

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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

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**Dream Big!...** On March 14, Logan Zhao, a fifth grader at Center School in East Hampton, won first prize in the 5-8 Age Group with his entry in the 2025 CHET (Connecticut Higher Education Trust, 529 College Savings Program) Dream Big! Competition for K-12 Students. With the prize, he was awarded \$5,000, deposited into the CHET 529 Direct Plan Account established for him. Logan is shown here with Connecticut State Treasurer Erick Russell.

## DeSimone Fired, WPCA Disbanded

By Anne Lilburn

The contentious saga regarding a possible biosolids facility coming to East Hampton appeared to draw to a close last week, as the town fired Public Utilities Administrator and Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) head Anthony DeSimone – and then disbanded the nine-member WPCA altogether.

Both items were discussed at a special Town Council meeting on March 12. The meeting had been set earlier that week, following public outcry and a series of meetings in which residents claimed improper and unprofessional actions on the part of DeSimone. Among other things, DeSimone was accused by members of the public of attempting to negotiate land deals on behalf of Griffin Residuals, a company that had been pursuing a biosolids facility in town.

At the top of the meeting, council chair Dean Markham, a Democrat, told those gathered that he had been informed by Griffin Residuals “that they are no longer interested in East Hampton and are withdrawing from town,” an announcement that was met with applause.

The meeting had been called for several reasons: to consider the WPCA’s role in the town and its current appointments; to discuss the firing of DeSimone and Town Manager David Cox, who was responsible for managing DeSimone; and to consider the outstanding purchase agreement related to 292 West High St., the land parcel whose proposed purchase started the public outcry related to both DeSimone and the WPCA.

The council entered executive session to discuss the human resources issues, and did come out to announce quickly that DeSimone had been fired as of that afternoon. Cox was not fired or formally reprimanded, but the council did make decisions regarding the land acquisition.

That parcel of land, which is adjacent to the current Joint Facilities wastewater treatment

plant, was originally proposed for purchase “for use in relation to future improvements at the wastewater treatment plant,” with the purchase being funded by the WPCA, but the council wished to consider whether the town could still proceed forward and purchase the land according to the terms of what had originally been negotiated.

The land, in this case, would be purchased with the intention of being held as “open space” or a “buffer area” around the current wastewater plant. Council member Ted Hintz, a Republican, argued in favor of purchasing the land as open space, and the council voted unanimously to move forward with that plan, sending the proposed purchase to the Board of Finance for its approval.

At a later Board of Finance meeting, on March 16, the board voted, with one abstention, to recommend the purchase of that land parcel for the agreed upon price of \$105,000.

At the March 12 Town Council meeting, the council also discussed the continued role of the WPCA. In voting to disband it, they left some specifics about its future unclear. At the Board of Finance meeting discussing the land parcel, Cox described the WPCA as “in legal limbo” at the moment, saying that it was “disbanded, but not eliminated as an entity.”

See *DeSimone Fired*, page 17

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## Get Stuck on Hebron’s Maple Festival

By Toriana Williams

As winter begins to loosen its chilly grip on Connecticut (slowly but surely), the town of Hebron is preparing for one of its most beloved traditions: the Hebron Maple Festival. The two-day celebration returns March 21 and 22 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., bringing maple syrup, tractors, farm animals and thousands of visitors together for a weekend that captures the spirit of small-town New England.

For many residents, the festival signals the unofficial start of spring. “It’s the first opportunity to really visit with your neighbors and your community again,” said Holly Habicht, president of the Town Center Project.

The festival has deep roots in Hebron, much

like its celebrated maple trees. It first began in 1989 when a local resident saw an opportunity to turn an abundant maple harvest into something special for the community.

According to Habicht, the idea came from Seldon Wells, who had tapped several maple trees and ended up with far more sap than expected. Instead of letting it go to waste, he approached the local library with a wonderful idea.

“In 1989, Mr. Seldon Wells had an exuberant amount of sap from some maple trees that he was tapping,” Habicht began. “He got together with the library and said, ‘Hey, I’ve got a lot of sap. I’m going to boil it down and make some sugar. How about we do a sugar-on-snow fund-

raiser for the library?’”

That simple community effort grew into the large festival that now draws thousands upon thousands of people each year. “Over the past two years, our resident state trooper has estimated over 20,000 people for the weekend,” Habicht said.

What makes the festival especially unique is its focus on community participation. Many of the activities offered throughout town are now free so families, no matter their financial circumstances, can enjoy the weekend together.

“Everything downtown is free of charge,” Habicht said. “You can throw an axe free of

See *Hebron’s Maple Festival*, page 23



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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.

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](http://www.carlguild.com/scholarship).

For additional information, contact Carl Guild at 860-813-2275 or [carlguild@gmail.com](mailto:carlguild@gmail.com)

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CIT3-5-26

**From the State Senator's Desk**

As my work chairing the legislature's Energy and Technology Committee has continued since my first term, I have learned so much about our state's energy needs. There are a lot of them. Our grid needs to be focused on affordability, reliability and the needs of the future all at once, and far too many Connecticut residents are struggling in the current landscape.

This year, as our committee's work continues, we are focused on energy policy issues that can do everything possible to manage our grid's many needs. Fuel sources, supply connections, pollution and keeping the power on remain key challenges our state needs to respond to, and I remain committed to finding common-sense solutions that aren't tied to political party but are focused on moving us forward.

As one example, our state is located at the end of a pipeline when it comes to natural gas, our most commonly-used source of fuel – we are simply too far away from generation sources and need to import natural gas from other states. That leaves us vulnerable to significant cost spikes, like those seen during hot summers and frigid winters putting stress on the power grid. As a result, the E&T Committee is looking at enhancing availability of other sources like nuclear power. We are looking to enhance state programs to meet the needs of the industry and reviewing opportunities we can use to bring reliable, lower-cost energy to our state.

That's not the only additional fuel source we're looking at. All sources joining the grid can be beneficial at reducing stress on our power needs, and we need an all-hands-on-deck approach. We're also reviewing opportunities to ease and improve the availability and distribution of solar power. It's not the right time to fully shift to renewable energies, but it's greatly beneficial to our state if we add them to our current resources. Easing the process and allowing more solar, especially in municipal uses, can help relieve pressure and support our needs.

One additional step we're looking into to protect Connecticut's energy grid is to approach energy generation and use in the same breath. Over the course of this decade, with the ascent of data centers and artificial intelligence, data centers have gone from promising regional investments to drawing attention for potential high usage of energy impacting the grid. As a result, we're reviewing shifting toward a new method of prioritization for data centers, where they bring power generation to the conversation to cover their needs. It's a more equitable approach for everyone involved.

These are only a few of the dozens of bills under review this year by the Committee, and I'm sure our work is far from over as the session continues through May. However, I also know we've got a good track record, and all of our major bills have passed, many of them near-unanimously, in the Senate in recent years, so I'm confident we'll build on that good work this year. I look forward to providing you with future updates.

**State Sen. Norm Needleman, R-33rd District**

*Note: The 12-town 33rd Senate District includes the Rivereast towns of Colchester, East Hampton and Portland.*



**Needleman**

**Rivereast Standout Athletes of the Week**

By Josh Howard

**Oliver Melmed – Bacon Academy (Fencing):** Melmed placed 5th in the Men's Epee division at the Connecticut High School fencing championships this month. Melmed, a senior, is a four-year varsity fencer at Bacon Academy and was part of the Bobcats Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) title in men's epee this winter. Following his graduation from Bacon Academy, Melmed will study mechanical engineering at University of Connecticut.

**Danielle Riley – East Hampton High School (Basketball):** Riley, a junior, was selected to the All-Shoreline Conference (SLC) second-team as the Bellringers won ten regular season games and then advanced to the quarterfinals in the Division IV state tournaments, defeating Bassick in the first round and Wilcox Tech in the second round. Riley, a junior, was one of two Bellringers selected All-SLC as sophomore teammate Giuliana DonAroma was an Honorable Mention selection.

**Nina Krawczyk – RHAM High School (Basketball):** Krawczyk scored 25 points, hitting a career-high seven three-pointers as the No. 23 Raptors upset the No. 10 seeded Wolverines of Griswold, 58-34, in the first round of the Division IV state tournament on March 7. Krawczyk, a senior, added six rebounds, five assists, and three steals as RHAM advanced to the second round. In her final season on the high school court, Krawczyk was named All-Central Connecticut Conference (CCC) and will now attend the University of Connecticut where she has been accepted in the school's pharmaceutical program.

**Evelyn Hair – Portland High School (Cheerleading):** Hair was a standout cheerleader for



**Bacon Academy senior Oliver Melmed placed top five at the Connecticut High School state fencing championships.**

the Highlanders and was selected to the All-Shoreline Conference (SLC) second-team. Hair, a senior, helped lead the way as Portland cheer placed third overall as a team at the conference championships at Westbrook High School.

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

**Xavier Honor Roll**

The following area students made the Xavier High School honor roll for the second quarter of the 2025-26 school year:

**Amston: High Honors:** freshman Jack Wickland.

**Colchester: High Honors:** sophomores Wesley Engleman, Noah Garvie; senior Corbin Engleman.

**East Hampton: High Honors:** freshmen Patrick Adams, John Perez; sophomores Jason Hurt, Caden Lee, Nethum Nakandala, Hunter Steiner; seniors Andrew Hawk, Benjamin Romero. **Honors:** sophomores Cameron Correa, Gavin King, Jack Morrell, Worthington Zinkerman; junior Darren Schwedler.

**Hebron:** juniors Dylan Bligh and Redmond Day.

**Marlborough:** junior Nicholas Palifka; senior Colin Tracey.

**Portland: High Honors:** freshmen Krystof Lukas, Owen Pandolfo; sophomores Alex Brown, Miles Matterfis, Ryan Nadolski, Finn O'Shea, Luke Thompson; junior Daniel Glezen. **Honors:** freshmen

Brennan O'Connor, Michael Sanborn, Ian Xiao; sophomore Ian Binnington; juniors Max Bernard, Lucas Michalewski, Danesh Raza, Zain Raza, Jeremiah Rowe; seniors Joseph Amendola, Andrew Sobieski, Chase VanDeventer.

**"PET OF THE WEEK"**



Sonny, 4yrs, is a big-hearted, beautifully social pittie who would love to be part of a loving, stable family. After being unexpectedly abandoned, Sonny never lost his gentle spirit. He has remained incredibly affectionate, people-oriented, playful, dog-friendly, and eager to connect with everyone he meets. Sonny is fun loving and will keep you laughing with the games he entices you to play. Because he is so connected to humans, Sonny can get anxious when he's unsure or alone. He deserves his own forever family.



Noah, 7 mths, is a very handsome older kitten who is still adjusting to life in the shelter. He is quite timid and loves spending the day in one of the cat trees where he feels safe. Noah would love to be your sweet little house panther!

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**Portland High School senior cheerleader Evelyn Hair was selected All-Shoreline Conference.**

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## From the Editor's Desk Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

It's once again that sweet time of year in Hebron.

The annual Maple Festival, a delightful two-day event, will return this weekend, March 21 and 22. While the bulk of the festivities – including the famous tractor parade! – will take place in the center of town, there will be activities all over, and of course tours of those sweet-smelling sugar houses.

I try to go every year. If you've never been, it's a just a ton of fun, for young and old alike. Toriana Williams has a preview in this week's issue, and if you turn to the Hebron section (after you get done with my column, of course) you'll find several notices of fun events taking place the two days of the festival.

To be honest, less than a month ago I was wondering what Maple Fest would be like this year. The area had just been hit with another gargantuan snowstorm, and there were huge piles of snow everywhere you went. There was no grass anywhere to be seen, and I began wondering just how all the white stuff would impact the festival. Parking would be at even more of a premium than usual, and walking through the center of town and traversing the yards of the sugar houses wouldn't be much fun either, what with, conservatively speaking, about 10 feet of snow to wade through.

I didn't anticipate – though I should have; I've lived here long enough – the Great March Thaw.

Between warmer temperatures and a couple of heavy, heavy rainstorms, there's currently not much snow left. So that's a good thing; I know how crowded the Maple Fest gets, and if there were still as much snow on the ground this weekend as there was in later February, things might have gotten a little hectic.

Instead, the only thing to contend with will be the mud – and I'm guessing lots of it. But come on: If you don't get your car stuck in the

mud at least once, have you even really *been* to the Maple Fest?

\*\*\*

Speaking of Hebron, I saw this week there's a new taxpayer advocacy group in town. The group, called Hebron VOICE (Voters for Oversight, Integrity, and Cost Efficiency), is a political action committee whose purpose is "to advocate for responsible fiscal stewardship and to ensure that residents have a strong voice in decisions affecting the town's financial future."

Reading about it took me back to the days of my youth – well, relative youth – and when I covered Hebron as a reporter for the *Rivereast*. It was early in the 2000s, around 2002 and 2003, and there was a group on the scene called Hebron Dollars and Sense. There were some rather protracted budget battles during my three years covering the town, so I had reason to speak with the wonderful Donna McCalla, the spokesperson for the group, fairly often.

Donna was great with quotes and providing you information, and I always made sure to include her thoughts among the various selectmen and school board members I'd interviewed for my 1,000-word weekly epics on the budget.

And it wasn't just me who would speak to Donna. She'd wind up quoted in the *Courant* and even the *New York Times*, as that paper eventually took notice of just how difficult it had become to craft a RHAM budget that would fly at referendum.

So, for a time there, Hebron Dollars and Sense was a big deal. It seems to have faded away, though. Its Facebook page was last updated in 2017, and its website appears to be dead.

But seeing the press release about Hebron  
**Editor's Desk continued on page 4**



**Painting Pals!...** The East Hampton High School Art Club recently hosted a landscape painting class at the school for members of the East Hampton Senior Center. With assistance from EHHS visual arts teacher Lisa Lupacchino Gilson, the students and 10 senior citizens shared an afternoon of creating, laughter and shared stories – followed by snacks.

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### A Letter to My Community

To the Editor:

Our last WPCA meeting was probably three hours long, of which forty seconds were highlighted on social media. To close my discussion about the plant's responsibility and accountability to odor complaints I did a flippant recital of an average citizen's odor complaint citing a farm on Middletown Avenue.

Most people that make these assertions do not realize that the WPCA pump station is in close proximity to the farm.

The reference was the closing to the discussion because there are occurrences when in fact it is the fault of the WPCA when odor mitigation is off line or doors are left open at the facility.

My perception was that I had made a point to the committee about the importance of our accountability to the community and I knew that they understood what I was discussing.

The reality was that I failed to include enough framework and context so that the listener would understand my point. The reference was in fact in defense of the farm with regard to instances where the WPCA is at fault.

My failure to thoroughly explain the context to the listener has resulted in discontent within our community and for that I sincerely apologize to the community but more so the family farm.

Anyone that knows my family history or furthermore truly knows me knows that the farming community is dear to me.

I used the name in my reference because I've known it as that since I was a child in the community. Growing up my uncles were friends with the family and it was never my intent to disrespect the family. It was in defense of them.

Regards,  
Peter Villa  
East Hampton

### Thank You, Town Council

To the Editor:

My house is at 4 Coughlin Rd., on the corner of Route 66 in Cobalt. As I said when I spoke at two East Hampton Town Council meetings last week, the proposed expansion of the sewer treatment facility on Route 66 at 292 West Main St. would have been, literally, in my – and my neighbor's – backyard. But due to overwhelming opposition to the project from concerned citizens, the Town Council was convinced to look deeper into issues related to the project and, to their credit, they ultimately decided to do the right thing and withdraw their support for the construction of such a facility in a residential area, which was always a terrible idea.

Huge thanks to the hundreds of citizens who attended the two meetings last week to make their concerns known and, ultimately, to the Town Council for listening to us, for taking our concerns seriously and acting accordingly. Very special thanks go to Ted Hintz who was, from the start, the leading voice on the Town Council who was opposed to the project. Thank you.

Bill Naughton Jr.  
Cobalt

### Let the Season Begin

To the Editor:

The political season is here, and the 34th District, which represents East Haddam, East Hampton and part of Salem has a real choice to make. This year's Republican candidate, Melissa Ziobron, left a \$132,000 job with the Republican State Committee to come back and "serve the public." Nobody walks away from that kind of money without a plan. Melissa, the district deserves to know what that plan is.

Then there's Meghan Rosenfeld. Mother of six. Career educator, paralegal, and HR professional, now in an executive leadership role. A

## Bulletin Board

While I consider myself a reasonably quiet and relatively peace-loving citizen, I was heartened this year to see news reports on mobs of senior citizens lining up – and even scuffling with one another – to get flu shots.

