

News Bulletin

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

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Thank You for the Music... East Hampton High School's production of *Mamma Mia!* premieres this weekend. Pictured from left are senior Jillian Leonardo as Rosie, senior Grace Pekar as Tanya, sophomore Leah Murphy as Sophie, and sophomore Taylor Dudek as Donna. For more on the musical, see the story on page 14.

Residents Slam Proposed Biosolids Facility

By Anne Lilburn

What started this week as an East Hampton Town Council meeting about a possible land acquisition for water treatment plant upgrades turned into a standing-room-only, and at times raucous council meeting Tuesday night, where residents expressed their outrage over both a proposed biosolids facility and the behavior of a Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) official.

By the time the meeting drew to a close, residents had issued calls to fire not just that official, but the town manager as well.

Tuesday actually saw two contentious council meetings – one in the morning and one in the evening. At the first meeting, held at 8:30 a.m., the council was set to review an opinion from the town attorney regarding a proposed town meeting about the purchase of a land parcel located at 292 West High St. “for use in relation to future improvements at the wastewater treatment plant.”

The meeting was the result of a series of events that began when the town scheduled a town meeting, with an in-person vote by residents, regarding that land purchase.

News of that town meeting seemed to spread on Facebook even before it had been announced on the official town website, and residents quickly responded by tying it to a separate, privately funded conceptual project that had been proposed by Griffin Residuals, a Georgia-based company that operates regional biosolids processing facilities.

Town Manager David Cox insisted that the two issues – the proposed biosolids plant, which according to town officials still needed land and would also need to go through several regulatory checkpoints; and the land acquisition, which would be acquired for use by the municipal wastewater treatment plant – were entirely separate.

“The acquisition of the land and the conceptual biosolids facility that has been discussed are unrelated,” he said at the Tuesday morning council meeting. He also said this in previous discussion with the *Rivereast*.

Still, many in the public, and some council members, remained unconvinced. The public responses ranged widely, from those who seemed to believe that the vote originally scheduled for Tuesday night would directly approve or deny the biosolids plant, to those who thought that the parcel at stake would house the biosolids facility, to still others who believed that the separate items were likely connected in some as-yet-unclear way, due to some coincidental timing and the involvement of certain public officials who had publicly advocated for both projects.

With the town meeting vote scheduled for Tuesday night, just prior to the regularly scheduled town council meeting, and while conver-

See Proposed Facility, page 13

Forensic Audit Ordered in Colchester

By Toriana Williams

Colchester continues to be the center of growing controversy following the emergence of a financial shortfall in the shared health insurance reserve fund between the town and the Board of Education, as well as the discussion of a proposed pay freeze for teachers as a possible way to help offset the deficit.

In a joint statement written by First Selectman Bernie Dennler and Board of Education Chair Stefanie Tracey-Calash – both Democrats – the town and school officials explained that Colchester operates a shared, self-insured health insurance fund that is used to directly pay employee health insurance claims for both municipal and school district staff. Because the fund is jointly maintained, its financial conditions affect both the town government and the school district.

According to the statement, concerns about the fund's status became clearer earlier this year after the town hired a new insurance broker in December. In January, the broker conducted an analysis of the fund and indicated that the

BOE's portion of the account could face a shortfall of roughly \$1 million during the current fiscal year.

Because the account is shared between the town and the school district, officials emphasized that the funding status of the reserve is a matter of mutual concern. The issue has been discussed at several recent public meetings, including the Jan. 28 Board of Finance meeting and a Feb. 9 joint insurance subcommittee meeting. At those meetings, representatives from the BOE said they had identified potential funding sources that could be used to address the shortfall during the current fiscal year.

Town officials stated that the deficit appeared to have been partly driven by the misapplication of a funding formula used to determine contributions to the shared insurance account. According to the statement, the formula error occurred on the BOE's side of the account and did not affect the town's contribution levels, as the two bodies maintain separate finance departments.

“The town expects to make net positive contributions to the fund this fiscal year,” the statement read. However, officials also noted that health insurance claims can fluctuate significantly and that maintaining an adequate reserve is important to ensure stability.

In addition to the funding discrepancy, officials also warned that rising health care costs are creating further financial pressures for both the town and the school district. Both sides expect a significant increase in projected claims in the coming fiscal year, which could place additional strain on budgets even as officials work to address the current shortfall.

Forensic Audit Authorized

Dennler and Tracey-Calash said they have been working together to coordinate a response to the situation. As part of that effort, the BOE recently voted in a public session to authorize the law firm Shipman & Goodwin, LLP to hire a forensic auditor to review the funding and management of the insurance reserve fund. The

See Forensic Audit, page 18

Inside...

Portland	
Schools Plan Revealed	pg 8
Portland	
POCD Planning Session	pg 9
Andover	
Connecting CT After Dark	pg 13
Marlborough	
BOS Plans for Field Maintenance	pg 19
Colchester	
Bacon Star Continues to Shine	pg 28
Colchester	
Canine Queen Reigns Supreme	pgs 30

Crossword Puzzle...Pg 29

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Market ad on page 39

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Tap into Nature

AHM Youth & Family Services and St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Hebron partner each year to host Tap into Nature during Hebron's Maple Festival.

This year's event will be held Saturday, March 21, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., and Sunday, March 22, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Tap into Nature is located both indoors & outdoors at AHM Youth & Family Services, located at 25 Pendleton Drive in Hebron. All ages are wel-

come.

This free event will feature exhibitors from Meigs Point Nature Center, Institute for American Indian Studies (Saturday), Mystic Aquarium (Sunday), Blue Moon Raptors, Hebron Pollinator Pathway, Riverside Reptiles, Hebron Paths and Trails, Composting, and of course, demonstrations of maple tree-tapping and maple syrup-making.

Attention Essayists and Orators!

The Hebron 250 Committee is sponsoring an essay and oratorical contest for RHAM High School students. The winning entry will be awarded \$250 and will present their essay at Hebron's July 4th ceremony. Here is a summary of the guidelines:

Theme: During the American Revolution, Connecticut was called "The Provisions State." What did the eastern region of Connecticut, including Hebron, Andover, Marlborough and Columbia, contribute to the war effort? Please explore the contributions of soldiers, women

working on the homefront, farmers and manufacturers.

Format and Writing standards: 500 words (3.5 - 5 minute speech); MLA style and guidelines; original writing, without the use of AI applications.

Deadline: Friday, March 27.

More information is available through coordinating teachers at RHAM, Margaret Clifton, Jennifer Stachowiak and Rebecca Fontaine. You may also email Lynn Leavenworth at lleavenwortharc17@gmail.com.

KinderRHAMa Summer Camp Registration

KinderRHAMa Preschool Summer Camp Registration is underway. The program is held at the AHM KinderRHAMa classroom and play yard at RHAM High School, and is for children ages 3-5 who have not yet started kindergarten.

Two early childhood teachers staff the program along with volunteers. Hours are 9 a.m.-noon Monday through Friday. Families can choose to enroll for one to eight weeks.

In camp, children work on social skills, gross and fine motor and school readiness skills in a relaxed atmosphere while enjoying summer recreational activities inside and outside. Children must turn 3 by Sept. 1 and campers must be fully toilet-trained to participate.

Cost per week is \$125 (or \$100 for the 6/29-7/2 week). The dates and themes are as follows:

Week 1: June 22-26 - Garden Adventures; Week 2: June 29-July 2 - Locomotion (No Camp July 3); Week 3: July 6-10 - Dinosaurs; Week 4: July 13-17 - Pirates; Week 5: July 20-24 - Ocean Commotion; Week 6: July 27-31 - Olympics; Week 7: Aug. 3-7 - Space Invaders; Week 8: Aug. 10-14 - Fun with Food To register, go to ahmyouth.recdesk.com/Community/Program?category=4. Financial aid may be available for families who qualify by filling out the form at: ahmyouth.org/program-scholarship-application.

For more information, visit ahmyouth.org/programs-services/kinderrhama-preschool-program. If you have further questions, please contact Becky Murray at beckym@ahmyouth.org or (860) 860-228-0871.

AHM's College Scholarships Open for Applications

AHM Youth & Family Services is accepting scholarship applications from Andover, Hebron, and Marlborough students who are planning to attend college in the fall.

Application deadline is May 15. Find the online application at: <https://ahmyouth.org/college-scholarship-application>. The scholarships are:

Erin Garvie: This \$1,500 scholarship was created by the Garvie family and friends. Each year, two college scholarships are awarded to graduating high school senior females who have been accepted to a two or four year college/university, have participated in high school athletics and exhibited leadership qualities.

Paige Houston: This \$500 scholarship was created by the Houston family and friends when

Paige passed away in 2013. Each year, one college scholarship is awarded to a RHAM High School graduate who has been accepted to a certificate program, trade school, or 2-4 year college/university, and is pursuing a degree in one of the following fields: education, human services, mental health, juvenile justice, or pediatric medicine. Special consideration will be given to students volunteering in the KinderRHAMa program (an AHM program partnership with RHAM High School).

William Stelzner: This \$500 scholarship was created by the Stelzner family and friends. Each year, one college scholarship is awarded to a RHAM High School graduate who plans to attend a 2-year college and has volunteered in the community.

KinderRHAMa Registration Opens March 16

AHM Youth and Family Services' KinderRHAMa Preschool, located at RHAM High School, will register students for 2026-27 starting Monday, March 16. Children ages 3-5 can attend the program. Children must be 3 by Sept. 1, 2026, and toilet-trained in order to attend.

Two experienced teachers staff the program and RHAM students assist in the classroom. The program follows the Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) from the State of CT for preschool aged children. Regular activities include circle/story time, outside play, science and math based activities, and daily arts and crafts projects.

Part-day and full-day options are offered. The

3-year-old program will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m.-noon, and the 4-year-old program will be held Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. The full-day option from is offered from 7 a.m.-3 p.m. There are also limited spaces to have your child attend five days a week from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.

The two-day program is \$2,490/year; the three-day program is \$4,465/year; and the five-day program is \$7,400/year. The two-day program with extended day (Tuesday/Thursday from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.) is \$3,600/year, and the three-day/week program with extended day (Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.), is \$5,400/year. Tuition can be paid in 10 installments. Financial aid may be available for families who qualify.

Registration will be online, at ahmyouth.recdesk.com/Community/Home. Families will be informed as to whether their child has a space within a week. If they have a space, families will be asked to pay a \$45 registration fee and \$150 deposit to hold their child's space.

For more information, contact Becky Murray at 860-228-0971 or beckym@ahmyouth.org.

Incoming Parent Orientation

RHAM Middle School's Orientation and Transition Program for parents/guardians of incoming 7th graders on Tuesday, April 7, at 6 p.m., in the high school auditorium.



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From the Editor's Desk Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

If you've put up with my, for lack of a better word, whining about the brutal winter this year, then you know I was loving the weather on Monday and Tuesday. Temperatures in the 70s both days! It was a delightful taste of spring – heck, it was a delightful taste of early summer.

But that's all it was.

Veterans of Connecticut winters are aware this is what is known as "Fool's Spring." It arrives often at about this time of year, and tempts you to put those sweaters and snow boots away, open all your windows, and frolic joyfully in the streets. It's all a ruse, though. What inevitably follows is "Second Winter" – a time when temperatures drop back into the 20s and 30s, you perhaps see some flakes in the air, and you begin to wonder what you did to Mother Nature to cause her to tease you so.

Sure enough, as I write this Tuesday night, the forecast calls for highs to be back in the mid-30s again by Tuesday of next week.

New England, as former NBC Connecticut anchor Heidi Voight shared on Facebook this week, actually has much more than four seasons each year. After we get through Second Winter, we'll have the Spring of Deception, followed by Third Winter, then The Pollening, then Actual Spring. Summer will then arrive, followed by Hell's Front Porch, then False Fall, then Second Summer, and finally, Actual Fall.

Personally, I wouldn't mind if we skipped a couple of those seasons this year and headed into Actual Spring pretty quickly. I'd say we've earned it, folks; wouldn't you?

Of course, no matter how many seasons we wind up with this year, you can't stop baseball from coming. Connecticut's favorite Double A baseball team, the Hartford Yard Goats, is

gearing up for another fun season, and on Tuesday they shared news of a...well, interesting treat they have planned for one night only this June.

Tuesday, June 9, will be "Eras Night" at Dunkin' Park – a night to celebrate Taylor Swift. There will be Taylor music, sing-along moments, and even an appearance by DJ Swiftie. There will also be on the menu a creation the Yard Goats are calling the "Anti-Hero."

Named after Taylor's hit song from the album *Midnights*, the item is a grilled 2-foot all-beef hot dog nestled inside 11 powdered mini-donuts, topped with a mustard-ketchup drizzle and sweet candied pink & blue sprinkles, served on an artisan Italian loaf bun.

I'm guessing, from the size of that thing, the Yard Goats will encourage you to share it with a friend or five. Nobody needs to eat that all at once.

I'm tempted to try a few bites of it though. It sounds delicious and weird all at once.

Baseball, hot dogs, doughnuts, and Taylor Swift. Each of them is great on their own – and on June 9, you get to enjoy them all at once.

Are you 55 and like to bowl? Then you're invited to join one of three morning leagues forming at Kickback n' Bowl in East Hampton.

The Spring Senior Mixed Bowling Leagues will play Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 11 a.m. starting March 23. Anyone in the *Rivereast* circulation area who's 55 or older is welcome to join.

If interested, contact Jack Anderson at 860-882-3752 or jackande52@aol.com.

Editor's Desk continued on page 10



Bowling Community Pulls Together... The bowling community at Kickback n Bowl recently came together to help Ray's Rebel member Derek Guiliano and his family, after the loss of their home due to a fire on Browning Drive in January. Pictured from left are Derek, Cheryl and Domenic Guiliano, along with coach Becky Godwin.

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

Clarification

In last week's *Rivereast*, in a story entitled "The Next Few Steps for Bacon Projects," there is a reference to the Colchester Board of Education's "alleged authorization of a forensic audit." The *Rivereast* was able to confirm after press time the board did indeed authorize the audit. A story on the audit is in this issue.

Enough is Enough

To the Editor:

When is enough enough? When it puts an unwarranted burden on the majority in a community. We the people of Colchester have just experienced a school system expense by referendum of more than \$19 million and now the BOE proposes a 10.47% increase over last year's budget, which could result in more than a \$4 million increase this year – \$23 million is not enough; it is too much.

And as our first selectman has stated "...this year's town budget will face additional pressure from the higher-than-typical Board of Education budget proposal and the difficult decisions facing the BOE and Board of Finance. Based on the combination of factors, I directed town

departments not to pursue new programs or capital projects in the upcoming fiscal year ...". Why does our community have to suffer because, as the school superintendent cited, one of the major factors for this increase is due to mismanaged funding of the reserves for health insurance for the school personnel.

Once again, the school system is looking for an all-or-nothing proposition. Why not phase in the needed funds so the full impact isn't felt in one year? This I believe calls for proper planning now and in the future to really meet the needs of the Colchester community.

Sincerely,
Ralph Bianco, Colchester

The Race is On...Part III

To the Editor:

With discussions about aquifers, wells, high water tables and four environmental reports, all referencing the Raymond Brook Watershed, in Hebron Center, one wonders where development ideas ever stemmed from. I can't help thinking people are confused and how would I explain this complex landscape to others.

Imagine a slightly bowed piece of plywood with odd cracks that resemble fractures. Now cover the board with clay, randomly add a variety of stones, alone, and in piles. Staple a large

Bulletin Board

"I've had it!" my wife announced the other morning as I went to pour myself a cup of coffee. As most husbands presumably know, there are numerous statements in a relationship where you can simply respond with a sort of noncommittal grunt and move on. Unfortunately, "I've had it!" isn't one of them.

"What's wrong?" I said, at the same time conducting a hasty mental review of possible personal transgressions, ranging from failing to flush the toilet to forgetting about Valentine's Day. I came up empty, which was encouraging, but not necessarily an indication that I was out of the woods, so to speak.

"I'm tired of being shut in all the time," she complained. "I'm tired of the snow. I'm tired of reading mystery novels. I'm tired of TV. I'm tired of winter."

"Oh." This was actually good news in a way, seeing as I apparently did not make the list.

"I'm bored out of my mind," she added.

"I could do a tap dance around the kitchen table," I offered, demonstrating a couple of steps. "Or maybe I could entertain you with a homemade sock puppet."

She glared at me like I was the physical incarnation of Father Winter or something.

"I know," I said. "Would you like the daily crossword puzzle? I'll let you have the crossword puzzle if you want."

My sacrifice was promptly kicked to the curb. "No, I don't want the crossword puzzle."

"Maybe you could bake some cookies," I suggested in desperation. "You know, to sort of productively fill some of those empty hours."

"Cookies? Really? Cookies?"

"What's wrong with cookies?"

"@(\$%# cookies. I'm going out of my mind and you think I should bake a bunch of #@(&ing cookies?"

"Hey, elves bake cookies. They seem quite happy, always marching around, breaking into song and being industrious. Just saying –"

"@(\$%# elves. I don't care what #@(&ing elves #@(&ing do. They can all go back to Ireland as far as I'm concerned."

"Um, not to start an argument or anything, but I think you're confusing elves with leprechauns."

"Oh yeah? Well, @(\$%# leprechauns, too. Little pests."

"Geez, what were you, raised by paratroopers?"

"I'm having a bad day."

"I can see that."

"I feel like I'm stuck in a leper colony."

Since there are only two of us in the house these days, I guess that made me the leper, or, at best, half the colony.

"As head leper, I'd like to say I feel your pain," I ventured.

"What makes you the head leper?"

"Hey, if you want to be head leper, it's okay with me. I just –"

"It's not your fault," she conceded.

"I know. Here, have a potato chip. You'll feel better... What's so funny?"

"You're an idiot. Who eats potato chips for breakfast?"

"Lepers who don't have any cookies?" I said.

She laughed. "Give me another chip," she said.

"Hey," I said. "How about we go out for a ride? We can go down to the shore and freeze to death on the beach. It'll be romantic. Kind of like that movie about the Titanic."

"I'll get my coat. Thank you."

"No worries. Maybe we could even stop at a bakery."

"I'm thinking liquor store," she said.

"Even better."

Jim Hallas

Rivereast Hours of Operation

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

RIVEREAST

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Reader Forum • Reader Forum

thin kitchen sponge over the top. Carve three shallow grooves into that sponge, representing the Raymond Brook, the middle stream and to the west, the stream flanking Church Street. Set the plywood at about a 5% pitch and spritz with water, adding several constant drips from the top (north). The watershed itself is “relatively flat and gently sloped” (ERT). This slope is key. As the sponge absorbs the water, the water spreads throughout the entire surface and, once full, drips out the bottom. Now tip the plywood just so, so that the majority of the water slowly drains out the bottom (eastern) corner of the watershed model. This bottom, eastern, corner is the base of Millstream Road where the Raymond Brook ducks under 207 on its way to the marsh and points beyond.

Because of this watershed’s slope, the water is always on the move, even when apparently stagnant. This movement, throughout the landscape, filters groundwaters whereby creating steady supplies of GA water. However, in times of extended drought, when water tables begin to lower or dry up, so too does the watershed. Being that aquifers are linked to water tables and vice versa. And water tables vary season to season. And watersheds drain constantly. Towns, like Hebron, must be careful not to overestimate water supplies. Drilling extra wells and tapping aquifers could be like spending more than we earn...at some point we’ll be broke. Should towns lower aquifers, and associated water tables throughout wet seasons, what happens, to residents, during dry seasons?

Many states including, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Connecticut have stringent watershed programs. These sponge like watersheds, with deep rooted plants, serve many purposes including water filtration, preventing flooding, water storage, carbon storage, wildlife habitats and local hay supplies. Watersheds also contribute to our overall health and well-being. The Raymond Brook Watershed does the same. Let’s #save17.

Jean Tulimieri, Amston

Dementia Talks No. 52

To the Editor:

I write this from Mom’s room in memory care. Day 6 of mom’s COVID quarantine; by the time this is published it will be day 13 and I hope she is out of isolation.

I sit here with gloves on, wearing an N95 mask, a flimsy gown (mom calls a dress) and on/off foggy glasses.

She looks at me differently today than she did 6 days ago. It has been an interesting week experiencing 12 hours as a 1x1 caregiver in a community. It is not easy – the paying attention 100% of the time, keeping her engaged and comfortable; then again it IS easy – because of

love. If the roles were reversed, she would be in the chair that I occupy.

At the time of this writing the #Hebron-RocksAlz Author Talk occurred on Saturday March 7th at the Gilead Church. I want to share thoughts that flowed through my mind 7 days ago, before this COVID dragon spit fire at us.

Initially I looked at the Author Talk as a fundraiser for our Walk2End Alz team; then as the date drew near, I realized that the fundraising is important but what is more important is to bring people together in community.

As you have noticed, I leave my essays by saying “know that you are not alone.” I wanted to illustrate this by bringing three amazing humans to an event so they can share their journeys – all touched by dementia. The foundation of the journey is common – dementia; however, their experiences are so very different – the experiences are old, new, raw, joyful, caring, uncharted. My hope is that for those that attended; that they took away just one thing that will help them in their own journey.

