

# News Bulletin

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Volume 47, Number 01

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

February 6, 2026

## Colchester Community Theatre Gets in the 'Act'

By Toriana Williams

The Colchester Community Theatre (CCT) is preparing to lift spirits, raise the roof and bring a whole lot of joy to the stage with its upcoming production of *Sister Act*, a high-energy musical packed with humor, heart and powerhouse vocals.

Opening Valentine's Day weekend, the show will run 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., giving audiences multiple chances to experience a story that celebrates friendship, faith and finding your voice. Ticket prices start at \$18 for standard admission, \$14 for seniors ages 65 and older as well as for children under 12. The show will be held at Bacon Academy on 611 Norwich Ave. Tickets can be purchased at [www.colchestercommunitytheatre.com](http://www.colchestercommunitytheatre.com).

Based from the hit Broadway musical, which in turn was adapted from the beloved 1992 film starring Whoopi Goldberg, *Sister Act* follows nightclub singer Delores Van Cartier as she's placed into protective custody inside a convent after witnessing a crime. What begins as a culture clash between sequins and habits quickly transforms into an uplifting journey of self-discovery – not just for Delores, but for the entire sisterhood. CCT's production leans fully into the show's infectious energy while honoring its deeper emotional core.

At the center of the production is Diana Ozmun, who wears two important hats within the organization. Ozmun is the longtime president of CCT, and for this play also stepped into the role of Mother Superior, a character she described as complex and layered.

"Mother Superior, of course, is the head of the convent," Ozmun explained. "She is filled with deep faith, and she's also filled with making sure the religious order is followed."

Mother Superior's rigidity, however, is challenged by Delores' arrival. Ozmun doesn't shy



Stop in the name of *Sister Act*! The cast of Colchester Community Theatre's latest production was hard at work during rehearsals last week. The musical takes the Bacon Academy stage next weekend, Feb. 13-15.

away from the character's flaws, and noted that "because of Delores, [Mother Superior]'s really quite a hypocrite," and added that while faith calls for unconditional acceptance, love and support, Mother Superior initially struggles to live up to those ideals.

This tension gives the role emotional weight, humor and ultimately growth, Ozmun said.

"She finally has an epiphany, because Delores shows her that she had a lot to bring. [The convent] wasn't just about ... a place for her to hide," Ozmun said. "Delores actually had a lot

that brought to the life of the church."

For Ozmun, the show's message feels especially timely.

"People are needing opportunities to be lifted up, to laugh, to come together," she said. "This particular show is very uplifting. It's about friendship ... through love, through connection and through acceptance."

Behind the scenes, longtime stage manager Laura Brown ensures that the fast-paced production runs smoothly. Brown has been involved with CCT since 1999 and has stage

managed productions for more than 20 years. Her role, she explained, involves "managing the crew, making sure that set pieces come on and off when they're supposed to, maneuvering the cast ... making sure that everything works in a seamless fashion on and off the stage when it's supposed to be."

Brown said she believes *Sister Act* resonates strongly with today's audiences.

"With where we are as a society, coming together as a community with hope ... appreciation and love for each other, building character," she said. "It's going to resonate where it's a feel-good comedy, but you leave knowing that ... we all bond together."

Brown also described the show as visually dynamic, noting that it "just keeps moving."

Taking center stage as Delores Van Cartier is Sara Ballard, who is making her debut with CCT in the lead role. Though it is her first year with the company, Ballard brings confidence, warmth and a relatability to the character.

Delores, Ballard explained, is a "nightclub singer," who found herself hiding in a convent after seeing something she shouldn't have. While Delores initially clashes with Mother Superior, Ballard said the heart of the story lies in connection. "It's a great show about ... [how] you don't have to be the same to be friends. Like everyone's different, and it's okay," she said.

Ballard found strong personal connections to Delores' journey.

"I think in a lot of ways, she's misunderstood," Ballard shared, adding that Delores cares about people "with her whole heart and that's ... just the type of person I am."

See *Colchester Theatre*, page 28

## Ambulance Association Receives Donated Manikin

By Anne Lilburn

The East Hampton Ambulance Association has a new gift thanks to an anonymous donor: a sophisticated, high-end medical manikin that can be used to train EMTs.

The GT Simulators Simbodies Pro Manikin Plus – which is anatomically accurate and has the ability to simulate a wide range of medical emergencies, from cardiac arrest to gunshot wounds and even amputations – was a donation from a resident who was impressed by the ambulance association's EMTs when they responded to a call at their home.

East Hampton Ambulance Association president Debbie Mayer said that the donor was someone who had already become aware of medical simulation manikins and their value in medical education. They made the dedicated donation specifically for this device, which ambulance association Chief Chris Wherry said cost roughly \$27,000. Mayer pointed out

that the donation was clearly earmarked for the manikin and covered the cost in full, meaning that no taxpayer dollars were used for it.

"I don't think people not in the medical field understand what a gift this really is to every single person in this town," said Mayer, who is a former emergency room nurse with decades of experience and who has extensive experience with medical simulation training.

"This manikin, it's got a leg and arm that comes off and it can pump blood, so these guys are going to be able to put a tourniquet on appropriately to stop the bleeding," said Mayer.

"And then you open the mouth and it looks like a real mouth," Mayer continued. "The skin feels real. The eyes open and shut, and you can program it for different things, so it's going to really allow us to do different scenarios. For the EMTs to actually experience something that maybe they haven't experienced before, but they

will have more confidence going into it, having had this training."

"[These types of manikins] are extremely realistic," said Wherry. "Their airways are cast from human cadavers, so they are extremely accurate. You could do all sorts of CPR-related activities. They've got an app that comes with it for your phone, so you can actually provide feedback through this app to the providers, to the EMTs, so you can create different types of lung sounds, different types of responses, and the manikin can provide feedback and talk, there are certain phrases, or an individual could talk through the app."

Wherry and Mayer both emphasized that having such a training manikin at a small-town ambulance association was unusual, with expensive devices like this typically reserved for medical schools and emergency services training.

See *Ambulance Association*, page 28

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**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.

**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](http://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.

**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.



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# BOE Unveils 11% Increase for School Budget

By Toriana Williams

Superintendent of Schools Valerie Bruneau last week presented a proposed 2026-27 fiscal year budget for Andover Elementary School that she said reflected the growing demands of a rebounding student population, rising contractual and insurance costs and increasing special education needs.

As a result of all that growing, rising and increasing, though, the budget proposal came in at \$5.06 million – a sharp 11% increase over current year spending.

Administrators emphasized that the proposal responded to long-term enrollment growth, state and federal funding uncertainties and years of constrained spending. While the overall increase is notable, Bruneau described the proposal as a necessary step to maintain educational quality, meet mandated services and ensure the school can safely and effectively serve its students.

## Enrollment Growth Shapes Budget Planning

Projected enrollment for the 2026-27 school year is 200 students in grade K-6, with an additional 70 preschool students, bringing the total number of children educated within the Andover Elementary School building to approximately 270 students by the end of the school year. The district also financially supports three

students placed in out-of-district facilities.

This growth marks a continued rebound from enrollment declines experienced between 2010 and 2020. Since the 2021-22 school year, AES has seen a 26% increase in enrollment, a trend supported by monthly enrollment reports and the town of Andover's updated Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The POCD specifically recommends planning for continued growth at the elementary level, citing demographic and housing data that point to sustained enrollment increases.

Current enrollment patterns also show pressure at specific grade levels, including the need for a second sixth-grade classroom, a staffing change reflected in the proposed budget.

## Budget Context, Long-Term Spending Trends

District officials noted that AES entered the 2026-27 budget cycle already at a disadvantage. Per-pupil spending has declined compared to both District Reference Group (DRG) C averages and neighboring districts, dropping Andover from 11th out of 30 districts to 17th out of 30. Notably, Andover is the only district in its comparison group spending less per pupil than the previous year, placing the district approximately 3.5% behind before accounting for new cost increases.

Historically, AES's budgets have been tightly constrained. Over the past decade, the total net increase across approved budgets is just \$244,000, with multiple years of flat or reduced funding. Administrators stressed that this long-term pattern has limited flexibility and contributed to today's challenges.

## Where The Money Goes

The proposed budget supports all core functions of the school district, including instruction, special education services, transportation, utilities, building maintenance, insurance and contractual obligations. Importantly, not all of the budget is borne directly by local taxpayers.

The district receives approximately \$2 million in Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funds, which go directly to the town of Andover to offset education costs. As a result, while the gross budget totals just over \$5 million, the net cost to taxpayers is closer to \$3.56 million.

## Salaries and Benefits Drive the Increase

As with many school budgets, salaries and benefits are the primary cost drivers in Andover's proposal.

Certified instructional salaries – including teachers, special education staff, speech therapists, librarians and school psychologists – are proposed to increase from \$1,884,978.40 to \$2,207,651, a 17% increase. Paraprofessional and paraeducator salaries for special education show an even larger rise, increasing 34%, from \$113,894 to \$152,096, reflecting student needs and mandated support services.

Administrative and non-certified salaries, including custodial and nursing staff, remain largely flat, while certified administrative salaries, including the superintendent and financial services, increase 6%, from \$302,544 to \$320,688.

Benefits represent another significant pressure point. Total benefits are proposed to increase from \$756,529 to \$890,008, an 18% increase, driven largely by a projected 15% rise in medical insurance premiums through the insurance consortium.

Overall, human expenses, including all salaries, account for approximately \$326,000 of the increase, while benefits contribute another \$150,000.

## Other Major Cost Areas

Transportation costs, including special education transportation, are proposed to rise 19%, from \$124,105 to \$148,160, reflecting increased service needs. Instructional technology repair and maintenance increases 6%, while software licenses and communication costs rise 8%.

Not all categories increase. Professional education services for special education and related therapies decrease 28%, while other professional services decline 18%, reflecting careful reduction where possible without impacting mandated services. Classroom supply budgets also decrease slightly, by 2%, and advertising costs are cut in half.

## Why Cuts Are Limited

Bruneau emphasized that the budget has already been reduced to what she described as "bare bones." Federal grants that previously supported staffing and services have expired, and future state grants are limited, particularly outside of early childhood education. Remaining grants, such as IDEA funding, are expected to remain stable but are insufficient to offset rising costs.

## Options to Reduce the Increase

To potentially lower the 11% budget increase, the Board of Education will consider several strategies, including using non-lapsing funds, drawing from the Norton School Fund, implementing energy savings and adjusting how shared facility costs – such as gym usage – are allocated. Depending on which options are adopted, the increase could be reduced to between 7.3% and 9.3% before going to town meeting.

## Consequences of Underfunding

Bruneau cautioned that failure to fund the budget adequately would result in teacher layoffs, class consolidations and class sizes of 24-28 students, levels she described as educationally unsound. Larger classes could also drive higher special education costs if students' needs cannot be met in general education settings.

## Next Steps

The Board of Education is scheduled to vote on a budget at its Feb. 11 meeting. The proposal will then move to the Board of Finance for review before being sent directly to town meeting and referendum, where residents will ultimately decide its fate.

## 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. And to reserve space at the center, call 860-742-7305 x4510 for dates and available rates.

**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, Puzzle and Pizza, trips to the library and the food pantry, Open Sew & Stitch, and more, see the monthly newsletter.

## 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.

**Special Upcoming Events: Shopping Trips:** Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. Shop Willimantic 2/10 and 2/24, and shop in Manchester on 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.

**Cardio Drumming with Priscilla:** Mondays, Feb. 9, 16 and 23, 10-11 a.m. Fee is \$7. This is a music-based gentle cardio class combined with rhythmic movement using an exercise ball and drum sticks. Transportation is available.

**Foodshare Truck:** Wednesdays, Feb. 11 and 25, 8:30 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.

**Soap Making:** Thursday, 11 a.m. Cost is \$3. Make your own soap. You choose the mold and an essential oil for the scent. Registration is required. Call the center to sign up. Transportation is available.

**Valentine's Charcuterie:** Friday, Feb. 13, 5 p.m. Cost is \$10 per person. Enjoy this in-person workshop where all the food and tools are supplied. Make a board to eat and a board to go. Space is limited. Call the center to reserve a spot.

**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.

**Casino Trip:** Friday, Feb. 27, 10 a.m. Hop on the bus for a trip to Mohegan Sun. The bus will return at 3 p.m. Space is limited. To reserve a seat, call 860-498-2326.

**Family Bingo:** Friday, Feb. 27, 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$10. Prizes awarded. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Food and extra bingo sheets available to purchase. Registration is required at 860-742-7305 x4510.

## Caregiver Support Group to Meet

The Andover Caregiver Support Group for caregivers will meet Thursday, Feb. 19, at 7 p.m., for one hour in the Andover Public Library on Route 6. A snow date of Feb. 26 is scheduled if needed. This event is hosted by the Alzheimer's Association and the Andover Caregiver Support Group.

The public is invited to attend Supporting Independence, part of the Alzheimer's Association's "Empowered Caregiver Series" aimed at teaching caregivers how to navigate the responsibilities of caring for someone living with dementia. A person living with dementia often wants to stay independent for as long as possible. Caregivers can learn how to balance safety and manage expectations to support independence at every stage of the disease.

The meeting will conclude with its usual "Show and Tell" segment, where participants are encouraged to share handy tips, tools, or gadgets that assist in caregiving.

gets that assist in caregiving.

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

Caregiving can be a demanding journey, often accompanied by exhaustion, isolation, fear, and stress. This support group is designed to bring together individuals who are traveling the same road, offering a space to share experiences, learn about resources, and connect with others who understand firsthand the challenges of caregiving.

Whether you have recently stepped into the role of caregiver or have been providing care for years, this group aims to foster a sense of community, reassurance, and encouragement.

For more information, call co-host Dianne Grenier at 860-742-3033 or Cathy Palazzi at 860-916-6122.

See More Andover News, page 9

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

**Town of Andover Board of Assessment Appeals Legal Notice of Meetings 2026**

Between March 1, 2026 and March 19, 2026 Andover BAA will accept Property Assessment Appeals for Real Property and Real Estate based on the 2025 Grand List, as well as 2024 Motor Vehicle supplemental Grand List appeals. Written application for appeals should be submitted to the Town Assessor's Office, 17 School Street, Town Hall Office Building. BAA will hold hearings, assigned by the Board Chair, on the following dates in April:  
Saturday April 4, 2026 9 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.  
Monday April 6, 2026 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Saturday April 11, 2026 9 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.  
Saturday April 25, 2026 9 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.  
Appeal applicants will be notified of hearing dates by mail. Please ensure appeal form is correctly filled out. All hearings will be in the Community Room of Andover Town Hall. Appeal forms are found online at the town website or at The Town Assessors office. Completed appeal forms will be accepted at Town Hall no later than close of business on Thursday March 19, 2026. 1TB/26

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## From the Editor's Desk Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

He saw it. The little bugger saw it. Connecticut's official state groundhog, Chuckles XI of Lutz Children's Museum in Manchester, saw his shadow Monday morning. And with that shadow brought the dreaded message: six more weeks of winter are on tap.

And it wasn't just in Connecticut. The nation's most famous groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil, saw his shadow as well – as did Staten Island Chuck, New York City's groundhog. Massachusetts' state groundhog, Ms. G? Yup, she saw hers too.

It's a conspiracy, folks. The pesky rodents have all banded together to ensure this winter of our discontent will never go away. (Either that or it was sunny Monday in Manchester, Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts. Nah, that can't be it.)

They'll certainly be high-fiving this weekend when, at least here in Connecticut, it's going to be bitterly cold. How cold, you may ask? Well, as I write this Tuesday night, NBC Connecticut (or Channel 30 to us old folks) is saying wind chills may range from 0 to -30. Yup, it could feel as cold as 30 degrees below zero by the time you wake up Sunday morning. That is absolutely frigid.

The new legislative session began in Connecticut on Wednesday, and one of the items expected to be taken up is the controversial matter of whether to ban cell phones in schools. State Rep. Jennifer Leeper (D-132) told the news outlet *CT Mirror* this week she's going to be pushing for a statewide 'bell to bell' ban of cell phones, from the start of the school day until the end of it.

"Even the proximity to your phone means a kid's thinking about their phone. So, if it's in your backpack, you're thinking about it, even though it's away," Leeper told the *Mirror*.

ror. "If it's actually fully out of sight and away and you know you can't access it, it frees kids' brains up from thinking about the phone, and who maybe messaged them, and what they missed."

The *Mirror* noted the state's two major teachers' unions, the Connecticut Education Association and AFT Connecticut, also support a bell-to-bell ban.

And I've got to be honest – I do too. I completely understand the benefits of cell phones, and, in this day and age, I think it's unrealistic to expect kids *not* to have a phone. But do they need to be able to access one during the school day? I'm not so sure.

Children are easily distracted; it's just a fact. So why tempt them by letting them look at their phone every 5 minutes when they should be learning? Even if they need to access the internet for a school assignment or project, most school systems these days provide students with tablets anyway.

I get that emergencies happen. Sometimes a parent may need to reach a student immediately, for one reason or another. When that does happen, though, the parent can contact the school office, and they in turn can contact the student's classroom. I absolutely detest the whole "it was good enough for me, so it can be good enough for you" attitude older generations sometimes employ around younger ones, but the fact is that when I was in school, that's how emergencies were handled. It worked fine then, and I'm sure it would work fine now.

I realize my position isn't shared by all. I knew that was the case even before I read the *Mirror* story, which quotes Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) president Meg Scata – who's also a member of the Portland Board of Education – as saying she

**Editor's Desk continued on page 14**



**Soccer Stars...** The Colchester Coyotes U11 soccer team had a successful season, winning three tournaments and capturing the division title. The team was recently recognized for winning its division at the SECJSA Awards Night. Pictured are, front row: Ryan Griffin, Bryan Poresky, Ryder Hlasyszyn, Anthony Szweczyk, Porter Winters, Max Dean Landon Sheridan; middle row: Connor Parsons, Jude Billiot, Camden Pariseau, Cole Pennella, Julian Norige, Austin Wilinski; back row: coaches Rob Hlasyszyn, Adam Griffin, Bryan Poresky, Paul Norige.

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### Correction

In a story in last week's *Rivereast, Portland First Selectman Michael Pelton was incorrectly labeled a Democrat. He is in fact a Republican.*  
*The Rivereast regrets the error.*

### DPWAC Update

To the Editor:  
Many happenings going on. The curbside pick-up bids are due at Town Hall at 10 a.m. Friday, 2/06. One more piece of the complex puzzle of rebuilding the Old Colchester Road facility.

The DPWAC had a meeting with the architects, at their request. The meeting was to discuss multiple design items regarding the new facility. Of course, the DPW staff was involved in the discussion, as this will be their "home" when it's completed. Among them were, where does the fuel station go on the site to best facilitate the flow of traffic during fueling operations. May we use the current road foreman's office (a Carefree shed) for the transfer station "guard shack" or are we building, or acquiring a new structure. The motor oil storage tanks for the service garage, the compressed air lines, waterlines, hose reels and electrical drops for the garage bays. Little things that make a big difference when actually utilizing the space, both inside and out.