It looked like Miracle Monday at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima as those hoping to be vaccinated emerged like gray-haired locusts from their old people lairs with their canes and walkers and crutches to invest some of what little time they have left on this earth bitching and grumbling and complaining and breaking wind while trying to not breathe on each other as the lines inched slowly along. You would have thought the government was handing out free Viagra or coupons for discounted hip replacements, such were the crowds.

All I can say is, God bless 'em.

I had begun to believe I was the only old coot left out there. Turns out there's millions of us. And we're a lot smarter than people give us credit for.

You don't see us old geezers worrying that the science is "bad" or that vaccines will turn us into salamanders or something. All we care about is living long enough to collect every dime we've paid into Social Security over the years. Then we can finally pass on in peace.

This may surprise you, but certain segments of society now claim all vaccines should be avoided because they might have undesirable side effects. Hey, if you'd rather get the measles or smallpox that's up to you – me, I'd rather risk the shot. We old geezers will gladly take our chances on "the science" if we can just hang on a while longer – and if the vaccine causes impotence in you kids under age 40, so much the better.

But a word on science. Allow me to tap into my vast store of accumulated old geezer wisdom to offer a personal perspective on science in general. Fact is, I have not always been a science enthusiast. But now that my main purpose in life seems to be hanging around and making a nuisance of myself, I have come to appreciate science as an ally in prolonging my ability to indulge in this satisfying new career.

As it happens, I learned the importance of not ignoring science the hard way at a very tender age. As a 7th-grader, I received a 'D' in science class.

I know. You're thinking: how on earth could an individual so perfect in nearly every way receive a near failing grade in something as basic as 7th grade science?

I would like to think that the disparaging formal assessment of my aptitude for science was more of a disciplinary than an academic issue, but I fear it was probably both. Regarding the former, it seems that scientists – or at least 7th grade science teachers who have been driven to their wit's ends by adolescent boys – take a dim view of students who attempt to cheer up queasy lab partners by pretending to blow dissected frog livers out of their nose. It is my opinion that this misstep (i.e., getting caught in the act), along with a total lack of interest in how pea plants have sex, earned me my near failing grade in science.

And so it was that upon arriving home with my report card, I was subjected to a lengthy (and frankly, unwelcome) tutorial by my parents on the importance of science (and also math and possibly social studies, if memory serves me right) with a particular emphasis on the lack of extracurricular activities offered at juvenile detention facilities.

Inspired, I vowed to take a more serious approach to my scientific studies and managed to pull that "D" up to a "C" by the end of the school year. Okay, maybe it was a "C minus." What, you were expecting Louis Pasteur? Anyway, I passed and as I assured my suffering parents, that was the important thing, right?

Truth be told, I never did learn to enjoy science. And I still don't get that business with the peas. But if scientists say a vaccine will allow me to live long enough to be a burden on my children and a drain on the Social Security System, you can count me in.

Jim Hallas

## Rivereast Hours of Operation

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

RIVEREAST

## News Bulletin

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woman who has spent years working with children, families, and seniors, and who volunteers on the East Hampton Commission on Aging, not for recognition, but because that's simply who she is.

Meghan doesn't divide people. She doesn't label them. She shows up, does the work, and has been doing it long before anyone handed her a microphone. That's not a politician. That's a neighbor. That's a leader. Eight months from now, the 34th District will choose its representative. Use the time to get to know Meghan Rosenfeld. I think you'll like what you find.

**Tom O'Brien**  
East Haddam

*Note: Rosenfeld is running as the Democratic candidate for the 34th House District which includes East Haddam, East Hampton and part of Salem.*

**What Are We Doing?**

To the Editor:

What are we even doing anymore, Colchester?

Barely two days after voters approved \$20 million for school projects, the Board of Education launched a forensic audit into the Health Reserve fund under Superintendent Sullivan and the previous board. We were told to trust the system, then immediately shown something serious enough to demand that level of scrutiny.

Mr. Sullivan says this was a simple accounting error, a misapplied formula. That does not add up. You do not initiate a forensic audit to fix a routine mistake. A forensic audit is used when there is reason to suspect intentional wrongdoing like fraud, falsified records, or misuse of funds. Calling this simple while taking that step is not believable.

At the same time, town leadership and their defenders insist there is nothing to see. The audit itself proves otherwise, yet there is little urgency from those who should be demanding answers.

Why the indifference? Is it because members of the BOF have said they are merely a rubber stamp with no real purpose? Is it because they allowed the BOE budget book to shrink from about 200 pages to 20, eliminating real oversight?

Much of the blame belongs with the BOE and the superintendent, but it is dishonest to pretend the Board of Finance shares none of it.

So where is accountability now? It has been

handed to teachers, who are being asked to take a pay freeze to fix a mistake they did not make, while officials who claim to support them stay silent.

Meanwhile, Mr. Sullivan talks about sacrifice but leaves out his 6% raise, approved by Donna Antonacci, now on the Board of Finance. He even presented his salary as unchanged.

No one responsible has been held accountable. Instead, taxpayers are. A 9% budget increase means about \$1,000 more a year for the average home, roughly what Trump's tariffs cost families nationally.

Why are we paying for their failure? Why has no one on the Board of Finance asked that?

And when residents object, we are told to offer solutions. That is not our job. We elected leaders to prevent this and fix it when it happens. This is their problem, and we have every right to reject any solution that is not responsible, transparent, and fair.

If "get along" means ignoring all of this, then what exactly are we doing?

**Jason LaChapelle**  
Colchester

**Question Development**

To the Editor:

Racing towards an important referendum in Hebron we revisit the location and function of the Raymond Brook Watershed and the importance of avoiding development here, including our Public Works. Local households have historically tapped into bedrock aquifers, throughout Hebron, and our watershed neighborhoods are no different. We've heard plans to put the PW and a new town center on John Horton Blvd.

Situated just east of Middle stream, JHBlvd appears, on maps, to be located neatly between

*See Letters, page 6*

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**The "East of the River" Real Estate Report**

**What Today's Market Conditions Mean for Homeowners**

As we move into mid-March, the real estate market is beginning to show signs of seasonal momentum. After a colder and relatively quiet winter, more homes are starting to hit the market. At the same time, buyer activity appears to be increasing as well. In just the past couple of weeks, we've begun to see something that was fairly limited earlier this winter — multiple offer situations. This pattern is fairly typical for our area. Activity often slows during the colder months and around the holidays, then begins to pick up as we approach spring. More buyers re-enter the market, and more homeowners start preparing to list their homes. For homeowners considering selling, this shift can create opportunities. When buyer demand increases and inventory is still relatively limited, well-prepared homes can attract strong attention from buyers. However, increased activity also means increased competition. As more listings come onto the market in the coming weeks, pricing strategy, preparation, and presentation become even more important. Homes that are priced appropriately and marketed effectively tend to stand out. Homes that miss the mark can still take longer to sell. What we're seeing right now is the early stage of the spring market beginning to take shape — more listings, more buyers, and in some cases, renewed competition for desirable homes. For homeowners thinking about selling this year, the weeks ahead will likely provide a clearer picture of how strong the spring market ultimately becomes.

**Market Snapshot – Past Week**

Hebron, Andover, Marlborough, Colchester, East Hampton & Portland

<b>Single-Family Homes</b>	<b>Condos</b>
• 7 homes sold	• 1 sold at \$170,000
• Average sale price: \$509,000	• Sale-to-list ratio: 97%
• Average sale-to-list ratio: 107%	• Days on market: 1 day
• Average days on market: 26 days	<i>Results vary by price point, condition, and pricing strategy.</i>
• Median days on market: 13 days	

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Robyn Letourneau  
860-918-3945

**23 GREENWICH PLACE, COLCHESTER**



**\$849,900**



Sarah Fox  
860-262-4424

**869 EAST STREET, HEBRON**



**\$549,999**



Robyn Letourneau  
860-918-3945

**2 SYLEO LANE, SALEM**



**\$1,075,000**



Brittany Howard  
860-910-6595

**316 WEST ROAD, COLCHESTER**



**\$479,900**



Mary Parker  
860-883-9949

**86 HI LEA FARM ROAD, COLCHESTER**



**\$619,900**



Mary Parker  
860-883-9949

**20 KEIRSTEAD CIRCLE, MARLBOROUGH**



**\$317,000**



Britt Miglietta  
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**160 SAYBROOK ROAD, ESSEX**



**\$1,100,000**



Robyn Letourneau  
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★ **Letters, cont. from page 5**

two lineaments or bedrock fractures. Development here could potentially effect households located directly below Colebrook Village. Above Middle stream sits a vast expanse of wetlands. These wetlands feed Middle stream, which could in fact, actually, be an open fracture. Either way, it's a really wet area. Proponents, of watershed development, are being vague by not mentioning that JHBlvd would need to be extended, towards the west, through these wetlands in order to reach the stony acres known as 17 Kinney Rd (old Horton land), 53 complex acres made more complicated by the surrounding wetlands.

Remember that kitchen sponge, from last week, and the odd sized stones under that sponge? These stones, or in some cases, massive boulders, cause gaps in the soils trapping pockets of water, which in turn, slowly worm their way down to points below. This complex watershed continually produces safe water. However, modern machinery combined with sheer will-power means, humans can easily dismantle this property. Colebrook, is built, on ledge. Ledge that was blasted without notifying residents. Many of our homes, and wells, sit on the same ledge. These blasts felt like earthquakes and we experienced an aftershock. Blasting raises questions. Should we be developing the watershed? Can we justify compromising wetlands and groundwater patterns to extend JHBlvd? A road that leads us to chronic development and associated problems. At what cost do we really need a new town center?

This tricky watershed could be considered shovel-ready, with a full-size excavator. However, one must consider long term damages. In addition to electrical, sewer, town water and natural gas, storm drains, storm ponds and engineered drainage systems must be installed to protect buildings from flooding. That water will then be redirected into surrounding tributaries whereby forever disrupting the delicate channels groundwater takes through the landscape. The more we learn about this watershed, the more we understand the importance of keeping PW on Old Colchester Road. #save17

**Jean Tulimieri**  
Amston

## Experience Hebron's Horton Property

To the Editor:

Have you heard the discussions about the Horton property in Hebron? Do you know where 17 Kinney Rd. is? These are the same place and have become a hot topic in town. Coming up will be two opportunities to experience this uniquely historic and environmentally important landscape. The first opportunity will be this weekend at the Maple Festival as Hebron Center History presents a multi-faceted display of artifacts, maps, and documents in the Douglas Library parking lot. The second will be a Walking Tour of 17 Kinney Rd. on Sunday, March 29, beginning at 2 p.m., at the Raymond Brook Preserve parking lot, 52 Kinney Rd. Details provided at Save Hebron Center on Facebook.

Both events will focus on the significance of the diverse history and how it connects to the equally significant environmental features of this highly productive watershed.

Imagine standing under the Iapetus Ocean 600-400 million years ago or watching a mile of ice sliding overhead as the Laurentide Ice Sheet glides by 2.6 million years ago. Find out about the glacial lodgment till soil left behind, the highest quality agricultural soil that exists

in Connecticut. Hold in your hand a stone projectile point created 12,000 years ago by the Paleoindians, the first inhabitants of Hebron. Look at the mysterious pictograph signature made in 1674 by the Sachem Attawanhood. Learn about Edward Shipman Sr., the friend of Attawanhood, who was willed 3,000 acres by the Native leader. Find out about the Shipman homestead, located just south of Kinney Road, and why this influential settler decided to live in Hebron center.

Discover the dynamic power of the Raymond Brook Watershed centered at 17 Kinney Road. Did you know that the glacial lodgment till soil results in a remarkable high water table, just 18" to 24" below the surface? Consider the amazing amount of water that is filtered by the pristine farmland and surrounding wetlands. According to the USGS Rainfall Calculator, for every 2" rainfall the 88 acres of the Horton Property receives 4,779,104 gallons of water! Add to that the EPA reports that the 30 acres of wetlands stores over 30 million gallons of water. This is fresh drinking water that all finds its way to the Raymond Brook Marsh, our Aquifer Protection Zone.

We hope you can join us at one of the two events and experience the Hebron treasure that is the Horton property/17 Kinney Rd.

**Sincerely,**  
**Kevin J. Tulimieri**  
Amston

## Congratulations, Dr. Sheth

To the Editor:

My congratulations to Dr. Radhee Sheth on the opening of Colchester Family Dental. Dr. Sheth, and her dental assistant, Barbara, are the perfect team. And as a patient of theirs for the last two years, I highly recommend them. I moved to Colchester in 2023 and was in need of some major dental care. Dr. Sheth was extremely caring, informative and knowledgeable, and made the treatments both affordable and easy. Her new office has the latest in screening and diagnostic equipment, and the space is welcoming and comfortable.

So, thank you Dr. Sheth for my new smile, and I look forward to years of continued care.

**John Fitts**  
Colchester

## Dollars and Sense

To the Editor:

Waa,Waa,Waa, what is that background noise? That's the politicians and BOE speaking to the *Peanuts* gang, you, the people of Colchester, and that is what is going to be, if not already, what is left of your finances: Peanuts.

Please, somebody explain why intelligent people continue to throw their money to these town boards as if they were pointing a gun at you and demanding you to give it up or else.

When you give into these demands it encourages them to ask for more, and every year it is more. They know you will vote yes, or worse not vote at all, which is as good as a 'yes' vote.

Here again, 2026: One million or more for the town budget and up to five million for the BOE. On top of that a possible One million or more shortfall for the BOE health reserve fund. The highly paid BOE people were out to lunch on this one and of course it isn't their fault; it never is. Can't wait to see whose shoulders this is going to fall on? I would put my money on the *Peanuts* gang.

What are you going to do about it? My suggestion is to get out and vote, let them know you're sick and tired of giving away your money to their demands.

**Frank Grande**  
Colchester

fell flat, and the stuff with the cast of *Bridesmaids* wasn't much better.

— Was glad to see Paul Thomas Anderson win for director. Saw some social media reactions saying that this was more of a lifetime achievement award, the way Martin Scorsese finally got Best Director for *The Departed*, and that's not fair. While it's true Anderson should've received an Oscar before now, *One Battle After Another* was an engrossing movie and a fantastic piece of filmmaking in almost every way. I had no problem with him winning for it.

— Maybe I should see *Hamnet*? Though I should probably have the Kleenex handy.

— I was thrilled to see Michael B. Jordan win Best Actor. He was fantastic in *Sinners*, in which he played a dual role. I've been watching Jordan in various projects for years, and have always been a fan, so it was pretty cool to see him take home the Oscar.

\*\*\*

See you next week.

## Belltown to Smelltown – Not a Chance

To the Editor:

On behalf of myself and others in the Middle Haddam area, I wish to express my sincere thank you to Town Councilman Ted Hintz Jr. for his extraordinary leadership in the Town Council meeting last Thursday. While public comments were being addressed it seemed like other members were just staring and seemed sort of disengaged. Ted took the lead and got things headed in the right direction which led to firing of Anthony DeSimone and the entire WPCA board. Also the Griffin company backed out of the deal. So thank you again Ted for having the best interests of the town in mind and for looking out for us the citizens of East Hampton

**Michael Pepin**  
Middle Haddam

## Accountability Before Taxation

To the Editor:

The developing crisis in Colchester's employee health reserve may prove to be the most serious financial blunder our town has experienced in decades. It occurred under Democratic Party control, and residents deserve a clear accounting of how it happened before we are asked to pay for it.

The warning signs were visible more than a year ago, long before the public learned the reserve may now be short by roughly \$1 million and could require millions more to stabilize.

More than a year ago, at a Board of Finance meeting in March 2025, Republican Tim Vaillancourt asked a simple oversight question: why was the health reserve contribution increasing by \$400,000, and what was driving that increase?

The answers were inconsistent. At first, the increase was described as leftover end-of-year funds. Later, officials acknowledged claims were exceeding contributions. One example discussed showed roughly \$294K being contributed while \$579K in claims were paid in a single month, requiring the reserve to cover the difference.

That should have triggered deeper financial scrutiny. Instead, when Mr. Vaillancourt pressed for clarification, Democratic board members argued with him rather than examine the numbers. The discussion devolved into confrontation, the chair shut it down, and the meeting moved on.

In other words, a legitimate financial oversight question was treated as a political dispute rather than an issue demanding investigation.

Now the town's Democratic leadership is proposing a roughly 9% tax increase. The combined town and school budget would increase by more than \$6 million in a single year, with taxpayers being told the increase is necessary to address a problem the public still does not fully understand.

Yet the public still does not know exactly what happened, and a forensic investigation into the health reserve is currently underway. Until that investigation is completed, residents do not yet know when the reserve began deteriorating, who was responsible for monitoring it, or why the problem was not addressed sooner.

