

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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

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**Did You Say It's Winter????... For Tara Bassette of Colchester, there's nothing quite like sitting on the patio with a warm cup of coffee, reading the Rivereast ..... no matter what season it is!!**

## A Life of Service: Remembering Rob Brown

By Toriana Williams

When Rob Brown passed away on Jan. 24, at the age of 69, Colchester lost more than a firefighter. It lost a neighbor who always answered the call, a teacher who shaped generations, a builder whose hands helped raise both homes and heroes, and a friend whose quiet presence filled every room he entered.



**Rob Brown**

Brown grew up in Colchester and graduated from Norwich Tech. He married his high school sweetheart, Donna, in 1980 and together they built a life rooted in faith, family and community. A skilled carpenter by trade, his craftsmanship could be seen in homes and projects across the area. But while building was his profession, firefighting was his passion.

Brown joined the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Company at just 14 years old as a cadet. "He joined us as soon as he could ... in our cadet department," recalled Debi Czarkowski Marvin, president of the volunteer fire company, who had known him for a long period of her life. From that moment on, the firehouse became a second home.

Over decades, Brown rose through every officer position in the department, from captain to chief. Yet titles never defined him. According to Czarkowski Marvin, "He was every officer position we have here ... but he was most happy when he was a firefighter, and when he was teaching others." Teaching was where he found his greatest joy and, arguably, left his deepest

mark.

Brown taught countless Firefighter I and Firefighter II classes and led hands-on drills that pushed his students to be better, stronger and more prepared.

"Hands-on training was when he was at his best," Czarkowski Marvin said.

She recalled that he transformed donated houses into training grounds, carefully creating controlled burn environments so firefighters could practice in realistic conditions without destroying the structure.

"Rob could do anything," she said simply. The impact of that work rippled far beyond Colchester.

"A lot of people were trained by Rob. A lot of people have education and knowledge that they learned from him," Czarkowski Marvin explained. Many of those he trained went on to full-time firefighting careers across Connecticut. "Many of those people have now retired from their career jobs," she added, a testament to the span of his influence.

Brown earned numerous honors over the years, including two Firefighter of the Year awards – an honor bestowed by a committee of peers – and the company's first ever Meritorious Life Saving Award for rescuing a man from a burning apartment building in 1997. He was also among the firefighters who traveled to Ground Zero after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, volunteering for days of grueling work

See Remembering Rob Brown, page 31

## Weir Seeks Third Term in State House

By Toriana Williams

State Rep. Steve Weir is running for reelection in Connecticut's 55th House District, which includes the Rivereast towns of Andover, Marlborough and Hebron, as well as Bolton and Glastonbury.



**Steve Weir**

If elected, this would be the Republican's third term in office. A small business owner and former police officer, Weir said his decision to run again is rooted in both unfinished work and a deep connection to the community he serves.

Weir grew up in Glastonbury and has lived in Hebron since 2000. After marrying his wife in 1998, the couple settled in Hebron, where they built their first home and raised three daughters.

Before entering politics, Weir spent most of his career self-employed in various contracting businesses. He also worked as a Glastonbury police officer from 2001 to 2005. "While the job was cool most of the time, ... I was meant to be self-employed," he said. Though he valued the experience and friendships he made, he decided to return to private business.

Weir first became involved in politics in 2019 and said frustration with state policies pushed him to run for office.

"I was frustrated at seeing headlines out of Washington ... and reading stories about policies coming out of Hartford specifically," he said. As a small business owner, he felt that lawmakers were not considering how new regulations affected employers. "The policies coming out of Hartford really ... only made it more difficult to run a small business," he said.

After an unsuccessful bid for the 19th Senate District, Weir was encouraged to run for the 55th House seat when then-Rep. Robin Green chose not to seek reelection. He won the seat and has since served two terms.

Reflecting on his time in office, Weir described his first term as a learning experience. "The first term is just trying to get your feet under you," he explained. During his second term, he was appointed ranking member on the Labor and Public Employees Committee.

Weir shared he is running again because he feels he has more to accomplish. "I have not hit my stride yet," he said. "I enjoy the job. I think I'm effective at ... making common sense proposals." He added that he works with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to improve legislation.

As a Republican in a legislature where Demo-

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### Bingo & Basket Raffle Night

Andover Congregational Church, located at 359 Route 6, will hold a Bingo & Basket Raffle Night on Friday, Feb. 20, starting with dinner at 5:30 p.m.; the game starts at 6:30 p.m.

Admission is \$15 and includes dinner, drink, dessert and bingo. No reservations required.

Leave a message at the church at 860-742-7696 with questions.

### Learn CPR

All are invited to learn CPR Sunday, March 15, from 10 a.m.-noon at the Andover Volunteer Fire Department.

This Heartsaver CPR class cost is \$20 and includes use of training materials, CPR/AED/Choking for adults/child/infant and 2-year certification from the American Heart Association.

Registration is required. Call Mindy Hegener at 860-706-3074.

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RE1-30-26



## From the Editor's Desk

# Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

Boy was this past Sunday night a good night to be a Marist grad!

For those of you who don't know, I am a proud graduate of Marist College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. (It's now a university, but when I went there it was still a college.) Marist is a great school, but it's not really known for its athletics. We've got famous alumni in other walks of life – the keynote speaker at my 2001 graduation was Fox News host Bill O'Reilly, a member of the Class of 1971 – but not too many when it comes to sports. Probably our most famous sports alum was NBA All-Star Rik Smits.

Well, at least until Sunday he was our most famous one.

That's because on Sunday night Marist, for the first time ever, saw one of its alumni play in the Super Bowl. That man was Class of 2013 graduate Jason Myers, the kicker for the Seattle Seahawks. And if you're one of the 125 million people who watched the Seahawks-Patriots matchup on Sunday, you know Myers had a pretty good night.

Myers kicked *five* field goals Sunday night, setting a Super Bowl record for a kicker, as the Seahawks topped the Patriots 29-13. In fact, with the five field goals, Myers racked up more points himself (15) than New England did as an entire team. Oh, and for good measure he also kicked two extra points after Seattle touchdowns.

Some even thought Myers should've been named the Super Bowl MVP. And while that would've been truly awesome, I understand why it didn't happen. No kicker has ever won Super Bowl MVP – and only once has one been named the regular season MVP.

A kicker, no matter how impressive a job he does, is on the field for just such a shorter period of time than the rest of the offense. It'd be tough to justify giving him an MVP over someone like quarterback or wide receiver or running back – people who are out there, in the thick of it, every time the offense takes the field. So I had no problem seeing Robert Griffin III take home the MVP Sunday.

But holy cow did Myers have an incredible night. Marist finally made it to the Super Bowl – and boy did we make a splash.

As for the Patriots – and I'm sure many of you were rooting for them – it was a tough night. Seattle's defense was just relentless, and

New England quarterback Drake Maye simply looked overmatched. He's such a talented guy though, and still so young. I can easily see him returning to the big game. It's far from a guarantee – just ask Dan Marino – but hopefully he can get there.

Ultimately, while it wasn't a high-scoring affair, Sunday's Super Bowl was still great entertainment. Seattle just put on a defensive clinic, the Bad Bunny halftime show was a lot of fun (and actually drew a higher audience – 128.2 million viewers – than the game itself), and the commercials.....well, ok, they were hit and miss. Too many commercials for AI (and too much AI in the commercials; the Dunkin' Donuts spot, while a great concept, was nightmare fuel), and only a few advertisements – such as the Sabrina Carpenter one for Pringles – that made me legit laugh out loud. There were a couple successful tug-at-the-heartstrings ones (a mortgage company ad made me tear up a bit), but for the most part just not the best year for Super Bowl ads.

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Speaking of sports, I haven't seen too much Olympics coverage yet – though I have seen enough to realize I still don't understand curling – but how can you not feel for Lindsey Vonn?

In case you don't know, Vonn, a champion downhill skier who already has an Olympic gold medal under her belt, was attempting a comeback story for the ages. Vonn, 41, had retired from the sport in 2019 – but then "unretired" in late 2024, after having successful knee surgery that cured her of the pain that had forced her to hang up her skis in the first place.

Vonn quickly reestablished herself as one of the sport's best – and this past December, she became the oldest downhill skiing World Cup winner, at the age of 41. She claimed her 83rd World Cup win, and first since 2018.

Also in December, she qualified for the Olympics. It would be her fifth and likely final Olympics, and the whole country was likely rooting for a storybook ending.

It was not to be, however. On Sunday, Vonn – who had already ruptured her ACL the week before – crashed not long into her downhill run, and was airlifted to a nearby hospital. Vonn shared on Monday that the

**Editor's Desk continued on page 7**



**Dinner and a Show!... Epoch Arts will hold its annual Dinnershow on March 7. The night will feature a full-course pasta dinner, as well as a variety of skits, musical numbers and Wackadoodles. Pictured is a skit from last year's show. For more about Dinnershow, see page 16.**

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

## Understanding Hebron Politics

To the Editor:

In the early 1990s, I ran and won a seat on the Sweetwater County School District No. 1 school board. It was an honor and a privilege to have won.

Within a week of my election, I received mail from the Sweetwater Education Association, Wyoming School Administrators Association, Wyoming Education Association, American Association of School Administrators, National School Administration Association, Wyoming School Boards Association and the National School Boards Association.

Wow; here was a small-town boy getting mail locally, from Cheyenne and from Washington. I just wanted to add value to local endeavors. What was going on??

There was a single theme to all the letters, though, that gave a clue. Every single letter said, in essence: Congratulations for your election and we applaud you for your civic mindedness. But you should remember that you do not know that much about being a board member and you would be well advised to come to us for guidance as you go forward with your public service.

This was my first introduction to institutions and how they might shape debates of the future. It is helping me now to understand the machinations of politics in Hebron.

Terry McManus  
Hebron

## Grinder Sale Thanks

To the Editor:

The Andover Congregational Church would like to thank everyone who attended the Souper Bowl Grinder Sale. The 2027 Souper Bowl will be on Sunday, Feb. 14, 2027.

Beth Lundberg  
Fundraising Chairperson

## Seeking Vendors for Portland Festival

To the Editor:

The Portland America 250 Committee is excited to announce that we are seeking vendors interested in participating in Portland's Home-town Festival 250, scheduled for May 16th, with a rain date of May 17th.

This festival will be a special community celebration, bringing together local residents, families, and visitors to honor our town's history and spirit. We welcome vendors who would like to be part of this memorable event and help us create a lively and engaging day for all who attend.

Anyone interested in participating is encouraged to reach out to a member of the Portland America 250 Committee by email at portlandamerica250@gmail.com or by connecting with us through our Facebook page. We look forward to working with local vendors and celebrating together as a community.

Sincerely,  
The Portland America 250 Committee

## Bulletin Board

"Driving around after one of our recent snowstorms, I noticed the usual quota of decapitated mailboxes lying by the road. The battered and broken victims of snowplows, the poor things never had a fighting chance. One particularly pathetic wreck still had part of the support post attached.

That's a normal part of winter in New England, I guess. Beautiful scenery punctuated by possible frostbite; the sound of your furnace burning up your savings; praying to the gods of winter that it's a dry snow instead of a wet snow as you venture out to clear your driveway – and, of course, occasionally finding your mailbox lying 20 feet down the road in a snowbank.

Homeowners seem to deal with the seasonal unpleasantness involving mailboxes in a variety of ways. On the one extreme, you have engineer types who (while we grasshoppers frolic by the seaside) take time during the summer to carefully prepare for the coming snows by reinforcing their mailboxes with yards of concrete and tempered steel. Done with proper obsessiveness, such fortifications are built to resist threats ranging from baseball bat-wielding high school students to mainline battle tanks.

At the other extreme – at least insofar as preventative maintenance is concerned—we have the guy who simply props up a sheet of plywood alongside his mailbox as a shield against snowplow assaults. Apparently (from what I have seen), this method also requires the homeowner get his four-year-old child to spray paint their house number on the board in the unlikely event that their mail delivery person is an imbecile.

The problem with the plywood defense is that too many of us have been conditioned to value genteel presentation over practicality. My mother, for instance, when my sister and I were kids, refused to allow us to roll our corn on the cob on the stick of butter, even though this was obviously the most effective way to get butter on the corn. Instead, we were required to balance a pat of butter on the end of a knife and try to wipe it onto the corn, an ordeal that was characterized as "good manners." I can only imagine what she would have to say about propping a sheet of plywood up against the mailbox for the entire winter.

I think most of us end up simply taking our chances in the mailbox lottery. We realize that snowplow drivers aren't really evil and sometimes mailboxes end up as collateral damage to a job that has to be done. Upon finding that it happens to be our turn today, we limit ourselves to a little obligatory profanity before heading to the garage to look around for a couple of bungee cords.

Bungee cords, should you be a newcomer to New England winters, are to decapitated mailboxes what slings are to broken arms. They serve to hold things in place until spring when more permanent repairs can be made. The wise New Englander keeps a generous supply of bungees at hand just in case. They're also cheaper than plywood and less likely to leave your mother shaking her head as she wonders where she went wrong.

Jim Hallas

## Riverast Hours of Operation

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

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

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Reader Forum • Reader Forum

**Stop Studying, Start Building**

To the Editor:  
I support the Rec Plex renovations and the new turf field at Bacon.

Let's talk plainly. Sure, plastic turf isn't as nice as a perfect grass field. But turf is a whole lot better than the embarrassing swamp pits we have now. Our kids deserve better than mud bowls and canceled games.

And we've been "talking about it" long enough. For 15 years we've done studies, formed commissions, sat through meetings, and heard promises that never seem to leave the room. How many more binders do we need? How many more seasons do we waste?

We finally have a real plan. A real path forward. This isn't hypothetical anymore.

I want my kids playing on these fields and enjoying a refreshed Rec Plex. I want families all across Colchester using it, year-round, proud of it instead of apologizing for it.

This is about community, not perfection. Progress beats potholes and puddles.

Let's get this done.

**John Farrell  
Colchester**

**Marlborough's Food Scrap Money-Saving Myth**

To the Editor:

A lot of people showed up at the Marlborough Board of Selectmen meeting last week, both in person and on Zoom, to protest the proposal for a "Pay Per Bag" trash program at the Transfer Station. I was one of them.

I thought it would be better to expand our Food Scrap program to reduce the amount of waste going into the trash and save the town money. Now I'm having second thoughts.

When the program first started in 2024 it was advertised as a way to save money by diverting heavy food scraps from the trash to compost collection bins at the transfer station. It was said that, "waste dropped off at the Transfer Station is hauled to expensive out-of-state landfills. Tipping fees charged by these landfills—which are based on the weight of the Transfer Station waste—have nearly doubled in the past 10 years & will continue to increase. These charges are passed onto all taxpayers, including those who do not use the Transfer Station. So reducing the volume of Transfer Station waste disposed of at other landfills can ultimately save taxpayers money."

But is that true? According to my arithmetic it's not. The trash tipping fees are currently \$115 per ton. But the Blue Earth compost bins are costing over \$256 per ton to remove the food scraps. I was told by some folks on the town's Sustainable Committee that we diverted 27.3 tons of scraps from the trash to the compost

bins since the start of the program through January of this year. But according to those same people we paid about \$7,000 to Blue Earth to haul those scraps away.

Simple math: \$7,000 divided by 27.3 tons equals \$256.41 per ton; more than double the \$115 trash tipping fees. Even if \$7,000 is a bit high and perhaps it's more like \$6,000 paid to Blue Earth, that's close to \$220 per ton.

So save \$115 per ton by diverting the scraps but pay double per ton to remove them? This makes no sense.

**Hal Whitney  
Marlborough**

**Dementia Talks No. 48**

To the Editor:

Recently I was invited to speak about quality of life on a podcast.

When asked the question "what does quality of life mean to you?" I answered from two perspectives: my mom, and myself as a caregiver.

From a caregiver for my mom, both my sister and I take to heart her quality of life. In thinking about my answer to the question, it was clear that quality of life changes throughout the dementia journey.

At the time of the diagnosis, quality of life is centered around preserving independence (safely driving, making meals, keeping up the house and yard, going to events, attending church, being with friends). Then you go through a phase of "should Mom live alone?", and quality of life becomes anchored in safety (taking meds on time, ensure that nothing catches on fire, eliminating any fall risk, protecting from scammers, cleaning the house, clearing the snow, doing the bills, get ahead of wandering, etc.). Then there is a phase of "others taking care" of Mom (trusting her care in others, advocating for engagement, hygiene support, clean clothes, dignity and respect).

