Music Theatre International, on Friday, Feb. 13, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 14, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, Feb. 15, at 2 p.m. All shows will be at the Bacon Academy auditorium, 611 Norwich Ave.

When disco diva Deloris Van Cartier witnesses a murder, she is put into protective custody in the most unexpected of places: a convent! Disguised as a nun, she finds herself at odds with both the rigid lifestyle and uptight Mother Superior. Using her unique disco moves and singing talent to inspire the choir, Deloris breathes new life into the church and community but, in doing so, blows her cover. Soon, the gang is giving chase, only to find them up against Deloris and the power of her newly found sisterhood.

### Dean's List

Colchester residents Laney Barrett, Sarah Newton, Audra Putorti and Leah Putorti made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Springfield College in Springfield, Mass.

Barrett has a primary major of education, Newton has a primary major of sports biology, Audra Putorti has a primary major of health science, and Leah Putorti has a primary major of health science/pre-PT.

Based on the hit Broadway musical, which was in turn adapted from the hit 1992 movie starring Whoopi Goldberg, features music by Tony- and eight-time Oscar-winner Alan Menken.

Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$14 for seniors (ages 65+) and children (age 12 and under). Premium seating tickets are available for \$28 each.

Tickets for this production are now on sale through the "Buy Tickets" page on CCT's website at [www.colchestercommunitytheatre.com](http://www.colchestercommunitytheatre.com). New this year, audience members are able to select seats when placing an order.

Tickets will also be available at the door (cash, check, or credit card) on performance days, subject to availability. Advance ticket purchase is recommended. All ticket sales are final - no refunds or exchanges.

CCT is selling advertisement space in our digital program as well as sponsorship levels to offset the cost of our costumes, sets and props construction. For additional information, contact producer Donna Brown at 860-639-9315.

In case of inclement weather, visit [www.facebook.com/ColchesterCommunityTheatre](http://www.facebook.com/ColchesterCommunityTheatre).

### Dean's List

Ryan Claffey of Colchester made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Stonehill College in Easton, Mass.

### DeCaprio Announces Reelection Bid

State Rep. Mark DeCaprio (R-48) has announced he is running for reelection. The 48th General Assembly District, which includes all of Bozrah, Colchester, Franklin, and part of Lebanon.

"We are in an affordability crisis in Connecticut," DeCaprio said. "Families, seniors, and small businesses are being squeezed by high taxes, high utility rates, and rising costs. I'm running for re-election to keep fighting for relief and to make our state more affordable for the people who live and work here. I have worked very hard on behalf of all of our residents - it would be my honor to have that opportunity once again."

A U.S. Navy veteran and 40-year Lebanon resident, Mark has devoted much of his life to public service. He and his wife, Cathy, raised their family in Lebanon, where he previously served on the Lebanon Board of Selectmen, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Lebanon Board of Education. He also served as Lebanon's Emergency Management Director, helping communities prepare for and respond to natural disasters and other crises. At the state level, he spent many years working in emergency management and environmental protection.

In the General Assembly, DeCaprio currently serves on the Appropriations where he believes in responsible budgeting, Judiciary, Public Safety & Security and Veteran Affairs Committees.

"In Hartford, I've worked hard to stand up for our veterans, strengthen public safety, and



State Rep. Mark DeCaprio

push back against policies that drive up costs and utility bills," DeCaprio said. "If I'm honored to be re-elected, I'll continue fighting every day for lower costs, safer communities, and a stronger future for Bozrah, Colchester, Franklin, and Lebanon."

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# Lifelong Resident Honored for Volunteering

By Anne Lilburn

For Jerry Cloutier, volunteering has long been a way of life. The lifelong East Hampton resident has been a volunteer firefighter since 1989, when he was a 15-year old high school student who signed up to be a junior firefighter because his friends were doing it and looked like they were having fun.

These days, Cloutier works as an Emergency Preparedness Specialist at Dominion Energy's Millstone Power Plant in Waterford, where he coordinates large-scale emergency drills and makes sure staff are trained and ready for emergencies. In April of last year, he was also named one of Dominion Energy's Volunteers of the Year for his work as a first responder.

Cloutier said it was an honor to be recognized for his work in the community, especially because it involves working for an organization that has become a second family to him, and that he's proud of.

"We're one of the few volunteer fire departments," Cloutier said, "where we're 100% volunteer."

While East Hampton is a small town, it still sees its share of fires. Cloutier said the number of blazes the department deals with each year varies, but there have been years in which the department has seen as many as a dozen fires. The volunteer crew also serves as first respond-

ers throughout town, responding to emergency situations including car accidents and hazardous materials incidents.

Cloutier said the fire department was actually one of the reasons he returned to East Hampton after serving in the Navy after high school. He wanted to continue to be a part of the group. His past work as a firefighter also helped steer him in the right direction, career-wise, when he first began working at Millstone on the fire brigade in 2000.

While he was pursuing his career, he also continued his work with the East Hampton Fire Department — at one point, even serving as captain of Fire Company 1. These days, Cloutier's son is continuing the family tradition. He started as a junior firefighter at the age of 15 and now, at 18, is a full firefighter.

Jennifer Rowland, a community and government affairs administrator at Millstone - Dominion Energy, said the company sought to reward volunteerism among its employees. She said that went beyond corporate volunteer events, with employees having the opportunity to log their personal volunteer hours and earn credits that the company would then pay out on in charitable donations.

Cloutier's honor, which earned him a trip to the company's corporate headquarters in Virginia for a ceremony at which he was given his

award by the CEO of the company, also earned him a \$5,000 credit towards a charitable donation, for which he could specify the charity. Cloutier said he split his donation between two local organizations: the East Hampton Lions Club and the East Hampton Food and Fuel Bank. Both of them, he said, were organizations whose work he said he had seen play out directly through his role as a firefighter.

"A lot of organizations help us in the fire department locally in East Hampton," he said. "And I just thought it'd be like, you know, it'd be nice to give back to them because they are so nice to us."

Cloutier said the Lions had supported the firehouse, buying supplies and helping with past fireworks displays. He also noted the club's other charitable work in the community.

"Knowing that they donate to other groups," he said, "I was like, well, this would be a good way to help them out with whatever they need."

As for the food bank, he said that the fire department had assisted them with collecting and transporting donations.

"I never really put much thought into it until I started to get involved when the fire department was helping the food bank, and we would bring the food from our firehouse to their storage location, and they would talk to us about how, you know, 'A lot of these shelves are empty,' or 'You know, this has been a bad year,' and it's like, 'Wow, I never really realized how many people in town rely on the food bank.'"

Mary Krogh, of the East Hampton Lions Club, said that most of the club's regular donations were much smaller. When club officials saw the large, \$2,500 donation, she said, they were "flabbergasted." Krogh went out of her way to investigate, noting that the donation had come from Dominion Energy with Cloutier's name referenced, so she located his email address and reached out.

Krogh said she was touched by his reply. "Your organization has always been very generous to us in the East Hampton Fire Depart-



Jerry Cloutier

ment and I wanted to give something back," Cloutier wrote, adding, "I hope you are able to put the donation to good use!"

Krogh said the organization would put it to good use, adding that club was planning on trying to earmark it for "something special."

"There are so many worthwhile organizations in this town, so for Jerry to pick the East Hampton Lions is quite an honor," she said.

## Bethlehem Lutheran Church News

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

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

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

## Honoring Revolutionary War Veterans

The East Hampton Cemetery Board, in conjunction with the America 250 Committee, is planning an activity to honor the Revolutionary War soldiers buried in all the East Hampton cemeteries in 2026, the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

The board plans to place a marker on the graves of these soldiers to recognize their commitment to the Fight for Independence. The board has identified the names of many of those soldiers and now wants to identify the locations of the graves to place the marker. The board is asking for information on these locations.

If you want to assist in this effort, or have questions about it, contact Terry Latimer at [tlatimer.cemeteryboard@gmail.com](mailto:tlatimer.cemeteryboard@gmail.com).

## Valentine's Day Cordon Bleu Dinner

The Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam, located at 52 Middle Haddam Rd., will sponsor a takeout dinner Saturday, Feb. 14, from 4-5 p.m.

The church is selling cordon bleu, baked potato, vegetable, roll, and chocolate cherry cake. Price is \$14 per dinner.

Please call or text Geri at 860-682-2067 to reserve your dinners. Please leave your name, phone number and dinner order. Reservations will be confirmed with a call back by Wednesday, Feb. 11.

## 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 [carlguild@gmail.com](mailto:carlguild@gmail.com).

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# Town Council Talks Senior Center, Bylaws

By Anne Lilburn

The East Hampton Town Council's regular meeting on Jan. 27 started off with a lot of love for the senior center. Public comment was filled with a range of people, from seniors who use the services, to high school students from the Interact club talking about their volunteer work, telling stories of how much the senior center and its community means to them.

Many told stories about staff members, including drivers, who had gone above and beyond, and many advocated for additional staffing to support the center's current needs.

Kim Crabbe, vice chair of the Senior Center and Services Task Force, gave a presentation outlining some of the changes and upgrades that have recently been made at the senior center and the priorities for the future.

The senior center is 40 years old, Crabbe mentioned, and its building "no longer serves the growing number of older adults in town." She said that in the last 15 months, nearly 300 additional adults have signed up as members.

"There are not enough rooms for the new and additional programs, there are not enough staff

to manage the new and active members, and there are not enough parking spaces for the 95% of members who drive to the center," she said.

She commended Senior Center Director Holly Marrero and acknowledged funding from Rotary and the donation of a computer from the library, both of which enabled needed upgrades, such as the installation of water bottle filling stations, upgrades to the computer center, installation of ADA-compliant handrails in restrooms, and the addition of a new coffee station and social area where members can gather to socialize.