Before asking taxpayers for one of the largest tax increases in recent memory, town leaders should provide the full facts.

How did the reserve collapse? Why were basic oversight questions dismissed instead of investigated?

Accountability must come before taxation. Colchester residents deserve answers before they are asked to pay for this failure.

**Michael Dubreuil**  
Colchester

## Colchester Budget

To the Editor:

As chair of the Board of Finance (BOF) in Colchester, I want to speak directly to our residents about this challenging budget year. Rising costs of goods and services, increasing rates on health care related policies, infrastructure needs, and an underfunded health insurance fund on the Board of Education side are all overlapping to make for some difficult decisions this year.

Our board's responsibility is to present a budget that is transparent, fiscally disciplined, and aligned with the values of our residents. That means weighing essential services against the realities of our tax base and doing so with care. Some choices will be tough. None will be made lightly.

Public engagement helps ensure that the budget reflects the priorities of the people who live here. I encourage every resident to attend our upcoming workshops, ask questions, and share your perspective.

Together we can navigate these challenges and

continue to support the services, quality of life, and excellent educational programs that make our town a place we are proud to call home.

**Budget Presentation Information:** Budget presentations were made by the Board of Education (BOE) and town at the Public Hearing held by the BOF last week. Those presentations and the full budget books for both budgets are available on the town and BOE websites. The recording/minutes for the public hearing are on the town website.

**BOF Budget Workshop Schedule:** (All held at 6 p.m., at Town Hall & on Zoom.) 1. Workshop #1 – Monday, March 23. Agenda: Town Budget Part 1 and Revenues. Departments: Public safety, first selectman, human resources, finance, tax collector, town clerk, assessor

2. Workshop #2 – Wednesday, March 25. Agenda: full BOE budget with all department heads.

3. Workshop #3 – Tuesday, March 31. Agenda: Town Budget Part 2 and Revenues continued. Departments: Community and human services (youth and social services, C3, library, park & rec, senior services), planning/code enforcement, elections, engineering, public works

4. Workshop #4 – Monday, April 6. Agenda: continuation of BOE budget. Possible joint budget discussion by board.

The format for the workshops do allow for citizen comments and questions to be asked and answered, so please look at the available presentations and budget books online, listen to the workshops and ask whatever questions are on your minds.

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

## I Thank All of You

To the Editor:

To my East Hampton neighbors: Thank you. Thank you to the residents who came out in force to the Town Council meetings — approximately 150 in person and 120 on Zoom. Your presence mattered, and it sent a clear message.

I especially want to recognize the courage of those who stood before the Town Council and spoke publicly about their concerns. Speaking up is not easy, and your voices made a difference.

I also want to acknowledge the Town Council for beginning to undo some of the actions that raised serious concern. I believe they have heard us loud and clear. Now we should give them some time and space to make public the facts behind what many of us have only heard about so far. Patience is a virtue.

As I wrote two weeks ago; there is a lot to uncover, to explain how we got this far down the road. Anne Lilburn of the *Rivereast* did a fantastic job with her article. Channel 3 also kept us informed. Keep it up.

For those townsfolk who have not heard or gotten involved: please follow the developments. We need your time, knowledge, and voice. Let the Town Council work to uncover the facts and bring the full picture to light.

**Douglas Mackeown**  
East Hampton

## More Than a Shopping Trip

To the Editor:

Did you know that something as simple as a shopping trip can make a meaningful difference in the life of an older adult?

At the Portland Senior Center, we see it happen every time our bus heads out for one of our community shopping outings. One of our upcoming trips leaves at 10 a.m. for the Old Saybrook Shopping Center, where participants can visit Walmart, Stop and Shop, Marshalls, HomeGoods, and Verizon before enjoying lunch together.

While it may appear to be a simple errand run, these trips offer so much more. For many older adults, transportation can become difficult over time. Driving may no longer feel comfortable, and asking family members for rides can sometimes feel like a burden. Organized trips like these help older adults maintain independence while still being able to run their own errands and make their own choices.

Just as important is the social connection. On these outings, conversations start the moment people step onto the bus. Friends compare shopping finds, share stories in the aisles, and sit down together for lunch. What begins as a trip to pick up a few necessities often becomes a day filled with laughter and companionship.

As someone who works closely with older adults, I can tell you that these moments matter deeply. Staying socially connected is strongly linked to improved mental health, reduced isolation, and overall well-being as we age. Sometimes the most powerful support we can offer is simply creating opportunities for people to get out, connect with others, and feel part of their

### Editor's Desk continued from page 4

VOICE float across my inbox this week took me right back to those Dollars and Sense days. Will Hebron VOICE wind up having the same impact? Only time will tell, but I wish them luck.

\*\*\*

I know you're all on pins and needles wondering what I thought of last weekend's Oscars. Well, first of all, I was indeed able to squeeze in a viewing of *Sinners* before the Academy Awards rolled around Sunday night. I liked it a great deal; it was ultimately a lot of fun, and extremely well-made. That said, I didn't like it quite as much as *One Battle After Another*, so I was happy when *One Battle* took home the Best Oscar trophy. But I'd have been fine with either one winning; they were both worthy.

Other unsolicited thoughts:

— Conan O'Brien, who hosted this year, was hilarious as always. He'd be a great choice to host again.

— The non-Conan comedy bits, however, were pretty bad. There was a lengthy bit with Robert Downey Jr. and Chris Evans that just

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community.  
The next time you see the Senior Center bus heading out of town, know that it is carrying more than passengers. It is carrying friendship, independence, and the simple joy of being together. If you are interested in learning more about these outings or other programs, please contact the Portland Senior Center. We are always happy to welcome new faces.

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

### Funny Who's Doing All the Complaining

To the Editor:  
I was hoping for an easy budget season without the drama. Here we go again.  
Colchester has a real problem. The Board of Education's health insurance fund is in crisis. But Republicans are already at meetings and on Facebook pointing fingers at anyone except themselves.

Here's what they're hoping you'll forget.  
Republicans on the Board of Finance voted against funding the health insurance reserve in June 2025. They derailed meetings and refused to let insurance experts explain how the fund works. Republican First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos ran the town side of that same fund \$700,000 into deficit by 2023. Bernie Dennler fixed it. The BOE side is still a mess and Republicans have no answers.

The Republicans casting the most blame are the most responsible for the mess. They helped create this problem, made it nearly impossible to fix, and now they're the loudest voices in the room.

You can always tell the difference between the people who fix things and the people who just complain to cause maximum drama. Here we go again.

**John Farrell**  
Colchester

### Hebron Town Budget Overview

To the Editor:  
Hello town residents — I wanted to provide facts regarding the town government structure and budget process below:

1. Colchester has a different type of government than Hebron. They have a first selectman, like a mayor, who is in charge of all the first round of budgets. He has sole discretion to direct departments on spending. The Hebron Town Council can make recommendations to the town manager on initial budget goals.

2. Hebron has three different feeds into the budget process: the town, the elementary schools and RHAM. Each budget is presented by the corresponding department. The town manager initially presents for the town and the superintendents for each of the schools.

3. Early March: we are currently in the process of initial department presentations. Once this is done, cuts can be made to the town by the Town Council. The BoE and RHAM BoE make the cuts for the schools.

4. April: After changes are made, the revised budgets are then sent to the Board of Finance. The Board of Finance can make no specific line changes to the RHAM budget. They are only able to make a top line cut/adds to the town and schools. It is up to the town and elementary schools to identify where these cuts will happen.

5. Late April/May: Once this has all been completed the town/education budget and the RHAM budget goes to voters.

Hope this helps folks understand the complexities of our town budgets and their processes.

**Claudia Riley**  
Amston

*Note: Riley is a member of the Hebron Town Council, but is writing as an individual.*

### DPWAC Update

To the Editor:  
Hello fellow residents! When I started writing letters to the *Riverast* I first included Frequently Asked Questions or FAQs. We have archived the first 44 FAQs and there are now some new ones:

Q45: Will the new Public Works facility at Old Colchester Road include a transfer station?

A: Yes, before the design process began, the Town Council had directed that the project must include a transfer station that will handle municipal solid waste (MSW) recyclables, bulky waste, waste oil and antifreeze, electronics and the reinstatement of the Swap Shack.

Q46: Since the Town did not receive any bids for curbside pickup of municipal solid waste, recyclables, and bulky waste items, what alterna-

tive options is the DPWAC pursuing?

A: There are currently discussions underway with Colchester regarding our residents using their facilities to dispose of municipal solid waste, recyclables, and bulky waste items. In addition, from the outset, the Committee has several other options they are currently pursuing that are looking promising.

Q47: Do the plans for the rebuilding of the Public Works facility require that the town purchase the Eversource property?

A: No, the design plans are not at all contingent on the acquisition of the Eversource property.

Q48: What will the cost be to temporarily relocate the DPW equipment and operations during the construction period?

A: The costs for the temporary relocations are currently being compiled by town staff and they will be shared once completed.

Q49: When will the referendum be held to vote on the OCR project?

A: This is a decision that will be made solely by the Town Council. However, it appears that the referendum will not occur until sometime this coming fall.

Q50: How can I find primary documents, presentations, and draft design renderings on past and present DPW projects?

A: We are coordinating with the town manager's office to clarify where residents can find all documents from before and after the formation of the current DPWAC. We will provide more information once it becomes available.

Q51: How can I submit questions to the DP-

WAC?

A: All questions should be submitted to the following email address: dpwac@hebronct.gov All emails will be acknowledged as soon as administratively possible. Some questions may require input from various resources to provide complete answers. However, the committee is committed to responding promptly. These are posted on the town website: www.hebronct.com.

**Todd Habicht, Vice Chairman**  
Hebron DPWAC

### No Increase to School Budgets

To the Editor:  
This is an open letter to the Hebron Town Council and Board of Finance read at the Budget Workshop on March 17:

Tonight, you will hear from two organizations outlining their proposed budgets for your consideration. I have a feeling that, not counting particulars, these presentations' tone and scope will greatly resemble those of past years. And they will be presented as approved by their respective boards in accordance with their mission statements or core values and belief statements.

I stand here tonight with the greatest deference to you, the boards of the two educational institutions and the numerous professionals that have worked strenuously to achieve the goal of passing this year's budget.

But I wish to add a few thoughts. Over the last few years, pleadings to the two educational

institutions and boards have been made to trim their spending. These requests were made not in objection to education but to ensure the fiscal health of the communities that they exist in. These pleadings have gone unheeded. And I understand why. Nowhere in the mission statement or the core value statement of these institutions is there any pledge to ensure the overall health of the communities that house them. These institutions are doing exactly what they pledge to do. Enhance, to the best of their ability, the education of their students.

But they do not exist in a vacuum. And their continued successful fiscal maneuvering has helped ensure three things. The passage of their budgets, an ever-increasing burden on the taxpayers of Hebron and the demise of Hebron's infrastructure. This cannot go on.

I request that the Town Council and the Board of Finance ask these two institutions to submit a zero-increase budget for this year and for the next two years. Such a budget strategy, to the best of my understanding, would meet Connecticut's MBR requirements and will give the town of Hebron some much needed relief. Such a budget outlook will allow Hebron to address its woefully decrepit infrastructure without forcing many of its elderly to move out of town due to a high tax burden.

I do not make this request lightly. It would entail the freezing of wages, benefits and salary steps. It is a drastic request, but I believe it tells the story of Hebron's current fiscal reality.

**Terry McManus**  
Hebron

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# Snow Days Can't Keep Addams Family from PHS Stage

By Anne Lilburn

While this year's snow may have tried its best to derail rehearsals for Portland High School's spring production of *The Addams Family*, the show's producers, stars and crew say they're ready to go this weekend – after a winter season filled with study hall rehearsals, Facetime choreography sessions and plenty of hard work.

Producer Elisha Millerd Lewis, who is in her fifth year producing the school musical and who is also a library Media Specialist at Portland's Secondary Schools, said that she and the show's directors had chosen *The Addams Family* because they were looking to change things up with something more modern after last year's performance of *Anything Goes*.

The choice turned out to be a hit with the students.

"It's a big tradition in our school to have a big stir up when the directors choose the musical," said *The Addams Family* pit orchestra member Lily Gaetani, a senior. "Everyone goes into the auditorium and they make a big slideshow and it's very exciting because this is a big event for our school, it brings a lot of people together."

"*The Addams Family*," she added, was "an exciting choice that was kind of unexpected."

Millerd Lewis said she was happy to see the kids get excited about the musical choice, and that choosing something that felt current was by design.

"We wanted something that was kind of a little bit more pop culture, that the kids would know and recognize, as well as people who are my age or even the older generation," she said. "We wanted it to kind of span generations."

Lewis added that between the musical itself (which premiered on Broadway in 2010), Netflix's current popular *Wednesday* series, the 1991 movie and the original 1960s television show, everyone was familiar with the subject.

For Anna Piascik, a junior who plays the role of Wednesday, the musical choice was welcome news.

"When I found out it was [*The*] *Addams Family*, I was so excited because Wednesday is like one of my number one dream roles ever," she said. "I was so excited. I've seen so many amazing productions of *Addams Family* in the past and I was excited to be a part of one of them."

Eighth-grader Kyrinn Stone, who is a dancer in the ensemble, agreed.

"I've been obsessed with the show *Wednesday* for a while, so I was very excited," she said, adding that she was also excited to be included as an eighth grader.

"I remember in all the younger grades, we'd always come and we'd watch like, half of the musical, they'd perform it for us, so I was always like,

'I want to do that when I get older,' and I'm glad I got to do it before I even went to high school," she said.

For students on the technical side of the production, the choice of *The Addams Family* came with some fun, like the sequined jacket that Leah Lamson, a senior who works on costumes for the production, chose to put under an outer jacket for Gomez to reveal during a dance number. It also came with some challenges, like the large foam trees that stage manager and set designer Kai Vardon, also a senior, said required some coordination to move around and stash backstage.

Senior Hailey Bustamante, who is the assistant technical director, runs the mics and also assists with on stage special effects and lighting. She's been working on the tech crew since she was a sophomore.

"I think if you're not really comfortable being on stage," Bustamante said, "tech crew is really good. It's really just a fun way to hang out with your friends and be a part of the show, and honestly, just watching the way the show grows is a fun experience in and of itself."

Every student and advisor mentioned one very big challenge that stood in the way of the production this year: the snow. With a lot of snow days interrupting rehearsals, students and faculty members really had to go above and beyond to get the work done.

"The snow days were definitely a hard hurdle to get over," said Piascik. "We spent a lot of time in school, and coordinating things outside of school that we needed to work on."

She said that they used study hall time, as well as lunch periods, to cheat extra rehearsal time, and stayed late after regular rehearsals to make up for the lost time. They also turned to some pandemic-era methods of collaborating.

"We would have group chats," said Piascik, "[and] we would record choreography videos for each other."

"We love our kids here. Like, they always go above and beyond," said Millerd Lewis, who recently returned from maternity leave herself and has been making up for lost time on this production.

Millerd Lewis added the production is important to the students.

"They want it to be the best possible performance that we could have, so they always take the time to get together and [rehearse]," she said. "And it's hard for high schoolers, right? Like, they have jobs, they have sports, they have these clubs that they belong to, they have to maybe watch younger siblings."

"So for them to carve out that time," she continued, "it means a lot to us as the directors, you know? Because we spend hours and hours and hours, but we also recognize that they spend



Portland High School – with an assist from Portland Middle School – is putting on *The Addams Family* for its spring musical this year. From left are cast members Martin Coppola, who plays Pugsley; Logan Price, who plays Gomez; Drey Farmer, as Morticia; and Anna Piascik, who plays Wednesday.

hours and hours and hours, too, outside of what we are asking them to do here at school."

The students said the respect was mutual, adding that they appreciate the extra work that their directors put in to the show.

"We're really lucky to have such a strong set of directors that really inspire us to keep going and to want to keep coming back every year," said Gaetani.

She said it's exciting to finally see everything come together.

"The work that you're putting in for months before," she said, "it really shows the community that this brings together for everybody, and then the excitement that builds up."

Piascik said she was looking forward to sharing the performance with the community, and added that she hoped community members would turn out.

"[The musical is] not something that gets as much attention as sports," she said. "We want it to be a bigger audience than just our family members and our close friends, we want people to come and see us."

Community members can see *The Addams Family* musical at the Portland Middle School auditorium on Friday, March 20 at 7 p.m., or Saturday March 21, at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets are available on site prior to the performance or can be purchased online at [tinyurl.com/phsaddams](http://tinyurl.com/phsaddams).