When I let go of the guilt that others are caring for Mom in the day to day, then quality of life becomes very personal and is guided by engagement (is she smiling and laughing, is she mobile and walking on her own, is she eating her meals, does she engage in activities, does she still take my hand when offered, is she talking, is she reading, ensuring her skin is lotioned and her teeth brushed).

As we trek through these phases of dementia, my quality of life becomes connected to Mom's. If Mom's quality of life is good, mine seems to be as well. I do try to take time for myself and breathe; walk in nature, be active and write. Mom is never far from my mind.

The next phase will change the definition of quality of life; when that comes, I will share what it looks like from my view of this journey we are on.

Thank you for reading and know that you are not alone. May today be your peaceful day.

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

**Honoring Veterans Through Community Partnership**

To the Editor:

I am proud to share some news that is very meaningful to us at the Senior Center and to me personally. One of my goals since stepping into this role has been to strengthen how we support the veterans in our community. I am grateful to say that through a new collaboration with the Connecticut Veterans Association, we are taking an important step forward in doing just that.

Together we are launching Coffee House workshops focused on VA benefits. These sessions will gently walk veterans and their families through how to access benefits, what they may be entitled to, and how to navigate the process with confidence. We want this information to feel clear, approachable, and easy to understand. Most of all, we want our veterans to know they are welcome here and that we are committed to helping them connect with the resources they have earned through their service.

At the Senior Center, our work is rooted in community and care. Supporting the men and women who have served our country is both an honor and a responsibility we take seriously. We look forward to welcoming local veterans and their families into a warm space where they can learn, ask questions, and connect with others.

This partnership is something we are truly proud of, and we are excited to continue building programs that reflect the needs and values of our community.

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

**Choose Wisely**

To the Editor:

Historically speaking, water is both the narrator and the narrative. Nowhere is this more evident than in Hebron. It'd be a shame to lose it. From 37 rejected properties for Public Works, to 17 Kinney's soggy acres, well water remediation costs, sodium chloride in wells and flooded sports fields water is both the story and the storyteller.

Water is the most important reason for keeping Public Works off the Raymond Brook Watershed. Industrial development, even over-salted roads, pose constant threats to groundwater. Due to Connecticut Statute 22a-471, water contamination is the financial responsibility of the polluters. Should Hebron pollute private wells, you, the taxpayers, would be responsible for replacing those water supplies plus 10 years of associated water bills.

It has been determined that Kinney Road will be more expensive to develop given the location. (Reference: DPW Action Committee). No developers purchased this land. This suggests that building on a notoriously high-water table

is, also, not favorable.

Please visit hebronct.com for Estimated DPW Building Project Costs, (5/26/23). An \$18 million bond was listed at 1.33% with costs of \$125-\$325 per household annually. Perhaps these figures will change. However, printing and posting non-referenced Town interest rates was irresponsible. Additionally, rebuilding 550 Old Colchester Rd. is not throwing good money after bad, but polluting groundwater is.

Schools and PW facilities are expensive. In 2005 Hebron purchased ten acres specifically for PW. There must have been a reason why. Now, 20 years later, a second, unsuitable, property has been acquired, multiple non-essential projects completed, while PW crews remain in the same, or worse, working conditions. It's a shame we chose to ignore former town manager Bonnie Therrien in 2011 and former town planner Michael O'Leary in 2016; both supported Old Colchester Road. It's a shame the PW is beyond repair. We have only ourselves to blame. We voted for public officials. We watched the decline of the PW facility. Why haven't we held town hall accountable?

Nobody can turn back the hands of time, but we can hope estimated costs come in lower when the project goes out to bid. And we can stay focused on safeguarding groundwater in Hebron. Like open land, safe water benefits every one of us. The next 300 years are up to us, right here, right now, in small towns just like Hebron. Choose wisely. Choose water. #save17

**Jean Tulimieri  
Amston**

**DPW Proposal Jeopardizes Education Priorities**

To the Editor:

A town's budget reflects what we value as a community. When resources are limited, choosing to spend heavily in one area inevitably means scaling back in others. It's no different from managing a household: if you take on a major expense, something else must give. That's why the \$30millionplus DPW facility isn't just another construction project, it threatens to squeeze out other essential priorities, especially education, which is seeking a 9.1% increase this year.

If approved, the DPW project would carry an annual debt service of roughly \$2.4 million, equal to about a 3mill increase in the tax rate. For homeowners, that means:

- A home assessed at \$250,000 would see taxes rise by about \$770 per year.
- A home assessed at \$500,000 would see taxes rise by about \$1,500 per year.

A tax increase of this size leaves little room for anything else. And it comes at a time when our two elementary schools face significant capital needs. According to the town's Capital Improvement Plan, roof replacements at Gilead Hill

*See Letters, page 6*

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Reader Forum • Reader Forum

**★ Letters, cont. from page 5**

and Hebron Elementary remain outstanding, with an estimated cost of \$2 million. Modern HVAC and airconditioning systems, essential for healthy air quality and safe temperatures, carry additional multimillion-dollar price tags of roughly \$5.5 million.

The town manager's budget message makes clear that our capital budget already falls short of meeting community needs. Many worthy projects must wait because funding is limited. Given that reality, how can we justify spending \$30 million on a DPW facility?

There is a better path. Several residents have suggested a more holistic approach, one that considers the town's full range of needs rather than treating the DPW project in isolation. To get there, we must reject the oversized Old Colchester Road proposal and insist that our town leaders pursue more affordable, responsible alternatives.

**Rob Poudrier  
Amston**

**The \$37 Myth**

To the Editor:

The Town of Colchester is telling residents that the proposed Bacon Academy athletic complex will cost just \$37 per year. That figure is being repeated as fact, but it does not withstand even basic scrutiny.

I live in a modest home and own a single car. I pay the town about \$7,000 per year in local taxes. Based on the adopted budget, for every \$10,000 the town raises and spends, about \$1.05 comes from my household.

Using that same math, a \$14.6 million, 25-year bond would increase my household's local taxes by at least \$100 per year – nearly three times the amount being advertised. And that still is not the full cost.

Artificial turf fields have a finite lifespan, typically around 15 years, after which full replacement is unavoidable. Temporary patching of worn-out turf is no substitute for planning for replacement; it does not restore a field's original performance, safety, or shock-absorption across the entire surface. If Colchester installs three artificial turf fields and each costs \$1.25 million to replace, that is \$3.75 million every 15 years – about \$25 per year for my household when averaged over time.

Taken together, the real long-term cost is roughly \$125 per year for my household – not \$37. What is most troubling is that this analysis

should not be coming from a private citizen. It should have come from the Board of Finance, whose responsibility is to evaluate full fiscal impacts and long-term costs. Instead, taxpayers were presented with a headline number and no meaningful financial due diligence.

You may decide that \$125 per year is worth it. That is a fair choice. But voters deserve to make that choice based on complete and honest information—not a misleading figure.

That is why Colchester should slow down, complete the design and financial analysis, secure grant funding, and then bring the project back to voters.

Finish the work, get the grants, then vote.

**Michael Dubreuil  
Colchester**

**Character Matters**

To the Editor:

The most recent appointment to Colchester's Board of Finance is Republican Donna Antonacci. The seat was vacated by a Republican and by town charter it has to be filled by a Republican.

What does that mean? Does a Republican have to be a member of the Republican Town Committee? The Republican Town Committee (RTC) is composed of 50 registered republicans in a town of thousands of Republicans, a very small minority.

I ran for a BOE position with Donna four years ago with the support of the RTC and joined as a member. My daughter ran with us but never wanted to be a member of the committee. The RTC had many issues and would even have police presence at their meetings. There was much dissension and arguing, which was something I was not proud to be a part of and was happy not to be voted back in two years ago. Many have left the party altogether. Despite some folks stating that she has not collaborated with the RTC, Donna tried to attend meetings and was sadly verbally attacked. So she stopped going.

This last election Donna and I ran to continue on the BOE on Row C still keeping our Republican affiliation because we both felt this small group of somewhat angry people should not dictate our values. Knowing most people vote party lines I was truly humbled by the votes that we received.

Now, as a Republican, Donna looked to fill an open position on the Board of Finance. The Board took into account her character, her ex-

perience on the BOE and her life experience as an owner of several businesses. They also took into account the behavior of the other applicant, the social media posts, the letters to the boards, the FOI requests and accusations against sitting board members. I saw the BOF choosing the responsible, experienced applicant who is devoted to doing what is right for her town. Donna serves her town with integrity and honesty. She listens to all constituents and makes decisions based on what is right and best for everyone, not just 50 people (some of whom are quite angry). I look forward to the next two years of seeing all the Boards work together to continue to move Colchester forward.

I hope that in future elections people will learn to vote for the person and not the party line.

**Marguerite Gignac  
Colchester**

**Budget Season – Your Input Matters!**

To All Colchester Residents:

Budget season for the development of our town and school budgets is underway and the opportunities for citizens to be involved and informed are starting! First up - the annual budget survey is open now (see town website) and there are multiple meetings and workshops coming up where you can give your input.

The full budget season schedule can be found on the town website, on the Board of Finance (BOF) page.

What's coming up?

For both budgets, the Board of Finance is running 2 budget forum meetings, the first is on Wednesday, Feb. 11th, at 6:30 p.m. and the second is on Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 6:30 p.m. These meetings will be hybrid - with the ability to join either in person or via Zoom.

To find details on joining, go to the town website and look at the 'Public Meetings' section.

**Budget Forum Format:** The budget forums are a chance for citizens to make comments or statements for the board of finance and others involved in creating the budgets to hear. This is in addition to the budget survey or other means of providing feedback. In the forums, every citizen has a chance to give three-minute statements about what they hope to see in the budgets when they are formally presented later.

**BOE Public Budget Development:** In addition, the Board of Education (BOE) is running

a presentation and workshops related to the school budgets that are currently being drafted as well. The superintendent and others will present their draft budget to the BOE on Feb. 18 and there will be two BOE-specific workshops scheduled for Feb. 23 and 26. These sessions occur prior to the BOE presenting the budget formally to the BOF in the first public hearing. See the Board of Education website for agenda and details about these sessions.

**Public Hearing and BOF Workshops:** Both the BOE and town budgets will be formally presented to the BOF on March 3 and the BOF will then hold workshops. Please make every effort to attend in person or via Zoom and participate in this vital process for the community.

Also, if you haven't completed the budget survey yet, it is open until Feb. 16th, and you can find the link to it on the town website.

**Sincerely,  
Karen Belding, Chair  
Colchester Board of Finance**

**Hebron Democracy in Action**

To the Editor:

The Jan. 29th special town meeting in Hebron was an exciting example of democracy in action. Complete with "parliamentary inquiries," ample public comments and insightful information from involved committee members, many facts were revealed and a beneficial conclusion was reached. The 13.25-acre Simiola property on Hope Valley Road features the valuable combination of environmental significance, active farmland with prime agricultural soil, connection to an existing greenway and a special place in Hebron history. Identified decades ago as a significant property by Hebron's Open Space Committee, it is a credit to the Committee and the voters that the property will be preserved.

Unfortunately, several of the public comments at the meeting displayed a common misunderstanding of the value of preserving open space. Thank you to Ann Zitkus for her well-written letter to the editor last week. Mrs. Zitkus concisely described the wide variety of benefits of open space, including health and economic benefits. Notably are the three "ecosystem services" of open space's ability to remove carbon dioxide, other air pollutants, and mitigate storm water, which are worth millions of dollars a year in Hebron alone, see itreetools.org. The preservation of property also includes the tremendous potential for economic growth as a part of the thriving Outdoor Recreation and Ecotourism sectors. The U.S. Department of Commerce reports the outdoor recreation industry contributes \$1.1 trillion to the U.S. economy every year, including \$4.6 billion in Connecticut alone. Recognizing the multifaceted value of the outdoor economy, on January 10, 2024, Connecticut created the new Office of Outdoor Industry and Experiences.

I urge Hebron residents to investigate more of the benefits of open space and visit [www.nrpa.org/blog/new-study-shows-benefits-exceed-park-costs](http://www.nrpa.org/blog/new-study-shows-benefits-exceed-park-costs). The authors clearly state, "Recently, the Community Preventive Service Task Force (CPSTF) announced a new finding that economic benefits exceed the cost for park, trail and greenway infrastructure. NRPA's The Economic Impact of Parks Report: Local park and recreation agency operations and capital spending were responsible for \$218 billion in economic activity and supported nearly 1.3 million jobs in 2019." The economic value extends to quality of life, which leads to a stable tax base. A 2023 study by the NRPA revealed that 84% of U.S. adults seek high-quality parks and recreation when choosing a place to live.

I am grateful for the efforts of the Simiola family, Hebron's Open Space Committee and the voters of Hebron for supporting a sustainable and economically vibrant future.

**Sincerely,  
Kevin J. Tulumieri  
Amston**



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# BOE Continues Work on Potential School Construction Plan

By Anne Lilburn

Portland's Board of Education met on Feb. 5 for a special meeting dedicated entirely to the school construction and renovation plan.

Superintendent of Schools Charles Britton presented the school district's Education Specification Plan, a document required by the state that serves as a "description of the general nature and purpose of the proposed school building project," according to the state's website.

Board of Education chairperson Laurel Steinhauser said that the plan had been developed after seeking out extensive input from community members and educators.

"This time around, after the failed referendum, as you all know," she said, "we wanted to make sure that we had stakeholder input in this work, so we put together an ad hoc committee, a task force, to provide some input as Charles [Britton] was getting ready to work on developing this document."

Britton said the plan came together a little differently than it might have under other circumstances.

"We did this a little bit in reverse," he said. "Technically, we should've had the ed spec plans and given the ed specs plans to the architects, and the architects use the ed specs plans to develop the budget [for the project.] We did it a little bit in reverse this time."

Britton outlined the basics of a plan that would consolidate and renovate the current schools. The plan involves: decommissioning Brownstone School, with its eventual purpose to be determined; renovating Valley View School

into an elementary school that would serve pre-K to grade two; renovating Gildersleeve into an elementary school serving grades three to five; relocating sixth graders to the middle school; and finally, replacing the roof and HVAC system on the high school.

"It's been close to 35 years now that the buildings haven't had significant capital work done," Britton said, adding that the fact that the schools are still operating is a testament to the people maintaining them, but "they've now reached a point where we've got to do some significant work on them because they've deteriorated."

Britton said that, as part of the process of developing the new plans, he and others on the committee went to the community to try to determine why the last referendum, which had proposed a larger pre-K through grade five school, failed. He laid out several community concerns, including concerns about school size and how that would affect the school's small town feel, traffic concerns, concerns around what to do with decommissioned schools, concerns that closing a school would result in the loss of a community gym space, concerns about the needed HVAC maintenance at the high school, and also, the overall lack of effective communication about what he described as a complicated plan.

"I'm hoping that by identifying the reasons that people told us that they didn't like the pre-K to five school [plan proposed at the earlier referendum]," said Britton, "it gives us a really important opportunity to say, 'We heard you,

and here's how this plan addresses those.'"

Steinhauser agreed that identifying the reasons that that community did not respond well to the previous plan was "important work."

Britton said that in addition to figuring out what the community disliked about the previous plan, the committee had sought to determine what the community did want out of their schools. He said that they held focus groups, and met with current educators, as well as with the Democratic and Republican Town Committees, to get input.

Key concerns and wants, he said, were "high-quality academic space," school security improvements, improved indoor air quality and HVAC systems, cost efficiency, energy efficient buildings, and "schools that can be used by the broader community" outside of the academic day.

Steinhauser said that the reason the board was laying out a proposed plan that would involve a full renovation of Gildersleeve (as opposed to just an "alterations only plan") is that "the community would invest 23 million dollars plus in alterations and only be able to achieve so much. And in five to ten years, we would need to come back and ask for more money to support more work."

For the Valley View renovation, Britton said he estimates that they will receive a roughly 74% state reimbursement on the project, due to its inclusion of a pre-K classroom and the 5% bonus for participating in the state's Open Choice schools program. Optimistically, Britton said,

with an additional 15% reimbursement for the dedicated special education space, the total reimbursement could go up to the "89% range."

For Gildersleeve, he estimated a roughly 54% reimbursement for the entire building from the state, but added that that may be higher when they add in the additional 15% that will be applied for the areas used for special education, bringing the total up to 69% reimbursement from the state for that portion of the project.

Steinhauser said that the town had a "unique opportunity."

"These are the reimbursements we are eligible for this year," said Steinhauser. "These reimbursements may very well not be around forever."

Britton said the hope was to have a town referendum in May, and then submit a plan to the state following that, if it passes. The town would have a response from the state by the end of the year, and could then get started working with architects on more detailed designs.