Crabbe also shared insights from focus groups indicating that community members were unaware of many senior center programs, and wanted more flexible operating schedules and increased parking.

She said the task force's end recommendations were to, in the short term, hire an additional full-time staff member, and to find additional space for programs and for parking. In the long-term, she said the task force believed there was a need for a new senior and community center to address what she called a na-

tionwide "gray tsunami," with the overall aging of the population. For now, she said they were advocating for the town to hire a consultant to conduct a needs assessment and figure out how to achieve the goals of an additional staff member, parking and interior space.

Town Council Chair Dean Markham, a Democrat, said the council would invite the task force back during the budget process to expound on their needs again.

Town Manager David Cox then presented on the police contract. The changes in the contract involve benefits, including the pension and retirement programs. Another change would allow officers who have already put in time in other municipalities to enter the East Hampton department at a higher salary rate that reflects their past years of service. Cox said that he hoped that all these changes would help the department to recruit officers to open positions. The council chose to defer a decision on the police contract until next meeting, to allow council members and the public time to fully review the documentation.

The council also discussed amendments to change its bylaws, in particular in regards to decorum, rules of debate and public comment.

Council member Ted Hintz, a Republican, took issue that emails from the public, which were requested to be read at meetings, were

merely included in the council's packet, whereas video comments were shown on screen at public meetings. He argued that this was "discriminating against one member of the public over another," and said that if emails were not going to be read in, then "we should not be allowing video to be shown at council meetings" either.

"But you're not," argued council member Karen Wanat, a Democrat, "because the emails are available in the Town Council packet, and the public has the ability to look at the packet."

Additionally, added Wanat, "if we start reading every single email we get, we are going to be here for days."

In the end, the council voted 6-1, with Hintz voting 'no,' to approve the amended bylaws, with a small change to reconcile the bylaws with town policy.

Town Manager Cox also discussed the formation of a potential housing task force that might exist as a possible subcommittee on the Planning and Zoning Commission, perhaps with additional members. He said that he believed there was a lot that still was not settled and that the state, the regional councils of governments (COGs) and other municipalities were all still working to understand the details of the new housing law that passed in November.

The next regularly scheduled Town Council meeting will be Feb. 10.

## Kindergarten Registration and Screening Dates

Memorial Elementary School is accepting applications for all children eligible to enter kindergarten in September.

Per legislation, any child who is five years old on or before Sept. 1 is eligible to register for Memorial's kindergarten program. If your child will not be 5 by this date but will be 5 by Jan. 1, 2027, and you would like them to attend kindergarten in the 2026-27 school year, you must submit a request for early entry by March 15.

Registration packets will be available beginning Monday, Feb. 2, in the Memorial School lobby, at the East Hampton Public Library, and on the EHPS website at [www.easthamptonps.org](http://www.easthamptonps.org). Completed registration forms are due to the Memorial School office by Friday, March 13, along with a full-size copy of the child's birth certificate and proof of residency in East Hampton. In addition, a current CT Health As-

essment form must be on file with the school nurse's office by Friday, Aug. 7. Students may not begin kindergarten until current vaccination records have been submitted.

Once all completed registration paperwork is returned to Memorial, you will be contacted to schedule a screening appointment for your child. The following dates have been reserved for screening appointments: Tuesday, April 21; Friday, April 24; and Monday, April 27. Appointments will be scheduled for half-hour time blocks between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. If you have requested early entry to kindergarten for your 4-year-old, you will be also scheduled for an additional assessment on Monday, May 4.

Call the Memorial School office at 860-365-4020 if you have questions regarding the registration process.

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### Middle Haddam Public Library News

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

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

**Featured Artist for 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.

**Chatham Chess Club:** Wednesdays, Feb. 4 and 18, 6-9 p.m. All ages and skill levels welcome, and lessons are available. For more information, email pjhoffman@juno.com.

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

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

**Yoga with Erin Day of Ten Summit Yoga:** Mondays and Saturdays at 9 a.m., and Tuesdays at 7 p.m. Cost is a \$15 drop-in fee. Register at tensummitst@gmail.com.

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



**History of Haddam Neck in Photos...** All are invited Sunday, March 1, at 2 p.m., for a program of the History of Haddam Neck in Photos. The program will be held at Haddam Neck Congregational Church, 408 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck, and will be presented by Elizabeth Malloy, director of the Haddam Historical Society/Thankful Arnold House. Note: This is a rescheduled date for this event, which was originally planned for Jan. 25. Pictured at left is the Gillette Feldspar Quarry from around 1906. Feldspar was sent to Trenton, N.J. factories to make ceramic tableware and later was sold to Bon Ami for cleansing product.

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Haddam Neck Congregational Church is accepting donations of fabric, yarn and notions for the Bits and Pieces sale to be held during the church's 37th annual quilt show on April 11 and 12.

All proceeds support church outreach and maintenance. Call 860-993-5311 or 860-301-4994 for information on how to donate.

Hours for the quilt show are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on April 11 and noon-4 p.m. on April 12, at the church, 408 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam

Neck. There will be a tea room, raffles, and dozens of handmade quilts featured. Suggested donation is \$8.

This year, organizers are asking for some patriotic or red, white and blue quilts to exhibit - in addition to other designs they want to share - as a way to celebrate the country's 250th anniversary!

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East Hampton • East Hampton

# First Responders Help Keep Residents Safe in the Snow

By Anne Lilburn

Portland and East Hampton first responders were ready to go this past weekend when a strong winter storm dumped over a foot of snow across the state.

Both communities said that coordination and communication across all the emergency services was critical to ensuring a successful storm response.

In Portland, First Selectman Mike Pelton said everything went smoothly and according to plan. He said that he worked with the police department, fire department and emergency services department to make sure that they all worked together to coordinate their response.

He added that knowing that the storm was coming helped, saying that he trusted that the first responders “know what to do anyways.” With that said, he said he personally worked to try to get the word out to residents to avoid street parking to keep the roads clear for plows and emergency vehicles.

Pelton said that the public works department

had done an excellent job keeping roads clean, and that their work continued into the following week, as they worked to move snow at intersections, corners and parking lot entrances.

In East Hampton, Police Chief Dennis Woessner said that his department had coordinated with both the fire department and the ambulance association. He noted that the department's entire fleet is all wheel drive, but that they only have one four wheel-drive vehicle, which he said makes a huge difference in rapidly falling snow conditions.

East Hampton Fire Chief Robb Rainville said that his department was lucky enough to have a newer plow truck that helped clear the way for any emergency response vehicles, adding that the plow came in handy, particularly when responding to medical emergencies.

“As you can imagine, moving patients from their homes to the ambulance is extremely challenging with snow on the ground,” said Rainville, “as is simply gaining access to residences

when roads and driveways are not yet fully cleared.”

Rainville said the department kept ten members on standby at all times at the firehouses throughout the storm, and assisted the public works department in clearing the fire station's lots to free up their resources.

East Hampton Ambulance Association Chief Chris Wherry said that they too staffed up for the storm, keeping two full duty crews on hand for 24 hours. He said they got five or six calls for service, and at one time, had two of their three ambulances out on the road at the same time on back-to-back calls. He said he was “very proud of the work that everyone did this storm,” describing the response as “well-organized.”

“Luckily, the forecasters got it right,” he said, adding that a good forecast kept people aware and at home.

Woessner echoed that sentiment, adding that his department didn't have a single traffic accident from midnight Sunday through midnight Monday. He said that the good fortune of the storm falling on a Sunday, when fewer people had to be at work or school, made a big difference. It enabled people to stay home, he said, where they were safer.

Rainville said his team responded to seven calls for service during the storm, including one structure fire, and he said he was proud of the work his all-volunteer department put in to both fight fires and support other first responders in their jobs.

“Our team continues to do an outstanding job,” he wrote, “and as a 100% volunteer department, I am extremely proud of our membership and their strong commitment to serving the community.”

## Schools Offer Preschool Programs

The East Hampton Public School System is seeking 3- and 4-year-old residents interested in preschool programs for the 2026-27 school year.

The school system is offering two preschool programs for the upcoming year: the Integration Program ed preschool half-day program and the full-day Smart Start program.

Memorial Elementary School's preschool Integration Program will be held three times a week for 3-year-old students and four times a week for 4-year-old students. Due to limited spaces, selection for peer models will be determined through a lottery process. If selected, peer models demonstrating age appropriate skills will be assigned by age to either a three day or four day a week schedule (2.5 hours per day). Children must be toilet-trained and turn 3 prior to Sept. 1 to be eligible for the 3-year-old program and turn 4 by Sept. 1 for the 4-year-old program. There is a \$3,000/student fee for this program.

Memorial Elementary School's Smart Start Program will be held five full days per week (9 a.m.-3:10 p.m.), following the East Hampton Public Schools calendar. Priority will be given

to 4-year-old children that meet income guidelines or have other factors for consideration. Additional applicants, regardless of economic or risk factors, may then be selected through a lottery process if there are spaces available. Children must turn 4 prior to Sept. 1 to be eligible for Smart Start.

Parents interested in proceeding through the selection process must pick up an application/information packet at either Memorial Elementary School or the East Hampton Public Library. Packets will be available on Feb. 3 at both locations. The completed Parent Interview Form, Immunization Form and a Proof of Residency must be returned to Kelly Caruso at Memorial School office no later than March 20. Students will not be eligible to enroll if all required immunizations are not current. Once all three forms are returned, parents will be contacted, no later than March 28, to schedule a time to bring their child for the screening and lottery/selection process.

Forms received after March 20 will not be accepted.

## Taxes Due

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

applies. Failure to receive a bill does not exempt taxpayers from payment or interest.