## 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](http://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](mailto:nosliw.dahc@gmail.com) or 205-999-8842; vice president Chris Donahue at [donahuecj@sbcglobal.net](mailto:donahuecj@sbcglobal.net) or 860-638-7400; or registrar Anne Whalen at [awhalen34@yahoo.com](mailto:awhalen34@yahoo.com) or 860-690-3414.

## Hop into Spring Festival

Trinity Church, 345 Main St., will host a "Hop into Spring" Festival Saturday, March 28, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event will feature homemade crafts, baked goods, candy, and door prizes. Families are invited to enjoy children's entertainment, including a dance party, and a special visit from the Easter Bunny, who will be available for photos with guests of all ages.

## Book Collection Day

All are invited to bring your gently-used books, DVDs, puzzles and CDs to the Friends of the Portland Library Book Collection on Saturday, March 21, from 10 a.m.-noon. Volunteers will help you bring in your donations at the back door of the library, 20 Freestone Ave. Donations are tax-deductible and acknowledgement forms will be available.

Donated items must be in sellable condition: no dirty, moldy, or items in poor condition. Also, the Friends cannot accept textbooks, business books, computer books, VHS videos or magazines.

Donated items are sold at the Friends Fall Book Sale and the ongoing book sale in the library. Proceeds from these sales support library programming.

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## Lions Accepting Scholarship Applications

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

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

All applications must be received by April 15 for consideration.

## POCD Surveys

All Portland residents recently received a large postcard in the mail with the survey information for the Portland Plan of Conservation and Development Update, and for the Future Downtown Portland and Riverfront Masterplan.

The two committees working on these plans are interested in feedback, as they said they are striving to have both plans reflect residents' priorities and visions. Residents are asked to complete the surveys by either using the QR codes found on the postcard, or visiting <http://bit.ly/4arlcZh>

For more information or assistance, contact the Portland planning office at 860-342-6727.



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# Pelton Proposes \$43.8M Budget

By Anne Lilburn

First Selectman Michael Pelton last week proposed a \$43.81 million budget for 2026-27, an increase of 4.88% over the current year.

This year's proposed budget includes \$43,808,607 in expenditures, a 4.88% increase over the prior year, with education making up \$27,218,420 of that total number and general government spending comprising \$16,590,187. The proposed general government budget has an increase of 4.7%, while the education portion has an increase of 4.99%.

The projected mill rate will be 37.19 mills for real estate (an increase of 1.89 mills from the current year) and 32.46 mills for motor vehicles.

The town has also seen an increase in its Grand List value, with a total value of \$977,591,000, a \$4,598,490 increase from last year.

At the March 10 public hearing on the proposed budget, Pelton, a Republican, described the spending proposal as "a starting point," and urged residents to come to the budget workshops, where they can "ask questions and elicit feedback."

"I hope with this budget process," said Pelton, "that people are involved, they're asking questions, they're seeking us out when we're out someplace and they want to know more about it, because the more that people get involved, the more that everyone owns this budget."

"These are ultimately taxes that everyone will pay," he added, "and I want people to know where the money's coming from and how it's being spent and what good it's doing the town."

Pelton broke down an overview of the town government, with 355 employees and volunteers, including some part time and seasonal employees. He also highlighted some recent townwide accomplishments, mentioning Brainerd Place and the upcoming Nordic Spa, adding that he believed those projects would be beneficial to future budgets.

"The more business you have in town, the more it spreads out the tax burden," he said, "so it makes the tax burden to residents decrease."

He also discussed the new municipal water source and well as a priority for the town, saying that he believed it would give the town more control over costs. Pelton noted the current

costs to the town for its municipal water supply totaled \$2,006,739, a 3.47% increase over the prior year. He emphasized that this was one of the reasons that he believed the town pursuing its own water supply made sense.

On the topic of budgetary challenges, both Pelton and Superintendent of Schools Charles Britton, who presented the education budget, brought up this year's steep increases in health insurance costs.

"One of the big drivers for both our budgets this year in particular has been the cost of health care and health insurance," said Pelton. "We had a big hit this year on that. It's happening everywhere: not just here, not just in Connecticut, not just in New England, [but] throughout the country. Insurance has just gone crazy."

He said much of the budgetary increases were driven by these "people costs," adding that "you would be surprised how little goes up on the materials that we buy, the service contracts that we have."

To prove his point, Pelton showed a slide that highlighted total general government "people costs," which are \$10,176,167, or 61.3% of the proposed budget. On the Board of Education side, that number was \$21,231,325, or 78% of the budget. Overall, the "people costs" of the combined budgets was \$31,407,492 or 71.7% of the overall budget.

Some capital items that Pelton said would be funded in the proposed budget under the general fund included Board of Education food service equipment and technology upgrades, a generator and ATV for the Fire Department, a website redesign for the library, and several items for the police department, including a police SUV, a keyless entry security upgrade and cameras for interior buildings.

The general capital fund will also cover a vehicle and HVAC system for the Public Works department, sealcoating the town garage, and some townwide items, including a new phone system and computers. He said all of these items were reviewed by the capital committee.

The percentage increases for most departments were in line with past year increases in the post-pandemic years.

On the education side, Britton described health care costs as "our big headwind this year," saying "it's something we can't get around; it's something we can't avoid."

He said that the town's current insurer, Anthem, initially estimated a 26.9% increase in health insurance costs, which he said the district was able to negotiate down, but not low enough to avoid having to make cuts. He said the district was facing the combined effect of premium increases, which are affecting school districts nationwide, as well as employee plan choices, noting that family plans cost significantly more than individual plans.

Britton said that, following negotiations with their insurer, the overall cost of benefits to the school district would now rise by 15.68%, from \$4,892,165 for the current year, to \$5,659,070, based on current estimates.

Britton also said that the Board of Education recently settled its school transportation contract, which added \$16,448 to the budget, as well as its paraprofessional contract, which added \$2,292 to the budget. All of these additional costs came in after the Board of Education voted on the budget in January, so Britton said that that meant that, with this proposed education budget, the Board of Education will be in a \$146,399 deficit, despite the 4.99% increase from last year.

As a result, Britton said he imposed a flat funding policy ("What you got this year is what you're getting next year") and was also forced to make some staffing cuts. The proposed budget will now involve cutting one full time teaching position, one paraprofessional position and one full time board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA) position. It also involves cutting an athletic coordinator.

"These cuts are going to be very hard to handle," he said, but "all of this was done to offset that draconian health insurance increase."

He emphasized that the budget could not absorb any more cuts without it affecting "aca-

dem, athletic, extracurricular and co-curricular programming."

Aside from staff benefits, Britton said that notable increases to the budget from last year included costs in the category of "purchased services," which includes lease payments on a property on Main Street that the district plans to use for its transition services program. This program serves 18- to 22-year-old students with disabilities who have not earned a high school diploma and who require additional training in life skills.

Britton pointed out that, while the lease will cost money in the short term, the program has potential to bring in revenue, because it could "become attractive to other towns," who would pay tuition to send their students there. Just one student's tuition, he said, would cover the cost of rent.

There is also an increase in the "buildings and equipment" category, due to the purchase of new Chromebooks for fifth and ninth grade students, which Britton said would stay with students for four years. Transportation costs for the school district were relatively flat, with a slight percentage decrease, in fact, due to the change to using an in-house minivan for some needs.

On the ongoing topic of special education costs and unfunded mandates, Britton pointed out that the state hasn't increased the baseline of its excess costs grants, which cover high special education costs, including outplacements, since 2013, but he said there is currently pressure on the state to make changes and he is hopeful that legislators will "do the right thing" and increase the amount.

Pelton encouraged residents to stay involved in the budget process. Budget deliberations will take place on March 24 and 25 at 7 p.m., and the Board of Selectmen will present the approved budget on April 8 at a meeting that will be open to the public. The town will vote on the budget at a referendum on May 11.

## Parks and Rec. News & Notes

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

**Easter Egg Hunt:** Families with children ages 1-10 are invited to come to the Portland Recreational Complex on Saturday, March 28, at 11 a.m. (Rain date is Sunday, March 29, at 2 p.m.) Find the golden egg and win a prize. Golden egg prizes will be provided by Carl Guild & Associates.

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

**Co-Ed Drop-In Volleyball:** Tuesdays through April, from 6:30-8 p.m., at Gildersleeve School. This program is free to Portland residents and has a one-time fee of \$20 for non-residents. Registration is required for all participants. The program does not take place on days when the school is closed or has early dismissal.

**Portland Sports Hall of Fame:** Portland Parks and Recreation is partnering with the Portland Sports Hall of Fame to accept nominations for the class of 2026. Nominations can be submitted to the Parks and Recreation Department digitally through their website or in-

person at the office located at 265 Main St.

**Summer Quest:** Register before May 1 to lock in early bird pricing. Kiddie Camp is open to children ages 3.5 to entering Pre-K or Kindergarten, Base Camp is open to children entering grades 1-6 and Teen Camp is open to children entering grades 7-9.

**Slamma Jamma Spring Break Basketball Camp:** Monday-Friday, April 13-17, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at Portland High School. Open to children in grade 3-8.

**Multi-Sport Program at Riverfront Park:** Saturday mornings, April 18-May 23. Separate programs are offered for kids aged 2-5.

**Junior Golf Workshops with Gerry - Grades K-5:** Saturdays, April 25-May 16, at Portland West Golf Course. Grades K-2 are 12:15-1:15 p.m., and grades 3-5 are 1:30-2:30 p.m.

**Junior Golf Workshops with Gerry - Grades 6-8:** Tuesdays, May 5-26, 4:30-5:30 p.m., at Portland West.

**Ladies Spring Golf Clinic for Beginners with Gerry:** Tuesdays, May 5-June 2, 6-7 p.m., at Portland West.

**Ladies Spring Golf Clinic for Intermediate Players with Gerry:** Wednesdays, May 6-June 3, 6-7 p.m., at Portland West.

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

**Men's Drop-In Basketball:** Tuesdays through June, from 7:30-9 p.m., at Portland Middle School. This program is free to Portland residents and has a one-time fee of \$20 for non-residents. Registration is required for all participants. The program does not take place on days when the school is closed or has early dismissal.

## St. Mary Palm Cross Sale

St. Mary Ladies Guild is wrapping up its Palm Cross sale. These crosses are used to adorn the gravesite of a loved one for Easter.

Cost is \$13 each. Call Guild president Jane Klemba at 860-301-3731 to place an order. Deadline for orders is March 15.

## Bereavement Support Group

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

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

## St. Mary Church News & Notes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


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# BOE Celebrates Students, Discuss Bathroom Reno

By Toriana Williams

The Board of Education meeting on March 11 covered a wide range of topics, from budget concerns to student achievements. The meeting showed both the challenges facing the district and the strong sense of community that surrounds the school.

## Public Comment

Longtime resident and former Board of Finance member, Georgette Conrad, spoke about concerns with the school budget. Drawing on her past experience, Conrad said, "I don't understand why every year we come up with this budget that's 10%, 11%." She also pointed out the financial strain on older community members, and said, "as we get older, we have a lot less income. ... You can't just keep dumping more money on us."

Current RHAM Board of Education member Scott Sauyet responded during public comment by adding context to Conrad's comment. Sauyet noted that the situation today is different from the past, explaining, "It's a very different

situation now," especially with changing student populations and needs. Sauyet shared that over the past decade, the BOE budget has only increased about 5% in total, suggesting that rising costs may now be catching up.

## Celebrations

The meeting also highlighted positive news. One of the biggest celebrations of the night was Andover Elementary School's participation in the recent Invention Convention held at RHAM High School. The program allowed students to identify real-life problems and create solutions. AES principal Taylor Parker explained the importance of the program, and said, "we encourage kids to find real problems that are really happening in their lives, and so [the work] becomes more real to them."

In addition to student achievements, the board discussed important updates about the town. One major announcement was that Andover has once again been recognized as a "heart-safe community." This means the town

has strong emergency preparedness, including CPR-trained residents and accessible AED devices. Superintendent Valerie Bruneau explained, "We have lots of people that are CPR trained ... and that we are committed to this." The certification will last for three more years.

## Financial Updates

The district is expecting a small deficit this year, but officials said it should be manageable. School board member Alica Lee noted, "I don't project it's a huge deficit, but it'll be there." Rising costs in areas like maintenance and printing were discussed, but some savings were also noted, such as lower heating usage due to school closures during cold weather.

The board also reviewed a draft audit report. There was only one issue identified, which had been ongoing for several years. It related to how financial records are shared between the town and the school district. Even so, the overall report was seen as positive progress.

## AES Bathroom Renovation Project

The board spent time discussing the upcoming bathroom renovation project, which is one of the district's major facility priorities. Board

members shared that the process is officially moving forward, thanks in large part to the work of project coordinator Eric Sanderson.

Board Chair Caitlyn Greenhouse emphasized just how much effort has gone into getting to this stage and said, "Eric Sanderson has worked his butt off for us." The request for proposals (RFP) has already been posted on both the school and town websites, showing that the project is now open for contractors to review and bid on.

The board also reviewed a clear timeline for the project. Contractors are required to attend a "mandatory site visit," said Greenhouse, on March 17 in order to submit a bid, ensuring that all bidders fully understand the scope of the work. Afterward, questions from contractors are due within a few days, with final proposals expected by April 6.

Board members said they expect to review those proposals at their next meeting and move toward selecting a contractor by mid-April. If everything stays on schedule, construction will begin in mid-June, shortly after school ends, with a goal of completing the work by late August.

## Congregational Church News

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

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

**Food Pantry:** Mondays from 5-7 p.m. Bring your own bags. The **Foodshare Van** comes

to the church every other Wednesday from 8:30-10 a.m.; **Senior Pantry** is on the opposite Wednesdays.

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

**Sunshine Stampers:** 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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](mailto:gardenandovercommunity@gmail.com).

## 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.

## 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.

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

## 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. Coffee is always on. All are welcome. For all questions or concerns, call the director, Tess Grous, at 860-742-7305 ext 4510 or at 860-798-6862.

The center's monthly newsletter, "Community Connections," is available at [www.andoverconnecticut.org](http://www.andoverconnecticut.org). Copies are also available at the center, Town Hall, and Andover Public Library. To receive the newsletter by email each month 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

## 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.

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

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

**Lunch at the Firehouse:** Wednesday, March 25, noon. The fire department is hosting lunch and bingo at the Firehouse. Lunch will be chicken, broccoli, garlic bread, Caesar salad, and dessert. 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.

**AARP Driver Safety Class:** Thursday, March 26, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Cost is \$20 for AARP members, \$25 for nonmembers. Location is Bolton Senior Center. To register, call the Bolton center at 860-647-9196. Completion may save you money on insurance premiums.

**Stained Glass:** Friday, March 27, 6 p.m. No prior experience needed. The focus of this class is tulips. This class fills up quickly, is for students 16 and up, and all materials included. To register, call the center.

**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.

Spanish for Beginners: If interested in joining the next session, call the center.

## 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.

## 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.

## Andover Lake Rising

It's that time of year again! Andover Lake will start rising to recreational level the weekend of March 28.

To become a member of Andover Lake, go to [www.andoverlakect.com](http://www.andoverlakect.com).

## 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 daily from 3:30-5:30 p.m. until March 26.

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

## 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.

## Kindergarten Registration

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

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

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

### 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.

### 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.

### 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 – and the deadline to apply is today.

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

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

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

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

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

Forms received after March 20 will not be accepted.

### Ziobron Announces Candidacy for State House

East Haddam Republican Melissa H. Ziobron, former state representative for the 34th District, has announced her candidacy for the Connecticut House of Representatives – where she would once again represent the 34th District.

The district includes East Hampton, East Haddam, and a portion of Salem. The district seat is currently held by Republican Irene Haines, who announced this week she will not be seeking reelection.

In a press release, Ziobron noted she has more than 25 years of continuous service to the community, through local volunteer roles, state elected office, and legislative budgeting positions. Throughout her career, the press release stated, she has prioritized the needs of families, small businesses, taxpayers, and environmental stewardship.

“My dedication to this community is not merely a campaign promise – it has defined my professional life for over two decades,” Ziobron said. “I have actively engaged in local initiatives, from trail maintenance and riparian buffer restoration to rigorous oversight in school board proceedings and local and state budget development focused on spending reductions. I worked tirelessly in Hartford to ensure our district’s concerns were addressed. I am seeking to return to elected office because residents deserve a representative committed to radical transparency while championing seniors, students, and the spaces we all cherish. We have a beautiful corner of Connecticut, and like so many residents, I love this area.”