The key that has kept my head above water since mom’s Alz diagnosis back in 2017 has been community. My hope is that you all find your community, find your selfcare, find strength you didn’t know existed to put feet on the floor every day and move forward with a glimmer of hope in your heart.

Because of my exposure to COVID, I choose not to emcee the event. An amazing team kept the wheels moving. For that I have deep gratitude for Jeanette B., Deb M., David O., Phyllis K., and Ally G.; and of course, the authors for being in the moment: John Scully, Lisa Marshall and Judith Podell.

Know that you are not alone.

**With much love and peace,
Tonya Maurer
(multitasking@comcast.net)
Alzheimer’s Hot Line 1-800-272-3900**

Why Don’t People Vote

To the Editor:

You stated that the yes votes tend to be less on bad weather days; however, they show up enough that it gives them the win the majority of the time, if not always.

The Colchester Public Works did an excellent job on the roads, but they didn’t clear the 18 inches of snow from driveways. So I still say

many could not cast their vote due to (snow or high water). My point was that those on a mission will do what is needed to accomplish those goals.

I would like to suggest that *Rivereast* ask the public in the towns you cover why they won’t come out to vote on town issues. The miniscule numbers that do vote is not even close to those who are eligible.

On another note, Jim Hallas pointed out that it’s a mystery to the Connecticut lawmakers where the all the money for nonprofits went. Ask the lawmakers in Minnesota; they might be able to help. And yes Jim, the Woke State of Connecticut is going to send the sissy police to arrest you.

Frank Grande, Colchester

**This Stat Is a Weed,
Stop Watering It**

To the Editor:

As surely as flowers bloom in spring, budget season arrives, with someone announcing that the cost per student keeps rising. Every year, people nod along like this means something. It doesn’t. It’s one of the worst ways to measure school spending, and I’d love it if we could finally stop treating it like it tells us anything useful.

Colchester’s enrollment has been dropping for years. When that happens, fixed costs are divided among fewer students, so the per-student cost goes up automatically. The district doesn’t have to spend an extra dime. Nothing has to change at all. The math just looks worse because there are fewer students in the denominator.

Here’s a simple example. A school bus costs \$1,000 to run. With 20 riders, that’s \$50 each. With 10 riders, the cost is \$100 per rider. The bus didn’t get more expensive. Nobody got a raise. The route didn’t get longer. Fewer kids just showed up.

And here’s the part that really gets me: students aren’t getting more for that higher num-

ber. We aren’t doing more things per kid. We’ve actually been cutting programs and services for years. So the cost per student goes up while kids get less. If that number is supposed to be a warning sign, it’s warning us about the wrong thing.

John Farrell, Colchester

Journalism, Not Facebook

To the Editor:

There are many good reasons why journalism and social media should be kept at a distance. The moment a reporter relies on Facebook as a source, truth and speculation become impossible to distinguish from each other.

That scenario is playing out right now in East Hampton regarding the proposed WPCA acquisition. Emotions are high and many questions linger. As has been the case with other issues in town, the argument has largely been lost and replaced with finger-pointing and character attacks.

In situations like this, local news plays an important role in separating fact from hearsay. When Facebook is used as a source on a topic like the WPCA expansion, objectivity is lost.

The *Rivereast* owes its towns better. Journalism is a very tough career. Hours are long, pay is abysmal, and reporters and editors draw criticism with every article that is published. It’s grown more difficult in the last few years, where the very nature of facts are disputed based on the source.

Meanwhile, newspapers are cutting back on the very resource that is most needed: reporters. The days of one journalist covering a single beat are gone. Reporters are now expected to cover multiple towns and meet byline quotas that satisfies the publisher.

There’s a reason why newspapers like *The Hartford Courant* no longer cover small towns. *See Letters, page 6*



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The “East of the River” Real Estate Report
What Happens to Home Prices When Interest Rates Change?
 Interest rates are one of the most talked-about topics in real estate, and many homeowners naturally wonder: If rates go up or down, what happens to home prices?
 The relationship between interest rates and home prices isn’t always as simple as people expect. In general, when interest rates rise, borrowing becomes more expensive. Higher monthly payments can reduce how much buyers are able to afford, which can slow demand and put some pressure on prices. When rates fall, borrowing becomes cheaper, which can bring more buyers into the market and increase competition for homes.
 But in practice, many other factors influence home prices as well — especially supply and demand.
 Over the past several years, even as mortgage rates increased significantly, home prices in many areas remained relatively stable or continued to rise. One reason is that inventory has remained historically low. When fewer homes are available for sale, buyers often compete more aggressively for the homes that do hit the market.
 Another factor is that many homeowners today have very low mortgage rates from previous years. That can discourage people from selling, which further limits supply.
 So while interest rates absolutely influence the market, they are only one piece of the puzzle. Local inventory levels, buyer demand, and how a home is priced and presented often play just as large a role in determining the final sale price.
 For homeowners considering a move, the key takeaway is this: market conditions are always evolving, but well-prepared homes that are priced appropriately continue to attract strong interest.

Market Snapshot – Past Week
 Hebron, Andover, Marlborough, Colchester, East Hampton & Portland
Single-Family Homes
 • 7 homes sold
 • Average sale price: **\$450,414**
 • Average sale-to-list ratio: **104%**
 • Average days on market: **26 days**
 • Median days on market: **7 days**
Condos
 • 1 sold at **\$170,000**
 • Sale-to-list ratio: **97%**
 • Days on market: **1 day**
Results vary by price point, condition, and pricing strategy.

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★ Letters, cont. from page 5

They simply don't have the resources and see more value in the old "if it leads, it bleeds" mantra that garners clicks.

When news cuts back, so do the critical checks and balances that local government requires. As a result, people turn to their heavily filtered newsfeeds and local discussion groups for actual information. While it's great to have interaction on things like recommendations and community service, any item of actual news quickly becomes divisive.

The *Rivereast* is the only newspaper covering East Hampton. The people most cited in articles are the ones making the most noise, not the ones best suited to answer questions.

Regardless of circumstances, good journalism requires diligence and contacting sources, certainly not relying on social media to fill in the gaps. The WPCA situation has snowballed, and we need actual information, not Facebook posts smearing local officials. We need the *Rivereast* to be fair and objective. In this instance, the newspaper fell short.

Sincerely,

Matt Engelhardt, East Hampton

Note: Engelhardt is a member of the East Hampton Board of Education, but is speaking as an individual.

Editor's Note: We feel the article in question was fair and objective, and the Rivereast stands by the story.

Budget Examination Is Underway

To the Editor:

Examination of RHAM and Hebron Elementary budgets is underway. Both entities will give a presentation in Hebron on March 17.

Now to the most difficult aspect on discussing taxes. The holy grail: education. I call it difficult because, historically, anyone who might question educational costs has quite often been labeled, vociferously, as anti-education. I find such exclamations often miss the mark. A taxpayer, any taxpayer, has the right and obligation

to examine all aspects of their tax bill.

Hebron's physical infrastructure is in a shambles. The town portion of the budget has repeatedly taken a second seat to educational costs.

At the same time, RHAM and the elementary schools have shown little interest in cutting their costs. Instruments such as the retirement of debt and contract negotiation processes, due to their nature, help obfuscate this lack of cost cutting. The retirement of debt has shielded over two million dollars of cost for one of the institutions from public scrutiny and employee wages and benefits are often presented as something beyond the institutions' control.

And both institutions are following the rules. And this is where the average citizen is at a loss. The processes of running institutions have procedural elements that end up confusing anyone who is not putting the data together. And I'm thinking that the institutions understand this and challenge anyone who might ask questions. I don't blame them. They are doing all they can to achieve their agendas and progress the institution they represent.

It is natural for a citizen to be confused by such processes. But citizens have to ask themselves if things are balanced. A crumbling town infrastructure might be able to help us understand.

Over the last several years, appeals have been made to RHAM and to the elementary school system of Hebron to curb their costs and to produce understandable budgets. These appeals have gone unheeded. For numerous reasons, budgets go relentlessly up, resulting in an ever-increasing burden on the taxpayer. But historically, ever-increasing burdens are accepted by the taxpayers.

A final note on RHAM: I do not know how the RHAM budget is presented to the taxpayers of Marlborough and Andover, but I have always found Hebron's presentation on referendum day confusing because I can never easily tell if RHAM's budget is going up or down. This is due to the emphasis placed on Hebron's portion, which fluctuates every year depending on student attendance.

Terry McManus, Hebron

Invention Convention Thank You

To the Editor:

Last week, the *Rivereast* ran a wonderful article about The Region 8 Invention Convention Semi-finals at RHAM. This week, we'd like to extend our gratitude to those who made this community event a success.

We thank our school-based educators from the elementary schools in Hebron, Andover, and Marlborough who champion this program and put in many extra hours to support the students. These include Katie Finlan, Adam Parks, Susie Adams, Kirstina Frazier, Michaela Dehm, and Mary Cochefski. We also thank the school administrators from these towns, who support this program in their buildings and Marlborough Big Y for donating prize items.

A very special thank you to our judges who generously volunteered their time, helping identify the inventors who will move on to the finals. We thank RHAM faculty Andrea Barton, Lindsay Bluestein, and Danielle Mooney along with Glastonbury technical education teacher Jim Thorn; RHAM graduate and University of Hartford Engineering student Angela Weese; Muhammad Salman Ali, Tony Centurelli, and Ericka Nunez from the Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers; Alexander Bon, Christopher Frais, Joshua Frost, and Angela Mercaldi from the Pratt & Whitney Manufacturing Engineering Development (MED) Program; and Chris Hageman, IDEAZ Industrial Designer and Project Manager. We also extend a special thank you to judge and guest speaker Mark Roser from Motive labs, local Hebron inventor and former Invention Convention parent.

We would especially like to thank the RHAM National Technical Honor Society advisors Eileen Lastrina and Laurie Prentice who helped guide RHAM engineering students and NTHS volunteers as they planned for, hosted, and helped judge the event. Participating students include Caleb Billie, Cayden Caplet, Seth Dunko, Alexander Giaccone, Logan Gianelli, Jake Guerriero, Mark Hall, Riley Kischell,

Isabelle Kreamer, Aidan Landry, Edward Liu, Chris Medina, Kacper Mlodzianowski, Charlotte Morganson, Benjamin Morrissey, Victoria Paslavka, Zachary Pugliese, Aiden Sackett, Jason Schadtle Champagne, Kevin Schadtle, Madelyn Stewart, Zechariah Souza, Talula Stomberg, Eli Strecker, Liam Tarallo, Max Veilleaux, Joshua Warren, Madeleine Weinstein, Adriel Wilson, and Dylan Young.

Another special thanks goes to early childhood education teacher Crista Penrose and students Rosalee Kelly, Karly Spencer, Jordan Summerer and Brody Wallace, who provided activities for siblings of the inventors.

Thanks to the generosity and commitment of these volunteers, RHAM hosted a wonderful community event giving our elementary students the opportunity to showcase creativity, perseverance, and ingenuity. We are grateful for the community support in making Invention Convention semi-finals such a meaningful experience for our young innovators.

Sincerely,

Mary Rose Meade - Hebron
RHAM Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Hebron's Maple-Dipped History

To the Editor:

Hebron Center History is once again thrilled to participate in the Hebron Maple Festival. Please stop by our booth in the Douglas Library parking lot on March 21st and 22nd to experience the history of Hebron center first hand. We will be presenting artifacts, maps, documents, images, and a treasure trove of items that illustrate the compelling stories of this place we call home.

As you wander between maple kettle corn and maple-dipped bacon, I hope you will think about the words of Professor Robert Thorson of the University of Connecticut Earth Science Department, "Envision the ellipse of good soil that is Hebron. At the top is the town center. To the west is historic Church Street, the main transportation route from north to south. To the east are the residual fields and laneways. These three elements go together to define historic Hebron."

Professor Thorson continued on to comment on the unique stone walls laneways found north and south of Kinney Road, located just a stone's throw from the Maple Festival, "I have never seen a series of stone wall laneways like this. It took the planning and effort of the community to create them. The extensive patch of good soil with good drainage nucleates the town. This is a beautifully preserved community landscape, rather than the hodge podge of walls built by individual farmers."

It was Professor Thorson who confirmed the important connection between the stone wall laneways and the underlying glacial lodgment till soil. This rare soil, comprising less than 20% of all soil in Connecticut, is our most important agricultural asset. The efforts at preserving this soil began between 1785 and 1800 and lasted into the early 19th century. Among the leading proponents was Gov. John S. Peters, who built his stately brick house and doctor's office on Church Street. Gov. Peters also re-established The Barber Lot, granted to one of Hebron's most important proprietors, David Barber, in 1704. Located across the street from the governor's home, centered by The Barber Lot, was his expansive farm. The governor's farm and the stone wall laneways found there still stand as significant historic landmarks.

Stop by the Maple Festival to learn more about Governor Peters and his influence on the landscape we enjoy today. We look forward to seeing you and sharing all this information and much more. Please visit Save Hebron Center on Facebook for more details.

Sincerely,

Kevin J. Tulimieri, Amston

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Rivereast Standout Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

Beckett and William Krajewski – RHAM High School (Swimming): Beckett and William Krajewski, brothers who attend RHAM High School and swim for the Manchester co-op, both excelled at the Central Connecticut Conference (CCC) championships at Wethersfield High School. Beckett, a sophomore, won a pair of events, taking first in the 200 Individual Medley (IM) with a time of 2:02.83 and the 100 Breaststroke with a meet-record time of 1:00.06. William, a junior, also broke a meet record, posting a time of 53.70 to win the 100 Butterfly (53.70). William also placed second to his brother in the 100 Breaststroke with a time of 1:03.66. They also won both of the relays they were in (200 Medley Relay and 400 Freestyle Relay) as the co-op placed third overall as a team.

Adam Dean – Portland High School (Wrestling): Dean won a North Central Connecticut Conference (NCCC) championship, winning the 132 lbs. division in Stafford last month. Dean, a senior, defeated Aiden Catalan of Canton in an overtime decision to finish atop the podium. He was also awarded the Most Outstanding Wrestler of the annual conference tourney. Senior teammate Cayleb James also won a conference title, beating Joaquin Vasquez of Canton in the 190 lbs. championship bout.

Liam Sweeney – Bacon Academy (Track & Field): Sweeney won the shot put and placed third in the weight throw at the Throwhawks Hall of Fame meet at Bloomfield High School on March 7. Sweeney, a senior, won the shot put with a toss of 56' 11.75" to best runner-up Khile Francis (55' 04") and the rest of a loaded field. In the weight throw, Sweeney had a season-best distance of 62' 4.25", placing behind only Francis (runner-up) and Bloomfield's Mason Gray, who finished first with a distance of 68' 6".

John Riley – East Hampton High School (Wrestling): Riley took fourth overall in his weight class at the Class S state championships, earning a spot in the State Open. Riley, a senior, defeated Richard Courville of St. Joseph and Maximus Shafer of Killingly to work his way through the 175 lbs. bracket at Killingly High School on Feb. 20 and 21.

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.



Brothers Beckett and William Krajewski of RHAM High School combined to win eight swimming medals at the Central Connecticut Conference championships on Feb. 28.

CGA Scholarship for Area Seniors

Carl Guild & Associates has officially opened applications for its 2026 CGA Community Scholarship, awarding seven \$1,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors across 9 local towns.

The scholarship is available to seniors in Portland, East Hampton, East Haddam, Colchester, RHAM, Glastonbury and Middletown. Applications are due April 1.

For the past eight years, Carl Guild & Associates has awarded scholarships to local students as part of its ongoing commitment to the communities it serves.

"We've built our business in these towns," said Carl Guild, broker and owner of Carl Guild & Associates. "This is our way of giving back and investing in the next generation. There's no catch and no sales pitch. We simply believe in supporting the students, families and communities that support us."

Over the years, the CGA Community Scholarship program has helped dozens of local students offset the cost of college and post-secondary education.

Students who live in or attend school in one of the eligible towns are encouraged to apply. Parents, teachers, and community members are also encouraged to help spread the word.

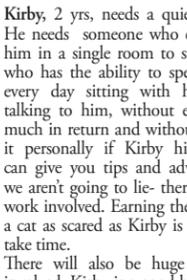
Applications and details can be found at www.carlguild.com/scholarship.

For additional information, contact Carl Guild at 860-813-2275 or carlguild@gmail.com

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Kirby, 2 yrs, needs a quiet home. He needs someone who can keep him in a single room to start, and who has the ability to spend time every day sitting with him and talking to him, without expecting much in return and without taking it personally if Kirby hides. We can give you tips and advice, but we aren't going to lie- there will be work involved. Earning the trust of a cat as scared as Kirby is going to take time. There will also be huge rewards involved. Kirby is a good boy and a sweet loving cat. Once he understands that he is safe, he is going to be an amazing companion. Whoever earns his trust is going to be adored. Kirby needs a hero who can see the love behind the fear. Do you want to be his hero?

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POCD Planning Session Brings Residents Together

By Anne Lilburn

Over 30 people gathered at the Portland Senior Center last Saturday for the town's Plan of Conservation and Development Public Workshop.

Residents had the opportunity to share their opinions on five different topics in breakout sessions, where moderators supported discussions about economic development; housing; riverfront and downtown; conservation and open space; and infrastructure, town facilities, and schools. Residents rotated through all of the stations, so that by the time the event was over, they had been to each table.

Town planner Dan Bourret, as well as representatives from planning firm Tyche, moderated each table, helping to jot down residents' concerns or thoughts on Post-It notes. By the end

of the morning, hundreds of Post-Its filled the tables. Along the way, at each table, community members shared their concerns, but also their aspirations for Portland, and they also turned to each other to discuss challenges, find areas of common ground, and work through differences of opinion. The room filled with conversational banter.

Tyche Senior Planner Jeremy DeCarli, town planner Dan Bourret and Tyche Associate Planner Johnell Clarke summarized some of the findings at the sessions, noting residents' desire for walkable neighborhoods, community facilities, investment in public water and sewer services, conservation subdivisions, protection against overdevelopment, and support for small

businesses on Main Street, including outdoor seating areas outside businesses, among other things.

After the breakout sessions, residents returned to the larger group meeting, where DeCarli asked attendees to offer up brief thoughts, ideas or phrases about Portland.

During this large group brainstorming time, some people said they hoped to see Portland capitalize on its existing recreational amenities. One woman mentioned the golf courses and marinas that Portland is known for, along with newer opportunities like the Nordic Spa that is scheduled to open later this year.

"A recreation destination," suggested DeCarli, which she agreed with.

On a similar topic, some in the crowd said they hoped for multi-use trails, with one man suggesting a walking trail connecting Brownstone School to the Riverfront and others suggesting a connection between the Air Line Trail and other areas in town.

Residents brought up their concerns and hopes regarding historic preservation, with one pointing out that there is "a lot of history in this town," and DeCarli pointing out the town's historic district. Another man hoped for town policies incentivizing the preservation, restoration and maintenance of historic buildings, adding that he hoped the town could be proactive in encouraging that.

On a similar topic, a woman voiced her concerns about development, saying she hoped that down could repurpose brownfields so that the town was "not expanding its footprint, but increasing how lively we are in this space." She said she wanted to focus on developing brownfields, not green fields.

Several in the audience said they hoped that the organizers of the session could reach out to younger residents, noting the older average age of those in attendance. Some suggested going to the high school to find out what teens and young adults hoped for the community, while others hoped to reach young parents with events where childcare might be provided while parents participated in workshops.

One of the last people to voice their opinion from the crowd was a man who said that when he thought of Portland, the one word he thought of was "home."

"As soon as I come into town, I feel like I'm home," he said, adding that he meant "not like your address, but like your home." He said he hoped sessions like this could help him and others to figure out "what does home look like?"

DeCarli, along with Bourret and Clarke, said that they would be attending upcoming community events, such as the upcoming Easter Egg Hunt. They also encouraged residents to fill out the POCD survey, which can be found online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/portlandpocd.

Brush Pick-Up

The Portland Public Works Department will conduct a brush pickup beginning Monday, April 6. All brush must be at the curb no later than April 5.

The Highway Department uses a clamshell bucket attached to its loader to load piles of brush that are too large for workers to load by hand. Brush pickup takes approximately one month and starts downtown and works to rural areas.

Residents are asked to leave enough room for the equipment to operate. Place your brush at least five feet away from your garbage container and other potential obstacles such as mailboxes,

fences, walls, water meters, telephone connection boxes and parked vehicles. Avoid placing brush under low-hanging tree limbs or power lines. Brush will not be collected if it is inaccessible.

You can stack your piles of brush end to end or on top of one another (not tangled). All brush needs to be cut to appropriate lengths (6 to 8 feet) and limbs must be no larger than 4" in diameter.

Please place only true brush at the curb. Lumber, construction material and/or leaves will not be picked up if placed at curbside.

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 portlandriver-valleygc@gmail.com before April 20.

Soccer Club Spring Registration

Portland Soccer Club (PSC) is now accepting registrations for the spring soccer season. Travel-Competitive registration will be accepted until March 22. Club-Recreational registration will be accepted until April 11, though a late fee of \$25 applies after March 31.

