

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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Black History Event Showcases Lesser-Known Stories

By Anne Lilburn

Nearly 100 people turned out last Saturday to celebrate Black History Month in Portland with an educational program that highlighted local and regional history many likely hadn't heard in school while growing up.

The program, entitled "Voices of Portland: The Fight for Freedom & Equality from 1776-2026," presented by the Portland Historical Society, the Middlesex County Historical Society, Portland's America 250th Committee, the Portland Public Library and the town's Committee on Solidarity.

The program featured speakers sharing stories of Black Portland-area residents dating back to colonial days.

Among the speakers was John Mills, a genealogist and founder of the Alex Breanne Corporation, a nonprofit dedicated to researching and sharing stories of enslaved African-Americans. Mills reminded those in the audience that the day - Feb. 21 - was the 61st anniversary of the assassination of Malcom X, which also took place on an afternoon.

"It's not lost on me," he said, "that I'm talking about Black history at the exact moment he was."

Mills referenced a quote from Malcom X at the beginning of his talk to emphasize the importance of knowing African American history: "When you know the origin, you know the cause. If you don't know the origin, you don't know the cause."

Mills went on to tell several stories of several enslaved people who lived in the area in the country's early days. Among those whose stories he told included Prince Mortimer, an enslaved 18th century Middletown man who served in the Revolutionary War, yet still was not granted his freedom, and who eventually died in prison at the age of 110 after being accused of poison-



Nearly 100 people turned out for a Black History Month celebration in Portland last weekend. Pictured from left are Barbara Shaw, a member of the "Voices of Portland" Planning Committee; John Mills, president and founder of the Alex Breanne Corporation; Jesse Nasta, a professor in the African American Studies Department at Wesleyan University, as well as executive director of the Middlesex County Historical Society; and the Rev. Debra Hopkins, former president of the Middlesex County NAACP.

ing his enslaver.

Mills said there were many stories of enslaved people enlisting and serving their countries, and he described them as "men who fought for a country that did not fight for them."

"The expansion of liberty," he said, "has often been driven by those who were denied it."

Another presenter at the event was Jesse Nasta, a historian and Wesleyan University professor. He emphasized that Black history in

Connecticut dated at least as far back as 1661, predating the Declaration of Independence. While the numbers of African Americans remained small as a percentage of the overall population (an 1850 census, he said, put the number of people of color in Portland at five, rising only to ten by 1860), Nasta emphasized that many of them contributed in large ways to society.

He described the Revolutionary War as "not a war of freedom for African Americans" and called the American Revolution "an unfinished revolution, especially as far as African Americans go."

Nasta talked about the Beman family, whose patriarch chose his own last name upon earning his freedom and named himself Beman in order to claim his right to "be a man." Jehiel Beman, one of his sons, went on to become a prominent minister in Middletown at the Cross Street AME Zion Church and was involved in the underground railroad.

Nasta also talked about the Colored Conventions, 19th century meetings that took place during a time when Black people were still denied the right to vote. Connecticut, he said, continued to deny the vote to African Americans even as other northern states allowed them to. The conventions, he told the audience, were opportunities for African Americans to organize and advocate for suffrage and other rights and causes, and served as proof that Black people in the area did not simply accept their fate, but continued to advocate on their own behalf.

Those at the event also heard from former Middlesex County NAACP president the Rev. See Black History Event, page 24

Athletic Complex Passes at Referendum

By Toriana Williams

Voters in Colchester approved two major capital improvement projects in a Feb. 24 referendum, authorizing nearly \$20 million in upgrades to athletic facilities and school infrastructure.

According to unofficial results, both questions on the ballot passed.

The first question concerned the \$14,562,400 appropriation for capital improvements to the town's athletic facilities at Bacon Academy and the town recreation complex. It received 1,042 votes to pass and 927 votes against.

The second question was in regard to the \$5,000,000 appropriation to replace the roof and make related improvements at Bacon Academy. This question passed by a much wider margin, with 1,681 passing votes and 294 votes against.

Both projects authorized the issuance of bonds and notes to finance the portions not

covered by grants or other funds.

First Selectman Bernie Dennler, a Democrat, said he was pleased with voter participation despite a winter storm that blanketed the area a day before the vote.

"I was really glad to see that we had a good turnout," Dennler said. "Pretty much in line with what we expect for budget referenda in Colchester."

Town officials had prepared contingency plans in advance of the blizzard to ensure Town Hall could open safely. Public works crews cleared roads and additional efforts were made to offer rides to residents who needed transportation to the vote.

"There was a lot of contingency planning that went into the last several days because of the blizzard," Dennler shared. "We were concerned how the storm might impact turnout, but we

did a lot on the public works side to make sure the roads were clear and passable, that the polling location could be opened safely and ... we offered rides to the polls ... to make sure everybody who wanted to vote had a chance to vote."

Dennler said the turnout reflected strong community interest in the projects. "Even on a snowy February day, a lot of Colchester residents really wanted to come out and make their voices heard."

Long Road to Referendum

The athletic complex project has been years in the making.

Dennler said that when he first ran for first selectman in 2023, he emphasized the need to form a recreation needs committee to take a comprehensive look at Colchester's facilities and plan for future capital investments.

See Athletic Complex, page 3

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Crossword Puzzle...Pg 26 Sponsored by Carl Guild & Associates



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Cover Story • Cov

Community Garden Offering Plots for 2026

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

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

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

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

Community & Senior Center Happenings

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

The center's monthly newsletter, "Community Connections," is available at www.andoverconnecticut.org. Copies are also available at the center, Town Hall, and Andover Public Library. To receive the newsletter by email each month, call 860-742-7305. And to reserve space at the center, call 860-742-7305 x4510 for dates and available rates.

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

Transportation: Call 860-498-2326 to schedule transportation. Provide a one-week notice for all appointment requests. All seniors, veterans, and disabled are welcome. Driver shifts end at 5 p.m., so plan accordingly.

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

Special Upcoming Events: Shopping Trips: Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. Shop Willimantic 3/10 and

Sheena the Therapy Dog

All are invited to come visit Sheena the Therapy Dog at Andover Library on Saturday, March 14, from 11 a.m.-noon.

Sheena, Queen of the Jungle, will be at the library, 355 Route 6, with her handler, Andover Friends of the Library member, Dr. Jennifer Nadeau. Come read to Sheena or just visit her!

Scholarship Available for Local Students

Andover Elementary School is now taking applications for the Andover Education Association and the Andover PTA Annual Scholarship, which is being offered to any Andover student.

Applications may be obtained from the RHAM High School guidance department or by contacting Andover Elementary School at 860-742-7339.

Application deadline is May 1.

3/24, and Manchester on 3/3, 3/17 and 3/31. Transportation is available.

Cardio Drumming: Tuesdays, 10-11 a.m. Fee is \$7.

Kids' Art Class with Kim: Wednesdays, 3/11 and 3/18, 3 p.m. Cost is \$18 per class or \$35 for both. The theme for March is watercolor ski masks. This class is for all skill levels. Space is limited. Supplies are provided. To sign up, call 860-742-7305 x4510.

New Shopping Trip! Thursday, March 19, departing at 8:30 a.m., for Trader Joe's and Michaels in Manchester:

Senior Art Class with Kim: Thursday, March 19, 10-11 a.m., \$8. The theme is Coffee and Teacups. This class is perfect for all skill levels. Space is limited. Supplies are provided. To sign up, call 860-742-7305 x4510.

Spanish for Beginners: Saturdays, March 7-April 25 (eight weeks), 10-11:30 a.m. Cost is \$80 for eight weeks; payment due by Feb 27. Instructor is Adelaida Gonzalez-Sarisley. Boost your memory, meet new people, and start speaking basic Spanish with confidence. Class material is provided. For adults ages 18 and up. Sign-up is required, by calling 860-742-7305 x4510.

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

Andover Egg Grab!

The Andover Recreation Commission is sponsoring its annual Egg Grab on Saturday, March 28, beginning promptly at 1 p.m. The event is held outdoors behind Andover Elementary School; in case of inclement weather, it will be moved inside.

Children 12 and under are welcome to attend and will be separated into appropriate age groups to hunt for plastic eggs filled with treats.

Please bring your own bag or basket to collect the eggs.

Kindergarten Registration

Andover Elementary School is registering kindergarten students for the 2026-27 school year. Andover's kindergarten program is full-day.

Parents of children who will be age 5 on or before Sept. 1, 2026, are asked to contact the school office at 860-742-7339 to obtain a registration packet or access it at www.andoverelementaryct.org.

Parents choosing to have their child attend an alternative kindergarten, not attend school until the following year, or who will be home-schooling are asked to inform the school of this decision.

Athletic Complex, cont. from page 1

After his election, the Board of Selectmen began forming that committee in late 2023. Members conducted public surveys, site walks and meetings with user groups, such as school representatives and senior citizens who use the town's recreation complex, parks and trails, to identify priorities.

Their recommendations laid the groundwork for a building committee formed in Jan. 2025. Over roughly 13 months, that committee refined the proposal that ultimately went before voters this week.

"There was a lot of planning to get to this and a lot of opportunity for residents to say what they wanted this project to be," Dennler said.

Addressing Longstanding Problems

Among the key elements of the athletic improvements are upgrades to the tennis courts at the recreation complex, which Dennler described as having been in poor condition for years. The project aimed to address persistent issues with the athletic fields, with their appearance leaving a lot to be desired, as well as drainage and maintenance challenges.

While the town implemented a new grass management plan in 2024 that improved fields at the recreation complex, Dennler stated that similar results have been difficult to achieve at the high school due to differing site conditions.

The approved project will create upgraded athletic facilities at Bacon Academy to complement those at the town's recreation complex. One notable addition will be field lighting, enabling the town to host "Friday night lights" events, something Colchester has been unable to do because its fields lack lighting.

Dennler said hosting evening games would not only foster community pride but also bene-

fit local businesses by drawing residents and visitors into town. "When there are games hosted in Colchester, you see the impact on our small businesses," he said and cited increased traffic and spending from families, visiting teams and spectators.

"We want to be able to host those because it benefits our small business community," Dennler pointed to data suggesting that every dollar invested in outdoor recreation can generate up to four dollars in local economic return.

Investing in Students and Infrastructure

The separate \$5 million roof replacement project at Bacon Academy addressed longstanding building needs at the high school. Dennler said he has been moved by feedback from students and athletes about the condition of facilities and how that affects their perception of their school and community.

"Hearing from students and players about the conditions at Bacon Academy and how it makes them feel about their school system and their town," he shared. "And I think getting this done is going to ... give those students more confidence in their school, and that's a great thing to see."

With voter approval secured, the building committee will continue meeting with project partners, including FieldTurf representatives, to prepare the athletic complex project for construction. Their next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday.

After years of study, public input and committee work, Dennler shared that the referendum marks a significant step forward in upgrading the town's recreational and school facilities, an investment in both community life and economic vitality.



Pictured is a rendering of the proposed new sports complex at Bacon Academy. The referendum was voted on Tuesday.



The "East of the River" Real Estate Report

Is Spring Really the Strongest Selling Season?

Every year around this time, the same question comes up: Is spring really the best time to sell?

Looking at the past five years of monthly median sale prices, there is a clear seasonal pattern. Prices tend to rise through late winter and spring, often peaking in early summer before leveling off or softening into fall and winter.

So yes — historically, spring is often strong. But that doesn't automatically make it the best choice for every seller.

When spring arrives, inventory typically increases as well. More listings mean more competition. Buyers have more choices, and pricing strategy becomes even more important. Homes that are well-prepared, properly priced, and presented effectively can benefit from heightened demand. Homes that miss the mark can get overlooked quickly.

The data shows seasonal momentum, but it also shows consistency. Well-positioned homes sell in every season. The real advantage isn't simply listing in spring — it's entering the market prepared, priced appropriately, and aligned with current buyer behavior.

Spring can bring more activity. Preparation is what brings stronger results.

Market Snapshot – Past Week

Hebron, Andover, Marlborough, Colchester, East Hampton & Portland	
Single-Family Homes	Condos
• 7 homes sold	• 1 sold at \$220,000
• Average sale price: \$416,714	• Sale-to-list ratio: 102%
• Average sale-to-list ratio: 101%	• Days on market: 1 day
• Average days on market: 27 days	Results vary by price point, condition, and pricing strategy.
• Median days on market: 15 days	



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REG-27-26

From the Editor's Desk Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

When William Shakespeare wrote the line "Now is the winter of our discontent," he was referring to a winter in which it just *wouldn't stop snowing*, right?

Scholars will tell you no, that the classic line from *Richard III* wasn't a lament of personal unhappiness, but rather a calculated introduction to Richard's manipulative and ambitious nature.

Balderdash.

I think The Bard was sharing his utter disdain for a year of snowstorm after snowstorm. He may have tried disguising it in a quote he gave one of his characters, but he can't fool me. I know what Billy-Boy was really trying to say.

And yes, this has been a lousy winter – at least for snow-haters like myself. (You may have picked up over the past few weeks/months/years that I'm not a fan of the white stuff.)

For me, in the Hartford area, Monday's blizzard wasn't *too* bad. A mere 9-10 inches of snow. I know much of the state got hit much, much worse though – including many of you reading this.

It doesn't look like it's going anywhere anytime soon either. As I write this Wednesday morning, snow is falling from the sky, coating the ground, making everything nice and slippery. Then, after a slight warm-up this weekend, more snow is in the forecast for early next week. At the moment, it doesn't look like much – 2 to 3 inches – but at this time last week, that monstrosity we dealt with Monday supposed to stay out to sea. So we'll see.

Meteorological spring begins this Sunday, March 1, and while actual spring doesn't arrive for a few weeks after that, hopefully warmer days are on the horizon. But I dunno. This has all the makings of a year in which it's still snowing in April.

At which point I think all of us will be discontented – not just me and Shakespeare.

Congratulations to Portland business Aqua Scapes of CT! The water garden installer and supplier took home the Best of Show Award at the Connecticut Flower & Garden Show, which was held last weekend in Hartford.

A panel of expert horticulture and landscape design judges strolled the live gardens on display throughout the four-day show, and selected landscape design winners in a variety of categories.

The Best Horticulture Award went to Ladd's Garden Center of Windham, and the Best Design Award was presented to Ironwood Landscaping of Wethersfield.

Flowers and gardens.....those sound pretty good right about now, don't you think?

On a related note, I don't blame anyone for choosing to fill their heads right now with thoughts of what they'll be doing when the weather gets warmer. Many of you will indeed be gardening. Others, though, will be hitting the open waters and partaking in the age-old tradition of fishing.

Connecticut Fly Fisherman's Association (CFFA) has been providing education in the field of fly fishing since 1967. Next month, CFFA will offer its Beginner Fly Fishing School – so if you're interested in fly fishing, now's the time to learn.

This school, taught by experienced CFFA members, begins Thursday, March 19. The course will feature four classroom dates, held at the Pitkin Community Center in Wethersfield, and will also include two outdoor classes: a Casting Instruction Class on April 27 in East Hartford, and Willimantic River instruction on May 4. While the East Hartford class is rain or shine, the Willimantic River one depends on water level, for safety concerns.

The entire curriculum can be found at www.ctflyfish.org/about-cffa/classes.

Editor's Desk continued on page 5



Meeting the Huskies... Recently, the state champion RHAM girls volleyball team attended a UConn women's basketball practice. The RHAM team got to meet members of the UConn women's team, and also head coach Geno Auriemma. Auriemma acknowledged the 11 state volleyball titles under head coach Tim Guernsey, and also three championships in the past four years for the RHAM seniors. Auriemma challenged the next class of RHAM athletes to work hard and strive for excellence and wished RHAM continued success.

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

Hebron School Budget

To the Editor:

Here we are. Budget request time. Again, the school board is asking for dollars which are ludicrous. Well over a million-dollar increase, not including what they want from the town for added police protection and other town services which do not appear in their budget. While we all realize that prices go up, requested increases also need to be reasonable. This request is not reasonable.

A suggestion which I made last year, and was basically laughed off last year, I again submit should be investigated. The superintendent (I believe) makes well over a quarter of a million dollars when benefits are factored in. That is just one person in an office of many! I feel that it is time to talk with our partner towns and consider having one superintendent and one BOE to oversee the entire school systems of the three towns. Leave the elementary students in their own towns/schools, but have one administrative system oversee the schools. I feel this will have multiple benefits to all of the towns, both financially as well as when the students transition to RHAM High School. Also, the costs of non-mandated programs need to not be placed onto the backs of the taxpayers.

I am hoping that, with newly elected officials, they do not think that they are going to go on a spending spree at the taxpayers' expense without a fight. We already have a state that is doing that.

Daniel Larson
Amston

Task Force

To the Editor:

A letter questioning the legality of the creation and appointments of the Education Specifications Development Task Force was sent on 02/01 to the Portland first selectman and members of the BOS, requesting a response from the town attorney and bond counsel.

Ethics rule 1-14 specifies no town representative can hold dual offices where one office is subordinate to another, where one office has the power of removal of the other or prohibited by the town charter.

The task force appears to be a subordinate committee to the BOS and BOE as members from both boards are voting members of the committee. The task force also includes two members of the public. Once the task force makes recommendations specific to educational development, the BOE will vote on the committee's recommendations to advance toward bonding. The BOS will vote to advance recommendations to a town referendum once all bonding requirements are met. The Strategic Capital Improvement Committee's legality is also in question as members of the BOE and BOS sat on the committee as voting members.

Town charter sections 401 authorize all town committees be created and members appointed by the first selectman and/or BOS. The first selectman may appoint members of the BOS to serve as ex-officio or non-voting members of any town committee. Presently, BOS serve as liaisons to committees to maintain neutrality when recommendations come before their

Bulletin Board

My lawyer suggested recently that I might want to update my will. This indicates one of two things to me: 1) I don't look as good as I think I do (highly unlikely) or 2) the landlord raised the rent on his office space.

Nevertheless, it doesn't hurt to be prepared, so I've been giving some serious thought as to how I want things handled when I eventually retire from retirement.

- First, of course, what remains of my earthly possessions (i.e., anything she doesn't think she already owns) will go to my beloved wife, provided that she doesn't bring her new boyfriend to the funeral. It would also please me if she would agree to come to the cemetery and throw herself on my casket while screeching, "Take me, too!" instead of muttering to whom-ever is officiating, "Hurry this thing up; I have to catch a plane to Aruba"

- An appropriate sum of money shall be set aside to pay for police to handle the massive crowds at my memorial service (or, see below should the turnout be less than anticipated).

- While I assume a number of skeptics will show up at my funeral to reassure themselves that I'm really dead, it occurs to me that many of my wide circle of my grieving friends and relatives may be unable to attend because of other commitments (like a breakfast special at Denny's, for instance). Or, better yet, I will outlive everyone I know and the only people to show up at the funeral will be my creditors. Therefore, I direct that a sum of money be set aside to pay professional mourners \$50 each as may be necessary to fill at least 30 percent of the seats at the service. Mourners who tear at their clothes and break out in periodic wails of "Why! Why!" and "He was a veritable saint!" shall be paid \$75.

- Anybody at my funeral service who remarks "He looks so life-like" shall be politely escorted out to the parking lot and set on fire. I'm sorry folks, but dead is dead.

- I realize it will be difficult to list my multitude of accomplishments and attributes in an obituary that does not run on for many thousands of words. Just don't forget to note that "He did the New York Times crossword puzzle in ink." You don't have to add that "It was usually impossible to determine his answers since he kept writing new words over his mistakes" or that the process took the better part of a week.

- Also, since obituaries are supposed to be nice, you're allowed to exaggerate a little, so you might want to say something like, "His family was the most important thing in his life" instead of "He only thought of himself" or "He was a great help around the house," instead of "He never did figure out how to use the dishwasher." I doubt if anyone who knows the truth will write a letter to the editor about it.

- I leave my slightly motheaten painting on velvet of Dogs Playing Poker (I know I promised to take it to the dump, honey, but I hid it behind the old refrigerator in the garage just in case you happened to die first) to my niece who never failed to remark on the expanding bald spot on the back of my head. As for that collection of well-thumbed vintage Playboy magazines (remember Playboy?) also hidden behind the fridge, I have no idea where they came from. They were probably there with those empty gin bottles when we bought the house.

- If you want me to truly rest in peace, please do not leave unopened cans of Budweiser beer on my gravestone. It's not nice to tease dead people.

