

News Bulletin

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

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A Visit with Maverick... Gilead Hill School staff members recently paid a visit to student Maverick Pankratz, who recently underwent three surgeries in the span of two months. Pictured at Connecticut Children's Medical Center are, from left, paraprofessional Julia Ramirez, Maverick, special education teacher Heather Godi, and paraprofessional Gretchen Lapiere. See story on page 27.

Hebron Sees Sweet Start to Spring

By Toriana Williams

With the snow melted and the sun – sometimes – shining warmly, the town of Hebron put on its annual Hebron Maple Fest last weekend. The two-day event was a celebration that felt equal parts tradition, reunion and experience.

Both days of the festival, the air was thick with the scent of maple syrup and bacon, on a soggy Sunday the hum of tractors rolled through town, and overall there was just the unmistakable energy of a community reemerging after months of cold and quiet.

For many, the festival is more than just an event. It's a two-day seasonal turning point. Residents stepped out from winter's isolation and into a shared space filled with laughter, artisanal craft tents, farm animals and the steady drip of maple sap transforming into syrup.

At the heart of the festival are the people who make it what it is: artists, farmers, students and families, each contributing their own thread to the weekend's tapestry.

Inside Hebron's Own Expo, local artist Marissa Petrozza, owner of MP Mountainworks, carefully explained her craft to curious visitors. Her table was filled with nature-inspired prints and apparel, each piece the result of a meticulous, hands-on process.

"The first step is that I dream of a design," she said. "I usually start off with a pencil sketch or a digital drawing. I then transfer those designs to a sheet of rubber, and then I carve away all the negative space."

Petrozza said she then covers the blocks with an ink-saturated roller, afterward stamping them on paper or fabric.

For Petrozza, who was "born and raised" in Hebron, the festival is as much about connection as it is about art. "It's always great to see so

many familiar faces and have returning customers," she said. "It really means a lot when I have people who are collectors of my work and they live right in town with me too."

A few booths away, Christiane Hellner-O'Brien showcased a completely different kind of creativity – one rooted in sustainably and reinvention. Surrounded by repurposed denim pieces, she described how discarded clothing became something new.

"Denim is one of the biggest things that gets thrown into landfills," she explained. "Recycling, it keeps it out of it. ... If somebody has jeans and they don't know what to do with them ... we turn it into something else." Her table displayed various denim apparel paired with paintings, beads and other artistic additions to give life back to items that would have been otherwise thrown away.

Like many vendors, Hellner-O'Brien saw the festival as a rare opportunity to reconnect. "I love seeing everyone and being together," she said. "Especially after the winter ... it's good to see people."

Beyond the artisan tents, the festival's agricultural roots are on full display at local sugar houses. At Woodyacres, owner David Schaller stood beside the steam evaporator, and explained a process that is deceptively simple yet

See Sweet Start to Spring, page 18

A Night of Doo-Wop Coming to Belltown

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton resident and doo-wop bandleader Jerry Fanfarelli has played in many auditoriums, but on April 25, he and his band, The Jukebox 45 Show Band, will take the stage at East Hampton High School for the first time – and they'll have company at the event, in the form of The Royal Teens, the band behind the 1958 hit "Short Shorts."

Fanfarelli said he first got the idea of performing there after watching a play with his wife at the high school and admiring the venue.

"It might be nice if we play here sometime," he said he told her, "because it's a nice auditorium and, you know, I think people would really enjoy the show."

Coincidentally, others had similar ideas around the same time, with the school district having recently decided to allow outside groups to use the theater, and The Jukebox 45 Band

happened to know someone who knew who to talk to: its own saxophone player and former Board of Education member Michael Buck, who was able to make some introductions.

"This could be a good fundraiser for you guys if we if we get enough people in there and enough interest generated," Fanfarelli said he told East Hampton's superintendent of schools, Timothy Van Tassel.

Eventually, the band settled on a fundraising concert for the town's Project Graduation event, where graduating seniors attend a large, substance-free, all-night party. In order to increase the draw, Fanfarelli turned to his friend Tom Austin, one of the founding members of The Royal Teens. Austin is still performing in the Royal Teens, as its only original member, with a new lineup of musicians rounding out the latest iteration of the band.

"I'm trying to do something nice for the East Hampton seniors," said Fanfarelli, who said he is happy to be offering a concert so close to home, while also supporting a great cause.

For Buck, who is a law enforcement officer in his day job, the concert will be a chance to perform for a local crowd who may not know him as a musician, something he said would be fun for his daughters, ages 11 and 9.

"You know, my 11-year-old may roll her eyes, but I think she's excited," he said. "She comes home from school and says, 'I saw your posters again today!'"

Buck said performing is a welcome change from his day-to-day life. Like Fanfarelli, who is a retired firefighter, Buck says his job often involves a lot of sadness.

"I did two tours in Iraq, six years on active See Doo-Wop Coming to Belltown, page 12

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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.

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

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Rivereast Standouts of the Week

By Josh Howard

Alejandro Chalfant - RHAM High School (Swimming): Chalfant won the Class LL state championship in the 50 Freestyle, finishing with a time of 21.75. Chalfant, a senior from RHAM that swims for the Manchester co-op, went on to compete in the State Open in the same event. The state champ was selected Class LL All-State and was named All-Central Connecticut Conference (CCC), along with receiving outstanding academic achievement during the second school quarter. Following his graduation from RHAM, Chalfant will pursue a degree in aerospace engineering.

Aaron Ciarleglio and Mason Walsh - Portland High School (Basketball): Ciarleglio and Walsh were both selected All-Shoreline Conference (SLC) after leading the way as the Highlanders won seven games this season. Ciarleglio, a senior, made the All-SLC second-team and Walsh, a sophomore, was named All-SLC Honorable Mention.

Mackenzie Shonk - Bacon Academy (Cheer): Shonk was named as an All-Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) first-team All-Star and was selected to the Class S All-State team after the Bobcats competed in the state competition this winter. Shonk, a sophomore, was also selected for an ECC Sportsmanship Award and was a Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) All-American.

Aiden Niderno - East Hampton High School (Basketball): Niderno was selected All-Shoreline Conference (SLC) for the second straight season after powering a Bellringers team that won eight games and made the state tournament this past winter. Niderno, a senior, is also a soccer player and standout track and



RHAM High School senior Alejandro Chalfant won a Class LL state championship, winning the 50 Freestyle.

field athlete for the Bellringers.

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



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From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

We're smack dab in the middle of budget season, folks – and for many of the towns in *Rivereast*-land, it's looking like a particularly ugly one.

Double-digit increases are proposed for multiple towns, and on top of that, Colchester's got a separate mess of its own – a million-dollar shortfall in the health insurance budget that's resulted in salary freezes, a forensic audit....and lots of finger-pointing.

Truth be told, there's a good bit of finger-pointing going on in all the towns right now – and that's been reflected in the letters to the editor pages. I've probably got more letters this week than any week since Election Day. That's a good thing! But they're also definitely starting to get heated.

The usual suspects, from both sides of the

political aisle, have letters in sharing their points of view. Not surprisingly, given how divided basically everyone seems to be these days, angry Democrats are blaming Republicans, angry Republicans are blaming Democrats. Everyone's been above board, there's been no childish name-calling (not that I'd allow that anyway), but people have been fiery. That's why when a reader made an interesting suggestion to me this week, I felt they made a good point.

Regular *Rivereast* readers are used to seeing the occasional note at the end of letters stating that the writer is a member of a particular board or commission. The reader suggested to me this week, why not expand that to include members of the local political town

Editor's Desk continued on page 8

Bulletin Board

I see that our state legislature continues to struggle with questions about how to deal with issues afflicting children ages 0 to about 35 (the latter end being the age when, according to death penalty opponents, a person's brain is finally mature enough to actually conceive a rational thought).

These are tough questions and I admire our legislators for taking time out from secretly earmarking budget money for their personal agendas in order to engage in endless fruitless discussions about potential solutions to things that actually matter to the rest of us.

Indeed, so moved am I by this demonstration of sacrifice, that I have decided to offer my humble assistance.

It seems to me that many of the seemingly insoluble problems involving inappropriate child behavior could be resolved with sensible legislation directed at the real issue here:

Moms.

Seriously.

I'm sure we all agree there is no failure of common sense, intellect or morality that cannot be resolved by yet another law. Goodness knows, we keep electing people who are more than willing to impose all manner of laws willy-nilly – and if moms are part of an ongoing public safety issue, then they darn well need to be regulated, too.

Don't get me wrong. I am not anti-mom. This may surprise some of you, but my mother was a mom and I even occasionally took her out for dinner if I happened to remember her birthday. I believe even the Association of Persecuted Divorced Dads will agree that the great majority of moms manage to muddle through parenthood fairly successfully, but we must also concede that even one preventable failure – no matter how small – is one failure too many.

But what about dads? you ask. Shouldn't dads also be held accountable for a kid's behavior? Let's be honest here. It pains me to admit it, but dads are just about completely useless when it comes to raising children. And if you don't believe me, just ask any mom.

So I hereby urge our legislature to consider new Motherhood Laws designed to forestall possible lapses of judgement by Connecticut moms. To be effective, any restrictions must be applied proactively before tragedies occur. I suggest we begin with some form of Mom Licensing for all women who have, or intend to have, or might possibly accidentally have, a child.

I would argue that this approach is no more intrusive on our liberties than legislative mandates that allow out-of-state developers to ignore local zoning regulations and build pretty much whatever they want, wherever they want, without any regard for the concerns or desires of the people who actually live in the community. Like our small towns, moms should be forced to bow to the wisdom of that arrogant cadre of political hacks who claim to work for the common good, but don't really care what you think.

I realize many well-established legislators – particularly those who have mothers, wives that are mothers, or who are presently under FBI investigation – may be reluctant to tackle this pressing public safety issue head-on. Allow me to appeal to what many of us have come to see as a guiding principle in what passes for “public service” these days:

Greed.

It is my belief that annual mom licensing fees could bring in many millions of dollars for state coffers. This bonanza would allow legislators to permanently take that embarrassing state Kenos game off the table and might possibly even rival their more recent cash cow – legalized sports gambling, which, though it has created its own major public health crisis, sure is profitable. And that's the main thing. After all, there's nothing like cold hard cash when it comes to reshaping the ethics of folks who make a career out of being generous with other people's money.

While proposed Motherhood Laws should clearly be studied in secret by a legislative committee and then submitted for emergency legislative approval in the wee hours of the morning without any of those annoying public hearings, I have a few suggestions that might prove helpful if included in the proposed bill:

*Moms must be required to submit all Christmas and birthday gift ideas (accompanied by the appropriate fee) for review by a new state board to be called the Motherhood Gift Verification Commission. Commission staff would be charged with culling such lists for inappropriate items such as sugary drinks, pornographic playing cards and Republican campaign literature.

*Since we no longer live in an agricultural society where large numbers of children are needed to help out on the farm (today, it's hard enough to get them to mow the damn lawn), Connecticut families should be limited by the Motherhood Law to no more than two and one half kids. There is simply no need in our evolving republic – what with high college tuitions, the proliferation of self-checkout kiosks in grocery stores, and more than enough wailing babies in our restaurants – for a mom to have more than two and a half kids.

*The state Department of Children & Family Services (DCF) clearly needs more funding to deal with the epidemic of child issues plaguing our otherwise fair state. Since these issues would not occur if moms did not insist on having children, I think it is only fair that the state impose a surcharge on Mother's Day cards. Proceeds from this surcharge would go directly to DCF to help the agency deal with the multitude of issues caused by children and the thoughtless, oversexed moms who insist on having them.

I realize this may all sound a bit harsh, but let's face it, tough problems require tough solutions and there's nothing like yet another law or regulation to get the ball rolling. I mean, after all, it's all for the public good. Right?

[Please be sure to tune in for a future column when I will address, “How sending old people out to sea on ice floes can save Social Security and resolve Connecticut's housing crisis.”]

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.



Traveling Soldier... State dignitaries recently visited VFW Auxiliary District 6 at Fowler-Dix-Park Auxiliary 5095 during their 'traveling soldier tour,' to acknowledge members' dedication and stellar support of active military and veterans. Pictured from left are Department President Cheryl Costello-Pelkey, District 6 President Judith Barnes, and Department Chief of Staff Deborah Breault.

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Thanks, Volunteers!

To the Editor:

Three cheers for the volunteers who made the 2026 Hebron Maple Fest happen! The faith that it takes to plan an outdoor festival in March is a little crazy but so commendable. After a tough winter in Connecticut this year, attendees released their cabin fever and the energy in the crowds was palpable and inspiring. Sincere thanks to the leaders, planners, volunteers, sugar houses, food vendors, musicians and recreational groups.

Lynn Leavenworth – Amston

Andover, Hebron and Marlborough Voters

To the Editor:

Please attend any of your town budget workshops. Observing the preparation and complexity of the budget process, will help you make an informed decision on the referendum.

Workshop schedules are listed on each of the town websites.

Thank you,

Susan Custance – Hebron

DPWAC Update

To the Editor:

The DPWAC had a booth at this past week-end's Maple Fest. Our booth had at least one member of the Town Council and one from the DPWAC at all times both days. The general consensus was that there was a lot of positive feedback from residents. Another take away was that many residents did not realize that this has been an ongoing goal since the facilities study done in 2010! That's correct – 16 years! I'd like to thank all of the people that were posted at the booth for their effort. We all seemed to enjoy the discussions that we had with residents.

A request was made by Town Councilor Claudia Riley about putting a visual timeline together for the public's consumption. Sincere thanks to Richard Steiner and Mal Leichter on a forthcoming timeline. As soon as it is available it will be shared. It is certainly eye opening, the many steps, hurdles, thought processes and monies already spent to get to where we are today.

You ask where are we today? We now as a town have gone through a complete schematic design phase (conceptual drawings and plans)

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

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that have been reviewed, picked apart and changes made to, to move on to the design development phase (final plans). Now that these plans are done, they are next made into actual construction drawings. These are then sent to contractors to bid on to actually build this new facility. This is the first time in 16 years that we have actual design development plans and not just speculation or conjecture.

I hope that those that took a flyer, that was available at the booth this past weekend, will email us at DPWAC@hebronct.gov with any questions. Please do visit www.hebronct.com for the latest FAQs and do come to and participate in meetings. Our next regularly scheduled meeting is 4/20/2026, 6:30 p.m. at the Hebron Town Hall.

Sincerely,
Todd Habicht, Vice Chairman
Hebron DPWAC

My Beliefs on Taxation

To the Editor:
 Before we get much further down the road of tax discussions, I'd like to give a brief explanation as to what my beliefs on the concept of taxation are.

I am not against taxes. I believe that I have a responsibility to chip in to the community pot in order for the whole community to work. And I believe individuals should contribute according to their means.

I believe a taxing system, the process of noting community needs and levying amounts of taxation bears a huge responsibility.

I am against the uneven splitting up of that community pot of taxes. Such a process will not accomplish one of my goals of living in a balanced and healthy community.

I am of the belief that if a system does not work for all, it will eventually not work for anyone.

Terry McManus – Hebron

Hebron Budget, Continued

To the Editor:
 Have you wondered what goes into your property/car tax bill amount?

-- Connecticut does not have a statewide property tax so each of the 169 municipalities is an independent taxing authority — they assess, levy and collect taxes from property owners.

-- How are property taxes calculated? By state statute, a real, and motor vehicle property is valued at 70% of its fair market rate and that assessment must occur every five years. Hebron's next revaluation is scheduled for next year.

-- How are grand lists developed? A town's grand list is the total assessed value of real (residential business/commercial), land and motor vehicles. That grand list number directly feed into a municipality's annual budget calculation.

-- What's the connection between grand lists and mill rates? During budget season, town department heads submit their budgets and funding requests. With that data, the tax assessor calculates how much revenue is needed to fulfill those proposed budget requests. Mill rate = net property tax requirement divided by net grand list x 1,000

-- Remember, a town's mill rate is not reflective of property values but rather the scope of services each community expects. It's an annual balancing act.

Claudia Riley – Amston

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

Colchester Board of Finance

To the Editor:
 Apparently, the Board of Finance, seeing the current financial mess Colchester is in and the possibility of public outrage, has now seen fit to hold meetings to quell this outrage. Why do I sense a dog and pony show? Maybe because of the letter that BOF sent to *Rivereast* using the same old tired catchphrases such as 'support the services,' 'quality of life,' and 'excellent educational programs that make this town a proud place to live' (as with many other towns that fit that description).

They know that by using these phrases it will lull the public into believing all is well.

Frank Grande – Colchester

Connection to the Collection

To the Editor:
 March 31st is Transgender Day of Visibility! Richmond Memorial Library has several offerings.

Learn all about gender with books like *Gender: Your Guide: A Gender-Friendly Primer On What to Know, What to Say, and What to Do in the New Gender Culture* by Lee Airton or *The T in LGBT: Everything You Need to Know About Being Trans* by Jamie Raines.

Teach your children about diversity and acceptance by reading picture books like *Jack (not Jackie)* by Erica Silverman and *When Aidan Became a Brother* by Kyle Lukoff.

More of a fiction fan? We recommend reading *The Spirit Bares Its Teeth* by Andrew Joseph White, or *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides!

Transgender Visibility Day is about celebrating the wide spectrum of gender and the accomplishments of transgender individuals throughout history. Visit Richmond Memorial Library today to learn more.