The PSC will only accept registrations online at www.bluesombrero.com/portlandsoccerclub.

For Club Soccer, cost per registrant is \$75, and the schedule is: Pre-K sessions: 8:45-9:30 a.m. (Saturday only); Dribbler sessions: 9:15-10:15 a.m. (Saturday only); Kicker sessions: 9:15-10:15 a.m. (Saturday Games & Practice -Wednesdays)

Dribbler and Kicker divisions will receive team shirts. Pre-K division will receive Team shirts and balls. These will be available for distribution on Friday, April 17, from 5:45-7 p.m., at the recreational complex.

The Club-Recreational program will run eight weeks, from April 18-June 13; there is

no Rec Soccer during Memorial Day weekend (May 23rd). All games will take place at the Recreational Complex.

For Travel-Town Soccer, the cost per travel registrant is \$170 for U9 to U14.

There are no tryouts planned for the spring season. New participants that did not play in the fall season are not guaranteed a spot on a spring travel team and will be added based on PSC board approval.

For more information, contact club president Chad Wilson at nosliw.dahc@gmail.com or 205-999-8842; vice president Chris Donahue at donahuecj@sbcglobal.net or 860-638-7400; or registrar Anne Whalen at awhalen34@yahoo.com or 860-690-3414.

Spring Senior Mixed Golf

All seniors from the nine *Rivereast* towns are invited to participate in the Spring Senior Mixed Golf League, which will take place Tuesday mornings, starting May 5, at Portland West Golf Course. The league will run eight weeks.

Seniors 55+ play nine holes in a match play format with handicaps. All skill levels from beginner to low handicappers are welcome to join.

Contact Jack Anderson for more info, at 860-882-3752 or jackande52@aol.com.

Concert to Benefit Food Bank

Tony Rome will play a concert to benefit Portland Food Bank on Saturday, May 2, at 2 p.m., at Concentric Brewing Company, 91 Main St.

Attendees are asked to bring a non-perishable food item for the food bank. If you can't make the show, Rome asks that you still donate to the food bank.

Exchange Club Round-Up for Food Drive

The Portland Exchange will be having a round-up event at Adams Hometown Market for the week starting March 15th. Customers will be able to round up their purchases, with the round-up amount going towards the Exchange Club's annual Food Drive in April.

Swing into Summer with Historical Society

As the country celebrates 250 years, the Portland Historical Society invites you to celebrate one of America's favorite pastimes — baseball — by attending a Hartford Yard Goats game at Dunkin' Park on Sunday, June 14, at 1:10 p.m. On this day, kids can run the bases after the game.

A limited number of tickets to the game will be available at a pop-up sale on Sunday,

March 15, from 2-4 p.m., at the Ruth Callender House Museum of Portland History, 492 Main St. Tickets are \$20 each and can be paid for by cash or check.

Ticket purchases are part of a fundraising campaign to rebuild the historic 1841 Gildersleeve Store on the grounds of the museum. For further information, contact Babs at 860-342-4573.

JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF ENTERTAINMENT TO SUPPORT

PORTLAND HIGH SCHOOL

PROJECT GRADUATION

CLASS OF 2026



presents: DUELING PIANOS

Saturday, March 28th 7:30pm – 10:30pm

CONCENTRIC
BREWING COMPANY

91 Main Street

Portland

\$30 per person

Tickets are limited so purchase yours early by using the following

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/savage-pianos-presents-dueling-pianos-tickets-1984630644683>

Tickets will also be sold at the door based on limited availability.

Don't forget to bring cash for your song requests!!!

All proceeds go to
Project Graduation 2026.



Andover • Andover

Cunningham Connects CT After Dark

By Toriana Williams

On Saturday nights, while most people are winding down or asleep, Morgan Cunningham is keeping the airwaves alive with conversation, connection and thought-provoking dialogue. Cunningham, Andover native and a news anchor and talk show host at WTIC NewsTalk 1080, recently launched a new program called *Nighttime Neighbors*, aimed at building a community for those awake after dark.

Cunningham said the show “is a way to extend a hand to a nighttime community of truckers, shift-workers, insomniacs, loners, shut-ins and anyone else who is looking for talk that engages, entertains, educates and even inspires,” Cunningham wrote as a description of the show.

The show airs live Saturday nights from 9 p.m. to midnight and combines Cunningham’s monologues with open phone lines, encouraging listeners to participate in a wide-ranging conversation that blends curiosity, philosophy, history and creativity.

Cunningham’s path to late-night radio began in childhood. Growing up as an only child in the woods of Andover, he said, “I love radio, and I’ve been in love with radio for a very long time.” He recalled that as a young boy he became fascinated with the medium. He enjoyed calling radio stations to request songs or discuss topics, and what started as a hobby eventually grew into a full-fledged career.

Over the years, Cunningham has built a career in radio that spans decades. He has been working at WTIC for nearly 10 years and also hosts a daytime show, *Spotlight Connecticut*, which was nominated in 2025 for a Connecticut Broadcasters Association award. The combina-

tion of personal experience and professional success led Cunningham to identify a niche for late-night talk radio.

The timing of the show’s creation was influenced by said combination. Cunningham noted that a nightclub he frequented with friends closed in 2025, freeing up his Saturday nights. Simultaneously, his daytime show recognition prompted him to request “an expanded platform” from his bosses.

“I wanted to do more talk radio, but I didn’t know quite what that would look like,” he said. “And I really wanted to do something at night because now my Saturday nights were mostly open again.”

Cunningham carefully designed *Nighttime Neighbors* to create a space for meaningful human connection. Unlike typical daytime talk radio, which often emphasizes rapid-fire news, weather and commercials, Cunningham’s late-night audience is more attentive and engaged.

“In the morning, talk radio stations are very rush, rush, rush. But at night, this audience is much slower,” Cunningham shared.

The show’s format blends prepared monologues with open phone lines, fostering a spontaneous and sometimes surprising discussions.

Cunningham said, “I come up with some topics or big picture questions, and I go into my own analysis, or I talk about my experiences related to that kind of topic.”

These monologues serve as conversation starters, with listeners frequently steering discussions in new directions.

Audience engagement has exceeded Cunningham’s expectations.

“I didn’t know if I would get a single caller,” he said. “I didn’t know if the ... callers would be receptive. ... And that first night, I was flooded with calls.”

Callers hailed not only from Connecticut but also neighboring states including New Hampshire, Vermont and Pennsylvania, demonstrating the show’s broad reach and appeal. Listeners ranged in age and circumstances, from fellow 29-year-olds to older individuals on dialysis who are otherwise isolated in their homes.

Cunningham’s show also intentionally counters a trend he has noticed toward an overreliance on technology and artificial intelligence.

“You hear about social media and these technologies, AI, that’s supposed to better connect us. Well, they’re really tools, but I feel that, and from my own experience ... they’ve caused plenty of disconnection as well,” he said. “When it comes to thinking and expressing yourself, you need a human element there. And my talk show’s combating that through old school talk radio.”

Looking ahead, Cunningham hopes to expand *Nighttime Neighbors* beyond the radio waves. He is considering hosting in-person meetups for listeners, inspired by a recent talk he gave at the Andover Public Library.

Ultimately, Cunningham wants listeners to feel a sense of belonging and engagement.

“I hope that they feel welcome,” he said. “I hope that they feel that they found a place where they can feel safe, where they can have fun ... where they could think freely, openly and where they can feel that they can share that.”

With *Nighttime Neighbors*, Cunningham has crafted more than a late-night radio program; he has created a community where curiosity, conversation and connection thrive. For those awake when the world sleeps, Cunningham’s show offers a rare combination of humanity, engagement and thoughtful dialogue in an increasingly digital and impersonal world.

Listeners can tune into *Nighttime Neighbors* on WTIC 1030, WTIC.com or on the Audacy or iHeart Radio apps.

Scholarship Opportunity

The East Hartford Garden Club has announced the availability of one \$1,000 scholarship to any full- or part-time student who is a resident of Andover and is majoring in horticulture, floriculture, landscape design, conservation, forestry, environmental concerns, botany and other allied subjects.

Students from Bolton, Bloomfield, Coventry, East Hartford, East Windsor, Glastonbury,

Manchester, Middletown, Vernon, Storr and Windsor Locks are also eligible for the scholarship.

Applications with the submittal instructions are available at the guidance department of the attending school. All completed applications must be received by April 1 to be considered.

Pancake Breakfast

Andover Volunteer Fire Department will host a pancake breakfast Saturday, April 4, from 8-10 a.m., at the firehouse on School Road.

All you-can-eat pancakes will be served with sausage, juice and coffee.

Admission is \$10 for adults and \$8 for seniors and kids.

Learn CPR

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

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

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

Easter Plant, Bake Sale

The Andover Volunteer Fire Department will hold its annual Easter Plant Sale and Bake Sale Thursday, April 2, through Saturday, April 4, from 10 a.m.-6 p.m., on Easter Sunday, April 5, from 10 a.m.-noon, at the firehouse on School Road.

There will be many plants to choose from – including lilies, tulips, hyacinths, hydrangeas, daffodils, spring baskets, pansies and more – as well as various tasty treats.

Church Tag Sale

Andover Congregational Church, 359 Route 6 in Andover, will hold a Tag Sale on Saturday, March 28, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; a bag sale will be from 2-3 p.m.

The church will accept donations for this sale starting Thursday, March 19, and continuing from 3:30-5:30 p.m. daily until March 26.

For more details, call the church at 860-742-7696 and leave a message with your contact information.

Library Friends Offer Scholarship

The Andover Friends of the Library group is offering a \$1,000 scholarship to an Andover high school senior. Applications are due May 1, and are available at the guidance office at RHAM High School, at the Andover Public Library, 355 Route 6, and on the town website at tinyurl.com/2huzen57.

Completed applications must be dropped off at the library or emailed to the Friends at andoverfol@gmail.com. The applicant must be currently enrolled as a senior in any high school, use the scholarship to further their education, and hold a valid Andover library card.

For more information call the library at 860-742-7428 or email the Friends at andoverfol@gmail.com.

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. Jenifer 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.

Items Needed for Auction

The Andover Youth Basketball Program will hold a goods and services auction Friday, May 8, to raise funds for equipment and other program needs.

If you would like to donate a gift certificate or an item to auction, call Carol Lee at 860-989-6988.

ASCT Looking for Members

The Andover Sustainable CT (ASCT) committee is looking for a person to join their meetings who is interested in continuing to make Andover a Sustainable town. Currently, the committee is working on attaining Silver Certification.

The committee meets the fourth Wednesday of each month, from 7-8 p.m. If interested in joining, text Cathy Palazzi, chairman, at 860-916-6122.

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.

Caregiver Support Group to Meet

The Andover Caregivers Support Group will meet on Thursday, March 26, at 7 p.m., at the Andover Public Library on Route 6. The meeting will run for one hour.

The public is invited to attend and hear from guest speaker Sara Elliott-Caratasios – author, social worker, and senior services administrator/municipal agent for the Town of Portland.

Elliott-Caratasios’ personal journey caring for her parents and in-laws while raising her four children inspired her book, *When Love Becomes Care: Real Talk for the Sandwich Generation*. Her work explores the emotional, physical, and spiritual realities of caregiving, especially for those balancing the needs of aging parents and growing children.

Her memoir and guidebook offer insight, honesty, and support for anyone navigating the challenges of being a caregiver.

The meeting will conclude with its usual “Show and Tell” segment, where participants are encouraged to share handy tips, tools, or gad-

gets that assist in caregiving.

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

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

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

Join us as we build a network of support, strength, and shared wisdom. For more information, please contact co-host Dianne Grenier at 860-742-3033 or Cathy Palazzi at 860-916-6122.

Community & Senior Center Happenings

The Andover Community and Senior Center, located at 25 School Rd., is open Monday-Thursday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m.-noon. 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 or to reserve space, call 860-742-7305.

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: Introduction to Tai Chi and Qigong: Tuesday, March 31, 5:45 p.m. Through gentle, flowing movements & mindful breathing, you’ll improve balance, flexibility, & overall well-being. Perfect for all levels. Call the center to register.

Shopping Trips: Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. Shop Willimantic 3/24, and Manchester on 3/17 and 3/31. Transportation is available.

Cardio Drumming: Tuesdays, 10-11 a.m. Free.

Kids’ Art Class with Kim: Wednesday, 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.

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.

Lunch at the Firehouse: Wednesday, March 25, noon. The fire department is hosting lunch and Bingo at the Firehouse. Transportation is available. Registration is required; call the center.

P.A.L. Program: Thursday, March 26, 2 p.m. The P.A.L. (People Across Lifetimes) program brings senior residents and Andover Elementary kindergarten students together to share lunch, laughter, and activities like being Pen Pals. Call the center to join or for more information.

Travel In Time Club: Friday, March 27, 2 p.m.. This free study group is based on *Travel in Time in Connecticut*, by local author and teacher Dan Blanchard. This is an intergenerational partnership with Andover Elementary School. Students and Seniors will be working on stories and interviews. Call the center to join or for more information.

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.

Cover Story • Cover

★ **Proposed Facility, cont. from page 1**
 sations were growing heated on Facebook, the council sought advice from the town attorney after a council member became aware that the WPCA might be able to acquire the parcel on its own, without an in-person town meeting vote.

In his decision, the town attorney, Richard Carella, wrote that the town meeting vote "is neither legally required, nor appropriate, for the Town WPCA / Joint Facilities to purchase the property at 292 West High Street for the construction or operation of the sewerage system."

As a result, the council announced a special Town Council meeting for Monday night to decide whether or not, in light of the attorney's decision, to cancel that vote, but the situation became confusing for residents when that meeting was canceled and rescheduled for Tuesday morning. On Facebook, speculation ran rampant that the town was deliberately changing the time to make it harder for working people to attend, but the reason turned out to seemingly be far more benign.

At the Tuesday morning meeting, Cox explained that the reason for the necessary meeting change was to comply with state law, which requires the town to provide 24 hours' notice of a special meeting, "excluding weekends, holidays, and days on which the office of the Secretary of the State or municipal clerk, as the case may be, is closed." Because he had not factored in the weekend, the town moved the meeting to the earliest possible time that would comply with that state statute, at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday.

At the morning meeting, the council struggled to conduct business, with public comments and shouting from the audience cutting into the agenda items. Members of the public voiced opposition to the biosolids plant, but also called for the firing of WPCA Public Utilities Administrator Anthony DeSimone, after a video of a public WPCA meeting where he and others made jokes about odors from a local pig farm circulated on Facebook. At this and also the later nighttime meeting, residents also alleged professional impropriety on DeSimone's part, suggesting that he worked behind the scenes to negotiate out of the public eye with Griffin Residuals.

At the evening meeting, the council broke with its traditional agenda protocol and put public comments at the start of the meeting. Members of the public took turns speaking directly to the council for two hours and 43 minutes before the remainder of the meeting proceeded.

Along the way, community members, one after another, strongly opposed the biosolids facility, with one referring to it as a "turd oven," and criticized what they said was improper behavior of town officials. In addition to DeSimone, public speakers called for the firing also Cox, particularly after Cox clarified that he was responsible for the hiring and firing of all town

employees, with the exception of himself.

Many yelled at council members, with some making personal and pointed attacks, and on more than one occasion, a member of the public walked down the aisle towards the council, shouting, before being gently urged out of the room by concerned friends or acquaintances.

Robert Baer, whose family owns the pig farm that was joked about in the WPCA meeting, shouted at the earlier meeting, "What are you guys gonna do?"

"What's going to be done?" he demanded later that night. "We're here!" he shouted. "What are you gonna do?"

Baer demanded that the town take action against DeSimone, and asked the council to "have my back," reminding them that he had known many of them a long time.

At one point, someone in the crowd mentioned a letter of intent indicating a potential agreement between the town and Griffin Residuals that council members, including council chair Dean Markham, a Democrat, said he had not seen before, and which audience members had struggled to find on the town website.

After the meeting, Markham indicated that he was concerned by the letter of intent, adding that he and council member Ted Hintz, a Republican, had "come to some consensus on working together" with regards to answering questions about that letter of intent and any other town dealings with the biosolids facility that may have been previously unknown to the public.

At the end of the meeting, the council decided to schedule a special meeting for Thursday evening, which will occur after this paper's Wednesday press time. Council members planned to discuss, among other things, issues related to the WPCA.

Despite the contentious turn that the meeting took, some council members chose to look on the positive side, with both Richard Knotek, a Democrat, and Joelyn Leon, also a Democrat, indicating that they saw the meeting as a good chance for the townspeople to vocally share their opinions and engage with public government.

Leon, for one, said she hoped the experience would motivate more people to get involved and be aware of what is happening in their local government.

"I wish more wish more townspeople, residents, would come out to our meetings, so we could collaborate together," she said. "When we're all talking, that's ... when we end up with results that are best for the town and the community, and so I appreciate the conversation that took place [Tuesday], I appreciate the collaboration that took place on the council itself among all of us, and I hope that that can continue in the future."

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St. Patrick Church News & Notes

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

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

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

PTO Meets Monthly

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

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

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

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

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 EHS.

Library Friends Offer Scholarship

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

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

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

Submit your completed application form by April 10.

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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.

Preschool Openings

Andover Elementary School Early Learning Center is accepting applications for preschool students for the 2026-27 school year. Andover's preschool program is full day. Before and after-school care is available.

Children who will be age 3 on or before Dec. 31, 2026, are eligible to attend at the start of the year.

The Andover Elementary School Early Learning Center receives funding for reduced tuition rates from two state grants: Early Start CT and the Smart Start Grant.

Call Taylor Parker for more information or contact the school office at 860-742-7339 to obtain a registration packet. You may also download one from www.andoverelementaryct.org.

Congregational Church News

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

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

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

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

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

Easter Services: Palm Sunday, March 29, 10 a.m.; Maundy Thursday, April 2, 7 p.m.; Easter Sunrise Service, April 5 at 6:15 a.m. at Siismet Farm, 79 Boston Hill Rd. Easter Service, April 5 at 10 a.m.

Community Garden Offering Plots

The Andover Community Garden Committee is offering plots, free of charge, to any interested Andover residents who would like to have their own garden space.

Garden beds being offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Gardeners will be responsible for planting, watering and caring for their designated beds during the growing season. Gardeners should plan for end-of-season bed cleanup as well.

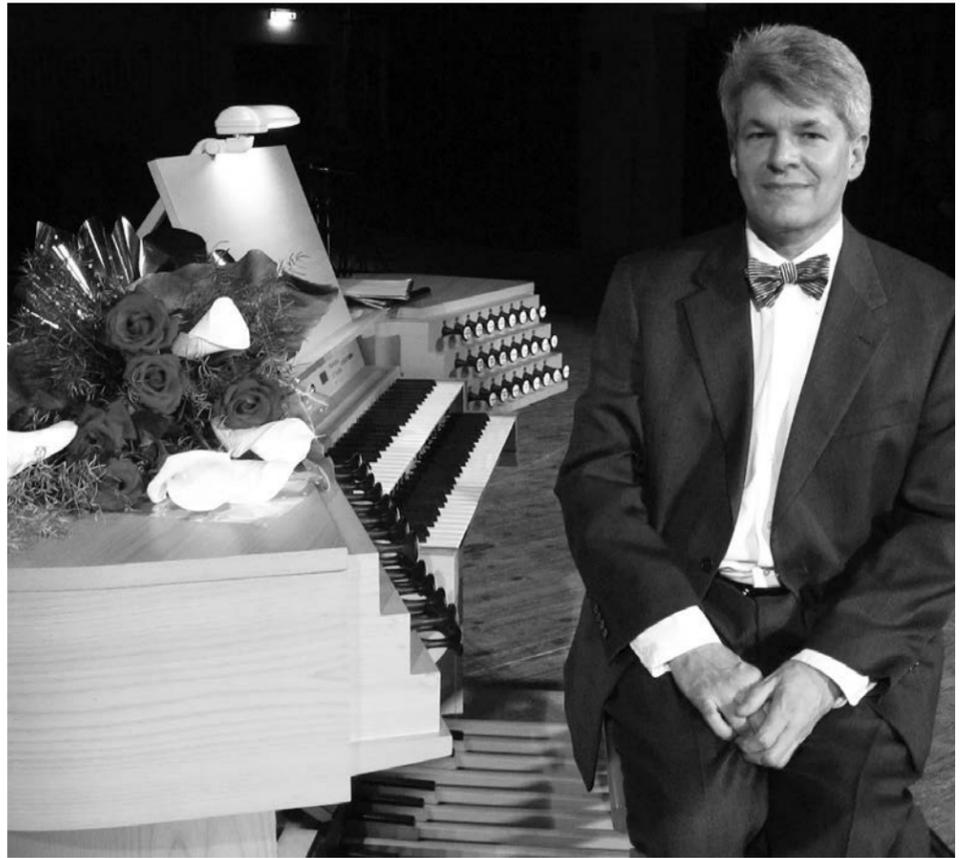
To request a garden plot for 2026, volunteer, or ask any questions, contact the committee on its Facebook page: Andover CT Community Garden, or email gardenandovercommunity@gmail.com.

Bingo & Basket Raffle Night

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

Admission is \$15, and includes dinner, drink, dessert and bingo. No reservations required. Leave a message at the church at 860-742-7696 with questions.