Britton said he hoped they could communicate to the community the choice before them.

"Do you want to spend \$23 million and get \$6 million [from the state] for a \$29 million project? Or do you want to spend \$23 million and get a \$52 million project with all of the reimbursements from the state?"

The Board of Education will meet for a combined meeting with the Board of Selectmen on Feb. 18 to further discuss the schools project at 5:30 p.m. in the Mary Flood Room of Portland Library.



Here Comes the Bride – Minnie Mouse!... Jane Muskatallo of Portland took the Rivereast to the bridal show at Embassy Suites in Isla Verde, Puerto Rico.

## Where in the World is the Rivereast?

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



Christmas in Tanzania... Portland residents Shaun Murphy and Ava Washington enjoyed Christmas 2025 in Tanzania – hanging at the national park at Mount Kilimanjoro.

# Where in the World?

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# Selectmen Get Landfill Solar Project Update

By Anne Lilburn

Portland's Board of Selectmen met on Feb. 4 for a regularly scheduled meeting. The board received an update on a potential solar project at the town landfill, and discussed the continuation of the town's well and water supply development work.

Clean Energy Task Force Chairman Andy Bauer provided an update on the landfill solar project, which has been something the town has been proceeding with since 2023, when it was first awarded a state incentive to develop the project. Bauer was joined by two consultants who had worked with the town on the project, Rob Klee of Klee Sustainability Advisors and Allen Sabins of Commercial Solar Works.

Bauer explained that the town first began looking into adding solar at the landfill in 2020 or 2021, and made a successful application to the state in 2023, but since then the project has been unable to make it all the way to the finish line. The two consultants gave an overview of the current challenges that the project was facing, and the urgency in addressing them, since the state award will expire at the end of 2026 if the panels are not up and running by then.

A couple of years ago, Klee said, it became clear that the project as planned could not proceed as originally planned without significant upgrades from Eversource to the existing power grid. There has been back-and-forth discussion

between solar vendor Greenskies Clean Energy, which will install the panels, and Eversource about when those upgrades might be made.

"Eversource said they'll make the upgrades in 2024, and then they said they'll make them in 2025, and then we have now most recently learned that those upgrades may be pushed to 2027," said Klee, adding that "we now see the pattern with Eversource."

Klee and Sabins said that one way to keep the project alive would involve reducing the size of the solar array so that it generates about one third less electricity. That would mean that it could proceed without the significant upgrades from Eversource.

The original project, which would have generated 990kW of power, "was [estimated at] a \$100K benefit to Portland's accounts," said Sabins. He noted that the one third reduction in power generation would result in that much less savings, but also said there might be a way to still get the full benefit: If the town, Greenskies and Eversource could come to an agreement, the town could still potentially reap the full energy savings benefit by coming to a deal with Greenskies wherein the company would allocate credits from some of its other projects, located at other nearby sites, towards Portland.

The board voted unanimously to allow the town to proceed with discussions with Green-

skies to figure out if a smaller project might be possible.

The board later briefly discussed the Board of Education's school construction plans and noted that there would be a special joint Board of Selectmen and Board of Education meeting on Feb. 18 focused on the topic.

Selectman John Dillon, a Democrat, emphasized his support for the project.

"We are in a very unusual time," he said, adding that new state legislation was providing incentives that could go "as high as 80% reimbursement" for construction costs.

On the town development front, First Selectman Mike Pelton gave an update on the Nordic Spa, saying the spa had already started interviewing people for jobs and was on track for a soft opening in November. Pelton also said that the Riverfront Access Project was still running on schedule. Town Planner Dan Bourret offered updates on Brainerd Place, assuring board members that businesses and tenants were beginning to move in.

The board also discussed the town's water independence plans, including the ongoing town well exploration and the contract with water company MDC.

Dillon expressed his concerns about the timeline for the water project, saying he wanted a "very detailed timeline with milestones." He worried that there was a tight end date to complete the well before the end of the newly negotiated MDC contract and said he wanted to make sure the town saw any red flags before they became a problem.

"We just heard, in a presentation on our solar project, how it just keeps getting pushed down the road," he said. "We don't have that luxury with this situation. Based on the negotiation with MDC, we have a drop-dead date, we have to be done." He added that he thought they needed to "start at that drop-dead date and work backwards" to develop a detailed timeline.

Selectman Vinnie Pitruzzello, a Republican, agreed, adding that he wants communication from whomever at the town "owns" the project and echoing Dillon that he wanted clear benchmarks and a timeline.

"I'm just afraid it's gonna be, next session, it's gonna be the same thing, same thing, same thing," he said. "I'm not gonna let it go."

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be a joint meeting with the Board of Education on Feb. 18.

## Historic House Plaque Program

The Portland Historical Society is offering a new Historic House Plaque Program for homeowners and businesses (that own historic houses) located in Portland. The purpose of this program is to honor the history of the town and to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the United States. The Society is working to spread the belief that historic houses deserve to be recognized.

In the 1980s, the society originally offered the Historic House Plaque Program for houses that were included in the book *The History and Architecture of Portland*, published by the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust. Many historic houses in Portland have displayed these plaques for many years, but quite a few are now weathered or may even be missing. Should you have any questions about your house, please contact us. The History and Architecture of Portland book is available in the reference area of the Portland Library.

The society is rolling this project out in phases. During this first phase, a new plaque will be provided for a cost of \$100 each for houses on the original historic houses list. The new house plaques will be like the original ones, measuring 10" x 20" x 0.75" but will be made from PVC

and will include the house's year of construction, the name of the original owner, drilled holes, and stainless-steel screws for installation on the front of your house. The society will also provide a copy of the description and photo of your house. The plaque is a recognition of the history of your house and carries no legal protections or restrictions on the property.

Depending on the response to this first phase, a second phase will be announced adding houses and businesses located in historic buildings not included in *The History and Architecture of Portland*.

To order your plaque, please submit a completed application, along with the \$100 fee, and a member of the society will contact you to discuss the details specific to your house. The application is available on the society's website, [www.portlandhistsoc.org](http://www.portlandhistsoc.org).

Submit your application to: [Portland-plaqueprogram@gmail.com](mailto:Portland-plaqueprogram@gmail.com) or mail it to: Portland Historical Society, attn Plaque Program, P.O. Box 98, Portland CT 06480. More details can be found on the society's website.

Please allow 6-8 weeks for the processing of each application.

## 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.

**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 ap-

pointment required.

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

**Book Clubs: 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.

**No March Movie:** Due to scheduling conflicts there will be no Wednesday afternoon movie in March, but stay tuned for more information about upcoming special screenings of *Hamilton* (2020; rated PG-13), which will be shown in honor of America's 250th birthday. Run time is 160 minutes.

## 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 stu-

dent's ability to articulate 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.

## 'Chill for Change' Returns Feb. 28

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

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

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

All jumpers must preregister, and must be

age 14 or older. Awards will be given for Best Costume, Best Team Theme, Biggest Pig Sty (most funds raised by a team), and Biggest Piggy Bank (most funds raised by an individual). Also, the top individual fundraiser will receive a free session of camp - which can be redeemed by your own family or gifted to someone else.

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

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

## February 'Love' Book Sale

The Friends of Portland Library group is sponsoring a used book sale in the Second-Hand Prose Bookshop at the Portland Library during regular library hours.

There is a large selection of books for those who love art, cooking, or gardening and several new choices for puzzle lovers. There are also fiction, romance, teen, and children's used books as well as DVDs. Books are 50 cents for paperbacks and children's books, \$1 for trade paperbacks and \$2 for hardcover. DVDs are 50 cents each disc and puzzles are \$5 unless marked otherwise.

FPL also has "I Love CT Libraries" reusable bags on sale for \$1 each.

All proceeds benefit programs funded by

the Friends, such as the Library's Museum Pass Program, children and adult programs, and the library's DVD collection.

Visit [www.friendsofportlandlibraryct.org](http://www.friendsofportlandlibraryct.org) for more information or email questions to [friendsoftheportlandlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoftheportlandlibrary@gmail.com).

## 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. 15, Cooke will preach on the topic "Salt and Light."

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

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

## 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.

## Exchange Club Bingo Night

The Portland Exchange Club will hold its next Bingo Night Thursday, Feb. 19, at Concentric Brewing, located at 91 Main St. Card sales start at 6 p.m., and games start at 7.

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

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

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**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 scheduling your appointment. All appointments are on Wednesdays from 9 a.m.-noon.

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

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

**Holiday Closing**  
The Portland town offices will be closed Monday, Feb. 16, in observation of Presidents Day.

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**Mahjong Practice Group**

A meet-up for learning and practicing Mahjong meets weekly on Tuesdays from 7-8:30 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church, 345 Main St, Portland.  
All player levels, including novice, are welcome. The game is played by NMJL rules.  
For more information, contact Ginger LaBella at gingerlabella@gmail.com or 860-759-0935. Novices requiring instruction should notify LaBella before attending so she can plan accordingly.

**Kindergarten Registration**

Valley View School has announced kindergarten registration for the 2026-27 school year. Parents/guardians whose children will be five years of age on or before Sept. 1, 2026, should contact Valley View School at kregistration@portlandct.us 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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**'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](http://portlandlibraryct.org/voices-of-portland).



**"...nowhere else to go!"**

**Abraham Lincoln met crises on his knees! During the Civil War he once said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had no where else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for the day."**

**WHAT DO YOU DO?** Complain, clam up, or commence your OWN solution? God says, it is "NOT by works of righteousness which we have done" (Titus 3:5) and "there is NO king saved by the multitude of a host: a mighty man is NOT delivered by much strength" (Psalm33:16).

If we try painting the well it does not change the water. Every time we work the pump we bring up more of the same water. As we draw upon our own human resources, they are never more than our own human resources. Our working cannot rise above its own level. "But to him that WORKETH NOT, but BELIEVETH on Him that justifieth (act of declaring a person righteous) the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:5). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). "Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: He is their help and their shield...He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great" (Psalm 115:11,13).

**WHERE DO YOU GO?** Family, friends or follow your OWN course? God says, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end there of are the ways of death" (Proverbs 16:25). "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6). "But WITHOUT FAITH it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that HE IS, and that HE is a rewarder of them that DILIGENTLY SEEK Him" (Hebrews 11:6). "And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).

"I, even I, am the Lord and beside ME there is NO SAVIOUR.... I am the first, and I am the last; and beside ME there is NO GOD" (Isaiah 43:11; 44:6). "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:22).

**WHAT DO YOU FIND?** Your OWN insufficiency or GOD'S SAVING SUFFICIENCY?

I cannot, but GOD CAN!  
I know not, but GOD KNOWS!  
I have not, but GOD HAS!

I will (or, I will not) bend my knees and look to the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved, secured and satisfied. "For whosoever shall CALL upon the NAME of the LORD shall be SAVED" (Romans 10:13).

**He invites you to come and to rely upon HIS WORD and HIS ABILITY to SAVE and to KEEP you.**

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Portland • Portland

# Local Goalie Honored, Headed South

By Josh Howard

Andrew Sobieski, of Portland, was selected as a high school All-American by United Soccer Coaches last month.

He was one of eight boys soccer players in the state to earn the distinguished honor.

Sobieski, a senior at Xavier High School, was a standout goalie for the Falcons soccer team in Middletown this past fall. He allowed only five goals in the regular season (16 games) and posted 13 total shutouts, including one in the state tournament.

"It's a huge honor," Sobieski said of the All-American label. "It's not something I take as a personal award – it's more of a team award and it's definitely not something I could have accomplished without my backline in front of me and the rest of the team as well."

Along with being dubbed an All-American, Sobieski was also selected as All-New England, All-State by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association (CHSCA), Southern Connecticut Conference (SCC) first-team, and was named as the SCC Player of the Year.

Most impressively, he racked up this resume in his first and only season playing on the high school soccer fields.

Prior to his senior year at Xavier, Sobieski played club soccer at Oakwood — based in Portland and Glastonbury — during his first three high school years.

Sobieski said he made the decision to play his final year at Xavier because he wanted one last chance to play with the players that he cut his teeth with during youth.

"These were the guys I grew up playing with at Sporting CT in Middletown," he reflected. "I've known them since I was 8 or 9 years old, and they are close friends. I knew they'd have my back and I'd have theirs."

Xavier head coach Brian Fitzgerald said the

addition of Sobieski this past fall was a pleasant surprise, from both a production and leadership standpoint.

"The guys were thrilled to have him [and] he became a leader on and off the field that the kids looked up to," added Fitzgerald. "They knew his pedigree and they knew what he would bring to the table."

Sobieski delivered with 56 total saves in 2025, heading a young defensive unit that decreased their goals allowed by 65% from the previous season.

"He made some saves in games that were spectacular, but we expected him to do it because he did it so regularly in practice and in training," recalled Fitzgerald. "He takes it personally if a goal goes in. He's a competitor, he hates to lose, and he puts in that extra work."

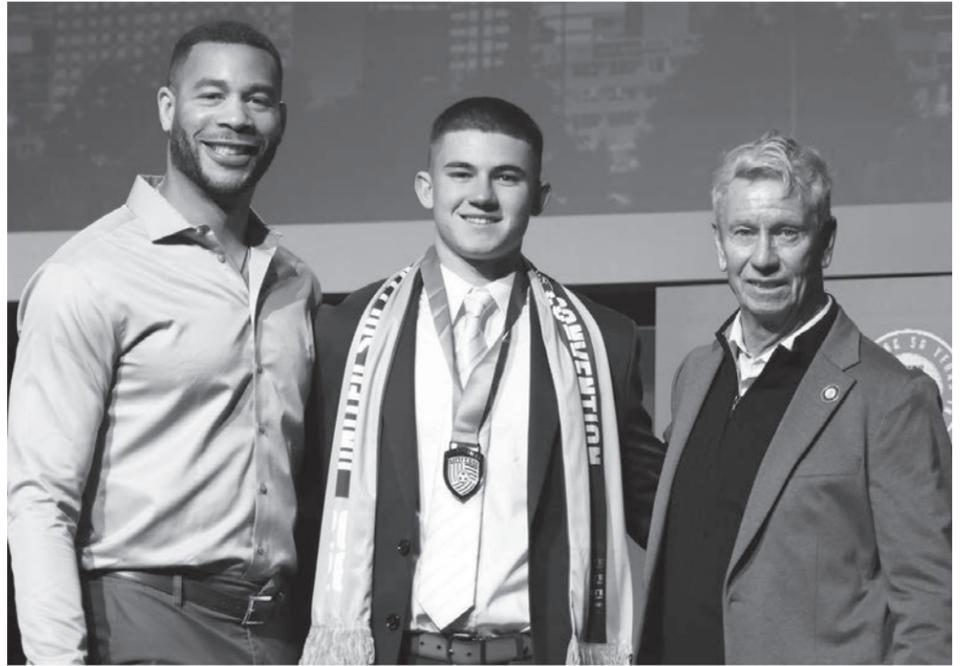
Sobieski became the second Xavier soccer player in program history to be named All-American, joining Diego Canellas (2024).

Following his high school graduation in May, the decorated keeper will embrace his next challenge at the collegiate level where he has committed to play Division I soccer for the Dolphins at Jacksonville University.

After exploring his opportunities at several colleges — which included Duke, Cornell, UMass, and Quinnipiac — Sobieski noted that the program in the Sunshine State was the right fit for his personality.

"I wanted to find a spot where I could develop and where I would be able to thrive in a team environment," explained Sobieski, who added he had an instant rapport with JU's goalkeeper coach Michael Garrihy. "I could tell while watching training down there that it was a very well-connected group that they had very good chemistry."

Sobieski's college soccer dreams started when he first stepped onto the local field in Portland



Portland's Andrew Sobieski (middle) was one of eight boys soccer players in the state to be selected All-American by United Soccer Coaches. Sobieski is flanked by Gochi Onyewu to his right and Paul Payne, the President of the United Soccer Coaches, to his left.

and over the years, his passion continued to grow.

He said the lessons he has learned through youth, club, and at Xavier have helped prepare him for his next stop, noting, "I was able to grow as a person and as a player at each spot."

Protecting the net has also been a part of Sobieski's journey since day one. In youth he split time between being a netminder and field player before settling into his permanent position in goal at Oakwood.

Once at Oakwood he became part of Goal Keeper Union (GKU), a group of goalies at the local club that trained together in an effort to

maximize their talents.

"It's a unique position and we all supported each other," he explained. "It takes a lot of discipline to be a goalkeeper and that discipline is something that I base my whole life around – whether that is school, soccer, weight-lifting, or my personal relationships."