Richmond Memorial Library
Marlborough

Thank You, Polish Club

To the Editor:
 All of our members in the Colchester Veterans Honor Guard wish to express their thanks and appreciation to St. Joseph's Polish Club for the generous donation resulting from their Polish Dinner fundraiser. Our thanks are also extended to the Polish Club kitchen crew for their fabulous food and their fantastic efforts in the kitchen. We also want to make special thanks to Dennis Polinski and this musicians for their wonderful Polish music that accompanied the dinner and dancing.

The St. Joseph's Polish Club contribution is much appreciated by all the members of the Honor Guard and the military families we serve during funeral honors ceremonies.

The St. Joseph's Polish Club's support is instrumental in enabling our Honor Guard to continue its efforts to recognize and honor the dedicated service of deceased members of the Armed Forces of the United States. The Polish Club is a positive example for all of the community service groups in Colchester.

Sincerely Yours,
Alphonse Letendre
Deputy Commander

Colchester's Finances Are in Crisis!

To the Editor:
 Colchester is rushing \$20 million in new spending despite a forensic audit uncovering serious financial concerns that voters were never informed about.

Colchester voters approved \$20 million at referendum on Feb. 24, and just two days later, on Feb. 26, the Democrat-controlled Board of Education requested a forensic audit of its own finances. That sequence alone should alarm every taxpayer.

A forensic audit is not routine. Unlike a standard audit, which reviews basic accounting practices, a forensic audit is used when there are concerns about serious financial mismanagement, fraud, or misuse of funds. Calling for one immediately after a public vote raises an obvious question: why weren't voters told before they were asked to approve millions in new spending?

Residents went to the polls without being informed of the \$1M shortfall in the health reserve and an additional \$4M deficit. That's not a minor oversight – that's material financial information. Transparency is not optional when asking taxpayers to commit this level of funding.

Democrats control the Board of Finance, Board of Education, and Board of Selectmen. What did town leadership know, and when? If these concerns existed prior to the vote, why were they not disclosed?

Board of Selectmen member Tim Vaillancourt urged First Selectman Bernie Dennler to postpone the referendum following the largest snowstorm to hit Connecticut since 1978. Instead, the vote was held the very next day, when many residents were still digging out, roads remained dangerous, and even schools were canceled. Moving forward under those conditions limited voter participation and raised real safety concerns.

Taken together, the timing is difficult to ignore: a major vote held immediately after a historic storm, followed almost immediately by a vote for a forensic audit. Residents are left to ask whether the vote was pushed forward before critical financial information could come to light.

With a forensic audit now underway, continuing additional spending sends the wrong message. Why not pause the project until the town has a clear, verified understanding of its financial position?

Colchester taxpayers deserve transparency, accountability, and leadership that puts facts before decisions – not after them. They should not be asked to bear this burden in the dark.

Until clear answers are provided, trust in town leadership – particularly First Selectman Dennler's decisions – has been severely undermined. The project should be paused immediately, and residents should demand responsible leadership that prioritizes public safety, fiscal integrity, and full transparency – not rushed decisions that put all three at risk.

Cyndee Larabee – Colchester

Thin Skin, Your Dime

To the Editor:
 Tim Vaillancourt has been involved in local politics for some time. In that time, residents who attend meetings have seen a pattern: interruptions, unsubstantiated allegations, and, when anyone pushes back, the meeting grinds to a halt over his hurt feelings.

A video from a previous meeting about the Board of Education's health insurance debacle popped up on Facebook. In it, someone told Tim he didn't understand something. That's it. That was enough to send the whole thing sideways. I commented on his inability to control his emotions. Tim's response was to call me a "punk" and a "keyboard tough guy," tell me I didn't have the "balls" to say it to his face, and let me know he's "not hard to find."

So just to be clear. I said he can't handle his emotions when his ego gets bruised. And his response was to lose his mind on Facebook and basically challenge me to a fight over a social media comment. I'm not sure he understands how he's making my point for me.

An elected official threatened a constituent on Facebook because his ego got bruised. That same ego, unchecked in a board meeting, probably cost all of us money. If Tim had kept it together during the health insurance discussions, we might not be looking at the bill we're looking at now. Turns out the most expensive thing in the Colchester budget isn't roads or schools, it's Tim's bruised ego.

John Farrell – Colchester

Convenient, But Not True

To the Editor:
 Last week in the *Rivereast*, John Farrell, a reliable cheerleader for Bernie Dennler and, at this point, a de facto spokesman for the Colchester Democratic Town Committee, tried to pin the health reserve mess entirely on Republicans. According to him, there's simply no way anyone aligned with his side could share responsibility.

That's convenient. It's also not true. Here's the part I actually agree with: Republicans do share some blame. Specifically, Republican leadership on the Board of Education. And that wasn't some sudden realization after the fact. Myself, Mike Dubreuil, and others were raising concerns about that leadership for years. Loudly. Consistently. Publicly.

It got to the point where Republicans removed then Board of Education members Donna Antonacci and Margo Gignac from their town committee. They didn't endorse them. Didn't nominate them for the ballot. And when they tried to run anyway as a third-party slate, the voters made their feelings crystal clear. They finished dead last. Not close. Not debatable. The town rejected them outright.

So if Democrats suddenly care about accountability, where were they then? Were they listening?

Of course not. On a good day, we were ignored. Most days, we were mocked. Farrell himself praised that same Board of Education leadership at public meetings. Bernie and his campaign used Republican disagreement as a

See Letters, page 6

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The "East of the River" Real Estate Report

How Is a Home's True Market Value Determined?

One of the most common questions homeowners ask is: What is my home really worth? The answer isn't as straightforward as many expect. A home's true market value isn't determined by an online estimate or even what a neighbor's home sold for. It's ultimately determined by what a willing buyer is prepared to pay in the current market.

That said, there are several key factors that influence that number. The first is comparable sales. Recent sales of similar homes — often referred to as "comps" — provide a baseline. These are homes with similar size, location, condition, and features that have sold recently in the same general area. But not all comps are equal. Adjustments are often needed based on differences such as lot size, updates, layout, age, and overall condition. A home that has been well-maintained and updated will typically command a higher price than one that has not, even if they appear similar on paper. Market conditions also play a major role. In a competitive market with limited inventory, buyers may be willing to pay more. In a slower market, pricing becomes more sensitive, and buyers tend to be more selective. Another factor is positioning. Pricing strategy, presentation, and marketing all influence how buyers perceive value. The same home can generate very different results depending on how it's introduced to the market.

In the end, a home's value isn't fixed — it's a range. The goal is to position it in a way that attracts strong interest and allows the market to respond. Understanding how these factors come together is what helps sellers make informed decisions and achieve the best possible outcome.

Market Snapshot – Past Week
 Hebron, Andover, Marlborough, Colchester, East Hampton & Portland

Single-Family Homes	Condos
• 2 homes sold	• 2 sold at an average of \$522,500
• Average sale price: \$402,500	• Sale-to-list ratio: 104%
• Average sale-to-list ratio: 104%	• Days on market: 5 days
• Average days on market: 7 days	Results vary by price point, condition, and pricing strategy.
• Median days on market: 7 days	

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★ Letters, cont. from page 5

talking point, dismissing every concern as political theater.

And then came the decision that says everything. Despite clear opposition from Republicans, including an official endorsement of Mike Dubreuil from the Republican Town Committee, Democrats on the Board of Finance appointed previous BOE chair Donna Antonacci to the vacant Republican seat anyway.

Let that sink in. They ignored the voters. Ignored the Republican party. Ignored the warnings. And now they want to turn around and blame Republicans for the very situation they chose to embrace?

That's not accountability. That's partisan propaganda.

So what's their solution now? Not accountability. Not reflection. Apparently, accountability is "too vague" of a word. Instead, it's deflect, blame, and ask residents to cover it, to the tune of about \$1,000 more a year for the average taxpayer.

You didn't have to agree with me when I was a selectman, or with Bisbikos. Our disagreements were public, and loud. But we never would have done this. And if we had, you can bet Farrell, Dennler, and the Colchester DTC would have been shouting about it from every corner of town.

Jason LaChapelle - Colchester

Best Options

To the Editor:

"Lack of funding is consistently cited as a barrier to implementing green infrastructure. However, because green infrastructure projects offer multiple benefits, they can qualify for a variety of federal, nonprofit, and local funding sources. Technical assistance programs can help communities prepare and apply for this unprecedented funding." - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

At the 3/16/26 Department of Public Works Action Committee meeting, a Hebron resident wondered if people couldn't lose their homes due to increased property taxes. After all, \$28 million is a big number and not our only expense. Fortunately, municipalities, generally, get better loan rates than private homeowners and there are multiple funding options to help offset associated costs. A modern PW with green infrastructure, is a wise investment because it benefits us both financially and environmentally. It is something we should be seeking grants for. See CT Clean Water at portal.ct.gov. DPW STEAP funding. US EPA epa.gov/green-infrastructure. US Economic Development Administration @eda.gov/funding/programs/public-works. EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs, grants.gov/search-results-detail/346815. Nobody wants to see anyone lose their home.

At the same meeting, we heard about a group

who is, apparently, pushing back, against the cost of the project. Unfortunately, the costs are the costs. Our site is beyond repair. Building new, versus upgrading old, means we must adhere to state mandates. These mandates were created to address chronic pollution generated by industrial type facilities. Additionally, Hebron has been warned repeatedly about unsafe working conditions leaving the town under pressure to build a better facility.

Arguing over money, at this point, seems counterproductive. We must move forward. By combining forces, and working together, we'd have a better chance of reducing costs through state, regional and federal programs. In some cases, we're late for 2026, because projected costs were necessary prior to applying. But, we should be on track for 2027.

Having reviewed approximately 37 properties, including the Raymond Brook Watershed/Kinney Rd and Burnt Hill, town hall agreed that confining our industrial pollution to an already compromised site is the wisest choice. A new PW, at any other location, poses threats to groundwater while potentially generating traffic issues. Costs would spiral from there. Confining pollution, working together towards infrastructure funding, attending meetings, supporting the Action Committee and 550 Old Colchester Road, are still our best options. #save17

Jean Tulimieri - Amston

Dementia Talks No. 53

To the Editor:

So sorry that I missed last week's deadline for publishing! Life does happen!

Mom: Glass Float... boat... sparkles
Me: ?????

Mom: But my cousin told me to wait here!
Me: Ok, let's walk over and sit by the door then.

Mom: The tail (as a question)
Me: ?????

Soon after the COVID-19 outbreak cleared in the community, my decoder-ring for translating what Mom was saying to what she was really communicating well, my decoder-ring 'went up in smoke.'

We have now shifted into what people might consider "word salad." At times the decoder ring works like a gem and I can meet Mom where she is, but as of late it frequently short-circuits and I do my best to meet Mom where she is; but admittedly I may not know where she is in the moment.

Is it frustrating? You bet.

However, I watch others interact with Mom and it brings me comfort that we are on a journey that others, in this oasis of a community, are also on. All at a different phase. All navigating uncharted waters. But we learn from observation, listening, and trying (with empathy).

We need to go slow, encourage where en-

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couragement is needed, adapt to the situation, stop pushing to do something when it is obvious “whatever it is” just isn’t going to happen, and engage in different ways. Always leading with respect, dignity, empathy, compassion and kindness. Oh, and calm!!! Yes, try to remain calm!! If you are frustrated, walk away, breathe, then come back.

Wishing everyone well as the spring flowers poke through the ground, and know that you are not alone.

P.S. – thank you to all that stopped at our #HebronRocksAlz table at the Maple Fest. Greatly appreciated!

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

Craft Fair Thanks

To the Editor:
Gilead Congregational Church, UCC extends our heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make our Maplefest Craft Fair a success this weekend, celebrating local talent, the Hebron community, and small businesses!

We are deeply grateful to:
· Our talented vendors for sharing their time, skills, and beautiful handmade goods
· Our dedicated volunteers and organizers for their planning, setup, and warm hospitality
· Our shoppers and festival visitors for supporting local artisans and strengthening community ties

The day was filled with the kind of neighborly spirit that defines Gilead’s community traditions - thank you so much to everyone who joined us!

For more information about Gilead Congregational Church, UCC and future events, please contact our church office.

**Rev. Brian C. Hardee, Pastor
Gilead Congregational Church**

**Aging With Choice,
Dignity, and a Plan**

To the Editor:
Most of us do not spend much time thinking about how our needs may change as we age. It can feel overwhelming to consider that one day we may need to modify our homes to remain safe, find reliable transportation if we are no longer able to drive, or possibly make the difficult decision to leave a home filled with memories. Yet learning about these possibilities early gives us something incredibly important, the ability to plan ahead, preserve independence, and make choices on our own terms.

Affordable housing and the ability to age in place are critical issues for many older adults and families in our community. Based on discussion with the Portland Housing Authority, applications for Quarry Heights have not opened since 2022, and Chatham Court since 2024. This highlights how limited the availability of affordable housing can be and how few options there may be to remain in Portland as needs change over time. Hopefully that will change in the very near future, but until then, it is important for residents to be aware of other options that may be available nearby. For those who may have the financial ability, other housing options in Portland that support older adults, such as Brainerd Place, may also be worth exploring and we will be discussing this new option in the future. These are all options worth discussing and preparing for before we find ourselves in a time of crisis.

At the Portland Senior Center, we are slowly and thoughtfully bringing these important, often avoided topics to light through education and by sharing local resources that can help individuals and families prepare for the future. Whether someone hopes to remain in their home with thoughtful modifications, needs transportation supports, or may eventually consider different housing options, having information can make all the difference.

As part of this effort, we are hosting Heritage Commons of Middletown, just over the bridge, to provide helpful information about a local affordable housing option so residents can learn more about choices that may be available close to home.

We invite the community to join us at the Senior Center for a Lunch and Learn with Heritage Commons on Monday, April 6, at noon, to learn more about affordable housing, aging in place, and planning ahead in a way that supports dignity, safety, and wellbeing. Registration is required to attend.

These conversations are not always easy, but they are important. Understanding options today can help provide comfort, stability, and peace of mind for the future.

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

We Need Your Help

To the Editor:
Programs and events in celebration of the 250th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence are moving right along. First, we’re assembling a time capsule to be unearthed on the nation’s 300th in 2076. Suggestions are welcome – email terryagrady@aol.com.

Second, we are assembling a commemorative book highlighting the celebration and business and personal ads are available. For information on size and cost, email terryagrady@aol.com

And to keep up to date on other programs and events, follow our Facebook page - America250 Portland CT

**Thank you,
America250 Portland CT Committee**

Bernie’s Fiscal Cliff

To the Editor:
Colchester is heading toward a fiscal cliff, and residents should be clear about how it happened and who was responsible.

This is Bernie Dennler and the Democrats’ fiscal cliff, and it may prove to be the most serious financial failure our town has experienced in decades.

For years, Democrats have controlled the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance, and now the Board of Education. They set the budgets, oversaw the health insurance reserve, and were responsible for asking the hard questions.

As early as March 2025, questions were raised about rising claims and whether contributions were keeping pace. Those warnings were not acted on. Instead, the reserve was allowed to deteriorate rapidly, with the BOE’s balance dropping by well over a million dollars in just a few months.

After Democrats took control of the BOE in November, they chose to place former Republican BOE Chair Donna Antonacci onto the Board of Finance, despite objections from the

Republican Town Committee. That decision tied past oversight directly to the body responsible for financial review.

Now we are seeing the consequences. A consultant has warned that the BOE could run out of insurance funds before the end of the fiscal year. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of dollars in claims were misallocated between the town and BOE and had to be corrected after the fact. That is a breakdown in financial controls.

The reports show inconsistent entries, delayed adjustments, and a lack of alignment between contributions and claims. In plain terms, this reserve was not managed with the discipline taxpayers expect.

The ongoing forensic audit is being framed as a BOE issue, but this is a shared insurance reserve. Any audit is, by definition, a joint audit of both the BOE and the Town. Every failure in oversight belongs to the entire system and specifically the Board of Finance.

And what is the response from town leadership? Not accountability. Not ownership. Instead, residents are being asked to absorb tax increases to cover the shortfall.

That is not responsible governance. It is the cost of failed oversight being handed to taxpayers.

Colchester deserves accountability. Taxpayers should not be asked to pay for failures they were never told about.

Michael Dubreuil – Colchester

Here We Go Again

To the Editor:
Mr. Terry McManus of Hebron wrote a pointed letter titled “No Increase to School Budgets” in the March 20th issue of *Rivereast*. This letter is so spot-on that I cannot improve on his message, so I apologize upfront and will borrow liberally from his text in my letter to East Hampton’s BOF and our Town Council.

The BOE in East Hampton has started their


annual campaign for a bigger budget, which will increase property taxes again. As a reminder, EH has suffered a 4-5% tax increase yearly for the past several years, as well as a recent property revaluation, and yet our police remain short-handed, roads in disrepair, run-off in the lake, and no potable water system. Soon we will hear from the TC and BOF outlining a proposed budget for the BOE. I have a feeling that these presentations tone and scope will greatly resemble those of past years, complete with the usual rhetoric about cutting classes, teachers, etc. The BOE mission statement states We partner with our families and community to prepare confident, compassionate, and collaborative learners who navigate a complex, global society. In prior years, pleadings by citizens of EH to the BOE have been made to trim their spending. The requests were not made in objection to education, but to ensure the fiscal health of the entire community. These pleadings have generally gone unheeded. So much for “partnering with our community.”

The continued successful fiscal maneuvering by the BOE, TC, and BOF has helped ensure three things: The passage of the increased BOE budget; ever-increasing tax burden on EH residents, and the continued deterioration of the EH infrastructure.