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Ronald Ebrecht, artist in residence and university organist emeritus at Wesleyan University, will perform a concert on the historic Appleton organ Sunday, May 17, at 4 p.m., at Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam.

Special Concert to Celebrate America

On Sunday, May 17, at 4 p.m., a special concert on the historic Appleton organ will be played at Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam, in honor of the country's 250th anniversary.

Performed by Ronald Ebrecht, artist in residence and university organist emeritus at Wesleyan University, the concert features a program spanning the lifetime of the Appleton and the breadth of American secular organ music including rags, jazz, blues and folk song.

Ebrecht has been lauded on four continents since his first international appearance at Notre Dame de Paris in 1976 for the American bicen-

ennial. He was twice presented in recital on the 1830 Appleton organ enshrined at the Metropolitan Museum in New York City and will explore the tonal resources of its older sister in Middle Haddam built in 1827 during the May 17th event.

Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam is located at 52 Middle Haddam Rd. in the historic village of Middle Haddam, and is handicapped accessible. Free parking will be available along High Point Road across the street from and donations will be accepted during the concert.

Call 860-993-5311 for more information.

Belldown Drama Club Presents *Mamma Mia!*

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton High School's Drama Club is presenting *Mamma Mia!* this weekend, and everyone involved in the production is excited for a fun-filled weekend of singing and dancing.

Mamma Mia! director and East Hampton Middle School teacher Rachel Mansfield said she and producer Karen Moore chose *Mamma Mia!* this year because they were looking for something fun and playful. The year before, the school had put on *Newsies*, which is set during the 1899 newsboys' strike in New York City. This year, she said, they wanted something that was the "polar opposite" of that. She said *Mamma Mia!*, which is based on the songs of the 1970s Swedish pop band ABBA, was just that.

"[It] is just two and a half hours of a dance party on stage," she said.

Mansfield said she liked to give students a "wide range" of shows in their high school theatre career, and said that "this is just pure musical theater, and a comedy, where *Newsies* was more of a drama."

She added that she loved the musical's message, which she said was "about appreciating the people around you and the love you have, whether it's your chosen family or your given family."

Two of the main roles, Donna and Harry, are both played by sophomores this year. Taylor Dudek plays Donna, while Eli Kloepfer plays Harry. Both said they had been involved with theater since a young age, with Dudek saying she started when she was nine and Kloepfer saying he began performing on stage as a kindergarten.

Dudek said she was "very excited," and is looking forward to performing "The Winner Takes It All." That song, she said, is what got her excited about auditioning.

"I watched the movie the day after I figured out what the musical was, and I fell in love with the song," she said, adding that she believed that her audition with that song was what really impressed musical director and East Hampton Middle School teacher Chris Briggs.

Kloepfer said that he was happy he got cast in the role of Harry.

"I like that he kind of evolves over the show," he said. "Like, he starts out really shy and then by the end he's really flamboyant and exciting, so I really like that he gets to have that change."

Kloepfer said that he enjoyed performing the song, "Thank You for the Music," because he had learned guitar to be able to play it on stage

as part of his performance.

Briggs, the musical director, said that the familiar songs of *Mamma Mia!* can actually prove challenging on stage.

"There's a lot of ensemble music in this show," he said, "and its deceptively difficult because there's a lot of harmonies and a lot of times where the whole cast is singing."

Mansfield agreed.

"There's a lot of intricate three-part harmonies," she said, "especially among the three leading ladies, that we are just super lucky that we have three incredibly talented girls playing our dynamos in the show."

Briggs, who also serves as the technical director for the production, said another part of the production that involved some hard work was building the set, which involved two levels to accommodate the large on-stage cast. Luckily, he said, many in the community came out to help. He said they posted on Facebook and held two big, eight-hour build days one weekend, with roughly 20 people coming to help.

"A lot of people showed up, tools in hand," he said, "and they just said what can I do?"

Mansfield said she wanted to call attention

to her technical crew as well, including lighting designer Angel Rodriguez and stage manager Frank Barry, both seniors.

"I will say, the cast is phenomenal and so talented," she said, "but the crew has worked really hard and I am incredibly proud of their work as well. They are such a huge part of making this happen, and they've made it so easy."

"Once the show is up and running," she added, "it is basically a student run production, which I think is incredible."

Briggs said he was proud of the students. "These kids are putting on a full Broadway musical in eight weeks of rehearsal time," he said, "which is just — it's insane that they can do this after school."

"They're creating this piece of art that will really only exist for this weekend," he said, and encouraged people to come support them.

Mamma Mia! will be presented at East Hampton High School Friday, March 13, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, March 14, at 2 p.m. or 7 p.m., and Sunday, March 15, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors and \$10 for students, and can be purchased at online at belltowndrama.ludus.com.

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.

Po's to Support TANGO2 Research

Po's Rice and Spice will donate a portion of its proceeds on Thursday, March 26, to the TANGO2 Research Foundation. This applies to all in-house dining, takeout orders, delivery and gift card sales.

Po's is located at 97 Main St. and is open for lunch from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and for dinner from 4-9 p.m.

The TANGO2 Research Foundation was cre-

ated in 2018 by Kasha and Mike Morris, long-time East Hampton residents, after their son Ryan was diagnosed with TANGO2 Deficiency Disorder (TDD). The foundation has made progress in funding research that has led to not only more insights about TDD, but also a treatment involving B-vitamin supplementation. The foundation now represents more than 300 families across 35 countries.

YPPCA Taking Registrations for Summer Theater Camp

The Young People's Center for Creative Arts (YPPCA) 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, YPPCA'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, YPPCA 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. YPPCA 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.

Bingo Fundraiser

All are invited to come for bingo and refreshments on Sunday, March 22, at 11:30 a.m., at Haddam Neck Congregational Church, as a fundraiser for Heifer International. The church is located at 408 Quarry Hill Rd. in Haddam Neck.

Heifer International is a global anti-hunger initiative that provides communities with the tools and resources they need to thrive.

This event immediately follows the 10:30 a.m. worship service in the Parish House. Donations are accepted to play and eat. Small prizes awarded.

Troop 57 Bottle Drive

Troop 57 is having its next bottle drive Saturday, March 21. Bring clean cans, plastics and glass to the American Distilling parking lot (31 East High St., Route 66) from 9 a.m. to noon. Since Connecticut charges 10 cents on soda, beer, water, tea, kombucha, and juice, all of these clean containers can be dropped off.

Connecticut doesn't accept pay us for milk containers, or containers of dairy products, wine and hard liquor, so Troop 57 doesn't accept them.

For more information, call Annette Kowalczyk at 860-267-2962.

RTC Offering Scholarship

The East Hampton Republican Town Committee is offering a \$500 scholarship to an East Hampton resident planning to pursue a career in a trade and graduating in 2026.

This award is open to any graduating student from East Hampton, Xavier, Mercy or Vinal high schools, or homeschooled East Hampton residents. Applications are available from the guidance department in the schools.

Deadline for submission of applications is May 15.

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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. Its follow-up, *Wreck*, also debuted high on the *New York Times* bestseller list and was selected as a

Good Morning America Book Club pick.

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.

The Art of Container Gardening

The Belltown Garden Club will present "The Art of Container Gardening: Designing, Planting, and Maintaining Your Own Urban Oasis" on Monday, March 23, at 6 p.m., in the East Hampton Public Library community room.

In this workshop, led by Mark Gostkiewicz, you'll learn everything you need to know to create a thriving container garden in any space. From selecting the perfect containers, to choos-

ing the right plants, and designing a layout that showcases your style, this class will cover it all.

Newcomers, interested in gardening and related topics, are particularly encouraged to attend. The East Hampton Belltown Garden Club is a member of The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut and National Garden Clubs. This event is co-sponsored by the East Hampton Public Library.

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.

Linefit: Just a reminder! Linefit classes continue Mondays through May 4 at 2 p.m.

Blood Pressure Readings: Monday, March 16, 12:30 p.m. Offered by Chatham Health District, drop-ins welcome.

Chatham Health Chat: Monday, March 16, 11:30 a.m. The activity will be playing cognitive health games. Diabetic recipes will be available.

Live Well with Chronic Conditions: Tuesdays, March 18-April 29 (no class on April 15), at 9:30 a.m., this free six-week workshop on how to better manage your ongoing health condition will be provided by Senior Resources Agency on Aging, Chatham Health District and the Connecticut Aging and Disability Services. Topics include healthy eating, physical activity and exercise, dealing with difficult emotions, decision making and communication skills, working with healthcare providers, action planning and problem solving.

History of Tarot: Thursday, March 19, 11 a.m. Discover the origins of tarot cards and how they evolved over time. Learn about the art, symbolism, and cultural influence behind these historic images. Led by volunteer Karen MacGeorge-Royal.

Design & Create: Thursday, March 19, 1:30

EHNS Trivia Night

All are invited to join East Hampton Nursery School at Rule of 3 Brewing, 201 W. High St., on Friday, March 20, at 6:30 p.m., for Trivia Night.

In addition to trivia by WhatTrivia, there will be a 50/50 raffle, raffle baskets, and Feelin' Saucy food truck. Tickets are \$25 per person. Register teams of 2 to 4 people.

To register and for more information, email ehnsfundraisers@gmail.com.

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 lives in Middletown, 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.

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

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: Cabin Fever History Series: Saturday, March 14, 11 a.m. Micheal Langlois will present "From Liberty to Legacy: Exploring American Ideals in the Musicals 1776 and Hamilton." Look at these revolutionary musicals and their contrasting visions of an American society at a crossroads.

Book Club: Wednesday, March 18, 6:30 p.m. This month's book is *Wreck* by Catherine Newman.

Belltown Book Brunch: Friday, March 20, 11 a.m. Discuss what you're currently reading while enjoying coffee, tea, and a breakfast treat. Register or drop in.

The Art of Container Gardening: Designing, Planting, and Maintaining Your Own Urban Oasis with Mark Gostkiewicz: Monday, March 23, 6:00 p.m. Learn everything you need to know to create a thriving container garden in any space. Sponsored by Belltown Garden Club.

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

more.

Magic: The Gathering (Grades 7-12): Saturday, March 28, 1-3 p.m. Whether you already know how to play the card game, or want to learn, come together and play with people of all skill levels. Bring your own decks or use one of ours.

Children's Programs: DIY Days: Grades K-8: Saturday, March 14, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Children and families in grades K-8 are invited to create a different toy, game, or treat together. No registration required; just drop in.

Michele Urban Music Presents: Sing Me a Fairy Tale: Monday, March 16, 10:30 a.m. Join singer Michele Urban for a lively musical storytelling adventure for children ages 1-8 and their families. Classic fairy tales are reimagined with interactive songs, dancing, and playful rhythm activities. Register or drop in.

Board Game Builders: Grades 1-5: Monday, March 16, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Create your own board game from scratch – design the rules, build the board, and bring your ideas to life using a variety of supplies.

Lionheart Puppet Company Presents: The Little Red Hen: Saturday, March 28, 11 a.m. Inspired by the classic tale *The Little Red Hen*, this puppet show highlights the values of cooperation, responsibility, and helping others. Recommended for children ages 3-7. Register or drop in.

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 current CT Health Assessment form

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

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

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

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Teen Open Stage... Epoch Arts invites teens in grades seven and up to the next Brookside Nights Open Stage, which will be held Friday, March 20, from 7-9 p.m., at Epoch, 27 Skinner St. Teens are invited to share your talent on stage, be it art, poetry, dance, music, improv, your favorite thing, or anything that inspires you. If you don't want to share, you can come hang out with friends with free food, drinks and art supplies. Admission is \$10. Pictured is Brooklyn Tyler reciting an original spoken word at a previous Teen Open Stage.

Rotary Club Scholarship

East Hampton Rotary Club is announcing scholarships applications for any high school senior graduating in 2026 who resides in either East Hampton or Marlborough.

Applicants must be graduating or have graduated from a secondary school accredited by the State of Connecticut and use the scholarship for expenses at an accredited 4- or 5-year college or university, community

college, trade school or commercial school. Various single and multiple year scholarships available.

Applications are due by April 3, 2026 and available online at tinyurl.com/EHRotaryScholarship2026 or through the guidance department of East Hampton High School, RHAM, Mercy, Xavier and Vinal.

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.

Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday, March 28, at 1 p.m., at the church field.

Women's Fellowship: The next gathering will be Thursday, March 26, at 1 p.m. at Mary's house.

Children's Ministry: Children's Ministry, for children in kindergarten through fifth grade, is held in Fellowship Hall during worship. The

theme is "Friends with God" and is taught through Bible stories where the characters are friends with God. A toddler nursery is also available. All are welcome.

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

Adult Bible Study: Sundays at 10:30 a.m. in the Music Room. The study is the Women of the Bible, based on scripture and information/analysis in the Study Packet. The study will conclude on May 17.

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

Ham Shoots

The Belltown Sportsman's Club will have ham shoots Sundays, March 22 and 29, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the club grounds, located off Tartia Road.

Bring your own shotgun or one will be provided. Shells supplied; 20 and 12 gauge. Cost is \$4 per shot. Food and refreshments available.

For more information, call Curly at 860-638-7221.

Pancake Breakfast

Fowler-Dix-Park VFW Post & Auxiliary 5095 are holding an all-you-can-eat Pancake Breakfast Sunday, March 15, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at the post home, 20 N. Maple St.

Cost is \$12 per person and includes bacon, sausage, coffee, tea, and all-you-can-eat pancakes. Children under 10 are free.

All proceeds benefit the post's Relief Fund to assist local veterans.

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.

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, March 13.

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 March 13 will be Diane Anelli, the cantor from St Patrick Church.

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

MHVC Accepting Scholarship Applications

The deadline is this weekend to apply for the Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords (MHVC) annual scholarships. Scholarships are awarded to Middlesex County students pursuing a career in music or nursing.

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 articulate his/her career goals

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

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

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 March: Paul Hoffman from East Hampton, whose watercolors will be on display during regular library hours.

Open Mic Night: Friday, March 20, 6-8 p.m. Come and share your talent or just listen and enjoy. Performers, call the library to sign up, at 860-267-9093.

Save the Dates: On Sunday, April 12, at 2 p.m., there will be a performance with Double Play featuring a mix of great live music performed by Cathy Kreger and Jon Swift. Al

Also, on Saturday, April 18, at 6 p.m. the library will host a poetry event with East Hampton Poet Sympetalous AKA Stan Lindh and pro-

fessional jazz musician Lynn Tracy.

Lastly, on Saturday, May 23, at 2 p.m., the library will host a performance by the Foundry Saxophone Quartet. This is a rescheduled event due to snow.

There is no charge to attend these performances, but donations to the library are gratefully accepted.

Chatham Community Chess Club: Wednesdays, March 18 and April 1 and 15, from 6-9 p.m. All ages and skill levels welcome; lessons available. For more information contact pjhoffman1@juno.com.

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

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

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

Schools Offer Preschool Programs

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

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

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

Memorial Elementary School's Smart Start Program will be held five full days per week (9 a.m.-3:10 p.m.), following the East Hampton Public Schools calendar. Priority will be given to 4-year-old children that meet income guidelines or have other factors for consideration. Additional applicants, regardless of economic or risk factors, may then be selected through

a lottery process if there are spaces available. Children must turn 4 prior to Sept. 1 to be eligible for Smart Start.

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

Forms received after March 20 will not be accepted.

Helping Hands Reopens

Helping Hands is open again, from 9-11 a.m. on the 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.



Spring classes will start soon at Epoch Arts. Pictured is Harper Goodson from one of Epoch's winter art classes.

Spring Classes, Adult Ceramics at Epoch Arts

Epoch Arts, 27 Skinner St., will offer a variety of classes this spring. Students in grades pre-K-12 can register online to take classes like art, ceramics, theater, improv, preschool classes and more.

Epoch will also offer an adult ceramics class this semester too.

Also, don't forget to register for Summer Camp; Epoch offers two weeks, one for teens and one for K-5th grade.

Full class description and registration is at www.epocharts.org/classes-registration.

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Irish Soda Bread for Sale

The yoked churches Haddam Neck Congregational and Second Congregational of Middle Haddam will sell Irish Soda Bread each Sunday from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., throughout the month of March.

The one-pound loaf is \$5. All proceeds go to Habitat for Humanity Middlesex County Chapter, the local food banks, and women's

shelters. To reserve bread, call or text 860-682-2067 with your name, phone number and amount to reserve – or buy first-come first-served. The GPS address is 408 Quarry Hill Rd., East Hampton, CT 06424, which is in Haddam Neck.

You may also buy the soda bread at Paul's and Sandy's Too, 93 East High St., as available.

Upcoming Budget Meetings

The East Hampton Board of Finance will be holding the following budget meetings:

Board of Finance Public Hearing/Special Meeting on Monday, March 16, at 6:30 p.m., at Town Hall, 1 Community Drive, in the Town Council Chambers #107 and via Zoom. The town and Board of Education will present overviews of their budgets. The finance board will also gather input from the public and other boards.

Budget Workshops will be held at the Town Hall, 1 Community Drive and via Zoom on the following dates:

Tuesday, March 17, 4 p.m. – General Government, Regulatory, Health & Human Services and Culture & Recreation;

Wednesday, March 18, 6:30 p.m. – Board of Education;

Thursday, March 19, 6:30 p.m. – Public Safety and Public Works.

Call to Artists

The East Hampton Art Association will have its Annual Fine Art Show entitled "Up, Up & Away" on Saturday, May 16, rain or shine, on the Congregational Church lawn, 59 Main St.

There will be more than 20 exhibitors with art for sale; \$5 cream puffs; an art auction; and over \$600 worth of prizes will be awarded to the artists, both members and nonmembers.

If you would like to display your work, contact ehaact@gmail.com for the details and a registration form (which must be mailed back along with the entry fee and received by April 18).

For more information, look for the association on Facebook or visit easthamptonartassociation.org.

Arts & Culture Commission Seeks Members

East Hampton residents with a passion for creativity and community life are invited to apply to join the East Hampton Arts & Culture Commission. You don't need to be an artist to serve – just someone who values cultural experiences and wants to help enrich the town's creative landscape.

The commission works to promote and celebrate the arts in East Hampton by purchasing work from local creators for display in town buildings, organizing community events, and providing grants to residents, students, and organizations. Recent grant recipients include a local preschool class, Epoch Arts (which provides art and theater programming for youth),

and East Hampton High School seniors completing capstone projects. Last year, the commission also contributed funding to help Center School purchase new stage curtains. Past events have included Gallery Nights featuring local artists and locally made refreshments, garden tours, Plein Air painting events, and other programs that showcase creativity throughout the community.

The commission meets the second Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. at East Hampton Public Library. Residents interested in joining or learning more are encouraged to attend a meeting or contact the town manager's office (860-267-4468) for additional information.

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 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.

Easter Flowers: Envelopes are available at the front and rear entrance tables for donations towards Easter flowers. Put "flowers" on the memo line of your check and include the names of those you wish to be acknowledged at Easter. You may also mail donations directly to the church office.

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

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 (arbittersports).

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.

EDC Now Accepting Scholarship Applications

The Town of East Hampton Economic Development Commission is now accepting applications for its new scholarship.

Any East Hampton High School senior planning to study business or a related field at an accredited four-year school this fall is eligible and encouraged to apply.

The purpose of this scholarship is to encourage local students to pursue careers in business and related fields, and to show them community support. Get the full details, eligibility requirements and access the application through the guidance department at East Hampton High School.

The application deadline is May 1.



A group of East Hampton Middle School seventh- and eighth-graders recently visited Quebec.

EHMS Students Visit Quebec

East Hampton Middle School seventh- and eighth-grade French students recently went on a trip to Quebec, Canada, as a part of an immersive French language and cultural experience.

Students were able to bring the classroom to life with real-world experiences such as ordering food, asking for items in stores and conversing with local folks using their French skills.

During the trip, students drove dog sleds, visited ice castles, saw the land of the Wendake (indigenous people), toured a Copper Museum and visited a traditional sugar shack, where they danced traditional dances and played the spoons.

EHNS Open House

East Hampton Nursery School will hold an open house for prospective families on Saturday, March 14, from 9 a.m.-noon, for the 2026-27 school year. The school is located at 111 Main St.

All interested parents are invited to come see the school, talk to current families, teachers and board members, and learn about the great programs offered. The 3's programs meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from either 8:30-11:30 a.m. or 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. The 4's programs meet either three days a week – Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. – or five days a week.

Visit www.easthamptonnurseryschool.com for more information or email e.h.n.s.enrollment@easthamptonnurseryschool.com.

A Night of Doo-Wop

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

Tickets can be purchased online at ehsprojectiongraduation.ludus.com. Choose premium seats with limited VIP add-ons and meet & greet for \$40, or choose general admission for \$25.

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

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Marlborough • Marlborough



Megan Lloyd (left) recently received a Certificate of Appreciation for her work in support of the Lions District Governor's Breakfast. She's pictured with Lions District Governor Peter Cianciolo.



Marlborough Lion Ken Hjulstrom recently received two awards. Pictured from left are Hjulstrom, Lions District Governor Peter Cianciolo, and Lions Club President Jean Paul Bolduc.