Off the field, Sobieski has been just as impressive, maintaining a 4.0 GPA. He was also a member of Science Honors Society, Social Studies Honors Society, English Honors Society, and Spanish Honors Society, along with logging over 65 service hours during his tenure at Xavier High School.

## 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 year-round and donated to the Ronald Mc-

Donald "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.

## 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.

**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.

## Dean's List

Alexander Dawson of Portland made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Western New England University in Springfield, Mass.

## Dean's List

Portland resident Colin Wallace made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Fairfield University.

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East Hampton • East Hampton

# Town Council Hears About Snow Removal Challenges

By Anne Lilburn

The Town Council met Tuesday and discussed the finalized version of its contract with the police union, received subcommittee updates, and heard from the town manager and public works director about snow removal costs and challenges.

Both Republican council members, Ted Hintz and Tim Feegel, were absent for the relatively short meeting.

With East Hampton experiencing a harder winter than in recent years, Town Manager David Cox updated the council on the town's snow removal situation. Cox said that the public works department's overtime budget is currently \$65,000, but that currently, the town had already spent over \$123,000 on overtime. He said that was due to the department responding to 26 adverse weather events since November, including the large snowfall from a few weeks ago.

"That event alone, that main response, cost about \$25,000 in overtime," he said. "That's about \$800 an hour to respond to that particular event."

Cox noted that snowstorms sometimes happen on Sundays, holidays and after usual hours, and said that crews had worked 36 hours straight in that storm to clear roads.

Both Cox and Public Works Director Matt Walsh also discussed the challenges posed by the regional road salt shortage. The town has had a salt order in since before Martin Luther King Day, said Walsh, but has only been receiving it in small amounts, which means Public Works has had to mix it with sand and use it sparingly.

"So what happens when you have a snowstorm and you can't go out and pre-treat the road with salt, is that the snow and ice actually sticks to the pavement," said Walsh, adding that, when that happens, "you can plow it and plow it and plow it, but the plow actually rides up over

the snow and ice that's stuck to the pavement, so it gives this appearance like we haven't been there or like we're not doing our job out there, and it just makes for a not nice finished effect.

"I think we've all kind of gotten used to the black roads," he added, "[where] you know, eight hours after the storm, everything looks great and it looks like the highway, and you know, unfortunately, without the salt, it doesn't look like that, so it's kind of back to the way it was in the '80s and '90s before we went to straight salt."

Cox asked the community for patience, saying he knew that some residents had felt that snow removal hadn't been done quickly enough.

"These are human beings," he said, "and they work, for that one event, 36 hours straight, and then get an evening off, and then they're back at it the next morning moving snow."

Council member Dean Markham, a Democrat, said he knew some members of the public were unhappy, but that "[Public Works employees] have my vote of confidence."

"Anybody who has dealt with ice and that quantity of snow should know better," he said, "and it's not like our employees are purposely leaving snow on that road bed. They're dedicated, they're working hard, and I hear them as they go by my house at two or three in the morning."

\*\*\*

On the police union contract, Cox updated the council on changes and updates to the current labor agreement. Cox had briefed the council on the same topic at the prior meeting, where they had asked for time to review the document. At the most recent meeting, he outlined some of the major changes, which he said were made with the goal of "mak[ing] East Hampton an attractive place to work so we can compete for the very few people who are interested in being police officers and that we can continue to fill our

open positions."

The new contract, he said, made officers eligible for retirement after 20 years, added an annual cost of living adjustment beginning at 62 years old, and added a provision that allows new hires who come to the department with service either as police officer or veteran to purchase up to five years of "experience" to either boost their starting pay or shorten the time needed before retirement. The council voted unanimously to approve the contract.

Following the police contract, council members provided updates on their subcommittee assignments. Council member Jack Solomon, a Democrat, gave the update from East Hampton's America 250 committee, which plans how the town will celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary. Solomon said that the town was hoping to participate in a July 4 parade that would take place in Middletown, where communities from throughout the county and region would be participating. He said that the committee was looking for volunteers, and emphasized that they wanted townspeople, not just the town government, to represent East Hampton.

"We don't want it to be the council or the town government itself," he said. "We want its people participating, and so we'd like volunteers." He said that anyone interested should contact either himself or Kevin Reich.

Council member Karen Wanat, a Democrat, provided an update on the town's redesign of its Plan of Conservation and Development. She reminded residents about the community survey, which was available online, and encouraged them to fill it out. She also reminded them about two upcoming community input sessions

taking place next week on Feb. 18 and 19. The first, on the 18th, will focus on the village center revitalization plan, while the other will focus on infrastructure, including sewers and water. Both will take place at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall.

Richard Knotek, a Democrat, provided an update from the firehouse site committee and said that the committee was making excellent progress. He said that they had posted a request for proposal to several consulting firms and hosted seven firms for a walk through of the firehouse sites. He said they would be reviewing proposals from the firms on Friday. He added that he was "very proud" of the committee for its fast, productive work, calling them "very dedicated people."

The council also heard an overall update from Cox. He said the town was once again applying for a federal grant that would cover costs associated with its youth drug and alcohol prevention program. The town had received this grant for the past five years, and was applying for a second phase.

Cox said that the town had actually started this reapplication process a while back, but that "the CDC and the federal government sort of took about three quarters of a fiscal year off [and] decided not to award those grants a year or so ago." He noted, though, that now the CDC and government are getting back to awarding the grants. He said that the application would go in this week, and said he was hopeful that the town would see continued funding.

\*\*\*

The council's next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 24.

## 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.

## Middle Haddam Public Library News

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

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

**Featured Artist for 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 [pjhoffman1@juno.com](mailto:pjhoffman1@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](mailto:tensummitst@gmail.com).

## 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](mailto:tensummitst@gmail.com) to register. The talk is free but donations to the library are welcome.

## Library Friends Offer Scholarship

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

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

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

Submit your completed application form by April 10.



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Police recently seized several products from a local smoke shop. According to police, the products – which included vapes, edibles and extracts – contained THC at levels that exceeded legal limits.

## Police Seize Cannabis Products at Smoke Shop

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton Police recently participated in an operation at a local smoke and vape shop, Hampton Tobacco and Vape, located at 42 E. High St., which yielded a seizure of several THC-containing products that exceeded legal limits, including vapes, marijuana edibles, cannabis flowers and extracts.

The seizure occurred as part of a compliance check conducted alongside the state Department of Consumer Protection and Connecticut Mental Health and Addiction Services, according to police. The police department said they had contacted them after receiving a tip from a local citizen reporting the suspected sale of THC-containing products to an underage individual. While recreational marijuana has been legal in the state since 2021, according to state law, products

containing more than 5 milligrams of THC may only be sold by licensed cannabis establishments to customers over 21 years of age.

East Hampton Police Chief Dennis Woessler said that, as part of the operation, an underage person attempted to buy some of these products and was refused service, but that the Department of Consumer Protection, which regulates tobacco and vape shops, then conducted a “compliance check,” where it was able to check inventory and other records. Upon doing so, they discovered the products that were above the legal limit authorized for sale in such an establishment.

Woessler said that, because the store did not sell to a minor, they did not make any arrests, but that the Department of Consumer Protection had the ability to take enforcement actions based on the products found.

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REZ-13-26

## 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. Chowder 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.

## East Hampton Library News & Notes

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

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

**Adult Programs: 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.

**Leaf & Lit: A Silent Book Club:** Tuesday, Feb. 24, 6 p.m. Bring your current read to the library, sip tea, and enjoy the quiet company of other readers.

**Teen Programs: 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: 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.

**STEMastic: Celebrate Black History Month for Grades 1-5:** Monday, Feb. 23, 4-5:30 p.m. In this drop-in program, learn about Black scientists of the past and present, then complete some mini experiments inspired by different scientific fields. Siblings and caregivers welcome.

## President’s List

Madison Hall of East Hampton made the fall 2025 President’s List at Plymouth State University in Plymouth, N.H.

Hall is majoring in elementary education and youth development.

## Dean’s List

East Hampton residents Leah Kohler and Phineas Scott made the fall 2025 Dean’s List at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Va.

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- 2) **Inspect your tires** – measure your tire’s tread and be sure none of your tires are balding. Proper traction is important for the rainy spring weather ahead.
- 3) **Check your windshield wipers!** Between ice, snow and salt, your windshield wipers are really put to work during the winter months. It is recommended to change your windshield wipers each season, especially as the rainy spring season approaches. Well-functioning windshield wipers will improve visibility and reduce the risk of an accident.
- 4) **Check your battery.** The average car battery lasts 4 to 5 years. Your vehicle’s battery works extra hard during extremely hot and cold weather, and these conditions can drain your battery.
- 5) **Top off your fluids** including windshield wiper fluid, engine oil and brake fluid.
- 6) **Wash your vehicle...** because a shiny, clean car isn’t just for looks. Your vehicle’s paint and undercarriage need to be thoroughly cleaned because salt and other winter chemicals can accumulate and cause rusting and/or grime build up.

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REZ-16-24

### 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.

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

### 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, tap dance, 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.

**Community Care Connection Program:** Tuesdays from 2 to 6 p.m. with Ria Irons, a certified community health worker, who will provide services on help with medication, communicating with healthcare providers, understanding care instructions and connecting with local resources. Health insurance will be billed for this service when possible. Call for an ap-

pointment: 860-267-4426.

**A Talk on Heart Healthy Behaviors:** Tuesday, Feb. 17, 10 a.m. Explore behaviors that support a healthy heart, along with practical ways to improve and strengthen your overall heart health. Presented by Jennifer Disette from Hartford Health Care.

**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.

**Design & Create Beaded Fauxliage:** Thursday, Feb. 19, at 1:30 p.m. Instructor Cindy Houle will lead an afternoon of creating faux plants with a variety of beads. Bring your own teacup or planting vessel.

**The Script Society:** Thursday, Feb. 19, 2 p.m. Actor, singer and director Val Bozzi will lead this opportunity to read a variety of scripts together.

**Family Tree Workshop:** Friday, Feb. 20, 10:30 a.m. Join Ken Doney for a hands-on session on researching your family tree. Bring your cell phone, iPad or laptop to the class.

**Drum Circle:** Friday, Feb. 20, 12:45 p.m., with Mark Zarillo. Get ready to feel the rhythm through this interactive drumming program. No experience needed. Cost is \$5.

**Art with Karen:** Sunday, Feb. 22, 2 p.m. Come create a simple piece of artwork with fellow creators. Cost is \$5 for supplies.

**Trips: 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.

### 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 com-

mitment 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).

### Epoch Arts Dinnershow Returns March 7

Epoch Arts will hold its annual Dinnershow on Saturday, March 7, at 6 p.m., at Epoch, 27 Skinner St.

This is a fundraiser for Epoch Arts' original Mainstage Theater production, *The Last Living Place*, which will be performed at the end of April. At the Dinnershow, the cast of *The Last Living Place* will serve you a full course pasta dinner and then you will sit back and relax while they perform in a variety of skits, musical

numbers and the famous Wackadoodles! Skits will randomly be called out and the cast will scramble to put their costumes on and perform on the spot.

Admission to Dinnershow is \$15, or \$12 for seniors. To make a reservation or if you would like to sponsor a skit for \$25 or a Wackadoodle for \$10 email [elizabeth@epocharts.org](mailto:elizabeth@epocharts.org).

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

### Christ Episcopal Church News

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

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

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

**Bible Study:** Contact Bobette Reed Kahn at [bbobette@khan.com](mailto:bbobette@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.

**Cobalt Lodge Service:** The monthly services at Cobalt Lodge will be held immediately after church on Feb. 15.

**Pancake Breakfast:** Join in the pre-Lenten celebration with a Pancake Breakfast. Pancakes, sausage, syrup and toppings will be served at coffee hour after church on Feb. 15.

**Ash Wednesday:** Feb. 18. Ashes on the Go are available in the parking lot from noon to 12:50 p.m., and Holy Eucharist with the imposition of Ashes will be held in church at 1 p.m.

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

### RTC Meets Next Week

All are invited to join the East Hampton Republican Town Committee at The Dublin, 42 E. High St., at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 17.

Attendees can learn about volunteer opportunities in the community. For more information, email [ehctgop@gmail.com](mailto:ehctgop@gmail.com) or visit [www.easthamptonrtc.com](http://www.easthamptonrtc.com).

### 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 café will be open before games and during intermission, offering hot snacks.

### Dean's List

Ephraim J. Butson of East Hampton made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Clark University in Worcester, Mass.

### EHMS Spring Athletics

East Hampton Middle School students who are interested in trying-out for either the baseball or softball teams can register online through [Arbiter-sports-registration](http://Arbiter-sports-registration) ([arbiter-sports.com](http://arbiter-sports.com)).

Athletes must have a physical conducted within the last 13 months before trying out.

Deadline for online registrations is Sunday, March 15. For additional information, contact EHMS Athletic Director Michael Mercaldi at 860-463-6837.

### 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.

**Ash Wednesday Service:** Feb. 18, 6 p.m. 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).

### Dean's List

East Hampton residents Brennan Johnson and Benjamin Maynard made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Western New England University in Springfield, Mass.

### 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.

### Belltown Garden Club to Meet

On Monday, Feb. 23, the Belltown Garden Club will meet in the East Hampton Public Library community room at 6:30 p.m. to craft nesting balls.

The balls will be crafted using dried grass, small twigs, leaves, moss, pine needles, plant fluff (cattail, cottonwood), bark strips and feathers. Please bring any of these materials if you are able.

Newcomers are particularly encouraged to attend. If interested, call Donna at 860-267-2853 to register. The East Hampton Belltown Garden Club is a member of The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut and National Garden Clubs.

### Cordon Bleu Dinner Postponed

Due to extended cold temperatures, the Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam is postponing the chicken cordon bleu dinner planned for this Saturday, Feb. 14. It will now be held on a Saturday, May 30.

The church apologizes for the cancellation.

### 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.

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Treat yourself to a little down time following a dental procedure and rest up instead of plunging right back into a busy work schedule following your appointment. You can always count on us to provide you with ideas for home care, answers to your questions, and excellence in dental care from a caring staff committed to your comfort, well-being, and sunny smile. Call us for an appointment; emergencies are also welcome at our full-service, state-of-the-art dental office.

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### 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

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.

### Belltown Garden Club Scholarship

The Belltown Garden Club is again offering a scholarship, available to high school seniors who reside in East Hampton.

All students must be graduating/have graduated from a secondary school accredited by the State of Connecticut, and must use the scholarship for expenses at an accredited school. The school may be a 4- or 5-year college or university, a community college, a trade school or a commercial school.

This scholarship is awarded to an East Hampton High School senior, with preferences given to a student who intends to major in sciences or education related to the earth. Related fields of study will be considered. Financial need could be part of the decision.

Applications are due by May 1, and are available through the guidance department at EHHS.

### 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.

### Epoch Arts

#### 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 Arts, 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).

### 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.



### 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).

### Police News

1/30: Oliver Caron, 19, of East Hampton was issued a summons for reckless driving and evading responsibility, East Hampton Police said.

1/31: Michael Blancato, 43, of Moodus, was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle while under suspension, improper use of a marker plate, and failure to carry insurance, police said.

From Feb. 2-8, officers responded to 21 medical calls, eight motor vehicle crashes and three alarms, and made 20 traffic stops, police said.

### Dean's List

East Hampton residents Abigail Daley and Sierra LaRose made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Salve Regina University in Newport, R.I.

### Dean's List

The following local students made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Mass.:

William Bothamley, a member of the class of 2029, who is majoring in aerospace engineering; Amber Murphy, class of 2028, majoring in civil engineering; Jarod Ondas, class of 2029, majoring in mechanical engineering; and Zachary Selger, class of 2029, majoring in aerospace engineering.

### Dean's List

Cassie Dugan of East Hampton made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Plymouth State University in Plymouth, N.H.

Dugan is majoring in elementary education and youth development.

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7 DAYS A WEEK

### 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. Checks should be made payable to 'Freezin' for a Reason.'

### Colchester Cares Makes First Quarter Donations

Colchester Cares, a group that supports various causes in Colchester, recently made donations totaling \$4,800 in its first round of giving for 2026. The group voted to give \$1,600 each to Freezin' for a Reason to support the Colchester Fuel Bank, the Colchester Federated Church for needed repairs, and to a Bacon Academy Senior Scholarship for a deserving Bacon Academy senior. Colchester Cares members, who commit to

donating \$100 a quarter, present current needs in town and then vote on where to send the group's collective donations. The group was established in 2020 and since its inception has donated over \$70,000 to Colchester causes. Colchester Cares always welcomes new members who would like to give back to our community. For more information, please visit [www.colchestercares.org](http://www.colchestercares.org) or follow the group on Facebook.