Checks should be made payable to Town of East Hampton. Payments may be mailed to:

Collector of Revenue, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424. Payments may also be made online at [www.easthamptonct.gov](http://www.easthamptonct.gov).

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

Email [taxcollector@easthamptonct.gov](mailto:taxcollector@easthamptonct.gov) with any questions or concerns.

## Senior Center Upcoming Trips

East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., is offering the following coach trips with Friendship Tours. Advance registration is required. For more information or to register, stop by the center or contact the center at 860-267-4426 or [seniorcenter@easthamptonct.gov](mailto:seniorcenter@easthamptonct.gov).

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

**Fairytale Lunch at Pickity Place, Mason, N.H.:** Thursday, May 7. Visit this 1786 cottage for lunch followed by time to stroll the grounds and shop, explore the herb shop, gardens and greenhouse. Also, visit the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, N.H., for a guided tour. Explore the sanctuary, sacred spaces, monuments and burial grounds built as a memorial to those who have fallen in service to the nation. Cost is \$167.

**On the Hunt, Moose & Gems, Bethel, Maine:** May 27-29. Spend two nights at Sunday River Resort, and visit Maine Mineral and Gem

Museum, Moose Safari, Conway Scenic Railway. Cost is \$769 double/triple occupancy.

**Newport Flower Show “Pearl of Newport”:** Friday, June 19, departing the Stop & Shop parking lot at 8:30 a.m. Rosecliff Mansion is the backdrop for the Newport Flower Show where participants can stroll the first floor of the mansion and the grounds filled with floral arrangements, shop the marketplace and have free time in downtown Newport. Cost is \$136.

**Boston Tall Ships:** Tuesday, July 14, departing from Stop & Shop at 9:30 a.m. Experience the fleet of international tall and military ships in Boston Port as part of Sail250; lunch at Jimmy Buffets' Margaritaville; browse Faneuil Hall then board the Charles I for a narrated cruise. Cost is \$183.

**Twin Lobsters and a Show at the Student Prince, Springfield Mass.:** Tuesday, Aug. 25, departing Stop & Shop at 9:45 a.m. Enjoy a lunch of twin lobsters or prime rib at this charming restaurant in the heart of downtown Springfield and a show with Freddie Marion performing hits by Wayne Newton, Kenny Rogers, Sammy Davis Jr. and more. After lunch, spend time at the MGM Springfield Casino. Cost is \$149.

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### Haddam Neck Covenant Church News

Haddam Neck Covenant Church, located at 17 Haddam Neck Rd. in East Hampton, invites all to in-person and online worship Sundays at 9 a.m. Pastor is the Rev. Tom Cowger. Communion will be served this Sunday. Refreshments are served after the service.

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

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

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

### MHVC Accepting Scholarship Applications

The Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords (MHVC) Executive Board is now taking applications for the group's annual scholarships to be awarded to Middlesex County students pursuing a career in music or nursing. In its 35-year history, MHVC has awarded over \$90,000 in scholarship money.

Applicants must have been accepted at an accredited college or university with one of these majors. The Review Committee will consider academic record, extracurricular and community service activities, the student's ability to ar-

ticulate his/her career goals and the recommendations of the references. The scholarships will be paid directly to the recipients at the spring concert which will be held on Saturday, May 2, at Portland High School.

All applications must be postmarked by Saturday, March 14, and can be obtained at Middlesex County high school guidance offices or by visiting [vocalchords20.org](http://vocalchords20.org). If you would like to make a donation to the scholarship fund, visit the website.

### 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.

**All-Ages: Cupid's Craft Corner: Friday, Feb. 13, 10 a.m. Visit Cupid's Craft Corner in the Library Community Room for crafts for everyone. Be your own Valentine or make something for someone special. While supplies last.**

**Adult Programs: Cookbook Club:** Tuesday, Feb. 3, 6:30 p.m. This month's theme is Dips. Bring a prepared dish, 12 copies of the recipe to share, and come hungry. Food should arrive ready to eat; the library will provide the plates and forks. Register or drop in.

**LibrarYoga:** Tuesday, Feb. 10, 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.

**Cabin Fever History Series: Love & War and**

**Other Stories of World War II:** Saturday, Feb. 14, 11 a.m. Meet Aaron Elson, World War II oral historian, an author of numerous books, blogger, podcaster, and publisher who has helped several veterans produce their memoirs. This is an America250 program.

**Teen Programs: Crochet with Keri: Grades 5-12:** Tuesday, Feb. 10, 6 p.m. Gather together in the Teen Space each month to create a tiny crochet project. All supplies and basic instruction included.

**Magic: the Gathering (Grades 7-12):** Saturday, Feb. 14, 1-3 p.m. All skill levels are welcome. Bring your own decks or use one of the library's.

**Children's Programs: Lego at the Library: Grades K-6:** Tuesday, Feb. 3, 4:30-5:30 p.m. All materials provided.

**Take Your Child to the Library Day:** Saturday, Feb. 7, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Master awesome moves, conquer the superhero obstacle course, then come from noon-1 p.m. for a superhero meet and greet. Superhero costumes encouraged. There will also be superhero crafts, a scavenger hunt, raffle, book giveaways, and more.

### Mediumship Event

VFW Post 5095 Auxiliary will hold a special evening of spirit communication and mediumship with certified medium Rebecca Anne LoCicero on Friday, Feb. 20, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. This event invites the community to experience an engaging and uplifting night of messages, connection, and insight.

The event will take place at the VFW hall, located at 20 North Maple St. Doors will open at 6 p.m., with the café available for food purchases. The canteen will open earlier, at 4 p.m., for guests wishing to enjoy refreshments before

the program begins.

"We are excited to welcome Rebecca Anne LoCicero to Post 5095 for an evening that blends community, curiosity, and connection," said event organizers. "This program offers a meaningful and memorable experience while supporting the mission of the VFW Auxiliary and the veterans we serve."

Tickets are \$30 per person and may be purchased at the VFW canteen during regular operating hours: Monday-Friday, 4 p.m. to close; Saturday and Sunday, noon to close.

For more information, call the Post at 860-267-8837 or text Cathy at 860-559-3236.

### 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.

### The Coconuts are Coming!

The Coconuts will return to VFW Post 5095 for a Valentine's Day Dinner & Show on Saturday, Feb. 14. This festive evening invites community members to celebrate the holiday with live entertainment and dinner.

The event will take place at VFW Post 5095, 20 North Maple Street, East Hampton, CT. The Post canteen will open at noon and remain open throughout the evening. Doors open at 4 p.m., followed by dinner service at 5 p.m. The performance by The Coconuts will begin promptly at 6 p.m.

Tickets are \$30 per person and are available

**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.

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

### 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.

**Need Help Shopping?:** Do you or a loved one need assistance with grocery shopping? The East Hampton Senior Center has volunteers ready to help. Each week staff will consult with you on a shopping list and a volunteer will do the shopping and deliver it to your home. They'll even help put it away. All volunteers are vetted through the Town of East Hampton. Call 860-267-4426 to sign up.

**Linefit:** Mondays, Feb. 2-May 4, at 2 p.m. This low-impact line dancing class combines

the joy of dance with the benefits of fitness. Fee is \$18 for the series.

**Heatsmart Information Session:** Tuesday, Feb. 3, 10:30 a.m. The East Hampton Energy Task Force will provide information on how income-eligible people could get a free energy audit to help save money on their energy bill. Refreshments will be served.

**Design & Create:** Thursday, Feb. 5, 1:30 p.m. Create a heart wreath.

**Trips: William Benton Museum: Wednesday, Feb. 11.** Visit the William Benton Museum on the University of Connecticut campus in Storrs. Depart the senior center at 10 a.m. for an 11 a.m. guided tour of the gallery's three current exhibits, including "Exploring America at 250," followed by lunch on your own at Applebee's in Willimantic. Cost is \$9 for the tour and transportation. Lunch on your own.

**Shopping and Lunch at Stew Leonard's:** Monday, Feb. 23, departing at 11 a.m. Shop and eat in the store cafeteria at Stew Leonard's on the Berlin Turnpike in Newington. Cost is a \$4 bus donation; lunch is on your own.

**Opportunities:** Do you or a loved one need assistance with grocery shopping? The East Hampton Senior Center has volunteers ready to help. Each week staff will consult with you on a shopping list and a volunteer will do the shopping and deliver it to your home. They'll even help put it away. All volunteers are vetted through the Town of East Hampton. Call 860-267-4426 to sign up.

### Police News

1/16: A 17-year-old juvenile of Portland was issued a summons for speeding and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, East Hampton Police said.

From Jan. 12-18, officers responded to 21 medical calls, nine motor vehicle crashes, two alarms, and 18 traffic stops, police said.

### Library Friends Trivia Night

The Friends of the East Hampton Public Library will host a Trivia Night Saturday, Feb. 28, from 7-9 p.m., at Rule of 3 Brewing, 201 West High St., Unit B1. Food trucks will be on site before 7 p.m.

Registration is required; only one registration per team please. Teams should be made up of 2-8 players, and the fee is \$20 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.

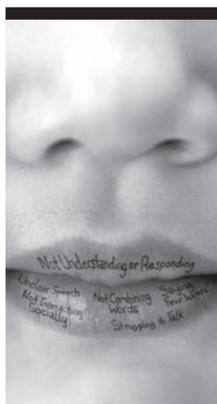
Register online at [www.EastHamptonPublicLibrary.org](http://www.EastHamptonPublicLibrary.org).

### CETF Heat Smart Event

The East Hampton Clean Energy Task Force will hold a Heat Smart Event Tuesday Feb. 3, at 10:30 a.m., at East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St. This presentation is open to all East Hampton residents.