Marlborough Lion Receives Awards

Marlborough Lion Ken Hjulstrom recently received two awards from the Lions Club.

Hjulstrom was selected as Marlborough Lion of the Year at the District Governor's Breakfast for his 22 years of dedicated service to the Marlborough Lions Club.

During Hjulstrom's time with the Marlborough Lions he has been a dedicated member assisting with various fundraising events and other Lions Club activities as well as serving for many years as the club's secretary.

In addition, Hjulstrom also received the Rose Amanda Freeman Award, which is presented to individuals for their "extraordinary service to Lions Clubs and their community." In addition to his many years of service to the Lions, Hjulstrom has also dedicated many years of service to his community by serving on several of Marlborough's town boards and commissions over the course of the last 28 years, is currently

a member of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and also serves as president of the executive board of Florence Lord Senior Housing.

This event also featured local clubs donating used eyeglasses and hearing aids, which will be sent to many countries around the world. The Marlborough Lions have collection boxes at Liberty Bank, Richmond Memorial Library, Town Hall and at Dr. Steven Rafalowsky's office on Saner Road.

Upcoming Marlborough Lions events include the Annual Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, March 29, and the Lions Club 5K Road Race on Sunday, May 24.

For more information on the Marlborough Lions Club, contact club President Jean Paul Bolduc at 860-798-2054 or Hjulstrom at 860-490-9116.

Local Lion Receives Certificate of Appreciation

Marlborough Lions Club Member Megan Lloyd recently received a Certificate of Appreciation for her work in support of the Lions District Governor's Breakfast, which was held March 1.

Lloyd played an integral role in the organizing and the running of the event. A past president of the Marlborough Lions Club, Lloyd has

a long history of stepping forward whenever help is needed both with the local Marlborough Club and with regional Lions events and activities.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Lions can call club president Jean Paul Bolduc at 860-798-2054 or club secretary Ken Hjulstrom at 860-490-9116.

Cover Story • Cover

★ Forensic Audit, cont. from page 1

investigation is intended to provide a clearer understanding of how the issue developed and to help guide future financial practices.

The officials said they could not comment further on the status of the investigation while the review is ongoing.

The issue was also addressed during a Feb. 18 BOE meeting, which focused on the district's proposed school budget for the upcoming fiscal year. During the meeting, Superintendent of Schools Dan Sullivan discussed the health insurance reserve fund and explained that the problem was linked to the continued use of an outdated funding methodology.

According to Sullivan, the formula used to determine contributions to the reserve fund had originally been designed by the district's insurance broker during a period when the reserve balance was strong. However, as the reserve began to decline, the district continued to apply the same formula without adjusting for the changing financial conditions.

"That reserve issue was really driven by the misallocation of a funding methodology coupled with increased claims," Sullivan said during the meeting.

As a result, the district did not request enough funding for the health insurance reserve in recent budget cycles, which contributed to the current deficit. "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 added.

Sullivan emphasized that the situation was not the result of intentional wrongdoing, but acknowledged that the end result is that the reserve is no longer in a healthy financial position. He also noted that while the district's budget finance committee reviewed reserve balances on a monthly basis, the information being used to monitor the account was not based on the correct data.

To prevent similar issues in the future, Sullivan said the district then planned to implement several changes to its financial oversight practices. These included conducting quarterly reviews with insurance partners to confirm appropriate reserve deposits and establishing additional internal verification procedures. The results of those reviews would be shared with the board's budget finance committee to improve transparency and oversight.

Teachers, RTC Blast Salary Freeze

During the public comment portion of the Feb. 18 meeting, several teachers spoke about a proposed salary and step freeze that had been discussed as a possible measure to help restore the reserve fund. Some educators expressed concern that the proposal would require teachers to absorb financial losses tied to a problem they did not create.

Kaelea Tewksbury, a special education teacher at Colchester Elementary School and a parent of children in the district, said the proposed freeze

could have significant financial consequences. She added that if the union were to approve the freeze, she would earn roughly \$10,000 less than what had been promised in her contract. "I have no hope of ever recovering the money," she said. Tewksbury questioned why teachers would be asked to shoulder the financial burden of correcting what she described as an administrative error.

Another teacher and parent, Amanda Lenk, voiced similar concerns during the meeting. Lenk said she was troubled by the idea of freezing teacher salaries while the overall proposed school budget at the time was increasing by at least 10%.

"I am deeply concerned about the proposal asking teachers to accept a salary and step freeze while the overall budget increases," Lenk said. She argued that a pay freeze would have a greater impact on lower-paid teachers than on higher-paid administrators.

"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," she said. "The burden is not equal, and the proposal is not equitable." She urged the BOE to pursue what she described as a more balanced and proportional solution to address the shortfall.

Separately, the Colchester Republican Town Committee adopted a resolution responding to the issue and expressed support for the town's teachers and paraprofessionals.

The resolution acknowledged the reported shortfall in the health insurance reserve fund but argued that the problem stemmed from years of "inadequate planning, oversight and financial management by district leadership" and the BOE. It also stated that the BOE, which is responsible for fiscal oversight of both municipal and education budgets, shared responsibility for ensuring appropriate financial scrutiny.

The committee emphasized that classroom teachers were not responsible for the deficit and should not be asked to absorb the consequences of what it described as governance and oversight failures. Specifically, the resolution opposed proposals that would ask the teachers' union to vote on freezing negotiated salary increases as a way to address the reserve fund deficit.

The committee argued that requiring teachers to give up agreed-upon compensation in order to correct financial mismanagement could undermine professional respect and harm workforce stability. Instead, the resolution called on district leadership, the BOE and the BOF to take responsibility for the condition of the reserve fund and to address the issue through transparent financial management and improved long-term fiscal planning.

The controversy was discussed further at the March 5 Board of Selectmen, as residents and board members weighed in on the matter. For more on that, see the story on page X.

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.

Special Kids' Events: Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday, March 28, at Blish Park. Visit the Easter Bunny. Ages 2 and under at 11 a.m.; ages 6-8 at 11:15 a.m.; ages 3-5 at 11:30 a.m.; and ages 7-10 at 11:45 a.m.

Kids Fishing Derby: Saturday, May 2, 9-11 a.m., at Blish Park. This event is held for anyone from 4 to 15 years of age. Registration is \$10. Prizes will be awarded for biggest fish, smallest fish and first fish caught.

Youth Programs: Crayola Imagine Arts - Wild World: The Art Of Conservation: For grades K-6, Tuesdays, April 7-May 19, 3:15-4:15 p.m., in the Marlborough Elementary School cafeteria. Registration fee is \$142/resident, \$147/non-resident.

Tiny Twirlers Dance Class - Tuesday Class: For ages 2-3 with caregiver. Tuesdays, 5-5:30 p.m., March 24-May 26; no class April 14. All classes held at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Registration fee is \$136.

Tiny Twirlers Dance Class - Saturday Class: For ages 2-3 with caregiver. Saturdays, 9:30-10 a.m., March 28-May 30; no class April 4, April 18 or May 23. All classes held at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Fee is \$108.

Sparkling Spinners: For ages 3-6. Thursdays, 4:30-5 p.m., March 26-May 28; no class April 16. All classes held at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Fee is \$136. No class April 16.

After School Co-Ed Dodgeball League: For grades 5 & 6. Mondays, March 23-May 11, 3:15-4:15 p.m., at MES. Participants will be divided up into teams each week to play various dodgeball games. No dodgeball on April 13th and May 4th. Fee is \$30/resident.

After School Co-Ed Handball League: For grades 5 & 6. Wednesdays, April 1-May 20, 3:15-4:15 p.m., at MES. Participants will be divided up into teams and play weekly games. No handball April 15 and May 13. Fee is \$30/resident.

Lego Pokemon Engineering: For grades K-4. Wednesdays, April 1-May 13, 3:15-4:45 p.m. Fee is \$136/resident, \$141/non-resident.

Mad Science-NASA Space and Beyond: For grades K-6. Thursdays, April 9-May 21, 3:15-4:15 p.m., at MES. Fee is \$142/resident, \$147/non-resident.

Soccer Shots: Saturdays, April 18-June 12 (no session May 23), at the West Road Memorial upper field. Mini, for age 2, is 3-3:35 p.m. Fee is \$90/resident, \$95/non-resident. Classic, for ages 3-5, is 3:45-4:30 p.m. Fee is \$113/resident, \$118/non-

resident.

Spring Into Yoga - Kids Yoga & Mindfulness Series: For ages 3-10. Tuesdays, April 21-May 12, 5:15-6 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Parent/guardian must attend to observe or participate with their child. Fee is \$58/resident, \$63/non-resident, or a \$20 drop-in fee.

Adult Sewing - Know Your Machine: For ages 16 and up. Thursday, April 23, 5:30-7 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee is \$52/resident, \$57/non-resident.

Intergenerational Multicultural Club: For grades 5 & 6. Fridays, April 24-May 29, 3:30-4:30 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Students will fill culture boxes with objects such as dolls, coins, and brochures from countries of your origin. Then, decorate the boxes, talk about your heritage, and celebrate with ethnic snacks. No cost to participate.

Horseback Riding Lessons: Ages 5 and up, English or Western style instruction. The lessons are private and are an hour in length. The lessons days and times are flexible. The instructor will contact you upon registration to set up lesson day and time. Fee is four lessons for \$175/residents, \$180/non-residents.

Adult Programs: Adult Beginner Ballet: For ages 18 and up. Tuesdays, March 24-May 26, 6:30-7:15 p.m. Class is held Dynamics in Hebron. Registration fee is \$181. No class April 14th.

Adult Tap: For ages 18 and up. Thursdays, March 26-May 28, 8-8:45 p.m. Class is held at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Registration fee is \$181. No class April 16th.

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.

Trip: Boston Red Sox vs. New York Mets: Saturday, July 11, 4:10 p.m. game at Citi Field in New York. Trip includes: a charter bus, ticket to the game, cookout at the stadium: hamburgers, hot dogs, sweet & sour meatballs, sausage & peppers, assorted salads, chips, water and soda, games and prizes on the bus. Registration fee is \$185 (400-level seating), or \$255 (lower level seating). Bus picks up/drops off at Putnam park and ride in Glastonbury.

Marlborough • Marlborough

Selectmen Plan for Field Maintenance, Hear Updates

By Toriana Williams

The Board of Selectmen held a meeting on March 3 at which several operational and administrative issues were discussed, ranging from seasonal field maintenance to infrastructure updates and emergency service matters.

Field Maintenance Plans

Board chair Susan McFarland, a Democrat, raised the issue of how the town should handle mowing and related upkeep of town athletic fields during the upcoming seasons. She explained that in previous conversations about the meeting agenda, she and Town Manager David Porter had discussed the possibility of putting the work out to bid.

McFarland emphasized that the town should follow the process that allowed multiple contractors to compete for work, provided they meet insurance and safety requirements. According to her, the job should be advertised as a temporary assignment lasting approximately 10 weeks. Porter agreed with the general approach and added that finding a local provider would be beneficial.

"I think given the scope of this particular work, it would be great to find someone local," said Porter.

McFarland further clarified that while mowing services could be contracted out through the bidding process, some related services would require more specialized professionals. The town would intend to solicit quotes for tick control from companies equipped with the appropriate expertise and equipment as tick management often requires specific treatments and application methods.

The broader goal, she emphasized, was to

avoid expanding the town's permanent workforce for a task that is limited in duration.

"We can just bid it out and just do it as a 10-week thing. We're not going to hire a new person at public works for a job that takes 10 weeks," McFarland explained, emphasizing that hiring a new employee for a position that would only last 10 weeks would not be an efficient use of public funds.

Communication Tower Updates

During his update to the board, Porter provided information about ongoing discussions regarding the town's communication tower arrangements. The matter involved negotiations and planning related to telecommunication infrastructure.

Porter reported that his most recent communication with an official involved in the matter occurred a few weeks prior. During that conversation, the official indicated that a second amendment to the relevant agreement would soon be prepared for review and approval.

However, finalizing the document depended in part on working with AT&T. According to Porter, the telecommunications company is still determining details about the equipment it intends to install and the amount of space it will require.

"We're still working with AT&T to nail down their equipment and space," he said. "The plan is to have the draft lease in their hands by next week."

Rescue Vehicle Incident

Another significant update came from Selectman Joe Asklar, a Republican, who described a recent accident involving a town rescue vehicle. The incident occurred while the vehicle was responding to a motor vehicle accident on Flood Road.

According to Asklar, the rescue truck left the roadway after its right wheel went off the edge of the road. The vehicle then hit a partially rotted stump located near the roadside. Officials believed icy conditions may have contributed to the incident, although the exact cause has not been definitively determined.

The impact caused enough damage that the vehicle had to be towed. Because the rescue truck is owned by the town, the situation has been reported through the municipality's insurance coverage.

Porter explained the steps taken immediately after the incident. First, the vehicle was towed to Firehouse 2, where emergency personnel removed the equipment stored on the truck. This included chainsaws and specialized rescue tools.

"That equipment will, on a temporary basis, be put on one of the other engines which will function as a stand-in... rescue truck while this one is being repaired," explained Porter.

Once the equipment was removed, the damaged truck was transported to New England Fire Apparatus, the dealership from which it was originally purchased. Technicians there are currently inspecting the vehicle to determine the extent of the damage and what repairs will be necessary.

Porter said he planned to visit the facility personally to review the damage and speak with technicians. He will also coordinate with the town's insurance company to ensure the claims process proceeded smoothly.

"I do not yet know the extent of the damage or how long it will take to repair. But I will keep you updated and please know that it is my intent to get it repaired and back on the road as quickly as possible."

Composting Conference Announcement

McFarland shared a piece of correspondence that could aid in the town's waste management plan. She announced that she had received an email invitation from Sustainable Connecticut regarding an upcoming composting conference. The event is scheduled for March 19 at Wesleyan University in Middletown and is free to attend.

McFarland encouraged both board members and residents to consider participating. She suggested that learning more about composting could help the town reduce waste management costs while promoting environmental sustainability.

"If we don't want to do pay-per-use ... unit-based pricing of bags," McFarland said, "teaching all of us as homeowners how to compost effectively ... maybe we can save all of ourselves collective tax dollars by composting either individually and or collectively."

She concluded by inviting residents to consider attending the conference.

Grief Share Group to Start

A Grief Share support group will begin Tuesday, March 31. The group will run every Tuesday until June 23. The first session will begin at 4:30 p.m. at Fellowship Community Church, 24 South Rd., and run until 6:30 p.m. A schedule of subsequent sessions will be provided at the first group meeting.

The group consists of 13 videos and discussion sessions with the last session on Tuesday, June 23, which will be the last video and a Celebration of Life to honor your loved one.

The sessions include watching a video, group discussions, and doing the sections pertaining to the video in the workbook at your leisure.

Grief Share features nationally recognized experts on grief recovery topics. Seminar sessions include "Is This Normal?" "The Challenges of Grief," "Grief and Your Relationships," "Why?"

and "Guilt and Anger." This is not a consecutive program. If you have started a Grief Share program before and have not finished or come in the middle of the sessions, you may still participate again.

There is a \$20 one-time registration fee, which includes the workbook. You will get the workbook at the first session. If you have already paid the \$20 registration fee from the previous Grief Share program, you will not need to pay again.

For any questions, please call 860-338-1060 or email shopgirl53@sbcglobal.net. Registration is on GriefShare.org. Click "Find a Group" and look for Fellowship Community Church. You may register there on Griefshare.org to see the schedule for the sessions and other information pertaining to Grief Share.

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.

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Folk singer John John Brown will perform at Marlborough Arts Center on Friday, March 27.

Folk Singer to Perform at Arts Center

The Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., will host folk singer John John Brown on the 4th Friday @ the Arts Café series on Friday, March 27, at 7:30 pm.

A Kerrville New Folk winner, Brown blends storytelling songs with visual art for his shows.

No Depression Roots Music and Cultural Journalism called his debut album *The Road* "a blend of astute Americana accompanied by a quiet, reflective glow."

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

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

For more information, visit www.marlbrougharts.org, email info@marlbrougharts.org or call us at 860-467-6353.

Student Show at Arts Center

The Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., will host the annual Student Art Show Saturdays and Sundays, March 14 & 15, and 21 & 22, from 1-4 p.m. each week. Admission is free.

The show features artwork by students at the elementary schools in Hebron and Marlborough, as well as the RHAM middle and high schools.

The Marlborough Arts Center is a nonprofit regional center for the fine arts, performing arts, and fine crafts. There is free on-site parking and the building is handicapped-accessible.

American Legion Golf Tournament

American Legion Post 197 will host a Golf Tournament at Blackledge Country Club, 180 West St., Hebron, on Monday, May 18.

For more information, email don1bu@comcast.net.

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Marlborough • Marlborough

Congregational Church News & Notes

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

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

March 15 is Girl Scout Sunday, and all Girl Scouts and their families are invited to attend this Celebrate Faith service. The worship service will be led by Seaver and will include a Message for the Children and a Girl Scout Dedication. After worship all are invited to Coffee Hour in the Thienes Lounge.

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

Outreach: The church collects non-perishable food items year-round for Marlborough Food Bank with a basket located in the narthex for Sunday worshippers to bring donations. The monthly luncheon for Florence Lord Housing residents will be March 22. 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 certi-

RTC to Host Bingo

The Marlborough Republican Town Committee will hold Bingo Friday, March 13, at the American Legion, 128 East Hampton Rd., Marlborough. 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.

Setback Tournament

There will be an American Legion Setback Tournament, Friday March 20th, at the American Legion Post 197, 128 East Hampton Rd. Registration is at 6 p.m., and the games start at 6:30 p.m. Play is Round Robin-style, and fee is \$10/person.

Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place. There will also be raffles and a 50/50. (All proceeds go to the ladies auxiliary.)

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

fied 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 is located on the lower level with easy access from the parking lot. The shop is open for shopping and donations Fridays from noon to 3 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Second Blessings is currently featuring spring and Easter 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@marlconchurch.org, or contact the church office at office@marlconchurch.org.

Watercolorist On Display at Town Hall

The Marlborough Arts Center presents a new solo exhibit featuring the work of arts center member and Connecticut artist Charles McCaughtry. The collection is currently on display at the Marlborough Town Hall's MAC Hallway Gallery.

McCaughtry's watercolors capture the poetry of nature, focusing on the relationships between earth, water, air, and light. An avid hiker and paddler, he draws inspiration from the wild areas he explores.

McCaughtry's work has been featured in over 50 solo exhibitions and is held in numerous institutional, corporate, and private collections across the United States, Canada, and Europe. His honors include commissions

from Liberty Bank, the Dodd Center at the University of Connecticut, and the Hartford Life Insurance Company.

For more information and to view his work, visit mccaughtryart.com.

The exhibit will run through the end of April and is open to the public during Marlborough Town Hall business hours: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Tuesday, 8 a.m.-7 p.m.; and Friday, 8 a.m.-noon. Town Hall is located at 26 N. Main St.

For more information, contact the Marlborough Arts Center at 860-467-6353 or the Marlborough Town Hall Tax Collector's Department at 860-295-6205.



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New Intergenerational Multicultural Club

Christi Moraga of CoDE (Coalition on Diversity & Equity) is looking for seniors and students to participate in the Marlborough Intergenerational Multicultural Club, which will include five seniors and five fifth and sixth graders from Marlborough Elementary School. The club will be held at Marlborough Senior Center.

The seniors and students will talk about their heritages and fill culture boxes with objects such as dolls, coins, brochures from countries of their origin, and decorate the

boxes. The group will celebrate with ethnic snacks. The meetings will be six Friday afternoons from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., starting the last Friday in April and running through May. The club is free.

This club will be sponsored by Marlborough Park and Rec and CoDE.

Seniors, please call the Marlborough Senior Center to register, at 860-295-6209. Deadline is April 1. Students, please register through Marlborough Parks and Recreation: 860-295-6203.

Marlborough Celebrates America 250

During 2026, the entire country is planning on ways to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and Marlborough has been busy planning activities for the town.

A small core committee has been working since the end of summer to put together a few fun activities for all to enjoy. Here's a quick preview of the activities, and please look for more details in an upcoming article in the *Rivereast* as well as reminders for each event as they draw near.

· Richmond Memorial Library presentations on March 24 (The Web They Wove – The Dirty Blue Shirts) and April 23 (The Art of Chocolate Making).

· April 8, a special assembly for a presentation at the Marlborough Elementary School (MES) by the Marlborough Junior Ancient Fife and Drum Corps.

· Participation in the Memorial Day Parade on May 25.

· On May 30, a series of eight reenactments by some figures in history taking place at three or four venues in town. Advance registration for a guided tour is advised, but walk-ins will be allowed.

· On June 7, a Marlborough Top Dog competition with prizes.

· June 26 – 28 groups who pre-register will create their own patriotic displays on the Town

Green. Judging will take place on June 29, and displays will remain on the green for all to see through July 5.