First elected to the state House in 2012, Ziobron won re-election in 2014 and ran unopposed in 2016. As ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, she fought to safeguard taxpayer funds, curb wasteful expenditures, invest in education, and secure funding for key local environmental projects, including the revitalization of Salmon River State Forest fishing platforms, the cleanup of Sunrise State Park, and the expansion of the Air Line Trail.

The press release stated that Ziobron’s leadership as the principal Republican voice on the 2017 budget committee contributed to the establishment of bipartisan fiscal guardrails that continue to constrain excessive state spending.

Following her departure from the House in 2018 to pursue a state Senate candidacy, Ziobron has worked as a senior fiscal policy staffer for the Senate and House Republican minority



**Melissa H. Ziobron**

in the Connecticut General Assembly.

Ziobron has also announced her team has completed fundraising in order to apply for the Citizens Election Program.

“While I was caring for elderly loved one who recently moved into our home, my team went to work collecting over 150 contributions from residents who support my candidacy,” Ziobron said. “I am grateful to them and those who took the time to send in a contribution, no matter the amount.”

With Haines departing, Ziobron said she is prepared to return to elected office.

“Voters – regardless of party affiliation, including Democrats, Republicans, and unaffiliated residents – share common priorities: accountable government, vibrant local economies, high-quality education, and the preservation of our natural environment,” Ziobron added. “These are the outcomes I have delivered throughout my career, and they will remain the focus of my efforts if elected.”

A graduate of Nathan Hale-Ray High School in East Haddam, Ziobron has been married to her husband, Scott, for over 30 years. They have two adult children and reside with their two dogs in East Haddam. If she wins in November, she will give up her staff position and salary before taking her oath of office.

### 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 available online at [tinyurl.com/EHRotaryScholarship2026](http://tinyurl.com/EHRotaryScholarship2026) or through the guidance department of East Hampton High School, RHAM, Mercy, Xavier and Vinal. Applications are due April 3.

### 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 recommen-

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

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



**And the Winner Is...** The Old Home Days Association has announced Donata Barber as the winner of the 2026 logo contest. Pictured is the winning logo, which incorporates this year’s theme of “Bells, Boats, and Birth of our Nation,” in celebration of America 250. Old Home Days this year runs July 9-11. For more information, visit [www.ehohd.org](http://www.ehohd.org) or look for East Hampton Old Home Days on Facebook.

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# Campground Fire Sends One to Hospital

By Anne Lilburn

The East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department responded to a fire at the Markham Meadows Campground on the morning of Saturday, March 14.

In a Facebook post, Fire Chief Robb Ravinville wrote that “upon arrival, firefighters found a camper fully involved in fire with a large propane tank actively venting and burning. Strong winds contributed to the fire spreading to a second camper nearby.”

Because of the presence of propane, the department requested additional resources. Both Marlborough and Colchester’s fire departments responded to mutual aid requests, and a hazmat crew from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection provided assistance with controlling the leaking propane tanks. Firefighters used water from a nearby pond to help extinguish the flames. Multiple media outlets reported that one

person was taken to the hospital, and NBC Connecticut reported that the fire had started in the wall of one of the campers.

Melissa Engel, who owns Markham Meadows, wrote in an email that “it was incredibly scary and a reminder of how fast camp trailers of any kind can go up in flames.”

“Fortunately,” she added, “these folks [who live in the trailer] were very aware of their exits and had a fire extinguisher at hand. With the exception of smoke inhalation, they escaped unscathed and were very lucky.”

“Our first responders were fabulous as always,” she wrote, “and prevented what could have been much more damage given the winds they were up against.”

Engel added that the residents of the camper were being taken care of by the camping community and “were in need of nothing at the moment.”

## Middle Haddam Public Library News

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

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

**Featured Artist for 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 Kregger 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

professional 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](mailto: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](mailto:tensummitst@gmail.com).

## Second Congregational Easter Schedule

Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam, which is yoked with Haddam Neck Congregational Church, invites all to its upcoming Easter services.

The two churches will hold a Palm Sunday worship service with a distribution of fresh palms on Sunday, March 29, at 10:30 a.m., at Haddam Neck Congregational, 408 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck. Coffee hour follows in the lower-level community hall. The Rev. Suzy Rivera will be the Spiritual Leader.

During Easter week, the Rev. Linda Choser

will lead a Maundy Thursday service with Bible readings and a simple meal at 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 2, at Haddam Neck Congregational.

A sunrise worship service will be held in the church yard of Haddam Neck Congregational at 7 a.m. Easter morning, Sunday, April 5, followed by a potluck breakfast in the Parish House.

The 10:30 a.m. worship service on Easter will be held at Second Congregational in Middle Haddam. Coffee hour follows.

For more information on any service, visit [www.haddamneckcongregationalchurch.org](http://www.haddamneckcongregationalchurch.org).

## 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](http://tinyurl.com/2huzen57).

Completed applications must be dropped off

at the library or emailed to the Friends at [andoverfol@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:andoverfol@gmail.com).

## East Hampton Library News & Notes

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

**Hours:** Monday - Wednesday, 10 a.m.- 8 p.m.; Thursday - Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

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

**The Deck Decoded: A Tarot Workshop with Linda Poland:** Tuesday, March 31, 6 p.m. Explore tarot as a tool for symbolism, storytelling, and self-reflection in this interactive workshop. No prior experience needed. For grades 8+ and adults.

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

**Teen Programs: 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: 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.

**Magic Tree House Party:** Grades K-3: Monday, Mar. 30, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Celebrate the *Magic Tree House* book series with activities inspired by Jack and Annie’s stories. Registration required.

**DIY Days: Grades K-8:** Saturday, April 4, 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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](http://www.epocharts.org/classes-registration).

## Easter Egg Hunt at HNCC

Haddam Neck Covenant Church will host its annual Community Easter Egg Hunt Saturday, March 28. The hunt begins at 1 p.m. by age groups.

Over 1,000 colorful candy-filled eggs will be hidden in the field outside the church. Come take photos with the Easter Bunny. There will also be Easter gift bags for the children to take home along with their candy. Rain date is Saturday April 4.

Haddam Neck Covenant Church is located at 17 Haddam Neck Rd., the road to the Fairgrounds.

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\*Ask server for more info if needed

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## Easter Egg Hunt at HNCC

Haddam Neck Covenant Church will host its annual Community Easter Egg Hunt Saturday, March 28. The hunt begins at 1 p.m. by age groups.

Over 1,000 colorful candy-filled eggs will be hidden in the field outside the church. Come take photos with the Easter Bunny. There will also be Easter gift bags for the children to take home along with their candy. Rain date is Saturday April 4.

Haddam Neck Covenant Church is located at 17 Haddam Neck Rd., the road to the Fairgrounds.

East Hampton • East Hampton • East Hampton • East Hampton • East Hampton • East Hampton • East Hampton • East Hampton • East Hampton • East Hampton

### 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

though Bible stories where the characters are friends with God. A toddler nursery is also available. All are welcome.

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

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

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

### Bethlehem Lutheran Church News

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

**Easter Schedule:** Sunday, March 29: Palm Sunday service, 10 a.m.; Thursday, April 2: Holy Thursday service, 6 p.m.; Friday, April 3: Good Friday service, 6 p.m.; Sunday, April

5 – Easter Sunday: Sunrise Service, 6 a.m., at Sears Park on Lake Pocotopaug; Easter service at Bethlehem, 10 a.m.

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

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

### Police News

3/5: Jeffrey Karzian, 66, of East Hampton, was arrested and charged with violating conditions of release, East Hampton Police said. The day before, 3/4, Karzian had been arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, police said.

3/7: Cruz Martis, 43, of Windsor, was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle while under suspension, police said.

3/9: Anthony Degennaro, 33, of Marlborough, was arrested and charged with risk of

injury to a child, sixth-degree larceny, second-degree breach of peace, criminal violation of a protective order, and third-degree assault, police said.

3/15: Austin Guerin, 23, of East Hampton, was arrested and charged with two counts of second-degree failure to appear, police said.

From March 2-15, officers responded to 33 medical calls, four motor vehicle crashes and 12 alarms, and made 30 traffic stops, police said.

### A Night of Doo-Wop

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

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

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

### 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](mailto: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 [easthamptonartsassociation.org](http://easthamptonartsassociation.org).

### 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.

### Open Stage at Epoch Arts

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 their talent on stage, be it art, poetry, dance, music, improv, or anything that inspires them. If you don't want to share, you can come hang out with friends with free food, drinks and art supplies. Admission is \$10.

### Irish Soda Bread for Sale

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

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.

### From the State Representative's Desk...

After careful consideration and thoughtful discussions with my family, I have made the decision that I will not seek reelection as state representative for Connecticut's 34th District when my current term concludes.

Serving the residents of the 34th District – East Haddam, East Hampton, and Salem, and previously Colchester prior to redistricting – has been one of the greatest honors of my life. When I first decided to run for office, it was rooted in a simple belief: that the voices of our community's matter and that public service is one of the most meaningful ways to help shape the future of the places we call home. I am deeply grateful for the trust the people of this district placed in me and for the opportunity to represent our communities at the State Capitol.

Throughout my time in office, I have had the privilege of working alongside dedicated colleagues and outstanding legislative staff whose professionalism, insight, and commitment to public service strengthen the work we do on behalf of Connecticut residents every day. I am sincerely thankful for the opportunity to collaborate with them and learn from their experience.

If there is one legacy I hope to leave behind, it is the importance of civic engagement. Our democracy depends on people being involved in their communities and in the decisions that affect their lives. I hope that during my time in office I encouraged residents to become more engaged, ask questions, and advocate for themselves, their families, and their towns.

For the remainder of my term, I remain fully committed to serving the residents of the 34th District. I will continue working on behalf of our communities and ensuring a smooth transition for whoever the voters choose to represent them next.

Finally, I want to thank my incredible family for their unwavering support. Public service requires sacrifice not only from those who serve, but also from those who stand beside them. Their encouragement and patience have made this journey possible.

To the residents of East Haddam, East Hampton, Salem, and previously Colchester, thank you for the privilege of serving you. It has been an honor I will always cherish.



Irene Haines

State Rep. Irene Haines R-34th District

Note: The 34th House District covers East Hampton, East Haddam and Salem.

### Christ Episcopal Church News

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

**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.

**Palm Sunday:** The Procession of the Palms will be held on March 29 at the 10 a.m. service.

**Private Confession:** Private confession will be held Wednesday, April 1, from 4-6 p.m. Call 860-267-0287 to reserve a time.

**Maundy Thursday Service:** April 2 at 6 p.m.

**Stations of the Cross:** Friday, April 3, 5 p.m.

**Good Friday Service:** April 3 at 6 p.m.

**Easter Bake Sale:** Saturday, April 4, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., in the Parish Hall.

**Easter Sunday:** April 5 at 10 a.m. It will be followed by an Easter Egg Hunt on the parish grounds.

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

### 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 created in 2018 by Kasha and Mike Morris, longtime East Hampton residents, after their son Ryan was diagnosed with TANGO2 Deficiency Disorder (TDD).

### 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](mailto:sjp2parishoffice@gmail.com).

All applications must be received by April 17.



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RE5-30-25

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RE11-6-20

# Proposed Budget Totals \$61M, a 4.5% Increase

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton's Board of Finance convened Monday night, March 16, to hear Town Manager David Cox and Superintendent of Schools Timothy Van Tassel present their proposed budgets for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

The total proposed town budget, including education, is \$61,119,835, a 4.51% increase over this current fiscal year. Education makes up 66.7% of that budget at \$40,627,676, which is 4.81% higher than the current year. Debt service is estimated to be \$3,893,986, remaining relatively flat.

If the budget is passed as proposed, the mill rate, both for real and personal property and for motor vehicles, will be 29.18. Assuming a tax collection rate of 98.5%, the total property tax levy will be \$50,456,342, a 5.14% increase over the previous year.

On the education side, the greatest share of the budget was made up of salaries and benefits, which together account for 85% of the proposed budget. Benefits, in particular, comprised a large amount of the budgetary burden, making up 20% of the total budget due to rising health care premiums.

Box Cox and Van Tassel said that they faced mounting costs due to health insurance premium increases. Van Tassel said at the meeting that he had never seen projected premium increases as high as this year, and said these large increases were a problem affecting school districts nationwide.

Van Tassel shared that the school district had initially received an estimate for a projected premium increase of 29% from their current insurer and had sought competitive options, but all the options they pursued resulted in a significant increase over the prior year. In the end, Van Tassel said the district now expects health insurance costs to increase by 15% over the current year.

Van Tassel said that the proposed budget included five additional positions, four of which are existing positions that were previously covered by other funding sources. The fifth is a full-time kindergarten teacher, which is due to a projected increase in student enrollment.

On the general town government side of the budget, excluding education, Cox said that the town had seen a significant increase in the health insurance budget of 21.5%, both due to premium increases as well as employee changes in coverage, including employees getting married or having children. Pension costs also are expected to rise by about 8%.

Next year's budget also calls for two additional full-time employees, along with the elimination of several part-time positions. The increase in full-time salary costs is approximately 1.77%, due to employee changes. According to the proposed budget, the new positions include the "conversion of a part time Land Use Enforcement Official into a full-time Assistant Planner/Land Use Enforcement Official."

Cox said this full-time position would be easier to keep staffed, and would also provide additional support during a time when the town is revising its Plan of Conservation and Development, and during which the state is making "significant changes to land use law."

According to the proposed budget, "the position will support the Department's continued high-quality support of the Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, In-

ter. Performances will take place July 23-25 at East Hampton High School. Auditions for the show will be held prior to the start of camp.

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

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

For more information or to register, visit [www.yppca.org](http://www.yppca.org) or email [info@ypcca.org](mailto:info@ypcca.org).

For more information, call Beth Cunningham at 860-365-1054.

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land Wetlands and Watercourses Agency and other land use bodies as the Town implements its new Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), which is scheduled for adoption in summer 2026."

Another new proposed position will provide support at the Senior Center. The new position will convert a current part-time assistant position into a full-time role. This position will, according to the budget document, aid in "operational efficiency and continuity of service."

Another notable budgetary increase from the prior year involves the East Hampton Ambulance Association, with the proposed budget recommending an increase of \$18,000 for the ambulance association, bringing the total for that organization to \$126,000, thereby reducing their current operating loss.

The proposed Capital Improvements Plan involves \$2.67 million to cover projects, equipment and vehicle purchases. Due to the use of lease financing to cover equipment, as well as offsets due to grants and other funds, the proposed capital improvements plan results in a very small decrease from the prior year of \$31,500.

Cox said that he understood that this year's property revaluation assessments, with their large increases, had been unsettling to many in

town. The town's total assessed real estate and personal property value stood at \$1.598 billion, while the total grand list value, which also includes motor vehicles, stood at \$1.729 billion. This makes the real estate grand list value 46.8% higher than the prior year, and Cox described this situation as "not unique to East Hampton," with post-pandemic property prices rising statewide.

"During several recent meetings," the budget proposal notes, "the details of the Grand List changes have been discussed, including the notable fact that average residential Assessed Value increases exceed 50% and that average commercial Assessed Value increases are about 25%, which is causing a shift in the overall distribution of taxes despite an anticipated reduction in the Mill Rate."

With that said, the budget book notes that, due to the reduction of the town's mill rate, "motor vehicle taxes for most, with the likely exception of those who purchase new vehicles, will decrease in FY2027."

The Board of Finance is conducting budget workshops over the next couple weeks, and is scheduled to submit the budget to the members of the town council on April 14, after which the town council will adopt it and the town will vote on it, both on as-yet-determined dates.

## 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.

## Congregational Church Easter Events

East Hampton Congregational Church, located at 59 Main St., has announced the following Easter events.

**March 29** is Palm Sunday with service starting at 10 a.m. at 59 Main St. with the Rev. Dr. Robin Joy Blundon providing the sermon and distribution of palms.

**April 2** is Maundy Thursday, which starts at 6 p.m. downstairs in Fellowship Hall. There will be a light free supper followed by a service of

reflection and communion then move upstairs for the traditional service.

**April 5** is Easter Sunday service at 10 a.m. With special choir and bell music along with sermon. After service there will be an Easter egg hunt on the lawn for all children to enjoy.

Office hours are Monday and Wednesday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. For more information, call the church at 860-267-4959 or email [congregation-alchurchcheg@gmail.com](mailto:congregation-alchurchcheg@gmail.com).

## Library Friends Offer Scholarship

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

The student should intend to continue his or her post-secondary education in a formal manner, such as college, trade school, or a certificate program. The applicant should have had some

involvement with a library that has positively impacted his or her life.

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

Submit your completed application form by April 10.