Last week there were several letters to the editor and an article in the *Rivereast* regarding the DPWAC's presentation to the Town Council on 1/22/26. Initially we thought the referendum would be in March. The chair stated the she felt the timeframe seems rushed. No referendum date set as of this letter.

The quote put forth by Silver Petrucelli & Associates

### A Pleasant Afternoon

To the Editor:

What a pleasant afternoon we spent at the Andover Community and Senior Center (ACSC) last Wednesday. Seniors arrived to hear Roland Bricault, one of the Senior Transportation drivers, play guitar and sing along. He amazed us with "oldies" and country music! Who knew we had such a talented senior amongst us?? He continued playing during lunch and was enjoyed by all. Thanks go to director Tess Grous and assistant Haley Proto for such a delightful afternoon.

Bingo followed a delicious lunch that cost a small fee of \$5, consisting of various sandwiches, chips, salad, fruit and dessert. Something for everyone! Please call the center at 860-798-6862 and sign up for these fun Wednesdays!

**Thank you,  
Cathy Palazzi  
Andover**

## Bulletin Board

"You may have noticed that the Winter Olympics are nearly upon us. Opening ceremonies begin this week in "Milan Cortina," which is apparently someplace—or maybe two places--in Italy.

NBC has been fervently promoting the upcoming "drama," presumably because the network has the broadcast rights, having invested billions for the privilege. Since NBC is not a charitable organization, I can understand why network bigwigs hope to entice us into spending untold hours watching mutant speed skaters with bulging thighs race around an ice rink. Personally, I think it would be a lot less tiresome for spectators if the skaters were required to crack coconuts between their legs after every second lap.

But to be fair, I guess even speed skating without coconut cracking has to be more gratifying than watching the end of the world as we know it as portrayed on a minute-by-minute basis on the cable "news" network of your choice.

As you may already suspect, I have mixed feelings about the Olympics. My main peeve is not the events — it's the incessant heart-wrenching stories about athletes who have sacrificed and persevered in hopes of getting their face on a Wheaties box. I mean, how many tear-jerking stories do I have to hear about some athlete whose beloved pet goldfish is undergoing chemotherapy, or who is dedicating their performance to their recently departed grandmother who mistook a stick of dynamite for a votive candle. After a while you start to wonder if there's a rule that you can't participate in the Olympics unless one of your third cousins died in a fire or something.

Then, of course, there are all those sports which — to me at least — aren't sports at all. Like curling for instance.

That's the one where contestants go out on a hockey rink and try to slide these big stones with handles on them over the ice and into a marked circle.

I actually like curling—probably because the most strenuous part seems to consist of some guy with a broom who frantically sweeps the ice in front of the stone as it creeps toward the target circle. I don't want to brag, but that looks like something I could be good at. So yes, I like curling better than, say, Greco-Roman wrestling (too sweaty, plus your face can end up in some really unfortunate places if you know what I mean), but still, I hesitate to call curling a sport.

I'm much less excited about one of the new so-called "sports" being introduced this year—something called "ski mountaineering." This event features: an ascent of the mountain on foot while carrying skis; an ascent of the mountain on skis; and finally a descent down the mountain on skis. If you ask me (and I know you didn't, but I don't care), nobody's going to give up the excitement of the curling competition in order to watch some idiot slog up a mountain when there's a perfectly good ski lift available.

Of course there is a history to some of these introductory sports. Those of you who live particularly empty lives may recall a now defunct Olympic event called "solo synchronized swimming" that debuted at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. Unlike the current group synchronized swimming event which features a platoon of aquatic Rockettes wearing swim caps and doing leg scissor splits while standing on their heads in the pool, the 1984 version featured a single swimmer performing a "synchronized" routine to music. If there's anything that could be more tedious than group synchronized swimming, I guess this would have to be it.

Mercifully, the solo event was dropped from the program after its third appearance in 1992. If the planets ever come back into their proper alignment (and I'll admit, that seems to be less and less likely with every passing day), I expect ski mountaineering will join solo synchronized swimming on the dust heap of "what in the world were we thinking?" Olympic experiments.

In the meantime, we'll always have curling.

**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).

### RIVEREAST

## News Bulletin

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

Published Every Friday by The Glastonbury Citizen

87 Nutmeg Lane • Glastonbury, CT 06033

Telephone (860) 633-4691

Email: [bulletin@glcitizen.com](mailto:bulletin@glcitizen.com)

**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 373 • Glastonbury, CT 06033

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Email Legal Notices to [legals@glcitizen.com](mailto:legals@glcitizen.com)

and call 860-633-4691 to pay with MC or VISA.

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Standard Mail – Postage Permit #1092 at Hartford, CT • Glastonbury Citizen (USPS-219-360)

News copy (non-letters) deadline for *The Rivereast News Bulletin* is Tuesday at noon. Please address all letters & news articles to: *Rivereast News Bulletin*, P.O. Box 373, Glastonbury, CT 06033

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

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sociates for \$27.8 million is available from the town upon request. We are looking into adding this information to the FAQs for easier access. Please know that as the designs are fine-tuned, the final number will change. For instance, on the quote is a number to drill a new well up to 500 feet deep. We do not need a new well, we just tested the one currently there, it passed with flying colors and will continue to be utilized. Just one example.

I have been trying my very best to share information as soon as it's available, as accurately as possible, without showing any advocacy, either for or against. As always please email me at: [thabicht@hebronct.gov](mailto:thabicht@hebronct.gov) with any questions. Come to a meeting, review the FAQs at: [www.hebronct.com](http://www.hebronct.com), educate yourself, be informed. So, you can make the best decision for our town.

Sincerely,

**Todd Habicht, Vice Chairman  
Hebron DPWAC**

### Walk in Peace

To the Editor:

In a time when the world can feel loud and divided, our children remind us of something simple and powerful: peace begins with us.

This Sunday, Feb. 8, at 1 p.m., families from across our community are invited to gather at the Fountain on Main Street in Glastonbury for a Children's Peace Walk to Hubbard Green and back. Young people – and the grown-ups who love them – will walk together in peace and loving kindness, showing that compassion, respect, and unity still matter.

This isn't about politics. It's about modeling the world we want our children to inherit — one where differences are met with understanding and neighbors show up for one another.

If you can't join in person, pause wherever you are and hold a moment of intention for peace.

Small steps, taken together, can light the way.

All communities are welcome. We hope you'll walk with us.

With gratitude,  
**Karen Wilkinson, Marlborough**

### Time Capsule Ideas Wanted!

To the Editor:

As we look ahead to our nation's 250th anniversary, the Portland America 250 Committee is working to create a meaningful time capsule that reflects who we are as a community today and what we value enough to preserve for future generations.

A time capsule is more than a collection of objects. It is a snapshot of daily life, shared experiences, hopes, challenges, and the stories that connect us. We want this capsule to represent Portland through the voices of the people who live, work, learn, and grow here.

We are inviting residents of all ages to share ideas for items that should be included. These might reflect community life, local traditions, current events, technology, family life, or simple moments that feel ordinary now but may be extraordinary to those who open the capsule years from today.

Community participation is what makes a project like this truly special. The more perspectives we include, the more authentic and meaningful the time capsule will be.

If you have an idea you would like to share, please email us at [portlandctamerica250@gmail.com](mailto:portlandctamerica250@gmail.com), or connect with us and post your ideas on our Facebook page. We cannot wait to hear your thoughts and suggestions.

Respectfully,  
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### Joyful Whist Tournament Brings Community Together

To the Editor:

Gilead Church hosted an evening of excitement and camaraderie during its Whist Tournament and Potluck on Saturday, January 31. Church members and community guests gathered for a night of fun, friendly competition, and meaningful connection, welcoming both longtime Whist players and first-time participants of all ages.

The highlight of the tournament was an impressive performance by youth church member Tucker Haines and his team of friends, who emerged as the tournament winners after a spirited evening of play.

We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who attended and supported this community event, helping to create the warm and festive atmosphere that made the evening truly memorable. Special appreciation goes to Judy Brandi for her dedication and hard work in organizing the tournament!

**Gilead Congregational Church**

### Dementia Talks No. 47

To the Editor:

I submitted this essay on Feb. 2nd, Groundhog Day; and am reminded of Bill Murray role in the movie!

Gosh, isn't dementia reminiscent of the movie? The same questions over and over again? The restating the same phrase over and over again? The referencing of people, places, things of the past as if they were happening right now? The constant request to go "home"?

That might not be the most eloquent analogy; but it may ring true for some. Know that the repeating of questions and such; the desire to 'go home'; the fright that a shower stall might bring ... all these things (and more) are not intentional. It is part of the journey. Learn the art of redirection fueled by patience.

Mom has been referencing her father as of late, alongside one of her brothers who passed away after returning from Vietnam. As an adult child of someone with Alzheimer's one of my biggest regrets is not writing notes about the family. The 'who is who'. The experiences Mom had as a child growing up working in the Cannon Store alongside her father; her mom passing away at age 49 – she had to grow up fast. There is much that I recall; but so much I know she shared that has been lost in the fog of life.

I'm so glad one of my friends mentioned that she wished she captured her loved one's voice; I took that too heart and try to catch mom on video reading cards she receives, the paper, the captions on the TV, doing karaoke with her memory care family. I'm grateful for that little hint as I am sure I will watch the videos to hear her voice when she loses her ability to speak.

As you read this, if you are a parent – share

your childhood stories with loved ones; if you are an adult child/grandchild – ask questions and catalog what is shared. Video, take pictures, relish in your time together.

And, please know that you are not alone.

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

### DPW Proposal: Much More Than \$28 Million

To the Editor:

Early cost estimates for the proposed DPW facility on Old Colchester Road already total a staggering \$28 million. And that figure does not include several significant cost drivers, such as:

- Townwide trash and recycling pickup
- Legal and administrative costs
- Insurance
- Financing costs
- Moving and relocation expenses
- Potential purchase of Eversource property

To be fair, the committee deserves credit for including contingencies. Anyone who has lived through a major construction project knows that costs almost always rise once work begins. I don't believe anything is being hidden, the problem is that many of these costs simply aren't known yet. But that uncertainty only reinforces the concern: this already expensive project is very likely to exceed \$30 million.

So what does that mean for taxpayers?

If the town finances a \$30 million project using long-term bonds — assuming a 20-year term at approximately 5.2%, a reasonable rate for a town with good credit — the annual debt service would be about \$2.4 million per year. That translates to roughly a 3-mill increase in the tax rate.

Here's what that looks like for homeowners:

- A home assessed at \$256,550 would see taxes rise by about \$770 per year.
- A home assessed at \$490,000 would see taxes rise by about \$1,470 per year.

In plain terms, most households would be paying \$700 to \$1,500 more every year — and that's before factoring in the Board of Education's recommended 9% budget increase. For a small town like Hebron, this level of new, ongoing tax burden is simply too much to absorb. We owe it to residents to pause, reassess, and explore more affordable alternatives before committing to a project of this scale.

**Rob Poudrier  
Amston**

### Remove Snow From All Your Doorway

To All Area Residents:

Have you cleaned all your doorways to the outside of snow?

I bet you haven't. Bet you only cleared the doors you always use to get into your house.

Do you know that if you don't clear all the doorways you could be stuck in your house if there is an emergency! You, are letting the snow pile up on the doorways and by not shoveling them they are only going to get deeper and more frozen. Your main door will be frozen at the bottom and hard to open. Your storm door (that open outward) now have to be pushed against the pile of snow you didn't shovel and that snow is now high and frozen. How will you get out if you can't get to the only doorway you have cleared?

Take the time to clear out all doorways every time snow falls. This is for the safety of you and your family members. Also, think about emergency people coming to your house – they only see the front of your home – they may not know where the other door is that you cleared – now they have to try to get to the door they see and time is now ticking away from getting to you and helping you.

Please don't think nothing will happen – because it just might happen tonight.

A concerned Andover resident,  
**Carol Barton**

### The Time is Now!

To the Editor:

The first of two important events are coming up. Tuesday, Feb. 10, at 7 p.m., is the town meeting and Tuesday, Feb. 24, is the referendum for the Colchester Athletic Complex and for the Bacon Academy roof. The Colchester Athletic Complex Building Committee has presented a shovel-ready plan to the town.

There have been two committees volunteering countless hours for over two years, researching, planning and working to ensure this project is what the town needs and the citizens want.

This is a multi-generational project that addresses all the necessary areas of our community's recreational needs, from work at the recreation complex to the athletic complex at the high school. The committee has chosen a highly competent and experienced company, Field Turf, for the recreation project. Furthermore, the town is being responsible and addressing all

See Letters, page 6



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★ Letters, cont. from page 5

immediate capital needs by including the roof at Bacon Academy which is past due for replacement.

The town finances are now in good standing to support this project at minimal long-term cost to the taxpayer.

There is nothing left to do but vote! To wait would mean increased costs of materials and labor over time. Grants and other funding opportunities will be applied for, but to wait for possible "maybe" money would only increase the cost of the project in all areas. Learn from the Bacon HVAC project. Grant money was projected to be used so that all of Bacon would have been air conditioned, and the money was retracted. So the HVAC plan had to be adjusted and not all areas are able to be air conditioned.

As far as the Bacon Academy complex, Field Turf is including a 10 year study of the water run-off to insure safety for surrounding homeowners. These are not the first turf fields in Connecticut. In fact, in our high school athletic division Bacon Academy is the last high school without any turf fields.

The Bacon Academy roof is far beyond its useful life and is in immediate need of replacement.

The time is now to move Colchester forward with projects that address the capital needs of our community while being financially responsible and accountable.

Marguerite Gignac  
Colchester

**Spreadsheet Man**

To the Editor:

When I moved to Hebron in 2006, I met my neighbor from across the street. He came over and introduced himself letting me know that he had built his house back in the 1950s and had raised his children there, all of whom had since left home and were living in other states. He became my first friend in Hebron.

A year later, he came over and told me he was selling his house and moving south. When I asked why, he said he could no longer afford the taxes. This was one of my first lessons about living in the town of Hebron.

I tell this story a lot. I once told it to an employee of the town and when I get to the point about not being able to afford the taxes, he interrupted: I've got to call BS on that. Your neighbor just didn't balance his spreadsheet.

My neighbor did not see that the town, the BOE and RHAM were following their individual agendas without any consideration to the combined effect that would be levied against the town's citizens.

Over the past two decades, I've been in the audience of the Board of Selectman or Board of Finance many times when an elderly citizen urged the board to do everything in their power to lower the tax burden.

Neither heeded the requests. They, along with RHAM, just worked their agendas and let the winners and losers fall where they may. And now Hebron has no infrastructure, elementary schools about to collapse and a regional high school that has won the obfuscation game to the other's detriment.

Terry McManus  
Hebron

**The Real DPW Fallacy**

To the Editor:

The sunken cost fallacy may be an interesting economic theory, however, the real fallacy in the discussion of Hebron's Public Works project is that Kinney Road is a viable and lower cost alternative. Over several years documented information has been presented that conclusively proves the plan for Kinney Road is fiscally, economically, environmentally and culturally flawed. While proponents of the Kinney Road option often avoid the economic, environmental, and cultural issues, the fiscal facts alone offer important reasons to keep Public Works at Old Colchester Road.

I encourage all residents to review the recording of the Department of Public Works Action Committee meeting of Jan. 13, 2026, posted on the Town of Hebron website:

<https://hebronct.com/uploads/agendas/6977a2dde9d35.pdf>

Starting at about 1 hour and 4 minutes in, the committee addresses "significant misrepresentation" of the original cost proposal of the DPW facility on Kinney Road. They continue to note that some DPW activities will remain at Old Colchester Road regardless and there would be a need for substantial site work at that location, resulting in the development cost at two different sites. Perhaps most importantly, the committee also noted that the cost of placing a Public Works on Kinney Road would exceed the cost of reusing Old Colchester Road. As stated

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by committee member Richard Steiner, “let’s be realistic, the John Horton (Kinney Road) site for DPW is way off Route 66, and the cost of bringing utilities in and so on... it’s going to cost more. It’s going to take longer to develop and longer to migrate from where we are.” This is not sunken cost fallacy; this is the voice of experience of a well-respected expert in the construction and public building industry.

Committee member Jody Leary also noted, “In my business, in the private sector, I create strategies all day long and it doesn’t cost me anything to come up with multiple options on paper. In this environment, it does.” In fact, the DPW Action Committee Update in last week’s *Rivereast* estimated the cost to create plans for Kinney Road would be an additional \$1.5 million to \$2 million. Again, this is not sunken cost fallacy, this is fact. The feasibility of updating the current DPW site has been established since 2016. The time to act is now. I urge Hebron residents to become involved, attend meetings, learn the facts and support the plan to keep Public Works at Old Colchester Road.

Sincerely,  
Kevin J. Tulimieri  
Amston

**If You Are Not There,  
You Are Not Heard**

To the Editor:

Too often, important decisions in our town reach a town meeting with little public awareness or input. By the time residents hear about them, the conversation is already underway — or worse, nearly over.

I’m writing to encourage my neighbors to pay attention to upcoming committee meetings and to attend when they can. These meetings aren’t just formalities; they’re one of the few places where ordinary residents can hear the same information at the same time, ask questions, and understand how decisions are being shaped.

Once an issue reaches the floor of a town meeting, the discussion is rarely neat or definitive. As witnessed at the town meeting on Jan. 29th, there aren’t always clear answers, and suddenly no one can answer questions.

I urge residents to do their due diligence and attend committee meetings. Specifically, any meetings that address the Public Works building project. Attend the meetings and make your concerns known. It is going to affect everyone, especially those of us who are living on pensions and social security. We cannot afford any more increases!

Silence and empty seats don’t mean agreement — they just mean fewer voices in the room. If we want thoughtful decisions, we need thoughtful participation, even when the issues are complicated and unresolved.

Showing up doesn’t require expertise. It just requires caring enough to listen, think, and be part of the discussion.

Angela Corentin  
Amston

**Do the Study First**

To the Editor:

One of the selling points of the Bacon Academy athletic field project is fixing the fields’ drainage problems. Ironically, that fix is also the project’s biggest regulatory concern.

So where does all that water go?

Not only into protected wetlands — but also onto neighboring private property.

Under the current proposal, water that now pools on the fields would be deliberately captured, piped, and discharged through existing outlets that direct increased flows into wetlands and onto land owned by adjacent residents. Rather than designing an optimal drainage solution, the project relies on legacy discharge points never designed to handle this volume of runoff.

And yet the town never bothered to ask basic questions.

What lives there? What depends on that habitat to survive? What happens when more water is sent downstream — into wetlands and onto a neighbor’s property? Are there sensitive or endangered species present?

No one knows. There were no studies of the impacts — no answers.