- Do not donate my underwear to the Salvation Army. I don't care if "it's still perfectly usable," I don't want homeless people running around in my shorts. It's creepy.

- I know that you will honor my wishes as if they were your own. My faith in you all is unshakable. Also, if you violate my sacred trust, I will find a way to come back from the dead and stare at you while you're sleeping. Yes, I'm really that weird.

Cordially yours,

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.

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Reader Forum • Reader Forum

elected boards.

Town Charter section 1412 defines the words board or committee to encompass all town committees regardless of title.

The dismissive response from the first selectman was that the task force was created and members appointed by the BOE chair and is an "Ad Hoc" committee. Therefore, the response acknowledges violations to the Ethics rule 1-14 and town charter sections stated above including definitions of a committee. This could potentially open future lawsuits if proper rules or fraudulent information is used to obtain bonding which may result in the town repaying the bond back to the state

It has been noticed that BOS members and the first selectman have overreached their authority by injecting members into town committees not authorized under the town charter.

Town charter mandates that the BOS must stay neutral as an unbiased committee on all voting issues to maintain public trust, the foundation of Ethics rules.

Questions remain and no response received from the town attorney or bond counsel.

**Rose Aletta
Portland**

Emergency

To the Editor:

At approximately 7 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 23, we had a medical emergency in a unit of our building at Edgemere Condominiums. It was during the height of Blizzard Calvin, wind howling and blowing snow. As they say, a day not fit for man or beast.

911 was called and my wife and I started to shovel our walkway to a point where the ambulance could back up. Within 10 minutes no less than 10 people showed up. Three of the firemen took up the shoveling and did a great job. Everyone else did the jobs they were there to do. Within minutes the patient was in the ambulance and heading to the hospital, and I'm happy to report that later that day we found out he was doing fine and should be home soon.

Even though this incident was not about me or my wife, I wanted to say thank you for a job well done to all the responders who did their jobs. Their professionalism, I'm sure, helped this emergency have a very happy outcome.

**William Sukach
East Hampton**

Thank You!

To the Editor:

Thank you, *Rivereast*, for publishing the "Voices of Portland" article on the Black History Month event, and photos of the two amazing speakers, Jesse Nasta and John Mills. The event on Saturday drew a record attendance, filling the meeting room at Portland's Waverly Senior Center. It was heartwarming to see so many attendees reconnecting before the event, and then continuing to visit with each other over refreshments after.

We thank: Jesse Nasta, John Mills, Mike Pelton, Barbara Shaw, Drey Farmer for showing informative slides of a class Netflix project, and Debra Hopkins, from the Middlesex NAACP, an organization that originated in Portland. And our sponsors, the Portland Historical Society, Middlesex County Historical Society, the Committee on Solidarity, the Portland Public Library, and the Portland America250 Committee.

**Voices of Portland Committee
Susan Bransfield, Liz Hibino,
Mary Maki, David Roane and Barbara Shaw**

Budget 'Entities'

To the Editor:

Hebron town budget processes have begun. I try and keep in mind the different 'entities' that are involved in this process.

The state is working out nuances of their budget that will affect our town finances this year.

The bargaining units have already worked most of their nuances last fall.

The administrations of the towns of Hebron, Marlborough and Andover, the Hebron Elementary and RHAM are putting the polish on their first drafts of the budget.

The elected boards of these administrative entities are grappling with the numbers and feeling the pulse of their constituents.

The appointed boards and committees and sub committees have worked through the year to hone their individual proposals as they have seen fit according to their charges.

Planning and Zoning is watching, knowing that their ongoing work greatly affects the coming discussion in ways that are historical and consistent.

And then there are the citizens. Working diligently to make ends meet at home and, for the most part, do not have time to participate in the upcoming dynamic. Their effect will be felt in May when they vote on the budgets.

The budget process is shaped continuously by actors who are present year-round. Citizens typically engage only at the end. If we, as citizens, want meaningful influence, we must pay attention now, at the beginning of the process.

The institutional inertia in the process points towards larger and larger tax bills and the deciders in town, we citizens, have to figure if this is a wise path to continue down. And this is the time of year to start thinking on this.

**Terry McManus
Hebron**

Momentum Growing For Two-Site Solution

To the Editor:

Hebron is closer than ever to the practical, affordable answer residents have demanded for years: a two-site plan that keeps the salt shed and transfer station exactly where they are and moves the Public Works garage to the Horton property. It's the option that protects services, avoids chaos, and stops the runaway spending baked into the current proposal.

Under this approach, the transfer station stays open. No temporary or permanent shutdown. No shuffling trucks and staff to Burnt Hill Park. No forced curbside pickup. No waiting for Colchester to "study" a problem that isn't theirs. And no dependence on a secretive plan the public hasn't been allowed to see. When costs are already sky-high, the last thing taxpayers need is a proposal that adds even more uncertainty and expense.

Defenders of the current plan point to a \$30 million project in Massachusetts – one that failed at referendum. That's not an example to

follow; it's a flashing red warning. Why would Hebron knowingly choose a path voters elsewhere have already rejected?

Longtime resident David Foster recently said what many have been thinking: the Old Colchester Road plan is fundamentally flawed, and the two-site solution is the responsible alternative. When respected voices in town call out a bad idea, ignoring them isn't leadership.

Some have tried to claim the Town Council is stuck with past decisions. That's simply false. No legislative body is bound by the actions of a previous one. Every new council has full authority to correct course. That's not a loophole; it's how representative government works. The council is not powerless, and it certainly isn't subordinate to SurveyMonkey.

Residents who genuinely care about Public Works employees should support the two-site plan. It protects their working conditions and keeps operations stable. And for those who say we can't waste more time: exactly. So why keep pushing a proposal that even its supporters admit will fail at referendum?

The path forward is obvious. The Town Council should direct the DPWAC to develop a transparent, financially responsible two-site plan that voters can actually support. With budget season approaching, the committee has the perfect window to produce a proposal that withstands scrutiny.

A two-site solution isn't just practical; it's the only option with a real chance of passing.

**Rob Poudrier
Amston**

Additional Employee Matters So Much

To the Editor:

East Hampton is a town where people look out for one another, and nowhere is that clearer than at our senior center.

As a member of the East Hampton Commission on Aging, I have reviewed reports showing steady growth in senior center membership and programming. More residents are coming through those doors, more critical programs are being offered, and more lives are being enriched. What strikes me most is not any single number, but the understanding that when we invest in our seniors, we invest in all of us. The health, dignity, and connectedness of our oldest residents shapes the kind of community every East Hampton family gets to live in.

That is why approving an additional full-time employee at the senior center matters so much

right now. Our staff is talented, committed, and stretched. This is a reasonable investment that ensures what we have built continues to grow and serve people well.

What gives me the most hope is the relationship developing between our high school students and senior center members. When young people and older residents come together — sharing time, knowledge, and simply being present with one another — something lasting takes shape. Our students gain perspective and connection to the community they are growing up in. Our seniors gain energy, engagement, and the knowledge that they are valued. Neither generation is waiting on the other. They are building something together.

This is what makes East Hampton special. While other communities struggle to find common ground, we have a tradition of reaching across generations rather than retreating into them. That does not happen by accident. It has to be supported, staffed, and sustained.

As a candidate for State Representative, I am committed to carrying that belief into the work I hope to do on behalf of this district. It begins here, with decisions like this one. I hope our town leadership will approve this vital position, and I hope residents will add their voices in support.

**Meghan Rosenfeld, M.Ed
Member, East Hampton
Commission on Aging
Candidate for State Representative District**

DPWAC Update

To the Editor:

It's been a couple of weeks since I've written a letter. Since my last update we have had a regular meeting and we have presented to the Town Council. Let me just say that a lot of information was shared in those two public meetings. The transfer station is *not* permanently closing. It was reiterated that this was for the duration of the rebuild on Old Colchester Road, not forever, as was shared on Facebook! Residents would be better informed by going to the FAQs on the town's website, at: www.hebronct.com, coming to the meetings in-person or attending online to get the correct information. This is truly the best way to hear firsthand with your own ears and not rely on edited, partially true "facts" (with an agenda spin on them) on Facebook.

The letters that I write are to share facts without an agenda. So on with more facts. There were no curbside pick-up bids from any trash

See Letters, page 6

Editor's Desk continued from page 4

Fee is \$50 if you're not a member of CFFA, or \$40 if you are. For youth 21 and under, fee is \$30; adults who attend with paid youth may take the course at no cost. Also, for signing up, all non-members receive a free one-year membership to CFFA – a \$25 value.

There is a maximum of 20 students allowed

in the class – so if this sounds like something that interests you, act fast! To register, contact Pete Naples at Flyon054@outlook.com to register. Please include your cellphone or landline in your email message.

See you next week.

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Reader Forum • Reader Forum

★ Letters, cont. from page 5

hauler. We had a representative from Cassella Waste in Willimantic attend one of the meetings. He shared why they did not bid and that he would be happy to work with us for additional ideas as to how to handle our MSW and Recyclables during construction. We have also been working with Colchester for alternate solutions. The Design development plans should be completed and sent to the estimators for pricing in March. At that time, we will have a real number to work with. As soon as it's available we will share it!

The price tag certainly has been the hot button topic. We, as a committee, are aware and paying attention, as it will affect our taxes too! I am extremely pleased with the public's increased participation in the discussion. Our committee now has a direct email address for you to ask questions: dpwac@hebronct.gov Please email us your questions, there are no silly questions, so ask! Turn around time for answers could be up to 72 hours. Please be patient as this is new for us too!

This year's Maple Fest is March 21st and 22nd and the DPWAC is currently putting a schedule together to man an information booth. A member of the Town Council and a member of the DPWAC will both be there, to share information and answer questions! Hope to see you there!

Sincerely,
Todd Habicht, Vice Chairman
Hebron DPWAC

DPW Cost Perspective

To the Editor:

Appropriately, the cost of Hebron's new Department of Public Works facility remains an important topic. While it is all too easy to criticize the \$28.7 million estimate, the cost is well within expectations for such a significant project. A quick search showed two similar DPW projects that share this same price range.

On Jan. 8, 2025, the *Provincetown Independent* reported it would cost \$26 million to \$30 million for a new 21,000-square-foot DPW in

Truro, Mass. In comparison, Hebron's plans are for a 51,000-square-foot facility. The owner's project manager (OPM) in Truro, Paul Millett of Environmental Partners, was quoted as stating, "No matter how you slice it and dice it here, you're between \$26 and \$30 million." Interestingly, the first referendum for \$28 million was defeated in May 2024 and by the time a second referendum was presented in December 2024, the cost had climbed to \$29.2 million.

On Aug. 13, 2024, the *Reporter Today* published that it would cost \$40.7 million a new 61,815 square foot DPW in Seekonk, Massachusetts. According to Seekonk Town Administrator Shawn Cadime, "it's clear that the Public Works department has widespread community backing, given its critical role in maintaining public safety vehicles, buildings, grounds, recreation fields, trails, and roadways, among other responsibilities. They truly touch every aspect of the town. We've made every effort to minimize costs while ensuring the building can support the department's functions for the next 100 years." I firmly believe this is also true in Hebron. It is important to recognize the significant impact that DPW staff have on life in town and building a quality facility is imperative.

The Town of Hebron website includes abundant documentation on the need for a new DPW facility, including reports from 2010, 2013, 2015 and 2017. The 2010 Facilities Study by the Town of Hebron reported in clear terms, "The Public Works facility is in desperate need of additional space and more efficient working conditions." In 2014, the Hebron Plan of Conservation and Development noted, "the maintenance / office building is not in adequate condition, and is undersized for the operations it houses..." and continued, "The Public Works facilities are clearly the town facilities most in need of replacement and upgrading."

The time has come to support the current DPW plan and move this project forward. For more information please visit Save Hebron Center on Facebook.

Sincerely,
Kevin J. Tulumieri
Amston

The Race is On, Part I

To the Editor

A "water table is the boundary between the unsaturated zone and the saturated zone underground. Below the water table, groundwater fills any spaces between sediments and within rock." - *National Geographic*

The average height or depth of your water table, depending on how you look at it, can vary greatly from season to season. This is a variable water table. It also varies from location to location. If you have beachfront property, you basically live at sea level and often have about a two inch water table. The closer the water is to ground level, the tougher building becomes. Septic systems and underground storage tanks are generally not permitted.

On the Raymond Brook Watershed, including Hebron Center, the "permanent water table is at an average depth of 24" below the soil surface. In some areas the water table may be closer to the surface." In some soil types found here, the water table averages 18". (-Environmental Review Team 1984, 1992, 2000). However, after heavy rains, standing water is a common sight. Building on high water tables is like adding marbles to a container full of liquid. The marbles, or buildings, displace the sitting water, redirect the path of oncoming water and cause flooding. As was the case in Hebron Center, and noted in the environmental report from 2000. Due to the water table, many buildings in Hebron Center sit on slab. Extensive drainage is recommended around basements, slabs and roadways. Once installed, discharging groundwater becomes another issue.

In 2021 and 2023, my watershed neighborhood sparked with standing water. However, in 2020, the exact opposite was true. That year Hebron Center firemen experienced a record number of residents coming to the station for water. Blessed with water in Hebron Center means whatever happens to that groundwater is up to us. All the money in the world cannot change the water table...or can it?

Fryeburg, Maine is losing their battle for groundwater in a sad turn of events... naturally, commercially and, worst of all...legally and

they're not alone. Water tables are now threatened by pollution, impervious surfaces and over burdening wells.

"If water is not extracted in a sustainable manner, the water table may drop permanently. ... Groundwater depletion occurs when the rate of groundwater extraction through wells is higher than the rate of replenishment from precipitation." - *National Geographic*. The race is on for water. #save17

Jean Tulumieri
Amston

Dementia Talks No. 50

To the Editor:

I have so many topics flowing through my mind today, that is hard to lock on a theme for this week's submission. So, I will hit three topics!

The first - shirts, pants, bras - oh my! This week I became a conduit for resources. One friend reached out asking about specialty bras for his wife whose Alzheimer's was progressing and her fingers weren't working like they used to and her brain wasn't fully "connecting the dots"; I reached out to my dementia community and asked if anyone has some ideas as I hadn't needed to solve that particular issue for mom. Another friend came back with two online stores that have really cool clothing options (Buckandbuck.com and Silverts.com) and several came back with sports bras as a solution since they can be put on "like a sweater." Sharing as there are so many different resources available that will help your loved-one live as independently as they can in the moment; and help you by making small simple tasks just a little easier ... for both of you!

Second - see our press release about an event on March 7th at 1 p.m. at Gilead Congregational Church. If you don't see it, reach out and I can give you some information (multitasking@comcast.net or 860-539-9287).

Third - if you would like to share your voice and help us destigmatize dementia, raise more caregiver awareness, voice the need for dementia training for home-care-agencies, training for clinicians, need for continued resources - please register for the March 11th Alzheimer's Advocacy Day at the State Capital (<https://alz-ct.quorum.us/event/29779>).

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

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What Rising Grocery Bill Means for Colchester

To the Editor:

If you've stood in the checkout line at our local Stop & Shop and winced at the total, you're not alone. Many Colchester residents have noticed grocery prices seem higher than in neighboring towns, and that frustration is growing.

Part of that perception is real. Shoppers across New England report noticeable price differences between stores just a few miles apart, sometimes seeing significant variation in everyday items like produce, dairy, and pantry staples.

But rising grocery bills aren't just about store markups. They're tied to forces far bigger than our town - global supply chain disruptions, federal trade policy, and tariffs that ultimately shape what we pay at the register.

Across Connecticut, grocery prices run higher than the national average. We've all seen examples: egg prices spiking after avian flu outbreaks or shelves thinning during supply disruptions. While seasonal shortages play a role, trade policy adds another, often overlooked, layer.

Tariffs are essentially taxes on imported goods. Recent trade policies have placed duties on a range of food items and agricultural inputs, including produce, seafood, and coffee. Those costs don't appear as a line item on your receipt, but they are built into the price families pay at checkout. Economists estimate tariffs cost the average American household roughly \$1,000 or more per year - a hidden tax felt most directly in the grocery aisle.

So what does that mean for Colchester?

Our town was founded as a farming community, and agriculture remains part of our identity. Colchester even adopted a right-to-farm ordinance recognizing the role agriculture plays in our history and future.

Buying more food directly from Connecticut farms and local producers won't eliminate global price pressures overnight. But supporting local agriculture keeps dollars in our community, reduces reliance on long international supply chains, and strengthens our food resilience.

While national policy decisions affect prices,

See Letters, page 8

Rivereast Standouts of the Week

By Josh Howard

Brody Kokofski - RHAM High School (Track & Field): Kokofski set a new school record in the long jump with a leap of 21'10" at GHC Invitational last month. Kokofski, a senior, finished first in the event at the multi-school event held at Hartford Public High School, eclipsing the program's previous mark of 20'10.75", which had been held by Aidan Kalisher since 2016. Kokofski would then go on to compete in the Central Connecticut Conference (CCC) championship and Class M state finals in both the long jump and as part of the Raptors 4x200 relay team.

Liana Salamone - East Hampton High School (Basketball): Salamone tied a season-high in points, scoring 29 as Ethel Walker beat Choate Rosemary Hall 60-53 on Sept. 20. Salamone, of East Hampton, also grabbed eight rebounds in the victory, which improved the team's record to 15-6 overall. Prior to transferring to the private school in Simsbury, Salamone helped lead East Hampton High School girls basketball to a state title in 2023. Now a senior at Ethel Walker, Salamone leads the team in points, rebounds, and steals this winter.

Jameson Grant - Bacon Academy (Wrestling): Grant placed fourth at the Class S state championships at Killingly High School last weekend. Grant, a sophomore, pinned Alexander Harr of Ledyard in the Round of 16 and then dominated Carter Murawski of Putnam in the quarterfinals. After falling in the semifinals, Grant came back to oust James Lemmis of Westport in the semifinal consolation round.

Kelsey Desmarais - Portland High School (Basketball): Desmarais scored 24 over two games last week as the Highlanders closed out the regular season with home wins over Old Saybrook and Westbrook. Desmarais, a junior, first scored 10 points and grabbed three rebounds in a 49-45 victory over Old Saybrook on Feb. 17. Two nights later, she tallied 14 points and four rebounds in a 44-38 win over Westbrook. The victories wrapped up a 9-11 regular season for the Highlanders, who now shift their focus to the conference and state tournaments.

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



RHAM High School senior Brody Kokofski broke the indoor track & field long jump record, earning him the top spot on the school's leaderboard.

'Arabian Adventure' at East Haddam School

The award-winning Tanglewood Marinette Productions, and the Friends Groups of the East Haddam Libraries, will present an Arabian Adventure on Sunday, March 8, at 2 p.m., in the Nathan Hale Ray High School auditorium, 15 School Rd. Moodus.

Admission is \$5 per person with a max of \$20 per family. Tickets available at the door, doors open at 1:30.

Tanglewood Marinette is a national theatre based in New England that has 2 UNIMAS awards, which is puppetry's highest honor. The group is returning for its fourth year, with a swashbuckling tale set in exotic lands and featuring Tanglewood's signature story book backdrop.

Replete with stage illusions and lighting effects, this fast-paced, action-packed drama is best for grades 1-6 and adventure-loving adults.

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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

Portland residents Amelia Ciarleglio and Julia Nadolski each made the fall 2025 Dean's List at College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass. They are each members of the Class of 2027.

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 kregitation@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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Board of Selectmen Considers Traffic Cams

By Anne Lilburn

Portland's Board of Selectmen had a busy night on Wed., Feb. 18, reconvening immediately after its shared meeting with the Board of Education to hold a regularly scheduled meeting.

The most prominent item on the agenda for this meeting was discussion around two different types of traffic cameras that the town hopes will result in less speeding and greater traffic safety.

The first set of cameras, license plate readers (LPR), have been on the Portland Police Department's wish list for a while now. Police Captain Scott Cunningham said that their plans to install the cameras hit a hiccup this past July, when Eversource changed its policy to not allow the police department to install the cameras on their poles. As a result, he said, the town revised its plan and pursued a solar-powered camera system that they are now getting up and running.

Cunningham said the cameras would be located at several sites in town, including the police building and on the pole that currently displays banners at the entrance to town just after the Arrigoni Bridge. The department currently has a camera installed on the police building and Cunningham said that the cameras have already helped officers solve two crimes already.