I respectfully request the TC and BOF ask the BOE to submit a zero-increase budget for the next three years. This budget would conform with Connecticut’s MBR requirements and give all EH taxpayers much needed relief, particularly to the elderly and fixed-income residents. A zero-increase budget entails freezing of wages, benefits and salary steps, and other cost-cutting measures, just like the rest of the real world has to endure. The BOE should be held accountable for lowering costs, and certainly should not be putting the burden of irresponsible spending on the taxpayers of East Hampton again.


**Bob Yenker – East Hampton
See Letters, page 32**

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Municipal Water Plans Move Forward

By Anne Lilburn

Portland held back-to-back Board of Selectmen meetings on Wednesday, March 18, where they approved contracts related to the town's ongoing municipal water plans, as well as improvements needed at its wastewater treatment plant.

The first (very short) meeting was dedicated to a single issue: the approval of a contract with Snyder Civil Engineering for design services for the town's new well. Though Snyder was not the lowest bidder, they were the best match for the town, said Director of Public Works Jason Morrocco.

Snyder, he said, had the "best grasp of what the town's vision is as far as what we want from a building, what we want from any type of future expansion if we need to treat the water." He also said they took into consideration the possibility of hooking up the well system to the town's current water infrastructure.

Board member Bobby Hetrick, a Republican, sought to clarify that.

"So Snyder wasn't the lowest bidder, but they're offering more in their bid than the others?"

First Selectman Mike Pelton, also a Republican, said yes, and added that Snyder seemed committed to meeting an aggressive schedule.

Hetrick said that that made sense, given that "Snyder is one of the bigger and better civil engineers for water in the state."

Board member Jim Tripp added that Snyder had given the most "complete response" of all the vendors, and the company showed it was thinking about the timeline.

"They gave us a lot of confidence," he said.

While the cost of the contract for the whole project is nearly \$1.12M, Morrocco said that the town would initially only bond the amount for the survey, design and planning phases, which totals \$564,315. That way, the town will be able to start payments on that smaller amount before bonding the rest, allowing the interest on the larger amount not to be drawn out.

The vote to approve the water development contract with Snyder Civil Engineering passed unanimously.

Not long after that, at the night's regularly scheduled meeting, Morrocco was back, this

time asking the board to approve the spending of \$23,500 on a new paperless videographic recorder and related required equipment and software to replace the current out-of-date and failing chart readers at the town's wastewater treatment plant.

Currently, Morrocco said, the town's old paper chart readers, which record readings, are failing. One, he said, is not working, while the other has a "very temperamental pen."

Morrocco said that Knapp Engineering was the "sole provider of this equipment and software," and that it matched the current equipment that they used at other pump stations, meaning that there would be "no learning curve" for operators, making Knapp the best choice for the town.

The board voted to approve the contract unanimously.

The board also voted to set a date for a public hearing about the school consolidation plan and referendum for April 15, and discussed the ongoing work at Brainerd Place.

Pelton provided updates on some of the specifics there, including some weathertightening – a process that protects against dampness and damage due to moisture – on historic buildings. He said the developer had only been granted a partial certificate of occupancy until the work had been completed.

Hetrick expressed frustration that some of that work wasn't proceeding according to plan and schedule.

"We just keep giving and giving and we don't seem to ever get anything back from that developer," he said. Pelton countered that he believed the developer had been accommodating in other circumstances, and said that the town would push the developer to stick to what had been agreed upon.

At one point in the meeting, a representative from the Portland Committee on Solidarity gave an update to the town, noting its recent Voices of Portland event for Black History Month, as well as an upcoming event for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. In the course of her remarks, she noted that many committee members regularly attended Thursday

pro-democracy rallies, which became a topic of conversation among board members later in the meeting.

"What are your thoughts as selectmen on the mentioning of the No Kings Rally, the democracy rallies, to us here?" asked Vinnie Pitruzello, a Republican.

Pitruzello emphasized that he supported the Solidarity Committee, adding that "they do a bunch of wonderful things," but said he was concerned about it being involved in political actions.

Hetrick agreed, saying that he believed these events to be "one-sided."

"The protest on Thursday is political. The committee shouldn't be political. If it's going to be political, then it shouldn't be funded," he said.

"I think it's great that we live in a country where you can do that and protest something peacefully, that's why we love our country, right?" added Pitruzello, "but for it to be mentioned as part of a report out to us multiple times" was concerning to him, he said.

Pitruzello said he was happy they were dis-

cussing his concerns freely.

"This is why we have these discussions," he said. "It's healthy."

"It's democracy," agreed Dave Kuzminski, a Democrat.

"It totally is, right?" Said Pitruzello.

Pelton offered up his own thoughts, saying, "I think what it reminds me, too, is especially in this time, this age, where just being able to try to talk about difficult things is hard for people, people can't disagree without being disagreeable these days."

"I do understand what you're saying," he added. "I think it's a slightly gray area, but I can see the line being drawn."

The board did not take any official action on the issue, but agreed that it supported the Solidarity Committee's overall missions to combat "racism, bias, bigotry, prejudice and violence" and "stand committed to peace, justice and freedom." The board also expressed support for the committee's past and future events.

The next regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting will take place April 8.

Kindergarten Registration

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

Parents/guardians whose children will be five years of age on or before Sept. 1, 2026, should: contact Valley View School at kregis-tration@portlandct.us to indicate if you will be

registering your child for kindergarten. Please provide your child's full name, date of birth, phone number, address, and parent's names.

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

Clothing Drive Fundraiser for Project Grad

There will be Clothing Drive Fundraiser next month to benefit Portland High School Class of 2026 Project Graduation.

In honor of Earth Day, organizers are collecting all clothing items (all seasons), stuffed animals, towels, sheets, pillowcases, and bicycles, as well as accessories like belts, hats, scarves, handbags, and gloves. Please note that shoes should be placed a separate bag, and pillows or comforters cannot be accepted. Please put everything in a plastic bag; no boxes.

You can drop off your donations at the Portland High School bus loop all day on Monday, April 27, and on Tuesday, April 28, until 3 p.m.; look for the drop-off sign. Organizers can also pick up bags directly from peoples' homes. To schedule a specific date and time for a curbside pickup, please email us at pbs26projectgrad@yahoo.com.

This fundraiser benefits Project Graduation: all proceeds raised go towards providing PHS seniors with a safe, drug free and alcohol-free celebration on graduation night.

PHS Class of '76 50th Reunion

The Portland High School Class of 1976 50th Reunion will take place Saturday, June 13, at Terrazza Quarry Ridge Golf Club, located at 9 Rose Hill Road in Portland. Cocktail hour will begin at 5 p.m.

Also, there is an optional opportunity to attend graduation for the Class of 2026, to celebrate the Bicentennial class with the Class of 2026's Semiquincentennial ceremony. Graduation is scheduled for Monday, June 15.

Anyone with contact information for class-

mates Betsy Bransfield Rose, Alex Castelli, Beverly Chester, Carol Clausi Karnilowicz, Richard Kearney, Nancy McKinstry Roch, Richard Pawoiczik, Mark Pierini, Maureen Robinson Jordan, or Thomas Savage is asked to email Mary Linda Eccles/Reitz at mlreitzphs76@gmail.com or message her on Facebook: Portland high class 76.

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

Trinity Episcopal News

Trinity Episcopal Church, 345 Main St., invites all to services on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Bible Study starts at 8:30 a.m. each Sunday. The church schedule can always be located at www.trinitychurchportlandct.org.

Holy Week Schedule: Palm Sunday service on 3/29 at 9:30 a.m.; Maundy Thursday Dinner and Service on 4/2 at 6 p.m.; Good Friday, 4/3 – Stations of the Cross on the Brownstone Green at noon, and Good Friday service at 6:00 pm at Zion Lutheran Church; Easter Vigil on 4/4 at 7 p.m. at Church of the Holy Trinity in

Middletown; Easter Sunrise Service on 4/5 at First Congregational Church at 7:30 a.m., and Easter Sunday service at 9:30 a.m.

The church is open for prayer and meditation, and the church office is open, from 2-4 p.m. each Friday. Anglican Prayer beading sessions are held at this time as well; all are welcome.

Check www.trinitychurchportlandct.org for more information. If you have any prayer requests to lift up, email the church office at trinitychurchportlandct@gmail.com.

Grant to Aid Local Pond

The Jonah Center in Middletown recently received a \$75,000 grant to remove invasive water chestnuts from bodies of water in the region, including Pecauset Pond in Portland.

The grant comes from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) grant program, which each year invests funds into projects focused on reducing the impacts of aquatic invasive species in Connecticut waters.

These species, like hydrilla and zebra mussels, can cause severe damage to water ecosystems. They can harm and kill native plants and animals and can make boating, fishing and swimming difficult or impossible, interfering with businesses and recreation alike.

The AIS program was established in 2019 through the state legislature with the goal of better protecting state waters.

Scholarship Offered by Garden Clubs

Applications are now available for a \$500 scholarship offered by the Portland Garden Clubs. The scholarship will be awarded to a graduating high school senior who is a resident of Portland and has been accepted at an accredited college or post-secondary school and plans to pursue a major in one of the following fields: agronomy, botany, city planning, conservation, environmental studies, forestry, horticulture, land management, landscape design, plant pathology or allied subject. Applicants must have a grade point average of at least 3.0.

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

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

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From the First Selectman's Desk

To the Seniors of Portland:

As first selectman, I've had the privilege of meeting many of you at town events, community gatherings, and simply around town. One thing that always stands out about Portland's senior residents is your deep pride in this community and your commitment to leaving things a little better than you found them.

With an important upcoming school referendum May 11, I wanted to speak directly to you.

Many of you no longer have children in the school system. Some of you may have grandchildren here, but many do not. And that raises a fair question: Why should I support this?

The answer is simple. Strong schools make a strong town.

Good schools help protect property values, attract young families, and keep Portland the kind of community we all want to live in. They support our teachers, give our students the tools they need to succeed, and ensure that the next generation grows up ready to contribute back to the town we love.

But there's another reason.

When many of you were students in Portland – or raising families here – there were seniors before you who voted to improve the schools even though they no longer had children attending them. They did it because they believed in investing in their town and doing the right thing for the next generation.

Today, we have the chance to do the same.

This project is also designed to be responsible and practical. By right-sizing our school system, we can operate more efficiently and close an aging building while investing in the schools our students and teachers actually use. Over time, that means lower operating costs for the town.

And importantly, the estimated cost to residents works out to less than 50 cents a day – less than the cost of a cup of coffee.

For those on fixed incomes, I understand that every dollar matters. No one takes that lightly. But this is an investment in Portland's future and the long-term health of our community.

Our seniors helped build this town into the wonderful place it is today. Supporting our schools helps ensure that Portland remains strong for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our community and please reach out if you have any questions about this project.



Pelton

Portland First Selectman

Respectfully,

Michael Pelton

Portland First Selectman

Tag Sale Registration Price Jumps on Wednesday

The Portland Historical Society's 30th annual Town-Wide Tag Sale will be on Saturday, May 9 — rain or shine — and the time for discounted registration is drawing short.

Register by Tuesday, March 31, for \$20; registration will increase to \$25 on Wednesday, April 1. Registration and payment for tag sales is open online and mail in forms are also available. Visit www.PortlandHistSoc.com and click on the link (the big yellow banner) to register — just follow the instructions online. A paper registration sheet can be downloaded from the website, completed and mailed with payment to P.O. Box

98. Paper registration sheets are also available in the barrel on the front porch at 492 Main St. as well as in the society's latest newsletter.

Registration for sales will close Sunday, April 26. Portland residents who sign up will be assigned a spot on the Society's official Tag Sale Map issued for that day listing the sale locations and types of items featured at each one.

The annual Town-Wide Tag Sale is the main fundraiser for the society. Proceeds help to maintain the museum and to further the mission to collect, preserve and share Portland's history.

No Yellow Tents for Historical Society

The Portland Historical Society is counting down the days to its 30th annual Town-Wide Tag Sale Day, which will be held (rain or shine) Saturday, May 9, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Due to the anticipated re-construction of the 1841 Gildersleeve Store, the Historical Society will not be holding its own tag sale that directly benefits the society. Therefore, the society will not be collecting items this year.

However, on Tag Sale Day the society will have a Bake Sale of homemade goodies on the porch of the Callander House. Members and friends of the society will be baking before Saturday and packaging their specialties for this sell-out sale.

Volunteers are needed to make this day a suc-

cess — particularly folks who can spare an hour or two on Thursday, May 7 and/or Saturday, May 9. Help is needed delivering tag sale poles on Thursday after 3 p.m. and collecting poles on Saturday after 2:30 p.m. Delivery/pickup works best if you work in pairs — a driver and someone to jump out of the car to deliver the pole to the door along with a bag of supplies. Approximately 140 poles will need to be delivered on Thursday and collected on Saturday. People are usually given a batch of 10 poles to deliver — a pickup truck, SUV or a vehicle with back seats that fold down works well.

For more information about volunteering, call 860-982-1486 or email PortlandCThistory@gmail.com.

Car Show Coming

The Knights of Columbus Memorial Car Show, organized by Portland's Freestone Council 7, will return Friday, June 26, in the rear parking lot of St. Mary Church.

The show starts at 3 p.m., prizes will be awarded at 7 p.m., and dinner will be available along with a charity raffle.

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.

Find Your Revolutionary War Ancestor

The Wadsworth Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) is holding a workshop to help you find your Revolutionary War ancestor on Saturday, April 11, from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave.

Contact the library at www.portlandlibraryct.org or 860-342-6770 to register.

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 bit.ly/4arlcZh

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

Exchange Club Offering Scholarship

The Portland Exchange Club is offering its John W. Goodrich Memorial Scholarship to a

Portland resident senior who is going on to higher education.

Community service is what the Exchange Club is all about. The Exchange is looking for students to provide the committee with a short essay describing their community service and

its impact on the community. Other secondary factors we consider are good academic achievement and participation in extracurricular activities.

Application forms can be downloaded from the Portland Exchange website at www.portlandexchange.org/john-w-goodrich-scholarship. The deadline for applications is April 18.

Swing into Summer with Historical Society

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

Tickets for the Hartford Yard Goats game are still available and an evening pop-up sale will happen on Tuesday, April 7, at the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History

at 492 Main St. from 6-7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 each and can be paid for by cash or check. If you would like to pay by credit/debit card during the pop-up, there will be an additional \$1 charge for each ticket.

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

Brush Pick-Up

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

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

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

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

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

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

Soccer Club Spring Registration

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

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

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

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

The Club-Recreational program will run eight weeks, from April 18-June 13; there is no Rec Soccer during Memorial Day weekend (May 23). All games will take place at the Recreational Complex.

Spring Senior Mixed Golf

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

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

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

Knights Scholarship Opportunity

The Knights of Columbus, Freestone Council 7, will be awarding three \$1,200 scholarships this spring to any Portland high school senior who is furthering their education at a college, university, or technical school.

The application is available at the area high schools guidance department or by requesting an application at scholarship@rsitg.com. All Portland residents graduating this year are eligible.

Due to the support of the Portland community, the Knights' annual Car Show was successful enough for the organization to be able to continue the funding of its annual scholarships for a ninth year.



Birth Announced... Joseph Curtis Berenguel and Julia Flagg Berenguel of Portland have announced the birth of a daughter, Dorothy Antonia. Dorothy was born Feb. 17, 2025, at the University of Connecticut. Paternal grandparents are Margaret A. Church of Brattleboro, Vt., and the late Jose Berenguel. Maternal grandparents are the late Kurt and Catherine Flagg. Dorothy is named after two of her great-grandmothers: Dorothy Southworth Squire of Meriden and Antonia des Barnas of Benahaddux, Almeria, Spain.



Concert to Benefit Food Bank... Tony Rome (pictured) will play a concert to benefit Portland Food Bank on Saturday, May 2, at 2 p.m., at Concentric Brewing Company, 91 Main St. Attendees are asked to bring a non-perishable food item for the food bank. If you can't make the show, Rome asks that you still donate to the food bank.

Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover

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.

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.

ASCT Looking for Members

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

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

Andover Egg Grab!

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

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

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

Andover Art Club

Children of all ages are invited to join local artist Caitlyn Grabenstein for an hour of creativity at Andover Public Library on Thursdays from 11 a.m.-noon, starting April 2.

Kids can color, draw and make art. Bring your favorite materials or use the library's. Call the library for more information at 860-742-7428.

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.

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

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.

Library Friends Offer Scholarship

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

Completed applications must be dropped off

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

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

Congregational Church News

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Kindergarten Registration

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

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

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

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.

Townsend Cemetery Spring Clean-Up

Residents are asked to remove any personal items and decorations from the Townsend Cemetery prior to Saturday, April 4. All items found to be in violation of cemetery rules and regulations or a hindrance to maintenance will be removed.

These items include pots, shepherd hooks, glass objects, cans and any items in front of the stone. Please remove and take home any item you plan to use next season.

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. 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/Foodshare truck, 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. This is a free introductory classes. The regular Tai Chi & Qigong class is April, and the fee is \$10.

Shopping Trips: Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. Shop Manchester on 3/31, 4/14 and 4/28, and Willimantic 4/7 and 4/21. Transportation is available.

Your Money Matters: Thursday, April 23, 5 p.m. The center is partnering with UConn - One Stop Student Services for this free interactive presentation designed to help middle and high school students navigate the challenges of making smart financial decisions. Through engaging discussion & real-life examples, students learn about budgeting, saving, responsible spending, and developing healthy financial habits early in life. Call 860-742-7305 ext. 4510 to sign up.