This is troubling when you consider what ordinary homeowners are required to endure. Residents proposing minor changes to their own property must hire experts and justify downstream impacts — especially when runoff affects a neighbor. Meanwhile, the town is asking voters to approve a project that would redirect far larger quantities of water offsite without doing the studies it routinely requires of private citizens.

This isn’t a vote against athletics or students. It’s a vote against rushing a project without un-

derstanding where the water goes, who it affects, and what damage it may cause.

Colchester is a Right to Farm community. We value open land, working farms, and environmental stewardship. That commitment should apply to town projects as much as it does to private property.

I refuse to vote ‘yes’ to a project built on unknowns. Who could support this when we don’t even know which habitats — or which neighbors — we might be harming?

There is a town meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 10, at 7 p.m., to move this project forward to referendum. On Feb. 11 at 7 p.m., the Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing to discuss drainage and water impacts. That sequence

alone should give residents pause.

If you’re concerned, I encourage you to attend both meetings at Town Hall. Let’s ask the town to slow down, do the work, and give residents the information needed before any referendum.

Finish the work, get the grants, then vote.

Michael Dubreuil  
Colchester

**The Grand List**

To the Editor:

We have great wildlife, ‘cause we have open land and we have wildlife on that land. What good is land without her wildlife?...Open land is grand.

We have great farming ‘cause we have soggy

land and we grow crops upon that land. What good are farms without water?...Groundwater is grand.

We live in Hebron and we have local history, a history that is based upon the land. What good is Hebron without her history?...Town history is grand. Wildlife and hay fields, history and groundwater, walking trails and excellent schools....ain’t Hebron grand!

The last few weeks brought justified concerns, regarding the cost of Hebron’s new Public Works. However, in the past few years, and without batting an eye, we oked two plastic bridges totaling approximately \$750,000, a new roof on the library for roughly \$465,000 and a

See Letters, page 8

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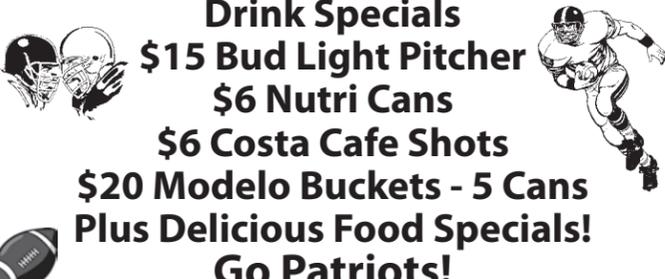
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★ **Letters cont. from page 7**

skateboard park coming in at nearly \$900,000. I like bridges and skateboarding but heard no public outcry. Much of that money came from state and federal funding, which is, of course, our money. These prices, to me, reflect how expensive municipal construction can be. So, is it any wonder a new state-of-the-art PW facility, and transfer station, would have a rough estimate of \$27.8 million? New Canaan's renovated Police Station clocked in at \$29 million. (new-canaanite.com)

How does a town lose the narrative to itself? Maybe groundwater has been the narrator all along? After all, Hebron visited and revisited Kinney Road, in 1992, 2000, 2004, 2012, 2016, 2019 and 2021. Why didn't the 88.6 acres of Horton land sell to anyone else? Why keep trying to build on inappropriate land? It might help to understand the property better by talking to local farmers while reviewing environmental reports.

If municipal renovations, plastic bridges and skate parks cost what they do, then people had to expect a PW facility, no matter where it went, would have a big price tag as well. Time was when kids built their own half pipes for skateboarding and towns basically stored salt under tarps. But times have changed. A big part of these changes, for PW, is preventing the costly and on going, problems concerning groundwater pollution.

We have clean water and we have a plan. Safeguarding water is that plan. What good is Hebron without her water?.....Safe water is grand #save17

**Jean Tulimieri Amston**

**Bridging the Digital Divide**

To the Editor:

As our world continues to move rapidly toward digital everything, it is becoming increasingly clear that many older adults are being asked to adapt without adequate support. From online medical portals like MyChart to digital check-ins at appointments, managing passwords, and safeguarding personal information, technology has become a daily requirement for health care access, communication, and independence.

In response to this growing need, we recently launched a new series of technology assistance workshops focused on digital safety and security for older adults, end of life planning for important documents and digital access, and understanding how emerging tools like artificial intelligence can be used safely and practically in everyday life.

Our first informational class was extremely

well-received. Participants were engaged, asked thoughtful questions, and expressed both relief and gratitude for a space where they could learn without feeling rushed, judged, or left behind. It reaffirmed what we already know. There is a significant and urgent need for education and guidance as systems continue to shift online.

Aging should not mean losing access, autonomy, or confidence. When older adults are supported with clear information and practical tools, they are better able to advocate for themselves, stay connected, and navigate health care and daily life with dignity.

Our next technology assistance workshop will be held on Feb. 23rd at 11 a.m. at the Senior Center. We welcome older adults who may feel overwhelmed by today's digital demands as well as those who simply want to better understand the tools that are now part of everyday life.

These conversations matter now more than ever. As medical facilities, service providers, and institutions increasingly rely on digital platforms, it is essential that we ensure older adults are not excluded simply because the systems changed faster than the support did.

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

**A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing?**

To the Editor:

I recently read an article in *Rivereast* on the Colchester Board of Education's appointment of Donna Antonacci to fill their vacant seat. Their charter mandated that it must be filled by a Republican. They had two people to choose from: Donna Antonacci and Michael Dubreuil. Donna had experience on the town's Board of Education but Michael was the town's voters choice and received nearly three times as many votes than Donna and the Colchester Republican Town Committee had endorsed Michael Dubreuil.

Last year, when the Colchester Board of Education proposed that Colchester should have a magnet school, I attended six or eight monthly meetings to express my opposition. I had not known any of the committee members and listened to their reasons and promotions of the school. I didn't know what any of the committee members political party affiliations were and it didn't matter. I had heard Donna promoting her opinions many, many times at those meetings. Every time she spoke she was strongly in favor of every Democratic proposal! She sounded like a very strongly opinionated Democrat!

After I learned she was a registered Republican, I found it very hard to believe. Then the thought came to my mind was, "I'll bet

she registered as a Republican just to give the Democrats another vote in everything they proposed!" I based my opinion on what I had seen and heard from her for only those six or right monthly meetings. Others that have seen her in action for longer periods of time may have a different opinion than mine.

If the Republican Town Committee thinks the same as I do of her, maybe they should look into permanently removing her Republican affiliation, if they can.

**Frank Blume  
Colchester**

**Hebron Expenses**

To the Editor:

It is now out there what the estimate for the new Public Works facility is. If accurate, it will create an approximately ?? mill increase onto your taxes. Now, the school is calling for a 9.1% increase. The largest that I can remember. The town's insurance costs are through the ceiling. What no one is considering is: what other expenses are on the horizon? 1) The state passed a law requiring all schools to upgrade their environmental air systems. As no money was included in the bill, they haven't pushed it - yet. The possible cost to the town for educational facility upgrades (as I remember): \$40 million. 2) I have heard rumors that there is talk of a request for the building of a new elementary school. 3) The Town Building Committee, last year, also did a presentation discussing multiple other town deficiencies which will cost millions to address. There are other monies being considered to be spent, and possible incomes lost.

While I agree that we need a new Public Works facility, I want to make sure we are spending the money wisely. Depending on the outcome of the referendum, I would suggest a long-range multifaceted approach. One thought which I actually shared last year, is that we look into building a new elementary school on John Horton Boulevard, where the state would be carrying (I believe) approximately 52% of the costs, and turn the existing Hebron Elementary school into a multifunction town offices facility -Public Works, Fire Department, Police Department, Town Offices - where, also, Parks and Rec can utilize the courts for their programs. This would allow the sale of potentially multiple town-owned properties. That income would then be used to help offset the costs of construction.

We, as taxpayers both need and deserve to know what expenses are potentially in our future, and a common-sense approach to handle those costs.

**Thank you,  
Daniel Larson  
Amston**

**Thank You for Supporting Open Space Preservation**

To the Editor:

Thank you to all residents who braved the extremely cold temps to attend Hebron's Special Town Meeting last Thursday evening. We preserved intact nature and gentle agriculture; part of a greenway corridor, benefiting all. Some realize the important benefits of this action inherently because of the beauty, health and life that preserved nature and gentle agriculture bestow us with. In addition, preserving such valuable ecosystems as the open space preserved last Thursday benefits us economically.

How many of us realize that keeping natural ecosystems intact has huge economic benefits? By removing vast quantities of carbon dioxide; removing other toxic air pollutants; and also mitigating storm waters, these three "ecosystem services" from natural ecosystems just in Hebron alone provide millions of dollars worth of services each year? (Learn more about these

values on itreetools.org!) Preserving water and water quality has great economic value, too.

In addition to such massively beneficial ecosystem services, we all benefit economically from preserving open space by enhancing people's collective quality of life with healthy outdoor recreational areas, by creating a healthier and more attractive area to live and work in, and keeping prime agricultural areas in use.

Even greater economic values are provided when we consider that preserving natural ecosystems directly combats the climate and biodiversity crises we are facing (natural ecosystems remove the greenhouse gasses which are at the root of the problem while providing biodiversity's needed habitat). These crises cause much destruction and are very expensive: consider the costs of reconstruction, combating extreme weather events, our increased insurance costs, increased medical costs, increased energy costs, and so on. Thinking globally and acting locally is very highly commended, and is indeed, possibly our most effective action.

Again, thank you for benefiting all by the life-improving and also economic-enhancing action of preserving an important natural greenway connection and gentle agriculture in Hebron.

**Sincerely,  
Ann Zitkus  
Hebron**

**Gratitude From Art Association**

To the Editor:

Our association wishes to express our sincere appreciation for the wonderful business community support we received in 2025. Annually, our members canvas the business community for donations which help finance our fine arts program. These generous businesses include:

Our Sponsors, who donated \$100 or more: American Distilling, Attorney Ken Barber, Belltown Auto, Belltown Recycling, Chatham Dental Center LLC, Global Self Storage, It's So Ranunculus LLC, KOCO Child Care Center, Lakeside Bar and Grill, Markham Meadows (Engel), McDonald's, Po's Rice & Spice, State Farm - Shawn Conroy, Sweet Jean's.

Our Benefactors, who donated \$50 or more: All About Blinds, Berkshire Hathaway - Sherry Borgeson, Burt Realty, Center Package Store, Custom Auto LLC, Dexter's, East Hampton Auto Parts (NAPA), Michael D. Reife DC LLC, Paul's & Sandy's Too Inc., Team Fitness.

Our Patrons, who donated \$25 or more: Big Y, Le Chic Boutique, Eco Coffee House, Island Vibes Creamery, Orthopedic Assoc./Hartford, Stop & Shop, Two Brothers Café, The Town Tavern.

We also wish to thank Serra Associates who invested in two purchase awards of \$100 to \$350 each for our Art Show exhibitors.

The East Hampton Art Association members and staff wish to express our thanks to our art exhibitors, our show visitors, our association officers, and our artists who donated to our auction.

Finally, a thank you to the East Hampton Congregational Church for hosting our annual Art Show this year and remarkably for the past 40 years.

Our local East Hampton Library printed a stunning show booklet for us both economically and efficiently. Thank you so much for your assistance on this most important project!

Those interested in supporting The East Hampton Art Association in 2026 may contact us at 860-682-2067. We will also be canvassing in the near future for our upcoming annual Art Show scheduled in mid-May. Individual membership is \$20, family membership is \$25, annually. Please consider joining us.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Rita Gibbons and GERALYN YOCHER  
Co-Presidents, East Hampton Art Association**



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

feels a statewide ban is unnecessary.

Scata told the *Mirror* districts are addressing the problem locally already, and said some students - such as multilingual learners or those receiving special education - need their phones for instructional purposes. But, again, if the student has his or her own school-issued tablet, I imagine that could be used for instructional purposes. It's what it's there for, no?

State Sen. Eric Berthel (R-32) told the *Mirror* he had heard from the parent of a child with Type 1 diabetes. The child's phone is connected to a device that monitors blood sugar, he said, and can alert the parents if the child has a crisis. That might not work, Berthel said, if the phone is shut off or not accessible.

Berthel makes a reasonable point. So in cases like those, when a child might be at risk of a medical emergency, you can carve out exceptions. I'm sure a statewide ban wouldn't be so draconian that it wouldn't allow for some wiggle room.

The legislative session just started, and a cell phone ban is just one of many topics that will be addressed this year. In other words, there might not be any movement on the issue anytime soon. But when there is, I'll be watching. It'll be interesting to see how this turns out.

\*\*\*

See you next week - and stay warm this weekend!

Andover • Andover

# BOE Tackles Variety of Items at Meeting

By Toriana Williams

The Andover Board of Education held a lengthy and wide-ranging meeting on Jan. 14, addressing energy efficiency projects, governance policies, enrollment trends, financial obligations and community concerns – while also postponing discussion of the recently contested bathroom renovation project.

## Energy Audit and Next Steps

One of the most substantial presentations of the evening focused on a completed energy audit of Andover Elementary School. Representatives Vince Costanzo and Alex Zapris of Resource Lighting & Energy presented the results of the audit and outlined potential next steps, including eligibility for Eversource's Micro-Municipality Incentive program.

The program is designed to improve energy efficiency in municipal facilities by supporting upgrades such as high-efficiency HVAC systems, building management systems and refrigeration equipment by allowing towns to access 0% interest loans of up to \$1 million for qualifying energy-saving projects.

Continuing, the presentation covered proposed-energy related work, anticipated costs, projected savings and the procedural steps required if the district chooses to move forward. Board members asked questions following the presentation but ultimately indicated they needed more time to review the information in detail. As a result, discussion and any potential action related to the energy project were tabled until a future meeting.

## Bathroom Renovation Project Removed from Agenda

A highly anticipated bathroom renovation update was removed from the agenda earlier in the meeting. The board voted to delete the item, explaining that additional information from more contractors was needed before a meaningful discussion could be had. The motion passed with one abstention by member Marcie Miner, a Republican, who said, "I don't really understand all the nuances yet."

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

The absence of the bathroom project discussion prompted comment later in the meeting. Residents expressed disappointment that the topic was not addressed but acknowledged the reasoning behind the decision. Public commenters also emphasized the importance of transparency, proper process and competitive bidding as the project moves forward. This was a result of previous concerns questioning whether the project followed town and BOE purchasing policies, particularly regarding competitive bidding requirements for subcontractors. Afterward, requests were made for better notification of future meetings related to the project so other town boards can remain informed.

## Corrective Action Plan Submitted for Review

Bruneau reported that the district's Corrective Action Plan had been completed and was ready for submission. The CAP is a required, written plan that details the steps a school must take to remedy identified deficiencies in areas such as performance, regulatory compliance, safety or data reporting.

The plan will be submitted by the town to the Office of Policy and Management, while the superintendent will submit it to the Connecticut State Department of Education. No formal board action was required at the meeting, but the update marked an important compliance step for the district.

## Superintendent's Report, Enrollment Clarifications

In her report, Superintendent of Schools Valerie Bruneau addressed what she described as misinformation related to school matters that have been discussed at recent town meetings.

"There's a lot of conversations that have occurred about school-based stuff [and] I mostly find it as misinformation," Bruneau said.

She clarified that some of those claims referenced Connecticut General Statutes under Title 7, which govern municipalities, including as-

## 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.



sertions that the school was in violation of state statute § 7-148v. Bruneau explained that public schools are governed under Title 10 of the Connecticut General Statutes, not Title 7, and said statutes that apply to municipalities do not apply to school districts or boards of education.

Bruneau also noted that current class sizes are the largest they have been in the last six years and stated that an additional classroom will be needed in the coming school year. She also reviewed preschool enrollment, explaining that while nine current preschool students are from out of town, only four out-of-town preschool slots will be available next year.

## Principal's Report, Professional Development

Andover Elementary School Principal Taylor Parker reported that two new Andover preschool students will begin attending school next month and that kindergarten registration has recently opened. Parker also highlighted several professional development initiatives, including a regional professional learning community hosted at Andover Elementary School with educators from Hebron, Marlborough and RHAM.

Additional professional development includes early childhood training for regional educators, restorative practices training for three staff members and math-focused workshops. Parker noted that future professional development days will continue to focus on school climate, safety and math instruction.

## Financial Matter and Approved Payment

Finance officer Jodiann Tenney presented the district's financial report and discussed an outstanding invoice from Fuss & O'Neill for a hazardous materials report. The invoice totaled \$8,100. Tenney recommended the payment be made from the town's 2% non-lapsing fund. The board unanimously approved the payment.

## Public Comment, Community Programs

During public comment, Doris Maldonado Mendez – a parent of two AES students – said Connecticut is facing a broader challenge with more than 119,000 young people, about one in five statewide, considered at risk of or disconnected from school, community or both. She described this as a problem that can be felt more acutely in towns like Andover.

"Rural towns like ours feel this more deeply ... with distance and limited services. That's why the work happening here at Andover Elementary is so important," Maldonado Mendez shared.

She emphasized that programs at AES play an important role in addressing those challenges, pointing to student-and family-centered initiatives in literacy, social-emotional learning, dance, STEM and media, as well as the upcoming Junior Achievement of Southern New England program to take place at the school in March.

Maldonado Mendez noted that she helped initiate contact with Junior Achievement last summer and said she was encouraged by the school's focus on building belonging and future-ready skills, particularly for young children entering the district.

## 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 gardeners

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](mailto:gardenandovercommunity@gmail.com).

## Congregational Church News

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

**Children's Church:** Is provided. **Choir:** At 9

a.m. Sundays in the sanctuary.

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

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

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



**Soup for Seniors...** Andover's recent Soup for Seniors event was a tremendous success, bringing seniors and community members together for a cozy potluck centered around a warm bowl of soup. Guests enjoyed a variety of homemade options, including beef barley, broccoli cheddar, and venison chili, along with bread, butter, and dessert. Extra soup was frozen to provide future meals for seniors. Due to the event's popularity, it will be held again – watch for details in the coming weeks.



Portland • Portland

### 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 or if the library is open.

**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.

**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.

**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.

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

**Book Clubs: Mystery Lovers Book Club:** Tuesday, Feb. 17, 1 p.m. *The Long Call* by Ann Cleeves will be discussed. **Talk About Books:** Tuesday, March 3, 1 p.m. *Tell Me Everything* by Elizabeth Strout will be discussed. **1st Thursday Night Book Club:** Thursday, March 5, 6:30 p.m. *Ask Again, Yes* by Mary Beth Keane will be discussed.

**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.

**"Circle for Change" with Cultivating Justice:** Tuesday, Feb. 24, 6 p.m. Community members will role play how the current probation system impacts everyone, not just those who are directly involved in the Connecticut criminal justice system. Co-sponsored by the Committee on Solidarity. Dinner will be provided, so RSVP through the link on the library calendar.

### St. Mary Church News & Notes

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

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

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

**Bereavement Support Group:** All are invited to attend. The group meets each month on the second Monday at 6:30 p.m. in the church hall and every fourth Tuesday at 2 p.m. in the

rosary room. Call Susan Bongiorno at 860-685-1966 for additional information.