Representatives will provide an overview of the Heat Smart program and explain how home energy efficiency assessments work. The presentation will cover common sources of energy loss in the home, typical measures used to improve efficiency - such as sealing air leaks and installing weather stripping - and the types of recommendations residents may receive for additional energy-saving improvements. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet program representatives, ask questions, and learn about the assessment process.

Refreshments will be served.



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Hebron • Hebron

# Former Revenue Collector Charged with Larceny

By Toriana Williams

Town officials in Hebron are continuing to cooperate with state authorities following an investigation into the town's former revenue collector, who was charged with felony larceny after allegedly stealing more than \$6,000 in cash deposits.

According to a press release issued by the town on Jan. 23, former revenue collector Adrian MacLean was charged with second-degree larceny after the apparent theft of approximately \$6,310 in cash deposits discovered in July 2025. The matter was referred to the Connecticut State Police by Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney after the issue was brought to the town's attention.

MacLean resigned from her position in July 2025 and arranged for repayment of the discovered stolen funds, the release stated. The investigation remains ongoing, and town officials say they are limited in what they can publicly disclose.

Tierney confirmed in an interview that the al-

leged theft was brought forward while MacLean was out of the office.

"It was brought to our attention," Tierney said, adding that another employee notified town officials. He declined to provide further details, citing legal advice and the active investigation.

Following the initial discovery, the town engaged in legal counsel, Halloran & Sage, which subsequently hired an independent forensic accounting firm, Forensic Accounting Services LLC, to conduct a more extensive review of the town's financial records related to the former revenue collector.

That review has since been completed and forwarded to the state's attorney office for possible additional investigation by that office and the police, according to the town's press release.

Tierney said he could not confirm how long the alleged theft had been occurring prior to its discovery, but noted that the forensic audit showed the issue extended beyond a single re-

cent incident.

Court records show MacLean was arrested on Sept. 11, 2025, by Connecticut State Police Troop K and charged with larceny in the second degree, a Class C felony. MacLean was released on a promise to appear and has no bond set in the case. The case is currently awaiting plea, with the next court date scheduled for Feb. 23, 2026, at Rockville Superior Court.

Tierney described the situation as both surprising and unfortunate, especially given MacLean's tenure with the town.

"Absolutely," he said when asked whether the incident came as a shock. "A long-term employee. You know, it's unfortunate."

Despite the ongoing investigation, Tierney said the town has already moved forward in filling the vacant revenue collector position.

The new revenue collector, Kristy Merrifield, began in her new role just last week, after previously working for the town of Hebron and most recently serving the town of East Hampton for

approximately 10 years, Tierney said.

"She was born and raised here in Hebron," he said. "So we're familiar with her, and she comes highly, highly recommended."

Town officials say they are actively working to strengthen internal controls in response to the incident. According to the press release, Hebron plans to improve policies, procedures and training measures to prevent similar situations in the future and restore public trust.

"The town will implement all appropriate measures to restore public trust and work with the auditors to ensure that best practices are in place to protect Hebron taxpayers," the release stated.

Tierney said no additional comments would be made while the investigation remains active. "It's still an active investigation, so there's very little that we can say," he said.

Town officials stated they will fully cooperate with any further investigation by state authorities.

## 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.

**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.

**Book Club:** A new session will begin Monday, Feb. 2, at 1:30 p.m., in Phelps Hall. All are welcome to participate, as the club will read and explore Stephanie Spellers' book *Church Tomorrow?* For more information, call the church office at 860-228-3244.

**Outreach:** Food donations support the local food pantries. A collection basket is in the church and outside the parish hall. St. Peter's maintains a nature preserve in the center of Hebron for use by local nonprofits. The church is also a supporter of Project Hope homeless shelter in Willimantic.

## Call for Local Artists Business Owners!

The Town Center Project Committee has announced an open call for local artists, crafters, makers and small businesses to participate in Hebron's Own Expo, a featured attraction at the upcoming 2026 Hebron Maple Festival.

This year, the Douglas Library will feature an indoor marketplace showcasing the works of local residents. The Expo will offer participants an opportunity to connect with hundreds of

festival attendees and share their work.

Hebron residents will receive priority consideration, and space is limited. Interested participants are encouraged to reach out as soon as possible.

To apply, email [hebronsownexpo@gmail.com](mailto:hebronsownexpo@gmail.com) or text 860-368-9125.

For more information about the 2026 Hebron Maple Festival, visit [thetowncenterproject.org](http://thetowncenterproject.org).

## Senior Center News & Notes

Russell Mercier Senior Center has announced the following programs. For more information, full program descriptions, and a list of recurring weekly activities, see the online senior newsletter at [hebronct.com/town-departments/senior-center](http://hebronct.com/town-departments/senior-center), or call the center at 860-228-1700. **Registration is required for all programs, unless noted, by calling the center.**

**RHAM Bingo:** Monday, Feb. 9, 2:30-4 p.m. RHAM National Honor Society students come and call the games, provide refreshments, and prizes. You can play up to four cards for free, and they play a total of eight games. Next date is March 2.

**AARP Income Tax Preparation for the 2025 Year:** 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 Tuesdays from Feb. 3-March 31. Sign-up required, by calling 860-228-1700.

## 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 Phillippino 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 a.m. and 11 a.m. Refer to [www.goodshepherdct.org](http://www.goodshepherdct.org) for weekday Mass times and more information about the parish.

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

**Sacrament of Reconciliation:** The pastor 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 Feb. 8. 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 Feb. 24. Contact Diane

(860-508-9959) for more information.

**Social Outreach Luncheon for CSK:** On Saturday, Feb. 7, the parish will provide and serve the noon meal at CSK consisting of lasagna, salad, and dessert. Sign-up sheets to provide food or serve as volunteers, and detailed instructions are posted in the CHF narthex and parish bulletin.

**Hebron Interfaith Human Services Collection (HIHS):** The parish supports HIHS through an ongoing collection of canned and dry goods. There currently is a great need for canned fruit, cereal, and oatmeal. Place bagged donations in the designated box next to the CHF Cry Room.

**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 parish ministers to homebound parishioners who wish to receive the sacraments. Call the parish office (860-228-3727 ext. 105 or 110) to set up a schedule.

**Collection for Project HOPE, Inc. (Homeless Shelter):** The parish supports the shelter by providing much needed items. Greatest needs: TP, paper towels, dish soap, laundry pods & dryer sheets; toiletries & women's personal hygiene products; household cleaning products & 13- & 35-gallon trash bags; men's crew neck T-shirts & boxer briefs (M,L,XL,2XL) & women's briefs (sizes 6-10); hand & body warmers; and men's & women's wool socks and new or gently-used clean winter clothing & coats. Place bagged donations in the oak collection box next to the CHF Cry Room or the designated bin in the STC entryway. Contact Monica (860-228-4211) for more information.

## 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/clch-hebron/live](http://www.facebook.com/clch-hebron/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.

## Military Whist Tourney is Saturday

As one of the final events in the kick-off for the 250th year celebration, The Town Center Project will hold a potluck supper and Whist tournament Saturday, Jan. 31, from 5 p.m. until 8:30 or 9 p.m.

Attendance is limited to 40 players. Whist experience is not necessary, but some card play knowledge is helpful. Whist is an old card game dating back to the 1500s, gaining popularity in England in the 1700s.

For any last-minute sign-ups, call Judy Brandi at 860-530-1584 by the end of Friday, Jan. 30.

## "Your Voice, Hebron's Budget"

Hebron Democrats will hold a listening session, entitled "Your Voice, Hebron's Budget," on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at 7 p.m., at Russell Mercier Senior Center, 12 Stonecroft Drive.

Democratic members of the Town Council, Board of Finance, local Board of Education, and RHAM Board of Education will be present.

This listening session is an opportunity for community members to share their thoughts, questions, and priorities related to the proposed town, local Board of Education and RHAM Board of Education budgets.

This session is sponsored by the Hebron Democratic Town Committee. All are welcome. For more information, visit [Hebrondems.com](http://Hebrondems.com).

## Local Artist on Display

The East Hampton Art Association is currently showing the oil paintings of Hebron resident Nancy Perkins at the Town Hall gallery through the end of January.

Perkins is an artist specializing primarily in landscape scenes that evoke memories from her travels throughout New England, the western U.S. and Europe.

Perkins holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in interior design from Iowa State University. She is a member of the East Hampton Art Association.



The Hebron Pollinator Pathway will have one-gallon Jug Gardens available this Saturday, Jan. 31, from 10 a.m.-noon. Pictured with a sample Jug Garden is HPP volunteer Gabrielle Bugden.

## Pollinator Pathway to Offer Jug Gardens

The Hebron Pollinator Pathway has prepared one-gallon water/milk jugs filled with moist soil and Black-Eyed Susan and Wild Geranium seeds to stratify over the next few months outdoors.

When leaves unfurl, plants can be moved to small containers and eventually into the garden after all danger of frost.

Jug Gardens will be available this Saturday, Jan. 31, from 10 a.m.-noon, in the barn at 209 Millstream Rd. A small donation supports HPP educational programs, demonstrations and new plant and garden installations.

For more information, look for "Hebron Pollinator Pathway" on Facebook.

Marlborough • Marlborough

# Selectmen Discuss Waste Program, School Issues

By Toriana Williams

The Marlborough Board of Selectmen spent much of its Jan. 30 meeting grappling with major policy questions related to waste management, school facilities oversight, staffing changes and long-term budget planning – while also responding to extensive public input on how these decisions could affect residents and the town's tax base.

## Waste Management Grant Tabled

Among the most significant items discussed was the proposed acceptance of a Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Sustainable Materials Management grant and the potential engagement of WasteZero as a consultant. The grant, valued at \$108,621, would support a multi-phase waste reduction and management initiative.