### 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. **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.

### CCT Presents Sister Act This Weekend

Colchester Community Theatre (CCT) will present *Sister Act* through special arrangements with Music Theatre International, on Friday, Feb. 13, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 14, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, Feb. 15, at 2 p.m. All shows will be at the Bacon Academy auditorium, 611 Norwich Ave. Based on the hit Broadway musical, which was in turn adapted from the hit 1992 movie starring Whoopi Goldberg, the play features music by Tony- and eight-time Oscar-winner Alan Menken. Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$14 for seniors (ages 65+) and children (age 12 and under). Premium seating tickets are available for \$28 each. Tickets for this production are now on sale

through the "Buy Tickets" page on CCT's website at [www.colchestercommunitytheatre.com](http://www.colchestercommunitytheatre.com). New this year, audience members are able to select seats when placing an order. Tickets will also be available at the door (cash, check, or credit card) on performance days, subject to availability. Advance ticket purchase is recommended. All ticket sales are final - no refunds or exchanges. CCT is selling advertisement space in our digital program as well as sponsorship levels to offset the cost of our costumes, sets and props construction. For additional information, contact producer Donna Brown at 860-639-9315. In case of inclement weather, visit [www.facebook.com/ColchesterCommunityTheatre](http://www.facebook.com/ColchesterCommunityTheatre).

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# Athletic Complex, Police Ordinance Advanced at Meeting

By Toriana Williams

On Feb. 10, residents of Colchester gathered at Town Hall for two special town meetings to address two major issues: whether to move forward with a large athletic complex and school roof project to a public referendum, and whether to adopt a new ordinance regulating police involvement in road construction projects.

## Athletic Complex, School Roof Projects

For the first meeting, residents voted on two resolutions that would send funding proposals to a public referendum, scheduled for Feb. 24.

The first resolution proposed appropriating \$14,562,400 for capital improvements to the town's athletic facilities at Bacon Academy and the Recreation Complex. The improvements include new synthetic turf fields, lighting, scoreboards, track upgrades, tennis and basketball courts, pickleball courts and a renovated splash pad.

After brief procedural discussion, a motion was made and seconded to advance the proposal. The moderator chosen earlier, Andrew Norton, called for a voice vote. "All those in favor of the motion, say aye," he said. A majority of voters responded "aye." Two opposing votes were recorded, and the motion passed.

The second resolution involved appropriating \$5 million for the replacement of the roof at Bacon Academy, along with related improvements such as HVAC upgrade. That motion was also approved by a strong majority, with no opposing votes heard.

Although no public debate occurred during the meeting itself, First Selectman Bernie Dennler later explained that the project had gone through a long public review process.

"All along through this process, we have wanted to make sure people have a lot of information about what is being presented so that nothing feels rushed," Dennler said. "So the voters, no matter what their decision is, have the information to make it informed." Dennler shared that the planning process lasted more than two years and involved public surveys, meetings, school tours and presentations.

"This was a two-year process, starting with the recreation needs committee," he continued. "They did public feedback sessions, community

## 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](https://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.

## 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.

## Dean's List

Colchester resident Marguerite Brady made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Fairfield University.

## President's List

Dylan Opalenik of Colchester made the fall 2025 President's List at Plymouth State University in Plymouth, N.H.

Opalenik is majoring in business administration.

## Dean's List

The following local students made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Mass.:

Abigail Belding, class of 2028, majoring in biomedical engineering; Jonathan Curry, class of 2028, majoring in data science; Xavier Gudelski, class of 2028, majoring in civil engineering; Kevin Reas, class of 2029, majoring in computer science; and Charles Rose, class of 2029, majoring in mechanical engineering and robotics engineering.

surveys. They met with school students. They toured every recreation facility in town, and that's how they developed their proposal."

Dennler added that the project was presented multiple times to town boards and residents, including public hearings and senior center meetings.

"I thought it was striking tonight that people were ready to move forward," Dennler said after the meeting. "There were a lot of people in the room tonight," with numbers coming in at over 60. "I think that says it's a big issue."

## Road Work Safety Ordinance Discussion

Following the adjournment of the first meeting, residents reconvened to discuss a proposed Police Protection and Assessment of Road Work and Road Construction Projects Ordinance.

The ordinance would require contractors performing certain types of road work to notify the police department. In some cases, police officers or certified flaggers could be required to help manage traffic and improve safety.

Resident State Trooper Sgt. Zachary Cash explained why he brought the ordinance forward.

"As you guys have probably seen driving through town, there's been a lot of road work in this community," he said. "There's been a lot of great road work jobs, but there's also been a lot of unsafe ones."

Cash said police currently have limited authority to require safety measures when work does not technically violate state laws.

"The police department really has no teeth to try and make a road job more safe for the community," he said.

Cash described situations where large trucks blocked roads, creating dangerous conditions.

"We took a number of complaints on Taylor Road ... for basically these big trucks that are blocking the whole road," he shared. "If it's not violating any state statute, even if it might feel unsafe, there's really nothing that the department can do but besides trying to encourage

them to potentially hire a police officer."

The trooper emphasized that the goal was prevention, not punishment. "We want to prevent something wrong happening," he said. "I'm very passionate about trying to keep road work, not only safe for members in the community, but just even police officers in general."

## Questions, Public Concerns

Several residents spoke during discussion. One speaker, Hunter Graves, asked for data regarding accidents due to road work. "Can you name an accident that was directly related to road work projects on town roads?"

Cash admitted he was unable to provide such details at the time, but that there were plenty of "close calls." "There's certainly a number of complaints," Cash said.

In response, Graves said, "Just kind of sounds like you're looking for problems that aren't there."

Resident Kevin Gardiner shared his personal experience.

"When they were doing Halls Hill ... my wife was in an accident. My neighbor was in an accident. I reported it to the police," Gardiner said. "There were quite a few close calls and accidents on that project."

Gardiner also warned about traffic dangers near Route 2. "Somebody's going to get smashed up there," he said. "Cops are getting hit. I got guys in my union that have been hit and killed."

Another resident, whose name was unidentifiable, raised concerns about small businesses being unfairly burdened.

"I've got a small landscaping company. ... Is this ordinance going to affect small contractors?" he asked. The trooper responded that the

ordinance would focus on long-term or high-risk jobs. "We're not here to go after small businesses," Cash said. "If you're going to be there for an hour or two ... that's not intense."

Krista Kardys asked Cash how many nearby towns had similar ordinances, and he replied that "about 25" municipalities in the state have similar ones. During an additional comment, Kardys also emphasized the importance of being proactive rather than reactive.

"I think it's in the benefit of the community to be proactive instead of reactionary," Kardys said. "When you're talking about being reactionary, we're reacting and creating ordinances after something terrible has happened."

Cash agreed, saying, "I don't want to wait for a contractor to get hit, one of your family members to be in a head-on [collision] just to restart this whole conversation."

After extensive discussion, the moderator called for a vote with the majority responding "aye," and one opposing vote was recorded. The ordinance passed.

## What Happens Next

With the town meeting votes completed, the athletic complex and school roof projects will move to a public referendum on Feb. 24, where residents will cast ballots to approve or reject the funding.

Meanwhile, the newly approved ordinance gives the Colchester Police Department the authority to review and require safety measures for road construction projects, aiming to improve safety for drivers, pedestrians, workers and officers.

As Cash said, "We want to make sure your families, yourself, are safe commuting to and from this community."

## Dean's List

James Gumbs of Colchester made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Western New England University in Springfield, Mass.

## Pierogies for Sale

St. Mary Ukrainian Church in Colchester will once again sell pierogies Saturday, Feb. 21. To place your orders, call Brenda at 860-365-0281 no later than Monday, Feb. 16.



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### Christian Life Chapel News

Christian Life Chapel is located at 392 S. Main St. For more information, call 860-398-9119 or email chapel.colchester@yahoo.com. The Rev. Don Rivers is the church's bi-vocational pastor, who also serves as president for "Racing with Jesus Ministries," The Racer's Church since 1980.

**Worship Service:** Sundays at 10 a.m. A livestream is available on YouTube and Facebook.

**Children's Worship:** Sundays at 10:45 a.m. Kids will learn about Jesus in age-appropriate ways.

**Women's Bible Study:** Tuesdays, 10-11:30

a.m., studying the book of Revelation.

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

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

**Upcoming Outreach:** Vacation Bible School is coming in July. Operation Christmas Child will also come up later this year; boxes and packing guides will be available at the church. All are invited to participate in this outreach program.

### Senior Center News & Notes

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

**Monday, Feb. 16:** Center closed for Presidents Day.

**Tuesday, Feb. 17:** 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10:30 a.m., Book Club; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 4-8 p.m., Wellness Nights.

**Wednesday, Feb. 18:** 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; 11 a.m., Broadway in Love Luncheon; 1 p.m., Sew-cial Time; 1:30 and 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming.

**Thursday, Feb. 19:** 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, Celebrate Black History - Ruttin; 4-8 p.m., Wellness Nights.

**Friday, Feb. 20:** 9 a.m.-3 p.m., AARP Tax Aide by appointment; 9 a.m., Social Service Hours, Open Art Studio; 10 a.m., Sit & Be Fit; 10:30 a.m., Choral Group; 11 a.m., Yoga; noon, Tech Time with Harry; 1:15 p.m., Bingo.

**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.

### Lions Pancake Breakfast

The Colchester Lions Club's 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 Os-trout. The church office is open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., and can be reached at 860-537-5189 or cfc06415@gmail.com.

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

**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. Os-trout 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.

### Senior Center Upcoming Trips

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

colchesterct.gov.  
**Majestic Cities of Central & Eastern Europe:** Oct. 4-17. Explore Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest and Krakow. This 14-day, 13-night trip includes airfare, hotels, and meals (12 breakfasts, one lunch, and six dinners). Cost is \$6,499 per person for double occupancy, if booked before Feb. 26. This is a small group tour (only 24 people in total on the tour) so space is limited.

**Picky Place: Fairy Tale Lunch:** Thursday, May 7, 7 a.m. Visit the 1786 New Hampshire cottage for lunch followed by time to stroll the grounds and shop. The prix-fixe lunch menu changes monthly. After, you will visit the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, N.H., for a guided tour, then stop at Hebert Candy Mansion in Shrewsbury, Mass., to pick up some treats. Cost is \$167 per person, and includes transportation and lunch. Space is limited.

**Amish Country Two-Day Adventures:** June 23-24, departure time TBD. On day one you will travel to the Amish Country and experience an authentic Amish dinner prepared by an Amish family. Overnight accommodation will be at the Comfort Suites Amish Country. On day two, visit the Lil' Country Store & Miniature Horse Farm, then take our reserved seats at the Sight & Sound Theater for *Joshua*. Cost is \$509 per person (double or triple occupancy) and includes the motorcoach, one night hotel, one breakfast, one dinner, admissions, tour escort, driver and tour director gratuity.

### 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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### WJMS Honor Roll

William J. Johnston Middle School had announced its honor roll for the second quarter of the 2025-26 school year.

#### Grade Six

**High Honors:** Brynne Alford, Adrianna Anastasiou, Gabrielle Bagnati, Emma Barthel, Delaney Berta, Elisabeth Boutote, Harper Brenek, Calleigh Carroll, Camilla Carroll, McKenzie Clarkin, Maggie Cleary, Owen Cote, Kennedy Cove, Bevin Cowell, Cole Deacon, Henry Farrington, Patrick Feldhouse, Amelia Fluck, James Ford, Caroline Frasier, Hugo Gostkiewicz, Isabel Hawes, Maureen Hickey, Harper Johnson, Caysen Jones, Jameson Kelleher, Brendan King, Zoey Koji, Emily Krepcio, Brent Lachapelle, A'Mya Laureano, Danny Liu, Aubrey Margelot, Olivia McClain, Brody Michaud, Skyler Michaud, Julian Mula, Amelia Mundell, Mackenzie Nadeau, Daniel Page, Bella Panus, Connor Peck, Luke Reid, Liliana Rioux, Mason Ryan, Elva Seals, Logan Sevigny, Hayden Sposito, Stanley Szczur, Jacob Talarczyk, Luke Theriault, Kaydence Trudeau, Lucy Verruso, Charlotte Walls.

**Honors:** Roaa Ali, Giuliana Arrigoni, Emily Auresto, Nhyira Badu, Mia Barillari, Belen Barrios-Valenzuela, Olivia Bishop, Finley Blanda, Camila Bravo, Samantha Busby, Grant Caplet, Olivia Christoff, Samarie Collazo, Sofia Contreas, Mark Denesha, Lillian Donovan, Drew Dugan, Lilith Erdman, Aria Fecteau, Jojo Feinberg, Hunter Graham, Leyawin Grigas, Alessandra Gruss, Magdalena Jantzen, Marcus Jodoin, Sean Jones, Lucas LaBarre, Sarah Langdon, Karson Lastrina, Stella Launonen, Edward Lengel, Harrison Maher, Gabriella Mauro, Addison McElroy, Aria McLaughlin, Emily Melgey, Juliana Michaud, Charlotte O'Hara, William Pagel, Lilu Parks, Mason Patenaude, Kaitlyn Peck, Dalen Pedro, Jillian Post, Dmitri Potter, Anthony Previti, Leia Priore, Luca Rago, Samantha Roberts, Nelson Rooney, Ryan Rowe, Lilian Sargenti, Summer Slocum, Leonora Smith, Joseph Spinetti, Levi Stahl, Samuel Standish, Evelyn Suski, Nicolette Tichy, Joseph Whitley, Elsa Wolf, Reika Zaler.

#### Grade Seven

**High Honors:** Lukas Anastasiou, Kaydence Bedner, Delaney Beirn, Olive Boyd-Bingham, Sarah Candler, Jace Collins, Nora Creutz, Stella DeGaetano, Neil Drylie, Antonio-James Ferreira, Honorah Gillespie, Grady Greene, Addison Grosso, Aubrey Henry, Ava Lizondro-Pane, Zachary Martino, Isabel Mattison, Mairead McGloin, Jasmine Morin, Evan Pazul, Rylan Ramos, Rory Richardson, Kendall Scholl, Sophia Sherry, Tyler Siena, Otto Walter, Adam Wilinski, Grace Wissler.

**Honors:** Lyra Ackroyd, Camden Allard, Brynn Angell, Jenalise Aquino, Elizabeth Belding, Danika Bennett, Grace Bisi, Hannah

Buyniski, Liam Cassidy, Mason Catalina, Felicity Chambers, Camden Christoff, Elizabeth Coats, Bailey Cobb, Josephine Doelger, Jayson Eisenberg, Lochlan Fabry, Aiden Francis, Hayden Fraser, Adrianna Georgens, Eve Gould, Courtney Hahn, Joshua Hunt, Isabela Ireland, Adeline Jordan, Cameron Kaiser, Grayson Kerrigan, Juliet Koonankeil, Sloan LaParre, Violet LaRose, Adrien Lavertue, Haoxi Liu, Ethan Lukra Matos, Krista Magnus, Joseph Marotta, Elmina Mulaibisevic, Jacob O'Connor, Isaac Pensa, London Peterson, Kailynn Rancourt, Autumn Rettig, Logan Roberts, Landon Roman, Ethan Schoen-Rene, Bryson Simone, Kayden Summerlin, Abigail Van Zilen, Daniel Vasbinder, Sophie Wilson, Cody Zajac.

#### Grade Eight

**High Honors:** Fabiola Berard, Terry Boaz, Molly Buscetto, Nina Caplet, Olivia Carrington, Chloe Civardi, Adrianna Colonghi, Tristan Cote, Bailey Cowell, Breena Cowell, Cali Cruz, Carter Doutre, Lily Eppler, Caitlyn Griffin, Alexander Healy, Benjamin Healy, Hunter Kovach, Reagan Manganello, Lilah Martz, Grace McAlpine, Ryder Michaud, Camille Mickens, Harper Perry, Lyra Riley, Payton Shelden, Lunaya Urban, Muhammad Usman, Morgan Valentine, Emma Verruso, Jack Wissler.