The LPR cameras and the accompanying software will connect Portland to a network of other cities that are also using the same technology. He said that they could enter in a vehicle description or partial plate and see if neighboring communities had seen the vehicle on their cameras, and that the department would also get alerts about stolen cars or missing people in other communities so that they could be on alert to help out.

Some selectmen asked how long data was

stored, and Cunningham said there not strict rules stipulating that. He said the main limitation was data storage capacity.

The board also heard details about another law enforcement camera system that might be coming to town down the road. Brandon Knox of Dacra Tech discussed his company's automated speed enforcement cameras, which the town is considering. These cameras would be mounted at key areas and identify speeding vehicles. From there, officers would be able to send a ticket based on the violation that was caught on camera. Knox reassured board members that the data would not be "commingled" with that from other municipalities and also said that the spots with cameras would be clearly marked. He said that the cameras were required to adhere to specific state rules and that tickets generated from these cameras, which would be \$50 plus an administrative fee, would not result in points on someone's record or insurance increases, making them different than situations where an officer pulls over a driver.

Knox pointed to other local communities, such as Middletown, that had had success using similar cameras to encourage drivers to slow down, and said that the process of getting the cameras up and running involved a state application process, public hearings and traffic studies. He suggested moving forward with traffic studies as a first step, which the board seemed to be proceeding with.

The town also discussed leasing town-owned land to a local couple and formalizing a process to allow residents to bid to lease town-owned lands for commercial agricultural purposes. The couple, Joe and Michelle Engel, are the owners of Highland Sol Flower Farm, which is currently a home-based business that they are looking to expand.

The land that they are looking to lease is Nolan Field, located at 3 Maple Ave., and they hope to plant flowers there to further the flower selling business that they have been running out of their Highland Ave. yard. The Engels said that they understood some might have concerns given the location's proximity to the river, and emphasized that they used "all regenerative practices," and did not use "any chemical pesticides, herbicides or fungicides." They also said that they were fully insured and that, in addition to supplying their current business, they hoped to also offer "you pick" access, as well as general public access to the flower field.

Board members seemed receptive to the idea, with First Selectman Mike Pelton, a Republican, having already discussed the idea with the Engels, and many board members saying they had bought flowers from the couple in the past. At the same time, many, including selectmen Jim Tripp and John Dillon, both Democrats, worried about setting a precedent and advocated setting up a defined process whereby community members could apply to use unused town property for agricultural purposes. Dillon also

expressed concern about the field's ties to the Chatham Court housing development, which he said was built using federal money and may still have restrictions on its usage. In the end, the board decided, without voting on any motions, to explore what would need to happen to set up a process to allow residents to apply to use town land for agricultural uses.

The last item discussed at the meeting concerned the Board of Education's school consolidation plan and concerns about informing the public about the plan with enough time before any referendum vote. Several selectmen said that the clock was ticking and worried about moving quickly enough. The board agreed to meet for a special meeting once they had received the most complete estimates on how the proposed plan would affect the town's mill rate and resident's taxes so that they could decide how to proceed from there.

The board is scheduled to meet after press time this week, on Thurs. Feb. 26, to further discuss those details on the school consolidation plan. Its next regularly scheduled meeting will be March 4.

Scholarship Offered by Garden Clubs

Applications are now available for a \$500 scholarship offered by the Portland Garden Clubs. The scholarship will be awarded to a graduating high school senior who is a resident of Portland and has been accepted at an accredited college or post-secondary school and plans to pursue a major in one of the following fields: agronomy, botany, city planning, conservation, environmental studies, forestry, horticulture, land management, landscape design, plant pathology or allied subject. Applicants must have

a grade point average of at least 3.0.

The scholarship is funded from the proceeds of community activities of The Portland Garden Club and The Portland River Valley Garden Club. A review committee will consider the applicant's academic record, ability to articulate career goals, and their recommendations. Financial need could be part of the decision.

Application and letters of recommendations need to be submitted to the applicant's Guidance or Counseling Department or emailed to sueanderson06480@aol.com or portlandrivervalleygc@gmail.com before April 20.

Bereavement Support Group

St. Mary Church, located at 45 Freestone Ave., invites all to attend the Bereavement Support Group. The evening session meets the second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the Church Hall. The afternoon session meets the fourth Tuesday at 2 p.m. in the Rosary Room.

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

Lions Accepting Scholarship Applications

The Portland Lions Club is now accepting scholarship applications for Portland resident students enrolling in a post-high school certificate or degree program that serves the public in some manner.

Applications will be accepted from students of all academic levels as well as learning challenges. Portland students can obtain an application form from the PHS guidance office or through the Portland CT Lions Club email: Portlandctlionsscholarship@gmail.com.

All applications must be received by April 15 for consideration.

St. Mary Palm Cross Sale

St. Mary Ladies Guild is conducting a Palm Cross sale from March 7-15. These crosses are used to adorn the gravesite of a loved one for Easter.

Cost is \$13 each. Call Guild president Jane Klemba at 860-301-3731 to place an order.

Deadline for orders is March 15.

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.

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

* Letters, cont. from page 6

we still have local choices. If grocery costs continue to climb, perhaps leaning into our agricultural roots is one practical way to respond — one rooted right here in Colchester soil.

Tamie Hamilton and Kyle Liang
Colchester

Note: Hamilton and Liang are Colchester residents pursuing an MBA at the University of Rhode Island.

'Misinformation' is Not an Argument

To the Editor:

Across the *Rivereast* towns, residents who question a project or a tax increase often hear the same response: "That's misinformation."

It is an easy word to throw around. It sounds authoritative. It implies dishonesty. And it conveniently saves the speaker from having to engage the substance of the concern.

But here is the pattern. No one ever identifies what the supposed misinformation actually is.

If a resident questions a budget line item that could be lower, or a new initiative that may not be necessary, what specifically is incorrect?

If someone challenges a part of a project with a fact, is that fact wrong?

If numbers are cited directly from the town's own documents, which figure is false?

Simply declaring "misinformation" without identifying the alleged error is not rebuttal. It is deflection.

In small towns like ours, the people debating these issues are not faceless accounts on social media. They are neighbors. We see them at local restaurants. They volunteer in our communities. To publicly label a neighbor's concerns as "misinformation" without pointing to a specific false statement is to imply dishonesty without proof.

If something is inaccurate, say so clearly. Identify it. Correct it. That is how responsible adults and good neighbors handle disagreement.

Otherwise, the label begins to look less like a defense of truth and more like an intellectually lazy attempt to discredit information that is accurate but inconvenient.

Public debate requires specifics. It requires accountability. It requires the courage to answer criticism directly.

If something is misinformation, prove it.

If you will not, the public is entitled to wonder whether the problem is not false information, but inconvenient facts.

"Misinformation" is not an argument. It is a substitute for one.

Michael Dubreuil
Colchester

Develop the Horton Property

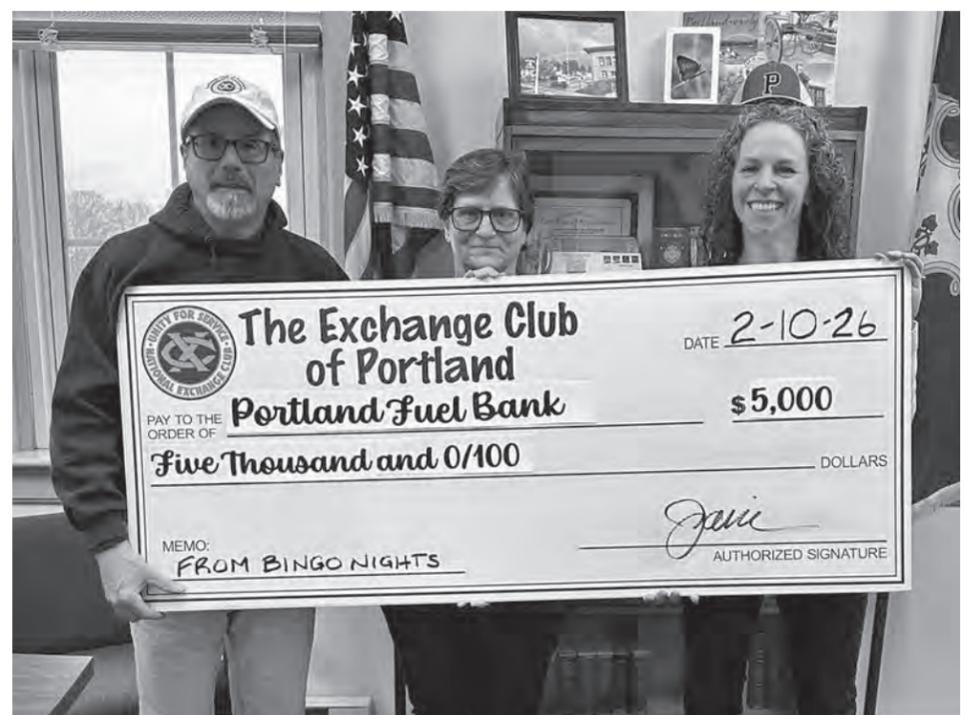
This is an Open Letter to Hebron Leaders and Townspeople:

It is time to take stock in the leadership of our town. Presently we are facing a vast expense for the construction of a New Town Department of Public Works facility. The current cost estimate by our architects is upwards of \$30 million for a town of about 9,300 souls. If this construction issue is passed by the townspeople, what will be constructed is an out-of-date and misplaced facility at our great expense. A facility that has no 3-Phase electrical power, no sewer, no town water, no natural gas and will be placed at the farthest southern boundary of our town. Also, for a period of 1 to 2 years, it will disrupt the trash and bulky waste handling of the town and require the temporary relocation of the DPW functions to various parts of town. All of which are costs in addition to the estimated \$30 million construction costs. On top of this expenditure, there is no consideration for the future town development.

The town should reconsider the development of the Horton Boulevard Property (17 Kinney Rd.) which the town purchased for \$600,000 several years ago. It was purchased as being slated for future Municipal use. At that time a masterplan was generated that depicted a well-thought-out municipal facility complex, central to our Town Center. We can still accomplish this. Let's use these funds for not only the construction of the new DPW facility in the center of the town, but also to bring the infrastructure, roads, electrical, sewer, water and natural gas, to the site for the future. Keep in mind that we will need a new Public Safety facility (firehouse and police) very soon. Also, there have been discussions of a new future Town Hall and possibly a new combined elementary school. These projects and others will come sooner or later. Please be forward-thinking and create a master plan for the town and all future municipal projects.

Please, pay attention to your fiduciary responsibility and lead the town in the correct direction, Develop the Horton Property for future town needs.

David Foster, AIA
Hebron



Donation... Portland Exchange Club members Jamie and Joann Leonard recently presented a \$5,000 check for Portland Food Bank to Social Services executive secretary Michelle Ceppaglia (right). The Exchange collected donations from its members which the Exchange matched. The Portland VFW Post 6121 donated \$100 and the remaining amount was proceeds made from the Exchange's two Bingo Nights in January. Proceeds from the two February Bingo Nights will be going to the Portland Food Bank. Go to www.portlandexchange.org for more information.

Portland • Portland

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.

Soup and Substance: On Wednesdays during Lent, Zion will once again participate in a Soup and Substance program together with Bethlehem Lutheran Church in East Hampton. Participants will meet together at 6 p.m. for a simple meal and discussion, alternating between the two churches. Dates are: March 4 at Bethlehem; March 11 at Zion; March 18 at Bethlehem; and March 25 at Zion.

Lenten Food Bank Collection: Also throughout Lent, Zion will collect items for Portland

Food Bank. Items to be collected include: March 1 - soap, bodywash; March 8 - paper goods: toilet paper, paper towels, tissues, napkins; March 15 - toothpaste, toothbrushes, mouthwash, dental floss; March 22 - deodorant, feminine products; March 29 - shaving cream, hand lotion, and body lotion; but any items are welcome at any time.

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

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

Senior Center News & Notes

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

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

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

Weekly Programs: Unless noted, all programs are free. Monday, 3/2: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, 3/3: Bears on a Journey, 9:30-11 a.m. - to donate light fleece for making teddy bears for cancer patients, call 860-342-0809; Watercolor Class, 9:30 a.m., for more information contact Bivonne at bivonne@yahoo.com; Congregate Meal, noon. Cost is \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: meatloaf, mashed potatoes, gravy, steamed carrots, peach cup, string cheese; Coupons for Troops, 1-4 p.m.; Setback, 1 p.m.; SyncoCize, 5-6 p.m., fee is donation to instructor.

Wednesday, 3/4: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; Chair Yoga with Gia, 10:30-11:15 a.m., fee is a \$5 donation to instructor; Rug Hooking Group, noon; Bridge, 12:30-4 p.m.

Thursday, 3/5: Stretch & Tone, 9:30 am.; Knit & Stitch, 10 a.m.; Congregate Meal, noon. Cost is \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: turkey pot pie, mashed potatoes, mixed veggies, string cheese, apple; Mahjong (FULL), 12:30 p.m.; Scrabble, 1 p.m.

Friday, 3/6: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; Chair Yoga with Gia, 10:30-11:15 a.m., fee is a \$5 donation to instructor.

Special Events: Unless noted, registration is required for all programs. Also, unless noted, all programs are free. Monday, March 2: Cooking for One with Marilyn, 11:45 a.m. On the menu for March is apricot-glazed chicken with spring vegetables. Fee is \$10.

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.



The Portland Historical Society will host Portland resident Beau Doherty March 8 as he presents a program about John Hall Sage (1847-1925), who gained national recognition as an ornithologist. Beau will share his expansive knowledge about birds, exploring common species from Sage's time and today.

Portland's Renaissance Man: John Hall Sage

On Sunday, March 8, at 2 p.m., the Portland Historical Society will host a presentation by local naturalist and nature photographer Beau Doherty on John Hall Sage (1847-1925), a prominent figure in Portland's history. The program will be held at the Waverly Center, 7 Waverly Ave.

Sage was not only a successful banker - serving as president of the Freestone Savings Bank and chairman of the Portland Trust Company - but also a passionate ornithologist, nationally recognized for his contributions to the study of

birds. His 1913 book, *The Birds of Connecticut*, remains a valuable resource for bird enthusiasts. Sage's legacy extends beyond finance and science. His Queen Anne-style home, built in 1884, still graces Brainerd Place.

At this gathering, Beau Doherty will explore Sage's ornithological achievements and review how Portland's landscape and bird species have changed since 1915 through photographs.

Light refreshments will follow the talk. This gathering is free and open to the public.

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, March 1, Cooke will preach on the topic "Born Anew."

Also at 10 a.m., elementary-aged children will meet for Church School in the newly renovated classroom, and the middle school class

will meet in the youth room. Infant - Pre-K children will enjoy playtime and an age-appropriate lesson.

All are invited to the church's Lenten Soup and Substance events on Wednesdays, March 11 and 25, starting at 6 p.m.

For more information, call 860-342-3244 or visit firstchurchportlandct.org.

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From the State Representative's Desk

A State Capitol Update

The 2026 legislative session kicked off on February 4th. Committees are busy raising bills, holding public hearings, and debating proposals that touch nearly every aspect of life here in Connecticut.

Gov. Lamont presented his budget adjustments, and that proposal is moving through the legislative process. Over the coming weeks, we'll hear directly from state agencies and the public, review spending line by line, and work toward a final budget vote before adjournment on May 6th. As always, my focus remains on fiscal responsibility, public safety, and making Connecticut a more affordable place to live and work.

This session, I formally requested that several proposals be raised for consideration – each aimed at strengthening our communities and addressing real concerns I hear from residents across Cromwell and Portland.

Making CT More Affordable: After hearing from many of you, I proposed legislation to provide much needed relief to reduce the financial burden on Connecticut families. One proposal is to eliminate the sales tax on prepared food at grocery stores, as families are working longer hours, and they deserve a break. A second proposal would eliminate the increased tax rate on the purchase of new vehicles \$100,000. I also proposed removing the public benefits charge from electric bills, again. Families, people on fixed incomes, and small businesses deserve some relief when it comes to our daily lives.

Honoring Our Veterans: We owe a lasting debt of gratitude to the men and women who served our country. I am supporting efforts to acquire additional space so that Connecticut veterans will have a final resting place here at home. No veteran should be forgotten.

Expanding Trades and Vocational Training: Not every successful career path requires a four-year degree. I am advocating for the coordination of workforce development, career pipeline and vocational training. By investing in workforce development and making programs available and accessible those that need them, we can help fill critical job shortages while opening doors to stable, good-paying careers.

Protecting Children and Animals: Chatbots and e-bikes are new risks facing our children. I've proposed common-sense ideas to reduce the risk to our kids. Animal cruelty is often a warning sign of broader public safety concerns. I proposed the establishment of a publicly accessible registry of convicted animal abusers to improve transparency, protect animals, and help prevent repeat offenses.

Farmland Preservation: I, along with my colleague state Rep. Kerry Wood (D-29), proposed a bipartisan bill to increase funding for farmland preservation across the state to encourage investment in these local businesses.

There is still much work ahead. Between now and the close of session, countless proposals will be debated, amended, and voted on. I encourage you to stay informed by visiting www.ct.gov to track legislation and watching committee meetings live at <https://ct-n.com/>.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out.

State Rep. Christie Carpino (R-32)

1-800-842-1423

Christie.Carpino@housegop.ct.gov

Note: The 32nd Addembly District covers Portland and Cromwell.



Carpino

Knights to Hold Baby Shower

The Council 7 Knights of Columbus will continue its 14th annual Baby Shower this weekend, Feb. 28-March 1. All items donated in the Rosary Room at the Church of St. Mary in Portland will be shared with Birthright of Meriden.

Birthright provides a range of support services for expectant and new mothers. Some of the services are no-cost pregnancy testing, prenatal health care, and maternity and baby supplies.

Suggested new items should be unwrapped, include: diapers, sleepers, blankets, rattles, bibs, bath towels, wipes, lotion, outfits, shampoo, bottles, baby bath, pacifiers, comb & brush sets,

socks, gift sets, stuffed animals, blanket sleepers, crib sheets, sweaters, hats, diaper bags, booties, etc.

A box for "Respect Life" cash donations will also be available, and gratefully received. Donations can also be mailed to Freestone Council, P.O. Box 7, Portland, CT 06480.

Brother Knight David Showlin commented, "This activity puts action into the Knights of Columbus's support of those mothers who choose life."

For further information, call David at 860-342-4259.

Portland

Joey-the-Cat

May 26, 2011 - February 20, 2026

Joey-the-Cat Elizabeth Coleman Arnold Koziel died peacefully after a one-day battle with brain cancer, which blood tests and all-day seizures confirmed. Do note, that even the day prior to his death, he was happy, bright-eyed, active, full of personality, affectionate, and strong.

A lifelong resident of Portland, Joey made friends everywhere he went... and boy did he go everywhere! Joey loved babies, toddlers, senior citizens, teenagers, adults, kids, dogs, and the steer at Penfield Farm. He had many close cat friends that he would visit, including Sassy, Babayaga, Jellybean, Zeus, Freya, Winnie, and Chloe.

He enjoyed long walks and sunsets, climbing trees and sunrises, fishing, parties, and rides in the cat stroller. He enjoyed moonlit romps, bat gazing, running, wrestling with Rocco the Golden Retriever, lush green grass at golf courses, live music, and playing wiffle ball and soccer.

A true New Englander, he loved being outside no matter the weather. He loved gardens and flowers and butterflies, insects, and birds. Oh boy, did he love birds! Yes, he was an avid hunter. Poor moles, mice, rabbits, and snakes. One time he brought home a weasel that was almost as long as him. I was horrified! He stood next to his prey strong and proud, a great and mighty lion.

Open your door, and he'd walk right in and make himself at home. Every neighbor at all four homes he lived at will attest to this, were happy about it, and treated him as their own...and gave him lots of treats! Having a gathering? He would saunter over and be the life of the party. You can picture it.

One time, when he was living with the Colemans, the house cleaner across the street thought he was a stray and took him home to East Hartford. Word got out that he was missing and a week later, those same neighbors asked their cleaner if she saw the cat because the Colemans lost him. The cleaner said yes, that he was living with her, and she brought him back. Ha!