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



The Jukebox 45 Show Band – which features a pair of East Hampton residents – will take the stage next month at East Hampton High School, as part of a Project Graduation fundraiser. Pictured from left are band members Joe Carver, Al Floyd, Jerry Fanfarelli, Miguel Vargas and Michael Buck.

*** Doo-Wop Coming to Belltown, cont. from page 1**

duty, and then I [went into law enforcement]," Buck said. "And so my entire adult life has been spent meeting people in the worst moments of their lives, right? So, music gives me an opportunity to bring people good moments, right? And it's a mental health outlet for me too. It's good for the soul."

Also joining The Jukebox 45 Show Band and The Royal Teens on stage at the event will be throwback band Back in Time. The plan is for all the bands to play together at the end, said Buck.

Both Buck and Fanfarelli said they are also looking forward to sharing their love of doo wop music with an audience that may be unfamiliar with it, and Fanfarelli said he hopes residents of all ages will fill the audience.

"The show is suitable for all ages," he said. "We deliver a show that covers decades of legendary rock and roll doo-wop."

East Hampton High School Principal Eric Verner said he was happy that the concert would raise money for Project Graduation, which he said was an important event for the school's graduating seniors. He described it as a fun, safe "last hurrah." Verner said that this

year's senior class was a "tight knit group" and that he hoped that the event would serve as the "culmination of their high school career."

He added that students had been helping to try to sell tickets, and between that and the work that Fanfarelli and Buck have been doing to promote the event, the concert is now close to 90% sold out. Fanfarelli said his goal is to sell out all 535 seats in the auditorium, and they currently have fewer than 100 tickets left to sell to make that goal.

"The bottom line is this," said Fanfarelli. "Once those people have their butts in the seat, I know what we're capable of doing, and I know that they're going to have a great show. They're going to just — it's going to be over the top."

"Mike and I have been working overtime, really, to try to put it together," he said, saying that the band rehearses twice a week, but that it's worth it.

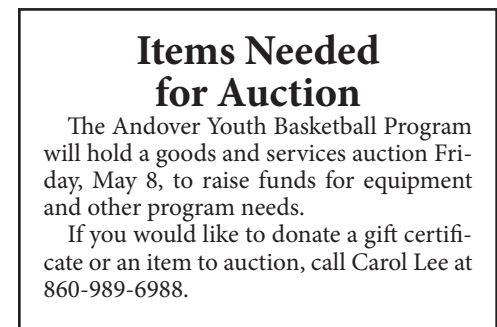
"Mike and I both, we love entertaining audiences," he said. "You know, we love making people happy."

Those looking to purchase tickets can do so online at ehhsprojectgraduation.ludus.com or by calling the EHHS main office at 860-365-4030.

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.



Council Considers Next Steps in WPCA Restructuring

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton's Town Council met for a regularly scheduled meeting Tuesday night, where the council discussed the restructuring of the town's Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), as well as tax relief options for veterans and seniors.

As has been the case for most recent town council meetings, public comment took front stage, with community members airing their concerns and grievances. Some called for continued investigations into the activities that had led to the firing of Public Utilities Administrator Anthony DeSimone and the disbanding of the town's formerly appointed WPCA. A few residents continued to call for officials to be fired and for town council members to step down.

One resident, a Vietnam War veteran, spoke of the need to make property tax relief easier for veterans, a topic that came up later in the meeting when the council and Town Manager David Cox discussed current state regulations that mandate a 100% tax exemption on structures for veterans who are considered to have a 100% service-connected total disability, and which allow the town to add an additional exemption for up to two acres of land. There are also potential exemptions available to surviving spouses of qualifying veterans and gold star families and spouses.

The council discussed bringing the town in line with the maximum amount of tax benefits available for veterans and their families, and also discussed other property tax relief measures, including those focused on seniors.

Council member Rich Knotek, a Democrat and an accountant, pointed out that the state's tax relief programs were exceptionally complicated, in his view.

Speaking to council member Ted Hintz, a Republican and also an accountant, Knotek said, "I have never seen — and I've looked at tax regulations, as you have, all my professional career — I have never seen such a patchwork of complicated tax exemptions."

"Our state thinks they've done such a great job with tax exemptions," he continued, "and I'll tell you, it's a lot of confusion and the money doesn't really go to the people who really need it in our towns."

Speaking of veterans, he said, "We want to offer them what we can, without a doubt."

In terms of senior citizens, the town currently has a property tax relief program for elderly homeowners, which freezes current property taxes at their current rates, but that program also requires in a lien against the property equal

to the difference between the paid rate and what they would pay were they not in the program. This lien, said Cox, was often cited by residents as the reason they did not want to participate in the program.

Hintz said that he had been on the council when that program was approved. He said that that program was built that way by design.

"We wanted to help the senior residents, but that didn't mean we needed to help all their generational [heirs]," he said. "And if they're going to sell the property after, there was no reason that the town shouldn't be reimbursed for the taxes."

Hintz further cautioned about the consequences of extending too much tax relief towards seniors.

"I hate to be the wet rag on this one," he said, "but as the population ages, if you start pulling all of the money out of the majority of the population, you're actually going to see a severe decrease in town [revenues]." He warned about the danger of "transfer[ing] all of the burden of the taxes to the non-senior population."

Though the council did not take action on tax exemption and abatements, Cox said he would draft an ordinance for the council to consider at their next meeting that would adopt all available veterans exemptions.

On the hot topic of the disbanding of the town's WPCA, and the ramifications and next steps on that issue, the council took action to further solidify its intention to act as the town's WPCA after voting to disband the body at its March 12 meeting. That action had left the WPCA in what Cox had previously described as a "legal limbo," where it continued to exist as a governmental entity despite the council's actions.

The council voted unanimously (with council member Karen Wanat, a Democrat, abstaining) to send a proposed ordinance establishing the town council as the WPCA to a public hearing that would be set for April 7.

The council also posed questions to town attorney Richard Carella on both the WPCA restructuring, as well as the planned development on Long Crossing that had prompted heated discussion from residents on the topic of sewer expansion over the summer. For this portion of the meeting, council member Karen Wanat recused herself.

Knotek asked Carella whether the council should be waiting before taking actions and discussing WPCA issues, given the current status, and Carella said yes.

"At the moment," he told the council, "you don't serve as the WPCA."

Carella told the council that state statute allowed the town council to designate itself as the WPCA, but that the town needed the ordinance to pass first in order to take actions as the WPCA.

He said that state law allowed the WPCA to be elected or appointed as well.

"It is unprecedented — " he started, before clarifying, "not unprecedented, but it is rare that the legislative body of a town takes the step to disband the WPCA and take those responsibilities on to itself."

He added that, according to state law, the town council did not have the ability to change the WPCA's role, meaning that the town council would not be able to retain the ability to determine where sewers would go unless it served as the WPCA.

"The WPCA has control over the sewer system, and you have to have a WPCA. Either you're gonna do it, or the [appointed] WPCA's gonna do it," he said.

He emphasized, as did Town Planner Juliet Hodge, that the WPCA must act within the parameters of the town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Hodge pointed out that POCD's specify both potential sewer expansion areas and sewer avoidance areas, and reminded residents that the town was currently working on its 10-year revision of the POCD, so this was a good time for them to be clear about where

they did and did not want sewers.

In terms of the development at 30 Long Crossing, council member Joelyn Leon, a Democrat, wanted clarification and asked if "as of now, everything is paused, in terms of the developer cannot move forward with anything going forward right now?"

Carella stated that, as of now, there was "no development agreement," and if the developer did do anything, "he does so at his own risk."

With that said, there were some gray areas.

"He has approvals for different things down there, and the sewer is just one facet of that. We can't shut down a job site on something that has already been in process and approved," said Hintz.

Hodge concurred, and said that the project was approved with individual septic systems.

The council also voted to send the purchase of the previously discussed parcel of land at 292 West High St. to use as an open space buffer around the current wastewater treatment plant, to a town meeting on April 7, to be held just prior to their special meeting on that night. That purchase had already been presented and approved by the Board of Finance.

At this meeting, the council also approved a contract for towing, maintenance and repair of police vehicles and also approved updates to the police department's General Orders in order to bring them into compliance with the current Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) guidelines. Both motions passed unanimously.

Easter Bonnet Contest

On Tuesday, March 31, starting at 1 p.m., the East Hampton Lions are presenting a free afternoon of music (song hits by Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin) and light refreshments, plus an Easter Bonnet Parade Contest — with prizes for the most original and the funniest Easter hat.

Take a hat and decorate it with something or anything. Use any kind of hat—even a base-

ball hat or a fire hat— just use your imagination. Prizes will be awarded for the winner in each category.

All women are invited to participate — and the Lions said they would love to see some men enter this contest as well.

The event takes place at the VFW on North Maple Street. For more information, call Donna at 860-267-2853.

Belltown Garden Club Scholarship

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

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

commercial school.

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

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

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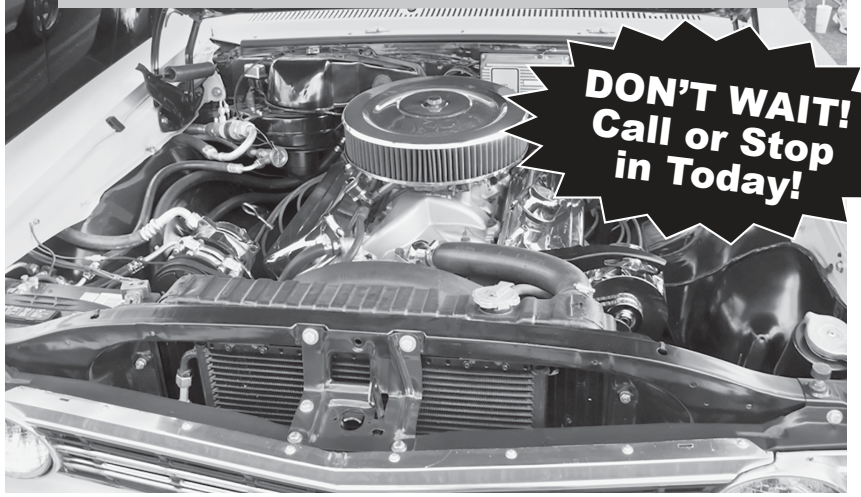
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Fish Fridays Wrap Up

The Knights of Columbus, St. John Paul II Council 6190 will hold its final Friday fish dinners of Lene on Friday, March 27.

Offerings include breaded cod, clams, and shrimp, which will be served with French fries and coleslaw. Baked cod and fried chicken tenders meals are also featured, and chowder will also be available. Coffee, tea, water and soda are also offered. Prices of the fish vary.

Entertainment on March 27 will be Diane Anelli, the cantor from St. Patrick Church.

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

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.

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

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.

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.hncovenantchurch.org.

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.

Middle Haddam Public Library News

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

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

Featured Artist for March: Paul Hoffman from East Hampton. His watercolors will be on display during regular library hours. An artist reception with Hoffman will be held from 4-6 p.m. Friday, March 27, with refreshments.

Save the Dates: On Sunday, April 12, at 2 p.m., there will be a performance with Double Play featuring a mix of great live music performed by Cathy Kreger and Jon Swift. Also, on Saturday, April 18, at 6 p.m. the library will host

Helping Hands Reopens

Helping Hands is open again, from 9-11 a.m. on the first and third Saturday of each month. Donations will be collected on those Saturdays, as well as every Thursday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Helping Hands is located at 27 Skinner St.

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

EDC Now Accepting Scholarship Applications

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

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

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

The application deadline is May 1.

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

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

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

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

Saturday CommuniTea: Is on hiatus, but the staff would be glad to put the kettle on during regular library hours.

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.

Monthly Herb Circle

The next Monthly Herb Circle at Wildcraft Herb Shoppe, 70 Main St. Unit B, will take place Wednesday, April 1, at 6:30 p.m. The theme is Herbs for Energy.

All new and experienced herbalists, tea drinkers, plant lovers, gardeners and more are invited to come meet the herbs, drink tea, and have herby fellowship.

Fee is \$10, for the herbs.

Family Bingo at VFW Post 5095

The VFW Auxiliary invites the community to a Family Bingo and Patriotic Celebration Sunday, April 19, from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., at VFW Post 5095, 20 North Maple St.

This special all-ages event will feature: Family Bingo with patriotic-themed prizes for all ages; additional games for those looking to take a break from bingo; and the Post Café offering lunch and snack items for purchase.

For more information, call 860-267-8837.

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.

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

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

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

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.

Senior Center News & Notes

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

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

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

Navigating Loss and Grief Workshop: Thursdays, starting April 2, at 1 p.m. This six-week workshop will focus on navigating grief and prioritizing safety, validation, and the transition from acute pain to integrated memory.

Design & Create Class: Thursday, April 2, 1:30 p.m. Join staff member Cindy Houle for a hands-on group art experience. Each session features a different project.

Christ Episcopal Church News

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

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 for more information.

East Hampton Library News & Notes

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

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

Adult Programs: 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.

Charcuterie Night: A Cookbook Club Event: Tuesday, April 7, 6:30 p.m. Bring an item or two – cheese, crackers, fruit, olives, sweets, or spreads – to add to the giant community charcuterie board. After assembling the board, then sample the food! Drop in or register.

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.

Lego at the Library: Grades K-6: Tuesday, April 7, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Come to the library to build a new creation based on a challenge/theme, solo or with friends. All Lego bricks provided.

Dog Man Party: Grades K-5: Saturday, April 11, 2-3:30 p.m. Celebrate all things Dog Man with crafts, activities, and snacks inspired by the graphic novel.

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Library Friends Offer Scholarship

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

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

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

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

Submit your completed application form by April 10.

Epoch Arts Accepting Tag Sale Donations

Epoch Arts will begin accepting donations next month for its annual September Two-Weekend Tag Sale.

A small group of volunteers will sort, clean and price the donations. Items not accepted: recliners, couches, headboards, mattresses, bedframes, high chairs, cribs, car seats, computers, printers, keyboards, TVs, VCRs, exercise machines, textbooks, encyclopedias, old-style phones, large toys, doors, ironing boards, strollers, single chairs, paint and cleaners, file cabinets, office chairs, large dog beds, lighting that can't be plugged in, medicine, animal dia-

pers and fish tank pumps.

Drop-off times are 8 a.m.-2 p.m. on the following dates: April 11 and 25, May 9 and 23, June 13 and 27, July 11 and 25, Aug. 1 and 8. Drop-off is located at the lower end of the building in the garage area by Helping Hands, 27 Skinner St. Please do not drop off your donations at the main entrance to our building or on any other drop off days.

Tag Sale 2026 is Sept. 11 and 18, noon-5 p.m., and Sept. 12, 13, 19 and 20 from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. For more information, visit www.epocharts.org.

Senior Center Upcoming Trips

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

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

On the Hunt, Moose & Gems, Bethel, Maine: May 27-29. Spend two nights at Sunday River Resort, and visit Maine Mineral and Gem Museum, Moose Safari, Conway Scenic Railway. Cost is \$769 double/triple occupancy.

Newport Flower Show "Pearl of Newport":

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

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

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

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.

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.



East Hampton's 6th grade travel basketball champs are pictured. Front row (kneeling from left): Connor LaBonia, Brennan King, Marco Serra, Lorenzo Milardo, and Rylan Ellison. Back row (standing from left): Coach Jason Serra, Oliver McCarthy-Nowak, Lucas Granatowski, Charlie McCarthy-Nowak, Sawyer Farrell, Sawyer McCarthy-Nowak, and coach Chris LaBonia.

East Hampton Travel Basketball Captures Championship

The East Hampton 6th grade travel basketball team won the 2026 Central Connecticut Division Championship.

After losing three of their first four games to start the season, the team turned things around and didn't lose another game for three months, finishing the season with a 17-4 mark.

Highlights of the season include victories against larger town teams such as Madison, Montville, Guilford, Wallingford, Bloomfield and Wolcott. The season included a huge victory at home against undefeated at the time (17-0) Valley Regional 34-32, handing them their only loss of the season at (25-1).

The travel team was powered by Charlie

McCarthy-Nowak, who led the team in rebounds, and Marco Serra, who led the team in assists and ran the offense with his leadership and quickness. Oliver McCarthy-Nowak led the team in three-pointers and Sawyer McCarthy-Nowak led the team with steals and defense.

The team had big contributions from Brennan King, who made key baskets in close games, and Sawyer Farrell, who provided stability in the front court. The team had key contributions from Lucas Granatowski (rebounds), Lorenzo Milardo (offense), Connor LaBonia (shooting), Rylan Ellison (defense). The team was coached by Jason Serra and Chris LaBonia.

YPCCA 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.

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 and enter East Hampton.

DTC Offering Scholarship

The East Hampton Democratic Town Committee is offering a \$500 scholarship to a graduating senior who resides in East Hampton for their continuing education and graduating in 2026.

Applications are available in the guidance office at the East Hampton High School. Deadline for submission of applications is May 1.

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.

Library Friends Offering Scholarship

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

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

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

Submit your completed application form by April 10.

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DECA Has Strong Showing at State Championships

By Anne Lilburn

More than 30 students from East Hampton High School's DECA Chapter competed at the State DECA Championships at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville on Feb. 26, with one student competing well enough to qualify for nationals.

DECA, a national organization that promotes leadership and entrepreneurship training for students, holds competitions where students have the opportunity to compete in the areas of marketing, travel and tourism, business plans, community awareness projects, marketing management and finance. The acronym originally stood for Distributive Education Clubs of America when the organization was first founded in the 1940s, but the longer version of that name was later abandoned.