**Honors:** Jayden Bennett, Brady Bigelow, Gabriella Bishop, Emilie Boutote, Paul Brodeur, Jacqueline Busby, Billy Colon, Sophia Dean, Lauren Dittmann, Lucas Dubreuil, Trevor Garvie, Dylan Gerkey, Noah Hall, Ruby Jeffries, Skylar Jones, Stella Kauffman, Lily Koji, Carlton Kristoff, Jackson Lenk, Ryan Lombardo, Mia Lopez, Jaxson Miller, Axel Monaco, Peyton Moynihan, Hannah Nitkowski, Makayla Oddis, Kylee O'Marra, Lauryn Pac, Molly Parsons, Cameron Pedroso, Josslyn Post, Braeden Richards, Amelia Roberts, Kyle Sands, Jenna Schoen-Rene, MacKenzie Schulze, Gavin Siena, Michaela Smith, Kaya Struzik, Ethan Summerlin, Logan Szweczyk, Gino Uccello, Makenzie VanCamp, Jake Ward, Kadence Weisensee.

### Scholarship Available for Bacon Seniors

Attention Bacon Academy seniors: a scholarship is available from Abundant Life Church.

The essay topic is: In 400 words or less, please explain how your Christian faith has helped you in building your character and what challenges you have experienced as a result of your Christian faith.

Deadline is March 6. Submit your essay with your name and date to the Bacon Academy school counseling office.

### Fish Fry Fridays

The Colchester Fish and Game Club will hold its annual Fish Fry dinners every Friday during Lent, starting Feb. 20 and running through and including Good Friday, April 3.

Meal choices include traditional fish and chips, baked fish with baked potato, the club's breaded clam strip dinner, as well as chicken

nuggets for the kids. All meals include coleslaw, coffee and dessert. Cost is \$17 for adults and \$10 for kids.

Meals will be served from 6-8 p.m. Take-out is available by calling the club at 860-537-2593 after 5:30 p.m. on Fridays.

### 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.westchestercongregation.org](http://www.westchestercongregation.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 [westchestercongregation.org](http://westchestercongregation.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.

### They Battled for Liberty

The Colchester Historical Society will welcome author and historian Irene Watson for a special illustrated presentation titled "They Battled for Liberty: Black Soldiers of Colchester Who Served in the Revolutionary War" on Thursday, Feb. 26, at 6:30 p.m., at Colchester Senior Center, 15 Louis Lane.

This will be an evening dedicated to honoring the African-American men of Colchester who bravely fought for freedom during the Revolutionary War.

All are invited to come and learn about these individuals and explore how their courage helped shape Colchester's history.

### 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).

### 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.

### 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.

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**Bruschetta Caprese \$12**  
Sourdough bread with roasted marinated red and green peppers with fresh mozzarella and topped with basil and balsamic glaze.

**Shrimp Cocktail \$16**  
4 jumbo shrimp served with Housemade cocktail sauce.

**Butternut Squash Ravioli \$14**  
4 butternut squash raviolis in a white wine sage sauce topped with fresh butternut squash chunks.

**Lobster Bisque Bread Bowl \$16**  
Housemade lobster bisque served in a housemade sourdough bread bowl.

### Entrees

**Prime Rib Dinner \$45**  
10 oz freshly roasted Prime Rib cooked to your liking with a side of Horseradish au jus. Served with chef's starch and vegetables. Your choice of blackened.

**Fornarelli's Stuffed Sole \$35**  
Sole stuffed with salmon, scallops, shrimp, haddock, and breadcrumbs, with an EVOO garlic butter sauce. Served with chef's starch and veggies.

**Fornarelli's Pasta Carbonara \$30**  
Fettuccine tossed in egg yolk, chicken broth, Parmesan Romano cheese, green peas, onions, and pancetta.

**Chilean Sea Bass \$35**  
Chilean Sea Bass in a lemon butter wine caper sauce. Served with chef's starch and veggies.

**Surf & Turf \$40**  
8 oz New York Strip and 5 oz lobster tail cooked to perfection and served with a side of chef's starch and veggies.

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# Rivereast Standout Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

**Madelyn Daniels – East Hampton High School (Cheerleading):** Daniels was named the Shoreline Conference (SLC) Cheerleader of the Year for the second straight season. Daniels, a senior, was also selected all-conference for the fourth time in four years as the Bellringers finished as the runner-up at the SLC finals for the second consecutive season. Joining Daniels on the All-SLC teams were Alivia Peterson (first-team), Mikah Levenduski (first-team), Alyssa Levenduski (second-team), and Braelyn Paddock (second-team).

**Boden Paul – Bacon Academy (Track & Field):** Paul earned a trio of top-three finishes at the Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) championships at the United States Coast Guard Academy on Feb. 7. Paul, a junior, was victorious in the 600 meters, finishing first with a personal best time of 1:25.23 and also placed third overall in the 300 meters with a personal-best time of 37.25. He then joined teammates Isiac Treat, Jackson Lavertue, Ethan Fleurose as the Bobcats 4x400 relay placed as the runner-up behind only the championship foursome from Ledyard. Paul will now compete at the Class S state championship, slated for Saturday, Feb. 14 at the Floyd Little Athletic Center in New Haven.

**Mya Peterson – Portland High School (Basketball):** Peterson scored 15 points as the Highlanders beat Cheney Tech 41-33 on Feb. 4. Peterson, a sophomore, added four rebounds

and a pair of steals to help the team earn their sixth win this season. It marked the fourth time that Peterson scored in double figures this winter, also posting a season-high 18 points against Hale Ray, 14 against Haddam-Killingworth, and 11 in a win over Old Saybrook. The Highlanders next travel to Coginchaug tonight (Friday, Feb. 13) at 7 p.m. before they close the regular season with a pair of home game, hosting Old Saybrook on Tuesday, Feb. 17 (7 p.m.) and Westbrook on Thursday, Feb. 19 (6:30 p.m.).

**Caden Bell – RHAM High School (Wrestling):** Bell made the championship match and placed second in his weight class at the Central Connecticut Conference (CCC) championship at Bristol Central High School last weekend. Bell, a sophomore, earned a bye in the first round before pinning William Heyward of Simsbury in the second round, ousting Raidon Yang of Enfield in the quarterfinals, and pinning Micah Yong of Bloomfield in the semifinals. Bell, the No 2-ranked wrestler at 120 lbs. in the tourney, fell to top-seeded Joshua Ramos of Middletown in the championship bout. Bell and the rest of the Raptors wrestlers now turn their attention to the Class M state championships, set to take place at Guilford High School on Feb. 20 and 21.

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

## URI Dean's List

The following area students made the fall 2025 Dean's List at the University of Rhode Island:

- Amston:** Ella Mayo, Paige O'Brien.
- Andover:** Rachel Arseneault, Cameron Rhodes, Emma Rhodes.
- Colchester:** Lily Barber, Gage Hinkley, Gracyn Kane, Matt McCune, Sam Miller.
- East Hampton:** Morgan Garcia, Madi Gay,

Kayli Levenduski, Marissa Martin, Addie Partridge, Raleigh Paulauskas, RJ Stanford.

**Hebron:** Rowan Akerlind, Madigan Haddock, Natalie Moulton, Feli Villanueva, Jacob Wazer.

**Marlborough:** Kaylee Brousseau, Ava Marchowski, Riley Sawyer, Skylar Swanson.

**Portland:** Rowan Bell, Giuliana Discenza, Sophie Favale, Brandon McPhee, Jenna Randazzo.

## ECSU Dean's List

The following area residents made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Eastern Connecticut State University.

**Amston:** Hannah Gialluca, a junior who majors in nursing; Emma Renaldi, a first-year who majors in communication, film and theatre; Joey Tyler, who majors in physical education.

**Andover:** Pawel Dabek, a senior who majors in health sciences; Jessica Day, a senior who majors in English and art; Shae Hoisington, a senior who majors in art; Gianella Miano, a senior who majors in psychology; Ashley Moore, who majors in accounting; Amanda Moore, a senior who majors in psychology; Chase Nelson, a senior who majors in political science; Duncan Page, a senior who majors in history; Boone Swanson, a sophomore who majors in criminology and sociology; Arianna Vernola, a senior who majors in art.

**Colchester:** Taryn Beisel, a senior who majors in English; Travis Chambers, a senior who majors in biology; Matthew DiBenedetto, a sophomore whose major is undecided; Luca DiStefano, a senior who majors in business administration; Jillian Filloramo, a junior who majors in finance; Sandra Geis, a senior who majors in social work; Jacqueline Gould, a first-year who majors in computer science; Ellie Guadalupe, a first-year who majors in communication, film and theatre, and business administration; Steven Laliberte, a junior who majors in mathematics; Alexa Lebiszczak, a junior who majors in accounting; Vivian Lubinsky, a senior who majors in English; Meaghan Malone, a senior who majors in health sciences; Kaitlyn Meltner, a first-year who majors in psychology; Catheryn Neudecker, a senior who majors in psychology; Josiah Nolsoe, a first-year who majors in finance; Tucker Noniewicz, a senior who majors in computer science; Katelyn Novak, who majors in health sciences; Marissa Nudd, a junior who majors in finance; Gabrielle Papale, a senior who majors in psychology; Tristan Pedroso, a first-year who majors in communication, film and theatre; Shannon Prochorena, a junior who majors in political science; Matthew Rapuano, a senior who majors in mathematics; Camille Running, a senior who majors in health sciences; Sydney Soja-Roach, a senior who majors in psychology; Christopher Stephenson, a senior who majors in data science; Kaitlyn Tracey, a junior who majors in elementary education and mathematics; Mia Voiland, a junior who majors in nursing; Aidan Zimmitti, a senior who majors in business administration and

accounting.

**East Hampton:** Alyssa Anderson, a first-year who majors in accounting; Ceana DeStasio, a senior who majors in art; Salem Didato, a junior who majors in political science; Caiden Hettrick-Rivera, a senior who majors in finance; Maya Korczak, a sophomore who majors in physical education; Logan Lefebvre, a senior who majors in accounting; Bailey Lombardi, a senior who majors in psychology; Kathleen Mansfield, a first-year who majors in psychology; Kylie O'Brien, a sophomore who majors in social work; Allison Pinzon, a senior who majors in social work; Jakub Remiszewski of East Hampton, a sophomore who majors in finance; Julia Stone, a junior who majors in psychology; Jennifer Tripp, a senior who majors in political science; Aidan Trombino, a first-year who majors in accounting; Madison Wall, a senior who majors in art.

**Haddam Neck:** Alejandro Campo de la Vera, a junior who majors in political science.

**Hebron:** Lillia Chaves, a sophomore who majors in secondary education and environmental earth science; Emma Keyser, a sophomore who majors in secondary education and history; Elizabeth Melzen, a first-year who majors in business administration; Ashlee Perkins, a sophomore who majors in health sciences; Lisa Richards, a senior who majors in business administration; Ingrid Taute, a senior who majors in finance; Adrian Thomas, a first-year who majors in music; Jeremy Velez, a senior who majors in Spanish.

**Marlborough:** Elyse Catania, a junior who majors in social work; Fenna Lacourciere, a senior who majors in art; Zachary Rodrigues, a sophomore who majors in physical education.

**Middle Haddam:** Megan Mayhan, a junior who majors in early childhood education and psychology.

**Portland:** Gabrielle Arnold, a first-year who majors in art; Zachary Doncet, a senior who majors in business administration; Ryan Kerr, a junior who majors in finance; Lindsey King, a senior who majors in business administration; Kayla LaMalfa, a senior who majors in health sciences; Isabelle McClelland, a senior who majors in biology; Sam Mucinkas, a first-year who majors in exploratory arts and humanities; Elizabeth Nedobity, a first-year who majors in health sciences; Caitlynn Robertson, a senior who majors in mathematics; Jake Thompson, a senior who majors in business administration.



Playing for a Cause.... Colchester Youth Basketball's 4th and 6th grade teams participated in the Coaches vs Cancer initiative, aimed to raise awareness and fundraising towards cancer research. On the top is the 4th grade players and coaches and on the bottom is the 6th grade players and coaches decked out in pink for the cause.

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### 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 questionnaire 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.

### Dean's List

Luke Veltri of Marlborough made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Salve Regina University in Newport, R.I.

### 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.

**Lenten Worship, Sacraments, Scripture Study & Stations of the Cross:** Lent begins Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18 – Masses with ashes are at 8:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. A service with ashes is at 3:30 p.m. Lenten Reconciliation: Mondays during Lent through March 23, 5-6 p.m. Scripture Study is Tuesdays during Lent through March 24, following morning Mass at 8:30 a.m. Stations of the Cross are held every Friday during Lent through March 27, beginning at 7 p.m.; a simple soup supper is served prior beginning at 6 p.m. in the church hall. All are welcome.

**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 pro-

grams 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:** Operation Rice Bowl is a Lenten program supporting the basic needs of neighbors. Rice bowls are distributed during Lent and collected with your monetary contribution the week after Easter. 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).

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### MORE WORDS

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE PAGE 32

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CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Neil Manausa

#### ACROSS

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- 10 Thomas opera
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- 21 Duo
- 23 Dash
- 25 Student
- 26 Sharpen
- 27 Stadium
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- 29 Of ocean movements
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- 31 Make a speech
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- 34 Recompense
- 37 Mirrors
- 38 Garden perennial
- 40 Door step
- 41 British submachine gun
- 43 Strauss opera
- 46 More delicate
- 47 Delibes opera
- 48 Proven point
- 49 Halo
- 50 Type style, for short
- 51 Nibble
- 52 Biblical preposition
- 53 High cards
- 54 Endure
- 57 Torrid

### 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, such as billiards, chair massage, the Cookbook Club, Parkinson's Disease Exercise Class, blood pressure screenings, and more.

**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.

**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**

### 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.



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**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.

**Trip: 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.

**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.

### Dean's List

Marlborough resident Sadie Eppinger made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Fairfield University.

### Dean's List

Katherine Granatini of Marlborough made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Marist University in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

She is currently a junior, majoring in business administration.

### Dean's List

Jack Campbell of Marlborough made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Mass.

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

### Girl Scout Sunday

Marlborough Congregational Church will hold its first Girl Scout Sunday on Sunday, March 15, at 10 a.m., at the church, 35 S. Main St.

This will be a Celebrate Faith event. All Girl Scouts and their families are invited to attend.

Marlborough • Marlborough

# Pursuing the Silver – One Frame at a Time

By Toriana Williams

At just 13 years old, Thea Sands is already proving herself to be a creative force, a confident leader and a young person deeply committed to service. A homeschool student preparing to attend East Catholic High School, Thea is working toward her Girl Scout Silver Award by designing and teaching a stop-motion animation class for younger children at her local library.

Thea is a member of Girl Scout Troop 63042, based in Montville, and has been involved in Girl Scouts for about two years. Her decision to join was inspired by family stories. “Mom told me so many stories about being a Girl Scout that I thought I’d try, and it’s been really, really fun,” she said. “We also know people in the troop already from a homeschool group.”

Thea is pursuing one of the highest recognitions available to Girl Scouts her age: the Silver Award. The award requires participants to identify a need in their community and develop a sustainable service project that demonstrates leadership, creativity and long-term impact.

“It’s like a leadership community service project,” Thea explained. “It is not required in Girl Scouts, but it is recommended ... that you at least go for one award.”

Thea said her motivation to pursue the award came from her mother, Kathleen Sands. “Mom got her silver and her gold,” Thea shared.

For her Silver Award project, Thea chose to focus on something that has become one of her greatest passions: stop-motion animation.

“Stop-motion is a method of movie-making,” she said. After watching the movie *Coraline*, which is also made using stop-motion, Thea began experimenting with animation using a phone app.

“You can just download it on your phone and make movies,” she said. “I made a lot. I mean, like 20 movies ... counting the ones I’ve done with friends and my brother.”

Thea’s projects range from short, simple films

to long, detailed productions requiring hundreds of photos. In regards to the length of time it takes to produce a project, “for shorter movies, maybe an hour. Longer movies, like up to three hours,” Thea explained. “The really long one that I did had like 500 photos.”

Thea uses a wide variety of materials in her animations. “I usually use little toys,” she shared. “Legos, paper, stuffies and Play-Doh. You can really use just about anything.”

That creative freedom is what she loves most. “It’s so versatile and you can get so creative. You can do practically anything,” she said. “I am the ‘create, create, create until your mind is mush’ [kind of person].”

She said her younger brother, Gabe, often joins her. “We usually do Legos, but we’ll add other stuff. We’ll try and do cool special effects,” she said.

Now, Thea is turning that passion into a free five-week instruction course for children ages 7 to 10, to be held at the Richmond Memorial Library beginning March 5. Each weekly session will run about an hour and will gradually build skills. “Week one is an introduction to stop motion,” she explained. “Week two is plushies, three is Legos, four is Play-Doh and week five is putting it all together.”