Another time, it was dark out and someone broke down in front of our house. Unbeknownst to the weary traveler, Joey jumped in his car as I watched from the second floor window. That's when I saw the person jump back 10 feet and yell, "IT'S A RACCOOOOON!" He was terrified! I ran outside and said, "It's okay, I bet that's my cat!" And it was. Boy did I laugh! The poor driver didn't but I sure did, and I'm still laughing now.

Joey-the-Cat was LGBTQIA positive. He was bisexual; however, he was neutered which he used to his advantage because man, he got around if you know what I mean.

I'm pretty sure he understood multiple languages because he was vocal, meowed often, and had such bright and engaging facial expressions. His two-syllable meows sometimes sounded like "Hello," and his three-syllable meows sounded like "I love you." His seven+ syllable meows we could do without as they were often around 5 a.m. when he was asking for breakfast. Grrrr, Joey.

Excellent listener – excellent. Never complained about anything.

Oh how he enjoyed kicking back with friends at Concentric Brewery or Arrigoni Winery, or having a pizza at Tommy's, where he said had the best cheese in town.

They say cats have 9 lives. Our cat had at least ten times that.

He loved everyone he met with his whole heart especially Lily, Theo, Lori, Jen, and his dog brother, Floyd. Joey was a seeker of adventure, a hopeless romantic, probably a swindler, but most of all he was our hero. Rest in peace, you son of a gun.

A funeral and Celebration of Life will be held this spring. All are welcome.



MHVC Accepting Scholarship Applications

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

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

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

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

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 for more information or email questions to friendsoftheportlandlibrary@gmail.com.

Parks and Rec. News & Notes

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

Youth Virtual Golf Clinics at Chris Cote's Golf Shop: A one-night clinic will be offered on Wednesday, March 11, from 5-6 p.m. Clinic taught by PGA Golf Professional Kevin Telford.

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

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

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

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 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, April 3, for Good Friday.

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! The library's Winter Reading Challenge wraps up tomorrow! Visit the library before the end of February to complete your challenges and receive a small prize.

Celebrating Women in History: Thursdays, 3:30 p.m., March 5, 12 and 26, for grades K-5. Learn about some of the contributions American women have made to history in areas such as art, science and transportation. Learn about several women who have broken barriers and made their mark in history and participate in projects recognizing each. Registration is required.

Family Craft Night: Leprechaun Traps: Monday, March 16, 6:30 p.m. Use library supplies and your imagination to design your own leprechaun trap. The library will have a variety of items to choose from, including craft sticks, boxes, pipe cleaners, moss, and more. This activity has steps that are appropriate for all ages, but a parent or guardian must be with children to help with supervision. Registration is required and opens on Monday, March 2, at 10 a.m.

Teen Program: Spring Egg Hunt and Peeps Houses: Monday, March 30, 3:30 p.m. Come to the Town Green (weather pending) for a competitive teen egg hunt and then use the items found in your eggs to make a gingerbread house for a marshmallow Peep. In case of inclement weather, the program will move inside to the li-

brary's Wagner Room and teens will only make marshmallow Peep houses. Registration is required and opens on Monday, March 2, at 10 a.m.

Adult Programs: Winter Reading Is AFOOT! The Adult Winter Reading Challenge wraps up tomorrow! Finish reading your 6 books to complete the challenge and visit the library before the end of February to receive 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.

Art Exhibit – Portland Perspectives by Nancy Brault and Sarah Weeden: The exhibit runs through Feb. 28.

Art Exhibit Reception – Youth Art Month: Thursday March 12, 4 p.m.; snow date: March 19. The visual arts instructors for the Portland Public Schools will present an art show showcasing the work of the Grade 8-12 students in celebration of Youth Art Month. All are invited to meet the student artists at this opening reception hosted by the Friends of the Portland Library. This exhibit runs March 12-April 18.

Hamilton Sing-Along: Friday, March 13, 6 p.m. Gather your friends and family for an after-hours, high-energy singalong version of *Hamilton* (2020; rated PG-13). Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. and the movie will start promptly at 6 p.m. All ages welcome. Don't want to participate in the show? There will be a **non-singalong screening** on Saturday, March 14, at noon. (Run time is 160 minutes.)

From Liberty to Legacy – Exploring American Ideals in the Musicals 1776 and Hamilton: Thursday, March 26, 6 p.m. These two American musicals tell the story of the founding of the nation. Michael Langlois will look at these revolutionary musicals and their contrasting visions of an American society at a crossroads. Note: this lecture features video clips from the two musicals. This event is part of the library's celebration of America 250. Registration is requested.

Book Clubs: 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. **Mystery Lovers Book Club:** Tuesday, March 17, 1 p.m. *Killers of a Certain Age* by Deanna Raybourn will be discussed.

East Hampton • East Hampton

Residents Share Hopes for Village Center

By Anne Lilburn

This past week, East Hampton's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Steering Committee continued its efforts to connect with the public regarding its upcoming POCD revision. On Feb. 18, the committee hosted a community session dedicated to considering the village center.

Town Planner Juliet Hodge said she was excited for the discussion, since she saw the village center as "a real opportunity" to address some of the town's planning challenges.

When talking about the village center, members of the public voiced several hopes and concerns. A few residents hoped for greater pedestrian and bicyclist access to roads around the village center. One father of a young child said he wished it were safer for his child to be able to ride, and another resident noted the importance of sidewalks to make customers shopping in the downtown area feel safe. Some talked of wanting to copy "car-free" districts and days that they had seen in other communities, while others worried that events like that could be unfeasible, both due to the involvement of state roads and parking challenges.

Brian Holt of AirLine Cycles said he hoped that the POCD would consider the kids who "don't do team sports" who might be riding their bikes and skateboards around town and looking for things to do. He said he hoped for more bike or walking paths that might connect the community, and maybe a bike park or a skate park. Others echoed that as a long-term goal.

A big concern from some in the audience was overdevelopment. At both the village center meeting and the infrastructure meeting, some residents worried that they would lose the small town feel that they loved.

"When I moved here 25 years ago," said resident Beth Angel over Zoom, "we had a small-town atmosphere." She said she worried that strip malls would make their way into town, and said "we're losing what we had here."

Other residents said they didn't want strip malls, but they did want redevelopment and reuse of unused buildings and improvements that would make the village district more usable. And while some worried about height restrictions, with concern that multi-story buildings would take away the town's rural charm, others in the audience pointed out that a taller building might help with other goals like preserving open space.

Hodge agreed with this assessment, and said that, while a five or six story building might not suit the town, a village center might be an appropriate place for a slightly higher profile building.

"[In] a lot of small towns people have three to four story buildings," she said, adding that it made sense for a building like that to be in the center because that's a downtown hub.

One caller, Bryon Turner, asked "why is there such a focus on the village center?" He said that businesses there seemed full and successful to him and "people like it" there, so he asked why the focus should be on redeveloping the area.

Hodge said one reason the focus was on the village was that the town had several properties that were not being used to their potential. Those properties, she said, had the potential to generate tax revenue. In terms of residents' concerns about losing any small-town New England charm, she said that, when it came to those properties, "you have a bunch of buildings I wouldn't call quaint."

Much of the discussion about the village center focused on buildings like that, including several brownfield properties that the town is in the process of working to rehabilitate. Ryan Baldassario, chair of the Brownfields Redevelopment Agency, discussed several properties that are in the town's brownfields inventory and which are located in close proximity to the village center, including 13 Watrous St., 13 Summit St. and 3 Walnut Ave.

Baldassario discussed the work that the town had been undertaking, with the assistance of UConn's Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TED) program, to secure funding for the properties' assessment and cleanup. Both he and Hodge emphasized that the properties offered a lot of potential, but also that the town had to do its part to rehabilitate the contaminated properties.

Some in the audience questioned why the town had to shoulder any responsibility in cleaning up the parcels, and suggested that a developer might be able to buy the properties and deal with the clean-up themselves.

"These things cost money," said one man in the audience. "Money that we don't have."

Both Baldassario and Hodge said they understood the impulse to look at it that way, but that it was very unlikely that someone would buy the properties in their current state.

"No one is going to buy a property this polluted, because they'll have to clean it up and they aren't as eligible [as a town] for funding to clean

it up," said Baldassario.

Hodge talked about what she called the "labyrinth of funding," with the many layers, partnerships and planning required to fund things to their fullest extent. She said the town needed "a vision" to attract developers and incentivize them to chip in.

Town Manager David Cox made the point that the cleanup of these sites would be specifically done in the hopes of enabling future development and that the town did hope to partner with commercial partners. He pointed out that state Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) grants for brownfield cleanup are required to have a private sector partner, because the "goal is to get back to commercial use."

Cox and others pointed out that the town has, in the past, tried unsuccessfully to market the buildings as they currently stand, and others noted that it would be challenging for a developer to secure a bank loan without first cleaning up the property. Baldassario also noted that, while there is technically a legal cleanup burden placed on the business that created the contamination, it was tough in these cases to enforce that, since some of the contamination at these sites goes back over a century.

Hodge said she understood that some had hopes that the private market alone would solve the problem of the blighted properties, but that the town had to partner to make that happen.

"Investment attracts investment," she said.

Paint-Along with Karen

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

All materials will be provided. You may bring your own pieces to work. To paint, cost for EHAA members is \$5; cost for non-members is \$10. You can also simply visit and just observe others' work at no charge for members, or \$5 for non-members.

Donations Accepted for 'Bits and Pieces'

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

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

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

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

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

Call 860-993-5311 for more information, or email mapionzio@comcast.net.

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.

Adult Programs: Cookbook Club: Tuesday, March 3, 6:30 p.m. This month's theme is "Make a Recipe from Your Favorite Cookbook." Bring a prepared dish and 12 copies of the recipe to share. Library will provide plates and forks. Register or drop in.

LibrarYoga: Tuesday, March 10, 6:30 p.m. Yoga 200 Certified instructor Amie Meacham leads an hour of gentle yoga for adults in the Library Community Room. All levels welcome. Bring your own mat if you have one and wear comfy clothes.

Tech Help: Thursday, March 12, 2-4 p.m. Basic technology help for phones, tablets, and e-readers. No registration required, just bring your device with you.

Cabin Fever History Series: Saturday, March

KoC Scholarships, Grants Available

The Knights of Columbus Council 6190 announces the availability of three \$1,000 scholarships to students continuing their education at an accredited college/university. Applicants must be members of St. John Paul II Parish.

The council will also award two \$500 Helping Hands grants to members of St. John Paul II Parish attending Mercy or Xavier High Schools.

Applications are available at guidance offices and the parish center office at sjp2parishoffice@gmail.com.

All applications must be received by April 17.

Meet the New Minister

Haddam Neck Congregational Church and Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam invite the community to come and meet the churches' new minister, the Rev. Linda Choser, on Sunday, March 15, at 10:30 a.m., at Haddam Neck Congregational Church, 408 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck. A potluck lunch follows in the schoolhouse.

Choser, who grew up in Westbrook, said she had a mystical encounter while going through intensive cancer treatment in 2014, which directed her to go to seminary and share her light with the world. She is a 2021 graduate of Hartford Seminary with a Master of Arts degree

in Transformative Leadership and Spirituality (MATLS). She is an ordained minister with the Universal Life Church Ministries, a non-denominational religious organization that acknowledges people are all children of the same universe.

Choser lives in Middletown and is the program manager for the Spiritual Life Center of Hartford International University for Religion and Peace (formerly Hartford Seminary) in Hartford.

Visit www.haddamneckcongregational-church.org for more information.

Kindergarten Registration and Screening Dates

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

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

Registration packets are now available in the Memorial School lobby, at the East Hampton Public Library, and on the EHPS website at www.easthamptonps.org. Completed registration forms are due to the Memorial School office by Friday, March 13, along with a full-size copy of the child's birth certificate and proof of residency in East Hampton. In addition, a cur-

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

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

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

Senior Center Upcoming Trips

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gabriela Negrón of East Hampton made the Dean's List for the fall 2025 semester at Southern Connecticut State University.

East Hampton • East Hampton

Town Council Considers Property Valuations

By Anne Lilburn

The Town Council met Tuesday, Feb. 24, for a regularly scheduled meeting where council members discussed the recent property revaluations and considered a potential “phase in” of new revaluations before eventually voting to reject that option.

At the meeting, the council heard from two representatives from eQuality, a property valuation firm that handled East Hampton’s revaluation. Overall, East Hampton’s residential property on its grand list increased in value by 51%, which the eQuality representatives said was typical for communities they have been assessing recently.

Paul Kennedy, who was in charge of East Hampton’s residential valuations for eQuality, laid out one option that the town could consider to offer “revaluation relief” to property owners who might now be facing a large increase in their property values and fearing a larger tax bill. A “phase in” process, which the state allows to happen over two to five years, would spread out, or “phase in” the increased property value over those years for tax purposes, so that property owners would have time to “catch up.”

Some council members grew concerned after hearing about the details of what a phase in entailed. Council member Ted Hintz, a Republican, pointed out that “the point of the revaluation is to equalize the taxes people are paying,” and to bring the taxes into line with what people “should” be paying according to assessed values.

Kennedy agreed. “It is an equalization,” he said, adding that “it takes a snapshot of the market at that time.”

Hintz, along with council member Karen Wanat, a Democrat, worried that a valuation might prove “unfair” to some property owners who saw their home values increase by less than the average. While a phase in would allow those whose valuations increased by a lot extra time to continue at their lower assessed value, which Hintz termed “underpaying” on that assessed value, it also would penalize those whose values had increased by as much, by keeping them in the range of “overpaying” based on their previously determined valuation.

Later in the meeting, Town Manager David Cox explained one reason that he believed that the council might want to consider a phase in

by pointing out that, when looking at the overall grand list, the properties that saw the greatest increase in value were those in the bottom tier, which were assessed under \$300,000. Because of that, he said the biggest increases would potentially affect those who had the least means to absorb those costs.

In the end, the council voted unanimously not to proceed with a phase in, worrying that it would potentially harm as many people as it helped.

Also at this meeting, the council considered a motion to accept a right of way on a parcel located at the corner of Wilkes Road and Moodus Road. The owner of a property there received permission to subdivide their parcel, and in return was asked to donate a small portion of land to the town in order to establish a full width right of way. While a neighboring landowner

expressed concern about overdevelopment and wetlands, given that the property was sold to a builder, the council voted to approve the property transfer.

The council also set a meeting date to proceed with the purchase of 292 West High Street, a vacant property adjacent to the town’s wastewater treatment plant. The purchase, which would be funded by Joint Facilities Committee funds, which come from ratepayers in the communities that use the plant.

The council also heard a short update from Cox about the firehouse steering committee, which is making progress and has selected three firms to interview for the role of conducting “condition assessments” of the current fire station sites.

The next regularly scheduled Town Council meeting will take place on March 10.

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.

Beetlejuice JR. Coming to EHMS

The East Hampton Middle School Drama Club will perform *Beetlejuice JR.* on Friday, March 6, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, March 7, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, March 8, at 2 p.m., at East Hampton Middle School.

Tickets are \$10 for children, students, and senior citizens and \$12 for adults. Tickets will be available for purchase in person at the time of the show, cash only.

Based on the blockbuster motion picture turned Broadway musical, *Beetlejuice JR.* tells the story of a strange and unusual teenager named Lydia Deetz, who is grieving the loss of her mother and obsessed with death. Luckily for Lydia, she and her father move to a new house haunted by a recently deceased couple and Beetlejuice, a delightful demon with a real zest for life. When Lydia calls on Beetlejuice to scare away anyone with a pulse, this double-crossing

specter shows his true stripes, unleashing a (Nether)world of pandemonium.

With music and lyrics by Tony Award nominee Eddie Perfect and a book by the Tony Award-nominated pair Anthony King and Scott Brown, *Beetlejuice* was nominated for eight 2019 Tony Awards, including Best New Musical.

Beetlejuice JR. is part of Music Theatre International’s Broadway Junior® collection of musicals, which are 30- and 60-minute versions of classic and modern shows adapted for the needs of younger performers. *Beetlejuice JR.* is presented through special arrangement with, and all authorized materials are supplied by, Music Theatre International.

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.

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.

For more information, visit www.epocharts.org.

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 next dinner will be Friday, Feb. 27.

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. 27 will be the East Hampton High School jazz band, with Andrew Groves.

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.

Schools Offer Preschool Programs

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

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

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

Memorial Elementary School’s Smart Start Program will be held five full days per week (9 a.m.-3:10 p.m.), following the East Hampton Public Schools calendar. Priority will be given to 4-year-old children that meet income guidelines or have other factors for consideration. Additional applicants, regardless of economic or risk factors, may then be selected through a lottery process if there are spaces available. Children must turn 4 prior to Sept. 1 to be eli-

gible for Smart Start.

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

Forms received after March 20 will not be accepted.

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.

Classifieds Pay

The Glastonbury Citizen & Rivereast News Bulletin

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POCD Considers Hot Topics of Sewers, Water

By Anne Lilburn

On Feb. 19, East Hampton's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Steering Committee turned its attention to a community discussion about infrastructure — or in other words, water and sewers.

The audience heard a bit about the town's history with water and sewer systems, dating back to the 1930s, when a public water system was first discussed, and heard about the infrastructure challenges the community faces today.

Tony DeSimone, Public Utilities Administrator with the town's Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), set the stage with some background on sewers in the town, explaining that the town first started having discussions about sewers in the 1960s, when the state ordered a wastewater treatment plant due to concerns about water quality in Lake Pocotopaug. In the 1970s, he said, East Hampton entered into an agreement with Colchester to jointly build a wastewater treatment facility, which today serves several communities in the area.

DeSimone explained that while most of East Hampton is not sewered, the geology of the area poses some challenges for septic systems due to high groundwater conditions, poor draining/non-porous soils, and a shallow depth to the

bedrock. He added that these conditions were even more challenging when paired with small lots and private wells, because when septic systems are in close proximity to wells, you worry about contaminating that water supply.

Town Planner Juliet Hodge talked about the challenges that the lack of water and sewer coverage pose for businesses and new development. Town Council member Karen Wanat, a Democrat, echoed these concerns, mentioning both American Distilling and Rule of Three Brewing as companies that had expressed interest in expanding but were unable to due to water and sewer limitations.

Unsurprisingly, many in the crowd had strong concerns about sewer expansion after the town's consideration of new sewer lines led to public outcry over the summer. Hodge said she understood residents' concerns and emphasized that the POCD would be a chance for the community to define areas where they might be comfortable seeing expansion, versus areas that they wished to label "cannot touch."

The conversation naturally expanded to concerns about overdevelopment and maintaining a small-town, rural feel, something which many in the audience felt was threatened by sewer and

water expansion.

The discussion frequently returned to concerns around sewer expansion in the areas that were considered last summer, with many worried about current regulations that would require a resident whose septic tank was failing to hook up to a sewer line if it was available to them. DeSimone reminded people that this was something that only pertained to homes where their septic was failing, and argued that the costs he had heard people talk about paying to replace their septic systems were far higher than the cost to hook up the sewer line, particularly on smaller lots where compliant systems were likely to be more expensive.

Some in the audience questioned what they were being told, challenging the committee on estimated costs for septic systems, as well as assessments of soil conditions and the assertions that septic systems were prone to failing in certain areas. Committee members backed up their presentation with soil mapping data and referred those with questions about septic failures to Chatham Health District. They emphasized that there was an "obligation to protect public health."

Hodge said she thought there were likely ways to consider exceptions in specific situations, like a scenario described by one woman in the audience involving a larger lot where

there was room to space things out. Wanat said she thought the town should "look into changing language" and work on a "waiver provision" process for these types of scenarios.

Multiple people on the steering committee emphasized that, when it came to sewer and water, the town had to consider not just one perspective, but the needs of everyone in the community. Some residents, they said, wanted sewers and were eager to connect their homes. A few people in the audience and on the committee also discussed the property value implications of sewers and water, saying that they believed it added to home values, while others said they worried that any infrastructure expansion would lead to increased development and a loss of the rural, small-town feel that they enjoyed.

Hodge reiterated that she hoped that, in the POCD, the town could prioritize specific areas for potential infrastructure expansion, and also set aside "sewer avoidance" areas.

In the end, committee members emphasized that the community should fill out the POCD survey, which is available online, so that their concerns could be heard, and so they could shape development in a way that steered development and grew the tax base, while also protecting and preserving the community's small-town charm.