· July 4. Take part in or watch from Blish Park or surrounding lake areas, two special Water Parades. At 10 a.m., the first parade for those who are using kayaks, paddleboards, or canoes (all manually powered) will set sail around Lake Terramuggus. Participants are encouraged to decorate their watercraft as well as themselves in the most patriotic ways. Then at 1 p.m., a second Water Parade will take place for motorized watercraft like pontoon and fishing boats. No judging, no prizes – just a whole lot of fun!

· Also, on July 4, the committee hopes to see many people at the town Beach at Blish Park. The committee said it is working on possibly getting some food trucks, ice cream trucks, and others to help make it a party atmosphere. Music might be present – and of course there will be a big fire pit available all day for you to make your s'mores or roast your hot dogs.

· Aug. 23 is Marlborough Day. See what activities are planned for that day!

· Sept. 19 is the Marlborough Ancient Junior Fife and Drum Corps parade and muster.

For more information on meetings, sponsorship, and updated events as they are planned, visit marlboroughhistory.org/america-250-main-page.

St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

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

Lenten Worship, Sacraments, Scripture Study & Stations of the Cross: Lenten Reconciliation: Mondays during Lent through March 20, 5-6 p.m. Scripture Study is Tuesdays during Lent through March 24, following morning Mass at 8:30 a.m. Stations of the Cross are held every Friday during Lent through March 27, beginning at 7 p.m.; a simple soup supper is served prior beginning at 6 p.m. in the church hall. All are welcome.

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

Faith Formation Programs: Cindy Bryan, Eileen Gilles and Helena Thomas lead the 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.stjfchurch.org, or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church).

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Watercolor Class for Mixed Abilities

Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., will offer an Introduction to Watercolor class, for people with mixed abilities with the medium of watercolor and painting in general, on Saturday, March 28, from 2-5 p.m.

Led by Marika Hahn, the class will give you an opportunity to focus on brush strokes and using liquid watercolors for a very transparent effect. The workshop is being held from 2-5 p.m.

Saturday, March 28, and the cost is \$65.

See the course description for supplies provided and supplies you must bring. To register go to MarlboroughArts.org and click on the menu tab in the upper right corner. Go to current classes and click on Intro to Watercolor March '26 session.

For more information, call 860-467-6353 or email info@marlborougharts.org.

Upcoming Classes at Marlborough Arts Center

Marlborough Arts Center, located at 231 N. Main St., will offer a variety of classes in March and April.

In March, there will be a variety of six-week workshops starting up for beginner to advanced watercolor enthusiasts. And if you only have a Saturday available, there is an Intro to Watercolor and an Intermediate Watercolor workshop, each three hours, on March 28; one will be in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

If you want to try a different medium, expressive Landscapes in Acrylic is for all levels and is being held on Sunday afternoon, April 26. And for those more interested in working with pen,

pencil, and ink in mixed media, check out the classes in the Zentangle club. You can attend any session and learn an abstract, relaxing art form that doesn't take much time and requires minimal supplies. The instructor, Laura Marks, is active in the Art for Healing program at Hartford Hospital.

For more information, go to marlborougharts.org. 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.

Senior Center News and Notes

Marlborough Senior Center, 17 School Drive, is open for activities. For more information about any senior center program, or to register, call 860-295-6209 or email socialservices@marlboroughct.gov. Also contact the senior center for a list of regularly occurring weekly and monthly programs, such as billiards, chair massage, the Cookbook Club, Parkinson's Disease Exercise Class, blood pressure screenings, and more.

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

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.

Blood Drive: Wednesday, March 18, 1-6 p.m. For more information or to make an appointment to donate, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or sign up online at redcrossblood.org with sponsor code "Marlborough."

St. Patrick's Lunch: Friday, March 20, noon-2 p.m. Enjoy corned beef and cabbage, carrots, potatoes and soda bread. The Millis Berfield Band will perform. Cost is \$10. RSVP by March 16.

Birthday Club: January, February and March birthdays will all be celebrated Tuesday, March 24, from 1-2 p.m., with cake. Open to all friends and family. It does not have to be your birthday month to celebrate. However, if it is, please RSVP.

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 Se-

nior Center and recreation activities are available to seniors and people with disabilities. Transportation is available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Rides must be reserved two business days in advance. Call 860-295-6209 for more information. Visit www.marlboroughct.gov for the complete transportation policy. Transportation services are only 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.

Social Services: Food Bank: Located at 3 Willhenger 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.

Homeowners Elderly/Disabled Tax Relief Program: Property tax credits are available to qualified households 65+ or disabled. Income limit for single is \$46,300; for married, up to \$56,500. For more information, call the assessor's office at 860-295-6201; for application assistance, call the senior center.

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.



Mike Waszkelewicz is a new member of the Marlborough Lions Club. He's pictured with, at left, past district governor Kathy Randall and, at right, his sponsor, Jean Paul Bolduc.

New Marlborough Lion

The Marlborough Lions Club has announced a new member, Mike Waszkelewicz. Waszkelewicz was sponsored by Marlborough Lions Club President Jean Paul Bolduc.

The Marlborough Lions Club serves people all around the globe with a focus on vision services in other countries, which includes supporting medical treatment to address those with issues effecting eyesight as well as fighting hunger and lending support for disaster relief. Eyeglasses and hearing aids that are collected locally are shipped overseas for distribution to people living in impoverished countries. Right here at home, The Lions provide annual vision

screening for children in our schools and day-care centers.

Various fundraisers, such as the upcoming Lions Club Pancake Breakfast on March 29th, the 'Round the Lake 5K on May 24th and October Masquerade 5K, allow the club to raise the funds necessary to support these humanitarian efforts.

If you have interest in joining the Marlborough Lions Club, contact president Jean Paul Bolduc at 860-798-2054 or secretary Ken Hjulstrom at 860-490-9116. New members are always welcome.

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 Lions 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.

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.

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Rotary Club Scholarship

East Hampton Rotary Club is announcing scholarship applications for any high school senior graduating in 2026 who resides in either East Hampton or Marlborough.

Applicants must be graduating or have graduated from a secondary school accredited by the State of Connecticut and use the scholarship for expenses at an accredited 4- or 5-year college or university, community college, trade school or commercial school. Various single and multiple year scholarships available.

Applications are due by April 3, 2026 and available online at tinyurl.com/EHRotaryScholarship2026 or through the guidance department of East Hampton High School, RHAM, Mercy, Xavier and Vinal.

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Correction

In last week's story on the proposed Marlborough town budget, it was reported that the town's portion of last year's AHM Youth and Family Services budget was proposed at \$219,399 while the actual expenditure was significantly lower at \$109,699. This is incorrect. While the proposed amount was correct, the \$109,699 figure is actually the year-to-date expenditure, and not the final expenditure for 2025-26.

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Maplefest Craft Fair Coming

As part of Hebron's Maple Festival, Gilead Congregational Church invites all to attend its annual Maplefest Craft Fair on Saturday, March 21, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall at 672 Gilead St.

This family-friendly event will feature a curated selection of unique, handcrafted goods

and one-of-a-kind gifts made by artisans within the local communities. The talents of a few of the vendors include handcrafted jewelry, scenic local photography, artisan-made home décor, fine paper crafts, fused glass suncatchers and adornments, and more.

United Brethren Synagogue News and Notes

United Brethren of Hebron Synagogue, located at 10 Church Street (Route 85) in the center of Hebron, is once again participating in the Hebron Maple Fest. The synagogue will sell baked goods and offer tours of its historic building on Sunday, March 22, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The synagogue said its historic building needs a new roof and other major renovations, and is looking for donations to its capital campaign. To learn more, go to www.gofundme.com/f/support-united-brethren-hebrons-vital-work.

United Brethren of Hebron offers a flexible,

inclusive approach to Judaism. The synagogue combines elements from both the Conservative and Reform traditions in its services, and its membership includes interfaith families and couples.

If interested in becoming a member or would like to learn more about the synagogue, please visit www.ubofhebron.org or email ubofhebron@gmail.com. Also, check out the synagogue's Facebook page for information about upcoming events and services.

Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief

Tax relief for homeowners aged 65 and older or 100% Social Security disabled is offered in conformance with eligibility requirements and specifications of state enabling legislation. The Hebron Assessor's office will accept applications through May 15.

The maximum income limits set for the Oct. 1, 2025 Grand List year are: Single, \$46,300; Married, \$56,500. A completed 2025 federal income tax return with supporting documents (if filed), including a 1099 Social Security state-

ment, must be presented at time of application. Social Security disabled applicants must also present proof of disability dated within three years of application. If no tax return is filed, all taxable and non-taxable income statements must be presented at time of application.

More detailed information about these programs is available at www.hebronct.gov, or by contacting the Assessor's Office at 860-228-5971 ext. 126.

Tax Abatement Applications Available

Applications for property tax abatements are available for Hebron residents. There is a town ordinance that defers property taxes when those taxes exceed 8% of total household income from any source.

For example, if the total household income from any source totals \$30,000, the property tax liability would be capped at \$2,400. The abatement would be for any property taxes that exceeded \$2,400. The abatement would apply to the upcoming tax year beginning July 1.

Under the ordinance, taxes that are abated

would be repaid when a property is sold or transferred through probate. Abated taxes would accrue at an interest rate which is significantly less than what is charged for delinquent taxes (18%). The interest rate is currently 4.25% and is reviewed annually by the Town Council.

Those interested in the program can request an application by calling the town manager's office at 860-228-5971. Applications will be mailed upon request. The application deadline is May 31.

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The Southeastern Connecticut Seahawks recently won the 14U Capitals Division State Championship hockey tournament. Three Colchester teens are on the team.

Local Teens on Championship Team

Three Colchester teens are on the Southeastern Connecticut Seahawks team that won the 14U Capitals Division State Championship hockey tournament on Sunday, March 1.

The win was a bit of an underdog story for the team as they were going against a team they hadn't beaten all season. They started the season playing against the Enfield Eagles in their first game and lost 8-2. The next time they played the Seahawks tightened the gap 6-2, third game of the season it was 3-1 in the Eagles favor. They finally tied the Eagles in the tournament 4-4.

After winning the semifinals game over the

Wonderland Wizards (out of Bridgeport) 5-1 Sunday morning, they faced off against the Enfield Eagles on Sunday night, pulling off a very close 5-4 win in regulation.

The three Colchester students on the team are Bacon Academy freshmen Dylan Molina and Benjamin Lockwood, and William J. Johnston Middle School eighth-grader Chase Pilney.

Anyone is interested in learning to play hockey or playing for the Seahawks, which is based out of Norwich, can learn more at SECYH.org. Tryouts begin March 21st.

For more information, call 860-748-9098.

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.

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.

Nocturnal Pollinators Program

The Colchester Garden Club invites all to learn about the importance of the often-overlooked nighttime pollinators at its meeting Tuesday, March 24, at 6 p.m., at Cragin Memorial Library, Norton Room A.

Margery Winters, longtime naturalist and assistant director at Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton, will present "Gardening Under the Stars; Saving our Nocturnal Pollinators." Ad-

mission is free.

The Colchester Garden Club is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with members in Colchester and eight other Connecticut towns. For more information about the club visit www.colchesterct.gov/colchester-garden-club or contact colchestergardenclub@yahoo.com.

Senior Center News & Notes

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

Monday, March 16: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Quilters Documentary; 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 17: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10 a.m., Book Club; 11 a.m., Diabetes Management Presentation; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 4-8 p.m., Wellness Nights.

Wednesday, March 18: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Walking Group; 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Reflexology; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Hand and Foot Card Game, Sit & Be Fit Video; 11 a.m., Four-Leaf Clover Feast; 1 p.m., Sew-cial Time; 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming.

Thursday, March 19: 9 a.m., Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling; 11 a.m., Yoga; noon, Senior Benefits Counseling; 12:05 p.m., Chair Massage; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes; 1 p.m., Knit & Crochet; 4-8 p.m., Wellness Nights.

Friday, March 20: 9 a.m.-3 p.m., AARP Tax Aide by appointment; 9 a.m., Social Service Hours, Open Art Studio; 10 a.m., Sit & Be Fit, Second Annual Quilt Share & Tell; 10:30 a.m., Choral Group; 11 a.m., Yoga; 1:15 p.m., Bingo.

Second Annual Quilt Share & Tell: Friday, March 20, 10 a.m. The center will once again celebrate all our talented members who make quilts by having a Share and Tell event. If you make quilts or have a favorite quilt to share,

you're invited to join in the celebration. Refreshments will be served. Registration is required.

Candle-Making: Tuesday, March 24, 6 p.m. Make a homemade candle to keep for yourself or give as a gift. The cost is \$8 and registration is required.

AARP Driver Safety Training: Wednesday, March 25, 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Learn the rules of the road, defensive driving techniques, how to operate your vehicle more safely, and how you can manage and accommodate age-related changes in vision, hearing and reaction time. You may qualify for a discount from your insurance provider. Open to anyone 50 and over. The cost is \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-members. Register by March 20 or until sold out.

Pictionary Team Night: Thursday, March 26, 6 p.m. Come play a fun game of Pictionary. Snacks will be provided and the winning team wins a prize. Cost is \$3, and registration is required.

Ultimate Bingo: Tuesday, March 31, 6 p.m. Space is limited for this monthly game, where you pay to play and the prizes are bigger. The cost is \$10, and registration is required.

Hand-Sewn Mini Quilts: Thursday, March 26, 1 p.m. All are invited to come make a tiny quilt that can be turned into a fridge magnet, a pin cushion or a mini quilt brooch. This is a free program, but registration is required.

Healthy Food Series: Making Meals Ahead for Healthy Living: Tuesday, March 31, 10:30 a.m. Look at various ways to meal prep, tools that make prepping easier, storage options and various recipes for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Several recipe samples will be shared. This is a free program. Registration is required.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES



Better Dental HEALTH



by George M. Mantikas, DMD

AMALGAM OR COMPOSITE FILLINGS?

There are several different types of materials used to fill cavities, but the two most often used are amalgam and composite. Amalgam (silver) was primarily used for many years, but composite fillings (plastic) are now more widely used due to their look and durability. Composite fillings appear more natural because they can be tinted to match tooth color. They are made from a mix of plastic resin and powdered glass. In addition to fillings, composites can be used for veneers, inlays, crowns, and chipped teeth. However, amalgam fillings are also very durable, have an easier installation process, and cost less. They also last longer: a composite filling may last around ten years, while an amalgam filling can last for fifteen.

If you would like to learn about the kinds of materials we use for repairing cavities, be sure to discuss your questions with us. We bring you our dental column in order to keep you up-to-date on the latest materials, research, innovations, and procedures available in dentistry today and to inform our readers how the many benefits of modern oral care can enhance their lives via a stunning smile. New patients are always welcome at our state-of-the-art office; please call for an appointment.

P.S. Although amalgam fillings contain mercury, the American Dental Association says they are a "viable and safe" option.

George M. Mantikas, DMD, PC

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RE3-13-26

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RE3-26-20

Selectmen Discusses Controversial Shortfall

By Toriana Williams

At last week's meeting of the Colchester Board of Selectmen, residents and board members alike spoke out about a budgetary shortfall that, according to one resident, could be as much as \$5 million.

As reported on the cover of this week's *Rivereast*, the discovery of the financial shortfall, which is in the shared health insurance reserve fund between the town and the Board of Education, led the school board to authorize a forensic audit to further dive into the matter.

During the public comment period of the March 5 Board of Selectmen meeting, resident Jason LaChapelle urged the board to take a more active role in investigating the shortfall tied to the BOE's health reserve fund. LaChapelle cited figures that have circulated publicly indicating a discrepancy somewhere between \$1 million and \$5 million.

"I want to talk about this forensic audit going on in the Board of Education and the somewhere between \$1 million and \$5 million shortfall in the health reserve fund," LaChapelle began. He emphasized that taxpayers expect oversight from elected officials, noting that the town charter gives the BOS authority to investigate town boards.

"We're your taxpayers and your constituents,

and you do have an obligation to watch out for the town's financial health and our tax dollars," he said.

LaChapelle argued that if the \$5 million estimate were accurate, the amount would represent a substantial portion of the town's finances. "That's, what, 30% of the town's budget, that's 11% of the Board of Education budget," he said. "That is not peanuts; that is a significant amount of money."

He continued to then question the board and their intent as they moved forward. "My question to this board ... is what are you doing about this? Where is the investigation into the previous Board of Education and how did we get to a point where the taxpayers have lost apparently \$5 million?"

He raised concerns about leadership oversight, noting that Republican Donna Antonacci, who was chair of the BOE during the period in question, now serves on the Board of Finance. LaChapelle asked when the selectmen might begin their own inquiry to determine how the situation developed and what steps could prevent similar issues in the future.

"The taxpayers going to be the only ones who will make up that difference," he said.

First Selectman Bernie Dennler, a Demo-

crat, responded to LaChapelle's comments by clarifying that the situation involved more than a simple loss of funds. Dennler, who has attended meetings of the town's health insurance subcommittee, said the widely cited \$5 million figure included projected costs rather than a confirmed deficit.

"I do want to offer, just, clarification because we don't have a Board of Education member present," Dennler stated.

He explained that two major factors are contributing to the numbers being discussed. The first is an increase in projected health insurance claims. Since the town operates as a self-insured entity, it directly absorbs rising healthcare costs.

"When you talk about this \$5 million number, a large portion is an increase in projected claims," Dennler noted, adding that the town side of the budget has experienced similar projections.

The second factor is a funding shortfall within the reserve fund itself, which Dennler acknowledged is serious. However, he said the BOE has already initiated its own investigation.

"The Board of Education does have an investigation underway," he said. "I will not comment on their investigation, but I do want to acknowledge that there are two factors here, and I don't

want to alarm people that there's \$5 million missing."

Selectman Calls Situation 'Outrageous'

Selectman Tim Vaillancourt, a Republican, expressed frustration with what he described as a lack of information provided to the Board of Selectmen about the situation. He argued that the board should have been informed earlier and more thoroughly.

"I think it's outrageous that we haven't been told more about this. I mean, it appears that none of you care that much about it," he said.

He pointed to a decision in the previous budget cycle when the board provided an additional \$250,000 to the BOE's health reserve fund, describing it as a budget maneuver the town had not used before. In light of the current discussion about the reserve fund, he said that decision raised more concerns.

"Now we're short a minimum of, the way I hear it, \$1 million, maybe more," he said, adding that the fund could potentially run out before the end of the fiscal year.

Vaillancourt also criticized Antonacci's leadership, going so far as to say she should resign from the Board of Finance. "I believe personally that this board should make a motion asking her to do so," he said.

Colchester Federated Church News

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

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

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.

Historical Society Program on Putnam

All are invited to join the Colchester Historical Society for a presentation on Major General Israel Putnam, led by historian and author Robert Hubbard, on Thursday, March 19, at 6:30 p.m., at Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave.

Israel Putnam (1718-1790) was an influential figure in 18th-century America, remembered for his pivotal roles in both the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War. In 1758, he narrowly survived being burned alive by Mohawk warriors, and later led a group of 500 men who were shipwrecked near Cuba. Putnam is fa-

mously credited with the command, "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes," during the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Detailing Putnam's close relationships with Aaron Burr, Alexander Hamilton, and John and Abigail Adams, Hubbard's presentation of Putnam re-examines the life of a revolutionary whose seniority in the Continental Army was second only to that of George Washington.

Robert Ernest Hubbard, author of *Major General Israel Putnam: Hero of the Revolutionary War*, is a historian and retired professor from Albertus Magnus College in New Haven.

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.

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. Children can be included on a team, but there must be at least four adults on each team. Additional Puzzlepalooza date: April 24.

CCO Concert: Colchester Choir and Orchestra will present its March concert, "Mozart to Modern," next Saturday, March 21, at 6:30 p.m. in the Bacon Academy auditorium. This concert will feature music from Disney's *Moana*, *The Greatest Showman*, and several classical pieces. Admission is free, but donations are appreciated and help offset costs of purchasing new music each season. For more information visit colchesterparksandrec.colchesterct.gov or contact parcsandrec@colchesterct.gov.

COMMIT Dance Fitness: Wednesdays, April

1-May 20, 6-7 p.m., at Jack Jackter Intermediate School, for ages 15 and older. This is a HIIT-style dance workout. Cost is \$60 per resident, \$65 per nonresident; drop-ins are welcome, at \$12 per class. Minimum of 4 participants required, with a maximum of 30 allowed.

Self-Defense for Adults: Tuesdays and Thursdays, April 7-May 7, 9:30-10:30 a.m., at 360 Defense, 52 Mill St., for ages 12 and up. Come try out Krav Maga and kickboxing to get a full body workout and learn practical self-defense. Cost is \$120 (five weeks, two classes per week). Minimum of one participant required, with a maximum of 12.

Auditions for Shakespeare on the Green: Twelfth Night: Colchester Actors' Theatre is holding auditions Wednesday, April 15, and Thursday, April 16, at 7 p.m., at the Youth Center, 95 Norwich Ave., for this summer's outdoor production of *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare. All roles are being cast. All actors age 16 and up are invited to audition, and are asked to prepare contrasting classical or Shakespearean monologues for the audition. Pre-registration is encouraged to reserve an audition spot. Walk-ins are also welcome. Show dates are June 25th and 26th on the Town Green in Colchester. Contact parcsandrec@colchesterct.gov with any questions or to reserve an audition time.