EHHS business education teacher Kristen Dean said that she had been advising the school's Business Club since 2011, but the school didn't launch its DECA chapter until 2022. She said that, while the DECA chapter does many of the same things that the Business Club did, it also offers new opportunities for students, one of the most notable being this annual state conference, which offers the competitors opportunities to connect and network with peers.

"The first year we went," Dean said, "I believe there were about 1,000 participants. This year, there were 1,500. So they are networking around 1,500 other students from all over the state."

Dean said she was impressed at the hard work the students put in just to be able to attend the conference. She credited them for doing a lot of "academic work" for what was not a class, but an extracurricular activity, including preparing a written presentation (either on their own or in a group) or taking a test in order to qualify.

"We had three [presentations] this year," she said, "and you can do it in teams. We had an innovation business plan, a community awareness project, and then a franchise business plan, and they were 20 pages each. Some were written, some were slide pitches, and then they brought visuals and all types of tools to present to the judges, and they did well."

Once at the conference, Dean said, the students participate in a role play for their compe-

tion.

"It is like a job interview," said Dean, adding that "there's a pretty strict dress code and they're there for a long period of time, and a lot of them are competing by themselves and they have to go in front of adults that they've never met before."

"I give them a lot of credit," she said.

One student who did a group presentation was senior Madelyn Wilk, who said she had been participating in the DECA chapter since her freshman year. Her team presented a proposal for an app aimed at students applying to college.

"[We] created an app called Bright Path for our project," she said, "and basically the app is kind of a way for students that are seniors to apply to colleges and make the process a lot easier."

"Since we're seniors in high school, we know how difficult the college application process could be," said Wilk, "so that's why we decided to make an app that would make this easier, and it utilized a lot of marketing because we had to figure out how to get the app out there and just make people know of it and stuff."

Wilk said she always got nervous prior to the championships, even though she had been competing for years, but that this year was easier for her than in years past.

"It still was nerve wracking my senior year, but it definitely is super exciting," she said. "I always get super excited to preside in front of the judges and show them what I've learned."

This year, EHHS had two students who were finalists. Derek Guiliano, a freshman, placed fifth, receiving an honorable mention in the category of Principles of Entrepreneurship, while Sean Hargreaves, a sophomore, placed fourth in the category of Principles of Hospitality and Tourism. That fourth-place win earned him a glass plaque and qualified him for nationals, which will be held in Atlanta in late April. Dean said it's the first time that the school will have a student attend nationals, and she was looking forward to the event, which was expected to have 15,000 competitors.

Principal Eric Verner said he was proud of all of the DECA students, describing it as one of the many "positive things" that bring EHHS together. He said he was particularly proud of



On Feb. 26, members of East Hampton High School's DECA chapter joined 1,500 students from across the state to compete in Connecticut's DECA State Career Development Conference at the Aqua Turf. The conference focused on such topics as marketing, travel and tourism, business plans, community awareness projects, marketing management, and finance.

the teachers who advise the students, including Dean and English teacher Stacey Riggio, who also advises the group, saying that "in this building, I feel I am blessed" to have so many "dedicated" teachers who go above and beyond.

Dean said that honors like nationals were exciting, but she was happy for every one of her students, even those who didn't bring home a "DECA glass."

"My goal," she said, "our goal, has always been that going to Connecticut's DECA conference is a goal in it of itself. There's a lot of preparation. There's

the dress code. There's coming so early to school. There's, you know, presenting in front of adults on topics that you may have just learned about."

"So, that's what we're really going for," she continued. "The experience, those interviewing skills, those non-verbal and verbal presentation skills, making East Hampton proud, presenting ourselves well, using the downtime, and that the networking. That's really what the goal has always been, and that's what we focus on, and winning the glass or honorable mention? That's just extra."

Arts & Culture Commission Seeks Members

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

The commission works to promote and celebrate the arts in East Hampton by purchasing work from local creators for display in town buildings, organizing community events, and providing grants to residents, students, and or-

ganizations. Recent grant recipients include a local preschool class, Epoch Arts (which provides art and theater programming for youth), and East Hampton High School seniors completing capstone projects.

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

Special Concert to Celebrate America

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

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

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

Call 860-993-5311 for more information.

Accepting Entries for Art Contests

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

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

The deadline for both contests is March 31.

Ham Shoots

The Belltown Sportsman's Club will have ham shoots Sunday, March 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.

Bingo at VFW Post

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

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

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.

Lions Offer Scholarships

The East Hampton Lions Club is offering students graduating an opportunity to apply for its four annual scholarships – the Gov. William O'Neill Memorial, Joseph Becker and Lions Club scholarships, and the Gustine Service Award.

Those who apply need to be East Hampton residents who attend East Hampton High School or area charter, tech, vo-ag or Catholic schools, or are home-schooled.

Applications are available at the EHHS guidance office. The due date for return of applications is April 30.

St. Patrick Church News & Notes

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

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

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

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.

Police News

3/17: Nicholas Kensey, 41, of East Hampton, was arrested and charged with unlawful discharge of a firearm and possession of a sawed-off shotgun or silencer, East Hampton Police said.

3/21: Trevor Depino, 54, of Southington, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, police said.

From Marh 16-22, officers responded to 18 medical calls, three motor vehicle crashes and four alarms, and made eight traffic stops, police said.

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 or www.bethlehemeh.org.

KoC Scholarships, Grants Available

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

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

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

All applications must be received by April 17.

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Grief Share Group to Start

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Hot Meals for the Hungry... Marlborough Congregational Church has been providing hot meals for clients of the Food Bank once a month. This past February, church members worked with members of St. John Fisher Church. Pictured from left are Kris Johnson, Eileen Gilles, Sue Harley, Julie Groene, Doug Meyer, Dustin Johnson and Barbara Meyer. (Sheryl Scheidel and Ida Spooner are not pictured.)

St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

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

Stations of the Cross: 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.

Lenten Reconciliation: The last Reconciliation prior to Easter will be Monday, March 30, with extended hours from 5-7 p.m.

Holy Week & Easter Mass Celebrations: Holy Thursday, April 2 – Mass at 7:00 p.m.; Good Friday, April 3 – Service at 3 p.m.; Easter Vigil, April 4 – Mass at 8 p.m. (No 4 p.m. Vigil Mass); Easter Sunday, April 5 – Masses at 8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

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.stjfcchurch.org, or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church).

From the Superintendent's Desk...

Marlborough is an amazing town with so many assets, including a wonderful elementary school. It takes a lot to have a school feel like a special place for children to learn and grow—families who love and encourage their children, a committed school staff who are knowledgeable and caring, a community that recognizes the value of educating its youngest citizens, and children who are curious thinkers who believe in themselves. Marlborough Elementary School has all of this going for it, and it is our aim to keep a great thing going for children and the community.

The Board of Education develops budgets for what it takes in this day and age to meet children's learning and social-emotional needs. Marlborough elementary school has had consistently low per pupil expenditure with high student performance outcomes—otherwise known as an excellent return on investment. MES is #29 out of 30 in spending in its demographic reference group (DRG-C) and second to lowest in spending (#15 out of 16) compared with all Pre-K-6 school districts in the state, while ranking as the 4th highest in performance. In addition to the excellence in academics, our students are served by a highly trained and essential related services and mental health team to help children thrive.

MES is a School of Distinction in Mathematics and a spotlight school district for foundational reading. Our physical education, health, art, Spanish, and music programs round out a plethora of learning experiences where children create, perform, and collaborate. Our Student Council organizes winter clothes and toy drives and collects goods for the Marlborough Food Bank. Our students now have a full array of opportunities to develop and hone critical thinking and problem-solving skills through our Science-Technology-Engineering-Art-Mathematics (STEAM) curriculum, Invention Convention, Future Problem Solvers, and a magnificent array of extracurricular clubs. Nearly 200 students participated in clubs this year ranging from painting to yoga to trivia to the ukulele and more! These enriching experiences could not exist if not for our teachers and staff who volunteer to run these activities.

We look at every budget line and ask ourselves, "Is there another way to achieve the same or a better outcome with greater efficiency?" We are adaptive and often face difficult reductions, including a significant decrease in spending for our Building Administrator structure beginning next school year. We were on track to propose a FY27 operating budget lower than a 3% increase, however medical insurance costs across the Region 8 consortium elevated our Operating Budget by over 2% in just that line. At the time this piece was submitted for publication, the Marlborough Public Schools operating budget was projected to be a 4.49% increase. The average among local area school districts is a 6.71% increase.

We respectfully seek the community's continued support of MES and the overall town budget. Please visit the budget tab of the school district website, marlborough.k12.ct.us, to become familiar with what has been proposed for next year's school budget. We will present the school budget again at the Town Budget Hearings on April 20th and May 4th ahead of the budget referendum on May 5th, but if you have any questions in the meantime, you can email budget questions to FY27BudgetQuestions@marlborough.k12.ct.us.

Holly Hageman
Marlborough Superintendent of Schools



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Local Realtor Ken Hjulstrom, left, met with state Rep. Steve Weir (R-55) at a recent Greater Hartford Association of Realtors event in West Hartford.

Realtors Meet with Legislators

On March 18th, the Greater Hartford Association of Realtors (GHAR) held an event at WeHa Brewing and Roasting in West Hartford to meet with Connecticut legislators who serve on the Insurance and Real Estate Committee and the Housing Committee.

The Connecticut legislators on hand included state Rep. Steve Weir (R-55), who serves on the Housing Committee. GHAR Government Affairs Committee member and local Realtor Ken Hjulstrom spoke with the legislators in attendance regarding bills that are being presented that address various issues involving real estate,

affordable housing and tenant/landlord rights.

The legislators on hand confirmed that receiving only a handful of emails or phone calls from the public is enough to get their attention regarding public opinion on proposed legislation. Members of the GHAR Government Affairs Committee encouraged legislators to think about the impact of proposed legislation on homeowners.

Anyone interested in learning more about legislation being considered can read more about the details at www.cga.ct.gov.

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.

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.

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

Benefit Assessment

Residents in the town's sewer district are notified that the Benefit Assessment bills are due to the Marlborough Water Pollution Control Authority (MWPCA), April 1. The last day to pay without interest is May 1.

Delinquent bills will be charged 1.5% interest per month reverting to the due date of April 1, or 18% per year. Minimum interest is \$5. If you do not receive a bill, please contact the Tax Office at 860-295-6205.

Make checks payable to MWPCA. Payments can be mailed to: Tax Collector, Town of Marlborough, P.O. Box 26, 29 North Main St., Marlborough, CT 06447, or placed in the Drop Box to the left of the Town Hall front door for payments by check – no cash.

Tax collector hours are Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Tuesday, 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m.-noon.

Congregational Church News & Notes

Holy Week and Easter Services are scheduled at Marlborough Congregational Church, located at 35 South Main St. Sanctuary worship services are livestreamed at mcc.marlconchurch.org and can be watched later through the church website, mcc.marlconchurch.org. Church pastor is the Rev. Valerie Seaver.

Palm Sunday, March 29 will include the annual Palm Parade, an Ice Cream Seder for the Sunday School students, and after worship, an Easter Egg hunt for nursery ages to grade 4 with a visit from the Easter Bunny. Homemade cookies at \$5 a dozen and chocolate lollipops for \$2 each will be sold in the Thienes Lounge, with proceeds to benefit Dorcas Women's Fellowship mission projects.

Maundy Thursday Service of Tenebrae on April 2 will be held in the sanctuary at 7 p.m. and will include Holy Communion and a dramatic reading of the Passion Story by church deacons. The Chancel Choir will participate in the service.

Easter Sunday, April 5: A Sunrise Service will be held lakeside at Lake Terramuggus at 7 a.m. Hymns will be led by a brass ensemble and hot cocoa will be served. All in the community are welcome. Bring a lawn chair if you wish.

The Resurrection Celebration will be held at the church at 10 a.m. The sanctuary will be decorated for Easter with flowers filling the chancel and Easter banners hung on the walls. The service, led by the Rev. Valerie Seaver, will include Holy Communion that is open to all, regardless of church affiliation, including children with parental guidance. The service will include a Children's Message, joyous music from the Chancel Choir including Handel's Hallelujah Chorus to close the service.

Marlborough Sings, led by Carolyn Brodgin-ski, will be held upstairs in the Thienes Lounge Saturday, April 4, at 7 p.m. All who enjoy singing, including musicians, are welcome.

Second Blessings Thrift Shop will be closed Good Friday and Holy Saturday, April 3 and 4.

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

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A steady rain didn't dampen the spirit of folks who participated in, and watched, the annual tractor parade at last weekend's Maple Fest. The two-day festival was not just entertaining but also educational, as Woodyacres Sugar House owner David Schaller is seen here instructing visitors on the art of maple syrup-making.

★ Sweet Start to Spring, cont. from page 1

labor-intensive. "You go out there middle of February and you tap the trees," he said. "They're all on tubing. ... It goes into collection tanks, and then you basically just boil the water out of it. You're leaving the sugar once you get it to a certain density."

The result is pure maple syrup, drawn directly from the evaporator. But what surprises many visitors is the scale of effort required. "It takes 50 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup," Schaller noted.

Schaller said he enjoys sharing the process. "I think it's pretty cool. A lot of people don't understand how it's made and how simple it is," he said. "It's crazy that still every year, more people are learning about it." That surprise doubled when attendees learned they could make syrup at home as well.

That sense of discovery extended to younger generations as well. At one demonstration, members of the University of Connecticut Woodsmen team drew a crowd as they showcased lumberjack-style skills. For former president and senior Jim Denton, the club is about more than just chopping wood. After joining, he discovered "these were like my people." He continued, "we teach a lot of things that you really can't get in any other clubs. ... A lot of teamwork and character-building activities."

Current team president Jack Wilson echoed a similar sentiment, and emphasized the unique nature of their work. "Everything we know is passed down knowledge," he said. "Someone learned it at one point, and then I was taught it. ... It's all generational kind of knowledge."

While demonstrations and crafts drew



crowds, it's often the simplest moments that leave the strongest impressions. For families attending the festival, the experience is about togetherness.

Five-year Hebron residents Joseph and Kerry Miffitt brought their daughter Ellie to enjoy the day despite the rainy weather that greeted them on Sunday. "Everyone's out here, despite the rain. There's a great little community, and we love it," they said.

Ellie, who endured the rain in her bright pink jacket, had no trouble identifying her favorite parts. "I like the bouncy houses and tractors," she said, adding that the "big one" stood out the most.

And of course, no Maple Festival would be complete without the food. When asked about favorite treats, answers ranged from maple syr-

up itself – "You're just drinking it by the bottle?" one vendor joked – to crowd favorites like cinnamon donuts and maple candies.

Throughout the weekend, these small interactions – between vendor and customer, neighbor and neighbor, parent and child – formed the true essence of the festival. Over the two days, craftsmanship was shared, traditions were preserved, and community bonds were strengthened.

The Hebron Maple Festival first started in 1989, and while the event has grown over the years, it remains, at its heart, a gathering rooted in something simple: sap flowing from trees, boiled down into something sweet and shared among people who call Hebron home. Or who, for a weekend, feel like they do.

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



Fife & Drum Food Drive

The Marlborough Jr. Ancient Fife & Drum Corps will sponsor a food drive on the town green this Sunday, March 29, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The young marchers will be playing traditional music and receiving any donations towards the Marlborough Food Bank.

Non-perishable food, toiletries or cash donations for the food bank will all be accepted. As one of a few community service projects, this will be the fourth year that the members of the corps have collected for the cause before Easter.

In 2025, the Marlborough Jr. Ancients collected 23 bags of groceries and \$175 toward the cause.

MVFD Women's Auxiliary Scholarships

The Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department's Women's Auxiliary is now accepting scholarship applications from any graduating senior who resides in Marlborough. The applications are available online through the RHAM Guidance Department.

Applications are due by Friday, May 1. Mail all completed applications to MVFD Women's Auxiliary, P.O. Box 237, Marlborough, CT 06447.

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.

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Watercolor Class for Mixed Abilities

Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., will offer an Introduction to Watercolor class, for people with mixed abilities with the medium of watercolor and painting in general, on Saturday, March 28, from 2-5 p.m.
Led by Marika Hahn, the class will give you an opportunity to focus on brush strokes and using liquid watercolors for a very transparent effect. The workshop is being held from 2-5

p.m. Saturday, March 28, and the cost is \$65. See the course description for supplies provided and supplies you must bring. To register go to MarlboroughArts.org and click on the menu tab in the upper right corner. Go to current classes and click on Intro to Watercolor March '26 session.
For more information, call 860-467-6353 or email info@marlborougharts.org.

Watercolorist On Display at Town Hall

The Marlborough Arts Center presents a new solo exhibit featuring the work of arts center member and Connecticut artist Charles McCaughtry. The collection is currently on display at the Marlborough Town Hall's MAC Hallway Gallery.
McCaughtry's watercolors focus on the relationships between earth, water, air, and light. An avid hiker and paddler, he draws inspiration from the wild areas he explores.
The exhibit will run through the end of April and is open to the public during Marlborough Town Hall business hours: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Tuesday, 8 a.m.-7 p.m.; and Friday, 8 a.m.-noon. Town Hall is located at 26 N. Main St.
For more information, contact the Marlborough Arts Center at 860-467-6353 or the Marlborough Town Hall Tax Collector's Department at 860-295-6205.

MVFD Easter Plant Sale

The Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department, located at 7 Hebron Rd., will hold its annual Easter Plant Sale Thursday, April 2, from noon-6 p.m.; Friday, April 3, from 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday, April 4, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.; and Sunday, April 5, from 9 a.m.-noon.
All are invited. Also, the Easter Bunny will pay a visit Saturday, April 4, from noon-2:30 p.m.