Planning and Development Director Peter Hughes outlined how the grant would be distributed in thirds as each phase of the program is implemented. Questions from Selectman Joe Asklar, a Republican, focused on the cost of required bags, the long-term financial impact on the town after grant funds are exhausted. Selectman Anthony Bratz, a Democrat, asked whether the program could ultimately result in a tax reduction.

Public interest in the proposal was substantial. Multiple residents raised concerns about the pay-for-bag program, how compost and

trash would be handled and where waste would be transported. Given the financial and operational implications, the BOS voted unanimously to table both the resolution accepting the grant and the authorization to engage WasteZero until its Feb. 3 meeting to allow for additional review.

## Selectmen Review MSBC, SRO Agreement

Another key topic was the role and responsibilities of the Marlborough School Building Committee. Superintendent of Schools Holly Hageman addressed questions from the board regarding the committee's charge, membership and the need for an owner's project manager and reference to the 2024 facilities study. The discussion centered on clarifying the scope and expectations of the committee before moving forward. The board opted to postpone further action on the matter until its next meeting, and the Town Manager David Porter indicated a renewed call for volunteers would be issued.

In contrast, the board did take definitive action on renewing the memorandum of understanding between the town and the Marlborough School District for the assignment of a school resource officer at Marlborough Elementary School. The agreement was renewed for an additional three-year term beginning July 1, and Porter noted that the existing agreement required no changes. Under the renewed terms, the officer's salary will increase by 3% annually,

with 90% of the cost covered by the school budget and the remaining 10% funded by the town. Hageman agreed to follow up on a data collection and monitoring provision included in the agreement.

## Town Manager Updates

Staffing and regionalization updates reflected broader efforts to manage costs and maintain services. Porter reported that the animal control officer resigned effective Dec. 31, 2025. He proposed regionalizing the position, similar to previous arrangements for the building official, and applying for a grant through the Capitol Region Council of Governments to offset costs. He also reported progress toward hiring a regionalized finance director who would work in town hall one day per week, with a grant application planned to help cover the first three years of expenses. Interviews for a part-time constable position were also underway.

During his update, Porter reported that the town assessor was nearing completion of the grand list and clarified that new construction is taxed based on work completed by Oct. 2025. He also committed to providing additional in-

formation comparing commercial and residential property values at a future meeting. Updates were provided on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funded improvements within town hall, including office modifications and flooring work, as well as details on planned roadway improvements under the North Main Street Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program grant.

## Resident Concerns on Waste, Taxes, Enforcement

Additional public comments included traffic enforcement statistics requested by residents, progress on a communications tower project with interest expressed by a telecommunications provider and ongoing discussions related to economic development projects. Asklar reported that a storage facility project had received its building permit, while apartment development on South Main Street remained on hold due to infrastructure limitations.

Public comment continued throughout the meeting, with residents raising questions about waste management, speed enforcement data, audits, committee appointments and state police reporting.

## Ukrainian Egg-Decorating Workshop

The Marlborough Arts Center will offer a Ukrainian Egg Decorating Workshop on Saturday, Feb. 28, from 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., at the center, 231 N. Main St.

The instructor, Sharon Leonard from Newington, has been making hand written eggs for over 40 years. She was inspired by her Ukrainian grandmother as a child and started perfecting the art form herself when in college. She has taught this amazing folk art to Girl Scouts, and privately at homes, libraries, and churches.

All supplies will be provided. This includes the stylist(kista), beeswax, candle, and hollow

eggs and dyes. Everyone will be able to take home a pysanki or decorated egg they have made. For those who want to do more after the workshop, Leonard will tell you where you can get supplies.

For more information and to register, go to [www.marlbrougharts.org](http://www.marlbrougharts.org). Online registration is preferred but mail in is also possible. The class cost is \$40.

This workshop is for ages 8 and above, but 8- to 12-year-olds should come with an adult.

For more information, call 860-467-6353.

## Donations Sought for Tag Sale

Marlborough Arts Center is accepting donations for its Winter Tag Sale, which will be held Saturday, Feb. 7, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at Marlborough Arts Center, 231 North Main St. Snow date: Saturday, Feb. 14.

People are welcome to drop off past treasures, tools, trinkets, working household goods, etc. Please no books, TVs or clothes. Items may be left at the lower level next to the door.

Donations can be dropped off Saturdays,

Jan. 24, and 31, from 10-11:30 a.m., and Tuesdays: Jan. 27 and Feb. 3, from 6-7:30 p.m.

Donations to the tag sale will raise funds to support the Marlborough Arts Center, a non-profit regional center for the fine arts, performing arts, and fine crafts, and completely organized by volunteers.

For more information, email [info@marlbrougharts.org](mailto:info@marlbrougharts.org) or call 860-467-6353 and leave a message.

## Senior Center News and Notes

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

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

**Events: Shopping Trips:** On the first Monday of the month, the bus will go to North Windham Walmart. Depart the senior center at 1:30 p.m. and return at 4 p.m. You will have 90 minutes to shop. Call to reserve.

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

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

**Encore Club:** Wednesday, Feb. 11, noon-1:30 p.m. Join for Music by Bill Naughton Jr and light refreshments. Reminisce over classic love songs.

**Mahjongg Strategy Class:** Wednesday, Feb. 18, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Please RSVP. Some playing experience required. This class is free.

**Scam Prevention:** Friday, Feb. 20, noon-1 p.m. A financial advisor from Edward Jones will speak on how to prevent yourself from being scammed and protect your money.

**What I Need to Know About My Electric Choices:** Thursday, Feb. 26. AARP will share instructions on how to compare and shop for cheaper electric rates and review your Eversource bill. If you qualify for the Eversource low-income discount rate, it can be added to your account on this day. Please note you are interested when you RSVP.

**Living Your Best Life:** Friday, Feb. 27, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Middlesex Hospital will be sharing healthy tips to live your best life.

**Transportation:** Rides to medical appointments, employment, essential services, the Senior Center and recreation activities are available to seniors and people with disabilities. Transportation is available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Rides must be reserved two business days in advance. Call 860-295-6209 for more information. Visit [www.marlbroughct.gov](http://www.marlbroughct.gov) for the complete transportation policy.

**Regularly Scheduled Programs: 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.

**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.

## 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 later this year.

For more information, visit [www.marlbroughhistory.org](http://www.marlbroughhistory.org).

## Pre-Kindergarten Screening Information

All public school systems in Connecticut are responsible for the identification of children who may be eligible to receive special education services. The Early Childhood team at Marlborough Elementary School is accepting applications for current resident children interested in its PreK screening for the 2026-27 school year.

If you are interested in your child participating in this process, eligible children must be at least 3 or 4 years old by Sept. 1, and parents/guardians must complete and return a ques-

## Arts Center Membership Drive

Marlborough Arts Center is holding its annual membership drive for 2026. New members are invited to join, while existing members are invited to renew their memberships.

The arts center hosts monthly concerts on the fourth Friday of each month, and provides arts and crafts classes, art shows, monthly email newsletters and more. The gallery and classroom are also available to rent for the day or hourly for personal events by the public. Members receive a rental discount.

Memberships start at \$25 with benefits including: advance notice of popular classes that

often fill up; solo shows at the center's second gallery inside Town Hall; an opportunity to display and sell art at the annual member's show; volunteer opportunities; and the chance to meet new friends and network with other artists, musicians and art collectors.

Visit [www.marlbrougharts.org](http://www.marlbrougharts.org) to join or renew securely online (debit/credit card or PayPal). Payment by check is available. Mail-in membership forms are on the website.

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

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

**Feb. 1:** The service will be led by Seaver and will include Holy Communion and the anthem by the Chancel Choir. Holy Communion is open to all, regardless of church affiliation, including children with parental guidance. After worship all are invited to Coffee Hour in the Thienes Lounge.

**279th Annual Meeting:** The church's annual meeting was postponed from Jan. 25 and will instead be held Sunday, Feb. 8, at 11:15 a.m., in the meetinghouse. Agenda items for church members to vote include the 2026 budget, 2025 Statistics, 2025 Report of the Treasurer, and naming the Rev. Bob Faulhaber Jr. to pastor emeritus of the church.

**Outreach:** The church collects non-perishable food items year-round for Marlborough Food Bank with a basket located in the narthex for Sunday worshippers to bring donations. A luncheon for Florence Lord Housing residents

is held monthly. The next church-sponsored Drive Thru Café, for Marlborough Food Bank clients and their families with tickets will be Feb. 22, with St. John Fisher Church providing the meal. First-quarter mission-giving will go to Marlborough Food Bank.

**Stretch and Strengthen** for seniors, led by certified instructor Barbara LaBlanc, is held Fridays at 9:45 a.m. upstairs in the Thienes Lounge. The community is welcome. The weekly drop-in fee is \$25.

**Second Blessings Thrift Shop:** The shop will reopen Friday, Feb. 6, from noon-3 p.m., and Saturday, Feb. 7, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Second Blessings is now featuring both winter and spring merchandise. Follow the shop through Facebook at Second Blessings Thrift Shop, Marlborough CT. The shop sells year-round through eBay at [bit.ly/MCCebay](http://bit.ly/MCCebay).

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

Marlborough • Marlborough

# Marlborough Schools Propose 3.57% Increase

By Toriana Williams

The Marlborough Board of Education reviewed a proposed 2026-27 school budget that calls for a 3.57% increase in operating spending, along with a significant rise in capital funding to address facility needs at Marlborough Elementary School.

Under Superintendent of Schools Holly Hageman's proposal, the district's operating budget would increase from \$8.93 million in the current fiscal year to \$9.25 million in FY27, a year-over-year increase of \$318,759. The proposal also included a \$210,000 capital request, up \$135,000 from the current \$75,000 allocation.