The final class allows students to combine everything they have learned. “You’ve experimented with different stuff,” she said. “You’ve gotten used to how to use the app. So now you can put it all together and make a slightly more complicated movie.”

Thea said she is both excited and nervous about leading the class. “I do not want to mess up in front of a bunch of little kids,” she said. “They’re all going to be looking at me.”

Despite her nerves, Thea has significant leadership experience. She has served as a counselor-in-training at Bible camp and recently led an art program for Girl Scouts, teaching color mix-

ing and painting techniques.

“I am a huge leadership person,” Thea said. When asked why, she laughed and answered simply: “I just like being in charge.”

Library children’s and teen librarian Vanessa Kelman has seen those leadership qualities firsthand.

“She’s a go-getter,” Kelman said of Thea. “She’s not shy about sharing her opinions and her thoughts. I think she can accomplish great things when she puts her mind to something.”

Kelman has worked with Thea through library programs, including Dungeons & Dragons sessions, and said she was impressed by Thea’s initiative in proposing the stop-motion project.

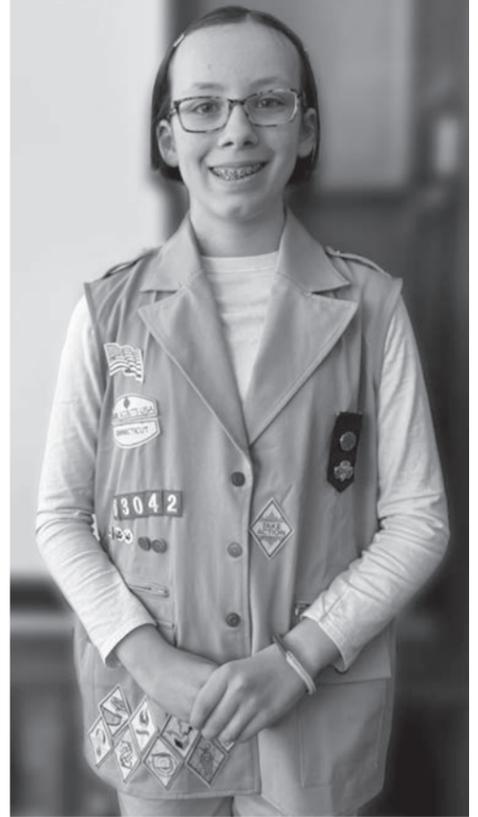
The program also emphasized inclusivity. The class requires a device with a camera and the stop-motion app, but Thea said she wants to ensure that no child is excluded due to a lack of access to technology.

As part of the project, the library is accepting donations of unused tablets or smartphones that can be used by students during the class.

“We have invited participants to bring their own devices,” Kelman explained, “but in the event that they don’t have their own devices, we would need to provide something. So rather than having a large upfront cost, we’ve asked for donations if anybody has something that they’re no longer using.”

Donated devices can be dropped off at the library and will help ensure the program remains sustainable long after Thea completes her Silver Award.

For Thea, the purpose of the project goes beyond earning a badge. “Creativity is just so expressive,” she said. “And I also feel like stop motion is a little bit overlooked. So I wanted to



Thea Sands

teach people about it because, hey, it exists. It’s here to stay.”

With her imagination, leadership and determination, Thea Sands is proving that big ideas – and meaningful community impact – can all start with a single frame.

## Congregational Church News & Notes

**Sunday Worship** at Marlborough Congregational Church, located at 35 South Main St., is held at 10 a.m. The service is also broadcast live every Sunday at [mcc.marlconchurch.org](http://mcc.marlconchurch.org) and recorded for later viewing. Church pastor is the Rev. Valerie Seaver.

Childcare for infants and toddlers is provided downstairs in the nursery but children are always welcome at the worship service. Sunday school is open to all children in the community for children ages 3 through grade 8. Contact Elizabeth Kukich at [ekukich@marlconchurch.org](mailto:ekukich@marlconchurch.org) for more information.

**Feb. 15** is a Bluegrass Sunday with hand-clapping hymns and special music performed by Joyful Blue. The service will be led by Seaver with the sermon given by Church historian and seminarian, Steve Pozzato. After worship, all are invited to Coffee Hour in the Thienes Lounge.

**Ash Wednesday** worship and receiving of ashes will be in the sanctuary at 7 p.m. on February 18.

**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. The monthly Sunday luncheon for Florence Lord Housing residents will be at noon on Feb. 15. 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 is open Fridays from noon-3 p.m. and Saturdays 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](http://bit.ly/MCCebay).

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

## Parks and Rec. Programs

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

**Youth Programs: 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: 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., 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 Marlborough Elementary School. 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.

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## Dean’s List

Sarah West of Marlborough made the fall 2025 Dean’s List at Western New England University in Springfield, Mass.

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# Selectmen Table WasteZero Proposal

By Toriana Williams

The Marlborough Board of Selectmen met Feb. 3, to address a wide-ranging agenda, but the most debated topic of the evening was a state grant related to waste management and an accompanying “pay-per-bag” proposal.

The state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) grant is part of a statewide initiative announced by Governor Ned Lamont in October. In all the grants totaled \$7.5 million and were awarded to 18 towns, including Marlborough. Marlborough’s grant would fund waste-reduction efforts and included authorization to engage WasteZero as a program consultant. WasteZero is a private company that assists municipalities with unit-based pricing, often referred to as “pay-per-bag” waste systems.

During the meeting, Board of Selectmen Chair Susan McFarland, a Democrat, explained that the proposal before the board involved both accepting the SMM grant and approving WasteZero as a consultant. However, she and other board members raised concerns about whether the program would benefit the town.

Selectman Anthony Bratz, a Democrat, stated that he did not see a benefit to the WasteZero program, and Selectwoman Louise Concodello, a Republican, agreed. The general consensus of the board was that the program did not provide a clear advantage for Marlborough at this time.

## WasteZero Dominates Public Comment

A large portion of the meeting was devoted to public comment, with many residents speaking about waste management, the existing food

scrap program and concerns about pay-per-bag systems.

Resident Hal Whitney noted that Marlborough’s food scrap recycling program has already been successful, and he explained that the town distributed approximately 100 six-gallon composting pails to residents at no cost. Reporting strong participation, Whitney compared Marlborough’s approach to other towns, such as Had-dam, which charged residents for composting pails.

Whitney suggested modifying the grant rather than rejecting it outright. He proposed reducing the grant amount to approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000 and using the funds to purchase an additional 500 composting pails and to install more Blue Earth food scrap collection bins on the far side of town. In regards to WasteZero’s proposal, Whitney said the “bottom line is to sell us over-priced garbage bags to accomplish the same objective: Remove heavy food scraps from the trash and redirect them to the ... Blue Earth compost bin. We can do that ourselves by expanding and publicizing this current scrap program.”

Resident Tom O’Connell, who shared that he has 20 years of experience in the waste and recycling industry, spoke at length about potential impacts of pay-per-bag systems. He explained that when higher-income households switch to private curbside pickup, fixed costs at the transfer station remain while usage declines. According to O’Connell, this often leads to higher fees for remaining users, especially seniors and residents on fixed incomes.

## 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 pre-

pare 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](mailto:dporter@marlboroughct.gov). Applications are available on [www.marlboroughct.gov](http://www.marlboroughct.gov) or in the town clerk’s office.

Cover Story • Cov

## ★ Weir Seeks Third Term, cont. from page 1

crats hold a majority, Weir acknowledged that not all of his proposals advance. “We are in the minority, two to one,” he said.

Still, he said he believes he plays an important role in reviewing and debating bills.

“I think I’m most effective at pointing out ... issues and unintended consequences with proposals,” he explained. Drawing on his background in construction, real estate and law enforcement, he often offers real-world examples during debates.

Weir said one of the most rewarding parts of the job is helping individual residents. “I do find it incredibly gratifying to be able to provide a solution ... to be able to connect that constituent and try and help solve their problem,” he said. He described acting as a link between residents and state agencies when communication breaks down.

When asked about the biggest concerns he hears from constituents, Weir pointed to affordability. “The biggest thing would be energy and just affordability, the cost of living in the state,” he said. He noted that seniors on fixed incomes, young families, and even his own daughter, a third-year teacher, struggle with high costs. “Everybody recognizes that it’s expensive to live here,” he said.

Weir believes that many affordability issues stem from decisions made at the state level. He often speaks about unfunded mandates, which are requirements placed on towns without providing funding to support them. These costs, he said, are eventually passed on to taxpayers. “Almost every decision we make up there has a cost that gets passed out to you,” he said.

Weir described his approach to lawmaking as careful and deliberate. He shared that one early lesson in office was learning that once party leadership commits to a vote, it is difficult to change outcomes. “Once a bill is called to the House floor, it’s almost 100% going to pass,” he said. Over time, he has worked to engage earlier in the process to amend bills before final votes.

He also expressed concern about rushing legislation. “If we make a mistake up there ... it has an effect down the line,” he said. He prefers passing sections of bills that both parties agree on, rather than approving large packages with

unresolved disagreements. “Why don’t we just pass the three [sections] and see how it goes rather than [pushing] through all 10?” he asked.

Public safety and education are also key issues for Weir. As a former police officer, he said law enforcement officers must be accountable but also supported. “Police officers should be held accountable,” he said, but he cautioned against “a blanket indictment” of law enforcement. He believes recent adjustments to state policies have helped restore some balance.

In education, Weir points to the burden that state mandates place on local schools. With family members in the teaching profession, he sees firsthand the challenges educators face. He argues that local districts need flexibility and adequate support.

Weir said he works to stay accessible to voters. His cell phone number is included in his emails, and he sends regular newsletters and posts on social media about legislation.

“We’re not here to hide. I’m here to be accessible,” he said. He attends community events across the district and maintains regular contact with town officials.

As of now, Weir said he is not aware of any opponent in the upcoming election. Still, he said he welcomes engagement from voters. “I look forward to a spirited campaign and a respectful campaign, no matter what,” he said.

When asked why voters should choose him, Weir pointed to his work ethic and attendance record. “I’ve had a 100% voting record in every committee meeting and ... every House vote since my time in office,” he shared. He also emphasized the time he spends reading lengthy bills and asking detailed questions about their impact.

Looking ahead, Weir said he remains motivated by service. “It’s so far been an honor,” he said. “I look forward to being their voice up in Hartford.”

Whether discussing affordability, public safety or government accountability, Weir presents himself as a cautious legislator who values careful review and open communication. As he campaigns for a third term, he said his goal remains the same: to represent all residents of the 55th District, regardless of party affiliation.

O’Connell also emphasized that Marlborough’s existing food recycling program has reduced waste without penalizing residents. He cautioned that vendor-driven bag programs can create long-term challenges related to equity, enforcement and participation, even if initial pilot programs appear successful.

Resident Beth Lander Morris spoke in support of the SMM grant. As a member of the Sustainable Marlborough team, she described the food scrap collection program as successful but, like Whitney, felt it was under-promoted. She said the grant could help increase participation through outreach and education.

Martha Smigel, a member of the Conservation Commission speaking as an individual, stressed that sustainability begins with reducing waste at the source. She raised concerns about education and enforcement at the transfer station and said that a program of this scale would represent a systemic change. Smigel stated that she believed a town-wide referendum should be considered before implementing such changes.

## Grant Discussion and Decision

After hearing public comments, board members discussed whether the grant could be modified. McFarland asked Town Manager David Porter whether it would be possible to reallocate the grant funds toward other sustainability efforts, such as expanding composting or recycling education, instead of contracting with WasteZero.

## 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 ‘Application for

Porter responded that modifying the grant was unlikely but said the town would not know unless it asked. He agreed to contact DEEP to determine whether the grant could be adjusted. “You never get what you don’t ask for,” Porter said. “So I’m going to call and ask.”

Selectman John Rizza, a Democrat, suggested that residents who spoke and had professional experience in waste management volunteer to assist the board and town manager in evaluating options.

McFarland made a motion to table the SMM Grant and the authorization to engage WasteZero until the next BOS meeting on Feb. 17, which passed unanimously.

## Other Financial Items Discussed

While WasteZero was the central topic, the board also reviewed other financial matters. Porter presented a draft of the fiscal year 2026-2027 budget, noting that the Board of Finance directed him to stay within a 3.5% increase. Major cost drivers included payroll, contractual obligations and health insurance, which is projected to increase approximately by 15%.

The board also heard a presentation from the Commission on Aging regarding a proposed new part-time position at the Marlborough Senior Center. If approved, the position would cost \$26,310 annually. The position is not currently included in the upcoming budget and was discussed as a future consideration.

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 was 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.

## Upcoming Classes at Marlborough Arts Center

Marlborough Arts Center, located at 231 N. Main St., will offer a variety of classes in late February, March, and April to help break up the winter blues.

The last day of February (Feb. 28), a Saturday workshop is being offered on how to decorate Ukrainian eggs. In March, there will be a variety of six-week workshops starting up for beginner to advanced watercolor enthusiasts. And if you only have a Saturday available, there is an Intro to Watercolor and an Intermediate Watercolor workshop, each three hours, on March 28; one will be in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

If you want to try a different medium, expressive Landscapes in Acrylic is for all levels and is

being held on Sunday afternoon, April 26. And for those more interested in working with pen, pencil, and ink in mixed media, check out the classes in the Zentangle club. You can attend any session and learn an abstract, relaxing art form that doesn’t take much time and requires minimal supplies. The instructor, Laura Marks, is active in the Art for Healing program at Hartford Hospital.

For more information, go to [marlborougharts.org](http://marlborougharts.org). Click on the menu link on the upper right-hand corner of the home page and then click on Classes and then Current Offerings.

Online registration is preferred, but mail-in is also possible. For more information on that, call 860-467-6353.



The Kenn Morr Band will play at Marlborough Arts Center, 231 North Main St., on Friday, Feb. 27, at 7:30 p.m.

## Kenn Morr Band to Perform at Arts Center

The Kenn Morr Band ([kennmorr.com/home](http://kennmorr.com/home)) will perform at the 4th Friday @ the Arts Café hosted by the Marlborough Arts Center, 231 North Main St., on Feb. 27 at 7:30 p.m.

The Kenn Morr Band is touring in support of its latest release, *Still Shining*. Recorded at Sandy Brook Studios in Colebrook, the album features eleven new songs penned by Morr highlighted by the cohesive playing of the Kenn Morr Band.

In addition to Morr, the band features violin virtuoso and multi-instrumentalist Tom Hagymasi, Berklee College of Music grad Pat Ryan on bass, and drummer Tido (T-Bone) Holtkamp. Known for its three-part vocal harmo-

nies and instrumental interplay, the group has been together for many years.

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

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

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

### Flashing Back to Old Home Days 2016

After the winter we've had, who wouldn't want to think about summer right about now? And for scores of East Hampton residents, summer means one thing: Old Home Days. So for a Flashback Friday this week, let's turn back the clock to 2016, and specifically some of the sights from that year's Old Home Days parade.

That year's "Glorious Celebration" also featured the unveiling and dedication of new signs

recognizing a portion of Route 196 as the Russell Oakes Memorial Highway. The two signs, one at the intersection of Route 66 and one near the corner of Skinner Street, encompassed part of the 1.5-mile Old Home Day Parade route over which Oakes presided for two decades. Oakes had passed away earlier that year at the age of 75.



**Obituaries**

*East Haddam*

**Mark Bottaro**

Mark Bottaro, of East Haddam, passed away Sunday, Jan. 18. He was born Feb. 22, 1958, in Hartford, to the late Angelo and Alice Bottaro. After graduating high school, he began working in construction and owned his own business for 29 years.



Mark was known for his soft demeanor, kind heart, honesty, and unwavering loyalty to the ones he loved. In his spare time Mark enjoyed hikes with his wife and his dog Piper, he loved watching his favorite teams play the Red Sox and the Giants, and he also enjoyed playing his acoustic guitar and enjoying music with his family. Throughout his life he loved speed bikes and muscle cars. He was always willing to help his family and friends in any way he could.

He will be deeply missed but always remembered with love by his wife, Jennifer of East Haddam; his son, Jackson of East Haddam; his brother, David of Southington; his many nieces, nephews, close friends and extended family.

A service was held Monday, Feb. 9, at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester.

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

*East Hampton*

**John Bair**

John Edward Bair Sr., 72, of Higganum, husband of Camille "Bookie" (Carlson) Bair, died Friday, Feb. 6, at his home, surrounded by his family. He was born in Huntingdon, Pa., the son of the late Stanley and Betty (Winnick) Bair.



John was a veteran serving with the U.S. Marines. Prior to his retirement, he worked for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. He loved the outdoors and was an avid boater.