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. 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, visit middlehaddamlibrary.com or call 860-267-9093. Mailing address: P.O. Box 123, Middle Haddam, CT 06456.

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

Featured Artist for February: Cynthia Minichino from Glastonbury, whose mixed media works will be seen during regular library hours.

Save the Date: Saturday, April 18, at 6 p.m.

the library will host a poetry event with East Hampton Poet Sympetalous AKA Stan Lindh and professional jazz musician Lynn Tracy. All are invited to this evening of poetry and music.

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.

Senior Center News & Notes

East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., announces the following. **Registration is required for all programs** unless noted; register at myactivecenter.com or by contacting the center at 860-267-4426 or seniorcenter@easthamptonct.gov. Senior center hours are Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Visit www.easthamptonct.gov/east-hampton-senior-center for more information and a list of regular weekly and monthly activities, including games, quilting, Bible study, 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 appointment: 860-267-4426.

Live Well with Chronic Conditions: Tuesdays through April 7 (no class March 10), 9:30 a.m. This free workshop on how to better manage your ongoing health condition is presented collaboratively with Senior Resources Agency on Aging, Chatham Health District and Connecticut Aging and Disability Services. Topics include healthy eating, physical activity and exercise, dealing with difficult emotions, decision-making and communication skills, working with health care providers, action planning and problem solving.

Play Mahjongg with Strategy: Thursday, March 5, 9:30 a.m. Whether you're a beginner or looking to enhance your skills, you'll learn

tips, tactics and techniques, taught by Barbara Hahn.

Design & Create: Thursday, March 5, 1:30 p.m. This is another hands-on session of creating with center staffer Cindy Houle.

AARP Safe Driving Course: Friday, March 6, 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Course is designed for drivers 50 and older. AARP members \$20, non-members \$25, checks payable to AARP. Please register online, or at the East Hampton Senior Center. Exact cash payment is requested day of the class.

East Hampton Senior Center Book Club: Tuesday, March 10, 10:30 a.m. *The Woman in Cabin 10* by Ruth Ware will be featured.

Trips: Landscape Painting with East Hampton High School Art Club: Thursday, March 5, leaving the senior center by bus at 2:15 p.m. Visit EHHS for a painting session with Art Club students and their teacher. No experience needed. Snacks provided by the students.

Lunch for Seniors at Windham Tech: Wednesday, March 11, leaving at 10:15 a.m. Enjoy lunch prepared by Windham Tech Culinary Students. Cost is \$21 for lunch and transportation - cash only.

A Night of Doo-Wop: Held at East Hampton High School on April 25. The senior center will offer participating senior center members a reduced ticket price of \$15 (regularly \$25) along with transportation to and from the show. Depart at 4:30 p.m.; doors open at 5 p.m. Features performances by The Royal Teens, Jukebox 45 Show Band and Back in Time. Proceeds benefit East Hampton High School Project Graduation.

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

Police News

2/14: Christopher Kidd, 56, of East Hampton, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

2/15: Ryan Mokrzycki, 22, of East Hampton was issued a summons for second-degree threatening and disorderly conduct, police said.

2/18: Frederick Everett, 43, of no certain address, was issued a summons for possession of a controlled substance, police said.

2/21: William Mitchard, 48, of East Hampton, was issued a summons for second-degree threatening and disorderly conduct, police said.

2/22: Jeremy Webster, 52, of East Hampton, was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and operating a motor vehicle without insurance, police said.

From Feb. 9-22, officers responded to 38 medical calls, nine motor vehicle crashes and 12 alarms, and made 52 traffic stops, police said.

Library Welcomes Best-Selling Author

East Hampton Public Library will host *New York Times* best-selling author Catherine Newman on Tuesday, March 24, at 6:30 p.m., for a reading, audience Q&A, and book-signing.

Newman's novel *Sandwich* was an instant *New York Times* bestseller, praised for its sharp humor and heartfelt insights into family life, love, and the universal challenges of midlife. Building on that success, her follow-up novel *Wreck* — which reunites readers with the unforgettable character Rocky and her family — also debuted high on the *New York Times* bestseller list and was selected as a *Good Morning America*

Book Club pick.

Newman's stories explore the messy, moving, and often hilarious realities of marriage, parenting, aging, and the fragile beauty of everyday life. Whether you're already a fan or new to her work, this event is a chance to hear directly from the author about her creative process and the inspirations behind her novels.

This program is free and open to all. Copies of Newman's books will be available for purchase during the event, and light refreshments will be offered.

Christ Episcopal Church News

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

Food Bank 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

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 (arbitersports).

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.

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

Dean's List

Payton Polsonetti of East Hampton made the fall 2025 Dean's List at College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass.

Polsonetti is a member of the Class of 2029.

bobette@khan.com if you are interested in participating.

Winter Warmth Collection: 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.

Lent Vitamin Drive: Save your loose change over Lent to make a donation to the St. Vincent's Center for Children with Disabilities in Haiti. The Missions Team wants to provide the center with funds to purchase multi-vitamins for their vulnerable students. Contributions are due by the end of April; please indicate "Missions" or "Vitamins" in the memo line of your check.

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

Monthly Herb Circle

Wildcraft Herb Shoppe, located at 70 Main St., Unit B, will hold its next Monthly Herb Circle Wednesday, March 4, at 6:30 p.m. The circles are held the first Wednesday of each month.

All new and experienced herbalists, tea-drinkers, plant-lovers and gardeners are invited to come explore various topics, meet the herbs, drink tea, and have fellowship. The topic for March is "Herbs for Spring." Cost is \$10 for the herbs.

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.

East Hampton • East Hampton

EHHS Honor Roll

East Hampton High School has announced its Honor Roll for the second quarter of the 2025-26 school year.

High Honors

Grade 9: Aehan Amith, Alyssa Arnold, Samuel Bafumi, Ayla Baklik, Mathew Balamucki, Addyson Bear, Brooke Bellemare, Chloe Brown, Jack Busher, Avery Cashin, Garrett Chretien, Georgia Clark, Gabriella Cooke, Wren Cuthbertson, Samuel D'Amore, Gianna Doll, Olivia Doolittle, Dwyer Layla, Emma Egan, Alexandria Ellison, Brayden Flynn, Bennett Galovich, Hadley Galovich, Connor Guarino, Avery Guild, Derek Guiliano, Vitaliy Herasym, Aloma Johnson, Alexander Jovel, Grace Kasper, McKenna Landress, Lily LaPlant, Shannon Mahoney, Lila Malinka-Morgan, Logan Matte, Nathan McCormick, Aurora McMahon, Molly McWade, Natalie Melendez, Makayla Mikulski, Joaquin Moren, Ethan Mortimer, Jackson Moulthroppe, Miya Nichols, Patrick Nunes, Dash Palmer, Lachlan Plante, Aoife Pont, Emma Riddell, Tristan Robinson, Sophia Rodrigues, Quinn Rurka, Kendall Sawyers, Logan Seaman, Summer Smith, Gianna Zadroga.

Grade 10: Alexis Bailey, Anna Bothamley, Noah Cahoon, Savannah Carrington, Amelia Chrin, Samantha Coleman, Brandon Coppolelli, Kailyn Crowley, Leslieane Cruz, Olivia Currier, Noah Cyr, Anja Czaja, Charlotte Daniels, Giuliana DonAroma, Taylor Dudek, Cole Eighmy, Hadley Fazekas, Zoe Ferrigno, Gabriel Finn, Owen Flannery, Adriana Garcia, Brett Gustavson, Brianna Gustavson, Abigail Hambidge, Sean Hargreaves, Emma Johnson, Gradon Johnson, Kaitlynn Johnston, Addison Jump, Shonali Karkun, Addison Kentzler, Jaxson Kentzler, Eli Kloepfer, Kenzie Lee, Alyssa Levenduski, Owen LoPresti, Alexander Maalouf, Trent Mackie, Jamin Martin, Hudson Milardo, Noah Miro, Peyton Moulthroppe, Kaeden Owen, Addison Perkins, Alivia Peterson, Bryce Pierson, Sadie Pinaud, Brayden Pisani, Travis Raines, Mason Rall, Kayla Rau, Emily Rawlinson, Ryan Reola, Reid Saucier, Jakoby Stevens, Katelyn Stiles, Mackenzie Strickland, Brooklyn Thorpe, Logan Thorpe, Avery Trombino, Annabel Tucker, Juliana Ware, Elizabeth White, Zoey Wilks, Riley-Jewel Wong.

Grade 11: Hailey Adams, Lucy Alford, Lee Barron, Raymond Basley IV, Charlie Burr, Hailee Carlone, Hunter Cashin, Kota Cloutier, Macie Coleman, Olivia Correia, Madeline D'Elia, Sayla DeStasio, Abbie Dipace, Lilly Engel, Michael Farrell, Owen Fielding, Daniel Fields, William Finn, Grace Flannery, Ava France, Luke Garcia, Pearl Gaston, Isla Gerrie, Kaelyn Gould, Savannah Groeper, Hayden Gullickson, Aidan Kelley, Benjamin Kohler, Brian Kostoss, Dolan Krasnitski, Mineth Kulatunga, Colin Ladue, Ryan Lopes, Kelsey Lynch, Madeleine Mohr, Eva Moren, Liam O'Connor, Paige Ottone, Braelyn Paddock, Peyton Paiva, Brett Paresi, Vanessa Perdion, Lillian Pinkleton, Devin-Patrick Preble, Dempsey Russell, John Salafia, Zephra Sanderson, Daniel Sullivan, Kaylan Sullivan, Teagan Sullivan, Logan Supinski, Adelle Sylvester, Aiden Theriault, Julia Uliszewska, Empress Valencia, Taylor VanBlaricom, Aubrey Varni, Mya Viveiros, Samantha Werme, Josie Wilson, Jay Wisniewski, Sebastian Woodson, Ethan Worrall, Maria Zabroski, Caitlynn Zory.

Grade 12: Marian Andoh, Ava Archer, Sofia Aresco, Beckett Asklar, Lila Babcock, Francis Barry, Michael Bellemare, Nicholas Borrelli, Aubrey Butler, Lilah Butson, Alexis Cardenas, Dylan Carlson, Anastacia Cooke, Tyler Crumb, Madelyn Daniels, Hannah DePino, Izzy Dickinson, Matthew Drlik, William Faber, Andrew Fenton, Javier Garcia-Villa, Brielle Gay, Aidan Gora, Gunner Green, Jocelyn Gustavson, John Haley II, Jaxon Hanson, Ava Jedziniak, Ashley Johnson, Logan Johnston, Dean Jump, Kendall Jump, Abigail Kiernan, Moon Knouse, Julianna Korczak, Adriana Kromish, Jillian Leonardo, Mikah Levenduski, Bethany Limmer, James Limmer, Sophia Long, Hannah Malinka-Morgan, Domenic Mangino, Jacob Marchinkoski, Eryk Mitkiewicz,

Noah Mokrzycki, Jake Morrone, Mackenzie Mortimer, Aiden Niderno, Leah Norton, James O'Brien, Chase Palmer, Sophie Perron, William Potter, Samantha Pugo, Cheyenne Rodriguez, Shanr Ruggiero, Jackson Rurka, Declan Russell, Aubrey Stevens, Grace Thrasher, Victoria Twiss, Sydney Vicino, Caleb Wagner, Evan Wagner, Amelia Wiesner, Madelyn Wilk, Jacob Woods, Marley Zinkerman.

Honors

Grade 9: Landon Baillargeon, Alana Banks, Arianna Blancato, Ryder Bonin, Samantha Braga, Luke Burr, Joshua Clark, Kailynn Cruz, Savannah Duplin, Corbin Engle, Ryan Flannery, Nora Foster, Peyton Frucce, Giana Garuti, Hayden Groeper, Meadow Hart, Garrett Heath, Tristan Hickey, Kylie Hull, Alayna Jensen, AmyAnne Jewart, Cara Johnson, Emma Kissane, Rehina Kotsur, Landen Lord, Paulina Lukaszczyk, Riley McMahon Thomas McMahon, Ezechiel Mervil, Riley Millett, Mia Milton, Reagan Moquin, Garrett Neary, Hayden O'ryan, Daniel Peterson, Ava Riley, Alexander Scanlon, Lili Shoenfelt, Jasmyrn Skinner, Emma Snyder, William Surpinski, Mckayla Wanat, Reid Wilk.

Grade 10: Liana Anderson, Forrest Bellucci, Kylie Bigelow, Brody Buckley, Aubrey Butler, Adalin Cardoso, Scarlett Cassell, Tyler Dallaire, Luke Davidson, Dakota Duplin, Lauren English, Cassandra Franklim, Trenton Gagnon, Thomas Haslam, Aiden Kelly, Eliana Kiernan, Brendan Kissane, Gavin Kloepfer, Hunter LaRose, Sandra Markham, Addison Marzi, Preston McGrath, Leah Murphy, Vincenzo Niosi, Cassandra Owocki, Oliver Phillips, Ava Ploszay, Aidan Poston, Faythe Pugo, Leonidas Ribeiro Neto, Raelyn Saucier, Cayden Schoonerman, Rachel Straub, Rachel Strickland, Peyton Wentworth.

Grade 11: Marlee Alston, Rohnan Burke, Andrew Christensen, Miles Coleman, Bryce Gagne, Mason Gagnon, Kellen Garvey, Shea Gaughran, Kailyn Granatowski, Madison Grgas-Tucilo, Joseph Jarzabek, Adrian Jeffers, Julian Kramer, Hudson Lombardi, Madison McGlynn, Colin Neary, Kenji Nicholas, Bryn Parmelee, Scott Ribeiro, Danielle Riley, Alexandre Rodrigues, Aubrey Root, Patrick Scott, Nathan Tiano, Zachary Zgoroski.

Grade 12: Ayomide Bamgbose, Vivienne Btaun-Fales, Jack Cote, Klara Cygan, Ethan Dewhurst, Ryder Fijalkowski, Mia Flynn, Hailey Geoffrey, Daniel Green, Madeline Griswold, Ethan Hall, Parker Hambidge, Lillian Lord, Colin Marshall, Grace Pekar, Jaelynn Ray, John Riley, Angel Rodrigues, Landon Searles, Lucy Shogren, Samantha Traino, Damon VanBlaricom, Ruger Wojchowski.

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.

Haddam Neck Covenant Church News

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

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

available. All are welcome.

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

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

YPPCA Taking Registrations for Summer Theater Camp

The Young People's Center for Creative Arts (YPCCA) is now accepting registrations for its 2026 Summer Theater Camp for students entering grades 6-12. The four-week program will run Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., June 29 through July 26, and will be held at East Hampton High School.

Right now, there is an early-bird special for registration. Tuition is \$725 for the full four-week program for registrations received by May 1. Scholarships are available for families with demonstrated financial need.

Designed to provide a comprehensive and immersive theatrical experience, YPCCA's camp combines professional-level training with the excitement of a fully staged production. Mornings are devoted to skill-building workshops in Acting, Show Choir, Dance, Stage Make-Up, Voice, and Stage Combat. Afternoons are dedicated to rehearsals for the camp's mainstage production.

This summer, YPCCA will present Disney's hit musical *Frozen*. The story follows Anna as she embarks on a perilous journey alongside a

rugged mountaineer, his loyal reindeer, and a magical snowman to find her estranged sister, Queen Elsa, whose uncontrolled icy powers have trapped their kingdom in an eternal winter. Performances will take place July 23-25 at East Hampton High School. Auditions for the show will be held prior to the start of camp.

All enrolled students perform onstage. In addition to participating in the mainstage production, campers take part in "The Event," a cabaret-style evening showcasing material developed during morning workshops. This special performance is presented free of charge to the community during the third week of camp.

While students interested in leading roles may audition in advance, auditions are not required to participate. Those who choose not to audition will be featured in the ensemble. YPCCA also offers valuable behind-the-scenes training, with many campers gaining hands-on experience as members of the stage and set crew.

For more information or to register, visit www.yppca.org or email info@ypcca.org.

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Decorated Bobcat to Play Soccer at Central

By Josh Howard

After being named the conference's best player, senior Mia Hageman will play collegiate soccer at the Division I level.

Hageman has committed to Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) where she will join a Blue Devils soccer team that is coming off an appearance in the Northeast Conference (NEC) championship game this past fall.

"I always wanted to go D1 - that was a goal of mine," stated Hageman, who also desired a place within driving distance of her hometown of Colchester. "It just felt like a good fit."

The Blue Devils in New Britain are getting a player that has made an immediate impact on the high school fields, earning Class M All-State from the Connecticut Girls Soccer Coaches Association in each of the last three seasons.

As a sophomore in 2023, Hageman was both productive and clutch, scoring the game-winning goal in a 1-0 state semifinal victory over Woodland. Hageman's semi-sealer propelled the Bobcats to the Class M state championship where they would defeat Suffield in penalty kicks to capture the program's first state championship.

Following the state title, Hageman expanded her role and became a versatile leader as the Bobcats captured a pair of ECC championships in 2024 and 2025.

As a senior this past year, Hageman dished out a team-high 22 assists and added 12 goals as she was named the ECC Player of the Year. She was also one of 26 players in the state to be selected All-New England.

Hageman said that the individual accomplishments have been special, yet it was the team success that she treasured the most, noting that sharing the state championship and pair of conference titles with her teammates is what she'll remember the most.

"When I think about the four years playing soccer at Bacon, it makes me think about how close the people on the team have been to me [and] how much they mean to me on the field and off," she remarked. "It left an impact on me because it was more of a family feeling."

Along with producing statistically, Hageman was also one of three team captains this past season, joining senior teammates Alyssa Blanchette and Lanie McIlduff in the captain's chairs.



Hageman was named as the Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) Player of the Year after a senior season in which she tallied a team-high 22 assists and scored a dozen goals.

The trio had the entire field covered, each making first-team All-ECC with Hageman serving the midfield, Blanchette powering the offense, and McIlduff leading the way on the defensive end.

It produced flawless results as the Bobcats finished the regular season undefeated (16-0) before capturing the conference crown for the second straight season.

Following the team's Senior Day victory over Woodstock Academy, head coach Matt Rafala called his captain's leadership, "unmatched."

"They're demanding in practice, they are demanding on the field, but they are compassionate when they do it and that's what makes them great leaders," Rafala explained.

Those traits have now become second nature to Hageman, who first started playing youth soccer before joining Oakwood Soccer Club at an early age.

Whether it was playing for the town, her club



Mia Hageman, a senior at Bacon Academy, has committed to play soccer at Central Connecticut State University. Hageman is pictured at her signing ceremony with her brother, Eddie, in the back and is flanked by her father, Dan, and mother, Marlene.

team, or the school, Hageman said the sport allows her to stay competitive and that she uses the lessons of the game in all facets of her life.

"One thing I've learned from soccer is that if you make a mistake, you can't keep thinking about it," she noted. "In the game, if you have one bad touch or lose a ball and keep thinking about it the rest of the game, it's not going to help. You just have to move on and grow from it."

Outside of soccer, Hageman participates in First Day at the high school, a fundraising effort that sets up activities to welcome incoming students to Bacon Academy.

Soon, Hageman will play the role of incoming freshman at Central where she will join a soccer

program led by veteran head coach Mick D'Arcy and longtime assistant Jen Prozzo.

D'Arcy has been in charge of the Blue Devils since the turn of the century and is the all-time winningest coach in the history of the program, leading the team to 10 NEC titles.

Hageman said that both D'Arcy and Prozzo were both big influences in her decision to choose CCSU, a place where she hopes to grow as both a person and player.

"I'm excited to meet so many new people at college and take the next step in my life," Hageman stated. "Obviously I'm a little scared to leave all my friends, but it will be good to meet new people that can give different perspectives."

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.

Pickity 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.

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, March 2: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 11 a.m.-noon, Fitness Orientation by appointment; 12:30 p.m., Mah Jongg, Bridge, Set Back.

Tuesday, March 3: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10:30 a.m., Healthy Food Series - Sugar Alternatives; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1 p.m., Cornhole, AARP Meeting - Women of Colchester During the Revolutionary War; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 4-8 p.m., Wellness Nights.

Wednesday, March 4: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Walking Group; 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Reflexology; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Hand and Foot Card Game, Sit & Be Fit Video; 10:30 a.m., Life Review; 1 p.m., Sew-cial Time; 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming.

Thursday, March 5: 9 a.m., Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling; 10:30 a.m., Strength Training Presentation; 11 a.m., Yoga;

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 ageappropriate 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.