The proposed increase is slightly above the district's five-year average of 3.29%. Hageman noted that the proposal aligns closely with early guidance from town officials.

"At the Board of Finance's budget kickoff, which was held in October, they respectfully asked that the school board and the team try to come in at no higher than 3.5. So we're close at this juncture," Hageman said.

District officials said the proposed budget is designed to support the goals outlined in the MES Strategic Continuous Improvement Plan, while balancing instructional priorities, student needs and affordability concerns. The plan maintains current programming and class sizes, provides support for students' academic, emotional and behavioral needs and continues special education services in the least restrictive environment.

Hageman also placed the proposal in a broader statewide context. "3.57 is definitely in the lower range of what's been coming in around the state with about probably a quarter of the school districts accounted for at this point," she shared.

If approved, the 2026-27 operating increase would be slightly above the district's five-year average annual increase of 3.29%. Over the past five budget cycles, Marlborough's year-over-year increases have ranged from 2.6% to 4.82%.

## Budget Priorities, Return on Investment

Administrators emphasized that Marlborough continued to spend less per pupil than many comparable districts while posting strong student outcomes. Based on 2023-24 data,

Marlborough's per pupil expenditure stands at \$19,607, placing it among the lowest spenders in District Reference Group C and ranking 14th out of 16 PK-6 districts statewide.

Despite lower spending levels, the district ranks fourth out of 16 comparable PK-6 districts in performance, according to accountability index data. District highlights cited in the budget presentation include recognition as a Connecticut State Department of Education School of Distinction in 2025, a model K-3 foundational reading program, steady improvement in math outcomes, immersive Spanish instruction in grades K-6 and award-winning arts programs.

District leaders pointed to these metrics as evidence of a strong return on investment, noting that Marlborough performs at a high level relative to its spending.

## Enrollment Trends, Class Size

Enrollment projections for the coming years show modest fluctuations across grade levels, with total PK-6 enrollment expected to dip slightly from 461 students in 2025-26 to 454 students in 2026-27. While overall enrollment is projected to decline by seven students, individual grades show notable shifts that affect staffing and class section planning.

Kindergarten enrollment is projected to rise from 53 to 59 students, prompting the addition of one kindergarten section. At the same time, the district proposed reductions in sections at several other grade levels, resulting in no net change in the total number of classroom sections, which would remain at 26.

Under the proposal, average class size across grade levels would remain within established guidelines, with administrators stating that maintaining class sizes that support effective instruction and strong teacher-student relationships remains a priority.

## Salaries, Benefits Drive the Increase

Salaries and benefits remain the primary cost drivers in the FY27 proposal, accounting for 84.6% of the total operating budget. Together, those categories represent \$301,440 of the \$318,759 increase. Hageman explained the increases were largely expected.

"The budget areas which increased were all of ... the salary line items together, which is not a surprise. That is not atypical. There are contractual increases, and our contracts are competitive regionally," she said.

Salaries alone are proposed to increase by \$211,037, or 3.33%. Several factors contribute to that increase, including the expiration of a grant that previously funded registered behavior technician (RBT) positions. As a result, the full cost of two RBT positions would be absorbed into the operating budget, bringing the total number of RBTs budgeted to three.

Other salary-related changes include the creation of a head custodian/maintainer position to replace an existing custodian role and adjustments tied to replacing a retiring teaching position in a shortage area, specifically Spanish instruction.

The increases are partially offset by reductions elsewhere. The proposal reduces building administration from two full-time principals to one principal and one assistant principal, adjusts paraeducator staffing based on student needs and individualized education program hours and notes that these changes would not result in a reduction of necessary services for students.

## Rising Benefits, Supply Costs

Benefits are proposed to rise by \$90,403, an increase of 7.6%. The budget includes a placeholder assumption of a 15% in medical insurance premiums, a figure administrators noted is higher than recent years but consistent with early renewal estimates across the state. Final renewal rates are expected in March, and any reduction would be reflected before the budget goes to referendum.

Supply costs are also increasing, up \$54,162, or 20.11%. That jump is largely attributed to a scheduled curriculum renewal, as the district's five-year contract for Envision Math is expiring. The district plans to adopt the 2027 version of the program under a new three-year contract, with the \$58,000 cost spread across two fiscal years.

Property services are proposed to rise modestly by \$10,063, or 2.89%, due in part to adjustments in copying costs to better reflect actual usage and planned service and repair work for

exhaust fans following an indoor air quality inspection.

## Areas of Decrease

Not all budget categories are increasing. Professional services are proposed to decrease slightly by \$534, while purchased services are projected to drop by \$46,584, a reduction of 7.77%.

The decrease in purchased services is driven largely by transportation-related savings. One van currently included in the budget would not be needed next year, and magnet school tuition is being budgeted at a 58% cost cap rather than the full projected cost, reflecting historical enrollment patterns.

## Capital Budget, Facility Needs

The proposed FY27 capital request totals \$210,000 and focuses on necessary facility-related actions at MES. One planned project includes a \$20,000 replacement of a day tank sensor and fill system. Director of Operations, John Mercier, explained the condition of the equipment.

"The company doesn't want to even think about fixing it," Mercier said. "This one has gone down a couple of times and now they just won't fix it anymore."

Other projects include \$30,000 for an owner's project manager to support planning for a future major alterations project and \$160,000 for the demolition and replacement of the southwest egress, a non-reimbursable item.

Several recommended indoor air quality improvements, totaling more than \$113,000, are not included in the capital request. District officials noted that while those improvements are recommended, other capital needs must take precedence as the district looks ahead to a larger HVAC replacement project that would require separate planning and approval.

## Next Steps

After Hageman presented the proposed budget to the BOE on Jan. 22, the board scheduled to continue its review and potentially adopt the budget on Jan. 29, before forwarding it to the Board of Finance on Feb. 9.

Additional information and updates are expected as the budget moves through the town's review process.

## 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.

**Youth Programs: 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 Marlborough Elementary School. Experiment with Crayola products and many art techniques like sculpting, storyboarding, collage, and mixed media. Discover design, careers like graphic design, universal design, urban design, and produce design. Fee is \$142/resident, \$147/non-resident.

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

## Dean's List

Bryn Aleksandra Chudzik of Marlborough made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Furman University in Greenville, S.C.

Chudzik's parents are Robert and Pamela Chudzik.

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**Safe Sitter:** Saturday, Feb. 14, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., at the Marlborough Senior Center. This class is designed to prepare students in grades 6-8 to be safe when they're home alone, watching younger siblings, or babysitting. Students even get to use manikins to practice rescue skills like choking rescue. Registration fee is \$140/resident, \$145/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. Session runs until the end of April.

## Vacancies on the MES Building Committee

The Marlborough Board of Selectmen is seeking volunteers to serve on the Marlborough Elementary School Building Committee.

Assisted by an architect and other consulting engineers, MESBC members are responsible for preparing an estimate of the total project cost, a schedule, and plan documents for the major alteration project designated by the Board of Education. The MESBC will

prepare an RFP for an Owner's Project Management firm to help prepare for a town referendum and manage the scope, schedule, and budget through completion.

Experience in the construction industry or trades is helpful and appreciated.

Questions can be directed to Town Manager David Porter at [dporter@marlbroughct.gov](mailto:dporter@marlbroughct.gov). Applications are available on [www.marlbroughct.gov](http://www.marlbroughct.gov) or in the town clerk's office.



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### Taxes Due

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

Failure to pay on time will be subject to interest of one and one-half percent per month reverting to the due date or 18% per year. If you do not receive a bill, please check online at [www.marlboroughct.gov](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.

### 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.

### St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Church is located at 30 Jones Hollow Rd. Pastor is the Rev. George S. Mukuka, Bill Gilles is deacon John McKaig is senior deacon retired. Heather Mancini is church secretary and can be reached at 860-295-0001; hours are Monday-Wednesday and Friday, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. People are asked to call before heading over or connect via email at [stjohnfisher30@yahoo.com](mailto:stjohnfisher30@yahoo.com). The church website is [www.stjfchurch.org](http://www.stjfchurch.org).

**Regular Liturgical Celebrations: Weekend Masses:** 4 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday. **Weekday Masses:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 8:30 a.m. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Mondays at 9 a.m. **Weekly Sacrament of Reconciliation:** Saturdays, 3-3:30 p.m., or by appointment.

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

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

**Community Outreach and Service:** Food drives are held weekly for the Marlborough Food Bank. Bags with specific shopping lists are available at the Masses. Sandwich-making and collection continues the last Thursday of the month for St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown. Other scheduled service opportunities can be found in the weekly bulletin.

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

### Resident Completes School Project

At Worcester Polytechnic Institute, all undergraduates are required to complete a research-driven, professional-level project that applies science and technology to address an important societal need or issue.

In fall 2025, Jack Campbell of Marlborough completed a project titled "Creating Trail Training Videos for the AMC."

Campbell is a member of the Class of 2027, and is majoring in mechanical engineering.

### American Legion Setback Tournament

There will be a Setback Tournament Friday, Feb. 20, at the American Legion Post 197, 128 East Hampton Rd.

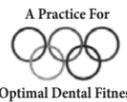
Registration is at 6 p.m., and the games start at 6:30 p.m. This is a Round Robin-style tournament, and prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place. There will also be raffles and a 50/50 raffle. (All proceeds go to the ladies auxiliary.)

For more information, call Sharon at 860-805-6917.