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

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

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

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

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

### 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.

**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.

**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 Gilder-sleeve 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.

**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.

**Spring Offerings: A Multi-Sport Program at Riverfront Park, Junior Golf Workshops for various grade levels, and Ladies Spring Golf Clinics for beginners and intermediates are coming in April and May; watch for more details.**



**YMCA CAMP INGERSOLL'S CHILL FOR CHANGE**

**12th Annual Chill for Change**  
**Saturday, February 28 | Jobs Pond, YMCA Camp Ingersoll**  
 94 Camp Ingersoll Road, Portland, CT

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

**We Need You to Join Us**  
 Spread the word! Tell friends, neighbors, coworkers, and family members that you're making a difference. Invite them to join your team or support your jump with an online donation. Grab a costume (or don't!) and join us at 1:00 PM on February 28 at YMCA Camp Ingersoll to help change lives!

You can help us get there by registering as an individual or creating a team by scanning QR code below.

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**State Rep. Christie Carpino recently shadowed three teachers at Portland High School.**

### Carpino Shadows PHS Teachers

State Rep. Christie Carpino (R-32) recently spent a morning shadowing three teachers at Portland High School, gaining firsthand insight into the daily challenges and rewards educators experience in the classroom.

During her visit, Carpino observed a civic class and two math classes. They discussed curriculum demands, classroom resources, and student engagement with their teachers. The experience provided an on-the-ground perspective before the legislature convenes for the 2026 legislative session to consider possible educa-

tion policies.

“Our teachers work hard every day,” said Carpino. “Spending time in the classroom reinforces how important it is that we support educators and give students the tools they need to succeed. It was evident how hard these teachers work to engage students and bring the material to life.”

Carpino thanked the Portland High School community for opening their doors and said she looks forward to continuing her advocate for policies that strengthen education in Connecticut.

### 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 Cas-

telli, Carol Clausi Karnilowicz, Marc Coman, Amy Dooley Lockmer, Richard Kearney, Laura Klemba, Michael Munrow, Richard Pawoiczik, 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 or message her on Facebook: Portland high class 76.

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

### Zion Lutheran News & Notes

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

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

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

**Year-Round Giving:** Pull tabs are collected

### 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 gingerlabella@gmail.com or 860-759-0935. Novices requiring instruction should notify LaBella before attending so she can plan accordingly.

year-round and donated to the Ronald McDonald “House that Love Built,” supporting families with seriously ill children. Zion recycles computer ink cartridges to support office supplies for Sunny Hill Preschool and Zion. Pull tabs and used ink cartridges may be dropped off at the church on Sunday morning, or by calling the church office.

For more information about any church activities, or if you are in need of pastoral assistance, call 860-342-2860, email zion.lutheran@snet.net, or visit zionlutheranportland.org.

### Dean's List

William Crawford Jr. of Portland made the fall 2025 Dean's List at the University of New Haven.

Crawford is a senior majoring in criminal justice.

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### 'The Fight for Freedom & Equality'

On Saturday, Feb. 21, from 2-4 p.m., a special program entitled “Voices of Portland - The Fight for Freedom & Equality: From 1776-2026” will be held at the Waverly Center, 7 Waverly Ave.

Speakers will include Jesse Nasta, John Mills, students from Portland High School, and representatives from the Middlesex County NAACP.

Attendees will hear about Black soldiers from Portland CT who fought in the Revolutionary War. They will also hear about Portland residents who enlisted in CT's 29th and 30th colored regiments during the Civil War, and will learn about Portland's connections to the NAACP, where the Portland-Middletown Chapter was created in 1946 with Portland resident Roosevelt Steele as its first president.

John Mills of Alex Breanne Corporation will

speak about Prince Mortimer, of Middletown, and Jesse Nasta, PhD of Wesleyan University will discuss Middletown abolitionists, their connection to Cross Street Church and the Underground Railroad, and information about the Beman Triangle in Middletown. There will be presentations from Portland High School students as well.

The event is sponsored by the Portland Historical Society, the Middlesex County Historical Society, Portland's 250th Committee, Public Library and Committee on Solidarity in celebration of Black History Month.

Everyone is welcome and refreshments will be served. Registration is recommended but not required, at: portlandlibraryct.org/voices-of-portland.

### Senior Center News & Notes

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

**Mobile Food Pantry:** The Food Share Mobile Pantry comes to the Food Bank every other Monday. The next date is Feb. 9.

**AARP Tax Return Preparation:** Wednesdays through April 8, 9 a.m.-noon. The service is free, but an appointment is required.

**Weekly Programs:** Unless noted, all programs are free.

**Monday, 2/9: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.;**

**Tuesday, 2/10: Bears on a Journey, 9:30-11 a.m. -** to donate light fleece for making teddy bears for cancer patients, call 860-342-0809; **Congregate Meal, noon.** Cost is \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: country-fried steak with gravy, veggie medley, roasted potatoes, roll & butter, string cheese, applesauce; **Coupons for Troops, 1-4 p.m.;** **Setback, 1 p.m.;** **SyncoCize, 5-6 p.m.,** fee is donation to instructor.

**Wednesday, 2/11: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.;** **Chair Yoga with Gia, 10:30-11:15 a.m.,** fee is a \$5 donation to instructor.

**Thursday, 2/12: Stretch & Tone, 9:30 a.m.;** **Knit & Stitch, 10 a.m.;** **Congregate Meal, noon.** Cost is \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: balsamic honey chicken breast, baked potato and sour cream, Brussels sprouts, roll and butter, milk, pear cup; **Mahjong (FULL), 12:30 p.m.;** **Scrabble, 1 p.m.**

**Friday, 2/13: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.;** **Mah Jongg, 10 a.m.;** **Chair Yoga with Gia, 10:30-11:15 a.m.,** fee is a \$5 donation to instructor.

**February Special Events:** Unless noted, programs are free and registration is required.

**Tuesday, Feb. 10:** Bingo with Sean from Ageless Insurance, 1:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, Feb. 11:** Cooking with Mary Brody: Easy Recipes with Chocolate. Time is 1:30 p.m. Fee is \$10.

**Thursday, Feb. 12:** The Heart of Health & Community Wellness Series. This series will include a blood pressure clinic from 10:45-11:45 a.m. and Chatting with Chatham Health wellness presentation at 11:15 a.m. Don't forget to sign up for the congregate meal at noon. (Must sign up by noon the day before to attend lunch; suggested donation is \$3 for meal, and you must fill out form.)

**Thursday, Feb. 12:** Sweet Treats and Conversation with Community Leaders, 1 p.m. This month's community leader is to be determined.

**Friday Feb. 13:** Family History Fun with Ken Doney, 10:30 a.m.

**Monday, Feb. 16:** Closed for Presidents Day.

**Wednesday, Feb. 18:** Shopping Trip to Rocky Hill: Walmart, Stop & Shop, T.J. Maxx and Marshalls, followed by lunch of choice. Leave the center at 10 a.m. There is a \$5 ride fee.

**Friday, Feb. 20:** CT Flower & Garden Show. Admission at the door is \$20.80. There is a \$5 ride fee. Leave the center at 9 a.m.

**Monday, Feb. 23:** There will be a monthly technology workshop at 11 a.m. A range of technology topics will be discussed.

### Carpino Highlights New Yellow Envelope Law

State Rep. Christie Carpino (R-32) recently attended a symposium on Connecticut's new Yellow Envelope Law. The symposium was hosted by the Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles, and several partner organizations, including the Council on Developmental Disabilities.

The event focused on how the Yellow Envelope Program can help residents with cognitive or physical disabilities have safer, less stressful interactions with first responders during traffic stops or emergencies.

In 2025, Carpino - whose district covers Portland and Cromwell - supported the Yellow Envelope Law, a bipartisan public safety measure aimed at making everyday encounters a little easier and a lot safer for individuals who may need additional time, support, or different communication strategies.

Effective Jan. 1, 2026, the law officially established Connecticut's Yellow Envelope Program. Through a partnership between the DMV, the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, and first responder organizations, the state is now distributing yellow envelopes and public education materials to help first responders quickly recognize when

someone may need accommodations.

The yellow envelope is designed to hold essential documents, such as a driver's license, registration, and insurance card, along with information about a person's disability or communication needs. Clear instructions printed on the outside help police officers, firefighters, and EMTs understand how best to interact respectfully and safely.

“Stressful situations are hard enough on their own,” said Carpino. “The Yellow Envelope is a simple, common-sense tool. It helps first responders better understand how to communicate with community members. It can ease anxiety, prevent misunderstandings, and make these moments safer for everyone involved.”

Carpino added, “It's easy to use - just keep the envelope in your glove box or on your visor and hand it to a first responder if you're pulled over or need help. That small step can make a big difference in how the situation unfolds.”

According to the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, yellow envelopes will be available at no cost through Connecticut DMV offices, local police, fire, and EMS departments, as well as at community events across the state.

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# Portland Solar Project Looks Likely

By Anne Lilburn

If everything goes as expected, Portland may soon be the home to a new solar energy project.

The proposed solar array, which would be built and operated by Greenskies Clean Energy, would occupy 17.4 acres on a privately owned land parcel located close to the Glastonbury border that was once home to a gravel quarry and a small orchard. The proposed project is projected to supply 4.5-5 MW of energy to the state's electrical grid, said Jeff Hintzke, Greenskies vice president of policy and marketing.

Hintzke said that the parcel was well-suited to the project, due to its close proximity to the local electric grid, an even grade, and not a lot of shade. Though the land lies in Portland and is accessed via a road in Glastonbury, jurisdiction for approval of the project rests with the Connecticut Siting Council, which is responsible for approving new public utility service sites, including solar projects such as this.

According to its website, the Siting Council's role includes "balancing the need for adequate and reliable public utility services at the lowest reasonable cost to consumers with the need to protect the environment and ecology of the state and to minimize damage to scenic, histor-

ic, and recreational values," as well as "providing environmental standards for the location, design, construction, and operation of public utility facilities."

Currently, Greenskies has an application filed with the Siting Council and is expecting a decision in the near future. In order for the project to proceed, they would also need an interconnection agreement with Eversource, which may include upgrades that the company will need to pay for in order to connect to the grid.

Greenskies is a Connecticut-based company that develops, builds and operates solar projects. The company currently has 680 sites in 19 states, and has an extensive presence in the northeast. Many of the company's projects are rooftop projects on existing properties, including warehouses and big box stores, as well as municipally-owned buildings, such as schools. Greenskies marketing manager Domonique Bedbury said that, in Connecticut alone, the company has partnered with 52 municipalities to place solar panels on public buildings, including in Portland at Brownstone Intermediate School in 2023.

Recently, the town of Glastonbury was grant-

ed "party status" in Greenskies' application to the Siting Council. The road that allows access to the property, Old Maids Lane, is in South Glastonbury, and the property is located near Nayaug Elementary School. The town had expressed concerns about construction vehicles on the road and the effects on nearby residents, as well as noise and potential light reflection into the school's second floor windows. The town also expressed concerns regarding the site's eventual decommissioning, with the town seeking to ensure that there are no long-term negative environmental impacts.

In Portland, the town's Clean Energy Task Force hosted a representative from Greenskies at its recent meeting on Jan. 20. Andy Bauer, chairman of the task force, said he expected the project to get approval from the Siting Council, noting that it had received a favorable environmental review from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), which noted in its letter to the Siting Council that its "Bureau of Natural Resources has determined that such proposed project...will not materially affect the status of such Site as core forest."

Likewise, the state's Department of Agriculture, which considers a project's impact to potential farmlands, did not express concern. The department specified in its letter to the Siting Council that "1.7 acres are classified as prime

farmland soils," and notes that Greenskies has agreed to plant 1.7 acres of pollinator habitat.

"The pollinator habitat seed mix shall include a variety of native grasses and forb species that bloom over the course of the growing season to maximize floral resources for pollinators," according to the Department of Agriculture's letter. The property does have a small apple orchard on site that is no longer commercially viable, and the landlords have agreed to move those trees to a nearby parcel, according to both Hintzke and Bauer.

Hintzke pointed out that, while this project is relatively small, the cumulative effect of smaller-scale solar projects statewide adds up. He pointed out that, state-wide, smaller projects like this have the potential to make a significant impact on the power grid.

Bauer emphasized the broader benefits of renewable energy projects like this solar project, saying that it was in line with the priorities of the town's Clean Energy Task Force.

"Number one, you want to reduce greenhouse gases. Number two, you want to improve air quality by reducing harmful emissions. And number three, you want to save money with how you plan for your energy needs," said Bauer. "And the beauty of renewable energy is that if you only care about one of those three things, you usually get all three."

## 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. 8, Cooke will preach on the topic "Let Your Light Shine."

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.

All are invited to the church's Portland Butterfly Presentation on Sunday, Feb. 8, at 11:30 a.m. Beau Doherty will share information about the more than 35 butterfly species found in this area. The presentation will focus on four distinct butterfly families, each with unique behaviors and habitat needs in the Portland landscape.

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

## AARP Tax Return Prep

AARP Tax Return Preparation will be available by appointment every Wednesday through 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 sched-

uling 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.

## Dean's List

Portland residents Paige Fitzgibbons and Dorothy Riley made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I.

## Parking Ban During Storms

The town has announced a parking ban will be in effect for all storms this winter season to allow highway crews to properly clear and treat the roads.

The ban will be in effect for any amount of accumulating ice or snow. Please make sure your vehicles are moved off the roadway at least two hours before a storm has been forecast to start.

Vehicles are to remain off the roadway for at least four hours after the storm has ended or until crews have completed their final plowing. Vehicles not moved may be towed at the owner's expense.

## Kindergarten Registration

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

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

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



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## 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. Tickets are 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.

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**Seed Swap Success...** On Saturday, Jan. 31, many garden enthusiasts gathered for a Seed Swap hosted by The Portland River Valley Garden Club at The Waverly Center in Portland. Participants enjoyed choosing flower and vegetable seeds, sowing winter seeds, making seed bombs, planting herbs, learning about microgreens, taking home donated repurposed coffee grounds from Portland Starbucks, making purchases from River Bend Bookshop in Glastonbury, and sharing refreshments. A great day was had by all! The club asks anyone who wasn't able to attend to please visit The Portland Library Seed Library where you can find many donated seeds from sponsors. You can also find more information on The Portland River Valley Garden Club Facebook page.

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At the Portland Historical Society’s annual meeting on Feb. 1, local author and architect Alain Munkittrick was given a certificate of appreciation for his presentation “Castles Along the Connecticut.” The certificate was presented by Bob McDougall, chair of the society’s Board of Trustees.

### Historical Society Holds Annual Meeting

The Portland Historical Society held its annual meeting at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 1, at the Portland Senior Center. There were over 50 members and guests present.

The meeting included the election of officers for 2026 – President: Susan Bransfield; 1st Vice President: Kathleen Richards; 2nd Vice President: Amy Knous; Corresponding Secretary: Linda Cunningham; Treasurer: David O’Brien and directors: Paul Santagata and Debra Freitag.

A review of accomplishments of the last year included presentation of “The Brownstone Timeline” last April, resuming third grade tours of the museum for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic, Gildersleeve Family Day in June, publication of “Voices of Portland Vol. 1” in September, and preparation for rebuilding the 1821 Gildersleeve Store on the museum property. The annual fundraisers, the Townwide Tag Sale in May and Festival of Wreaths in December, were both very successful.

Recognition awards were presented to: Don Snyder, owner & Ian Jackowiak, surveyor of Snyder Civil Engineering for surveying services performed and donated to the society’s project to rebuild the 1821 Gildersleeve Store on the grounds of the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History; and to Babs Scheer for her work coordinating the revival of the historical

society’s collaboration with the Portland Public Schools’ third grade teachers to provide tours of our museum for their students, hosting five visits in June and four visits in November.

Appreciation awards were presented to: Jeff & Caroline Murray for their work coordinating and hosting a tour of their “Universal Design” home in October for the benefit of our project to rebuild the 1821 Gildersleeve Store; Grzegorz Dawidowicz for his work promoting awareness and appreciation of Connecticut’s local history through his Facebook Group “Connecticut Old Churches Houses Bridges Mills,” created in 2021 and with over 68,000 followers, featuring articles and photographs about Connecticut History including Portland; and Alain Munkittrick for his work preparing his program on “Castles Along the Connecticut” for our Annual Meeting highlighting a selection of historic houses of the Connecticut River Valley inspired by castle architecture, including William Gillette’s “Seventh Sister” in East Haddam and Portland’s St. Clements, featured in his book “Historic Houses of the Connecticut River Valley.”

The meeting concluded with announcements of upcoming events, including a Black History Month event on Saturday, Feb. 21, entitled “Voices of Portland – The Fight for Freedom & Equality: From 1776 to 2026.”

### Middle School Honor Roll

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

#### Grade Eight

**High Honors:** Dylan Arnold, Avery Berard, Sadie Campbell, Cora Chenier, Miriam Clements, Maya Finkelstein, Whitney Gatto, Luz Glick-Grappo, Lillian Hallinean, Rowan Kirsche, Carmelo Spada, Kyrinn Stone.

**Honors:** Timothy Bolstridge, Caiden Bouchard, Peyton Clark, Aaryn Cole, Rory Connelly, Joshua Corriveau, Leo Dean, Sullivan Donohue, Zayden Dullary, Orson Felter, Rocco Glick-Grappo, Kristina Gonzalez, Amaya Huff, Hannah Lamson, Justin Lin, Noah MacDonald, Jude Matterfis, Derek Mazzullo, Brody Mullen, Gabriel Ngunjiri, Griffin Poach, Patrick Reilly, Sebastian Robotin, Larissa Rossi, Taylor Sobieski, Danica Strayhorn, Evan Warner, Abel Wells.

#### Grade Seven

**High Honors:** Lillian Alvarado, Hailey Briggs, Skylar Caldwell, Max Campbell, Daniel Carpenter, Roman Christensen, Lauren DeMer-

chant, Gavin Hungerford, Ella Libera, Eziah Limas, Juliana Martin, Benjamin Martinez, Tessa Napp, Spence Papke, Selma Payne, Samuel Pickett, Andrew Quesnel, Christian Quesnel, Nicholas Rago, Landon Richey, Adrian Rodriguez, Sofia Rotaru, Nathan Tine, Bianca Vibberts, Nicholas Vibberts, Isabelle Vieira-LeMay, Rodney Warren.

**Honors:** Sophia Adamaitis, Ella Agosta, John Bankoski, Elizabeth Barone, Colette Brault, Mason Buckley, Titan Caldwell, Lily Cavalier, Joshua Clark, Marshall Clarke, Brayden Cunningham, Izabella DeCrescenzo, Fabian DeLeon Ortiz, Booker Edie, Reid Fournier, Brady Furtak, Selena Gregoire, Maya Hale, Noelle Haniewski, Kenzie Kroeber, Luciano Lomando, Sophia Lopez, Emma Maronde, Zachary Martin, Connor McKeaveney, Jacob Phelps, Dominick Rodriguez, Adele Rogers, Logan Schmidt, Heithor Silva, Sofia Trojanowski, Madison VanDeventer, Raymond Vicino, David Williams, Aidan Witschy.