'Colchester Women in the Revolutionary War'

After a winter break, the Colchester Area Chapter 4019 of AARP will resume its meetings Tuesday, March 3, at the Colchester Senior Center, located at 15 Louis Lane.

Board members will meet at 12:30 p.m., with the general membership gathering at 1 p.m. All members are encouraged to bring food for the refreshments table to share. This year, socializing and coffee time will go from 1-1:30 p.m., with the main members' meeting starting im-

mediately after.

The March program will be presented by Irene Watson and is entitled, "Women of Colchester During the Revolutionary War." The program looks at the activities and contributions of Colchester women at the time of the war. All Colchester-area seniors are encouraged to attend this free gathering and also learn more about our local AARP chapter.

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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. Parks and Rec. can also be reached at 860-537-7297 or at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

Commit Dance Fitness: Wednesdays through March 4, 6-7 p.m., at Jack Jackter In-

termediate School. For ages 15 and up. Drop-ins are welcome, at \$12 per class.

Puzzlepalooza: Friday, March 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 date: April 24.

Cougars Comedy Night

The Colchester Cougars Youth Football and Cheer will host a Comedy Night Wednesday, March 25, at Bacon Academy, featuring national touring comedian Corey Rodrigues.

Rodrigues has logged television appearances on *Conan O'Brien*, *Dry Bar Comedy*, *Gotham Live*, *Laughs on FOX*, and truTV's *Laff Mobb's Laff Tracks*. In 2018 he released his own *Dry Bar* comedy special and in 2020 he put out a half-hour special on EPIX's *Unprotected Sets*. He has also been featured on Sirius XM radio and appeared in the 2022 Amazon Prime film *Salesman*, showcasing his wide-ranging appeal across both TV and online platforms

The evening will also feature 50/50 raffles and

themed raffle baskets.

All funds raised will go toward the Cougars' \$30,000 fundraising goal to update the organization's colors to better match Bacon Academy and Colchester youth sports colors, while aligning more closely with Lyman Memorial High School.

Colchester Cougars Youth Football and Cheer serves families in Colchester, Lebanon, East Haddam/Moodus, Salem, Bozrah and East Hampton.

Tickets are \$30 in advance or \$40 at the door. However, tickets are expected to sell quickly, so advance purchase is recommended. For tickets, visit tinyurl.com/CougarsComedy.

Spring Book and Bake Sale

The Friends of Cragin Memorial Library will hold its Spring Book and Bake Sale at The Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave., from March 6-11.

The sale will begin Friday, March 6, from 4-7 p.m., with a pre-sale admission charge of \$5 to pick the "cream of the crop." There is no admission charge from Saturday - Wednesday. Hours those days are:

Saturday, March 7, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, March 8, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; Mon-

day, March 9, and Tuesday, March 10, from 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; and Wednesday, March 11, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. There will be a Monday-Wednesday special: Fill a box or bag for \$5.

The sale will feature books galore, even large print books and books on tape. There will also be music, movies, puzzles, and games. Baked goods for sale are individually wrapped.

All proceeds support library programs that benefit the patrons of The Cragin Memorial Library.

Colchester Federated Church News

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

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

Twelve-Step Meetings: AA meets in the church library Monday-Wednesday and Friday at noon and Thursday at 10 a.m., and at 7:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. On Saturdays at 9:30 a.m., Al-Anon meets in the Jerusalem Room and AA meets in the Stage Room.

Boy Scout Troop 72: Meetings are held in the Stage Room every Monday at 7 p.m. through June.

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Superintendent Proposes 10.5% Budget Increase

By Toriana Williams

The Colchester Superintendent of Schools last Wednesday presented a proposed \$52,249,642 budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year, representing a 10.47% increase over the current year's adopted budget of \$47,297,722. If approved, the proposal would increase spending by \$4,950,620 year over year.

The increase marked a notable departure from more modest growth in prior cycles. The 2025-26 adopted budget rose from \$45,576,075 in 2024-25, and previous annual increases ranged from 0.47% to 3.63% over the past several years.

Superintendent of Schools Daniel Sullivan acknowledged the magnitude of the proposed increase during his presentation to the board and said it was "certainly not the position we want to be in. But we've been as honest and as transparent as possible tonight."

Budget Priorities, Academic Performance

District leaders said the proposal was built around maintaining academic performance, meeting legal obligations and stabilizing long-term financial systems. Sullivan emphasized the district's broader vision during the presentation. "We want Colchester Public Schools to be a place where all of our students and staff feel like they have a home," he said.

While creating the budget, administrators first considered mandated requirements. Sullivan noted that legal obligations include both longstanding and newly enacted mandates, such as updated HVAC inspection requirements under state legislation.

Starting July 1, districts must now inspect at least 20% of school buildings, with all facilities

inspected by June 30, 2030. The cost of those inspections vary depending on building size and age and must be factored into multi-year financial planning.

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Jessica Kuckel highlighted the district's academic standing, pointing to stable performance metrics and competitive outcomes among peer districts. "When we talk about preserving academic achievement, we're actually talking about preserving both outcomes and the systems that drive them," said Kuckel.

She added that the district remains stable under Connecticut's accountability standards, with strong college and career readiness indicators, competitive graduation rates and positive attendance trends.

Kuckel also emphasized that students with disabilities are held to the same rigorous standards as their peers and that maintaining specialized instruction and intervention systems is crucial both for student achievement and for long-term cost avoidance.

The district's Net Current Expenditure per Pupil (NCEP) rose 6.81% from 2023-24 to 2024-25, closely aligning with the District Reference Group (DRG) average increase of 6.85%. Colchester's NCEP stands at \$22,187. In recent rankings, Colchester placed 70th out of 166 districts statewide in 2024-25 and 11th out of 24 within the DRG.

Enrollment Trends, Budget Drivers

Enrollment has remained relatively steady. As of January 2026, district enrollment stood at 2,099 students, compared with 2,090 in September 2025 and 2,110 in January 2025. September

2024 enrollment was 2,111.

While minor fluctuations occur year to year, overall enrollment has not significantly declined, limiting opportunities for reductions tied to staffing or programming.

In terms of budget drivers, salaries and benefits made up the largest share of proposed spending. Regular education salaries and benefits total \$31,498,257 in the proposal, followed by \$10,841,884 allocated for special education. This increase, though the numbers may be different, is shared by many surrounding towns.

Other major categories in the budget include \$4,457,759 for supplies, legal fees, professional services, insurance and tuition; \$3,042,117 for maintenance of facilities; \$1,877,445 for transportation contracts; and \$530,651 for athletics and clubs.

Sullivan explained that health insurance costs are a primary factor behind the significant increase.

The district has operated under a self-insured health model for approximately 30 years, meaning it paid employee claims directly while purchasing stop-loss insurance to cover claims exceeding \$125,000 per individual. Over the past several years, high-cost claims have fluctuated substantially, including \$1 million in claims exceeding stop-loss in 2019-20 and \$1.1 million in 2024-25.

District medical expenses have similarly varied, rising to \$2.8 million in 2024-25. During that same period, the health reserve balance declined sharply, dropping to \$854,000 by June 2025 after previously reaching highs of \$4.3 million.

Health Reserve Error and Corrective Measures

Sullivan addressed what he described as a health reserve funding issue driven by the application of an outdated funding methodology. "That reserve issue was really driven by the misallocation of a funding methodology coupled with increased claims," said Sullivan.

He explained that a formula developed by the district's insurance broker was designed to function when reserves were strong. However, the district continued applying that formula even as reserves weakened, resulting in insufficient funding requests in recent years.

"That resulted in us not asking for adequate funding the last couple of years for the health reserve and that has put our health reserve into a precarious spot," he said and added, "That was certainly not done with any intentionality, but that doesn't change the end result that the reserve is not in a healthy place."

Although the budget finance committee reviewed reserve balances monthly, Sullivan said

the district "[was] monitoring the account, but we were not using the right data."

To address the issue, the district plans to implement quarterly reviews with its insurance partners to verify appropriate reserve deposits and establish internal verification procedures. Those reports will be shared with the board's budget finance committee to avoid similar issues in the future.

Proposed 'Pay Freeze'

During public comment, several teachers raised concerns about a proposed salary and step freeze as what appears to be a potential partial solution to help restore the health reserve.

Kaelea Tewksbury, a special education teacher and parent in the district, voiced opposition to the proposal. "I'm a parent of children in the district, and I'm a special education teacher at CES," said Tewksbury. She added that if the union vote approved the freeze, "I will make \$10,000 less than I was promised when [Sullivan] and I signed my contract. And I have no hope of ever recovering the money."

Tewksbury questioned why teachers would face reductions while administrators would not see equivalent cuts.

"Why are we in this mess? Because the leaders of our schools failed to find a critical error. In return for the mistake that they are directly responsible for, they are asking teachers to sacrifice while accepting no sacrifice of their own," she said.

Amanda Lenk, also a special education teacher and parent, expressed similar worry. "I am deeply concerned about the proposal asking teachers to accept a salary and step freeze while the overall budget increases by at least 10%," said Lenk.

She added, "While the administration has also agreed to a freeze, the reality is that a freeze does not impact a \$230,000 salary the same way it impacts a \$60,000 salary. The burden is not equal, and the proposal is not equitable." Lenk also referenced the administrative error tied to the health reserve and urged the board to seek "a more balanced proportional solution."

District officials have stated that they are working to stabilize the reserves while maintaining academic programs and meeting contractual and legal obligations. The budget will continue moving through the town's review process in the coming weeks, with additional discussion expected as the proposal advances.

Dean's List

Michael Vilaro of Colchester made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Siena University in Loudonville, N.Y.

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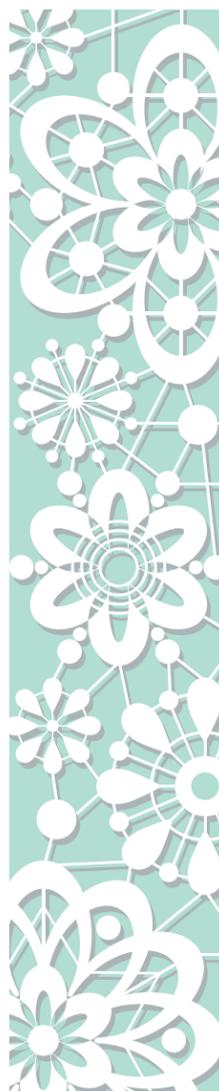
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Court of Honor... Boy Scout Troop 13 - Colchester recently held a Court of Honor for Eagle Scouts John Dalton (right) and Garrett Schuth (left). Dalton completed his Eagle project, designing and constructing a garage door training prop for the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Company which is housed at Schuster Park. Schuth designed and constructed garden boxes for the Colchester Public schools which are in front of William J. Johnston Middle School. Dalton and Schuth are the 90th and 91st Eagle Scouts in Troop 13.

Lions to Offer Vision Screenings

The Colchester Lions will offer Free Vision Screenings Friday, March 20, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at Cragin Library, 8 Linwood Ave.

The Lions provide vision screenings at the elementary and intermediate schools as well as a number of nursery schools and home day care locations. All Colchester children, 6 months through young adults, are eligible for this free

service. A parent or guardian will need to sign a permission form. The equipment screens for myopia, hyperopia, anisometropia, anisocoria, strabismus, and astigmatism. A printout of the screening results will be provided.

The Lions will gather raw numbers of vision issues for reporting purposes and do not retain any personal information.

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.

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.westchestercongregationalchurch.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 westchestercongregationalchurch.org, email westconchurch@gmail.com or call the church at 860-267-6711. Pastor Ron Lake can be reached at 860-428-3460.

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Good Earth Gift and Garden is 'Dancing Everyday'

By Toriana Williams

As customers step inside The Good Earth Gift and Garden, one of Colchester's newest small businesses, they're met with the faint aroma of freshly baked muffins, the rich scent of organic coffee and the easy rhythm of conversation between owner and guest. It doesn't take long to realize this isn't just a shop. It's an experience that can only be had on Norwich Avenue.

In December, husband-and-wife team Carl Reguin and Deirdre "Dee" Daboll officially opened their doors after years of dreaming, planning and building, quite literally. Reguin broke ground in March 2020 and constructed the space himself from the ground up, drawing on more than 40 years of experience as a general contractor. Aside from a few specialized subcontracted tasks, everything else reflects his craftsmanship.

"It's not exactly like I envisioned," Reguin admitted with a smirk. His original concept, which he came up with nearly two decades ago, centered on organic vitamins and supplements. It was to be a health-focused shop long before "organic" became mainstream. But life, and love, shifted that vision.

"I met my bride in 2015," he said.

The two met at Home Depot, and two years later they were married. Daboll, a former dental hygienist of 30 years, brought a vibrant, artistic energy to Reguin's practical foundation. When he saw structure, she saw color.

"He was set in his ideas," Daboll smiled. "I'm a little trippy. I love color. I love joy."

That balance is undeniable the moment you walk in. Pastel walls showcase bright scarves, artisan teas and handmade goods. Clay and metal suns purchased on a trip to Pennsylvania hang proudly, which were originally meant for resale but ultimately claimed as permanent fixtures because, as Daboll decided, "They're my vibe."

Nearly everything in the store follows one guiding principle: organic and thoughtfully sourced.

The Good Earth serves organic Sound Coffee, roasted in Bridgeport, and is currently the only retailer east of the Connecticut River carrying it. Customers can sample any blend before purchasing, whether whole bean or freshly ground.

The olive oils and balsamic vinegars are organic and high-end, including eight-year aged balsamics and infused varieties, from garlic basil to bacon-infused oil, which one customer swears transformed her husband's morning omelet. Customers are encouraged to taste, blend, experiment and give feedback if they stop by again.

Honey is sourced locally from apiaries in New London and bottled in Andover. A2 milk from Ellington, including popular strawberry and coffee varieties, come in reusable glass bottles, reinforcing the shop's sustainability efforts. In warmer months, they plan to offer organic herbs, vegetables and houseplants, many planted in repurposed containers to keep costs down and reduce waste.

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 19-21.

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 barbogzzo@gmail.com or 860-208-4121.

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.

Nothing here is meant to feel mass-produced. "We try to carry things you won't find on Amazon," Reguin said.

Behind the shop sits a greenhouse now reborn as both a growing space and community venue. Even in January, sunlight warms it to 70 degrees, offering a winter sanctuary where Daboll can sip her coffee and "play in the dirt."

The greenhouse is quickly becoming the heart of the store.

Coffee-tasting, olive-oil tasting and upcoming wine-tastings are planned, following the recent approval of The Good Earth's liquor permit for organic wines and beers.

One of Daboll's favorite memories so far? Three women spending four hours playing Mahjong in the greenhouse. A gentleman joined them after hearing laughter drift through the shop.

"They bought a coffee and a muffin," Reguin said. "It wasn't a big financial day, but that's exactly what we want this place to be."

Couples now regularly stop in to share tea and baked goods. Games are ready nearby, and the space invites lingering.

"We want it to be somewhere people visit," Daboll said.

The bakery operation is powered by the couple's son-in-law, chef Chris Lumpkins. In just a few morning hours, he can produce dozens of muffins in multiple flavors, focaccia breads and small-batch organic fudge.

"Watching him is like magic," Daboll said. "It's mind-boggling," Reguin added.

Everything is made in-house and fully organic, which requires recipe adjustments and careful temperature control, with no boxed mixes allowed. When baked goods reach the end of their prime freshness, they aren't discarded. Instead, trays are delivered to the local senior center, where they're happily enjoyed with coffee.

"It's important that nothing goes to waste," Daboll said.

Though new to running retail, Reguin and Daboll said the Colchester business community has been instrumental in helping them find their footing. Fellow members of the Colchester Business Association have shared advice, lessons learned and encouragement.

"We're always learning," Reguin said. "It's challenging but educational!"

They've been intentional about not directly competing with neighboring small businesses, adjusting product offers to compliment rather than conflict. January, they learned, is slow for everyone. Lead times on organic goods can be tricky. Produce ordering has been a learning curve, but they're adapting.

"It takes about two years for a business to really start paying for itself," Reguin noted. "We're in it for the long haul."

One of their most meaningful upcoming initiatives involves partnering with special education classes from Bacon Academy. Teacher Jodi Mellinger and the United Arts program will collaborate with the shop to host greenhouse

Colchester Giving Garden

It is that time of the year to once again get ready for the Colchester Giving Garden's 2026 growing season. The garden will host an information evening at Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave., on Thursday, March 12, at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be in Norton Room B.

The garden is starting its 14th year of growing and donating all of the fresh produce to the town food bank and area soup kitchens. The garden is an all-volunteer-run vegetable garden and all are welcome to come and join in this community venture. No gardening experience is needed and all ages and abilities are welcome to join in. It is a very rewarding way to help those in need right here in our town.

For more information, email Colchester-givinggarden@gmail.com.

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Kahleal Mayernick, left, Carl Reguin and Deirdre Daboll, right, are excited for the warmer weather ahead and the opportunity to greet new customers at The Good Earth Gift and Garden located on Norwich Avenue in Colchester.

classes and sell student-made items in-store.

The plan allows students, who already operate a small Facebook Marketplace initiative, to display and sell their crafts at The Good Earth Gift and Garden, with proceeds returned directly to them. "They deserve a platform," Daboll said. "And we have space."

Local artisan Dawn Smith of Sunrise Floral Creations is also planning sustainable wooden bouquet workshops in the greenhouse, with more small creative classes in development.

Employee Kahleal Mayernick, 21, has been with the business since opening day after previously working with Reguin in contracting. He now oversees greenhouse operations and general store tasks. "It's a totally different environment," Mayernick said. "Most days it doesn't even feel like work."

Reguin agreed the shift from contracting to retail has been substantial - less physical, more

President's, Dean's List

The following Colchester residents made the President's List and Dean's List for the fall 2025 semester at Southern Connecticut State University:

President's List: Evelena Picano

Dean's List: Dani Benoit, Sophia Goodine, Salim Dieujuste, Josiah Perkins, Benjamin Grottole.

Resident Elected to Academy

Michael McCune of Colchester was among the more than 150 people recently elected to The National Academy of Engineering (NAE).

The academy honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions to engineering research, practice, or education. Members are also recognized for pioneering new and developing fields of technology, making major advancements in traditional fields of engineering, or developing and implementing innovative approaches to engineering education.

McCune is a senior fellow, Transmission Design, at Pratt & Whitney. He was honored for engineering excellence and innovation in the development of technology for high-bypass geared turbofan jet engines.

mental. Learning Point of Sale systems, inventory management and customer engagement has stretched him. But working alongside Daboll daily has been worth it.

"This is our retirement," Reguin joked. "We went from 35 hours a week to 90." Still, they're "dancing every day."

From taste-testing olive oils to hosting Mahjong games, from senior center muffin deliveries to empowering special needs students, The Good Earth Gift and Garden has quickly become more than a storefront. It's a reflection of two people who chose joy, community and sustainability over ease.

When asked what they're most looking forward to next, Daboll didn't hesitate. "Spring!" And even while winter lingers outside, wipe off the snow from your boots before stepping inside The Good Earth Gift and Garden and feel their warmth for yourselves.

Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner

The St. Joseph Polish Club, at 395 South Main St., will hold its annual corned beef and cabbage dinner Sunday, March 15, from 1-3 p.m. The meal is dine-in or to-go, and is open to the public.

Dinner includes corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, carrots and rye bread with butter. Tickets are \$16 and must be purchased in advance. Tickets are on sale at the club during regular business hours.

First-Time Homebuyers' Class

All are invited to a First-Time Homebuyer's Class that will be held at Carl Guild & Associates, 392 South Main St., on Sunday, March 28, at 1 p.m.

First-time homebuyers will learn about programs that help with downpayment, inspections you may need to do on the home, and everything you need to know about house-shopping.

Speakers will be realtor Carol Ryall, Hayley Horzepa of Total Mortgage, and Ryan Hartman of Anchor Home Inspection.

To reserve a seat, call 860-514-5333 or 203-695-2818.

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REP-27-26

Preschool Lottery Applications

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

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

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

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

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

TTCP Seeks Volunteers

The Town Center Project (TTCP), an all-volunteer-driven 501c3 nonprofit organization that provides various art installations and events in Hebron, is looking for volunteers to help organize and produce a few events.