**HEALTHCARE SERVICES**



**Better Dental HEALTH**



by George M. Mantikas, DMD

### DENTAL PICKS VS WATER FLOSSERS VS INTERDENTAL BRUSHES

Dentists often recommend a minimum once-daily interdental cleaning (cleaning between your teeth). There are several ways to do an interdental cleaning at home, and traditional flossing is just one option. Floss picks attach floss to a device that allows you to hold a handle as you floss, rather than holding the floss itself. These are a good option for hard-to-reach spots or for people with dexterity limitations. Water flossers use a pressurized stream of water to clean between teeth. The pulsating water compresses and decompresses the gums, forcing bacteria out. Interdental brushes are the most effective interdental cleaning tool and use a small fiber or rubber brush that fits between teeth. They come in different sizes for more effective cleaning.

Keeping your gums healthy and strong by conscientiously giving them the attention they need is your best defense against the harmful buildup of plaque that can ruin your brilliant smile. And not only do floss, either alone or on a floss pick, water flossers, and interdental brushes do a thorough job of cleaning between teeth, their gentle massage provides the bonus of also make your gums feel good. We'll do all we can to bring your oral health to its maximum potential. Time for some serious consideration to your teeth and gums? Time to call us for an appointment.

*P.S. Although water flossers are not considered to be effective at removing plaque, studies suggest they may still be more effective than traditional flossing.*

George M. Mantikas, DMD, PC  
The Ridge • 142 East High Street • East Hampton, CT 06424  
860-267-6666 • [www.DrMantikas.com](http://www.DrMantikas.com)

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WORD PLAY

1TB 1/23

Obituaries

East Hampton

Karl Theodore Nilson

Karl Theodore Nilson, known affectionately to friends and family as "Gus," passed away Wednesday, Jan. 7, in Meredith, N.H. He was born Jan. 16, 1954, in Norwood, Mass., to Clara and George T. Nilson.



Karl grew up in both Andover, Mass., and Augusta, Maine, before spending much of his young adult life in and around the Boston area. He graduated from Williams College in 1976 and built a successful career in the technology industry.

Karl and his family later settled in East Hampton. In 2021, he and his wife, moved to Meredith, New Hampshire, to be closer to his mother, Clara, and his brother, Ken. Most recently, Karl retired from Semitech Solutions in Westford, Mass., where he devoted many years of hard work, integrity, and dedication.

Above all else, Karl cherished his family and friends. He is survived by his beloved wife of 40 years, Cheryl; his son, Matt; daughter-in-law, Jocelyn; his brother, Kenneth; sister-in-law, Cathy; and nieces, Annika and Maria. He was preceded in death by his mother, Clara, and his father, George.

Karl was a charismatic and deeply personable man with a remarkable ability to form and sustain lifelong friendships. From his college years through his professional life and beyond, he built a wide and meaningful community of friends whom he truly cherished. Family and friendship were the cornerstones of his life.

In his younger years, Karl loved playing basketball, but it was golf that became his lifelong passion. A devoted golfer since the age of 5, he played avidly until the very end, especially enjoying rounds with his son, brother, and close friends. His membership at Birch Hill Golf Club held special meaning, where weekly matches, friendly competition, and camaraderie brought him great joy. A true New England sports fan, Karl rarely missed a game and proudly supported all Boston teams.

His warmth, loyalty, and love for life will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

Portland

Joan Guilmette

Joan (Vacca) Guilmette, wife of Randall Guilmette of Portland, passed away peacefully Thursday, Jan. 22, following a brief illness. She was 77. The daughter of the late John and Caroline (Amen-ta) Vacca, Joan lived her entire life in Portland.

In the 1970s she was an active member of the Portland Junior Women's Club, and served for two years on the Board of Education. A lifelong parishioner at St. Mary's church, she was often recognized as "the lady with the hats."

Joan was possessed of an indomitable spirit, and was fearless in pursuit of her goals. After graduating from Portland High School in 1966, Joan went to work at Camp's in Middletown, where she developed her love and aptitude for sewing, often making her own clothes when what was available in stores didn't meet her standards. Finding herself unemployed in her early 40s, Joan founded her own company, Con-

necticut Metal and Tool Supply, and resolutely took on much bigger competitors in a male-dominated industry, forging her own path and running a successful business before selling and retiring at age 70.

A lifelong lover of learning, Joan had always dreamed of going to college, and in her 50s she took that step, earning her B.A. in history from Trinity College – and having so much fun doing so that she went ahead and earned her M.A. from Wesleyan as well.

Joan loved family and friends and had plenty of both, and her house was always open to anyone coming to town who needed a place to stay. She loved cooking and trying new recipes, and was happiest whenever her family was all together. She housed foreign exchange students from many countries, and as a result had friends all over the world.

She loved to travel and visit friends in other countries, and in her retirement continued traveling, visiting France, Italy and New Zealand, cruising the Nile, and traveling the length of the Mississippi River. She worked as a guide at the Mark Twain house, and volunteered at the Connecticut River Museum and the Portland Historical Society. When she wasn't working or traveling, Joan enjoyed summers in her pool, and walks around the neighborhood with her friends, daughter, and sister-in-law Alice.

Joan was accompanied on all her journeys by the love of her life, her husband Randy, whom she married in 1967. In addition to her husband, Joan leaves behind three children and children-in-law: Lucian Guilmette and Kristine Hopp, Dolores and Alexander Bates, and John and Meghan Guilmette, all of Portland. As a proud Nunna, Joan took delight in her seven grandchildren: Emily, Isabelle, and Katherine Guilmette, Mariana (Bates) Stover and her husband Russell and Cole Bates, and Clara and Evan Guilmette. She also leaves her brother, James Vacca and his wife Joyce, and her sister, Suzanne Burgess and her husband Jeffrey, also all of Portland, along with many beloved nieces and nephews and countless friends.

Her family would like to thank the staff at Middlesex and Hartford Hospitals and at Portland Care and Rehabilitation Center for taking such good care of Joan in her final days.

The funeral will be held Saturday, Jan. 31, at 9 a.m., at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial in St. Mary Church, Portland, at 10 a.m. Burial will be in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Friends may call at the funeral home on Friday, Jan. 30, from 4-6 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, please make memorial contributions to St. Mary Church in Portland.

Colchester

Robert J. Peloquin

Robert J. Peloquin, 72, of Norwich (formerly of Southbridge, Mass.), passed away Thursday, Jan. 22, at his home, after a long illness. He graduated from Southbridge High School/Cole Trade in 1972 as class vice president and captain of the Southbridge High School Pioneers football team.



He was a machinist by trade and held various positions including General Dynamics, TI Group Automotive and Walbro Plastics. He was happiest when he was with his children and grandchildren, Cullen Baudner and Harrison Peloquin. He enjoyed watching New England sport teams and cooking.

He is survived by his children, Jay and Samantha Baudner of Colchester, Daniel Peloquin and Elise Stanmyer of Moosup, and Jaclyn Peloquin of Colchester. He was predeceased by his parents, George and Charlotte Peloquin of Southbridge, Mass.

He is also survived by his siblings: Ellen Rupert of Newport, R.I., Patti and Ted Nikolla of Southbridge, Mass., Anne Leduc of Newport, R.I., William and Cynthia Peloquin of Bakersfield, Calif., Paul and Karen Peloquin of Sun City, Ariz., Peter and Lisa Peloquin of Myrtle Beach, S.C., Mary and Ron Childs of Newport, R.I., and Jane and Bill Proulx of Bolton. He has several nieces and nephews including many great-nieces and great-nephews.

He will be greatly missed by all his family and friends. A celebration of life will be held at later date.

For online condolences or to share a story of Robert, please visit [www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

East Hampton

Jeffrey Lee Barron

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Jeffrey Lee Barron, 54, of East Hampton, who died unexpectedly in his sleep of natural causes in the early hours of Tuesday, Jan. 20.



Jeff was born in San Francisco, Calif., on May 6, 1971, to Robert Barron and the late Joan (Ber-gevin) Barron. He grew up in Middletown, and graduated from Xavier High School (Class of 1990). At Xavier, Jeff enjoyed playing sports, especially basketball and volleyball, and he was a leader on both teams.

Jeff held a CDL license and spent his career as a truck and delivery driver. For the past 15 years, he worked for Primo Brands as a route and sales representative, where he not only handled deliveries but also excelled in sales. He was admired and respected by his co-workers and customers alike for his strong work ethic, efficiency, and ability to make authentic connections with people. He was named Driver of the Year in both 2024 and 2025.

Jeffrey's greatest joy and deepest love was being a father to his son, Lee, who is currently a 16-year-old junior at East Hampton High School. As a devoted single parent, Jeff prioritized and supported Lee in every way. He lived his life as an example of what it means to be a good person and a strong man at all times, especially in the face of adversity. Whether reading bedtime stories, attending pinewood derbies, encouraging Lee as he gained confidence and developed his athletic skills at the Parkour gym, or supporting Lee as he has become a successful runner and captain of his high school cross country and track teams, Jeff was present for every milestone. Along with instilling a strong work ethic, he passed on his sense of humor and passion for life. No father could have been more devoted or better prepared his son for the challenges life has thrown his way than Jeff Barron.

Jeff could take apart and fix just about anything. He took pride in teaching and working alongside Lee on many projects. Most recently, Jeff remodeled their small house so Lee could have a true room of his own. They loved living close to Lake Pocotopaug and were in the process of building a floating dock to swim to. Together, they shared a love of music festivals and the outdoors, often spending time hiking, biking, and kayaking.

Jeff is survived by his beloved son, Lee; his father, Robert Barron; his brothers, Timothy Barron (Cyndi) and Blair Bergmann (Carol); along with a niece, nephews, and many cousins. Scott, Chris, Amy, Jay, Mark, Dave, and Scott and many other close friends are like family to Jeff and Lee.

Jeff was an active and well-known member of the East Hampton community. He readily shared his time, skills, and positivity. Jeff's untimely passing leaves a void that can never be filled, but his memory will live on in the hearts of all who were fortunate enough to know him.