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

Fish Fry Fridays

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

Meal choices include traditional fish and chips, baked fish with baked potato, the club's breaded clam strip dinner, as well as chicken nuggets for the kids. All meals include coleslaw, coffee and dessert. Cost is \$17 for adults and \$10 for kids.

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

Lions Club Accepting Grant Applications

The Colchester Lions Club is now accepting applications for grant requests from community groups and organizations, in preparation for its annual Community Night of Giving in May.

Organizations should be prepared to demonstrate how the funds would be used to benefit the community. Applications can be found on the club's website (colchesterlions.org), or may be obtained in writing: Colchester Lions Club, P.O. Box 423, Colchester, CT, 06415. Completed applications must be submitted by March 20.

Serving the community since 1949, the Colchester Lions give back all profits raised to groups and organizations in the community, in addition to Lions' causes in the region, state, country and world.

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?

Clothing Swap Coming Soon: The church will host a Church Clothing Swap, and is looking for donations. All are asked to donate gently used clean clothing. All sizes are welcome—men, women, teens, and children. Date: Saturday, March 28, 9 a.m.-noon.

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.

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Bacon's Three-Sport Star Continues to Shine

By Josh Howard

Entering the final season of his high school career, Bacon Academy senior Troy Johnson hopes his final chapter is as memorable as the previous ones.

Along with being an all-state soccer player at the school, Johnson most recently scored his 1,000th career point for Bacon boys basketball and now prepares for his senior lacrosse season with a Bobcats team that has captured back-to-back conference championship banners.

Johnson said playing the three sports has allowed him to expand his horizon, both as an athlete and as a person.

"I feel like the community I've built is very strong because I'm not just around one group of guys, I'm around three different groups of guys," said Johnson. "I feel like I'm able to bring what I've learned in each sport and bring a new perspective."

In diversifying his athletic endeavors, Johnson is following in the footsteps of his two older brothers, Quinn and Grant, who also played a trio of sports. His father, Montez, was also an All-American athlete that was a three-sport star.

"I always thought that was normal, but as I got older and started playing at a higher competition, a lot of these dudes only played one sport [and] I really worried that a skill gap would soon develop," recalled Johnson.

But that gap never widened as Johnson always played with kids older than him, which translated to immediate success once he was at Bacon.

In his final high school basketball game on Feb. 26, Johnson scored a career-high 32 points and eclipsed 1,000 career points in the process. Once the final buzzer sounded, Johnson had posted 1,007 career points, becoming the sev-

enth player in program history – and the first since Erik Martin in 1993 – to surpass the four-digit scoring total.

Prior to the finale, Johnson said he knew he was close to the mark but wasn't sure of the exact number he needed to score. He ended up reaching the milestone on a layup with 5:41 left in fourth quarter.

"I was really glad to have my teammates and the student section there to support me. I really appreciated it," Johnson said of the memorable moment.

Over his four years on the courts, Johnson started every game and Bacon Academy boys head coach Craig Kupper said his prolific point producer was more than just a scorer.

"He could have scored 2,000 if he wanted to, but he was a great teammate and always willing to make the extra pass and not force anything," added Kupper, who said Johnson's other sports allowed him to hit the ground running once basketball season tipped off. "He always came in with that competitive fire already lit."

Heading into the basketball season, Johnson had already made the most of his final soccer season by earning Connecticut Soccer Coach Association (CSCA) Class M All-State after serving as a senior captain for a Bobcats soccer team that advanced to the state quarterfinals this past fall.

Johnson scored a team-high 26 points (11 goals, 4 assists) as he made All-Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) First-Team to go along with his all-state selection.

Bacon Academy boys soccer head coach Skip Starks said Johnson has an unending work ethic, referring to his all-state forward as a "class individual" that is blessed with tremendous athletic abilities.



Troy Johnson is a three-sport star that earned all-state on the soccer fields last fall, netting 11 goals and dishing out four assists as the Bobcats advanced to the quarterfinals of the Class M state tournament.

"He leads by example in everything that he does," added Starks, who also coached Johnson's older brothers. "He comes from a great family and checks everything single box that you could check."

Next up is the lacrosse season, set to officially start on March 21 with games beginning in early April.

A year ago, Johnson hit a scoring mark on the last game of his junior season, eclipsing 100 career goals. Heading into spring, Johnson has 102 goals and 28 assists and will most certainly add to those totals this spring as the Bobcats aim to finish atop the ECC Division II standings for the third straight season.

"We have a great group of guys and I feel like this year we can make a run," Johnson said of the goals coming into the 2026 season. "I don't have a lot of individual goals; I'm just trying to focus on what I can do for the team to succeed."

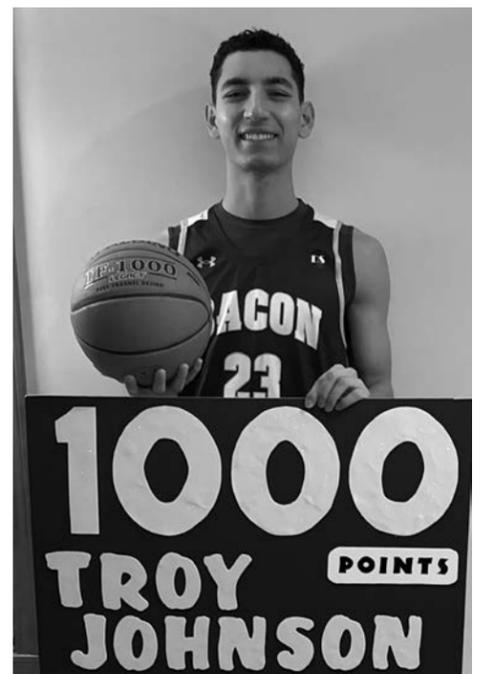
Once lacrosse season wraps up in a few months, Johnson will shift his focus to college where his long-term goal is to become a math teacher.

Although intramural sports may be in his future, the year-round athlete said his education will now take top priority.

"I'm ready to move onto my next chapter," explained Johnson. "My dad always preached 'carry the books as well as the ball.'"

Johnson has already started educating youth, serving as a coach and referee for youth sports in town.

Whether it is teaching or coaching, Johnson said mentoring the next generation is the next



Johnson recently eclipsed 1,000 career points on the hardwood, becoming the first Bacon Academy boys basketball player in over three decades to hit the four-digit mark.

challenge he will tackle, adding, "I'm just glad I can continue my journey and give back to the community."

WJMS PTO Comedy Night

There will be a Comedy Fundraiser for William J. Johnston Middle School on Friday, March 13. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the event starts at 7 p.m.

There will be a cash bar, raffle prizes, a 50/50 raffle, and more. This is a PG-13 event.

Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased at www.funny4funds/events.

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.

Breakfast with the Easter Bunny

Colchester Youth and Social Services will hold a Breakfast with the Easter Bunny fundraiser Sunday, March 29, from 9-11 a.m., at the Colchester Senior Center, 15 Louis Lane.

Tickets are \$15 per person and include breakfast, DIY photos with the Easter Bunny, an egg hunt, and crafts. Kids can also enjoy mini carnival games, face-painting, and an Easter Bunny Cake Walk, with tickets available for \$1 each (cash only).

To purchase tickets, visit tinyurl.com/bunny-bfast. For more information, visit Colchesterct.gov/yss.

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.

Winner, Winner, Chicken Dinner – Wrights Farm & Bally's Twin River Casino: Thursday, April 16, departing at 10:15 a.m. Your meal consists of dinner rolls, salad with the farm's classic Italian dressing, pasta with red sauce, French fries, and Wright's famous baked chicken. Leave room for ice cream for dessert. After time in the gift shop, there will be a visit to Bally's Twin River Casino. Cost is \$115 per person. This includes transportation and lunch; it does not include a casino bonus at this time. 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.

Goodspeed – Jesus Christ Superstar & Lunch at Gelston House: Wednesday, June 3, departing at 10:30 a.m. Have lunch and then see the classic rock musical. Cost is \$105 per person. Includes transportation and lunch at the Gelston House.

City Island Lobster House – Bronx, N.Y.: Thursday, June 4, departing at 8 a.m. Take a scenic ride across the bridge from the Bronx to City Island, a seaside village. Enjoy lunch at City Island Lobster House, and afternoon shopping at Little Italy's Arthur Avenue. Cost is \$171 per person, which includes transportation and lunch.

Dean's List

Colchester residents Caroline Banning, Kelly Ann Kessler and Ray Talbot made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Goodwin University.

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.

Vendors Sought for Spring Fair

Colchester Federated Church's annual Spring in Bloom Vendor Fair is coming up on May 2 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. This fair showcases local crafters, vendors, farmers and more.

If you would like a table at the fair to sell your goods, please reach out to Renee Misbach at rouillette01@snet.net for more information.

Pierogies for Sale

St. Mary Ukrainian Church in Colchester will have homemade pierogies for sale Saturday, March 21. To place your order, call Brenda at 860-365-0281.

There are about 200 dozen available, so call Brenda ASAP to make sure you get them, the church advised.

Community Wellness Fair

Colchester Youth and Social Services and the Colchester Farmers Market will hold the Colchester Community Wellness Fair Saturday, March 21, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., at the Colchester Senior Center, located at 15 Louis Lane.

This free, family-friendly event will feature local mental health services, wellness resources, community vendors, and many various activities. Residents of all ages are encouraged to stop by, meet local providers, participate in activities, discover resources that support a healthier community, and enjoy a day focused on health and well-being.

For more information and event schedule, please visit Colchesterct.gov/yss.

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Updates Issued on Roof Project, Athletic Complex

By Toriana Williams

Residents at referendum last month approved a roof replacement at Bacon Academy as well as construction of a new athletic complex – and last week, First Selectman Bernie Dennler provided updates on both projects.

Dennler told selectmen at their March 5 meeting that, since there are leaks in the existing roof at Bacon, “we would like to try to get the ball rolling as quickly as possible.”

Dennler, a Democrat, explained that forming a building committee is a necessary first step, particularly if the town hopes to apply for funding assistance from the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services (DAS). The committee would oversee the project’s design, bidding and construction phases.

He asked fellow board members whether they preferred an open recruitment process or direct outreach to individuals with previous experience serving on municipal building committees.

Selectwoman Rosemary Coyle, a Democrat, suggested a streamlined approach. “I think maybe we can just get a lot of talented people together,” she said and recommended a three-

member committee supported by two alternates.

Dennler also said the Athletic Complex Building Committee had begun meeting, following the approval at referendum. Consultants from FieldTurf have already returned several bids, and the committee is reviewing pricing to finalize the project scope.

The committee plans to meet again on March 18 and is expected to present recommendations to the board the following evening, potentially marking the next step toward improvements at the town’s athletic facilities.

Other Updates

Also at last week’s meeting, selectwoman Denise Turner, a Democrat, highlighted upcoming family-oriented events in town, including a bicycle safety rodeo scheduled for May 2 at the Federated Church. The event will coincide with the annual Food Fest on the Green and will include small riding courses designed for children.

Turner also noted that auditions for the town’s Shakespeare on the Green production will take place in April.

Historical Society Program on Israel Putnam

All are invited to join the Colchester Historical Society for a presentation on Major General Israel Putnam, led by historian and author Robert Hubbard, on Thursday, March 19, at 6:30 p.m., at Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave.

Israel Putnam (1718–1790) was an influential figure in 18th-century America, remembered for his pivotal roles in both the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War. In 1758, he narrowly survived being burned alive by Mohawk warriors, and later led a group of 500 men who were shipwrecked near Cuba. Putnam is famously credited with the command, “Don’t fire until you see the whites of their eyes,” during the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Detailing Putnam’s close relationships with Aaron Burr, Alexander Hamilton, and John and Abigail Adams, Hubbard’s presentation of Putnam re-examines the life of a revolutionary whose seniority in the Continental Army was second only to that of George Washington.

Robert Ernest Hubbard, author of *Major General Israel Putnam: Hero of the Revolutionary War*, is a historian and retired professor from Albertus Magnus College in New Haven.

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 Saturday, 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.

Pierogies for Sale

St. Mary Ukrainian Church in Colchester will have homemade pierogies for sale Saturday, March 21. To place your order, call Brenda at 860-365-0281.

There are about 200 dozen available, so call Brenda ASAP to make sure you get them, the church advised.

Major General Israel Putnam
Hero of the American Revolution
Robert Ernest Hubbard

The Colchester Historical Society will hold a program on Major General Israel Putnam Thursday, March 19, at 6:30 p.m., at Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave.

Dean’s List

Daniel Wozniak of Colchester made the fall 2025 Dean’s List at the University of Connecticut in Storrs. He is attending the School of Engineering and majoring in electrical engineering.

Vendors Wanted

The Colchester Dog Park Committee is looking for vendors that sell dog related items for the 12th annual “Spring Bark for the Park.” The event will be held on the Town Green on Sunday, May 17, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., with a rain date of Sunday, May 31.

The event will feature a Lucky Duck Egg Hunt for the dogs, May Baskets, a blessing of the dogs, and other canine entertainment.

Vendor slots are available at \$40 per booth. There is no charge for nonprofit organizations. If you are interested, email tagnobark@gmail.com.

Garden Club Continues to Blossom

The Colchester Garden Club continues to blossom as one of the town’s active volunteer groups. The club brings together residents (from Colchester and surrounding towns) who share a love of gardening, learning and community service.

CGC monthly meetings feature guest speakers, demonstrations, and discussion on topics ranging from native plants and pollinator habits to vegetable gardening and sustainable practices. The club welcomes gardeners of all experi-

ence levels—from seasoned growers to those just discovering the joy of getting their hands in the soil.

Anyone who wishes to learn more, attending a meeting, or joining upcoming projects is encouraged to reach out and get involved. Email Colchestergardenclub@yahoo.com for more information.

Colchester Garden Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Lions To Host ‘Coconuts’ Comedy Show

The Colchester Lions Club will host an evening with Coconuts - Boomer Humor Comedy Rock Band on Friday, March 27, at St. Joseph’s Polish Society, 395 South Main St.

The Coconuts’ blend of music and humor includes parodies, sing-alongs, comedy numbers, and rock and roll from the ‘50s, ‘60s and ‘70s.

Doors will open at 6 p.m., and the show will start at 7 p.m. Outside beverages are not permitted, but snacks are welcome. Tickets are \$25 each and can be obtained by emailing ColchesterLionsComedy@gmail.com, or calling 860-337-2924.

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ANSWERS TO PUZZLE PAGE 39

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
14					15				16					
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53							54			55				
56							57			58		59	60	61
62							63			64				
65							66			67				

CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Neil Manausa

ACROSS

- 1 Velvety garden bloom
- 6 Big blow
- 10 Hindu music
- 14 Unaccompanied
- 15 “Sayonara” sash
- 16 River to the Caspian Sea
- 17 Presidential hopeful Henry Ross
- 18 So that one should not
- 19 Normandy town
- 20 Oscar’s bashes?
- 23 Coral buildup
- 26 Down
- 27 Aptitude
- 28 Remaining whole
- 30 Part of NB
- 31 Willy Wonka author’s residences?
- 34 Cow or dull add-on
- 37 Lycée
- 38 Pose
- 39 Very, to Verdi
- 41 Map abbreviations
- 42 Richard’s dresses?
- 44 Walden, for one
- 46 Richly-patterned fabric
- 47 Verdi opera

- 50 Ruminant remark
- 52 Nebraskan Native Americans
- 53 Sigmund’s favorite food?
- 56 Solid
- 57 Highlander
- 58 Helmsman
- 62 Rose’s love
- 63 Nimbus
- 64 Trioxygen layer
- 65 Bruce and Brandon
- 66 Caesar’s way
- 67 Feel

DOWN

- 1 Baby food
- 2 Pub order
- 3 And not or not either
- 4 Wet blanket?
- 5 Abominable Snowman
- 6 Former prime minister of Israel
- 7 Red as ____
- 8 Have ess trouble
- 9 Will subjects
- 10 Steal, in the Wild West
- 11 Musical Shaw
- 12 Greatest physician until Hippocrates

- 13 Cather’s “____ Lady”
- 21 Apollo’s mother
- 22 Wasn’t colorfast
- 23 Fare
- 24 Act out on stage
- 25 Character of a people
- 29 “Evita” role
- 30 ____ noire
- 32 Secondhand
- 33 A Beattie’s title
- 34 Comparably obese
- 35 “Midnight Cowboy” character
- 36 Records, var.
- 39 Triumphant interjection
- 40 Polish the car
- 42 Italian dumplings
- 43 Coyote st.
- 44 Feathers
- 45 See 32 Down
- 47 Rubbish
- 48 “. . . his ____ increase”
- 49 Spooky
- 50 Thousand, in Tours
- 51 Thespian
- 54 Warmth
- 55 Poetry of tradition
- 59 Chaney
- 60 Switch positions
- 61 Anger, with off

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Colchester's Canine Queen Reigns Supreme

By Toriana Williams

Mary Bylone of Colchester is celebrating the continued success of her Newfoundland show dog, Serena, formally registered as "Grand Champion Gold Timberknolls Queen of the Court for Seaworthy." In February 2026, Serena earned Best of Opposite Sex for the second consecutive year at the prestigious Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, adding yet another ribbon to a career that is already nothing to bark at.

With more than 110 wins, Serena was also honored by the Newfoundland Club of America and will be formally recognized at the Newfoundland National Specialty Dog Show in May.

Bylone, a retired registered nurse, former chief nursing officer at Hartford HealthCare and former Colchester first selectwoman, has been involved with Newfoundland dogs since 2009. What began as a simple search for a pet therapy dog quickly grew into a full-fledged passion for the breed, a lifestyle that revolves around the show ring.

Today, Bylone owns several Newfoundlands at any given time and travels extensively across the country, often by RV, to compete in dog shows nearly every weekend. "She's been showing now for 20 months. She's been out on the road going to dog shows almost every weekend," Bylone said.

The frequent travel has taken Serena far beyond Connecticut, with appearances in states including Michigan, Wisconsin, Virginia and Pennsylvania, just to name a few stops on the tour. Serena has competed in roughly 200 shows, proving she's always ready for the next competition.

Dog shows judge animals according to detailed breed standards that evaluate physical structure, movement and overall appearance. While judges rely on those objective guidelines, Bylone said there's always remnants of subjectivity involved. "They're human, and they have things that they like." Fortunately for Serena, she knows how to steal the spotlight.

"Serena is just a phenomenal show dog. She loves it," Bylone shared. "When she gets in the ring, it's like, 'Hey, over here, look at me.' Her ears go up and she struts her stuff."

Serena was unfortunately unavailable for comment, but her response would have almost certainly been, "Woof."

At just three and a half years old, Serena has already reached the Grand Champion Gold level, one of the highest titles in the sport. Preparing a champion Newfoundland, however, takes more than just wagging a tail.

Bylone carefully manages Serena's grooming, nutrition and training. The breed's thick double coat requires extensive upkeep, especially during show season.

"That process is about three hours from start

to finish," Bylone explained.

Despite the demanding schedule and significant expense of competing, Bylone prefers to travel with Serena herself rather than rely entirely on professional handlers. After all, their partnership is more than just owner and dog, it's a team effort.

One of Bylone's favorite memories from their time on the road came after a big win. To celebrate, she prepared a special dinner.

"I have a picture of where she's laying on the ground, and in front of her is the ribeye steak and a bottle of Prosecco," Bylone said. "It happened to be her birthday and she won Best of Breed that day. So it was a very special time."

While Serena shines in the spotlight, her personality at home is just as impressive.

"She's a very confident girl," Bylone said. As the unofficial leader among Bylone's group of Newfoundlands, Serena clearly knows she's top dog.

"It's like she comes in and she says, 'Okay, I don't know who was in charge while I was gone, but I'm back. So stand aside.' And you can almost see it happen," Bylone shared with a laugh.

Serena's story is also tied to meaningful lineage. She was bred by a close friend in Tennessee and originally came to Bylone's home on a temporary basis while the breeder recovered from a health issue. But Serena quickly made herself at home, and it didn't take long for Bylone and her wife to realize the pup was there to stay. In a fitting coincidence, Serena's mother also had a standout showing at Westminster, winning Best of Opposite Sex two years in a row, one year while pregnant with Serena. In a way, Serena's first trip to the famous show happened before she was even born. Talk about being born ready for the big leagues.

Serena's show career will likely conclude at the Newfoundland Club of America National Specialty in May, where hundreds of the breed's best dogs will compete. After that, Bylone hopes Serena will move into the next phase of her life - possibly raising litters of puppies that carry on her strong genetics and gentle temperament.

Even retirement might not keep her out of the ring forever. If all goes well, Serena could return years down the road as a veteran competitor, proving you can still teach an old dog a few new championship tricks.

For Bylone, the rewards of dog showing goes far beyond ribbons and ranking. The sport, she said, is about celebrating the breed, improving future generations of dogs and sharing the experience with friends who share the same passion. Regardless of the outcome in the ring, she believes every participant leaves with the best prize of all: the companionship of a beloved dog.



Serena, a Newfoundland owned by Colchester resident Mary Bylone, continues to rack up the titles at prestigious dog shows.