## Senior Center News & Notes

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

**Lunches:** Served Monday through Friday, to ages 60 and up. Call to reserve a meal or sign up online. Reservations for the next day's meal are due by 10:30 a.m. the day before. Meals are free; a \$3 donation is requested. A Form 5 document must be completed before registering for lunch; stop by the senior center to complete and submit the form.

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

**Nutrition Education:** Monday, March 23, at noon, with Chris Blancarte of Senior Resources, featuring a discussion on Heart Health Nutrition.

**Café Conservation with the Coordinator:** Tuesday, March 24 at 12:15 p.m. Share your thoughts, ideas and concern with Center Director Holly Marrero.

**Navigating Grief and Loss Workshop:** Thursdays starting March 26 at 1 p.m. This six-week workshop on navigating grief and prioritize safety, validation, and the transition from acute pain to integrated memory.

**Friday Film Fun:** Friday, March 27 at 1 p.m.

## YPPCA Taking Registrations for Summer Theater Camp

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

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

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

This summer, YPCCA will present Disney's hit musical *Frozen*. The story follows Anna as she embarks on a perilous journey alongside a rugged mountaineer, his loyal reindeer, and a magical snowman to find her estranged sister, Queen Elsa, whose uncontrolled icy powers have trapped their kingdom in an eternal win-

## Spring Senior Mixed Bowling

Seniors are invited to join in the fun of bowling with a choice of three morning leagues, as Kickback n' Bowl is forming its Spring Senior Mixed Bowling Leagues.

The leagues will play Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 11 a.m. starting March 23 at Kickback n' Bowl in East Hampton. All seniors 55+ from the nine *Rivereast* towns are all welcome.

Contact Jack Anderson for more info, at 860-882-3752 or [jackande52@aol.com](mailto:jackande52@aol.com).

## 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 20.

This year's offerings include breaded cod, clams, and shrimp, which will be served with French fries and coleslaw. Baked cod and fried chicken tenders meals have been added. Chowder will also be available. Coffee, tea, water and soda are also offered. Prices of the fish may vary from week to week.

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.

## 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.

## 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](mailto:ehnsfundraisers@gmail.com).

# Bellringer Blazing to Buffalo

By Josh Howard

After serving as the lead distance runner at East Hampton High School for the past four years, Jocelyn Gustavson will soon be trading the blue and white of the Bellringers for the blue and yellow of the Golden Griffins of Canisius University.

Gustavson, currently a senior at EHHS, has committed to run cross-country and track for the Division I running program at Canisius, a private university in Buffalo, N.Y.

During the college search, the Belltown native said she was looking for a place with the right culture and the right climate.

"I've always wanted to run in college but don't like running in the heat, so I wanted to go somewhere that was pretty cold and Buffalo is pretty cold," said Gustavson. "I've always thought it is really pretty in upstate New York and when I did my overnight, I liked the team and the fit was right."

Since entering the halls at EHHS, Gustavson has been a three-season runner for the Bellringers. She first made a name for herself on the cross-country trails where she became a four-time All-Shoreline Conference (SLC) first-team selection.

With spring's outdoor track and field season starting this month, Gustavson is preparing for her final season locally where the Bellringers are seeking for a third straight conference title.

East Hampton cross-country and track coach Bill Wilkie said that Gustavson hit the ground running from day one, noting, "She has been our team leader both athletically and emotionally since the first day of practice her freshman year."

"Her performances are so strong and inspiring that it has moves a lot of the other girls, and even on the boys side, along in their races and in

training," added Wilkie

During her time on the local trails, Gustavson worked her way up the cross-country leaderboards.

As a freshman, she placed eighth at the Shoreline Conference (SLC) finals and 11th at the Class SS championship in 2022.

Racing as a junior in 2024, she was the runner-up at the conference finals before winning a Class SS state championship.

She was limited because of arch issues in her feet this past fall, yet was still able to close her cross-country career strong before returning healthy for winter's indoor track and field season where she placed 4th in the 1,000 meters and 6th in the 1,600 meters at the SLC finals.

She also teamed with her sister Brianna Gustavson, along with Abigail Hambridge and Shannon Mahoney on the Bellringers' 4x800 relay team that won a conference championship and earned a bronze medal, placing third overall at the Class SS indoor championships.

During her recovery from the foot alignments, Gustavson noted that she had to do different workouts during that rehab process that have allowed her to strengthen other muscles that she said have helped make her a more complete runner.

Along with her consistent production, Wilkie noted that Gustavson has a competitive fire that you just can't teach.

"She lets her legs do the talking," stated Wilkie. "What really stands out is that she really loves to race. She thrives in races and she looks forward to every track and cross-country meet. You can see it when she races, she is so intense and focused."

Heading into her final season at the high school, Gustavson noted that she is "relieved" to have made her college choice so she can focus



Gustavson and the girls outdoor track and field team at EHHS are aiming for a third straight conference title this spring. Pictured is the team after capturing the 2025 Shoreline Conference Championship.

on leaving her hometown with more personal-best finishes as the team aims to capture a third straight SLC title after bringing home the conference banners in 2024 and 2025.

A year ago, Gustavson had four top-five finishes at the conference finals to help the Bellringers repeated as champs. She placed third in the 400 meters and fourth in the 800 meters, along with being part of the third-place 4x400 relay and fifth-place 4x800 relay squads.

Gustavson's hope is to soak in her final season with the teammates that she's become so close to over the past few years.

Outside of running, Gustavson was also part of the school's Interact Club (a community service-based club), along with helping out with the Special Olympics and at her church camp.

"I will miss everything here, but I'm looking forward to a new adventure," she remarked

In Buffalo, Gustavson will join a program led by head coach Nick Wilson. Wilson's Golden Griffins compete in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference.

She will study graphic design through the school's Digital Media Arts program.

Gustavson said she is feeling both excitement and nerves about her next stop, adding, "I'm going so far away compared to some of my friends, but it's a new challenge and a new way to challenge myself."



Jocelyn Gustavson, a senior at East Hampton High School, has committed to run cross-country and track at Canisius University in upstate New York.

## Accepting Entries for Art Contests

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

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

The deadline for both contests is March 31.

## 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 univer-

sity, a community college, a trade school or a commercial school.

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

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

## Red Cross Blood Drive

East Hampton Congregational Church, located at 59 Main St., will conduct a blood drive on Saturday, April 11, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall.

To make an appointment, call 1-800-733-2767 or visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter East Hampton.

## 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 home-schooled East Hampton resident. Applications available from the guidance department in the schools. Deadline for submission of applications is May 15, 2026.

## 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.

Cover Story • Cover Story • Cover Story • Cover Story • Cover Story • Cover

★ *DeSimone Fired, cont. from page 1*

He later clarified in an email that "the WPCA still exists as a governmental entity with its same responsibilities," adding that he believed it would be reseeded in the future, something that Council Chair Markham agreed with.

Cox wrote that "Short term, the Council will act in the role as the WPCA and will select members to serve on the Joint Facilities Committee. The council indicated that it planned to review the state law and determine how it desired to restructure the authority assigned to the WPCA pursuant to the statutes going forward."

In terms of the WPCA's role, Cox wrote that "the WPCA is in charge of overseeing the operation of the sewer collection system, budgeting,

planning and all other aspects of our local operation with the assistance of the Public Utilities Administrator [DeSimone's former role]. They also select half of the members of the Joint Facilities Committee, which oversees the operation of the wastewater treatment plant and the shared facilities for its operation, including budgeting, long term planning and the like with the assistance of the plant Superintendent and the Public Utilities Administrator."

Cox noted that a replacement would need to be hired to fill in DeSimone's role of Public Utilities Administrator, and that an interim appointment would likely be made in the meantime.

**RHAM HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL**

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### 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.

### Congregational Church News & Notes

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

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

**March 22** is a Bluegrass Sunday, with hand-clapping hymns and special music performed by Joyful Blue. The service will be led by Seaver. 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 certified instructor Barbara LaBlanc, is held Fridays at 9:45 a.m. upstairs in the Thienes Lounge. The community is welcome. The weekly drop-in fee is \$25.

**Second Blessings Thrift Shop** 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](http://bit.ly/MCCebay).

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

### 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@com-cast.net](mailto:don1bu@com-cast.net).

### 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](http://marlborougharts.org). Click on the menu link on the upper right-hand corner of the home page and then click on Classes and then Current Offerings.

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

### 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.

### 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](mailto:shopgirl53@sbcglobal.net). Registration is on [GriefShare.org](http://GriefShare.org). Click "Find a Group" and look for Fellowship Community Church. You may register there on [Griefshare.org](http://Griefshare.org) to see the schedule for the sessions and other information pertaining to Grief Share.

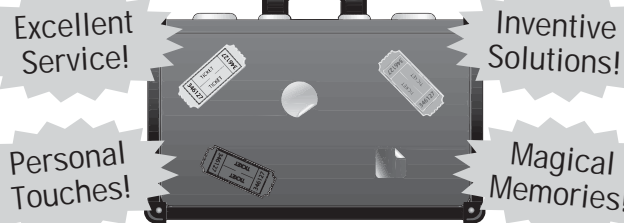
### Student Show at Arts Center

The Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., will host the annual Student Art Show Saturday and Sunday, March 21 and 22, from 1-4 p.m. 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.

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### 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, April 2nd, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Portland Public Library, 20 Freestone Avenue, to consider the following: PZC Application #25-15; 259 Main Street. Request for a Special Permit for a Facility of the Town of Portland for a Post Secondary Transition Program. Application of the Town of Portland and property of J & M Main Street Properties LLC. Map 29, Lot 258. Zone B-3/TCVD. Dated at Portland, CT this 17th day of March 2026 Robert Ellsworth, Chairman Planning & Zoning Commission

2TB 3/20, 3/27

### TOWN OF COLCHESTER LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the Town of Colchester Ratepayers that quarterly water and/or sewer usage bills are due and payable on April 1, 2026. Payment not made in full on or before May 1, 2026, will be subject to interest of 1.5% per month from the due date. Mail postmarked (US Postal Service postmark only) on or before May 1, 2026, will be considered paid on time. **Payments dropped in the town hall's drop box after 4:30 p.m. on Friday, May 1, 2026, will be considered as having been made on the following business day and will be deemed as paid late.** Failure to receive a bill does not invalidate the bill nor interest. Please contact the Tax Collector's Office if you have not received your bill. Water & Sewer Payments should be made payable to the Water & Sewer Commission. Please write your account number on the check. Payments can be made online through the town's website <https://www.colchesterct.gov/> - fees apply. OR: come into the Tax Office, use the Town's Night Drop, and/or mail payments to: Tax Office, 127 Norwich Ave, Colchester, CT 06415. If a receipt is desired, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope. Office hours are Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm, and on Thursdays until 7 pm. Questions concerning payments should be directed to the Tax Office, (860) 537-7210. Michele Wyatt, CCMO CCMO Town of Colchester Tax Collector

3T 3/20, 4/10, 4/24

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

### 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. Admission 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](http://www.marlbrougharts.org), email [info@marlbrougharts.org](mailto:info@marlbrougharts.org) or call us at 860-467-6353.

### 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](http://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@marlbrougharts.org](mailto:info@marlbrougharts.org).

### Setback Tournament

There will be an American Legion Setback Tournament, Friday March 20, at the American Legion Post 197, 128 East Hampton Rd. Registration is at 6 p.m., and the games start at 6:30 p.m. 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.

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### 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.

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.

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

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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### 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: 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.

**Chair Yoga:** Next session runs Tuesdays, March 31-April 21. Fee: \$30/residents, \$35/non-residents.

**FABBS Exercise:** Flexibility, Agility, Better Balance and Strength workout class. Movement and exercises are drawn from body building, yoga, ballet and more. April session runs Mondays, April 6-27, 10:45-11:45 a.m. Fee is \$40/residents, \$48/non-residents. RSVP by April 2.

**Line Dancing Lessons:** All levels welcomed, age 55 and up. Next session is Thursdays, April 9-30, 5-7 p.m. Fee: \$50/resident, \$60/non-resident. RSVP by April 2. May, June and July sessions will follow.

**The Encore Club: Wednesday, April 8.** Join Bill Naughton and new musical guest for light refreshments as he sings and shares fun facts only a radio host would know.

**This or That; Dementia Talk: Friday, April 17, 1-2 p.m.** With relatable stories, light humor, and practical guidance, you will learn about what is and isn't dementia.

**Scam Prevention:** Monday, April 27, noon-1 p.m. A financial advisor from Edward Jones will speak on how to prevent yourself from being scammed and protect your money.

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

**Transportation:** Rides to medical appointments, employment, essential services, the Senior Center and recreation activities are available to seniors and people with disabilities. Transportation is available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Rides must be reserved two business days in advance. Call 860-295-6209 for more information. Visit www.marlboroughct.gov for the complete transportation policy. Transportation services are only available Monday and Tuesdays, until further notice.

**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. Deadline to apply: May 15.

**Meals on Wheels:** Provides meals and daily visits for people 60 years of age and over, and their spouses or caregivers. Apply directly with CRT by calling 860-560-5848, or call the senior center for a referral.

**Energy Assistance and Eversource Discounts:** Income-based. Contact the center for an appointment. For energy assistance, the application deadline is May 29.





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### St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

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



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**Notice of Democratic Caucus**

To enrolled members of the Democratic Party of the Town of East Hampton, CT. Pursuant to the Rules of the Democratic Party and State election laws, you are hereby notified that a caucus will be held on March 26, 2026, at the Joseph N. Goff House Museum, 2 Barton Hill Road, East Hampton, CT at 7PM for the purpose of endorsing candidates for state, congressional, state representative, state senator and judge of probate conventions for the East Hampton Democratic Town Committee and to transact other business as may be proper to come before said caucus. Kevin Reich, Chair 1TB 3/20

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 8 IN-PERSON / VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING ANDOVER, HEBRON, MARLBOROUGH MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2026 - 6:30 PM RHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER**

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/lyxi-tibz-foy>  
Or dial: (US) +1 337-435-0258 PIN: 245 427 132#  
More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/lyxi-tibz-foy?pin=8056978728695>

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE HELD BOTH VIRTUALLY AND IN-PERSON (RHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER) ON MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2026, AT 6:30 P.M. TO DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING: 1. "TO PRESENT AND DISCUSS THE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 8 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2026-2027." 2. "TO PRESENT AND DISCUSS THE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 8 PROPOSED CAPITAL BUDGET FOR 2026-2027." DATED AT HEBRON, CONNECTICUT, March 17, 2026**  
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 8  
HEATHER SUMMERER, CHAIRPERSON  
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 8 BOARD OF EDUCATION 1TB 3/20

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING/ PUBLIC HEARING CHATHAM HEALTH DISTRICT**

Towns of Colchester, East Haddam, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough and Portland  
The Chatham Health District Board of Health will hold a Special Meeting/Public Hearing on March 31, 2026 at 2 p.m. via Zoom, Meeting ID: 876 0349 2358 Passcode: 437237. The purpose of this Special Meeting is for the consideration of adopting the Proposed FY2027 Chatham Health District Fees Schedule. At this hearing, interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications will be received. The Proposed FY2027 Chatham Health District Fee Schedule is available for public review at <http://www.chathamhealth.org> and in any of the District Offices.  
Russell Melmed  
Director of Health 1TB 3/20

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## New Life for Memory Care Courtyard at Marlborough Health & Rehab

Marlborough Health & Rehabilitation Center, a 120-bed skilled nursing facility, recently completed a major renovation of its secured memory-care courtyard – an outdoor space dedicated to residents living with Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia.

The facility includes short-term rehabilitation and long-term care units on the west side of the building, with a 62-bed secured memory-care neighborhood located on the east side. While the courtyard had long served residents, uneven surfaces and an outdated design raised safety concerns and limited its full potential.

“This all started with the staff’s warm welcome of a volunteer, who is a friend of ours,” said Pamela Atwood of Atwood Dementia Group. On a spring day, when residents could have been outside, Atwood began to envision how repairs and redesign might enhance the lives of residents, families and staff, getting to engage with nature in a safe and beautiful space. She called on her friend, Debra Javit of Javy Enterprises. Having been so impressed with the staff’s care of residents during volunteering, Javit started the “Project of Love.” Together, along with nurse Tara Tyrseck, Memory Care Director, and the families of residents, Javit raised over \$30,000 for Project of Love.

“This courtyard is more than just an outdoor area – it’s an extension of the residents’ daily lives,” said Atwood, who was the memory care consultant for Marlborough Health & Rehab’s new memory care unit. “Thoughtful design, safety, and sensory experiences are essential for individuals living with dementia, and this project truly reflects that understanding.”