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.
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.

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Parks and Rec. Programs

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

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: 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.

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: 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.

Senior Center News and Notes

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

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

Events: 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 2-30 (no class April 23), 5-7 p.m. Fee: \$50/resident, \$60/non-resident. RSVP by March 31.

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.

Birthday Club: April birthdays will be celebrated Tuesday, April 28, from 1-2 p.m., with cake! Open to all friends and family. It does not have to be your birthday month to celebrate. However, if it is please RSVP.

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

Transportation: Rides to medical appointments, employment, essential services, the Senior Center and recreation activities are available to seniors and people with disabilities. Transportation is available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Rides must be reserved two

business days in advance. Call 860-295-6209 for more information. Visit www.marlbroughct.gov for the complete transportation policy. Transportation services are only available Monday and Tuesdays, until further notice.

Social Services: Food Bank: Located at 3 Wilhenger Drive, and can be reached at 860-295-6008. There is an open house Tuesdays from 10 a.m.-noon and 4-6 p.m. The food bank is in need of: canned vegetables (corn, green beans, peas, carrots), jam/jelly, fruit cocktail, and canned fruit. The food bank is open to qualified residents in need.

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.



Colchester Cares recently voted to give \$1,600 to Colchester Federated Church for repairs. Pictured from left are church members Suzanne Cramer and Deborah Howard along with Kim Talarczyk, co-founder of Colchester Cares.

Colchester Cares Makes Donations

Colchester Cares, a group that supports various causes in town, recently made its first-quarter donations totaling \$4,800. The group voted to give \$1,600 each to the Colchester Federated Church for repairs, Freezin' for a Reason to support the Colchester Fuel Bank, and a scholarship for a Bacon Academy senior student accepted into a 4-year college/university.

Colchester Cares members, who commit to donating \$100 a quarter, present current needs in town and then vote on where to send the group's collective donations. The group was es-

tablished in 2020 and since its inception has donated over \$70,000 to Colchester causes.

Colchester Cares always welcomes new members who would like to give back to the community. You can be a member without having to attend meetings. Suggesting worthy causes, voting, and donating can all be done online. The next quarterly meeting will be held Tuesday, April 21, at 7 p.m., at the Carl Guild Community Room, 392 South Main St., Colchester.

For more information, visit www.colchester-cares.org or follow the group on Facebook.

Vendors Sought for Spring Fair

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

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

Honor Society Inductee

Claire Alexander of Colchester, a student at the University of Alabama, was recently elected to membership into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest all-discipline collegiate honor society.

Red Cross Blood Drive

American Legion Post 54 will hold a Red Cross Blood Drive at Saint Joseph Polish Club, 395 South Main St., on Monday, April 27, from 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m., for a Red Cross Blood Drive.

While donations of all blood types are needed, the American Legion said the Red Cross especially needs Type O Negative and Type B Negative blood donors right now.

Download the American Red Cross app or go to the Red Cross website at www.redcrossblood.org to make an appointment. Walk-ins can also be accommodated.

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Lions Club Collecting Donations, Eyeglasses

The Colchester Lions Club will hold its annual Sight Saver Weekend the weekend of April 17-19.

Collection locations will be: Noel's Market on Friday, April 17 from 3 to 7 p.m.; Saturday, April 18, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and Sunday, April 19, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; also, Stop & Shop on Saturday, April 18, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and

Sunday, April 19, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Fifty percent of the funds raised during this weekend will go to Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation. The rest of the money raised will go towards local causes at the end of the Lions' year.

Lions Club members will also be collecting used eyeglasses all weekend.

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.

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.

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

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 Service 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.

Christian Life Chapel News

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

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

Children's Worship: Sundays at 10:45 a.m. Kids will learn about Jesus in ageappropriate ways.

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

Community Bible Study: Wednesdays at 7

p.m. All are invited.

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

Upcoming Events: Sunrise Service: Sunday, April 5, 7:30 a.m., on the Town Green.

Clothing Swap: Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Celebrate creation care by sharing and reusing clothing in this community-focused event.

Vacation Bible School (VBS): Monday, July 20-Friday, July 24, 9 a.m.-noon. This year's theme is: Illumination Station: "Shine a Light on Jesus." This is a week of faith, fun, and discovery for children.

Senior Center News & Notes

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

Monday, March 30: 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 31: 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, April 1: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Walking Group; 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Reflexology; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Hand and Foot Card Game, Sit & Be Fit Video; 1 p.m., Sew-cial Time; 1:30 p.m., Cardio; 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming.

Thursday, April 2: 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, April 3: Senior center closed for Good Friday.

Passover Seder Celebration: Monday, April 6, 11 a.m. Rabbi Ken Alter will discuss the history surrounding this holiday and how it is celebrated by the Jewish community. This is a free program but registration is required. This is open to all regardless of your own faith.

Spring Centerpiece Workshop: Tuesday, April 7, 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Leah O'Hearn, the owner and designer from It's So Ranunculus Flower Shoppe, will lead a spring floral design class. She will guide participants through creating a seasonal arrangement filled with spring colors, textures, and unique blooms. This program is sponsored by Graceful Transitions.

Space is limited. Registration is required. You may only register for the day or evening program, not both.

Exploring the World of Charcoal Drawing Mini Class: Friday, April 10, 12:30-2:30 p.m. From an actual still life setting, students in this beginner-level class will learn how to use charcoal drawing tools to create a realistic charcoal drawing. Taught by Jeanette Green. The cost of this class is \$16, this covers the instruction and supplies.

Pre-Season Golf League Meeting: Tuesday, April 14, 2 p.m. This is an informational meeting to discuss the 2026 Golf League season at Chantclair Golf Course in Colchester. This is a senior co-ed league and new members are welcome. Attend the meeting or call the center for more information.

Spring Fever Luncheon: Wednesday, April 15, 11 a.m. Celebrate this season of growth and new beginnings with a good-time spring party. The Boomers will perform favorites from Buffett, the Eagles, Springsteen, Zac Brown, and more. Lunch will follow with glazed ham, rice pilaf, green beans almondine, and apple crumb pie. Tickets are \$10 per person. Space is limited; registration is required.

Mixed Media Art Adventure: Tuesdays starting April 20 at 10 a.m. In this six-week workshop, beginner and intermediate students will create unique artworks. Design elements, design principles, color theory, and even a little art history will be touched upon lightly in passing. Jeff Poole is instructor. Cost is \$60 per person. Space is limited.

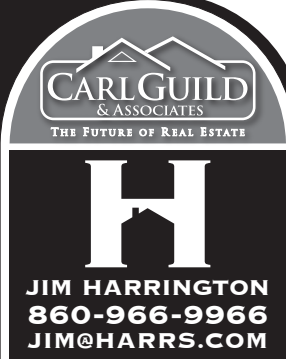
Mental Health As We Age Lunch & Learn: Wednesday, April 29, 11:30 a.m. AM As people age, they may experience certain life changes that impact their mental health. Kara Caevette from Masonicare will present. This is a free program, but space is limited. A choice of tuna or turkey sandwich will be served for lunch. Registration is required.

A MAN OF MY WORD.

- Jim Harrington, BROKER

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ALIASES

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE PAGE 33

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CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Neil Manasa

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- 29 "You're So ___": 1972 hit
- 30 The A in A.D.
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- 56 Other than
- 57 Fall short
- 58 Soul singer James
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- 63 See 28 Down

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Budget Hearing Highlights Rising Costs, Insurance Crisis

By Toriana Williams

The first public hearing on proposed held on March 10 brought together town officials, school leaders and residents to review and question proposed budgets that reflected rising costs, financial challenges and difficult decisions.

The meeting focused on two main parts: the town government budget and the Board of Education budget. Both presentations showed how increasing expenses, especially for healthcare, are currently shaping financial plans for the upcoming fiscal year.

Town Budget Overview

First Selectman Bernie Dennler, a Democrat, presented a proposed town budget of \$19,521,660, which represented an increase of about \$1.4 million, or 7.9%, from the previous year. He explained that the budget is built around these priorities: “stability and safety, sustainability and affordability.”

Dennler explained that the town cannot control many of the cost increases. For example, wages are rising by about \$560,000, mostly due to union contracts. Employee benefits are increasing by \$547,000, largely because of higher healthcare costs. Debt service is also increasing by \$85,000, while supplies and utilities are increasing by around \$70,000 and \$30,000.

Healthcare is one of the biggest concerns. The town is self-insured, meaning it pays employee medical claims directly. Healthcare costs are projected to rise from about \$1.3 million in the current year to \$1.8 million in the next fiscal year. Dennler explained, “Every time one of our people goes to the doctor past their deductible, we are paying that directly.”

The budget also reflects everyday expenses affected by inflation. For example, road salt and sand are expected to cost about \$75,000, and police body camera updates will cost an additional \$42,000. Even smaller increases, like \$6,000 for the regional health district, add to the overall total.

Dennler also reviewed past budgets to show how spending has changed. The town budget was \$15.7 million in FY 2021-22, \$15.6 million in 2022-23, \$15.7 million in 2023-24, \$17.1 million in 2024-25 and \$18 million in 2025-26. He noted that recent increases were, in part, from inflation and new labor contracts after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Department Highlights and Services

Dennler discussed several town departments in detail. He shared that Public Works has struggled with staffing in the past, but wage ad-

justments are being phased in over four years to improve employee retention. The fire and emergency medical services department responded to nearly 2,500 calls in 2025, including 735 fire-related and around 1,700 EMS calls. That averages about seven calls per day.

The fire department is also adding staff to meet a goal of three firefighters per shift, which will increase payroll by about \$97,000 plus \$16,000 in retirement and FICA costs. However, ambulance services are expected to generate about \$660,000 in revenue.

Other requests include \$12,000 to raise senior bus driver wages from \$17-\$19 per hour to \$21-\$22 per hour, and a \$37,000 increase to double the registrars of voters’ weekly hours from 10 to 20 hours due to increased workload.

Dennler also highlighted savings efforts, such as consolidating officers to save \$33,000, switching animal control services to save up to \$35,000 and using cannabis tax revenue, about \$20,000, to fund Youth Services programs.

Board of Education Budget and Insurance Crisis

The Board of Education presented a proposed budget of \$51,915,042, which is a 9.76% increase over the previous year. Without insurance costs, the increase would be much smaller - about 2.94%, bringing the total to \$48,688,472. With insurance only included, the total rises to \$50,524,292, or 6.82%.

The well-known health insurance fund is the main issue driving this increase. Officials described it as a “perfect storm” caused by rising claims and a mistake in how the fund was calculated. Superintendent of Schools Dan Sullivan explained, “It was the misapplication of a formula ... and as a result, we are in a challenging financial position at this moment.”

The budget included an increase of over \$3.2

million for health insurance. Officials said the fund needs to be rebuilt to a safe level. Ideally, the reserve should hold three to four months of claims, or about \$2.1 million to \$2.8 million. However, the current reserve is about \$1.2 million, and there is a possibility it could be depleted if claims continue at the current rate or higher.

To address this, the BOE initiated a forensic audit. This type of audit is a detailed investigation used to find out what went wrong by a third-party organization. As BOE chair Stefanie Tracy-Calash, a Democrat, explained, it is meant to “do a comprehensive review of the fund ... to understand what this impact would mean for our community.”

Tension Over Transparency

One of the most notable moments of the public hearing was a tense exchange between Board of Finance member John Thomas, a Republican, and Superintendent Dan Sullivan. Thomas criticized Sullivan’s explanation of the insurance issue, saying, “The town of Colchester deserves to know that there’s something going on a little more serious than mismanagement of some sort.”

He also expressed concern about approving a nearly 10% budget increase while a forensic audit is still underway, stating, “I’m a little uncomfortable with any kind of a budget increase with a forensic audit going on.”

Sullivan responded firmly and said, “I think I was quite transparent. ... It was not a misappropriation of funds. ... It was a misapplication of a formula.” He explained that once the issue was discovered, steps were taken to fix it and prevent it from happening again.

The exchange became more personal when Thomas replied, “Transparency is not something you’re noted for, sir. ... Very disappointed.”

‘Spring Cleaning with Purpose’

The next meeting of the Colchester-area Chapter 4019 of AARP is on Tuesday, April 7, at the Colchester Senior Center located at 15 Louis Lane. The theme of this month’s meeting is “Spring Cleaning with Purpose.”

This talk will offer tips for downsizing, decluttering, and organizing a lifetime of belongings.

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.

Ukrainian Catholic Church News

All are invited to worship each week at St. Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, 178 Linwood Ave. The church offers Eastern Rite Divine services. Church doors are open for Divine Liturgy on Saturdays at 4 p.m. and Sundays at 9 a.m.; the Sunday service is bilingual.

For more information, call the church at 860-537-2069.

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.

If you have any questions or need assistance, contact Parks and Recreation at parksandrec@colchesterct.gov or 860-537.7297.

ings. Shelia Gavish of Amston Home Transition Solutions will present.

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

All seniors in the greater Colchester area are welcome to attend this free program.

Polish Club Fish Fry

The St. Joseph’s Polish Club at 395 South Main St. will host their annual fish fry Friday, April 3, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Dinner will be \$16 for adults and \$10 for children under 12. Guests will have their choice of baked or fried fish.

You can call your order in and pick it up, or eat in the hall. Orders will start being taken at 4 p.m. For pick-up, call 860-537-2550.

Dean’s List

Samantha D’atri of Colchester made the fall 2025 Dean’s List at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta.

Classifieds Pay

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Conversation Turns Heated at BOS Meeting

By Toriana Williams

On March 19, the Colchester Board of Selectmen held a meeting that covered a wide range of topics, from school concerns and financial oversight to infrastructure projects and a heated debate about a local farmers market.

The meeting included strong public comments, detailed updates from town officials and moments of visible tension among board members.

Public Concerns Raise Serious Issues

Olivia Duksa spoke first, who identified herself as the chair of the Republican Town Committee but said she was speaking “as a citizen and concerned parent.” She raised concerns about student behavior and school oversight.

“No students should feel targeted, intimidated or unsafe for their beliefs,” she said, referring to reports of bullying involving a student political group. She emphasized that the issue goes beyond politics and reflects the community’s responsibility to protect students.

Duksa also questioned financial oversight within the school system, particularly a forensic audit resulting from a million-dollar shortfall in the health insurance fund. She asked, “Who initiated this forensic audit and is it being conducted by a truly independent third party with no ties to those involved?” She stressed the importance of “transparency and accountability ... especially when it comes to taxpayer dollars.”

Jason LaChapelle followed with questions about the same audit. He asked First Selectman Bernie Dennler, a Democrat, “when did you know about the forensic audit?”

He then challenged the first selectman directly, saying, “I don’t think anybody believes for a second ... you were unaware” [of the forensic audit].

LaChapelle also criticized the timing of a recent school funding decision, arguing that residents should have been informed about the audit before voting. He also raised concerns about a local organization connected to the farmers market, questioning why it was still operating despite the issues that were reported.

Allegations About Farmers Market

Spark Outcry

Much of the meeting’s tension centered on allegations involving the Colchester Farmers Market and a business associated with it.

Carolina Moilanen, of Southwitch LLC, sells

such products as candles and dolls who sells candles and dolls, shared her own personal experience. Selling her products and services through local events “is my only income. ... I have no family in America,” she said. She described repeated promises of payment that were never fulfilled, and added, “I am exhausted ... and I hope that you ... will stand for the artist.”

Later in the meeting, another resident named Tina described similar issues as a former employee of the accused party. She stated, “I was never paid. ... I still have not been paid.” She urged the board to recognize what she called a pattern of behavior and take action.

These allegations led to a tense exchange between board members. Selectman Tim Vaillancourt, a Republican, requested to add the issue of the Colchester Farmers Market to the agenda, calling the situation “completely outrageous.” He argued that the town had a responsibility to look further into the situation, and said, “This is a problem that needs to be investigated.”

Dennler replied, warning against acting on unverified claims. “This board is repeating allegations which may or may not be true,” he said. Dennler emphasized that the farmers market is not a town-run event and that individuals can rent public space through Parks and Rec.

The discussion escalated as Vaillancourt accused Dennler of inaction, saying, “It’s outrageous that you don’t care.”

Dennler strongly rejected that claim, and responded, “Please stop saying that I don’t care, Tim. There are many things that I will tolerate from your behavior, but I will not tolerate you consistently saying that I don’t care.”

Dennler also criticized that tone of the discussion, calling it “a circus and a bit of a kangaroo court.”

Infrastructure, Town Projects Move Forward

Beyond the controversy, the board addressed several infrastructure projects. Public Works Director Joe Leone explained a pressing need to maintain the town’s water supply wells. He described how constant use causes buildup that ultimately reduces output.

“Over time they start producing less and less,” Leone said. The town approved a \$28,785 con-

tract to redevelop one of the wells, which involves cleaning and restoring the capacity of the well.

The board also approved the formation of a building committee for the roof replacement project at Bacon Academy. The project is considered urgent due to ongoing leaks. The committee will include experienced members and new participants, and the motion passed unanimously.

An update on the athletic complex project showed delays due to permitting issues. Dennler said approvals from environmental and zoning agencies are still pending. Vaillancourt raised concerns about design choices, including the lack of a kitchen in a planned concessions building and limited parking. Dennler shared that they would review these concerns.

Environmental Cleanup Nears Completion

The meeting included an update on the long-running Norton Paper Mill remediation project. Planning Director Nic Haggerty reported that cleanup is nearly complete after several years of work, and that “the light is at the end of the tunnel,” she said.