John is survived by his wife, Camille; children, John Bair Jr. and his wife Theresa of Higganum, Brittany Hall of New Britain, Charlie Bair of Higganum; brother, Larry Bair of East Hampton; six grandchildren, David Bair, Natalie Melendez, Zoey Hall, Jabriell Melendez, Max Bair and Josephine Bair; brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Tiger and Yvonne Carlson of Higganum. He was predeceased by his brother, Robert M. Bair.

"If you knew him, you have your own stories." Visitation will be held on Sunday, Feb. 15, from 2-4 p.m., followed by a military funeral honors service at 4 p.m. at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown. Burial will be held at the convenience of the family.

Those who wish may send memorial contributions in John's memory to the Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758517, Topeka, KS 66675.

To share memories or express condolences online, please visit [www.biegafuneralhome.com](http://www.biegafuneralhome.com).

*Colchester*

**Joan M. Rogers**

Joan M. Rogers, 83, of Colchester, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 3. Born Dec. 29, 1942, in New Britain, she was the daughter of the late Henry and Helen Rogers.



Joan enjoyed a career as a sole proprietor and later worked at the local vet and elderly assisted living. She often spent her retirement days at the Colchester library and tending to her plants at home. She also enjoyed physical activity, and one would often see her walking in her neighborhood several miles a day.

Joan leaves behind a daughter, Karen Bissell of New Jersey; a sister, Elizabeth Lemelin of Plantsville; and several nieces and nephews. Joan was predeceased by a son, Steven Bissell.

Burial will be at the Rose Hill Cemetery, Rocky Hill. A private memorial service will take place at this time.

Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home is entrusted with Joan's arrangements.

*Portland*

**Arthur R. Tuttle**

Arthur R. Tuttle, 66, of Portland, passed away from cancer at home on Tuesday, Feb. 3. Born and raised in East Hampton, Art had a lifelong love of the outdoors. He was an avid fisherman and hunter, who proudly served as president and a life time member of the Belltown Sportsmen's Club, where his grandfather was one of the founding members.



A true "jack of all trades," Art could fix just about anything. He was also a talented potter and glass artist, and a longtime member of Wesleyan Potters in Middletown, where he was the building and grounds co-chair for many years. Art believed in always doing the right thing, making people laugh, and always lending a hand to those who needed it.

He was passionate about music and loved going to concerts. On weekends during racing season, you could always find him watching NASCAR, cheering on Joey #22.

Above all, Art valued his family. His family was the most important thing to him. He loved his wife, two daughters, his two sons-in-law (who he considered his sons), and his two grandchildren more than anything in the world, and was incredibly proud of them. He loved spending time with them sometimes as the quiet observer or sneaking candy to the grandkids. Telling them really corny dad jokes and playing his music way too loud.

Art is survived by his loving wife and best friend of 43 years, Cheryl Schoell Tuttle of Portland; his daughter, Chrystal and husband, Justin Goodson of East Hampton, and daughter, Jessica and husband, Michael Siavvakas of Cheshire;



**Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester is marking 30 years of service this year. Pictured from left are funeral home staff members Isabelle Nowosad, Kailyn Perez, Kristi Aamoth, Bret Fensley, Genevieve McCarthy Nowosad and Pat McCarthy. Staff not pictured: Sean McCarthy, Alana Nowosad and Lilah Nowosad.**

**Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home Celebrates 30 Years**

Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester marks 30 years of service this year. Founded in 1996, the family-owned funeral home has built its reputation on compassionate care, personal attention, and its guiding motto: Family Serving Families.

The funeral home said remaining family-owned and operated has allowed the funeral home to maintain a deep personal approach while adapting to the evolving needs and traditions of the community.

"Our philosophy has always been simple," said Patricia McCarthy, owner and director. "We treat every family as if they were our own. That commitment has guided us for 30 years and continues to shape everything we do."

Over the years, Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home has expanded its services to include tra-

ditional funerals, memorial services, cremation options, pre-planning, and veteran services. The funeral home remains actively involved in the community through support with local events, charitable work, faith organizations, and civic groups.

As part of its 30th anniversary, Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home extends its sincere gratitude to the families who have placed their trust in the funeral home over the years.

"It has been an honor to serve this community," added McCarthy. "We look forward to continuing our mission of family serving families for generations to come."

For more information about Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home and its services, visit [www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com) or call 860-537-9611.

**Obituaries**

and his beloved grandchildren, Harper Goodson and Michael Gus Siavvakas, who will always remember him as "Papa."

To be friends with Art was a friend for life. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Feb. 21, at 11 a.m., in the First Congregational Church, 554 Main St., Portland. Burial will be at a later date in Swedish Cemetery, Portland.

In lieu of flowers please consider a donation in his memory to the ACLU. [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org) or NORML, [norml.org](http://norml.org).

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

*Colchester*

**Alfred Arnold Amon**

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Alfred Arnold Amon on Tuesday, Feb. 3. Alfred was 83 years old. He was born in Willimantic on Dec. 10, 1942, the son of the late Edward and Freida (Krause) Amon.



Alfred, known to his family as Unky, was a lifelong resident of Lebanon, attending school there and then went on to trade school learning skills as an electrician. He worked for a time with the union, N.E.C.A./IBEW local 35 and later went into business himself, partnering as Koppish and Amon Electric. Alfred was an active member of the Redeemer Lutheran Church in Lebanon where he also served as a Deacon for many years. He was also a member of the Moose Club in Willimantic and the Lebanon Grange. In his free time, Alfred enjoyed bowling, horseback riding, and sorting through treasures at tag sales and auctions. Most importantly, he loved spending time

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Obituaries

with his family and friends.

Alfred will be missed by all who knew him but always remembered with love. He is survived by a brother, Harold Amon and his wife Patricia of Colchester; a sister, Ruth Kuzmech (John) of Naugatuck; his caregivers, nephew Randy Vincelette and wife Lynn and niece Tina Buskey and husband Paul, both of Lebanon. He is also survived by many nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, extended family, and friends.

In addition to his parents, Alfred was preceded in death by two brothers, Edward and Frederick Amon, and a sister, Louise Vincelette.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Feb. 21, at the Redeemer Lutheran Church, 328 Village Hill Road, Lebanon, CT 06249. Calling hours are at 10 a.m., with a service at 11 a.m. Reception will be in church hall following the service. Burial will be at the convenience of the family at the New Lebanon Cemetery, Waterman Road, Lebanon.

Donations in Alfred's memory may be made to Redeemer Lutheran Church.

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

Colchester

Mirian Elizabeth Ryan

Mirian Elizabeth Ryan of Colchester passed away peacefully Sunday, Feb. 8, surrounded by the love of her family. She was born Aug. 17, 1932, in Rydewood, Md., to the late Eldon and Catherine Amos.



In 1951, Mirian married the love of her life, Ray Ryan. Together they shared a devoted marriage and raised three children in Colchester, where Mirian built a life centered on family, service, and quiet strength.

Mirian spent most of her life as a dedicated homemaker, pouring her heart into her family and home. Outside the home, she also worked as an administrative assistant at Aaron Dress and later as a baker at Bacon Academy, where her warmth and work ethic were deeply appreciated. She proudly served for many years as the Girl Scout Cookie Chairman for the Colchester Council, supporting generations of young girls with encouragement and leadership. In her free time, Mirian found joy in tending her gardens—both flowers and vegetables—nurturing beauty and life in everything she touched.

She will be deeply missed and forever cherished by her children, Michael (Selina) Ryan, Daniel Ryan, and Sally Ryan, all of Colchester; her sister, May Polley of Pennsylvania; her grandchildren and their spouses, Matthew (Danielle), Benjamin (Sanna), James (Lizbeth), Jenavieve, Lindsay (Mike), and Hunter; her great-grandchildren, Jackson, Theodore, Kara, and Kacey; and many extended family members and dear friends.

Mirian was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Ray Ryan, and her brothers, John and Charles. Her kindness, devotion to family, and gentle spirit will remain in the hearts of all who knew her.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Company.

Visitation will be Friday, Feb. 13, from 10 a.m.-noon, at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home. A service will be held Friday, Feb. 13, at noon.

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

Cover Story • Cov

★ Remembering Rob Brown, cont. from page 1 in the aftermath.

Even in his final months, while battling non-Hodgkin lymphoma, Brown remained active. On the Fourth of July weekend this past summer, he was among the first on scene at a major structure fire just down the street from his home. As First Selectman Bernie Dennler said during a eulogy at Brown's funeral, "Rob was there as a firefighter, but he was also there as a neighbor. Trouble on his street? Of course, Rob is the guy who shows up."

That simple truth — he shows up — echoed again and again in the memories shared by those who loved him.

Dennler, who spoke at the funeral as a family member of Brown's, recounted a freezing January morning just days before Brown's passing. A boiler had burst in his home.

"I did the thing I always did if something was broken and I didn't know what to do," Dennler said. "I called Uncle Rob. And of course, within minutes, there he was armed with propane heaters to save the day."

Brown had recently undergone chemotherapy, yet there he was, in three-degree weather at sunrise.

"That's Rob for you," Dennler said. "And the thing is ... he never bragged about it. Didn't ask for credit, didn't ask for anything in return. He just showed up and he helped."

At the firehouse, that same steady devotion was evident in small, daily acts. "He was always ... the last one to leave, turning off the lights and locking the doors," Czarkowski Marvin remembered. If anyone had a question about the building — one he helped construct as part of the building committee — Brown had the answer.

He was strict when he needed to be, but deeply respected. "He got his point across, you know, but ... he was a leader that everyone wanted to follow," Czarkowski Marvin shared. "You knew that he knew what he was doing ... so you wanted to learn from him."

Yet for all the intensity of emergency calls and training drills, there was also laughter — especially on Friday nights. For years, the depart-

ment covered ambulance duty on Fridays, and the station became a gathering place.

"We would usually just be hanging out here on Friday evenings eating ice cream," Czarkowski Marvin said. "A lot of people would just stop by and hang, and we'd just laugh and laugh." The ice cream was no accident. "Rob always wanted ice cream," she said. His sweet tooth became so legendary that a local creamery, Salem Valley Farms, even created a flavor in his honor.

For Brown, sleep was optional. "He didn't sleep," Czarkowski Marvin said with a chuckle. "He just was always on call. He was always there when someone needed him. ... Time didn't matter. You could call him at midnight, and he would be there."

In his eulogy, Dennler captured that relentless energy perfectly, describing Brown's "I trained the Energizer Bunny" attitude. He called him a "one-of-a-kind man, an example of the very best of Colchester, frankly the very best of America."

In one of the most vivid tributes, Dennler said Brown was "simultaneously unassuming and also almost larger-than-life hero, a sort of mythic figure, like a Norman Rockwell painting come to life."

But perhaps the most heartfelt reflection was this: "We are left today with a huge, Rob-shaped hole in our lives and in our community."

Brown's love extended first and foremost to his family — his beloved wife of 45 years, Donna; his children and grandchildren; his siblings and extended family. As Czarkowski Marvin gently said, "All of our thoughts are with the family. ... They're the ones experiencing the hardest time right now."

Brown's legacy, however, reaches far beyond bloodlines. It lives in every firefighter he trained, every neighbor he helped, every structure he built, every call he answered without hesitation.

In his closing words at the funeral, Dennler offered a charge that feels like both instruction and invitation: "Work hard, be there for each other, and eat lots of ice cream."

Rob Brown did all three. And because he did, a community is stronger, safer and kinder today.

**TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION NOTICE OF ACTION**

At the regular meeting on Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall and via ZOOM, the East Hampton Planning and Zoning Commission took the following actions:

Referral from WPCA under CGS 8-24 for Clark Hill Road Sewer Expansion – Favorable Recommendation  
 PZC-25-013: Investment LLC, 8 Aldens Crossing Road, for a two lot Re-subdivision. Map 12/ Block 16/ Lot 2. – Approved with Conditions  
 PZC-20-024: Phoebe & Violet LLC, 249 West High Street, Request Extension for Special Permit Sec. 8.4 Motor Fuel Filling Station with convenience store in the Commercial Zone, Section 5.2, Map 6/ Block 12 /Lot 1B – Approved with Condition  
 Ray Zatorski, Chairman

1TB 2/13

**LEGAL NOTICE, TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH, CONNECTICUT BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS**

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

THE DATES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

**2025 REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY & 2024 SUPPLEMENTAL MOTOR VEHICLE GRAND LISTS**  
 WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11: FROM 6:30 PM IN PERSON HEARINGS ONLY

**2026 MOTOR VEHICLE GRAND LIST**  
 WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 11: FROM 6:30 PM IN PERSON HEARINGS ONLY

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

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

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

2TB 1/30, 2/13

**NOTICE OF ACTION TOWN OF ANDOVER ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

The Andover Zoning Board of Appeals took the following actions at their Special Meeting February 3, 2026:

Denied: ZBA # 25-15ZBA Application of Christine Gomes, 52 Baucala Road Andover CT 06232. Application to vary frontage and lot area for a vacant lot, accessors Map/Block/Lot 32/48/53CB. Please direct any questions to 860.742.7305, ext. 4220.

Fred Oliver  
 Chairperson – Zoning Board of Appeals

1TB 2/13

**MARLBOROUGH ZONING COMMISSION NOTICE OF ACTION**

The Marlborough Zoning Commission, at its regular meeting on February 5, 2026, took the following action:

APPLICATION APPROVED:  
 APPLICATION #Z-06-23 – 5 Hebron Road, SunEv Inc. (Applicant) C&G Properties LLC. (Property Owner) Site Plan Modification approved with conditions  
 ERIC COLANTONIO, ZONING COMMISSION CHAIR

1TB 2/13

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**LEGAL NOTICE Global Freestone LLC**  
 244 Middletown Ave.  
 East Hampton, CT  
 860.267.6623

Will sell or otherwise dispose of such personal property on Saturday February 21st 2026 at 8:00 AM  
 Property previously owned by:  
 R DiYulio

2TB 2/6, 2/13

**TOWN OF HEBRON LEGAL NOTICE**

At their meeting on February 5, 2026, the Town Council declared a vacancy on the Planning & Zoning Commission. The Council designates Friday, February 13, 2026, as the posting date for the vacancy notice. The 35th and final day by which nominations shall be received is Friday, March 20, 2026. The Town Council is now notifying the political parties and the general public of this vacancy.

Interested candidates should attend a meeting of the Commission and discuss with the Chairman the frequency of meetings and the time commitment involved.

All residents of Hebron who are registered to vote are eligible. Letters of interest or questions may be addressed to Andrew J. Tierney, Town Manager, Town of Hebron, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, Connecticut 06248 or call 860-228-5971.

1TB 2/13

**LEGAL NOTICE Global 17 LLC**  
 244 Middletown Ave.  
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 860.267.6623

Will sell or otherwise dispose of such personal property on Saturday February 21st 2026 at 8:00 AM  
 Property previously owned by:  
 A Paradis

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# Love Lines

*Josh,*  
Happy 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I  
will love you forever  
and always.

-Amanda

*Jud,*  
Together forever  
my love.

-Mimi

*Island Boy,*  
I love you.

-Snowflake

My love, my love,  
my love, there's  
nothing more that  
needs to be said.

-Kevin

*C,*  
Thank you!  
What a life!

-B

*Dawn,*  
You are the  
brightest star in  
my life.

-Mark

*Dear Vikki,*  
Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Valentine's  
Day in our new  
home. I love you!

-Ashley

*Honey,*  
You put a smile on  
my face

xxx  
ooo

*K,*  
Another greatest  
year together

-P

I still remember  
when we walked  
home in the rain.

-Izzie

*Delo,*  
You still take my  
breath away.

-Joe

*Dave,*  
Today Tomorrow  
Always.

Love  
-Mel

*Kristy,*  
"How you doin'?"

Love ya!  
-Nick

*Emily, Declan, and Audrina,*  
Keep up the amazing work  
and continue reaching  
for the stars!

Love,  
-Mom & Dad

*Honey,*  
You're still my  
girl.

*Trina, Amy, Sara,  
Brianna, Elena,*  
My 5 snow angels

Love  
-Daddy, Dad,  
Grandpa

*My Joey,*  
You are my Valentine  
every single day.  
I love you & us.

-Bev

Pat & Kevin  
FOREVER

Welcome  
Callum!  
We love you!

You are my  
everything

xx

Meet me at  
Camp...  
you know  
when

I don't say it  
enough -  
I LOVE you

*Bernie and Pop,*  
Happy Valentine's Day!  
We love you!

-Ruth and  
Marshall