Carpino Hits the Boat Show... Last week, state Rep. Christie Carpino (R-32) stopped by the Hartford Boat Show to check out the incredible innovation and craftsmanship behind Connecticut’s boating industry. As a legislator representing the Connecticut River communities of Cromwell and Portland, Carpino said she knows boating isn’t just recreation — it’s jobs, small businesses, manufacturing, tourism, and a big part of the local economy. Carpino said it was great to check in with local business owners, especially Bob Petzold of Petzold’s Marine Center, chair of the Boat Show, and Tasha Cusson of Portland Boat Works, chair of the Marine Trade Association. Carpino talked shop, learned about the type of employees they hire, and saw firsthand the work they’re doing to keep this industry strong and growing right here in Connecticut.

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**“PET OF THE WEEK”**

Four-month-old Orion is a sweet and laid-back boy. His main priorities are playing with his favorite toys (the wand toy and laser light) and getting treats. Orion does also believe in “play hard, nap hard” and will spend his afternoons sleeping in a cat tree or bathroom sink curled up with one of his littermates. At these times he also tolerates being scooped up for hugs and cuddles even if he feels his foster mom is embarrassing him. Orion would do well with another kitty friend (after a slow introduction) or one of his littermates. He is a total sweetheart who will be the perfect companion for anybody looking for a little extra warmth and love in their lives.

Four-month-old Peanut Butter Monkey is the bravest of her siblings and always looking for her next adventure. In her foster home she was the first to come out of hiding and explore. She’s a stunning girl with orange tiger markings scattered around her fur. PB loves to play with toys but also loves being picked up and petted and will start purring almost instantly when this happens. She’s a mischievous kitten who likes to try escaping her foster room so she can be with the other kitties and people in the house. PB is looking for a home where she can have a kitty friend (or more) to love and play with and a family to spoil her tons!

**FOR MORE INFO ON ADOPTING CATS OR DOGS, CALL 860-569-0722**  
**VOLUNTEERS & FOSTER HOMES NEEDED — CALL: 860-569-0722**

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 A non-profit, all volunteer animal rescue organization, rescuing abandoned, abused and impounded cats and dogs. **WWW.POAINC.ORG**



### Teen Game Night

Teens in grades six and up are invited to come hang out with their friends at the next Epoch Game Night, taking place Friday, Feb. 13, from 7-9:30 p.m., at Epoch, 27 Skinner St. Play some old school games as well as some new ones, like DDR, Xbox games, chess, corn hole, and a variety of others. Various art activities will also be available. There will be free food and drinks all night long. Fee for the night is \$10. For more information, visit [www.epocharts.org](http://www.epocharts.org). Pictured at the last game night, playing Giant Jenga, are Asher and Clayton Schroth.

### A Night of Doo-Wop

East Hampton Project Graduation is sponsoring "A Night of Doo-Wop & Rock n' Roll," featuring Tom Austin's Royal Teens, Jukebox45 Show Band and Back in Time, on Saturday, April 25, in the East Hampton High School auditorium.

Tickets can be purchased online at [ehsprojectgraduation.ludus.com](http://ehsprojectgraduation.ludus.com). Choose premium seats with limited VIP add-ons and meet & greet for \$40, or choose general admission for \$25.

All proceeds benefit East Hampton Project graduation to provide a safe and amazing after graduation celebration.

### President's List

Annin Daley of East Hampton made the fall 2025 President's List at Vermont State University in Randolph Center, Vt.

### Dean's List with Honors

Neha Sidana of East Hampton made the fall 2025 Dean's List with Honors at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, with a 4.0 GPA.

Sidana is a freshman in the ELMPA (physician assistant) program at the university.

### Dean's List

Audrey Cooke of East Hampton made the fall 2025 Dean's List at the College of Charleston in Charleston, S.C.

Cooke is majoring in marketing.

### Library Friends Offering Scholarship

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

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

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

Submit your completed application form by April 10.

### Project Grad Seeks Members

East Hampton Project Graduation is looking for new members!

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

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

### 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.

### Dean's List

East Hampton residents Tyler Khongkham, Aiden Nolan, and Aiden Palen made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Springfield College in Springfield, Mass.

Khongkham has a primary major of health science/pre-PT. Nolan has a primary major of finance. Palen has a primary major of biology.

### Dean's List

East Hampton residents Abigail Flynn and Michaela Healy, and Middle Haddam resident Bridget Keilbach, made the fall 2025 Dean's List at the University of New England.

### PTO Meets Monthly

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

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

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

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

### 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).

### Donations Accepted for 'Bits and Pieces'

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!

Call 860-993-5311 for more information, or email [mapionzio@comcast.net](mailto:mapionzio@comcast.net).

### 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.

### 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).

### St. Patrick Church News & Notes

St. Patrick Church, 47 West High St., is a member of St. John Paul II Parish, along with St. Bridget Church in Moodus.

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

During the week, Masses are celebrated at 8 a.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays at St. Patrick, and on Wednesdays and Fridays at St. Bridget.

### Resident to Represent

Landon Vaillancourt of East Hampton has been recognized as a Living-Learning Community (L-LC) World Representative at the University at Albany in Albany, N.Y.

Vaillancourt, who is majoring in psychology, is a world representative for the Psychology L-LC.



**Ezold Honored... Fowler-Dix-Park VFW Post & Auxiliary 5095 is proud to report that auxiliary member Christopher Ezold (pictured) recently received an Award of Commendation from the CT State Commander Charles Pickett. Ezold was recognized 'For Meritorious and Distinguished Service in Furthering the Aims and Ideals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.'**

### Dean's List

Aiden Sones of East Hampton made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

### Dean's List

Austin Bigelow of East Hampton made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Vermont State University in Randolph Center, Vt.

### 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).

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**LEGAL NOTICE**  
**TOWN OF ANDOVER REVENUE**  
**COLLECTOR'S NOTICE**

To the property owners of the Town of Andover: The Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes listed on the October 1, 2024 Grand List becomes due and payable to the Town of Andover on January 14, 2026. Payments must be US postmarked, paid on line, or brought to Town Hall by February 16, 2026 to avoid an interest charge. Interest will be charged starting February 17, 2026 on all delinquent bills at a rate of 18% per year (1½% per month) from the due date of January 14, with a minimum charge of \$2 for each bill. View or pay taxes online at [www.andoverct.org](http://www.andoverct.org). Cash, check or money order payments are accepted at the Town Hall during business hours. Payments by check or money order may be mailed to the Tax Collector's office or placed in the drop box outside Town Hall. Typical office hours during collection months are Monday 8:15am- 7pm, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:15 am-4pm. Please refer to [www.andoverct.org](http://www.andoverct.org) for updated office hours. The Tax Collector's office will be CLOSED February 5-22nd. Please plan accordingly. Failure to receive a tax bill will not invalidate the tax or any interest which may, by State law, accrue. If you have any questions, please contact the tax office at 860-742-4035 option 4.

3TB 1/9, 1/16, 2/6

East Hampton • East Hampton

### Fish Fridays Are Back

The Knights of Columbus, St John Paul II Council 6190 is offering a variety of fish dinners on Fridays during Lent. The first of our dinners will be Friday, Feb. 20.

This year's offerings include breaded cod, clams, and shrimp, which will be served with French fries and coleslaw. Baked cod and fried chicken tenders meals have been added. Chow-

der will also be available. Coffee, tea, water and soda are also offered. Prices of the fish may vary from week to week.

Entertainment on Feb. 20 will be Diane Anelli, the cantor from St Patrick Church.

Meals are served from 4:30-7:15 p.m. in the St. Patrick Church Parish Center, 47 West High St. Takeout service will also be available; advance orders must be received by noon on Fridays, by calling 860-267-6644. Do not leave orders on answering machine.

### Accepting Entries for Art Contests

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Auxiliary 5095 is now accepting entries for its annual 2025-26 Young American Creative Patriotic Art and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art scholarship competitions. These scholarships are designed to recognize young artists in grades 9 to 12, encourage patriotism, and assist students who wish to further their education.

For contest eligibility and rules, as well as additional information, visit the library, the Post Home, or [vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships/young-american-creative-patriotic-art-contest](http://vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships/young-american-creative-patriotic-art-contest). Student entries must be submitted (along with a completed entry form) to VFW Post 5095, 20 North Maple St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

The deadline for both contests is March 31.

### American Legion to Meet

The next meeting of the Treadway Cavanaugh American Legion Post 64 will be held Tuesday, Feb. 10, at 7 p.m., at the VFW, 20 North Maple St., East Hampton.

All members are encouraged to attend. Any veterans interested in joining are welcome.

### Monthly Herb Circle

All new and experienced herbalists, tea drinkers, plant lovers, gardeners and more are invited to the next Monthly Herb Circle at Wildcraft Herb Shoppe, 70 Main St., Unit B, on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at 6:30 p.m.

The topic for February is "Herbs for the Heart." Cost is \$10.

### Police News

1/22: William Norton, 32, of East Hampton, was arrested and charged with operating under the influence, East Hampton Police said.

1/23: Theodore Powers, 43, of East Hampton, was arrested and charged with first-degree criminal trespass, disorderly conduct, and second-degree harassment, police said.

From Jan. 19-Feb. 1, officers responded to 40 medical calls, four motor vehicle accidents and six alarms, and made 34 traffic stops, police said.

### Provost's List

Emily Jovel of East Hampton achieved a perfect 4.0 GPA during the fall 2025 semester, earning a spot on the Provost's List at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y.

Jovel's major is criminology.

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**Fried Mozzarella** Topped with marinara sauce

#### PASTA COURSE

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

#### SOUP OR SALAD

Cup of soup of the day or garden salad

#### DINNER CHOICES

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

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

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<p>Canadian Club Whisky 1.75 Liter</p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: 24px;">\$17<sup>99</sup></p>	<p>Jack Daniel's Whiskey 1.75 Liter</p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: 24px;">\$42<sup>99</sup></p>	<p>Hennessy VS Cognac 750 ml</p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: 24px;">\$35<sup>99</sup></p>	<p>Jameson Irish Whiskey 750 ml</p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: 24px;">\$25<sup>99</sup></p>	<p>Maker's Mark Whisky 1.75 Liter</p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: 24px;">\$49<sup>99</sup></p>
<p>Barefoot Wines Assorted 750 ml</p> <p style="color: red; font-size: 24px;">\$5<sup>00</sup></p>	<p>Bread &amp; Butter Wines Assorted 750 ml</p> <p style="color: red; font-size: 24px;">\$11<sup>99</sup></p>	<p>Michelob Ultra 30 Packs 12 oz. Cans</p> <p style="color: red; font-size: 24px;">\$27<sup>99</sup></p> <p style="font-size: 10px;">plus dep.</p>	<p>Lawson's Sip of Sunshine 4 Packs 16 oz. Cans</p> <p style="color: red; font-size: 24px;">\$13<sup>99</sup></p> <p style="font-size: 10px;">plus dep.</p>	<p>Corona Family 12 Packs 12 oz.</p> <p style="color: red; font-size: 24px;">\$15<sup>99</sup></p> <p style="font-size: 10px;">plus dep.</p>
<p>Tanqueray Gin 1.75 Liter</p> <p style="color: green; font-size: 24px;">\$32<sup>99</sup></p>	<p>Method California Cabernet 750 ml</p> <p style="color: red; font-size: 24px;">\$19<sup>99</sup></p> <p style="font-size: 10px;">2023 - 93 Pts. #1 Top 100 of 2025</p>	<p>Seagram's VO Canadian Whisky 1.75 Liter</p> <p style="color: green; font-size: 24px;">\$17<sup>99</sup></p>	<p>Trader Vic's Chocolate or White Chocolate Liqueur 750 ml</p> <p style="color: green; font-size: 24px;">\$15<sup>99</sup></p>	<p>Taaka Vodka 1.75 Liter</p> <p style="color: green; font-size: 24px;">\$8<sup>99</sup></p>
<p>Kendall-Jackson Vintner's Reserve Chardonnay 750 ml</p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: 24px;">\$11<sup>99</sup></p>	<p>Boen Tri-County Pinot Noir 750 ml</p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: 24px;">\$19<sup>99</sup></p> <p style="font-size: 10px; color: red;">John's Pick!</p>	<p>Nicolas Feuillatte Reserve Exclusive Brut 750 ml</p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: 24px;">\$39<sup>99</sup></p>	<p>Michelob Ultra 0.0 Non-Alcoholic 12 Packs</p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: 24px;">\$12<sup>99</sup></p> <p style="font-size: 10px;">plus dep.</p>	<p>Cann THC 3mg or Artet THC 3mg 4 Packs</p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: 24px;">\$16<sup>99</sup></p>

All Items Subject To Availability. Not Responsible For Typographical Errors.

CIT2-30-25

CIT2-5-26

East Hampton • East Hampton

# 'Hidden Fire' Caught Behind Fireplace

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton's Volunteer Fire Department showed that sometimes firefighting takes time and diligence when they responded to a "hidden fire" located in the walls behind a fireplace in a home on Chestnut Hill Road in the early morning hours on Jan. 30.

"The residents were alerted to an issue when they noticed an odor of smoke inside the home," said East Hampton Fire Chief Robb Rainville, adding that the residents' decision not to delay calling 911 allowed firefighters to respond quickly, even in frigid temperatures.

Firefighters found "light smoke" in the home when they arrived around 5:15 a.m., and used thermal imaging cameras that allow firefighters to pinpoint the location of a so-called hidden fire. In this case, the fire was located behind the stone fireplace, and according to Rainville, it had spread to the home's main carrier beam.

"Firefighters began carefully dismantling sections of the fireplace and surrounding mortar and stone to access the hidden fire area," Rainville said via email. The process took two hours, and

involved meticulous work using picks, axes and an electric hammer to remove mortar and stone, with firefighters climbing behind and underneath the fireplace, according to fire department public information officer Jim Burke. Burke added that it was a "beautiful hearth" and that it was sad to have to take it apart, but important to stop the spread of the fire.

Because the fire had spread to the house's structural carrier beam, firefighters then had to use wood to shore the structure while they fully extinguished the fire.

"Our team showed tremendous resilience and determination," wrote Rainville in the department's Facebook post, "taking however long was necessary to make sure this home was safe and that no hidden fire remained."

Burke said that this type of work at a fire is not uncommon. He said he tells new firefighters that "firefighting is about two percent glory and the rest is hard work."

Burke said that extra cold temperatures like the ones we are experiencing can sometimes bring with them increased fire risks, as people increase



A "hidden fire" was found behind a fireplace at a Chestnut Hill Road residence in the early morning hours of Jan. 30.

their use of furnaces and fireplaces, as well as space heaters that not only pose a direct fire risk, but also can put a strain on a home's electrical system.

As for the type of fire that occurred this past week on Chestnut Hill Road, Rainville said it's something that his department has definitely seen before.

"Fires concealed within walls, ceilings, or fire-

places are not everyday occurrences, but they are also not uncommon," said Rainville. "These types of fires can be particularly dangerous because they may not present obvious flames initially and can spread undetected. This is why early reporting, thorough investigation, and the use of tools such as thermal imaging cameras are critical."

## 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 in advance only. Community members may purchase tickets directly at the Post by speaking with the bartender.

For additional information, contact the Post at 860-267-8837.

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### 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 are now available 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 Assessment 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.

### 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. 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.

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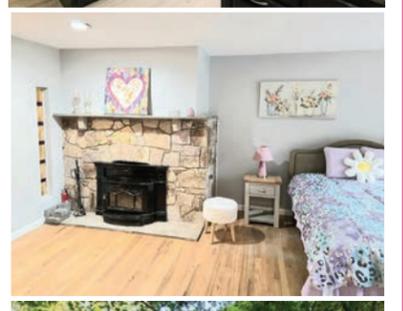
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### Senior Center News & Notes

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.

**Blood Pressure Checks:** Monday, Feb. 9, 12:30 p.m. Get your blood pressure checked by a professional from Chatham Health District.

**Chatham Health Education Session:** Monday, Feb. 9, 11:30 a.m. Chatham Health will visit to discuss reading food label to make healthy shopping decisions.

**Tech Help with Digital Mike:** Tuesday, Feb. 10, 10 a.m. Need help with your laptop, cell phone or iPad? Meet with Mike Crutchfield to discuss your technical challenges and see if he can help. Registration appreciated, but drop-ins welcome.

**Playing Mahjongg with Confidence:** Wednesdays through March 4 (no class Feb. 18), 9:30 a.m. Barbara Hahn returns to lead this hands-on session to help players gain confidence in Mahjongg. Cost is \$5.

**Save the Date for A Valentine Affair:** Wednesday, Feb. 18, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Enjoy a pizza lunch and sweet treats while listening to live music with Patrice and Richard and Monica on the piano. Share your love stories with friends.

**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.

### Paint-Along with Karen

The East Hampton Art Association will have an interactive "Paint-Along" acrylic painting session with artist Karen Williams at the Congregational Church Fellowship Hall, 59 Main St., from 1-3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 8.

All materials will be provided. You may bring your own pieces to work on or simply visit and just observe others' work at no charge for members, \$5 for non-members.

Paint-Along Cost for EHAA members: \$5 materials fee. Cost for non-members: \$10 (\$5

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

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

### 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: 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.

**Paint & Pastries - Valentine's Day: Adults & Grades 8-12:** Tuesday, Feb. 17, 6 p.m. All are invited; no experience needed.

**Book Club:** Wednesday, Feb. 18, 6:30 p.m. This month's book is *We All Live Here* by Jojo Moyes.

**Tech Help:** Thursday, Feb. 19, 2-4 p.m. Basic technology help for phones, laptops, tablets, and

e-readers. No registration required; just bring your device with you.

**Belltown Book Brunch:** Friday, Feb. 20, 11 a.m. Meet to talk about what you're currently reading, while enjoying coffee, tea, and a breakfast treat. Register or drop in.

**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.

**Teen Advisory Board: Grades 8-12:** Tuesday, Feb. 17, 6 p.m. Help plan programs, improve the Teen Space, and more.

**Children's Programs: 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.

**DIY Days: Grades K-8:** Saturday, Feb. 21, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Children and families in grades K-8 are invited to create a different toy, game, or treat together. No registration required; just drop in.

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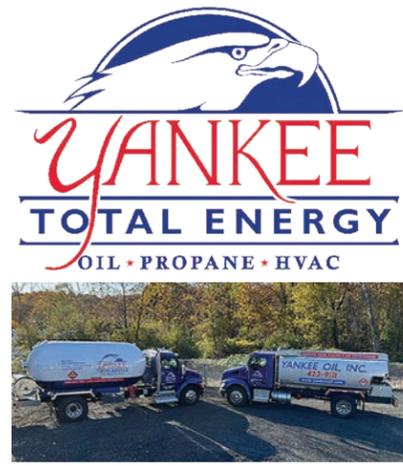
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# Local Family Recovering from House Fire

By Anne Lilburn

Domenic Guiliano describes Jan. 26 as “a rough day.” That is perhaps an understatement.