Soil testing results have been positive so far, and officials expect to finish excavation soon. While costs have increased, the project remains within budget due to contingency funds covering excess costs. Once cleanup is complete, the town will begin planning the next phase of park development.

Additional Updates

Dennler shared an overview of several ongoing town efforts, starting with the budget process and insurance planning. He explained that upcoming budget workshops will review spending across departments like emergency services,

administration and education to guide how taxpayer money is allocated.

The first workshop took place on March 23, the second on March 25, the third will be held on March 31 and the last on April 6. Afterward, the Board of Finance will hold a regular meeting and joint budget discussion on April 8, with a second public hearing to be held on April 22. Some dates may be subject to change, and readers should monitor the dates on Colchester’s town website.

Moving forward, Dennler also discussed the town’s self-insurance system, where Colchester covers smaller claims but uses stop-loss insurance to handle the larger expenses. Currently, that coverage begins at \$125,000, but officials are considering raising the threshold to reduce costs while carefully weighing the added financial risk overall.

Dennler highlighted progress on the youth center renovation, noting that major structural repairs have fixed a long-standing issue with a sagging floor. “You’re going to have to throw the ball now,” he joked, in reference to how a ball could roll across the previously sagging floor due to it not being level.

Construction is ongoing, with plans to reopen in September. In addition, Dennler addressed regional matters, including the temporary disruption at a shared wastewater facility due to leadership changes in East Hampton, and a proposal from Hebron to use Colchester’s transfer station during renovations. The arrangement could bring in revenue while having limited impact on local services, and officials are continuing to review the details further.

Giving Garden Fundraiser

The Colchester Giving Garden has been chosen to be the recipient of our local Stop and Shop’s “Bloomin’ 4 Good” flower bouquet fundraiser for the month of April.

For each bouquet sold at the Linwood Avenue Stop and Shop from April 1-30, one dollar will be donated to the Giving Garden. The bouquets are marked “Bloomin’ 4 Good” and the donation will be automatically taken at the register.

The Giving Garden is an all-volunteer vegetable garden on Norwich Avenue that grows and donates all of the fresh produce to our town food bank and area soup kitchens to help those in need. Everyone is welcome to come join in at the garden as the volunteers start their 14th year soon.

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

Abundant Life Church News & Notes

Abundant Life Church, a Christ-follower church that believes in salvation through Jesus Christ, is located at 85 Skinner Rd. Worship is in person at 10:30 a.m. Sunday.

Adult Sunday Bible School: Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Bible Study for Women: Every Wednesday at 10 a.m. at Sweet Aroma, Colchester.

Healing Bible Study: Every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

Prayer Meetings: Thursdays, 10 a.m. and Fridays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. There is also a brief meeting for pre-service prayer on Sundays at 10:15 a.m.

Men’s and Women’s Breakfast: Meets

monthly on Saturdays at 8 a.m. The men meet the first Saturday of the month, and the women meet the third Saturday of the month.

Children’s Church: Meets Sunday mornings after worship service.

Easter Services: Palm Sunday, April 29, 10:30 a.m.; Good Friday service, April 3, 6 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 5: Sunrise Service on the Colchester Green, 7:30 a.m.; Easter Service at Abundant Life, 10:30 a.m.

Call the church office at 860-537-3082 for more information, questions, or even if you just need prayer. You can also visit AbundantL.com.

Parks & Rec News & Notes

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

COMMIT Dance Fitness: Wednesdays, April 1-May 20, 6-7 p.m., at Jack Jacker 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-de-

fense. Cost is \$120 (five weeks, two classes per week). Minimum of one participant required, with a maximum of 12.

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

Community Wellness Fair

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

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

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

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/bunnybfast. For more information, visit Colchesterct.gov/yss.

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.

Senior Center Upcoming Trips

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

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

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

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

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

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).

Hebron • Hebron • Hebron • Hebron • Hebron • Hebron • Hebron • Hebron • Hebron • Hebron • Hebron • Hebron • Hebron • Hebron • Hebron

Joint Meeting Discusses Sewer Rates

By Toriana Williams

The town of Hebron held a joint budget workshop on March 10, which was attended by the Town Council and Board of Finance. The boards discussed the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) budget, which is projected to rise.

Sewer Rates Increasing

One of the biggest topics included the WPCA budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Officials spent significant time breaking down both revenue and expenses. The councilors and board members asked the WPCA members to justify the increase numerically and operationally.

WPCA Administrator Kevin Kelly explained that sewer rates will need to increase slightly, climbing \$26 to \$698 per year per EDU. An EDU (Equivalent Dwelling Unit) is how the town measures sewer use for homes and businesses.

This increase is meant to cover rising costs. WPCA Chair Chris Hemberger explained that the system depends mostly on user fees. “The only revenue we really get is from the users,” he said. “It’s hard to maintain a significant system like this ... just with the funding you get from users.”

WPCA’s current total revenue, and therefore budget, sits at \$837,414.

The proposed \$26 increase in the EDU rate

opened a discussion about affordability versus necessity. While the increase itself was relatively modest, the reasoning behind it - rising operating costs and limited revenue sources - were examined closely.

Some of the major expenses driving the increase included payments to Colchester for sewage processing, increasing maintenance and contractor costs and electricity and general operational costs.

Rising Costs, Budget Pressures

Two major costs are driving the WPCA budget, which are payments to the town of Colchester for wastewater treatment and maintenance costs for shared facilities. The Colchester contract by itself is expected to cost over \$530,000, while maintenance would cost \$141,000, an increase of \$23,000. Kelly explained that these costs can change each year. “Some years it’s more, some years it’s less, but that’s the numbers we’re working with right now,” he said.

To keep the rate increase smaller, the WPCA reduced how much money it puts into its savings fund, also known as the “sinking fund.” A sinking fund is a dedicated reserve of money that is set aside over time to pay for future expenses, similar to any regular savings fund. However, this raised concerns about whether the town is saving enough for future repairs.

The council and board debated whether cutting savings to limit rate increases was a smart long-term move. Some members were concerned that this approach could lead to larger financial problems later.

One Board of Finance member questioned the idea of reducing contributions given the current balance. He noted the sinking fund was “already probably too small” and asked how comfortable officials were cutting it further. Hemberger replied, “I’m confident. We’ve been managing with what it is.”

However, Hemberger noted that a catastrophic issue, like a force main failure, could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to fix. The budget “should probably be in the millions,” he said. “The only way to get that is either the town contributes and maybe gives us some of our funding back, or we have to escalate ... the annual EDU rate.”

Aging Infrastructure, Future Projects

Officials also discussed the condition of the town’s sewer system. Some parts are nearly 40 years old, according to Kelly, and could fail if

not maintained well. Kelly warned the board, “If anything ever breaks on that [Route 85] force main, it would be devastating.” Hemberger agreed and said, “If anything significant ever happened to the sewer system, it would be unimaginable.” These comments displayed the delicate balance the officials are operating under.

One large project that was discussed involved improvements to shared facilities in East Hampton. Hebron’s share is expected to be \$260,000 per year spread over five years, which ultimately totals to \$1.3 million. Another project included upgrades to sewer pump stations as phase 2 pump station improvements are nearing the design phase, which could cost about \$3.5 million.

However, there was confusion during the meeting about how these costs are listed in the town’s long-term budget plans. Officials agreed they need to review the numbers more carefully.

Both discussions highlighted the tensions between investing now to prevent failures versus keeping current costs manageable for residents in the current fiscal year.

Parks and Rec News & Notes

Hebron Parks and Recreation is offering the following. For full program descriptions - including costs - and to register, please visit hebronct.recdesk.com/community or call 860-530-1281.

Summer Camp Registration: Opens Wednesday, April 1, at 8 a.m.

Pickleball Clinics: At Hebron Elementary School. Clinic for beginners will be Wednesday, April 8, from 5-6:30 p.m., and clinic for intermediate level players will be held Wednesday, April 1, from 5-6:30 p.m.

Hatha Yoga: Session III will be Tuesdays,

April 21-June 2, at Gilead Hill School. Whether you’re new to yoga or a seasoned practitioner, all are welcome.

Tai Chi: Thursdays, April 23-June 4 (no class May 21), 6:30-7:30 p.m., at Gilead Hill School. This is a low-impact form of exercise focusing on a series of slow, graceful, and continuous movements. This program is open to adults of all fitness levels. No prior experience is necessary.

Karate: Six-week ongoing sessions are available, for ages 6+. Mondays and Wednesdays, 5-6 p.m., at Gilead Hill School.

‘Day of Tears’ Program on April 12

A special program and discussion highlighting the largest sale of enslaved people in American history will be held in Hebron on Sunday, April 12 from 3-6 p.m. The event is sponsored by Sanctuary Performing Arts and the Coalition on Diversity & Equity (CoDE) and will be held at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, 30 Church St.

On March 2 and 3, 1859, the largest auction of enslaved people in American history took place in Savannah, Ga. More than 400 men, women and children were sold. As the auction began, the skies darkened and a torrential rain began to fall. The rain continued for two days, stopping only when the auction ended. Those days became known as “The Weeping Time.”

This staged reading is told by those who lived it: the enslaver, the seller, and the husbands, wives and lovers who clung to the desperate hope of keeping their families intact. It is based

on the novel *Day of Tears* by Julius Lester, who granted his permission for this adaptation.

A reception will follow the program in St. Peter’s parish hall. It will feature hors d’oeuvres and a discussion with the *Day of Tears* director and cast.

Registration is strongly recommended, but tickets may be available at the door. Reservations can be made at www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/day-of-tears-mlk-event. Ticket costs are \$20 for adults and \$5 for youth.

For anyone who registered for the event originally scheduled for January (but was postponed due to weather), their ticket will be honored on April 12. If that date no longer works for someone who registered previously, they can email CoDE at code.diversity1@gmail.com and request a refund.

Douglas Library News & Notes

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

Adult Programs: Friday Films: Fridays at 1 p.m. March 27, *F1* (PG-13). Popcorn and water are provided. There will be no film on April 3.

Edible Landscaping: Monday, March 30, 6:30 p.m. Join Mark Gostkiewicz of Tri Gable Lea Farm for a common-sense approach to “Foodscaping.” Whether you are a beginner or a seasoned gardener, this workshop will give you the practical skills to add “curb appeal you can eat” to your home.

Closing: The library will be closed on Good Friday, April 3. It will be open Saturday, April 4.

Artist of the Month: All are invited to stop in the Community Room and view a collection of artwork by Hebron artist Chuck Paprzyca.

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

Mahjong Group: Tuesdays, 11 a.m. Stop in

and play Mahjong no matter what your skill level is.

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

Children’s Programs: Lego Club: Every Monday, 4-5 p.m. Calling all builders!!! Get creative and build some Lego creations.

Lego Club Saturday: April 4, noon-1 p.m. Can’t make it Monday? The library now offers a Saturday Lego Club in the Children’s Programming Room.

PJ Storytime: The first and third Tuesday of each month, at 6 p.m. There will be stories, songs, and crafts.

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

Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service

All are invited to celebrate Easter at Hebron’s annual Ecumenical Sunrise Service on Sunday, April 5, at 6:30 a.m.

This special service will take place in the field behind Gilead Congregational Church, UCC (672 Gilead St.), with leaders from Hebron faith communities coming together to guide all in worship.

In case of inclement weather, the service will be moved indoors to the sanctuary of Gilead Congregational. Following the service, light refreshments will be available in the Fellowship Hall for all to enjoy.

Gilead Congregational’s Easter festivities continue with a traditional service at 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary. All are also invited.

Gilead Hill Staff Visit ‘The Mayor’

Maverick Pankratz, 5, of Hebron, is affectionately known as “the mayor” at Gilead Hill School. Since birth, he has been grappling with medical complexities that have significantly impacted his life. Recently, he underwent three surgeries in the span of two months, starting in February.

Maverick, a special needs student at Gilead Hill, receives assistance from paraprofession-

als and staff. On March 8, he was admitted to Connecticut Children’s Medical Center due to severe pneumonia. He underwent two surgeries and is now gradually recovering.

Heather Godi, his special education teacher, arranged two special visits with several staff members to lift his spirits, as he has been struggling to keep up his fight since his admission.

Calling All Hebron Artists!

The Hebron Creative Collective will hold the juried art show “Hebron Creates” on May 3, from 11 a.m.-4 p.m., at Colebrook Village in Hebron - and the deadline for applications is coming up.

This exhibition seeks to highlight and celebrate artists in Hebron and its immediate surrounding towns, with a chance to win cash prizes totaling \$500.

Local artists aged 14 and up are invited to submit up to three pieces of 2D or 3D artwork. Art can be in any media (e.g. paintings, ceramics, jewelry, glassware, textile art, collage, etc), with the size of the artwork no larger than 24 inches.

Entry fees for adults are: \$20 for up to two pieces, or \$25 for three. Fees for students 14-22 years old: \$10 for up to two pieces, or \$15 for three. Entry fees are non-returnable, but will be waived if you would like to join the Hebron Creative Collective for 2026. Annual membership is

\$40 for adults and \$25 for students 14-22. Prizes totaling \$500 will be awarded based on use of medium, composition, use of color, proficiency and design.

Applications and jpegs of your work will be accepted until April 10. Jpegs of art should be cropped to art’s edges, well-lit, and at least 150dpi. Selected artists will be announced on April 17.

This year’s judge will be Pennsylvania fine artist Tricia Lowery Lippert. Lippert specializes in oils and pastels, and is known for her landscapes and wildlife paintings. She has won many awards and her art is in private collections all over the world. www.tricialowerylippertfineart.com

Visit www.thetowncenterproject.org/hebron-creative-collective for an online application and submission guidelines. Questions can be emailed to artinhebron@gmail.com.

Senior Center News & Notes

Russell Mercier Senior Center has announced the following programs. For more information, full program descriptions, and a list of recurring weekly activities, see the online senior newsletter at hebronct.com/town-departments/senior-center, or call the center at 860-228-1700. Registration is required for all programs, unless noted, by calling the center.

No Yoga in April: There will be no Thursday yoga during April.

Health & Safety Panel with Q&A: Tuesday, April 7, 10 a.m. Resident Trooper Graeme Fraites, Fire Chief Peter Starkel, Fire Marshall Chris Bray, Chatham Health Director Russell Melmed, and a representative from Amplify CT (promotes best practices that help communities live well and be well) will all present.

Bus Trip to Cracker Barrel: Monday, April 27, leave at 11 a.m. and return at approximately 3 p.m. Cost is \$5 for transportation. Space limited to eight spots.

Men’s ‘Golden Oldies’ Social Activities Group: Friday, April 24, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. If you are 60 or older and interested in participating is a social activities group with other men, call social worker Dennis Farrar, MSW at 860-228-1700 ext. 204 to register.

Chair Yoga and Sound Healing: Tuesday, April 28, 10 a.m.-noon. This is a two-part program. Chair Yoga, a gentle form of yoga that uses a chair for balance or as a prop for poses/asanas, will be followed by Sound Bath, experiencing sound healing instruments like crystal bowls. This two-hour program costs \$25 and is led by yoga instructor Sara Billings. Register by Monday, April 27.

Weekly Shopping Trips: Pre-registration is required by noon the day before the trip. Call 860-228-1700. Pick-up times TBA weekly. Schedule: Wednesday, April 1, Big Y (the center is closed Friday, April 3, for Good Friday); Friday, April 10, Walmart, 11 a.m.; Friday, April 17, Stop & Shop, 11 a.m.

Easter Egg Hunt

Christ Lutheran Church is having its annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 4, at 11 a.m. This event will be at the church located at 330 Church St., Amston.

This event is open to the community. All children 12 and under are invited to participate. Bring your Easter baskets to collect the eggs. Refreshments will be served after the collection of eggs.

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The Rising Stars... The Kelley kids of Portland showing off their hometown pride at The Rising Stars meet at The Track at New Balance in Boston where Declan Kelley competed as one of the members of the Portland High School indoor track and field team



Exploring Machu Picchu... Dawn and Michael Gingras of Marlborough recently enjoyed exploring Machu Picchu. They saw the snow-capped Andes and hiked in the Amazon Rainforest.



Punta Cana Pals... Pictured are friends David Corey and Dylan McKinney of Marlborough, on a recent trip to Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic.



A Chilly Cruise... On her quest to see all seven continents, Julie Ciucias of East Hampton traveled on an expedition cruise to Antarctica. Here she is holding the *Rivereast* next to one of many penguins she saw. She attended numerous lectures, ventured off ship by zodiac and special ops boats to see icebergs, glaciers, whales, birds and seals, and even went on a submarine dive.

Where in the World?

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Obituaries

Portland

Stewart A. Phillips

Stewart "Stew" A. Phillips, 61, passed away peacefully Sunday, March 15. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him. Stew was born on April 8, 1964, in England, Stew came to America with his family in 1964, they moved to Vermont and then relocated to Connecticut and later he settled in Massachusetts.



Stew worked as a machinist, taking great pride in his trade throughout his life. Stew spent most of his career working at Standard Knapp in Portland, where he was known for his strong work ethic, precision, and dedication. He earned the respect of his coworkers and those he worked alongside. Stew finished his career at Electro-Term Hollingsworth in Springfield, Mass. Stew truly enjoyed his time working there.

Outside of work, Stew had a deep love for sports. He enjoyed baseball, football, soccer, golf, and racing. He could often be found watching a game or talking sports. He also enjoyed hiking and the outdoors and had a great appreciation for all types of music, finding joy and relaxation in both.