The renovation was completed by Creative Exteriors, led by Tim Tomko, whose team repurposed and leveled the existing pavers to create a safer walking surface. Tomko collaborated with Atwood who introduced a circular pathway designed to support dementia-friendly movement. The courtyard also features a secure water fountain that adds calming sights and sounds to the space. Plans are underway for spring plantings, including a sensory garden and family-shared plantings to encourage connection and engagement.

The facility plans to host an official ribbon-cutting celebration in the spring, once landscaping and furnishings are complete, to formally recognize the many individuals, families, and organizations that helped make the project possible. If you would like to support the next phase of the project, visit [gofund.me/65fbc2206](http://gofund.me/65fbc2206).

## Parks and Rec. Programs

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

**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.

## Cover Story • Cover Story • Cover Story • Cover Story • Cover Story • Cover

★ **Hebron’s Maple Festival, cont. from page 1**  
charge. You can bounce in the bounce house free of charge. You can throw a skillet,” she laughed.

Visitors can expect a packed schedule of entertainment, demonstrations and hands-on experiences spread across the town center and nearby farms. One of the highlights of the weekend is the chance to visit local sugar houses and watch maple syrup being made. Three locations will participate this year: Wenzel Sugar House, Woodyacres Sugar House and Wilkinson Farm.

Each location offers its own unique experience. At Wenzel, visitors can watch maple sap being boiled into syrup while enjoying sweet treats. Habicht said guests may also meet a special farm animal during their visit. “They will have ... Maple Leaf Farm’s employee of the month, which is a super sweet little baby calf,” she said with a laugh. “Their faces are just so freaking cute.”

Meanwhile, Woodyacres will feature a special demonstration from the UConn Woodsmen Team. The group will show off lumberjack-style skills such as chopping and log handling. “I know, who knew UConn had a timber team?” Habicht joked. “It’s amazing.”

At Wilkinson Farm, visitors can take a deeper dive into the maple-making process. The farm will offer demonstrations on how to tap trees and produce maple syrup, and guests will even have the chance to purchase equipment to try sugaring at home.

In addition to the sugar houses, the festival offers a wide range of family-friendly activities. One crowd favorite is the Hebron Tractor Parade, which will roll through town at 2 p.m. on Sunday. Last year’s parade featured more than 100 tractors, making it one of the largest in Connecticut.

“There’s just something about tractors and farms that people love,” Habicht shared.

Other returning events include axe throwing,

skillet tossing, chainsaw carving and tours of a working dairy farm. Visitors can also stop by the “Hebron’s Own Expo,” held in the community room at Douglas Library, where local artists will sell handmade goods such as block prints, wire wrapped jewelry and upcycled denim.

This year also brings several new attractions. One of the most exciting additions is ice sculptor Joe Alemdia, who will transform a large block of ice into a detailed sculpture on Saturday at 10:30 a.m. on the firehouse front lawn. The festival will also feature live music and plenty of maple-themed treats throughout town.

For animal lovers, another popular stop is the local donkey museum, where visitors can meet miniature donkeys and even give them a gentle hug.

“If you think the little baby cow is cute, wait until you see the little miniature Eeyores,” Habicht said. “You actually get to snuggle with them!”

And who doesn’t love snuggles? Despite the size of the event today, Habicht said the festival’s purpose remains simple – to bring people together.

“It really, truly, is just a community event,” she said. “Everybody’s got their hand in the pot.”

That shared effort is part of what keeps the tradition alive year after year. Volunteers, farmers, local organizations and residents all play a role in making the weekend possible.

For visitors attending for the first time, Habicht has one simple recommendation: explore everything. “So many fun things,” she said. “A ton is jammed into those two days.”

Attendees better lace up their walking shoes. With maple syrup boiling, tractors rumbling through the town and families gathering to celebrate the season, the Hebron Maple Festival continues to offer something sweet for residents and visitors alike.

As Habicht put it, the festival’s magic lies in the people who make it happen. “It’s an amazing phenomenon,” she said. “But the festival itself is pretty darn special.”

For more on the Maple Fest, including a booklet containing a list of events and a map, visit [www.thetowncenterproject.org/maple-fest](http://www.thetowncenterproject.org/maple-fest).

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Recent updates include fresh interior paint, freshly stained deck, propane fireplace insert, newer central air, garage doors, and boiler. Additional highlights include main-level laundry, built-ins, and a two-car attached garage.

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### Senior Center News & Notes

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

**Monday, March 23:** 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign, Senior Spotlight; 11 a.m.-noon, Fitness Orientation by appointment; 12:30 p.m., Mah Jongg, Bridge, Set Back.

**Tuesday, March 24:** 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 4-8 p.m., Wellness Nights.

**Wednesday, March 25:** 9 a.m., Making Memories, Walking Group, Waffle Day Breakfast; 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Reflexology; 10 a.m., Adult Color-

ing, Hand and Foot Card Game, Sit & Be Fit Video; 1 p.m., Sew-cial Time; 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming.

**Thursday, March 26:** 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, Handsewn Mini Quilts; 4-8 p.m., Wellness Nights.

**Friday, March 27:** 9 a.m., Social Service Hours, Open Art Studio; 10:30 a.m., Choral Group; 11 a.m., Yoga, Lunch Bunch; 1:15 p.m., Bingo.

**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.

### 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](http://tinyurl.com/CougarsComedy).

### Memorial Day Parade Coming

On Sunday, May 24, Colchester will hold its annual Memorial Day Parade. The parade is a community effort and the local groups are encouraged to participate to make this event a success.

Each contingent willing to march or prepare a float will be able to obtain an application form online, from the Colchester first selectman's office or at Town Hall after March 31; email [aedwards@colchesterct.gov](mailto:aedwards@colchesterct.gov).

The parade committee expects to have several military units represented, including the Army National Guard 1109th TASM-G, U.S. Navy,

U.S. Marine Reserve, U.S. Coast Guard, and the Air Force Reserve.

The theme of this year's parade will be "Colchester Honors 250 Years of Heroes." There will also be a grand marshal and guest speaker who will soon be nominated. Residents of Colchester can offer suggestions for these positions to the parade committee.

The Colchester Parade Committee will again award prizes for the best volunteer marching unit, best float meeting this year's parade theme, and most creative float.

### Colchester Federated Church News

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

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

**Holy Week Schedule:** March 29, Palm Sunday Processional, 9 a.m.; April 2: Maundy Thursday Tenebrae, 7 p.m., featuring The Last Supper - remember the last night Jesus spent with his disciples; April 3: Good Friday Stations of the Cross Service, noon - walk throughout the sanctuary from station to station and contemplate the seven last words Jesus spoke from the cross; April 5, Easter Sunday: Sunrise Ser-

vice at Lake Hayward at 6:15 a.m., and a Worship Service with Communion at 9 a.m.

**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.

### 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.

**A MAN OF MY WORD.**

*- Jim Harrington,*  
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### ROYALTY

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE PAGE 39

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# Fornarelli's Family Recipe for Success

By Toriana Williams

In Colchester, a father and son duo are sharing their love of food with the community through their restaurant, Fornarelli's. For co-owners John Fornarelli and his son Vito, the restaurant is more than a business. It tells of a family's story built on tradition, hard work and a passion for cooking that began long before the doors opened.

John's love of food started in Italy. Born in Bari, he learned to cook from his mother while growing up. Those early lessons shaped the way he still thinks about food today. "The whole thing with me is I have inspiration from my mother," John shared. "She's the one who taught me pretty much all about the food."

His mother passed down more than recipes. She passed down a passion for cooking and a belief that food should be simple, fresh and made with care. John, who has spent most of his life involved with food, said he has been around restaurants for years.

"I've been in it all my life," he said. Now approaching his late 60s, John still puts that passion into every part of the restaurant. One of his daily jobs is picking out ingredients himself. He personally selects seafood, meats and other items to make sure customers get the best quality possible.

"I make it my job to go out and pick everything," he said. "I go out and get our fish ... all of it."

John's son, Vito, grew up around that same love for food. While his father learned cooking in Italy, Vito learned the restaurant business by working in it as a teenager. "I started dishwashing ... when I was 16, 17," Vito shared.

Those early jobs helped him learn how restaurants operate from the ground up. Today, he is 35 years old and has been in the industry for nearly two decades. While John focuses heavily on ingredients and food quality, Vito handles the day-to-day operations of the restaurant. Together, the two say their roles balance each other.

However, the family's restaurant journey did not begin in Colchester. In 2013, the two opened a restaurant in New Haven. This first venture helped the pair learn the challenges of running their own business. But the road was not always easy. Rising rents eventually forced them to close the New Haven restaurant in 2018.

After leaving New Haven, they opened another restaurant in Hartford. Unfortunately, the

timing could not have been worse. Soon after opening, the coronavirus pandemic shut down businesses across the country. "We were open two months and then COVID came," said John.

Despite the difficulties, the father and son continued working toward a longtime goal: opening a restaurant closer to home in Colchester. Both had lived in the area for many years and wanted to bring their style of Italian cooking to the community. "We wanted to bring our food, our family style food that was what I've been eating all my life here," John said.

Construction delays caused by the pandemic slowed their plans, but eventually the restaurant opened in April 2022. Since then, the restaurant has grown into a popular local spot.

The goal of Fornarelli's is simple: serve high-quality food with a strong sense of family. The restaurant's philosophy focuses on cooking meals from scratch and using fresh ingredients whenever possible.

"Our culture here is what we call high-quality food with family values," said John.

Many dishes are made only after customers order them, and the restaurant avoids heavy sauces and extra ingredients that can hide natural flavors. "We want you to taste the flavor of the food," John explained.

The eatery's menu includes many Italian favorites, but they also add their own touches. "Our chicken parm ... is phenomenal," John said with a grin. Fresh seafood is another highlight. Customers often order fish dishes and scallops, which John personally sources. "We go through quite a bit of fish here," he laughed.

Beyond the food, Fornarelli's also offers a full experience for guests. The restaurant serves craft cocktails made with fresh juice instead of bottled mixes. Vito takes pride in the drink menu and the creativity behind it. "Everything we use is fresh," he said.

Downstairs, the restaurant has a lounge area called the Grotto. The space hosts live music, comedy shows and other events that bring people together. "We bring a lot of local bands in," Vito shared.

The restaurant also offers private events like baby showers, rehearsal dinners, holiday parties, and even celebrations of life. These gatherings have helped Fornarelli's become part of the community as the community becomes part of the restaurant.

Both owners said they value the connection with their customers. John often walks through



John Fornarelli, right, and his son Vito are co-owners of the popular Fornarelli's restaurant in Colchester. They're pictured in front of a portrait of John's parents in Italy. "[My grandfather] is holding a pigeon and a cigarette," Vito laughed. "Why a pigeon?" the *Rivereast* asked – the answer: unknown.

the dining room greeting guests and checking on their meals. "I always say hello," he said.

Their goal is to make every visitor feel comfortable. "You come in as a guest and you leave as family," John added.

The restaurant also supports local programs and charities. The owners donate to events and help raise money for local schools, including Bacon Academy which Vito attended as a child.

As the restaurant grows, father and son continue to look for new ideas. They plan to expand their lunch offerings and host additional special events throughout the year. They are also preparing to add something exciting to the menu: cheese wheel pasta. The dish will feature pasta

tossed inside a large wheel of cheese, allowing it to melt and coat the noodles with rich flavor, offering a beautiful and delicious view into Italian cooking.

Through all of their plans, the heart of the restaurant remains the same. For John and Vito alike, Fornarelli's is about sharing the food they grew up with and the values they learned from family.

After decades in the food business and several restaurant openings, their mission is still simple: "Continue to offer the best quality of food," John stated. In Colchester, that dedication is helping the two turn family tradition into a lasting local favorite.

## Christian Life Chapel News

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

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

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

**Women's Bible Study:** Tuesdays, 10-11:30 a.m., studying the book of Revelation.

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

## Parks & Rec News & Notes

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

**Puzzlepalooza:** Friday, 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.

**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

**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.

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 [parksandrec@colchesterct.gov](mailto:parksandrec@colchesterct.gov) with any questions or to reserve an audition time.

## Military Veteran Coffee House

The next Colchester Military Veteran Coffee House will be held at Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave., on Saturday, March 21, from 10 a.m.-noon.

All military veterans, male and female, are welcome. Contact Mary Gura with questions or suggestions for speakers at 860-537-2921.

## 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](http://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.

## 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](mailto: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.

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

**Majestic Cities of Central & Eastern Europe:** Oct. 4 -17, departure time TBD. Enjoy multi-night stays, immersive local tours, authentic food, culture in Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, and Krakow. This 14-day, 13-night trip includes airfare, hotels, and meals (12 breakfasts, one lunch, and six Dinners). Contact senior center staff for availability and pricing.

**Ocean City, Maryland:** Oct. 13 -16, departure time TBD. Spend three nights directly on the beach. Explore Assateague Island, visit the historic town of Berlin and board the Assateague Tour Cruise and look for dolphins, horses, and more. Also, explore Fenwick Island Lighthouse, visit the Discover Sea Museum and enjoy an afternoon on the boardwalk. Cost is \$949/person (double or triple occupancy).

## Former Resident Killed in Maine

By Mike Thompson

A former Colchester resident was murdered earlier this month in Maine, according to Maine State Police, and her boyfriend has been charged in the killing.

Makayla Rose DeSantis, 23, of Colchester, was fatally shot Sunday, March 8. Police report they received a 911 call reporting the shooting. First responders transported DeSantis to MaineHealth Franklin Hospital in Farmington prior to her eventual transport to Maine Medical Center in Portland, where she succumbed to her injuries, police said.

Investigators learned that DeSantis sustained her injuries at a residence on Left Bank in Carrabassett Valley, police said.

The next day, March 9, Austin Doucette, 24, of Carrabassett Valley was arrested and charged with DeSantis' murder. According to the *Hartford Courant*, Maine State Police confirmed Doucette and DeSantis were in a relationship. WMTW, an ABC affiliate in Maine, reported the two were co-workers at the Sugarloaf ski resort in Maine.

DeSantis' sister, Max DeSantis, has launched a GoFundMe page to pay for funeral expenses.

"Makayla was the most heartfelt, well-minded woman I've ever been around," Max DeSantis writes, adding, "She was the best big sister and the greatest role model I could've



Makayla DeSantis  
Photo via GoFundMe

asked for."

As of press time Wednesday, the fundraiser had generated more than \$21,000 in donations. It can be found at [www.gofundme.com/f/celebrating-makayla-roses-life-and-legacy](http://www.gofundme.com/f/celebrating-makayla-roses-life-and-legacy).

DeSantis' obituary appears in this week's *Rivereast*, on page 32.

### Strategic Plan Survey

Residents are asked to complete a community assessment survey the town Recreation Commission has issued.

In 2023, the commission created a Strategic Plan, and part of the plan states that a community assessment survey will be conducted every three years. This information will be used to update the goals and objectives as well as make

improvements to programs and events.

The survey is open to Colchester residents aged 18 and older, through March 31. The survey can be accessed at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/Colchester2026](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Colchester2026).

If you have any questions or need assistance, contact Parks and Recreation at [parksandrec@colchesterct.gov](mailto:parksandrec@colchesterct.gov) or 860-537.7297.

### 'Mozart to Modern' Concert

Colchester Choir and Orchestra will present its March concert, "Mozart to Modern," this 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, including an original orchestral piece as well as a Mozart Horn Concerto with a

solo performed by Dana Lord.

Admission is free, but donations are appreciated and help offset costs of purchasing new music each season.

For more information visit [colchesterct.gov/colchester-choir-orchestra](http://colchesterct.gov/colchester-choir-orchestra) or contact [parksandrec@colchesterct.gov](mailto:parksandrec@colchesterct.gov).

### 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](mailto:ColchesterLionsComedy@gmail.com), or calling 860-337-2924.

### 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](mailto:tagnobark@gmail.com).

### 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.

### 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.

### 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](http://tinyurl.com/bunny-bfast). For more information, visit [Colchesterct.gov/yss](http://Colchesterct.gov/yss).

### 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](mailto:rouillette01@snet.net) for more information.

### 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 activi-

ties. 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](http://colchesterct.gov/yss).

### 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](http://www.colchesterct.gov/colchester-garden-club) or contact [colchestergardenclub@yahoo.com](mailto:colchestergardenclub@yahoo.com).

### 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.

### 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](mailto:Colchestergardenclub@yahoo.com) for more information.

Colchester Garden Club is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.



Local author Carrie O'Neill – pictured here with horse Paddington – recently shared her journey with residents at The Residence at Glastonbury. Photo by Nikki Rivard.