On that night, Guiliano received a phone call from his wife, who was home with his 15-year-old son, telling him his house had caught fire, starting in the garage.

She was home, Guiliano said, when she “heard a pop in the garage and the lights flickered.” The smoke alarms followed.

Guiliano rushed home, hoping he might be able to fight it or salvage his motorcycles. As he prepared to head in, he was hit by a smoke plume and Guiliano said that’s when “it blew,” fueled perhaps by the gasoline in his motorcycles, lawnmower and power tools, he said.

Firefighters were able to extinguish the blaze, but not before it had spread to his living room and up to the second floor of the house. Until it’s repaired, the home is currently not livable.

In a press release, the East Hampton Fire Department said the blaze was a two-alarm fire.

According to the release, “upon arrival, members were met with fire in the garage area of the residence. Due to active fire conditions, snowy weather, and cold temperatures, a second alarm was requested to ensure adequate resources were on scene and to prevent any delay in suppression efforts.”

There were no injuries in the blaze, but Guiliano said repairs and rebuilding at his house are estimated to take at least eight to 12 months. The living room has extensive smoke damage, as well as water damage from the firefighting efforts, and their furniture is destroyed.

Additionally, the family lost all the contents

## Dean’s List

Jason Gardiner of East Hampton made the fall 2025 Dean’s List at Champlain College in Burlington, Vt.

of their garage, including two motorcycles, power tools, fishing gear, bowling gear and his kids’ snowboards (he has three children, with one in college and another currently serving in the Navy). Some of the things that he’s lost, he said, are irreplaceable, but he said he’s most happy that his family is safe.

Now Guiliano, a retired Navy chief and current adjutant/quartermaster at the Connecticut state VFW, finds himself and his family in an unfamiliar situation: on the receiving end of help.

“At the end of the day, I’m not the type to take handouts,” he said. “I’m the one to suffer in silence.”

That’s why, he said, he appreciated his that those in his communities, both in East Hampton and at the VFW, had reached out to support him.

“I didn’t feel alone,” he said. “People came together [to help] and it’s very humbling.”

Guiliano’s VFW coworkers, including Senior Vice Commander John Kennedy and Commander Charles Pickett, organized a crowdfunding page where people can donate to support Guiliano and his family. Guiliano said that the VFW was more than just a workplace for him, but a community. When he found out his house was on fire, one of the first people he called was Kennedy, himself a recently retired Danbury firefighter, who drove out from his home in Brookfield to support his friend.

As a firefighter, Kennedy said he knows that recovering from a fire is hard. He said he knows that, even with insurance, fire victims are often faced with unanticipated costs and needs for support, particularly as their lives are disrupted.

The family has already seen people reach out to support them. Guiliano’s wife works for the



A Jan. 26 fire ravaged a Browning Road home. The blaze left the house uninhabitable, and homeowner Domenic Guiliano estimates it will take eight to 12 months to repair the damage. Photo by Domenic Guiliano.

town of East Hampton in their Land Use Department, and one of her coworkers offered up the use of a cottage on her property in Colchester, so the family has a place to stay. Guiliano said he’s grateful that he doesn’t have to worry about where they will live for now.

Kennedy said that Guiliano is the type of guy that people want to help.

“Dom is always giving back to veterans,” he

said, adding that he hoped people would consider returning the generosity.

Those wishing to donate can do so via the Zeffy crowdfunding page at [www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/donate-to-domenic-guiliano-and-family-fire-relief](http://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/donate-to-domenic-guiliano-and-family-fire-relief) or send donations directly to VFW Connecticut, c/o Domenic Guiliano and Family, P.O. Box 429, Rocky Hill, CT 06067-0429.

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## Center Package Store

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### 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.

**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.

### Mediumship Event

VFW Post 5095 Auxiliary will hold a special evening of spirit communication and mediumship with certified medium Rebecca Anne Lo-Cicero 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 pur-

chases. The canteen will open earlier, at 4 p.m., for guests wishing to enjoy refreshments before the program begins.

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 for directions. The Holy Eucharist will be celebrated with the Rev. Diana Rogers, priest-in-charge.

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

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

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

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

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

### 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.

**Women’s Fellowship:** The next gathering for Women’s Fellowship will be Thursday, Feb. 19, at 1 p.m. at Mary’s house.

**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 Women of the Bible, based on scripture and information/analysis in the Study Packet. The study will conclude on May 17.

**Office Info:** The office can be reached at 860-267-2336; hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The church website is www.hncovenantchurch.org.

### 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 February:** Cynthia Minichino from Glastonbury. Her work can be seen during regular library hours. There will be an artist reception Tuesday, Feb. 17, from 4 to 6 p.m. All are invited to come meet the artist and view her work. Refreshments will be served.

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

**Open Mic Night:** Friday, Feb. 20, 6-8 p.m. Come and share your talent or just listen and enjoy. Performers, please call the library to sign up.

**Foundry Saxophone Quartet:** Sunday, Feb.

22, 2 p.m. Enjoy an afternoon of folk, jazz, and modern standards with these musicians who met at the Hartt School of Music and have been performing together ever since.

**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.

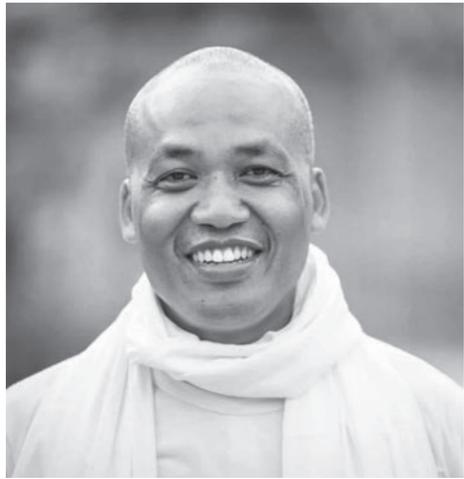
**Yoga with Erin Day of Ten Summit Yoga:** Mondays and Saturdays at 9 a.m., and Tuesdays at 7 p.m. Cost is a \$15 drop-in fee. Register at tensummitst@gmail.com.

**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.

### Dean’s List

Drew Di Stefano of East Hampton made the fall 2025 Dean’s List at the University of Connecticut School of Engineering.

Di Stefano will be graduating in the spring with a degree in electrical engineering.



Vedaji

### Realizing Divine Love While in Physical Existence

A talk on “Realizing Divine Love While in Physical Existence” will be held Monday, Feb. 16, at 4 p.m., at Middle Haddam Public Library, 2 Knowles Rd., Middle Haddam.

The program will be led by Vedaji, the former head of a monastery in India and founder of the nonprofits Food4Lives and Mindful Seva Institute. The talk is hosted by the library and Ten Summit Yoga & Earth Based Wellness. A Fire Ceremony follows the event at a nearby home at 6 p.m.

Contact Erin Day at 860-262-0248 or tensummitst@gmail.com to register. The talk is free but donations to the library are welcome.

### Dean’s List

Aiden Sones of East Hampton made the fall 2025 Dean’s List at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

### 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.

### Helping Hands Closed for February

Helping Hands will be closed for the month of February and reopen Saturday, March 7. It will then be open every first and third Saturday of each month. Donations will be collected on those Saturdays, as well as every Thursday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Helping Hands is located at 27 Skinner St. For more information, call Beth Cunningham at 860-365-1054.

### Bingo at VFW Post

All are invited to bingo every Thursday at VFW Cobra Post 5095, located at 20 North Maple St. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Early Bird Bonanza will be at 6:20 p.m., with regular game play starting at 6:30 p.m. There will be a progressive jackpot and cash prizes.

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

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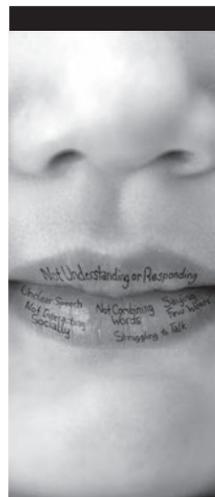


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# DeCaprio to Seek Third Term in State House

By Toriana Williams

In 2022, Republican Mark DeCaprio was elected as the state representative for Connecticut's 48th House District. After winning reelection in 2024, DeCaprio has now launched a campaign for a third term, seeking to continue representing the district's four towns: Bozrah, Franklin, Lebanon and the *Rivereast* community of Colchester.

A longtime Connecticut resident, DeCaprio has lived in the state for more than 40 years and currently resides in Lebanon. As a Navy submarine veteran, he brings a background rooted in public service and emergency response to his work in the legislature.

Following his military service, DeCaprio earned a master's degree in public health and went on to work for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), where he served as emergency response coordinator and later as a division director. His work included responding to oil and chemical spills, as well as handling terrorism-related emergencies in the years following the Sept. 11 attacks. "[I] worked a lot with fire departments and police departments, all ... municipal departments," DeCaprio explained.

Afterward, DeCaprio ventured into politics in 2018, launching a campaign for the state House that ultimately ended in defeat. He ran again in the subsequent race, losing again before finally securing a victory in 2022. Despite those setbacks, DeCaprio said encouragement from supporters motivated him to continue. "It's kind of hard to campaign all year and lose ... but people encouraged me to try again," he shared.

As the campaign gets underway, DeCaprio said constituents can expect to see him out in the community. "People are going to be seeing me ... around town, knocking on doors and lis-

tening to people," he said.

At the Capitol, DeCaprio said his legislative work is closely tied to his professional background and committee assignments. He currently serves on four committees: Appropriations, Judiciary, Public Safety and Veterans and Military Affairs. He said those roles allow him to apply his career experience to policymaking, particularly on issues related to emergency services and veterans.

"When we're looking at legislation that involves our first responders ... I really have a career working with first responders," DeCaprio said. "I'm also a veteran, so I feel like those two committees ... I feel like I can contribute."

DeCaprio said his committee work has translated into several legislative efforts he considers key accomplishments during his time in office. Among them is his support for bipartisan fiscal guardrails designed to reduce the state's long-term pension debt. The guardrails limited how surplus funds could be spent, instead directing excess revenue toward savings and pension obligations.

In addition to fiscal policy, DeCaprio said he supported the HERO Act and other measures aimed at honoring veterans and improving support for military members and their families. He also pointed to his voting record on economic issues, noting that a business advocacy group awarded him a 100% pro-business score.

"Small business really is the engine ... of our economy," he stated.

As he looks ahead hopefully to another term, DeCaprio said affordability remains one of the most pressing concerns he hears from constituents. Rising electricity costs, particularly for customers of Eversource, have been a frequent topic of frustration, he said. DeCaprio criticized the "public benefits charge" included on electric



State Rep. Mark DeCaprio (R-48) has announced his bid for a third term. The lawmaker is seen here, far left, in a photo from last April, when he welcomed Colchester students to the State Capitol for YSB (Youth Service Bureau) Day.

utility bills, arguing that some of the costs passed on to ratepayers would be more appropriately handled through the tax system.

"High electricity costs are very much on people's minds," he said, adding that he would like to see rates reduced and relief provided to residents facing high monthly bills.

DeCaprio also spoke on medical freedom as an issue he intends to continue pursuing if reelected. He cited the removal of religious exemption for school vaccination requirements in Connecticut, arguing that families who object to certain vaccinations on religious grounds are no longer being heard.

"I think there should be medical freedom," he said. "Let families decide."

According to DeCaprio, as a result of the removal of the exemption, some families are being forced to make difficult choices as a result

of, including relocating out of state.

As of now, no challenger has formally announced a campaign for the 48th District seat. Though, if opposition does arise, DeCaprio said his case to voters rests on his legislative record, committee work and accessibility to constituents, emphasizing that while disagreements are inevitable, he believes voters value consistency and responsiveness from their elected officials.

Looking ahead to the campaign, DeCaprio said he plans to continue engaging directly with residents across the district while focusing on affordability, public safety and individual freedoms. He also pointed to Connecticut's natural beauty and strong local communities as reasons he remains committed to public services.

"Connecticut is a beautiful state," he shared. "We have a lot of beautiful natural resources."

## 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.

**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.

**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.

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

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

## Westchester Church News

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

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

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

**Outreach and Other Opportunities:** 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 [westchesterconchurch.org](http://westchesterconchurch.org), email [westconchurch@gmail.com](mailto:westconchurch@gmail.com) or call the church at 860-267-6711. Pastor Ron Lake can be reached at 860-428-3460.

## 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).

## Ladies Guild Offering Trip

St. Andrew Ladies Guild in Colchester invites all to accompany guild members on a Valley Forge and Longwood Gardens tour, from May 19-24.

Step back into American history at Valley Forge, explore the heart of Philadelphia, and wander through Longwood Gardens. There will also be a visit to the Museum of the American Revolution, as well as the Betsy Ross House to enjoy colonial chocolate making.

For a flyer, contact Barbara Gozzo at [barbgozzo@gmail.com](mailto:barbgozzo@gmail.com) or 860-208-4121.

## Women Commemorating 250 Years

Female military veterans and town residents are invited to attend a planning meeting to commemorate the country's 250th birthday and the roles women have taken in building the nation.

Bring your ideas to Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave., on Saturday, Feb. 28, from 1-3 p.m.

Call Colchester Municipal Veteran Representative Mary Gura at 860-537-2921 for more information.



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## Lions Pancake Breakfast Scheduled for Feb. 22

The Colchester Lions Club annual February Breakfast Buffet will return Sunday, Feb. 22, from 7:30-11 a.m., at St. Joseph's Polish Society, 395 South Main St.

Enjoy a full breakfast with pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage, home fries, toast, juice, coffee, tea and water.

Advanced tickets are available at Dime Bank and Mel's Downtown Creamery, or by calling 860-303-3162. Advanced ticket prices are \$11

for adults, \$9 for seniors, \$8 for children age 5 to 12. Children 4 and under are free.

Tickets will also be sold at the door. Cost will be \$13 for adults, \$11 for seniors, \$9 for children age 5 to 12. Children 4 and under are free.

All proceeds are returned directly to the community through Lions causes such as eye research, as well as community service projects and grants to local organizations.

## 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.

**Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper: Tuesday,** Feb. 17, 5:30-7 p.m., in the Church Stage Room. All are invited to this evening of pancakes and fellowship. A free-will offering will be received.

**Ash Wednesday:** Wednesday, Feb. 18. Ostrout will be in the front circle of the church from 7-9 a.m. offering Ashes to Go. An Ash Wednesday worship service will be held at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. All are welcome.

**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.

## 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 to raise funds to help local families heat

their homes through the winter.

Brown noted that the need for assistance continues to grow.

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.'

## Bacon Academy Honor Roll

Bacon Academy has announced its honor roll for the second quarter of the 2025-26 school year.

### Grade Nine

**Honors with Distinction:** Ryleigh Angell, Abbie Barthel, Charlotte Bunting, Donovan Caruso-Wozniak, Elyse Christoff, Logan Cleary, Alexander Courtemanche, Gabrielle D'Attri, Ava Galante, Nova Gostkiewicz, Nora Gudelski, Olivia Helms, Aydell Imasuen, Shea Kellogg, Carleigh Maher, Melanie Meneses-Guzman, Maggie Parekh, Georgia Priest, Julia Rago, Delaney Scholl, Milania Shilosky, Ava Sykes, Isabel Weiner, Eric Weng, Kaylie Wong.

**High Honors:** Jack Barthel, Lauren Brown, Abygail Carroll, Eric Deacon, Gianna Dean, Aidan Dietz, Jacob Gauthier, Zack Ginand, Morgan Gray, Madeline Hagan, Jocelyn Hahn, Sophie Hustus, Iliana Kansagara, Brenna Kogut, Nadia Korzhoff, Adam Laspino, Ellery Markham, Jessica Mattos, Dylan Molina-Apu, Eleanor O'Hara, Sarah Wisniewski.

**Honors:** Payton Alford, Blake Allard, Vincenzo Arrigoni, Julia Carnelli, Mason Colwell, Liam Coons, Jemma Currier, Liara Golden, Briana Hawes, Fiona Helms, Katherine Hormuzdiar, Gino Intrieri, Genevieve Kukich, Kayla Lachapelle, Lily Lenda, Benjamin Lockwood, Finn Maloney, Jameson Mauro, Sophie Mullen, Samantha Nadeau, Tully Richardson, Taydian Serrano, Cayden Steele, Izsak Treat, Emily Welles, Matthew Wood.

### Grade 10

**Honors with Distinction:** Alex Badrick, Carmen Champagne, Grace Clarkin, Cameron Cruz, Allison Field, Emily Fougerouse, Charlie Gott, Jack Grimm, Quinn Guntulis, Ashtyn King, William Priest IV, Adrina Ruzsala, Audrey Siborg, Chelsea Williams, Lila Wilson.

**High Honors:** Benjamin Adams, Zakariyya Ali, Brayden Buyniski, Ashley Cleary, Isabel Faber, Abigail Floyd, Brody Hochholzer, Sufyan Kasli, Connie Lin, Owen McLoughlin, Mark Miano-Talbot, Emma Pensa, Gabriella Rauccio, Charles Ringuette, Adriana Russo, Gabrielle Russo.

**Honors:** Elyason Beeler, Dannah Beirn, Adam Bigelow, Alexios Bounas, Grace Busby, Megan Buscetto, Dante Gonzalez, Claire Gould, Cadence Hlasyszyn, Brendan Kastrop, Rochelle Labriola, Jackson Lavertue, Joshua Lund, James Mattison, Shane Meyer, Kiersten Page, Isabella Rivera Kloss, Mackenzie Shonk, Maci Swenson, Zachary Weissensee.

### Grade 11

**Honors with Distinction:** Raphael Antonacci, Jake Ashley, Gehrig Bartiss, Brooke Burchfield, Nicolas Chiaverini, Skyy Courtemanche, Jacoby Eisenberg, Hannah Ferrigno, Bray Gelenev, Savanna Healy, Reina Hill, Madeline Ives, Keegan McKenzie, Kaylee Opalenik,

their homes through the winter.

Brown noted that the need for assistance continues to grow.

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.'

Boden Paul, Grace Poirier, Cora Rago, Abigail Richards, Alexa Smith, Anthony Soto, Riley Trudeau, Eleni Tsakiris, Toheed Usman.

**High Honors:** Katherine Belding, Elizabeth Floyd, Matthew Galante, Ella Jeffries, Paraskevi Koutsofavas, Charles Mauldin, Peyton Mikalonis, Cole Mitchell, Samantha Moon, Benjamin Salemi, Ian Sanders, Jason Trusz, Miles Viggiani, Codey Wade, Ashleen Walsh.