A Catholic Funeral Mass will be held Friday, Jan. 30, at 11 a.m., at St. Patrick Church, 47 W. High St., East Hampton.

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

**TOWN OF HEBRON LEGAL NOTICE**

At their meeting on January 22, 2026, the Town Council declared a vacancy on the Hebron Board of Education. The Council designates Friday, January 30, 2026, as the posting date for the vacancy notice. The 35th and final day by which nominations shall be received is Friday, March 6, 2026. The Town Council is now notifying the political parties and the general public of this vacancy. Interested candidates should attend a meeting of the Board and discuss with the Chairman the frequency of meetings and the time commitment involved. All residents of Hebron who are registered to vote are eligible. Letters of interest or questions may be addressed to Andrew J. Tierney, Town Manager, Town of Hebron, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, Connecticut 06248 or call 860-228-5971. 1TB 1/30

**TOWN OF HEBRON LEGAL NOTICE**

At their meeting on January 22, 2026, the Town Council declared a vacancy on the Planning & Zoning Commission as an Alternate. The Council designates Friday, January 30, 2026, as the posting date for the vacancy notice. The 35th and final day by which nominations shall be received is Friday, March 6, 2026. The Town Council is now notifying the political parties and the general public of this vacancy. Interested candidates should attend a meeting of the Commission and discuss with the Chairman the frequency of meetings and the time commitment involved. All residents of Hebron who are registered to vote are eligible. Letters of interest or questions may be addressed to Andrew J. Tierney, Town Manager, Town of Hebron, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, Connecticut 06248 or call 860-228-5971. 1TB 1/30

**TOWN OF COLCHESTER PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF DECISION**

At its Regular Meeting of January 21, 2026, the Colchester Planning & Zoning Commission made the following decision (s): **C.G.S. 8-24 Referral, Town of Colchester, Athletic Complex and Bacon Academy Roof Projects** – To make a favorable recommendation to the Board of Selectmen pursuant to C.G.S. 8-24 for capital improvements to the Town's athletic facilities at Bacon Academy and the Recreation Complex; and, to make a favorable recommendation to the Board of Selectmen pursuant to C.G.S. 8-24 for capital improvements related to replacement of the roof at Bacon Academy, including HVAC improvements. Planning & Zoning Commission Joseph Mathieu, Chair 1TB 1/30

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# LEGALS

## TOWN OF HEBRON BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS LEGAL NOTICE OF MEETING

The Board of Assessment Appeals will hold hearings and/or deliberations at the Town Hall, Lower-Level Meeting Room, on Tuesday March 10, 2026, and (if necessary) Thursday, March 12, 2026, for the purpose of hearing Real Estate and Personal Property appeals of the 2025 Grand List, and 2024 Grand list Supplemental Motor Vehicle appeals. Written application must be submitted to the BAA at the Office of the Assessor, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron CT 06248, between February 1- February 20, 2026. Completed applications (per CGS § 12-111) must be received by 1:00 pm Friday, February 20, 2026, to be considered for appeal. Applications can be found on the Town of Hebron website (hebronct.gov) and are also available during business hours, at the Assessor's office.

1TB 1/30

## COLCHESTER HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE

The Historic District Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 7:00 P.M., in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 127 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415 to hear and consider the following petitions:

**Certificate of Appropriateness- COA 2026-001 Town of Colchester**— for the installation of security cameras at the Colchester Youth Center, 40 Norwich Ave (MBL # 16-00/064-000).

**Certificate of Appropriateness- COA 2026-002 Bacon Academy Board of Trustees**— for the installation of an ADA access ramp to the North side of Historic Bacon Academy and associated improvements, including demolition of the non-historic rear bathroom building, replacement of the North side door, and alterations to the existing fence, 84 Main Street (MBL # 16-00/073-000).

At this hearing interested parties may be heard and written communications received. A copy of this petition is available for public inspection 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) Historic District Commission Ellen Sharon, Chair

1TB 1/30

## TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE Notice of Hearing

Notice is hereby given that the East Hampton Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing at their meeting on Wednesday February 4, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. at the East Hampton Town Hall – 1 Community Drive, Room 107 and via ZOOM to consider

A referral from the WPCA under CGS 8-24 for a Sewer Expansion on Clark Hill Road. The file is available for viewing in the Land Use Office 860 267-7450. Ray Zatorski, Chairman

2TB 1/23, 1/30

## TOWN OF PORTLAND

Legal notice is hereby given to the taxpayers of the Town of Portland that the second installment of Real Estate and Personal Property taxes on the Grand List of October 1, 2024, and the Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes are due and payable on January 1, 2026.

Taxes not paid in full on or before February 2, 2026, become delinquent and subject to interest at the rate of 18% per annum (1.5% for each month or fraction thereof) dating back to the original due date of the bill. Two months of interest will be due on February 3, 2026. Minimum interest charge is \$2.00.

Quarterly water and/or sewer usage bills are due and payable January 16, 2026. Payment not made in full on or before February 17, 2026 will be subject to interest of 1.5% per month from due date.

Payments are accepted in person at 33 East Main Street, Portland, CT or by mail: Portland Collector of Revenue, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480-0071. Payment can also be made online at www.portlandct.org or placed in the drop box.

As a matter of law, the taxpayer is liable to the town for the tax installment(s) as they become due and payable. Therefore, failure to receive a bill does not relieve the taxpayer of the statutorily required interest when a payment is late.

Office hours are as follows:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday: 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Holiday hours:

Tuesday, December 23, 2025: 8:30a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 24, 2025: 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 25, 2025: CLOSED

Friday, December 26, 2025: CLOSED

Wednesday December 31, 2025 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 1, 2026: CLOSED

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, TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH, CONNECTICUT BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS

THE BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS WILL HOLD HEARINGS AND/OR DELIBERATIONS AT THE SENIOR CENTER, 17 SCHOOL DRIVE MARLBOROUGH.

THE DATES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

**2025 REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY & 2024 SUPPLEMENTAL MOTOR VEHICLE GRAND LISTS**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11: FROM 6:30 PM**

**IN PERSON HEARINGS ONLY**

**2026 MOTOR VEHICLE GRAND LIST**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 11: FROM 6:30 PM**

**IN PERSON HEARINGS ONLY**

Applications will be available on February 1, 2026 and MUST be in to the Assessor's office by Fed Ex, UPS, USPS or email, Assessor's office, on or before 2/20/2026 by 4:30 pm.

With all supportive documentation in order for the appointment date and time scheduled to be honored.

Appellants/ or representatives must physically attend the hearing or a decision will not be rendered.

2TB 1/30, 2/13

## TOWN OF COLCHESTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Colchester Conservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on February 11, 2026, beginning at 7:00 PM in the Colchester Town Hall Meeting Room 2 at 127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, CT, to hear and consider the following application: **W2026-3135** - 611 Norwich Ave, Bacon Academy High School; Bernie Drenner - First Selectman - Applicant/ Owner; Assessor's ID 05-04/06A-000. Athletic Fields turf project with a proposed improved emergency access path with direct impacts to a wetland & watercourse.

At this hearing, interested persons may be heard and written communications received. A copy of this application is located in the Land Use Department, Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue, and may be inspected during regular business hours (8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday). Application materials are also available on the Colchester Conservation Commission webpage at <https://www.colchesterct.gov/colchester-conservation-commission>.

Conservation Commission Falk Von Plachecki, Chair

2TB 1/30, 2/7

## Town of East Hampton, Connecticut Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency Wetlands Agent Approval

Pursuant to CGS Section 22a-42a (c) (2) Application IW-26-002: 14 Quinn's Way, install 14' X 32' Shed on Crushed Stone in Upland Review Area has been approved by the duly authorized agent of the East Hampton CT Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency.

Juliet Hodge  
Duly Authorized Agent

Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency

1TB 1/30

## TOWN OF COLCHESTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF DECISION

Notice is hereby given that at its Regular Meeting on January 14, 2026, the Colchester Conservation Commission made the following decision:

**W2025-3132** - 124 Wall St & 111 Old Hartford Rd; Center Village Development LLC - Applicant/ Owner; Assessor's ID 10-00/011-000 & 15-00/061-000, Proposed sewer line extension with direct impacts to a wetland. - **APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS**

Dated January 15, 2026  
Conservation Commission Falk von Plachecki, Chair

1TB 1/30

## TOWN OF COLCHESTER PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Colchester Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on February 4, 2026, beginning at 7:00 PM in the Colchester Town Hall Meeting Room at 127 Norwich Ave, Colchester, CT to hear and consider the following application(s): **PZC2025-015 Mark Pensa** Regulation change application to amend Section 7.3 of the Land Development (Zoning) Regulations Special Permit Uses in the Arterial Commercial (AC) District to allow Mixed Use Development and to add new Section 7.6 Standards for Mixed Use Development in the AC District. **PZC2025-016 Jeffrey Naples** Regulation change application to amend Section 7.3 of the Land Development (Zoning) Regulations Special Permit Uses in the Arterial Commercial (AC) District to allow Dog Daycare, to add Dog Daycare to Section 20 Definitions, and to Table 10.1 Number of Parking Spaces Required; and to add new Section 8.8.20 Dog Daycare Standards.

At this hearing, interested persons may be heard and written communications received. A copy of these applications is located in the Land Use Department and Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue, and may be inspected during regular business hours (8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday). Application materials are also available on the Colchester Planning & Zoning Commission webpage at <https://www.colchesterct.gov/planning-zoning-commission>.

Planning & Zoning Commission Joseph Mathieu, Chair

2TB 1/23, 1/30

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

**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 [dmbappraisal@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dmbappraisal@sbcglobal.net).

**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.

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## PETS

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