### Local Author Reconnects Residents with Wonder and Joy

Residents at The Residence at Glastonbury, a senior living facility, were recently treated to a fairytale-like true story by an award-winning Colchester author and encouraged to share the moments in their own lives that inspired wonder and joy.

Carrie O'Neill, author of *Animals DO Talk: What Animals Tell Me They Want You to Know*, shared her journey from lawyer and healthcare industry executive to equine retreat facilitator and animal communicator and offered heartwarming advice from animals for how to live more joyful lives.

O'Neill encouraged participants to recall moments when they inexplicably felt powerfully drawn to something that lit a spark within them. As residents told their stories, she encouraged them to keep noticing and tending those sparks rather than shutting them down as illogical or unimportant. She shared an important lesson she learned from her small herd of horses – Vitamin J (Joy) is an essential ingredient for life. Dogs and cats agree; they often do things to shift their peoples' energy from stress to joy.

O'Neill said tending the spark of animal communication changed her life. She said she always had a special connection with animals but was surprised to begin having entire conversations with them. The horses began talking 10 years ago, O'Neill said, after she created her retreat center Possibilities Farm LLC, where people come to spend time with and learn from

horses, not ride them.

O'Neill said farm clients noticed the relationship she had with her horses and started asking for help with their animals. She said she then discovered that just by looking at a recent picture of an animal she could connect and converse with them too. Word spread, and now she is an animal communicator serving clients around the country.

O'Neill said conversations with hundreds of dogs, cats, horses, other species, and the humans who love them inspired her to write *Animals DO Talk*, which shares wisdom from the animals on the entire lifespan from welcoming an animal into the family to end of life decision-making. Her book has been selected as Best Book Club Pick by the Firebird Book Awards and has been named as a finalist by the Dog Writers' Association of America (Books on the Human/Animal Bond), the American Writing Awards (Non-Fiction and Animals/Pets), and the international Wishing Shelf Book Awards (Adult Non-Fiction).

O'Neill lives and works at Possibilities Farm in Colchester. To learn more about the services she offers or to schedule an animal communication session, author talk, or event please visit her websites at [www.talktoyouranimal.com](http://www.talktoyouranimal.com) or [www.possibilitiesfarm.com](http://www.possibilitiesfarm.com), or contact her directly at [carrie@talktoyouranimal.com](mailto:carrie@talktoyouranimal.com) or 860-609-1941.



Hitting the Beach... Marcus, Adrienne and Mir Clements brought the Rivereast to a black sand beach in Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain. The three actually became stranded for two days in Norway on our return trip due to their flight being canceled because of the blizzard in Connecticut.

### Where in the World is the Rivereast?

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



Seeing Nawlins... Maureen Curtis of East Hampton sent in this photo of a recent trip to New Orleans with her high school friends. Thanks for bringing along the Rivereast!



Red Rocks and the Rivereast... Ken and Renee Kudrak and Bill and Michelle Millington are enjoying the red rocks at Chicken Point in Sedona, Ariz. - with the Rivereast on board, of course!



Happiest Place on Earth... John and Alice Rowley of Marlborough, along with their children, Jessica Trusz of Colchester and Neil Rowley of Elgin, Ill., and two of their grandchildren, recently enjoyed several fun-filled days at Walt Disney World in Florida.

# Where in the World?

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

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

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

\$25 GIFT CARD

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## Obituaries

## Portland

## Dolores Noonan

Dolores Noonan (née Duval), 91, of Portland, died Thursday, March 12 – a woman of sharp wit and deep determination who never met a crossword she couldn't solve.

Born in Bristol in 1934 to Joseph and Juliette (Laurendeau) Duval, Dolores grew up in a Franco-American household where French was the first language spoken. She attended a French school taught by nuns before making the transition to an English-language high school – a shock at first, she would say, but one she quickly came to appreciate.

She married William Noonan and together they settled in Wethersfield, where they raised their two daughters, Evelyn and Mary. Dolores began her career as a secretary in the legal department at Connecticut General Life Insurance, stepped away to raise her family, and later joined Trinity College in Hartford – first as secretary to the English department, and eventually as Executive Assistant to the Vice President. In retirement, she and Bill enjoyed extended road trip vacations throughout the United States and Canada, including an obligatory stop in Noonan, N.D. They later settled in Portland. Bill passed away in 2013.

Dolores had a lifelong love of words that showed up early. At 27, she wrote a wonderful essay about a white right-hand-drive Jaguar she had briefly owned – describing herself as a formerly shy girl who “blended nicely with the woodwork” until the car changed all that, including, she noted, accepting drag race challenges at red lights.

That love of language never left her. She completed the daily crossword in the *Hartford Courant* without fail and when that grew too easy, she took up diagram-less crosswords, solving them without the grid. Every day when her daughters came home from school, there would be a note waiting – sometimes just a message, sometimes a cryptogram tucked inside. She quit smoking at 90 after nearly eight decades, never looked back, and always made sure dessert (carrot cake if possible!) came first.

She spent her final years first at Greystone Retirement Home and then at Portland Care and Rehab, where her dry humor and easy demeanor were much appreciated by staff and residents alike, and where she remained an avid Words with Friends player until the end. The staff at Portland Care looked after her with great kindness and skill, and the family is deeply grateful.

She was predeceased by her husband William, her parents, and her three brothers, Al, Bob, and Buck. She is survived by her daughters Evelyn and Mary.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. The Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, is in charge of arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes donations to Read to Grow ([readtogrow.org](http://readtogrow.org)), a Connecticut nonprofit dedicated to bringing books and literacy to children from birth. For a woman who loved words as deeply as Dolores did, helping a child discover that same love feels like a fitting tribute.



## Colchester

## Makayla Rose DeSantis

Makayla Rose DeSantis, of Colchester, passed away Sunday, March 8. She was born in Middletown on May 13, 2002, to Michael and Kim DeSantis. After graduating from Lyman Memorial High School, she moved to Maine and worked at 45 North at Sugarloaf, a ski resort in Maine.

Makayla truly enjoyed going to work each day at Sugarloaf, where she was surrounded by people who supported and cared for her. Her strong work ethic and quiet determination did not go unnoticed; through dedication and perseverance, she worked her way into a management role. Outside of work, Makayla found joy in simple, meaningful things – baking, culinary creations and ideas with friends and family and expressing her creativity through floral design, painting and crafts. She was a deeply caring person who naturally put others before herself. If someone needed help, Makayla never hesitated to set aside whatever she was doing and be there for them, a reflection of the kindness and generosity that defined her life.

Makayla will be deeply missed but always remembered with love by her parents, Michael and Kim DeSantis; her sister, Max Desantis and her companion Skyla; her grandfather Douglas Harmon; her uncle and his spouse Robert Harmon (Sarah); her cousin, Jenaia Harmon; and numerous extended family members and friends.

She was predeceased by her grandmothers, Francies Harmon and Betteann Judd.

A visitation and celebration of Makayla's life will take place Saturday, April 11, beginning at 10 a.m. A time to share memories will begin at noon, and a burial will follow at Linwood Cemetery.

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



## Amston

## Sean Matthew McCracken

Sean Matthew McCracken of Amston, fondly known as “Mac,” passed away Sunday, March 8. He was 70 years old.

Sean was born July 9, 1955, to the late Robert and Ruth (Stern) McCracken in Detroit, Mich. After graduating from Redford Union High School, he joined the U.S. Army. Sean served stateside and overseas in Germany before retiring as a proud military veteran. After his military service, Sean worked for the United States Postal Service for many years.

In 1981, Sean met the love of his life, Sarah, and married her. Together they raised three children – a son and daughter, and later an adopted son. In his spare time, Mac enjoyed riding his Harley, detailing cars, following Detroit sports teams, and cooking. Having never stopped cooking for an Army, Mac was known to share his culinary creations with family and friends. More than anything, he enjoyed spending time with his wife, Sarah, and spoiling his grandchildren.

He will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by his wife, Sarah, of Amston; his sons, Sean McCracken II and his wife, Nicole, of Willimantic, and Horace Hatten-McCracken of Plattsburgh, N.Y.; his daughter, Candice Deguzis and her husband, Jason, of Amston; his grandchildren, Caroline and Ryan Deguzis; his brother, Michael McCracken of Farmington Hills, Mich.; and numerous extended family members and friends.

A visitation and celebration of life was held at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home on Thursday, March 19. Burial followed at St. Peter's Cemetery in Hebron.

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



than 35 years, where he was respected for his technical expertise and commitment to excellence. His love of fixing things led to his hobby of restoring antique cars, reflecting both his curiosity and his appreciation for craftsmanship. He and the family spent many weekends taking drives in the Ford Model As he restored. He also enjoyed collecting antique clocks. Bart remained curious throughout his life and loved learning new things; he was an avid reader and also enjoyed curating vegetable gardens.

Bart's community and faith was important to him. He participated in community service through Civitan International and was a member of the American Society for Metals. He was a longtime and devoted member of St. Paul's Church in Huntington and St. James Episcopal Church in Glastonbury.

A funeral service will be held at St. James Episcopal Church in Glastonbury on, Friday, March 20, at 1 p.m. Burial will be in the Swedish Cemetery, Portland.

In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes donations to St. Jude ([www.stjude.org](http://www.stjude.org)).

For online condolences, please visit [www.mulryanfh.com](http://www.mulryanfh.com).

## Portland

## Kenneth M. Poulin

Kenneth M. Poulin, 69, originally of Portland, later a resident of East Hampton, passed away Tuesday, March 10, after a long chronic illness. He was born July 2, 1956, in Warwick, R.I., to Roland Poulin Sr. and Dorothy Poulin (Bisson).

Kenny worked for many years at Daniels Oil in Portland, where he was known as a dedicated and hardworking employee. He loved spending time outdoors, especially pheasant hunting with his dogs, first Roscoe and later Jasper. Whenever he had the chance, Kenny could also be found fishing. He enjoyed watching NASCAR with his family and was a lifelong and loyal Dallas Cowboys fan. In his younger years, Kenny loved playing sports and spent many hours playing basketball with his brothers and friends. He also spent many years playing softball with the Wizards and later with the Garbage Builders.

Kenny was known for his strong personality and stubborn streak, but those who knew him best also know his loyalty, humor, and deep love for his family and friends.

Kenny was one of seven children and valued the time spent with his large family.

He was predeceased by his parents, Roland Poulin Sr. and Dorothy Bisson Poulin; his father-in-law and mother-in-law, Paul and Lillian Berry; his brother, Steven “Stevie” Poulin; his sister-in-law, Christine Poulin; and his nephew, Richard “Richie” Holmgren Jr.

He is survived by his wife, Lois Poulin (Berry). He also leaves behind his siblings: Roland Poulin Jr.; Sandra Tuttle (Poulin) and her husband Daniel Tuttle; Robert Poulin and Jana Fisher; Gerald “Jerry” Poulin and Jessica Poulin; and Michael Poulin and his wife Heather Poulin. He is also survived by his sister-in-law, Cindy Berry Morgan and her husband David Morgan, and his brother-in-law, Glenn Berry and his wife Vivian Berry. Kenny also leaves many cousins, nieces, nephews, and great-nieces and great-nephews who will cherish his memory.

Kenny will be remembered for his love of family, the outdoors, sports, and the many memories shared with those who knew him.

There will be no services. The family asks that Kenny be remembered in your own special way.



## Hebron

## Anne Marie Piggott

Anne Marie Castle Piggott, 75, died Tuesday, Jan. 20, after a long battle with cancer. She was born Jan. 22, 1950, in Rutland, Vt., and grew up on Spellman Terrace. She was the daughter of Charles and Beverly Castle. She graduated from Christ the King grammar school, Mount St. Joseph high school, and Trinity College in Burlington, Vt.

Annie married Terrence Piggott in 1971. She had two sons, Justin and Daniel. She taught English at Corpus Christi School in Wethersfield, and subsequently for Connecticut Cane and Reed and then for Gerber Scientific Products in Vernon, Connecticut.

Annie was a very creative person who enjoyed basket weaving, stained glass work, painting, quilting and cooking. She won many awards for her apple pies. She was the president of the Hebron Historical Society and participated in the activities of the Red Hat Society.

Survivors include her husband Terry Piggott, her son Daniel and grandchildren Leah and Patrick, and her sisters Barbara Castle Hanson, Ruthmary Castle Gembarowski, and Jean Castle McLaughlin, and her brother Charles Castle, and many nephews and nieces.

Annie was predeceased by her parents, Charles and Beverly Castle, and her son, Justin Michael Piggott.

## Cromwell

## Barton Hamilton Hessler

Barton Hamilton Hessler, 92, passed away peacefully with his beloved family by his side on Monday, March 9.

He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He is survived by his beloved wife of 68 years, Jacqueline Hessler; his three children, Kurt, Keith, and Kim; and their spouses, PeggySue, Paula, and Michael. He was blessed with a long life that included seven grandchildren Jeffrey, Cameron, Tyler, Brendon, Jaelyn, Macenzie, Griffin and two great-grandchildren Penelope and Sawyer.

Bart was born in Philadelphia, Pa., on Jan. 4, 1934, and attended Central High School in Philadelphia. He earned a full scholarship to Drexel University where he graduated with a B.S. degree in metallurgical engineering. Bart and Jacqueline met in Flourtown, Pa., and married in November 1957. Shortly thereafter, they began their family and moved to Connecticut. He was a devoted family man who cherished spending time with those he loved. One of Bart's favorite places for family time was at the beach in Ocean City, N.J. In later years he and Jacqueline enjoyed time at the lake in New Hampshire.

Bart worked at Textron Lycoming for more



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ad COUNCIL



# LEGALS

**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.**  
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Dated at Hebron, Connecticut, this 10th day of March 2026.  
Frank Zitkus, Chair 2TB 3/13, 3/20

**MARLBOROUGH ZONING BOARD  
OF APPEALS COMMISSION  
NOTICE OF ACTION**

The Marlborough ZBA Commission, at its regular meeting on March 11, 2026, took the following action:  
**APPLICATION APPROVED:**  
**APPLICATION #ZBA-01-26** – Christopher Vallera (Applicant/Property Owner) 222 No Main Street – Covered entryway 10ft wide by 6ft in depth, extending 2ft past the front setback  
**MATT WILSON, ZBA COMMISSION CHAIR** 1TB 3/20

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

The Colchester Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on April 1, 2026, beginning at 7:00 PM in the Colchester Town Hall Meeting Room at 127 Norwich Ave, Colchester, CT to hear and consider the following application(s): **PZC2026-005 Town of Colchester Special Permit Application for Lighting for Recreational Facilities in excess of 35 ft per Section 12.10 of the Land Development (Zoning) Regulations at Bacon Academy High School, 611 Norwich Ave (MBL 05-04-06a). Zoning District: Rural Use (RU).**  
At this hearing, interested persons may be heard and written communications received. A copy of these applications is located in the Land Use Department and Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue, and may be inspected during regular business hours (8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday). Application materials are also available on the Colchester Planning & Zoning Commission webpage at <https://www.colchesterct.gov/planning-zoning-commission>.  
Planning & Zoning Commission  
Joseph Mathieu, Chair 2TB 3/20, 3/27

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Gano's Power Equipment at 860-537-3431  
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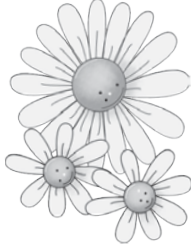
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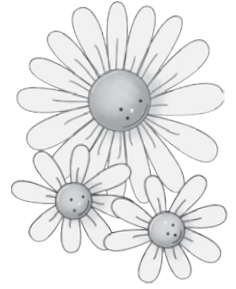
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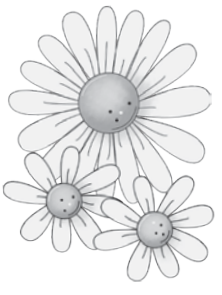
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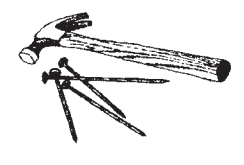
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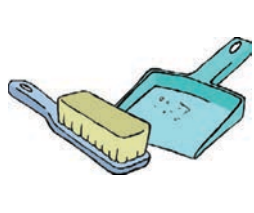
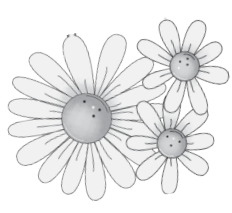
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**TEETER INVERSION TABLE:** FDA register. \$175 or best offer. Gently used. 860-267-0025.

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**TAG SALE**

**ESTATE SALE:** March 21st & 22nd. Rain dates 28th & 29th. 10am-4pm. 164 Old Colchester Road, Amston. More info 860-500-8993.







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