**Honors:** Leah Butterfield, Zachary Chiarella, Aidan Claffey, Lauren Emmons, Kayleigh Engle, Leah Eveleigh, Ethan Fleurose, Edward Gignac, Jorjie Gill, Zephyn Harrington, Averi Johnson, Skylar Johnston, Samantha Jordan, Mason Koji, Rae Lenda, Hailey McGlynn, Nathan Metcalfe, Michael Migliaccio, Joshua Millington, Chelsea Pirro, Maddyn Reinholtz, Landon Roderick, Zachary Russo, Kagan Ruzsala, Luke Schroeder, Autumn Sneed, Mason Steele, Melissa Vazquez-Lopez, Evan Vernali, Yovani Vicente Cho, Delaney Walsh, Shauna Wells, Travis Wood.

### Grade 12

**Honors with Distinction:** Alyssa Blanchette, Kylie Boerenko, Benjamin Buyniski, Ashton Capone, Emma Cote, Melanie Couture, Ethan Creutz, Arianna Elliott, Bailey Elliott, Joseph Gignac, Liam Goodine, Leyia Hall, Brynn Herboldt, Colby Hlasyszyn, Anna Ibey, Troy Johnson, Caden King, Lily Koziol, Devon Kudrak, Lanie McIllduff, Olivia Meyer, Alyssa Nelson, Sokhano Nguon, Joseph Papale, Allen Quinones, Reagan Reid, Lorelei Romasanta, Rachel Rumph, Syris Sciremammano, Jillian Snow, George Stula, Corinne Toennes, Colton Waterman.

**High Honors:** Oakley Adams, Riley Anderson, Elijah Banks, Bela Dec, Morgan Delaney, Mikayla Farrington, Hector Franceschi-Newton, Charlotte Galarneau, Taryn Gray, Mia Hageman, Lucas Jones, Talan Ladyga, Madison Levasseur, Evan Lovegrove, Grayson Mahon, Madeline Meyer, Sawyer Naus, Gianna Riley, Liam Sweeney, Cameron Taskey, Natalie Uhrig.

**Honors:** Harrison Billiot, Evelina Bouna, Maily Bravo, Caroline Brown, Hailey Brown, Clarence Coogan, Julian Dean, Logan East, Emma Fidrych, Sasha Koopman, Michael Krol, Ian McClain, Andrew Mertz, Madison Peck, Sara Sands, Delaney Smith, Liana Southworth, Abigail Stillwell, Landon Vigil, Matthew Vilar-do, Brayden Ward, Chase Williams.

## Dean's List

Colchester residents Birch Collins and Amaya Zavistoski made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I.

## President's List

Alex Sanchez of Colchester made the fall 2025 President's List at the University of Bridgeport.

## 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, stu-

dent 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.

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

**Tuesday, Feb. 10:** 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10:30 a.m., LTCOP Meeting; 12:30 p.m., CHOICES Counseling, Pinochle; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 4-8 p.m., Wellness Nights.

**Wednesday, Feb. 11:** 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, Celebrate Black History – Black Art; 1 p.m., sew-cial Time; 1:30 and 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming.

**Thursday, Feb. 12:** 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, Essential Oil Workshop; 4-8 p.m., Wellness Nights.

**Friday, Feb. 13:** 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; 10:45 a.m., Blood Pressure Clinic; 11 a.m., Yoga; 1:15 p.m., Free Valentine's Bingo.

**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.

## 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).

## 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.

## 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.

## 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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# RHAM Lineman to Continue with Bison

By Josh Howard

Despite only playing two years of organized football, RHAM High School senior Max Obey has committed to four more years on the gridiron at the next level.

"I'm excited to announce that I've decided to continue my academic and athletic career at Nichols College," Obey, a Hebron native, announced on social media last month. "I want to thank my family, friends, and coaches for supporting me along the way."

In heading to Nichols, Obey will become a member of a Bison football squad that plays in the Conference of New England (CNE).

Obey said the small business school in Dudley, Mass., "matched all my needs," adding, "It had everything I was looking for during the recruitment process."

Standing at 6' 3" and weighing 240 pounds, Obey has the ideal side to play football at the next level. He was recruited as an offensive tackle, but indicated that he's ready for whatever the coaching staff at Nichols needs.

"If they want to move me to guard or center or defensive line, I'm willing to do that," he conveyed.

Obey's versatility was on full display during his time on the field with the Raptors. He first joined the team as a junior and over the last two years has played along the offensive and defensive lines, along with serving as the team's punter last year.

As a three-way starter last fall, Obey helped pave the way for a Raptors running attack that amassed nearly 1,600 rushing yards and 14 touchdowns on the ground, he made seven tackles for loss on defense, and averaged nearly 23 yards per punt.

RHAM head coach Steven Calande called Obey, "a complete program guy."

"He's involved in all aspects of the program," added Calande. "[He] leads at youth camp; [he] helps clean up afterwards."

Along with his production on the field, Obey was the recipient of the team's Leadership Award this past fall.

Prior to playing football, Obey wrestled as a sophomore before heeding the advice of RHAM wrestling coach Dakota Fleming, who was also school's football coach at the time and encouraged Obey to give football a try.

During his first season in pads, Obey noted, "I was always learning something new."

"When I started playing as a junior, I was going against guys that already have three or four years of experience and that gave me the opportunity to improve," he recalled. "Playing defensive line helped make me a better offensive tackle, because going up against somebody I would see the other player's footwork and how they use their hands and I could implement that into my own strategy."

Along with learning the techniques and nuances of the game, Obey added that his time in the weight room has made him a more complete player.

He became part of the Raptors' 1,000-pound club (combined weight of a person's max squat, bench press, and deadlift) this past year.

Obey said the added bulk improved his "confidence" on the field, noting, "And now I can use that to beat the guy in front of me."

Despite the team finishing winless last season, Obey noted that he was proud of how he and the other departing seniors are leaving the Raptors program at RHAM. He was one of four team captains last fall that helped lay the foundation in the team's first year under Calande.

"We really improved this year and the first-year guys really stepped up and bought into the



Max Obey, a senior at RHAM High School, has committed to play college football at Nichols College in Massachusetts.

physical aspect of the game," added Obey. "I think it's good that the younger kids got to see that football isn't always about winning, but it's about trying and failing and then trying again. You just have to show up every day, even though you're bruised and tired."

Obey will now join a program as Nichols that

will be entering year three under head coach Vinny Marino.

Marino is a former quarterback at the University of Connecticut, who was later an assistant coach for the Huskies before making his way to the Bison.

## Douglas Library News & Notes

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

**Holiday Closing:** The library will be closed Monday, Feb. 16, in honor of President's Day.

**Adult Programs: Knit-Wits:** Mondays at 6 p.m. All levels and all fiber crafts are welcome.

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

**Black History in Connecticut:** Wednesday, Feb. 11, 6:30 p.m. This program is presented by Connecticut Museum of Culture and History staff and based on the Connecticut Museum's nationally renowned collection. Partnered with the HHS as part of America 250.

**Chess Club:** Thursdays at 4 p.m. The Chess Club welcomes players of all ages and skill levels to drop in and play a game or improve their

skills.

**Friday Film:** Friday, Feb. 13, 1 p.m. *Wicked: For Good*, rated PG, will be shown. Popcorn and water are provided.

**Quiet Reading Club:** Saturday, Feb. 14, 2:45-4 p.m. Settle in with a good book (your own or one of the library's) for an hour of quiet reading time after the library closes. Light refreshments provided. Please arrive before the doors lock at 3pm.

**Children's Programs: Take Your Child to the Library Day:** Saturday, Feb. 7. All are invited for fun activities! At 10:30 a.m., there will be a Special Lego Club, and from noon-2 p.m., there will be drop-in crafts including weaving bracelets, hand-knitting and others.

**Lego Club:** Monday, 4-5 p.m. Get creative and build some Lego creations.

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

## Honor Society Inductee

Quinnipiac University physical therapy student Ayla Skoly of Amston has been inducted into the Physical Therapy Pro Bono National Honor Society.

The honor society recognizes outstanding physical therapy students who provide pro bono service as part of their education.

## 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 addresses an important societal need or issue.

In fall 2025, Autumn Worthen of Amston completed a project titled "Tracking Impact: A Framework of a Data Strategy for Banksia."

Worthen is a member of the Class of 2027, and is majoring in biomedical engineering.

## Dean's List

Sean Connolly of Hebron made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Stonehill College in Easton, Mass.

## Dean's List

Mia Tyler from Amston made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Springfield College in Springfield, Mass.

Tyler has a primary major of pre-prof athletic training.

## Dean's List

Hebron residents Edward Lavoie and Caitlin McClaine made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Springfield College in Springfield, Mass.

Lavoie has a primary major of physical education and health/FCS. McClaine has a primary major of health science/pre-PA.

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### Gilead Hill Kindergarten Registration

Gilead Hill School is registering eligible kindergarten students for the 2026-27 school year. Parents/guardians of children who will be 5 years of age on or before Sept. 1, 2026, and are planning to have their child attend public school in Hebron, are asked to log into [www.hebron.k12.ct.us](http://www.hebron.k12.ct.us) by Friday, Feb. 27, to begin the registration process. From the "Quick Links" portion of the page, click "Registration" and complete the pre-registration form. A link will then be sent to you to complete registration.

You will be required to upload your child's birth certificate and two proofs of address. One must be a mortgage document, lease/rental agreement or property tax statement, and the other must be a cable bill, utility bill or Internet bill. You will also be required to upload a copy of your child's medical form, including their physical and immunizations prior to the start of kindergarten.

Call the Gilead Hill office at 860-228-9458 with any questions.

Students currently enrolled in the preschool program do not need to register for kindergarten as this process happens automatically.

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## 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 stjohfisher30@yahoo.com. The church website is www.stjfisher.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:** 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.stjfisher.org, or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church).

## Vacancies on Town Boards, Commissions

The Town of Marlborough is seeking residents to serve on various town agencies. The following commissions have alternate vacancies: Economic Development, Lake Advisory, Water Pollution Control Authority, Nature Trails and Sidewalks, and the Commission on Aging.

All residents of Marlborough who are registered to vote are eligible. Interested candidates should go to the town website and search 'Vacancies' in the search bar, then click on Vacancies - Marlborough, CT and then click 'Applica-

tion for Appointment to Boards, Commissions or Committee' for the most recent application.

The closing date on applications for vacancies is 30 days from the first date that the vacancy is posted in the newspaper – which in this case is today, Feb. 6.

Applications can be dropped off at the Town Hall in the Town Clerk's office, or you can mail them to: Marlborough Town Hall, Town Manager's Office, P.O. Box 29, Marlborough, CT 06447.

## Parks and Rec. Programs

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

**Youth Programs: Lego – Winter Wonderland Engineering:** For grades K-4. Wednesdays, Feb. 11-March 18, 3:15-4:45 p.m., at the Marlborough Elementary School cafeteria. Build bobsleds, design snowmobiles, and take a ride on the Polar Express. Explore your snowiest ideas and learn STEM concepts with tens of thousands of Lego pieces at your mitten-tips and the guidance of an experienced Play-Well instructor. Registration fee is \$139/resident, \$144/non-resident.

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

**Safe Sitter:** 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.

**Kids & Family Sewing (Reusable Bunny Bag Shaped Gift Bag):** For ages 7 and up. Thursday, March 5, 5:30-7 p.m., at Marlborough

Senior Center. Participants will create a bunny shaped gift bag. Registration fee is \$40/resident, \$45/non-resident.

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

**Adult Programs: Galentine's Night Out (Yoga and Self-Love):** Friday, Feb. 13, 5:30-6:45 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Grab your gals for a night out featuring a yoga class filled with classic love songs and girl power ballads to get your heart pumping. After savasana, wrap up with some journaling and reflection, affirmation card pulls, and DIY temporary tats/friendship bracelets. Registration fee is \$20/resident, \$25/non-resident.

**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.

Cover Story • Cov



**Thanks to an anonymous donation, the East Hampton Ambulance Association has a new high-end medical manikin that EMTs can use to simulate a wide range of medical emergencies, from cardiac arrest to amputations.**

**★ Ambulance Association, cont. from page 1** ing facilities. They both also pointed out the particular importance of these types of training simulations for more rural areas.

"You can use this for various types of trauma," said Wherry, "so you can apply different types of makeup. It has two different potential amputations that you could set up, it has gunshot wounds [that it can simulate], and you can hook up blood pumps to it, so these wounds will bleed."

"You know, aside from, you know, grabbing someone off the street and poking holes in them," he joked, "this is the most realistic way to train for those kinds of scenarios."

Wherry added that situations like gunshot wounds and amputations are not things his ambulance association EMT's commonly see, but that doesn't mean they don't need to know how to deal with them. In fact, those situations are the ones that they may need to train on, because they don't regularly encounter them in the field.

"These types of situations may happen very infrequently, but when they happen, you just need to know what to do," he said. "So they are high risk, low frequency events. And those are the danger areas — high-risk, low-frequency — and so you need to you need to practice them."

And while the manikin is useful for those rare scenarios, Mayer also said it was useful for scenarios EMTs face on a more frequent basis as well, as it allows careful monitoring of CPR quality and depth, so that EMTs can feel confi-

dent that they are performing CPR well.

The ambulance association received the manikin late last year, but they put it to use in a training and simulation for the first time recently on Saturday, Jan. 31. Wherry said they had nearly 15 staff members there for what he said was a well-planned event.

"This was the first sort of debut, we'll call it, of the manikin," said Wherry, "so I wanted it to be a fairly spectacular debut."

He credited his training coordinator, Alex Hinds, for putting together a comprehensive scenario for training purposes that involved everything from patient care to transport, with EMTs using the ambulances and completing a real simulation.

"He spent a lot of time developing this to where, if the team came in and made all the right choices, then good things would happen, and if they came in and made some good choices, then, you know, other things would happen. It was a sort of, I called it like a choose-your-own-adventure kind of a scenario."

Wherry said everyone seemed to enjoy the hands-on nature of the training, and said that he hoped to be able to do more regularly scheduled trainings with his staff in the future.

"I think the sentiment from Saturday [after the training]," he said, "was that we are, as an entire organization, extremely thankful for this donation."

## 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 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 for more information.

**Feb. 8:** The service will be led by Seaver with an anthem performed by the church Bell Choir. 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. pastor emeritus of the church.

**Community Sing,** led by Carolyn Brodgin-ski, will be held upstairs in the Thienes Lounge Saturday, Feb. 7, at 7 p.m. All who enjoy singing, including musicians, are welcome.

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

**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 for updates. The eBay shop is open year-round at bit.ly/MCCebay.



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The finished walk-out lower level is ideal for entertaining and leads to a spectacular backyard with a Gunite pool, professional landscaping, and total privacy. Located in sought-after Blackledge Estates, this home is a rare blend of luxury, comfort, and thoughtful updates.

Cover Story • Cov

**★ Colchester Theatre, cont. from page 1**

Ballard continued, "If I care about you, I care about you, and I care about you a lot."

That emotional openness, paired with the show's demanding vocals and choreography, makes the role both challenging and rewarding. "You have to bring it to life," Ballard noted.

One of the defining features of this production is its ambitious choreography, led by choreographer Amanda Backer, who is also a performer in the show. Backer has been choreographing for about five years and has been part of CCT for a decade. She described dance as an essential storytelling tool: "Dance is a great storyteller. It uses movement and feeling and emotion to bring more of the story to life ... and elevates the show overall."

Backer noted that *Sister Act* is particularly demanding, featuring 11 dance numbers – "which is a lot," she said – and multiple styles. Backer said many of the numbers are "five-plus minutes long" with complex transitions. She embraced the challenge, blending together Broadway jazz,

1970s dance moves, tap and choir-style choreography.

"Tap is my favorite," Backer said, "so I know I wanted to put tap in the show, which I don't think has ever been done before."

Ultimately, Backer hopes audiences leave energized.

"In this show, we want them to be dancing on their feet," she said. "We want them to have fun. Kind of get their mind off of things in the world and just come to a place where they can sing and dance and have a great, entertaining night."

With its blend of disco-inspired music, gospel harmonies, heartfelt storytelling and a passionate cast of volunteers, CCT's *Sister Act* promises to be a joyful celebration of community and courage. Whether you're a longtime theatergoer or attending your very first community production, this Valentine's Day weekend offering invites you to sit back, laugh loudly and maybe even dance in your seat – because sometimes, finding your voice can change everything.

Marlborough • Marlborough

### 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@marlboroughct.gov. Applications are available on www.marlboroughct.gov or in the town clerk's office.

### 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.marlborougharts.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.

### Connection to the Collection

February is an exciting month for sports lovers around the world. With the Olympics starting Feb. 6th, and the Super Bowl on the 8th, Richmond Memorial Library says now is the perfect time to dive into its collection of sports books. Learn more about the history of the Olympics by checking out *The Games: A Global History of the Olympics* by David Goldblatt, or impress your friends with exciting NFL stories from *300 Pounds of Attitude* by Jonathan Rand, which tackles the wildest stories and craziest characters the NFL has ever seen. Turn the Super Bowl into an engaging STEM lesson for your kids by reading *It's a Numbers Game*, which tackles the math behind the perfect punt, the game-changing interception, and

so much more. The book is by Eric Zweig – with a foreword by NFL superstar Patrick Mahomes. Or, you can celebrate the Olympics with *Amazing Facts: Olympics & Paralympics* by Caroline Rowlands. Are you more of a fiction fan? Check out *Overkill* by Sandra Brown or try a romance hot enough to melt the ice with *Icebreaker* by Hannah Grace. For kids, try *The Extra Yard*, a *Home Team* novel by Mike Lupica; *Geronimo Stilton Saves the Olympics* by Geronimo Stilton; or *How do you become an Olympian?*, a book about the Olympics and Olympic athletes by Madeleine Kelly. There's something for everyone this February at RML!

### 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.marlborougharts.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@marlborougharts.org, call the office at 860-467-6353 and leave a message, or visit www.marlborougharts.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-

tionnaire no later than Friday, March 6. An in-person screening is planned for Friday, March 20. Please note that children identified as kindergarten eligible (those turning 5 by Sept. 1) are not eligible for the PreK program for the upcoming school year. Please contact Joanne Andrews at 860-295-6236 or jandrews@marlborough.k12.ct.us if you would like to receive a screening questionnaire or have any questions regarding the program.

### 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@marlboroughct.gov. Also contact the senior center for a list of regularly occurring weekly and monthly programs. **Senior Center Hours:** Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. **Holiday Closing: The center will be closed Monday, Feb. 16, in observance of Presidents Day.** **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. **Birthday Club: January and February birthdays will be celebrated with cake on Tuesday, Feb. 23, from 1-2 p.m. Open to all friends and family. It does not have to be your birthday month to celebrate, but if it is, please RSVP.** **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.marlboroughct.gov for the complete transportation policy. **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. **Trips: Lancaster, Pa.:** April 22-24. Visit Sight & Sound for its production of *Joshua*, visit the Amish country and enjoy an authentic Amish dinner, and tour of Seltzer's Smokehouse. Trip open to all ages 18 and up. Cost is \$699/person double/triple, and \$849/person single. Deposit of \$150 needed. Last payment is due March 4.