The only special skill required is a love for community and the ability to be present. Help is needed for a number of TTCP's traditional programs, like the Town-Wide Tag Sale or Make Music Day, which is always June 21 and is a time when Hebron joins 120 other countries

in celebrating an International Day of Music. TTCP also organizes the Maple Fest and Harvest Moon Festival – and both require a lot of community input. This year, TTCP is also planning several events to honor the nation's 250th birthday.

If interested in volunteering, email ttcp@the-towncenterproject.org.

Local Artist on Display

Hebron resident Chuck Paprzyca will be showing a comprehensive collection of his art at the Douglas Library the month of March.

His work, which spans the last 50 years, includes such subjects as landmarks, landscapes, waterscapes and flora and fauna. A wide array of originals and prints will be available for purchase, with a portion of sales benefitting the library.

Paprzyca's art can be found on his website at www.cpapart.com.

Dean's List

Hazel Landers of Hebron made the Dean's List for the fall 2025 semester at Southern Connecticut State University.

Dean's List

Ben Cancellaro of Hebron made the spring 2025 Dean's List at Tufts University in Medford, Mass. Cancellaro is a member of the Class of 2027.

★ Black History Event, cont. from page 1

Debra Hopkins, who told her story of activism, from her start at age 15 as "the youngest member of the Middletown Black Panthers" to her rise to become the first female president of the Middlesex County NAACP in 1989. She emphasized the continuing importance of the community advocating for itself.

Also at the event, Drey Farmer, a student in Portland High School's Black and Latino Studies class, presented a school project, delivered in the form of a proposed Netflix series, complete with episode summaries. Farmer said the class had been assigned to develop their stories based on historical research. Farmer's story featured a young African American woman who comes of

age during the time of the Civil War.

During the question-and-answer period, one woman in the audience raised her hand to say that she found it notable that she had grown up locally but that she had never heard these stories, and until this presentation, had not been aware of the tribal name of the Wangunk people, the Indigenous tribe that occupied the Portland area when Europeans first arrived.

Mills told her that that was a good question to consider, and said that it was not an accident that this history had not been taught in schools. He encouraged those present to continue to learn more.



the Y

YMCA CAMP INGERSOLL'S CHILL FOR CHANGE

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

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

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

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

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'Voices of Portland'

Pictured here and on the facing page are some of those who spoke at, and attended, last week-end's successful "Voices of Portland" event.



Marlborough • Marlborough

Kenn Morr Band to Perform at Arts Center

The Kenn Morr Band (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 band is touring in support of its latest release, *Still Shining*.

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 harmonies 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.marlbrougharts.org, email info@marlbrougharts.org or call 860-467-6353.

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 marlbrougharts.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.

Congregational Church News & Notes

Sunday Worship at Marlborough Congregational Church, located at 35 South Main St., is held at 10 a.m. The service is also broadcast live every Sunday at mcc.marlbroughchurch.org and recorded for later viewing. Church pastor is the Rev. Valerie Seaver.

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

March 1 is the second Sunday in Lent. The service, led by Seaver, will include Holy Communion. Holy Communion is open to all, regardless of church affiliation, including children with parental guidance. After worship all are invited to Coffee Hour in the Thienes Lounge.

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

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

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

is held monthly. The next church-sponsored Drive Thru Café, for Marlborough Food Bank clients and their families with tickets, will be March 29. 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.

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

Senior Center News and Notes

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

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.

AARP Tax Prep: All appointments are filled; waitlist only.

Intergenerational Multicultural Pilot Club: The center is looking for 5-6 seniors who would like to share their culture, via cuisine, souvenirs and items, with youth from Marlborough Elementary School. Program to start in April.

Transportation: Rides to medical appointments, employment, essential services, the Senior Center and recreation activities are available to seniors and people with disabilities. Transportation is available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Rides must be reserved two business days in advance. Call 860-295-6209 for

more information. Visit www.marlbroughct.gov for the complete transportation policy. Beginning March 1, transportation services will only be available Monday and Tuesdays until further notice. The senior center said it anticipates hiring a second driver, at which time services will resume and be expanded.

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.

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.

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ANSWERS TO PUZZLE PAGE 32

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CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Neil Manauasa

ACROSS

- 1 The late Madame Gorbachev
- 6 Blasé
- 11 Fleetwood ____
- 14 Make sense
- 15 The Tacoma Dome, for one
- 16 Common Roddick serve
- 17 Hoo?
- 19 "In ____ We Trust"
- 20 People born after Cancers
- 21 Epidermal opening
- 22 Watt?
- 28 Afferent
- 29 Congers
- 30 Buffalo-Albany canal
- 31 Moniker
- 32 "____ Doubtfire"
- 35 Wear?
- 40 Opp. of antonym
- 41 Undress
- 42 Philippine buffalo
- 43 Hayworth
- 44 Crossing the plate
- 47 Y?
- 51 "Roots" author Haley
- 52 Roosevelt's pet Scottie
- 53 Race the engine
- 54 Howe?

- 61 Wrath
- 62 Puget Sound is a big one
- 63 All
- 64 Supped
- 65 Rains cats and dogs
- 66 The Beatles "Sexy ____"

DOWN

- 1 Tough guy actor Aldo
- 2 "Much ____ About Nothing"
- 3 Altar avowal
- 4 Not a pref.
- 5 NASA missions
- 6 Teen's first car?
- 7 Stemmed from
- 8 Morning moisture
- 9 Wind dir.
- 10 ____ es Salaam
- 11 Cartoon character with bad eyesight
- 12 Oak start
- 13 Surrendered
- 18 Look by Snidely Whiplash
- 21 IBM machines
- 22 Lewis, in "The Nutty Professor"
- 23 Hamburger enhancement
- 24 Took advantage of

- 25 Bring up
- 26 Before the final
- 27 Measured in kWh
- 28 Spots
- 31 Cowboys' org.
- 32 Handwriting stroke
- 33 ABC's Arledge
- 34 Obstacle
- 36 "Beowulf," for one
- 37 "Little Women" character
- 38 12 months
- 39 Poi ingredient
- 43 Tyrannosaurus ____
- 44 Street wisdom
- 45 Caffeinated, carbonated beverage
- 46 Midwestern Native Americans
- 47 "West Side Story" song
- 48 On the qui vive
- 49 Mississippi River sight
- 50 Proposal
- 54 Dainty drink
- 55 Popular card game
- 56 Winter bug
- 57 Argentina's Peron
- 58 Sam, on "Cheers"
- 59 Precedes cycle or cameral
- 60 "Reflections in a Golden ____"

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Marlborough • Marlborough

Vacancies on Town Boards, Commissions

The Town of Marlborough is seeking residents to serve on various town boards and commissions. All residents of Marlborough who are registered to vote are eligible.

Interested candidates should go to the town website, marlboroughct.gov, and search 'Vacancies' in the search bar, then click on 'Vacancies - Marlborough, CT' and then click 'Application for Appointment to Boards, Commissions, or Committees' for the most recent application.

Please submit applications for alternate positions on the following committees by the date indicated.

March 12: Economic Development, Finance, Lake Advisory, Water Pollution Control Authority, Nature Trails and Sidewalks, and the Commission on Aging.

April 2: Finance.

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 Clerk's Office, P.O. Box 29, Marlborough, CT 06447.

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: 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.

Student Honored

Kyle Wood of Marlborough was recognized for outstanding achievement at the 2026 American College Theater Festival on Jan. 31.

Wood won the USITT Award in Sound Innovation. He will be invited to an upcoming national theater technology conference and will have the opportunity to meet and learn from professionals in the field.

Wood is a student at Emmanuel College in Boston.

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.

RTC to Host Bingo

The Marlborough Republican Town Committee will hold Bingo Friday, March 13. Doors open at 5 p.m., and bingo starts at 5:30 p.m.

There will be cash and gift prizes, as well as Tea Cup raffles. Food, snacks and refreshments will be provided.

Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. For more information or to reserve your spots, call or text Zina Planeta at 860-798-6038.

Dean's List

Cooper Halotek of Amston made the fall 2025 Dean's List at the University of Tampa.

Halotek is a junior majoring in accounting.

Dean's List

The following three Marlborough students made the fall 2025 Dean's List at the University of Tampa:

Ethan Demosthenous, a junior majoring in accounting; Summer Acabchuk, a junior majoring in finance; and Isabella Wiktorowicz, a freshman majoring in finance.

President's List

Ryan Lim of Marlborough made the fall 2025 President's List at Siena University in Loudonville, N.Y.

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

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

Community Outreach and Service: 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).

Voter Canvas News

The annual statewide Voter Canvas to confirm addresses has ended. Not all voters received a canvas letter. The Voter Registration System automatically changes the voting status for those whose returned letters were not received by the registrar of voters' office.

To check your registration status, visit portal.dir.ct.gov/sots/LookUp.aspx or call the Marlborough registrar of voters at 860-295-6166. Office hours are Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., and Thursdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Marlborough Lions Pancake Breakfast

The Marlborough Lions Club will hold its annual Pancake Breakfast Sunday, March 29, from 7:45-11:45 a.m.

The breakfast is being planned for both dine-in and take-out and will be held at the East Glastonbury Fish and Game Club on Planeta Road in Marlborough, which is located off of West Road just east of Exit 12 from Route 2.

The Lions will serve various varieties of pancakes along with sausage, ham, fruit coffee and juice. Tickets will be available for sale in advance of the event or can be purchased at the door on the day of the breakfast. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$9 for seniors and \$7 for children 12 and under.

The success of this event is also dependent upon local businesses, which support the Li-

ons in the form of \$25 sponsorships. Lions Club members will be contacting local businesses in advance of the breakfast and any business interested in providing a sponsorship is encouraged to contact the Lions.

The Lions Club supports programs which address various issues including blindness, drug abuse prevention and diabetes awareness as well as supporting many local charities such as the Marlborough Food and Fuel Banks and vision screening for children in grades Pre-K to 6 at Marlborough's elementary school. Attending this event will help the Lions to continue its service to those in need.

For further information, to provide a sponsorship or to purchase tickets, call Jean Paul Bolduc at 860-798-2054 or Lions Secretary Ken Hjulstrom at 860-490-9116.

Pre-Kindergarten Screening Information

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

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

tionnaire no later than Friday, March 6. An in-person screening is planned for Friday, March 20. Please note that children identified as kindergarten eligible (those turning 5 by Sept. 1) are not eligible for the PreK program for the upcoming school year.

Please contact Joanne Andrews at 860-295-6236 or jandrews@marlborough.k12.ct.us if you would like to receive a screening questionnaire or have any questions regarding the program.

Parks and Rec. Programs

Marlborough Parks & Recreation has announced the following. For full program descriptions or to register, visit www.marlboroughct.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.

Discovery Zone learning Center



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2026 GUIDE

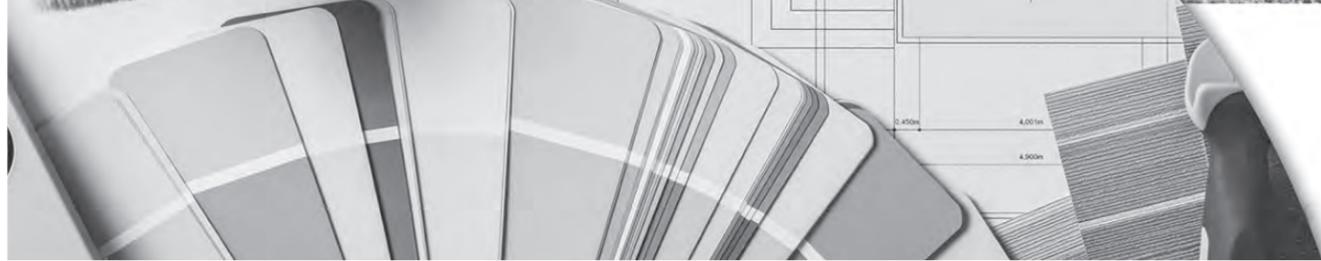
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Obituaries

Portland

Isabelle G. Downing

Isabelle G. (Isabel) Downing, 95, of Portland, passed peacefully at home on Sunday, Feb. 15. She was born Feb. 27, 1930, to the late Dominic and Lucille (Cordone) Natale. She was the beloved wife to her late husband, Robert K. Downing.



Isabel was a lifelong parishioner of St. Mary's Church in Portland. St Mary's is where she was baptized, went to school and got married. She had a strong faith in God and attended mass services regularly.

After getting married, she and Bob bought their beautiful home in 1956, where they started a family and raised their four children. When her children were young, she became a Dutch Maid salesperson, hosting home parties and selling Dutch Maid clothing. She loved it and it was her first taste of being a somewhat entrepreneur working on her own terms. Many years later, she started working for the City of Middletown, as a school secretary at Farm Hill School, where she worked for 10 years.

One day, Isabel and two of her teacher friends got together to wallpaper one of their rooms. They had fun, worked well together and had the idea to moonlight as wallpaper hangers. Eventually, the teachers fell away and she was left standing alone. Isabel still had the vision, the passion, and the drive to do this. She was determined to start a wallpapering business, but needed some help. This is when she turned to her daughter Joan, who had just graduated from high school in 1982. And, that was the beginning of "Paper Dolls Wallpapering" and it is still in business to this day. She worked hard and built a very successful business. Isabel made her way to the top and became a true entrepreneur.

After losing her oldest daughter Nancy at age 47 to cancer in 2003, Isabel slowly started to retire and handed the business over to Joan. After getting off the ladder, she still wanted something to do. She became an Avon representative, selling Avon products to her family and friends, and also volunteered at the Portland Senior Center for many years.

She enjoyed bowling with the women on her bowling team, playing cards with other friends, and getting together with the Bunco ladies once a month. She loved a good laugh with her friends and family. Isabel loved to cook and gather with her family on holidays and weekends.

Isabel was a loving soul who would do anything for anybody. She was a rock and inspiration to all of us, her immediate family, her siblings, nieces, nephews and friends. She truly loved and appreciated everyone who was in her life.

Isabel is survived by her son, Ray Downing; her daughters, Marjorie and her husband Walter Rode, Joan and her husband Danny Withereil; her grandchildren, Jared and his wife Michele, Justin and Lillie Downing; her great-grandchildren, Arlo and Lyra Downing.

Isabel is predeceased by her husband, Robert

Downing, and her daughter, Nancy Downing.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, March 7, at 10 a.m., in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial will be in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown. Friends may call at the funeral home on Saturday, March 7, from 8:30 a.m. until the time of service.

Amston

Shirley J. Fabrycki

Shirley J. (Burnsworth) Fabrycki, 82, of Amston, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Feb. 17, at William W. Backus Hospital. Born in Vestaburg, Pa., she was the cherished daughter of the late Sterling and Viola (Brown) Burnsworth.



Shirley shared 63 devoted years with her beloved husband, Theodore M. Fabrycki Sr., who predeceased her. Shirley passed on what would have been their 66th wedding anniversary, a date that forever marked the deep bond they shared.

In 1962, Shirley made Connecticut her home, eventually settling in Hebron, where she and Theodore raised their family and built a life centered on love. Shirley had a generous spirit and a gift for bringing people together. She delighted in hosting family gatherings, where her home was always filled with warmth, laughter, and the comforting presence of those she loved most.

In her early years, Shirley worked as a hairdresser. She later transitioned into food services before retiring from the Hebron Public School System, where she was a familiar and friendly face to many.

Shirley's greatest pride and joy was her family. She is survived by her three children: Theodore Fabrycki Jr. and his wife Noreen of Massachusetts; Scott Fabrycki of Amston; and Tammy Porter and her husband Scott of Hebron. She also leaves behind her siblings, Sterling Burnsworth Jr., Vivian Burnsworth, and Juanita Paquin.

She was a proud and loving grandmother to Jason, Brandon, Peter, Dale, Ryan, Jordan, Conor, Dolton, Cody, and Jillian, and a devoted great-grandmother to Mia, Saoirse, Jackson, Maeve, and Quinn. Each of them carried a special place in her heart, and she treasured every moment spent with them.

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to the compassionate staff at Backus Hospital for the care and comfort provided during Shirley's final days.

Services will be held privately. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Hebron Volunteer Fire Department, 44 Main Street, Hebron, CT 06248.

Shirley will be remembered for her unwavering devotion to her family, her welcoming home, and the quiet strength and kindness that defined her life. Her legacy lives on in the family she loved so dearly.

Moodus

Louis Michael Pear

Louis Michael Pear, fondly known as Mickey, lifelong resident of Moodus, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 18, after a long illness. He was 88 years old. Mickey was born Oct. 25, 1937, in New Haven. He was the son of Samuel Pear and Bertha (Dworski) Pear, both of whom predeceased him.



Mickey grew up in Moodus and graduated from Hale Ray High School. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy right out of high school and served honorably for three years during which he received the China Service Medal. He loved his time in the Navy, and often joked it was the best three years of his life. He married his beloved wife, Louise Pederzani, on Nov. 23, 1968. They built their home, raised their family and spent their married life together in Moodus.

Mickey loved living in Moodus and took great pride in living there his whole life. Mickey devoted his time and talent to running his gas station and auto repair shop in Norwich for 24 years until his retirement in 2002. He was a former member of the East Haddam Volunteer Fire Department, serving as a fireman, fire police and commissioner.

Most importantly, Mickey will be remembered as a soft-spoken, hard-working family man who will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by all who knew him, especially his loving wife of 57 years, Louise; his children and their spouses, Brian Pear (Patty Flanagan) of Moodus, Daniel Pear (Kara Noonan Pear) of Palmer, Mass., Carol (Kenneth) Cleveland of Cromwell; six grandchildren, Olivia, Ava, Ella, Owen, Sam, and Ben; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased in death by a brother, Martin Pear.

Calling hours will be held Sunday, March 1, from 1-3 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial will be held at a later date to be announced in the Moodus Cemetery with full military honors.

Donations in his memory may be made to either the East Haddam Fire Department, P.O. Box 375, East Haddam, CT, 06423 or the Victory Junction, 4500 Adam's Way, Randleman, NC, 27317.

For online condolences or to share a story of Mickey, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com/Moodus.

Colchester

James Linane

James Linane, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother and true "salt of the earth," passed away peacefully in the early hours of Wednesday, Jan. 7.



Born Aug. 31, 1939, at St. Vincent's Hospital in Bridgeport to John Linane and Agnes Murphy Linane, Jim lived a life defined by kindness, humor, and an unwavering presence for those he loved.

A proud veteran, Jim served his country in the United States Army before returning home to build a life centered on family. He worked at Jenkin's Valves of Bridgeport as an expeditor and foreman until its closure, after which he and his wife ran a small convenience store in Bridgeport.

He was a man of rare character – friendly, welcoming, and always ready with a joke to raise your spirits or heartfelt advice when it was needed most. With a humble spirit, he lived life with a warm and welcoming soul that touched everyone he met. Jim's greatest joy was found in the simple moments spent with his family.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Mary Ann Linane; his daughter, Sharon Macken and son-in-law Patrick of Punta Gorda, Fla.; his son, Richard Linane and daughter-in-law Michelle of Stratford. He also leaves behind his cherished grandchildren, Richard and Rebecca Linane, who were his pride and joy. James was preceded in death by his older brother, William Linane.

His legacy of being a helpful, funny, and a deeply present man will live on in the hearts of those who knew and loved him.

Calling hours will be at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home on Saturday, March 21, from 1-3 p.m., with a service at 3 p.m.

"PET OF THE WEEK"



Meet Milo! He is an 11 month old Labrador Retriever/Jack Russell Terrier mix and weighs 22lbs. He is an incredibly sweet and affectionate boy who craves human attention - guaranteed to be your constant shadow, leaning into your legs or laying at your feet. Milo is a high energy boy and will do best with a family who will be active with him on a daily basis. He is learning his basic commands and how to walk nicely on a leash. Milo is dog friendly (even overly so) and may consider sharing his home with another similar sized or larger dog(s). Milo previously lived with children and he would love kids to play with (8 years of age and older).

Pepperoncini, 3mths, has an energetic spirit and affectionate nature that make him the perfect companion for anyone looking for a smart, playful friend. After he wrestles with his siblings and runs zoomies through the house, Pepper loves snuggling in your lap, with his paws always kneading as if he's making tiny biscuits. Pepper was born in a POA foster home and loves people once he knows them. He can be shy at first, but can't resist a good cuddle, so he can be won over pretty quickly. He has been in a home with a small dog and adult cats and is interested in spending time with them. Pepper is close with his brother, Pickles, and would love to be adopted with him.