Strike a Pose...Serena and her handler, Jessica Thibault, smile for cameras after Serena won back to back Best of Opposite Sex at the famous Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show on February 3, 2026.



Serena and owner Mary Bylone pose with nearly three foot long ribbons, prizes that "take up a lot of space" in the home Bylone shares with her wife and four other Newfoundlands.



Pat's Peak... Troop 13 and Troop 72 enjoyed a day of adventure and skiing at Pat's Peak in New Hampshire. They skied all day and into the night under the lights and then the scouts spent the night in the lodge. This one of the many adventurous trips that Troop 13 partakes in. The troop meets on most Mondays at 7 p.m. at the St. Andrew Church Hall, in Colchester. Boys ages 11 through 17 are welcome to join. Stop by at any meeting or contact scoutmaster Brian Marburger at brian.marburger@comcast.net or 860-917-5896.

Colchester • Colchester • Colchester • Colchester • Colchester • Colchester

Westchester Church News

Westchester Congregational Church, located at 98 Cemetery Rd., holds worship Sundays at 10 a.m. All are welcome to attend. The church choir always welcomes new members. Services are also available on Zoom; visit www.westchestercongregation.org 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: Knitting Group meets Thursdays at 10 a.m. Many knitted, crocheted, and quilted items have been sent to Native American reservations, hospitals for babies, and other places to help those in need. The Blessings Box is at the end of the church parking lot and contains donations of non-perishable food, personal care, and other items for those in need. Take what you need; donate what you can. Also, the church sponsors the Wounded Warrior Project, a donation opportunity to help veterans.

For more information, visit westchestercongregation.org, email westcongregation@gmail.com or call the church at 860-267-6711. Pastor Ron Lake can be reached at 860-428-3460.

For more information, visit westchestercongregation.org, email westcongregation@gmail.com or call the church at 860-267-6711. Pastor Ron Lake can be reached at 860-428-3460.

Abundant Life Church News & Notes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Local Student Named Candidate in Presidential Scholars Program

Benjamin Buyniski, a graduating senior at Bacon Academy, has been named one of more than 5,000 candidates in the 2026 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. The candidates were selected from nearly 3.6 million students expected to graduate from U.S. high schools in the year 2026.

Scholars are selected based on superior academic and artistic achievements, leadership qualities, strong character and involvement in community and school activities. Further consideration will be based on the students' essays, self-assessments, description of activities, school recommendations, and school transcripts.

A panel of educators will review these submissions and select approximately 600 semifinalists in the spring. The Commission on Presidential Scholars will select the finalists, and the U.S. Department of Education will announce the Scholars in the summer.

To commemorate their achievement, U.S. Presidential Scholars are awarded the Presidential Scholars Medallion.

Annually, up to 161 U.S. Presidential Scholars are chosen from among that year's senior class.

Buyniski is the child of Alex and Laurie Buyniski.

Dean's List

Colchester residents Taylor McKnight and Marissa Parola made the fall 2025 Dean's List at Emmanuel College in Boston.

McKnight is majoring in Englis and Parola is majoring in marketing.

Ahavath Achim Schedule

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

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

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

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

Ukrainian Catholic Church News

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

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

Obituaries

Colchester

Frank Carbone

With heavy hearts, yet grateful for a life well-lived, we announce that Frank Salvatore Carbone, 77, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Sunday, March 1, surrounded by his family.



A devoted father, loving husband, trusted friend, one-of-a-kind personality, and person of unwavering faith, Frank was many things to many people. If you knew him, you likely have a story or two, an unforgettable experience, something that made you laugh, something that made you cry, something you are still repeating to this day, or a moment when he offered a helping hand right when it was needed most. His incredible sense of humor could light up a room, but it was his deep, genuine warmth that defined him – a warmth that made people feel valued and cared for.

To his children, he was a loving anchor, completely devoted, endlessly supportive, and always just one phone call away. He was their biggest champion, deeply proud of them and never shy about saying so. His love only grew as his family did. He loved his son-in-law as another son and adored his daughter-in-law beyond words, embracing them as his own and taking overwhelming joy in the lives they built together with his children. Nothing meant more to Frank than his family. Whether playing sports with his children, spending long days at the beach, or gathering around the table to enjoy a meal (especially one cooked by his wife), these were his greatest treasures.

Frank will be dearly missed by his loving wife of 53 years, Nancy Carbone — his steadfast partner in life and love. Their marriage was a beautiful example of devotion and loyalty. Nancy never left his side, including during the final week of his life, when she slept in a chair beside his hospital bed so she could remain close to him. Their 53 years together were a testament to enduring love.

Frank served as a combat medic during two tours in the Vietnam War. Upon returning from the war, his search for the answer to why God would allow such atrocities moved him to study the Bible and lead him to becoming one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Over the course of over 50 years, Frank was an active member of several congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Connecticut area, and a member of the Colchester Congregation for over 30 years. Sharing his faith in Jehovah with others was one of the defining commitments of his life.

In recent years, Frank fought a courageous battle with lymphoma caused by Agent Orange exposure during his military service. The family is very appreciative of the loving support of family and friends, especially over the past year, as well as to the medical personnel for their compassionate care, in particular his oncologist, Dr. Yu Zhang.

Frank is survived by his wife, Nancy Carbone; his son, Jesse Carbone and his wife Margherita;

and his daughter, Emily Silva and her husband Claudiano. He is also survived by his beloved siblings – his brother Richard Carbone; his sisters, Lucia Carbone and Paula Carbone and her husband Daniel Silva; as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins, and extended relatives.

He was predeceased by his parents, Salvatore and Pauline Carbone, and his brother, Salvatore Carbone. He will also be dearly missed by his sisters-in-law, Doreen DeSarro and Anita Bellows, and his brother-in-law Warren Bellows.

Frank's life was marked by faith, service, humor, loyalty, and unwavering love. He will truly be missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Colchester

Peter Salmoiraghi

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of Peter Salmoiraghi of Colchester. He passed on Sunday, March 8, with his family by his side, after a courageous battle with Parkinson's disease.



Peter was born on June 20, 1943; he was a son of Orest and Elinor (Landry) Salmoiraghi. Peter was a graduate of the University of Hartford School of Engineering and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He was employed as a Mechanical Engineer at Electric Boat for 37 years until his retirement.

Peter married Denise Sorice on Oct. 26, 1968, and they shared 57 wonderful years together. Peter's greatest joy was his family.

In addition to his wife Denise, Peter is survived by his son, Kurt Salmoiraghi and his wife Christine of Manchester, and his daughter Kelly Parola and her husband Taber of Colchester. He leaves behind his loving grandchildren, whom he adored deeply: Cameron, Marissa and Madison Parola and Axel Salmoiraghi. He was affectionately known as Popu. He also leaves behind his sisters, Jaqueline Peterson, Cynthia Salmoiraghi (Maureen) and brother David Salmoiraghi (Patricia), and nephews Thomas and John Peterson and niece Ting Ting Salmoiraghi and extended family Terri, Andrew and Mia Barillari.

Peter was a kind and gentle soul who had a great passion for jogging, tennis, biking, woodworking and fishing.

Funeral services will be held at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., beginning with calling hours on Friday, March 13, from 4-7 p.m. The funeral Mass will be celebrated on Saturday, March 14, at 10:30 a.m., directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial will follow in New St. Andrew Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Peter's memory may be made to The Michael J. Fox Foundation, www.give.michaeljfox.org.

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

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RE8-29-25

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 in South Korea... *The Glastonbury Citizen* and the *Rivereast* really got around this time – starting in Hong Kong, cruising through Taiwan and Japan, and making their way to South Korea! Here are East Hampton residents Margaret and Dave Wilcox at the DMZ, in South Korea... because even on vacation, they're keeping up with the news! Margaret said seeing the DMZ was an incredible experience – part history lesson on the Korean War, part eye-opening look at present-day Korea.



Rivereast at the Border... Dave McGovern from East Hampton brought the *Rivereast* on his visit to Fort Kent, Maine, on the border of Canada and America's First Mile!!



Mah Jong at the Pool... Jeanne Bishop and Jane Muskatallo of Portland, with friends from Delaware, play their weekly games of Mah Jong at the pool in Puerto Rico – just dreaming of the snow up north!



The Panama Paper... Lisa Hewett and Linda Armstrong of Andover recently visited Panama. In addition to visiting the Panama Canal and the San Blas Islands, they brought the *Rivereast* with them when they learned about the sugarcane milling process at a family farm in El Valle, a town nestled in a volcanic crater. They are pictured here with friends from Toronto, Bob and Sue.

Where in the World?

**Going on a trip?
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Fill out, clip and mail to:

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.)

Additional Words (30¢ per word): _____

Email Your Classified Line Ad to admin@glcitizen.com and call with your credit card number.

Place Your Ad online: www.glcitizen.com

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*.

Democratic Caucus

To enrolled members of the Democratic Party of the Town of Colchester, CT- Pursuant to the Rules of the Democratic Party and State election laws, you are hereby notified that a caucus will be held on Thursday, March 26, 2026, at 7:30 PM at Colchester Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave. The caucus will select delegates to attend the upcoming statewide conventions and transact other business as may be proper to come before said caucus. - Dated, March 13th, 2026.

1TB 3/13

MARLBOROUGH ZONING COMMISSION NOTICE OF ACTION

The Marlborough Zoning Commission, at its regular meeting on March 5, 2026, took the following action:
APPLICATION APPROVED:
APPLICATION Z-01-26 86 E Hampton Rd (Applicant) Farm on Carter Hill (Property Owner) 2026 Public Events with conditions
ERIC COLANTONIO, ZONING COMMISSION CHAIR

1TB 3/13

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

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.

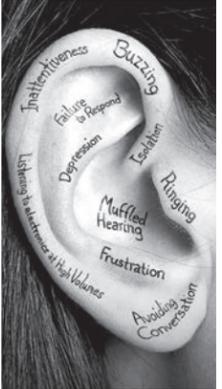
WANTED: Individual firearms, collections & estates including, military & related items. Federally licensed firearms dealer. Appraisal. Richard Pleines. 860-663-2214.

CASH PAID for any Toyota
Other makes, running or not, crashed ok. Will take other makes and models.
Free pickup. Call any time:
\$ 203-600-4431 \$

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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-heel-dogtraining.com.

PURE BRED SHITZU: For sale. 3 girls, 7 weeks old. looking for their forever home. 860-978-0587.



The early stages of communication disorders are easier to spot when you know the signs.

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Early detection can improve treatment and quality of life. For more information visit IdentifyTheSigns.org.



EMPLOYMENT

PART-TIME CLIENT SERVICE COORDINATOR WANTED: Wanted: Part-time (16-20 hrs. week) client service coordinator for a local financial services office. The ideal candidate is organized, professional, and client focused, with strong communication skills and proficiency in Microsoft 365 and familiarity with Salesforce tools such as CRM. Prior client service or financial services experience is preferred. Interested applicants may send a résumé and brief cover letter to lester.h.butnick@ampf.com with the subject line "Client Service Coordinator Application."

DRIVER WANTED IN HEBRON: for Saturdays & Sundays. 9am-12pm, plus other trips. \$17/hr. Call 860-228-0809.

IF YOU ARE WELL ORGANIZED: have good communication skills and can sell shades and blinds, call 860-977-8389 and leave a message.

Place Your Classified Ad Online!

Visit www.glcitizen.com and click "Classifieds" Fill out the fields and submit payment via PayPal.

7-3-2025

Westside Manor is searching for Attendants to fill our part time 1st, 2nd and 3rd shift position.

7AM-3PM, 3PM-11PM and 11PM-7AM

Attendant Responsibilities: Housekeeping, Meal prep and Medication administration required for the position. Medication Certification Course is mandatory and offered with paid training.

Interviews are done by appointment only, Monday thru Friday. Please call 860-267-4401 or email us at Simona@westsidemanor.com to schedule an interview today!

9 WEST HIGH STREET, EAST HAMPTON
Job Type: Part time: 24-hours per week. Salary: \$17-18.75

RES-13-26

FINANCIAL PLANNING ADMINISTRATIVE 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. Please email your resumes to: Katie@briggswealthmgmt.com.



CIT-5-26

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS NOTICE OF ACTION

At its Regular Meeting held at 6:30 pm on March 9, 2026 at the East Hampton Town Hall - 1 Community Drive, the Zoning Board of Appeals approved the following variance request: ZBA-26-001: Woodland Estates, Variance requested to Sections 4.6.C.1 & 2 of the Zoning Regulations to reduce the required width of a shared driveway from 22' to 15', allow a portion of the shared driveway to be gravel, and increase the maximum of residences that can be accessed from a shared driveway from 2 to 4, Map 06/ Block 12/ Lot 7B & Map 06/ Block 12/ Lot 7A – with a Condition.

1TB 3/13

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HEBRON SELF STORAGE Auction Legal Notice

Facility operator's sale for non-payment of storage charges pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 42-159 through 42-169. For the satisfaction of the facility operator's lien, the following property will be sold at public auction on Friday, March 27, 2026@ 10 AM, on the premises of Hebron Self Storage, 555 Church Street, Hebron, CT 06248. Hebron Self Storage reserves the right to cancel a sale at any time for any reason.

UNIT#	OCCUPANT	CONTENTS
0	Eric Schiffer	Household Goods

1TB 3/13

EMPLOYMENT

Youth & Family Services Administrator

Town of Portland, CT (EOE)
Salary Range: \$61,000-\$79,500
Deadline: 3/27/2026 or until filled
Submit application, resume and three letters of reference to: First Selectman's Office, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480-0071
Email: mceppaglia@portlandct.org
Full-time 40 hours (M-F), salary DOQ; non-union position; full fringe benefits package. Subject to pre-employment drug/alcohol testing & criminal history background check. All qualified applicants will be considered for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Required: Bachelor's degree in psychology, counseling, or a related field plus 3 years progressively responsible experience in youth & family counseling, including at least 1-year supervisory capacity, or equivalent combination of education/experience. Must have valid CT Driver's License; First Aid and CPR certification.

1TB 3/13

Public Works Maintainer II (Full-time)

The Town of East Hampton is seeking a motivated, safety-minded, and dependable individual to fill the position of Public Works Maintainer II. The Public Works Maintainer II performs a variety of semi-skilled and skilled tasks in the maintenance, construction, and repair of Town infrastructure—including roads, sidewalks, bridges, catch basins, and parks. Responsibilities also include operating trucks and heavy equipment, and snow, ice and debris removal. Must possess a CDL with class B (air brake endorsement) license or the ability to obtain one within 6 months of hire. This is a full-time, bargaining unit position with benefits that include health, dental, vision, 401, life insurance, and PTO. \$24.17 per hour. 40 hours per week, plus OT as necessary. The applicant should have a clean driving record and be in good physical condition. Interested candidates should submit a resume and employment application by March 25, 2026 to the Town of East Hampton, Department of Human Resources, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424, or by email to: lseymour@easthamptonct.gov EOE/M-F/AA. A job description and employment application may be found at www.easthamptonct.gov

1TB 3/13

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.

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Resumes can be sent to 79A Norwich Avenue, Colchester CT 06415 or TheCDG@sbcglobal.net

RE1-16-26

New Beginnings for Life is a smaller company with a big heart that cares for individuals with intellectual disabilities. We are seeking kind, patient, and passionate candidates to join our team. We have individuals who need care and companionship in Colchester and surrounding towns. We have great benefits, and the rate of pay is \$17.25 per hour.

For our day support program, which is from 8am-4pm and 2pm-5pm, the towns are in Salem, Groton, Hebron, Lebanon, Higganum, East Haddam, New London, Norwich, East Hampton, Colchester.

For our group home positions we have Monday-Sunday open second and third shift which is 3pm-11pm and 11pm-7am.

These positions are in Colchester.

If you are interested in becoming a part of our team, please feel free to call us and ask for more information at 860-531-9426

RE3-15-24

LEGALS

TOWN OF PORTLAND PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Portland Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, March 19th, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Portland Public Library, 20 Freestone Avenue, to consider the following:
PZC Application #25-11: 1401 Main Street. Proposal to construct a 30 ft by 100 ft hitting pavilion. Application and property of Cote Range LLC. Map 68 Lot 1. Zone FP, RI and R-25.
PZC Application #25-13: Proposed Amendment to the Portland Zoning Regulations. Changes to section 8.3 lighting regulations. Application of the Town of Portland.
 Dated at Portland, CT this 3rd day of March 2026
 Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
 Planning & Zoning Commission

2TB 3/6, 3/13

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing March 18, 2026, 7:00 pm in the Andover Town Hall Community Room, 17 School Road and via ZOOM, to consider the following application:
#26-1ZBA APPLICATION OF CHRISTINE GOMES, Bausola Road parcel, Map 32 Block 48 Lot 53CB. Applicant is seeking relief from lot area requirements of section 11.2 of the Andover Zoning Regulations to construct a single-family dwelling on the parcel. The overall proposal intends to decrease non-conformities that currently exist.
 Interested parties may ask questions and/or offer comments, either verbally or in writing. Applications are on file and available for public inspection with the Building and Land Use Department.
 Building and Land Use Office 860.742.7305, X - 4219 or email zoning@andoverct.org.
 Fred Oliver
 Zoning Board of Appeals - Chairperson

2TB 3/6, 3/13

ANDOVER PZ&C PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Andover Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing March 17, 2026, 7:00 pm in the Andover Town Hall Community Room, 17 School Road and via ZOOM, to consider the following Special Permit application and the draft Plan of Conservation and Development:
#26-1SP Application of Thomas Hurst/Elizabeth Paulsen, 746 East St Andover CT 06232. The Applicant is applying to convert storage/attic space of an existing farm store into a market rate accessory apartment per section 4.11.3 of the Andover Zoning Regulations.
 The Andover Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing to hear comments and gather public input on the draft Plan of Conservation and Development.
 Interested parties may ask questions and/or offer comments, either verbally or in writing. Applications are on file and available for public inspection in the Building and Land Use Department and on the Town's website.
 Building and Land Use Office 860.742.7305, X - 4219 or email zoning@andoverct.org.
 Patrick Dougherty
 Planning and Zoning - Chairperson

2TB 3/6, 3/13

2nd Installment SEWER USE LEGAL NOTICE

Second Installment Sewer Use Bills are due and payable April 1, 2026. The billing rate is \$672.00 which may be paid in two equal installments, the first installment was due October 1, 2025 and the second installment being due April 1, 2026. Second Installment Payments must be postmarked or received no later than May 1, 2026. Payments that are unpaid as of May 2, 2026, will be charged interest of 1.5% per month retroactive to the installment due date per State Statute 12-146. To make payments by check, please make check payable to: Town of Hebron. Payments may be mailed to: Town of Hebron, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, CT 06248. If desired, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a receipt. There is a drop-off box attached to the Town Office Building located next to the entrance on the lower level, south side. In addition, there is a box inside the building located in the hallway between the Tax and Assessor's Office. Payments left in the box after the close of business will be retrieved the following morning.
 The Collector's office is located in the lower level of the Town Hall at 15 Gilead Street. Hours are Monday through Wednesday 8:00am to 4:00pm, Thursday 8:00am to 6:00pm, and Friday 8:00am to 1:00pm. Please note Monday - Thursday the office is closed for lunch from 12:30pm - 1:15pm.
 Respectfully,
 Revenue Collector

3TB 3/13, 4/3, 4/17

LEGAL NOTICE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION HEBRON, CONNECTICUT

The Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing at a meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 7:00 P.M., to be held virtually through the GoToMeeting Platform, on the following:
I. Petition 2026-01: Petition of the Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission to revise Section 2.E.8 of the Hebron Zoning Regulations to increase the size of accessory structures permitted in Residential Districts.
II. Petition 2026-02: Petition of Megan Armes to operate a dog training and grooming facility in existing space at 522 Church Street in accordance with Section 3.E.2.1.7 of the Hebron Zoning Regulations, Amston Village District.
Planning and Zoning Commission
 Mar 25, 2026, 7:00 - 10:00 PM (America/New_York)
 Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://meet.goto.com/504228301>
 You can also dial in using your phone.
 Access Code: 504-228-301
 United States: +1 (872) 240-3212
 Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:
<https://meet.goto.com/install>
 Dated at Hebron, Connecticut, this 10th day of March 2026.
 Frank Zitkus, Chair

2TB 3/13, 3/20

REAL ESTATE

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RE3-13-26

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RE3-7-25



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RE3-27-25

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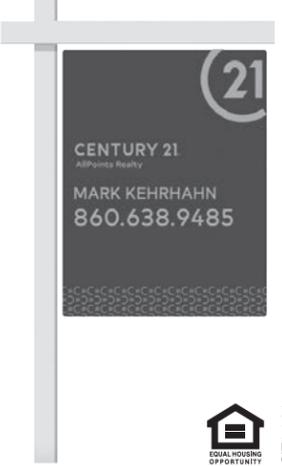


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RE4-11-25



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RE3-13-26

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RE10-3-25

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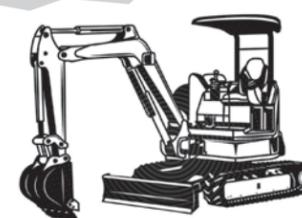
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RE3-13-26

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RE3-13-20

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