### 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.

### Dean's List

Marlborough residents Dylan Kolakowski, Todd Machowski and Garrett Nicol made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I.

### Dean's List

A graduate of St. Bernard School, Gabriella Zickmann of Marlborough has been named to the fall 2025 Dean's List while studying English at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pa.

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## Obituaries

## Colchester

## Robert F. Brown



It is with heartfelt sorrow that Rob's family announced his passing on Saturday, Jan. 24, after a difficult struggle with non-Hodgkin lymphoma. He was 69 years old. Rob was born Sept. 30, 1956, in Middletown. He was the son of Frederick Palmer Brown and the late Patricia (Dawson) Brown.

Rob grew up in Colchester and graduated from Norwich Tech. He married his high school sweetheart, Donna Sanzone, on Aug. 30, 1980. The couple made their home in Colchester, where they raised their family and became actively involved with the community.

He was a lifelong member of the Colchester Bible Baptist Church and had a personal strong sense of faith and devotion. Rob was an accomplished carpenter, but his true passion and successful career was as a firefighter. Rob began as a volunteer and quickly earned his rank, becoming the first paid firefighter in the Colchester Fire Department. His accomplishments were widespread over the years he served. He helped build the firehouse which is currently in use by the Colchester Fire Department. He was an instructor for firefighting 1 & 2 and was a state fire instructor as well.

Rob earned the Life Saving Award during an emergency call while on duty. He was Fire Fighter of the Year in Colchester on two separate occasions. He was one of the first to volunteer to go to New York City after 9/11 to help with cleaning up, search, and rescue. Most recently, Rob was actively involved with the Salem Fire Department, serving as a captain with the department there. In other areas, Rob was instrumental and one of the best customers at Salem Valley Farms where he had an ice cream named after him. Red Rose in Colchester was also a recipient of his dedication to sweets. Most importantly, Rob was a family man, who selflessly would stop at nothing to provide, protect, love, and serve them. A trait which he extended to his entire community with compassion and generosity.

Rob will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by all who knew him, especially his beloved wife of 45 years, Donna; his children, Samantha and her husband, Stephen Elias of Cranston, R.I., Robert F. Brown III and companion, Jamie Sacilowski of Colchester; siblings, Jon Brown of Colchester, Kevin (Christina) Brown of Colchester, Karen (Hutch) Hutchins of Salem, Debbi (David) Hockman of Spring Grove, Pa.; sister-in-law, Heidi Brown of Enfield; grandchildren, Carter and Colton Elias, Remi and Cora Brown; numerous extended family and a host of friends through the Colchester and Salem fire departments and communities. In addition to his mother, he was predeceased by a brother, Jeff Brown.

A celebration of life will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 7, at the Colchester Fire Department. Burial will be private in the Exeter Cemetery in Lebanon.

Donations in Rob's memory may be made to the Colchester Volunteer Fire Company, 52 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, CT 06415 or the Salem Fire Company, 424 Hartford Rd., Salem, CT 06420 or Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma, [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

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

## East Hampton

## Frances E. Connelly



Frances E. (Delfs) Connelly, 91, of East Hampton, died peacefully at her home Saturday, Jan. 24. Born April 14, 1934 in Schenectady, N.Y., she is the eldest daughter of the late Augustin Wilhelm and Frances Agnes (Mealy) Delfs.

Fran graduated from Draper High School, Class of 1951, and from Wesleyan University, Class of 1984. She worked as a branch manager for Connecticut Bank & Trust and Fleet Bank and as a tax professional for H&R Block. She recently retired from the East Hampton Public Library, where she shared her love of books and reading with community members of all ages whom she considered special friends.

Fran was a beloved and devout member of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in East Hampton and Zion Lutheran Church in Portland. She was proud of her Lutheran Heritage and the various roles she played within the church; her church family was a natural extension of her own.

Fran deeply loved her family. She displayed this love and devotion alongside her beloved husband, (the late Edward J. Connelly) as a committed United States Air Force wife and mother to their four children. "Frannie," as Ed lovingly called her, could transform any house into a home and any neighborhood into a circle of friends. Fran & Ed raised their family amidst military relocations across the United States and internationally, spending three years in Frankfurt, Germany.

Following their time in the Air Force and Ed's untimely passing in 1978, Fran settled in East Hampton. She continued to travel throughout her life with family, friends and mission groups to new and familiar destinations across the U.S. and the world.

Fran was an extremely intelligent woman with a sharp mind; she shared vivid memories of her vast life experiences with loved ones until her passing. She loved to sing and play the piano and used the gift of music to connect with others in a myriad of ways. She appreciated all forms of art and was especially fond of the performing arts. She spent many years as a volunteer at The Bushnell Performing Arts Center and The Hartford Stage.

Fran lived each day with a kind, patient, faithful heart. She is dearly missed & fondly remembered.

She is survived by sons Robert Connelly and his wife Nancy, Douglas Connelly and his partner Bonnie Peterson; grandchildren Laura Dube, Jennifer Amell, Andrew Connelly and Cyrus Wilder; great-grandchildren Lucas & Dominic Dube, Tristan & Sylvia Amell, Lizzy, Kate & Wyatt Wilder; siblings Richard, Bill, Tom and Patricia Delfs; and countless nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends whom she loved very much.

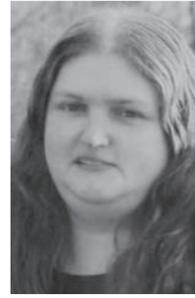
She was predeceased by her husband, Edward J. Connelly; son, Richard Connelly; daughter, Karen Connelly; sister Barbara and brother Martin Delfs; and numerous relatives and friends.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Feb. 21, at noon, at the Zion Lutheran Church, 183 Williams St., Portland. A period of prayer and reflection will begin at 11 a.m. Please join us for a Celebration of Life reception in the fellowship hall immediately following the service. A private family burial will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the East Hampton Public Library, 105 Main St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

## Willimantic

## Lillian Ruth Garthwait



Lillian Ruth Garthwait, of Willimantic, passed away Sunday, Feb. 1, at the age of 67. She was born March 31, 1958, in Windham, to the late George and Ruth Knudsen.

In 1988, she married Donald Garthwait, and they made their home in Willimantic, where she was a lifelong resident. She was a homemaker, who enjoyed taking walks with her husband. She loved cats and would feed any stray cat who came to her door.

Lillian will be deeply missed but always remembered with love by her husband Donald of Willimantic; her sisters Barbara and Susan; her sister-in-law Darlene; and numerous extended family members and friends. She was predeceased by her parents and two sisters, Tina and Beatrice.

A visitation and celebration of life will be held at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home on Friday, Feb. 6, beginning at 11 a.m., with the service to follow at noon.

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

## Lebanon

## Evelyn May Grabber



Evelyn May Grabber, of Lebanon, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, Jan. 27, at the age of 95. Evelyn was born in Norwich Aug. 28, 1930, a daughter of the late Mabel Irene (Perkins) Fargo and Alvin Fargo.

Evelyn was a lifelong resident of Lebanon, graduating from Lyman Memorial High School in 1949 and then on Aug. 19, 1950, she married her high school sweetheart, Frank Spafford Grabber. The couple made their home in Lebanon on the family farm known as Oweneco Farms.

Although she worked as a bookkeeper and bus driver for Clark Transportation for more than 30 years, her true calling and passion was working beside her husband on their family farm, where you would find her driving the tractor bailing hay and driving the truck chopping corn. Another true passion for Evelyn and her husband Spafford evolved in 1991 with the creation of Oweneco Farms Sugar Shack. They went into partnership with Evelyn's sister-in-law, Dawn and her husband, John Drum and together they began making maple syrup on the farm. Her husband predeceased her in 2008.

Evelyn was a devout Christian and member of the First Congregational Church of Lebanon where she served in many capacities working with the Sunday School, served as clerk for many years and enjoyed working on the Supper Committee and running the churches hamburger booths at the Lebanon Fair alongside her husband for many years. Church family and community were important to her; she was a loving, giving and caring person and she loved her volunteer work with Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

During her leisure hours, Evelyn often enjoyed immersing herself in a good book or unwinding with her crocheting. Some of her favorite memories and cherished times were made while camping with her family and friends. The grandchildren have many wonderful memories of their camping days with Grandma and Grandpa at Strawberry Park.

She will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by her daughter, Ellen Meseroll, with whom she made her home; her grandchildren, Kelly (Thomas) Brinkmann of Colorado Springs, Colo., Ashley (Derek) Rhodes of Mansfield, Wesley Meseroll of Ohio; great grandchildren, Joel Brinkmann, Kenneth Rhodes, Cayden Miller, Ava Rhodes, Logan Meseroll, Garrett Meseroll and Hugo Doll-Meseroll; and many extended family members and friends.

In addition to her husband and parents, she was predeceased by a grandson, Scott Meseroll and siblings, Albert Fargo and Beatrice Hebert.

Please join the family for a Memorial Service in celebration of her life on Saturday, Feb. 21, at 11 a.m. at the First Congregational Church of Lebanon, on the corner of West Town Street and Exeter Road, Lebanon. Burial will be private in the Exeter Cemetery.

Donations in Evelyn's memory may be made to the First Congregational Church (Deacon's Fund), P.O. Box 125, Lebanon CT 06249.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with arrangements. For online condolences or to share a story of Evelyn, please visit [www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## East Hampton

## Marion Irene Roberts



Marion Irene (Coe) Roberts, also known as Mic/Micky, passed peacefully Monday, Jan. 19, at Cobalt Health Care and Rehabilitation Center, at the age of 103.

Born Aug. 28, 1922, in Middletown, Marion was a member of the first graduating class of East Hampton High School in 1941. She attended Nasson College in Sanford, Maine.

She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Chuck and Donna Roberts; grandchildren, Cully and wife Gina, Carrie and husband Bill, Tyler, Ryan and wife Christa, Garrett and Madison; great-grandchildren, Scarlett, Clara, Cullen, Jeffrey, Jax and Chloe; as well as many friends and extended family.

She was predeceased by her husband Cully and her two sons, Craig and Jeffrey, along with her two sisters, Dorothy Peterman and Helen Condon.

She met Cully, the love of her life, while teaching dance with Arthur Murray Studio at the Bond Hotel in Hartford. During their 52 years of marriage they lived life to the fullest, enjoying traveling with close friends, theatre and most of all laughing and spending time entertaining family and friends in their West Hartford home, always enjoying a glass (or two) of wine.

A longtime resident of West Hartford, she was a member of the Hartford Golf Club and Town and County Club where she enjoyed playing golf and bridge and socializing with friends.

Mic enjoyed collecting antiques, reading, knitting, needlepoint, hosting a cocktail party and setting the perfect table, complete with ironed, linen napkins. She loved socializing and never passed up an invitation. She enjoyed being active, walking in the West Hartford reservoir and on the Air Line Trail in East Hampton.

She completed an extraordinary feat just after her 100th birthday, when she walked and crossed the finish line of the Haddam Neck 5K Road Race with her son and daughter-in-law, winning her age group.

The family will be having a celebration of life later this year.

## Colchester

## Jean Crowther Sosnoski



Jean Crowther Sosnoski of Colchester, and formerly of Stratford, passed away Sunday, Jan. 18. She was 93 years old. Jean was born in Providence, R.I., on Nov. 4, 1932. She was a daughter of the late Robert and Dorothy (Sargeant) Crowther.

Jean married Bernard Sosnoski on Feb. 5, 1955, in Stratford. The couple settled in Stratford, where she devoted herself wholeheartedly to raising her children and creating a warm, steady household. In later years, she returned to the workforce, working as a bookkeeper. Jean and Bernie retired to Colchester to be closer to family members. She was an avid book reader, and found great joy in cross-stitch, knitting and crochet.

Jean and Bernie were members of the Stratford United Methodist Church, and later of the Westchester Congregational Church in Colchester and the Colchester Senior Center. After 60 years of marriage, Bernard predeceased Jean on Oct. 7, 2015.

Jean leaves behind her two children, David Sosnoski and his wife Maryalice of Sterling, Mass., and Robert Sosnoski and his wife Melissa of Colchester; her five grandchildren, Jacqueline Aldous and her husband Corey, Heather Sosnoski, Colleen Sosnoski and her fiancé Dylan Morris, Brian Sosnoski, Jason Sosnoski and his wife Lillian; and numerous extended family members and friends.

She will be sadly missed but remembered with love by all who knew her.

A memorial service will be held Friday, March 6, at 11 a.m., at Westchester Congregational Church, 98 Cemetery Rd., Colchester.

Burial will be private in the State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown. Donations in Jean's memory may be made to the Colchester Senior Center, 15 Louis Lane, Colchester, CT 06415.

Arrangements are under the care of the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

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

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Obituaries cont.

Hebron

James Asmuth Jr.

James Ellsworth Asmuth Jr., of Wethersfield, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, on Wednesday, Jan. 28.



Jim was born in Neenah, Wis., on Sept. 11, 1946, to James Ellsworth Asmuth Sr. and Helen Asmuth. He was a proud graduate of Georgetown University. He owned Northeast Copy and retired at the age of 48. In the years that followed, he embraced life fully. He and his devoted wife, Carolyn, shared travel adventures, golf outings, and countless memorable dinners. They enjoyed their home on Nantucket for many years and spent their time between Hebron and Bluffton, S.C., as Jim pursued his lifelong love of birding.

Jim was far more than a birder - he was a highly regarded amateur ornithologist and a cherished mentor within the Hilton Head Audubon community. He found great joy in leading programs, teaching others to recognize bird calls and feathers, and contributing recordings to Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology in support of avian research and education. He became a Master Birder and taught a class through the Hilton Head Audubon Society.

Jim is survived by his loving wife of 38 years, Carolyn; his daughters, Eloise Mongillo and her husband Michael, and Kate Johnson and her husband T. Michael; and his stepsons, Derek Yaworsky and his wife Christine, and Dustin Yaworsky and his wife Lauren. He was predeceased by his stepson, Damon Yaworsky.

He is also survived by his siblings: Peter Asmuth, Mary Ellyn Wroblewski, David Asmuth, Barbara Asmuth, Tom Asmuth, and Tracy Oberbrunner.

Jim was a devoted grandfather to nine grandchildren, who lovingly called him "Baba": Cassandra, Helena, Marlowe, and Skyler (children of Kate Johnson and T. Michael); Dylan (Lauren) Damon, and Celia (children of Derek and Christine); and Dane and Devin (children of Dustin and Lauren).

Calling hours were at Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, on Thursday, Feb. 5, from 4-7 p.m. Burial will be private. A larger celebration of Jim's life will be scheduled in June, when friends and loved ones will be welcomed to gather in his memory.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Hilton Head Audubon Society, P.O. Box 6185, Hilton Head Island, SC 29938.

For online condolences, please visit www.mulryanfh.com.

Hebron

Charles D. Oliver Sr.

Charles D. Oliver, Sr., fondly known as Charlie, of Hebron, passed away Friday, Jan. 30, at the Mansfield Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation where he had been residing. He was 90 years old.



Charlie was born in New London on Sept. 29, 1935. He was the son of the late Anthony and Stella (Denison) Oliver. He married Catherine Ellis in 1956. She predeceased him, and Charlie later wed Joan Skut, who also predeceased him in 2009. Charlie retired several years ago after a long career as a master carpenter with his special talents creating beautiful cabinetry.

He was a resident of Hebron for 60 years and was a member of the Hebron Sportsman's Club since the early '60s and loved fishing in both fresh water and ocean. Charlie loved fishing, hunting, and camping in Pulaski, N.Y., where the fishing trips were memorable. He was a skilled carpenter and cabinet maker and a gentleman farmer for most of his life at the "SueSisCinChuck" farmstead. Everyone knew they could find him in his beloved workshop. In the 1970s, he built the Corn Shed in Hebron. Charlie owned and operated the store which sold fruits and vegetables also where he formed many long, lasting friendships. During that same time ('70s) he could be heard on the CB radios chatting regularly with some wonderful friends; his handle was "Woodchopper."

Charlie will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by all who know him, especially his children and their spouses, Chuck (Yvonne) Oliver Jr., of Hebron, Sue Oliver (Earle Fredericksen) of Bolton, Catherine (Glenwood B.) Campen of Andover, Cindy Lukaszewicz (Everett Reaviel) of Willington; siblings, Paul Oliver of Amston, Mary Oliver, Judy Westcott of Moodus, Margaret Arnold of Amston; five grandchildren, Stanley, Michael, Tyler, Cody, Benjamin; 4 great grandchildren, Calvin, Milena, Colsen, and Aaliyah; and many extended family members and friends.

In addition to his parents and spouses, he was predeceased by grandsons, Shawn and Garrett; a brother, Anthony Oliver; and his dog "Oliver."

The family would like to thank the staff of Mansfield Center for Nursing & Rehab for the care and kindness given while Charlie resided with them.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, at a later date. Burial will be private.

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

LEGALS

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 Ave., Colchester, CT, to hear and consider the following application: W2026-3135 - 611 Norwich Ave, Bacon Academy High School; Bernie Dennler - 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, 2/6

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF ANDOVER REVENUE COLLECTOR'S NOTICE

To the property owners of the Town of Andover: The third installment of the Real Estate and Personal Property taxes listed on the October 1, 2024 Grand List becomes due and payable to the Town of Andover on January 1, 2026. Payments must be US postmarked, paid on line, or brought to Town Hall by February 2, 2026 to avoid an interest charge. Interest will be charged starting February 3, 2026 on all delinquent bills at a rate of 18% per year (1½% per month) from the due date of January 1st, with a minimum charge of \$2 for each bill.

View or pay taxes online at www.andoverct.org. Cash, check or money order payments are accepted at the Town Hall during business hours. Payments by check or money order may be mailed to the Tax Collector's office or placed in the drop box outside Town Hall. Typical office hours during collection months are Monday 8:15am-7pm, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:15 am-4pm. Please refer to www.andoverct.org for updated office hours.

Failure to receive a tax bill will not invalidate the tax or any interest which may, by State law, accrue.

If you have any questions, please contact the tax office at 860-742-4035 option 4.

3TB 12/26, 1/2, 2/6

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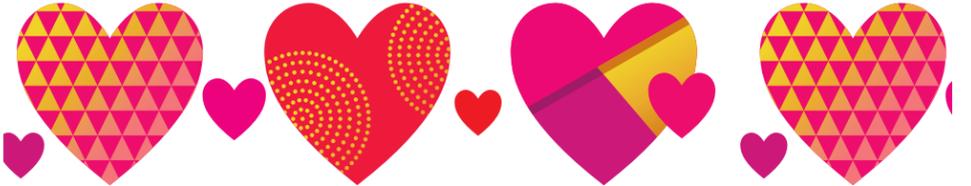
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