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Preplanning Funeral Services makes sense and is free to do at Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home

167 Old Hartford Road Colchester, CT 06415
www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com

Please call our office for personalized information on costs and services.
860-537-9611



For more info on adopting CATS or DOGS, call 860-569-0722
VOLUNTEERS & FOSTER HOMES NEEDED — CALL: 860-569-0722

Protectors of Animals, Inc.
 144 Main St., Unit O, E. Hartford, CT 06118
WWW.POAINC.ORG
 A non-profit, all volunteer animal rescue organization, rescuing abandoned, abused and impounded cats and dogs.

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Pigging Out in Puerto Rico... Ronnie and Carla Muskatallo of Portland recently visited Ronnie's mom at a pig roast in Carolina, Puerto Rico – and the *Rivereast* visited too!

Where in the World is the *Rivereast*?

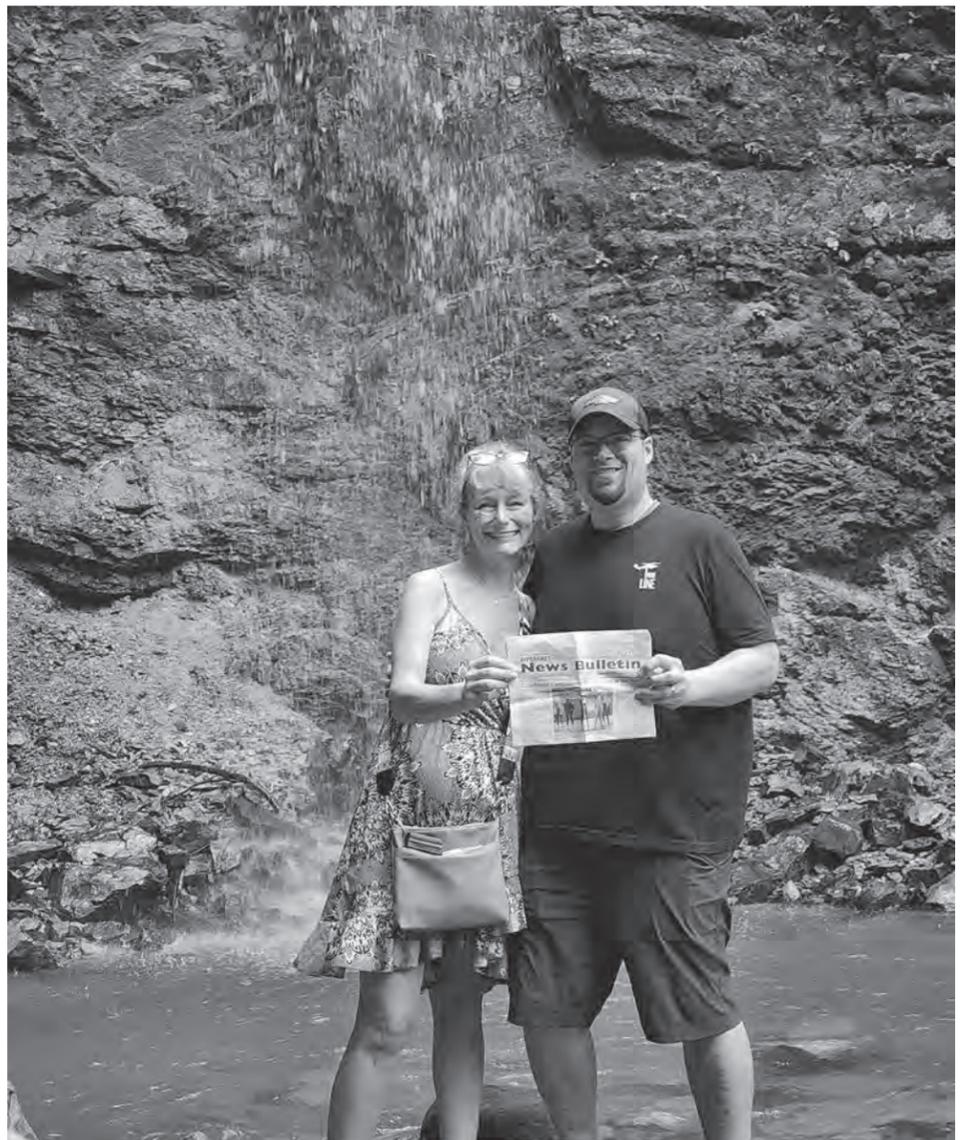
Taking a vacation or a day trip soon? Or simply going out to dinner? Bring the *Rivereast* with you! Whether it's across the globe or across town, we want to see where you've been! Simply snap a photo with the *Rivereast*, send it to bulletin@glcitizen.com and, if printed, you'll receive a gift card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



Rivereast Goes for the Gold!... Melina Rothert and Sam Oeschger of Marlborough enjoyed skiing and watching Olympic snowboard events in the Italian Alps of Livigno for the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games!



Cruisin' with the Rivereast... Teresa Tacinelli of Marlborough recently brought along the *Rivereast* on a Marlborough Senior Center cruise. This picture was taken in Nassau in the Bahamas.



Enjoying Ecuador... Yvonne and Burt Jones of Andover visited Ecuador and brought the *Rivereast* to the Cascadas Kintia Panki. The local Jibaro/Shuara Indians painted their faces to pay respect to the tribe and the land.

Where in the World?

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

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

To enter, email your photo and address to: bulletin@glcitizen.com

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The Glastonbury Citizen, P.O. Box 373,
Glastonbury, CT 06033-0373

Citizen Deadline: Mon. NOON • Bulletin Deadline: Tues. NOON
Category (example: For Sale) _____

Classified Text: A word is anything with spaces around it. For example: Rd., 2BR, 6-cyl. are all one word each. A phone number is one word.)

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PLEASE CHECK ONE

- \$16.00 per week for 25 words or less in *The Glastonbury Citizen*; 30¢ ea. add'l word
 - \$15.00 per week for 25 words or less in the *Rivereast News Bulletin*; 30¢ ea. add'l word
 - \$24.00 per week combination rate, 30¢ ea. add'l word for insertion in both The Citizen & Rivereast
 - \$35.00 per week combination rate, 30¢ ea. add'l word for insertion in The Citizen, Rivereast & Rare Reminder
- Please make checks payable to: *The Glastonbury Citizen.*

LEGALS

LEGALS

LEGAL NOTICE MARLBOROUGH ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

The Marlborough Zoning Commission will hold the following Public Hearing Thursday, March 5, 2026, at 7:00 PM at the Town Hall, 26 No Main Street
APPLICATION #Z-01-26 – 86 E Hampton Road (Applicant) Farm on Carter Hill (Property Owner) 2026 Public Events
Written testimony will be received at the public hearing and written testimony can be sent to the Building/Land Use Department at the Town Hall ahead of the public hearing.
ERIC COLANTONIO, ZONING COMMISSION CHAIR 2TB 2/20, 2/27

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING

The Marlborough Zoning Board of Appeals will hold the following public hearing
On Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 7:00 P.M. in the Marlborough Town Hall, 26 North Main Street.
APPLICATION #ZBA-01-26 – Christopher Vallera (Applicant/Property Owner) 222 North Main Street - is seeking variance of Article Three A.1, Minimum Requirements, Article Three A.3 Conformity of Buildings & Land, Article Three A.5 Reduction of Lot Areas or Minimum Required Yards, Article Three A.9 Minimum Required Yards, Article Six D. 2 a Front Yard Setback, and Article Eleven D.1.c Non-Conforming Structures, in order to expand a non-conforming building to construct a porch with a Front Yard Setback of 21.5 feet where 40 feet is required. Interested parties can review the application materials in the Land Use/Building Department during normal Town Hall hours. Written testimony should be sent at least 24 hours ahead of the public hearing date building@marlboroughct.gov, and oral testimony may be given during the public hearing.
2TB 2/27, 3/6

TOWN OF COLCHESTER PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF DECISION

At its Regular Meeting of February 18, 2026, the Colchester Planning & Zoning Commission made the following decision (s):
PZC2025-015 Mark Pensa Regulation change application to amend Section 7.3 of the Land Development (Zoning) Regulations Special Permit Uses in the Arterial Commercial (AC) District to allow Mixed Use Development and to add new Section 7.6 Standards for Mixed Use Development in the AC District. **Approved, as amended, effective March 14, 2026.**
Planning & Zoning Commission
Joseph Mathieu, Chair
1TB 2/27

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

Notice is hereby given that the East Hampton Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing at their meeting on Wednesday March 4, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. at the East Hampton Town Hall – 1 Community Drive, Room 107 and via ZOOM to consider
PZC-26-001: Tony Flannery, Flannery Row Subdivision, for a three lot Re-subdivision, Map 6/ Block 37/ Lot 1.
PZC-26-002: Ryan Brodeur, 98 Middletown Avenue, Construct 30' x 50' Garage in Upland Review Area, Map 12/ Block 48C/ Lot 4.
The file is available for viewing in the Land Use Office 860 267-7450.
Ray Zatorski, Chairman
2TB 2/20, 2/27

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WANTED TO BUY

BUYING COLLECTIONS & ACCUMULATIONS, FREE REVIEW: Comic Books, Vintage Toys, Sports Cards, Adv Signs/Cans (Soda, Beer, Gas Station), Zippos, License Plates, Jewelry, Postcards, Etc. Call/Text 860-817-4350

LEGOS WANTED: Cash paid for new or used in small or large amounts. Call Trevor, 860-841-0514.

PICKER, BUYING ESTATES, WHOLE COLLECTIONS: estate items, antiques & collectibles. Is you house packed up with generations of items, collections? Call Jeff 860-716-9428. 30 years of buying/selling experience.

WANTED TO BUY: your sterling silverware, tea set, or any item made of sterling. Top cash price paid on the spot. I can come to your home or meet you at a place of your choosing. Call/text Dominic at 860-836-5013 or email dmbappraisal@sbcglobal.net.

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

WANTED TO BUY: All antiques; toys, military, watches, advertising, jewelry, coins, clocks, signs, all musical instruments, guitars, saxophones, keyboards, trumpets, amplifiers, accordions, vintage electronics, hi-fi stereo, amplifiers, pro-audio, radios, ham equipment, tube type equipment, plus more. 1 item or entire estate. Call 860-707-9350.

WANTED: Individual firearms, collections & estates including, military & related items. Federally licensed firearms dealer. Appraisal. Richard Plaines. 860-663-2214.

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PETS

DOG OBEDIENCE CLASSES: starting soon. Offering Puppy Kindergarten, Basic Manners/What Rescue Dogs Need and Want; CGC/Therapy; Agility. Over 25 years experience. Michelle Larson, Paws-N-Heel DTC, 860-267-6040. paws-n-heeltraining.com.



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Free pickup. Call any time:
\$ 203-600-4431 \$

TOWN OF COLCHESTER AQUIFER PROTECTION AGENCY Notice of Decision

At its Special Meeting of February 18, 2026, the Colchester Aquifer Protection Agency voted unanimously to set an effective date for the revised Town of Colchester Aquifer Protection Area Regulations. The effective date shall be January 1, 2026. A copy of the approved Regulations may be viewed in the Land Use Department and Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue. The Regulations are also available on the Colchester Aquifer Protection Agency webpage at <https://www.colchesterct.gov/planning-zoning-department/aquifer-protection-agency>.
Joe Mathieu, Chairman
1TB 2/27

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing at their Meeting on Monday, March 9, 2026 at 6:30pm at the East Hampton Town Hall - 1 Community Drive, Room 117 and via Zoom to consider the following application:
ZBA-26-001: Woodland Estates, Reduce 22' wide driveway to 15' wide gravel driveway and increase the number of homes served from 2 lots to 4 lots, Map 06/ Block 12/ Lot 7B & Map 06/ Block 12/ Lot 7A
Applications are on file in the Land Use Office 860 267-7450
2TB 2/27, 3/6

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON NOTICE OF SPECIAL TOWN MEETING TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026

A special town meeting of the electors and citizens qualified to vote in town meetings of the Town of East Hampton, Connecticut, will be held at the East Hampton Town Hall, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, Connecticut on Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. for the following purpose:
1. To consider and act upon the following resolution,
RESOLUTION OF TOWN MEETING APPROPRIATING \$105,000 AND APPROVING THE ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 292 WEST HIGH STREET FOR USE IN RELATION TO FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS AT THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT; AND RESERVING THE RIGHT TO REIMBURSE THE TOWN FROM FUTURE BORROWING PROCEEDS
RESOLVED,
1. That the Town of East Hampton appropriate \$105,000 for costs associated with the acquisition of a specific parcel of land known as 292 West High Street from the undesignated, unencumbered Joint Facilities Committee Capital balance. This land is situated in the Town of East Hampton, County of Middlesex, and State of Connecticut. It is shown as "Land of Angelo Simoni Tax Map 6 Block 6 Lot 3B EXISTING AREA 135270.41 SQ. FT. 3.11 ACRES REVISED AREA 122376.20 SQ. FT. 2.81 ACRES" on a map entitled "Land of Angelo Simoni Coughlin Road and West High Street, East Hampton, Connecticut REVISED PROPERTY LINE." The map was drawn by Warren Surveying and recorded in the Office of the Town Clerk of East Hampton in Book 77, Page 15.
The appropriation may be spent on title insurance, adjustments and closing expenses, legal fees, and administrative costs related to the acquisition. The Chairman of the Town Council, the Town Manager or any other proper officer or official of the Town is authorized on behalf of the Town to enter into any agreement, to execute any documents, and take any other actions necessary or desirable to acquire said real estate.
2. That the Town Council, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Town Council, the Town Manager, the Finance Director, and other proper officers and officials of the Town are authorized to take all other action which is necessary or desirable to acquire said parcel of land.
3. That the Town hereby declares its official intent under Section 1.150-2 of the Federal Income Tax Regulations (the "Treasury Regulations") that project costs may be paid from temporary advances of available funds, which are paid within sixty (60) days prior to and any time after the date of passage of this resolution in the maximum amount of \$105,000 for the ACQUISITION OF REAL ESTATE AT 292 WEST HIGH STREET (the "Project"), and that (except to the extent reimbursed from grant moneys) the Town reasonably expects to reimburse any such advances from the proceeds of bonds, notes or other obligations (the "Obligations") in an aggregate principal amount not in excess of \$105,000 for the Project. Such Obligations shall be issued to reimburse such expenditures not later than eighteen (18) months after the later of the date of the expenditure or the substantial completion of the project, or such later date the Treasury Regulations may authorize, but in no event more than three years after the original expenditure is paid. The Treasurer, or designee, is authorized to pay expenses of the project in accordance herewith pending the issuance of reimbursement Obligations. The Town is authorized to amend this declaration of official intent (except as to the maximum amount) as they deem necessary or advisable and to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the Obligations. This resolution is adopted solely for purposes of compliance with the Treasury Regulations and may not be used or relied on for any other purpose.

Dated at East Hampton, Connecticut, this 24th day of February 2026.
PER ORDER OF THE EAST HAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL
EAST HAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL
Dean Markham, Chairman
Jack Solomon, Vice Chairman
Timothy Feegel
Ted Hintz, Jr.
Richard Knotek
Joelyn Leon
Karen Wanat
1TB 2/27

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ASK A SILLY QUESTION

**LEGAL NOTICE of PUBLIC HEARING
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Town of Portland, CT**

Notice is hereby given that there will be a public hearing on the proposed Budget for 2026-2027 to be held, by the Board of Selectmen pursuant to Section 1201.3 of the Town of Portland Charter, at the following place and time:
**Tuesday, March 10, 2026
7:00 P.M.**
**Mary Flood Room – Public Library
20 Freestone Avenue, Portland CT**
In-person and live streamed on Zoom A
SUBJECT: General Government, Board of Education Budget, and all other Special Revenue Funds
At this hearing, any resident or taxpayer may be heard concerning the proposed budgets. Copies of the proposed budget are available as of March 2, 2026 for inspection in the Town Clerk's Office, Public Library and online at www.portlandct.org. Dated this 27th day of February 2026
Attest: Michael A. Pelton, First Selectman

1TB 2/27

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
HEBRON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
HEBRON, CT**

Pursuant to Section 9 of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Regulations of the Town of Hebron, the Conservation Commission has scheduled a Public Hearing on the following application:
Petition 2026-02, Town of Hebron, 550 Old Colchester Road, Demolition and Reconstruction of the Hebron Department of Public Works Facility and Transfer Station – Specific to Possible Inland Wetlands and Upland Review Area Impact.
The hearing will be held Thursday, March 12, 2026, at 7:30 P.M. at a Virtual Meeting. There will be a time limit of 3 minutes for each resident that wishes to address the Commission.
CONSERVATION COMMISSION Public Hearing (virtual)
Mar 12, 2026, 7:30–8:30 PM (America/New York)
Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://meet.goto.com/910135621>
You can also dial in using your phone.
Access Code: 910-135-621
United States: +1 (872) 240-3412
Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:
<https://meet.goto.com/install>
Dated at Hebron, CT this 20th day of February 2026.
James P. Cordier, Conservation and Inland Wetlands Agent
For Tom Loto, Chairman, Hebron Conservation Commission

2TB 2/27, 3/6

.....
**YOUR AD
Should Be Here!**
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**CALL US AT:
860-633-4691**
.....



EMPLOYMENT

FINANCIAL PLANNING ADMIN ASSISTANT: Small financial planning firm in Glastonbury looking for a full-time, M-F, in-office admin assistant. Must be highly organized and professional with prior admin experience in a financial planning firm. Responsibilities would include: greeting clients, ability to confidently operate a multi-line phone system, accurate data entry, preparing correspondence, completion of financial account forms, filing and maintaining accurate records. The ability to multi task in a fast-paced office environment is vital. A high degree of computer literacy and proficiency is needed. Must be able to comfortably navigate Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, Outlook) and also have knowledge of other financial planning platforms. Experience with Orion and Schwab Forms is a plus. Must be able to work independently. Applicants must have strong interpersonal skills, be a willing team player and bring a positive attitude to the office. We are a very service-oriented firm and therefore applicants should have a desire and ability to provide exceptional customer service. We do have our dog in the office so you must be a dog lover.

PT BATHER / GROOMER'S ASSISTANT: Bather/Groomer's assistant. Prep, bathe dogs. Must be able to lift 50lbs. Experienced dog handlers preferred. Apply in person, 283 Main Street, Portland.



Marlborough Seeks Public Works Foreman

The Town of Marlborough is accepting applications for a Public Works Foreman to lead the team responsible for maintaining town-owned facilities including town roads and stormwater systems, vehicle and machinery fleet, town hall, public works garage, fire houses, transfer station, Blish Park, recreation fields, cemeteries, and the town green. The Foreman reports to the Town Manager, schedules crewmembers, and directs daily operations of the PW crew. The Foreman exercises considerable judgment and is responsible for innovating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of all functions under their purview.
Applicants should have a high school diploma or GED and experience maintaining facilities, landscaping, construction, and/or skilled trades. Experience leading teams is strongly preferred.
The expected wage range is \$35.53 - \$37.41 per hour, depending on experience and qualifications. The total compensation package includes health and dental insurance, employer HSA contribution, 457 defined contribution retirement plan with employer match, employer sponsored life insurance, tuition reimbursement, professional development, accrued leave time (vacation and sick), and 12 paid holidays.
Applicants should submit a cover letter, application, and resume to David Porter, Town Manager, via email (dporter@marlboroughct.gov) or mail (26 N. Main Street, Marlborough, CT 06447). Applicants should be prepared to submit professional references. Position open until filled. First review of applications on March 6.

1TB 2/27

DENTIST WANTED

COLCHESTER DENTAL GROUP Seeking a Part-time, full-time, or part-time leading to full time. Eventual buy-in and/or partnership option, for a fee-for-service dental office willing to explore all of these possibilities. For the right person, this is an ideal opportunity. One owner AACD accredited dentist practicing full-time, and available to mentor as needed.
Benefits and schedule are negotiable. We are well known as the best in the area, and we intend to keep it that way. Our incredible staff has always been one of consistency, longevity and dedication.
Resumes can be sent to 79A Norwich Avenue, Colchester CT 06415 or TheCDG@sbcglobal.net

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