Stew will be remembered for his warm spirit, his sense of humor, and the connections he built with those around him. Stew was a devoted partner who shared a special bond with Elizabeth Lemire, the love of his life.

He is survived by his beloved partner, Elizabeth and her children, daughter Jenna and her son Stephen and his wife Lauren His sister Sarah Phillips; his brother Robert Phillips and his wife Pam; his nephew Josh, and niece Sabrina; as well as his beloved aunts, uncle, cousins, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and close friends, all of whom will miss him dearly. He was predeceased by his father, Roy Phillips, and his mother, Christine Phillips.

A celebration of life will be held at Firtion Adams Funeral Services (76 Broad Street, Westfield, Mass.) on Saturday, April 11. Calling hours will begin at 1 p.m., followed by a celebration of life at 2 p.m. Family and friends are invited to gather, share memories, and honor Stew's life.

Stew's memory will live on in the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing him.

East Hampton

Shannon M. Sheley

Shannon M. Sheley passed away Saturday, March 21, leaving behind memories of radiance, resilience, and wit that will live on in the hearts of all who knew her.



To know Shannon was to know someone with an unmistakable spark. She loved life deeply, fiercely, and fully. She was witty, clever, and strong-willed, meeting every challenge that came her way with courage and determination. Shannon was a fighter until the very end.

A proud graduate of Albertus Magnus College, Shannon earned her bachelor's degree in business management, magna cum laude. Her career reflected her talent, drive, and versatility – spanning management roles, as well as extensive work in the broadcasting industry in both radio and television. She excelled in technical and on-air performance, later applying her skills to commercial and residential property and project management.

Shannon found her peace and joy in the world around her. She loved nature, hiking, and the ocean. She cherished music and live performances, and there was nothing she enjoyed more than a night of concerts, theater, creating a gourmet home-cooked meal or simply playing her drum kit – set proudly in her own living room.

Shannon was an animal lover at heart, often saying that some of the best people she'd ever known had four legs and fur. Her energy, her passion, and her presence will be deeply missed.

A private service will be held at a later date. To leave online condolences, please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Andover

Dennis G. Jones

Dennis G. Jones, 79, of Lake Charles, La., formerly of Andover, beloved husband for 45 years of JT Atkinson, shed this mortal coil on Monday, March 2.

Dennis was born in May of 1953, son of the late Doug and Nancy (Parrish) Jones. He proudly served his country as a sergeant in The United States Air Force, stationed in the Philippines in the last months of the Vietnam War, where he assisted with the returning of prisoners of war. It affected him profoundly. Dennis was employed with the State of Connecticut where he did Institutional Research for the Community College system, retiring after 25 years of service.

Dennis loved music and singing, especially gospel and showtunes, and was a gifted pianist. His gentle nature and sharp wit were appreciated by all who knew him.

In addition to the love of his life, JT, he is survived by his sister, Linda Bargoil; his two nephews, Dale Peterson and his son Graham, Jeremy Peterson and his wife, Chelsea, and their daughter Millie.

His service will be private. In lieu of flowers, his family requests that a donation in his name be made to the American Lung Association. Breathe freely, my love.

Colchester

Michael Baine

Michael Baine, of New Haven, passed away Tuesday, March 12. He was 61 years old. He was born in Mount Kisco, N.Y., on Aug. 20, 1964, to Paul and Barbara Ann Baine. After graduating from high school, Michael worked in fine dining but his true passion was to follow in his father's and grandfather's footsteps and so he joined the family window cleaning business in New York.



He took great pride in every job he did for his customers. Eventually, Michael took over the family's business, which was founded by his grandfather Harry Baine. In his spare time, Michael enjoyed riding his bicycle, hiking, and traveling in New England.

Michael will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by his mother, Barbara Ann Baine; his brother, Jonathan Baine; his niece and nephews; and numerous extended family members and friends. He was predeceased by his father, Paul Baine; and his sister, Lizabeth Johnting.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home. Services will be private.

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

East Hampton

Eddie E. Robinson

Eddie Eugene Robinson, 75, of East Hampton, husband of Sandra (Venturella) Robinson, passed away Monday, March 9, at Autumn Lake of Cromwell. Born in Wayne, W.Va., he was the son of the late Herman and Willie (Robinson) Prince.



Eddie lived in East Hampton for 40 years. He graduated from Connecticut State Community College and served in the United State Navy during Vietnam. He was employed at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Manufacturing for forty-seven years where he was the former President of Pratt Whitney Union Local No. 700 IAMW. Eddie loved Dallas Cowboys and the New York Yankees.

Along with his wife, Eddie is survived by his son Eddie E. Robinson, Jr. of Rocky Hill; his daughter Tammy Robinson of Bristol; three grandchildren, Thomas, Luciana and Micayla and six great grandchildren.

Besides his parents, he was predeceased by his son, Robert M. Robinson; brother, Alvie Napier; and sister, Wanda Sue Scalora.

A graveside service will be held Friday, April 24, at 10 a.m., in the State Veterans Cemetery, 317 Bow Lane, Middletown, where full military honors will be accorded. A Celebration of Life will be held for Eddie and his son Robert, who passed away Dec. 12, 2025, on Friday, April 24, at noon, at Elks Lodge @ Shunpike Village Shopping Center, 825 Cromwell Avenue, Rocky Hill.

Donations in Eddie's memory may be made to the charity of the donor's choice.

To share memories or send condolences to the family, please visit www.doolittlefuneralservice.com.

Lebanon

Marjorie M. Fortin

Marjorie M. Fortin, of Lebanon, passed away Friday, March 20. Her beloved family was attentively by her side. She was 82 years old. Marjorie was born in Providence, R.I., on March 1, 1944, to the late John and Helen Meegan. She grew up in Coventry, R.I., and moved to Connecticut in the late 1960s.



Marjorie married her high school sweetheart, and love of her life, Joseph Fortin in June of 1964. They later moved to Lebanon, where they made their home and raised their daughters.

In her spare time, Marjorie liked to keep busy with various town activities and events. She was a member of the Lebanon Historical Society and Red Cedar Lake Association. She greatly enjoyed taking boat rides with Joe and her beloved dog, Rosie, and getting lost with Joe on the backroads of Connecticut on the search for the state's best hamburger. Some of her favorite pastimes were gaming and playing cards. She loved the Christmas season, and would leave her Christmas tree up year-round. Her greatest joy was being with her children and grandchildren, where her happiest memories were made.

Marjorie will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by her husband, Joseph Fortin of Lebanon; her daughters and their spouses, Catherine Fortin and Blake Howald of Northfield, Minn., and Caroline Fortin and Justin Henry of Lebanon; her grandchildren, Dominic Ferrara, Pascale Howald, and Yeardeley Howald; her sister-in-law, Elaine Meegan; and many extended family members and friends.

She was predeceased by her parents, John and Helen Meegan; her brother, John Meegan; her sister, Joan Laborio; and her nephew, Daniel Laborio.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home. Details for Marjorie's celebration of life will be shared at a later date.

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

Portland

Evelyn Ruth Nesor

Evelyn Ruth Nesor passed away Friday, Feb. 27, at the age of 84. She was born Sept. 12,



1941, in Bronx, N.Y., to the late Joseph and Margaret Ecker. She was a resident of Portland for 23 years. Evvie was a one of a kind, a true force of nature and a Virgo to the core.

Evvie grew up in New York City, graduated from Forest Hills High

More Obits, page 32

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Obituaries cont.

School in 1959 where she was best athlete in her class, and attended Queens College until she married Harvey Nesor, the love of her life, in 1961. Her son Richard Allan was born in New York in 1963, and daughter Debra Jill was born in Stanford, Calif., in 1965. The family returned to the New York area for two years, then moved to Massachusetts for 11 years. When Pratt & Whitney called Harvey, they gladly moved to Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., and truly believed that would be their forever home. But P&W had other ideas and closed the Florida plant prompting the move to the home location in Connecticut.

Evvie had a number of careers including wife, mother, technical typist, real estate assistant, retail sales, store manager and special education assistant. She was avid about her passions which changed with time but brought many bowling trophies, created drawersfull of knitted scarfs and afghans, while filled many a crossword puzzle book. But most of all were her many intricate

Sharpie coloring creations that were truly creative, and her total dedication to video poker at Mohegan Sun Casino, where she held the rank of Ascend player for many years.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Margaret Ecker; her sister, Lillian Saf-ran; her beloved grandmother, Helen Locsey; and her dearest son, Richard Nesor.

She is survived by her husband, Harvey Nesor; her daughter, Debi (Debra) Bernard; her grandsons, Richard Bernard and Tyler Bernard; and her beloved pet cockatoo, Kiki.

A funeral service was held at IJ Morris at Star of David of the Palm Beaches, 9321 Memorial Park Rd., Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., on Wednesday, March 4. She now rests next to her son Richard and her parents Joseph and Margaret Ecker.

Those who wish may send donations to the American Lung Association, Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation, or a charity of your choice.

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

★ Letters, cont. from page 7

Maple Thanks and History Walk

To the Editor:

Many thanks to everyone that stopped by the Hebron Center History table at the Maple Fest; your keen interest and continuing encouragement are deeply appreciated. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to The Town Center Project, particularly Holly Habicht and Wendy Oakes, for their tireless efforts to make this lively event a true celebration of Hebron and all things maple.

I was thrilled to have a moment to speak with state Sen. Cathy Osten and explain the compelling connection between the historic landscape of Hebron center and how it was shaped by ancient and current geological and environmental forces. It was also nice to share a moment with Town Council Chairperson Tiffany Thiele and other members of the council, as well as members of a few other committees as they strolled through the festival. Connecting with each other and learning from our various perspectives and experiences enriches our community.

I am even grateful for the angry gentleman and his wife who vociferously shared their frustration over their perceived cost of preservation in Hebron and the reality of ever-rising taxes. I tried to share information from the Cost of

Community Services studies, which have firmly documented over many decades that preserving agriculture and open space does not raise taxes, development raises taxes, but to little apparent success. In the end we parted cordially and I am sure with the shared awareness that this longstanding debate will continue. For others of similar perspective, I would urge you to visit Save Hebron Center on Facebook and read about the COCS studies and the economic benefits of agriculture and open space.

Standing in Saturday's glorious sunshine and sharing millions of years of Hebron's distinctive history was evocative of the amazing connection between historical events and the environment. For another opportunity to experience the connection between history, the landscape and the environment I welcome you to join the Historic Watershed Walking Tour this Sunday, March 29th, at 2 p.m. We will begin at the Raymond Brook Preserve parking lot, 52 Kinney Rd., in Hebron. The tour will cover about one mile of gently sloping terrain and last about 45 minutes. There is some mud so boots are recommended. Light rain is ok; just bring an umbrella. Heavy rain will postpone one week. For more information please visit Save Hebron Center on Facebook.

Sincerely,
Kevin J. Tulimieri - Amston

**LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
PUBLIC HEARING**

The Marlborough Zoning Board of Appeals will hold the following public hearing on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 7:00 P.M. in the Marlborough Town Hall, 26 North Main Street.
APPLICATION #ZBA-02-26 - Richard & Carrie McMahon (Applicant/Property Owner) 59 Lakeridge Drive - are seeking variance of Article Three A.1, Minimum Requirements, Article Three A.3 Conformity of Buildings & Land, Article Three A.5 Reduction of Lot Areas or Minimum Required Yards, Article Three A.9 Minimum Required Yards, Article Six D. 2 a Front Yard Setback, in order to construct a garage a Front Yard Setback of 14.5 feet where 30 feet is required.
Interested parties can review the application materials in the Land Use/Building Department during normal Town Hall hours. Written testimony should be sent mailto:at least 24 hours ahead of the public hearing date to planner@marlboroughct.gov, and oral testimony may be given during the public hearing.

2TB 3/27, 4/3

**TOWN OF COLCHESTER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
LEGAL NOTICE OF AGENT DECISION**

Notice is hereby given that on March 19, 2026, the Duly Authorized Agent for the Colchester Conservation Commission made the following decision:
W2026-3136 - 104 Shailor Hill Rd; Michael Poresky - Applicant/ Owner; Assessor's ID 05-16/017-000. Proposed grading, construction, and erosion and sedimentation controls within 100' Upland Review Area. - **APPROVED WITH STANDARD CONDITIONS**
Dated March 19, 2026
Conservation Commission
Falk von Plachecki, Chair

1TB 3/27

**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/yxi-tibz-foy>
Or dial: (US) +1 337-435-0258 PIN: 245 427 132#
More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/yxi-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 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 3/27

**LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF HEBRON
BOARD OF FINANCE
HYBRID PUBLIC HEARING
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026, 7:00 P.M.**

The Hebron Board of Finance will conduct a Public Hearing on their recommended budget on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Douglas Library of Hebron Community Room, 22 Main Street, Hebron. A virtual option is also available at the following link:
BOARD OF FINANCE - PUBLIC HEARING AND BUDGET MEETING
April 7, 2026, 7:00 - 10:00 PM (America/New_York)
Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://meet.goto.com/664196525>
You can also dial in using your phone.
Access Code: 664-196-525
United States: +1 (872) 240-3212
Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:
<https://meet.goto.com/install>

Information regarding the Board of Finance's Proposed Budget will be available at <https://hebronct.com/budget-information/>. Residents are encouraged to attend this Public Hearing and express their opinions. Comments regarding the proposed budget can also be emailed to hebronbudget@hebronct.gov.
Brian Thibault, Chair
Board of Finance

1TB 3/27

**TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN MEETING
LEGAL NOTICE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026
7:00 P.M.
ELMER THIENES/MARY HALL
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAFETERIA**

The legal voters of the Town of Marlborough and eligible Property Owners with a Property Assessment of \$1,000 or more are hereby notified and warned that a duly called Town Meeting will be held at the Elmer Thienes/Mary Hall Elementary School Cafeteria, 25 School Drive, on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. for the following purpose:
To consider approval and act upon:
• Transfer \$120,000 from Capital Non-Recurring Fund MES Roof Replacement to the MES Southwest Egress Demolition and Replacement Project.
Dated at Marlborough, Connecticut this 17th day of March 2026
Board of Selectmen
Susan McFarland, Chair

1TB 3/27

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

To the property owners of the Town of Andover:
The last and final installment of the Real Estate and Personal Property taxes listed on the October 1, 2024 Grand List becomes due and payable to the Town of Andover on April 1, 2026. Payments must be US postmarked, paid on line, or brought to Town Hall by May 1, 2026 to avoid an interest charge. Interest will be charged starting May 2, 2026 on all delinquent bills at a rate of 18% per year (1½% per month) from the due date of April 1st, with a minimum charge of \$2 for each bill.
View or pay taxes online at www.andoverct.org. Cash, check or money order payments are accepted at the Town Hall during business hours. Payments by check or money order may be mailed to the Tax Collector's office or placed in the drop box outside Town Hall. Typical office hours during collection months are Monday 8:15am- 7pm, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:15 am-4pm. Please refer to www.andoverct.org for updated office hours.
Failure to receive a tax bill will not invalidate the tax or any interest which may, by State law, accrue.
If you have any questions, please contact the tax office at 860-742-4035 option 4.
Kate Fuller, Tax Collector
Town of Andover
17 School Road
Andover, CT 06232

3TB 3/27, 4/3, 4/24

**TOWN OF ANDOVER
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
NOTICE OF ACTION**

The Andover Planning & Zoning Commission took the following actions at their Regular Meeting held on March 17, 2026:
APPROVED:
Special Permit Application #26-1SP, Application of Thomas Hurst/Elizabeth Paulsen, 746 East Street to add an accessory apartment above the existing Farm Store pursuant to section 4.11.3 of the Andover Zoning Regulations.
Details of the above-referenced application can be found on the Town of Andover's website or in the Building and Land Use Department at Town Hall.
Wayne Kasacek
Zoning Agent

1TB 3/27

**TOWN OF ANDOVER
Zoning Board of Appeals
NOTICE OF ACTION**

The Andover Zoning Board of Appeals took the following actions at their Regular Meeting held on March 18, 2026:
APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS:
Special Permit Application #26-1ZBA. Applicant Christine Gomes was granted a variance from Section 11.2 of the Andover Zoning Regulations. Specifically, a variance was granted from lot size and frontage requirements in the Andover Lake District for a vacant parcel, Mblu 32-48-53CB on Bausola Road. Details of the above-referenced application can be found on the Town of Andover's website or in the Building and Land Use Department at Town Hall.
Wayne Kasacek
Zoning Agent

1TB 3/27

**LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
ATTENTION SEWER USERS**

Notice is hereby given to all property owners connected to the sewers in East Hampton that the second installment of the sewer use payment is due and payable on April 1, 2026. The last day on which to pay without penalty is May 1, 2026. **Property owners will not receive a second sewer use bill for the installment due on April 1, 2026. The October bill was a three-part form which includes the April installment.** Payments received May 2, 2026 and later, including payments postmarked May 2, and later, are considered past due and will be subject to an interest penalty of 1.50% per month or a fraction thereof, 18% per annum, from the due date of the tax, as required by Connecticut General State Statutes 12-130 and 146. The minimum interest charge is \$2 on each tax bill. A returned check fee is \$20. Payments legibly postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service on or before May 1, 2026 are considered on time regardless of when they are received by the Collector of Revenue.
As owners of property, taxpayers are responsible to see that taxes are paid when due. Failure to have sent or received a bill does not exempt the taxpayer from payment of all taxes, interest charges and collection costs, as per Conn. Gen. Stat. 12-130 and 12-146. Interest is charged on all late payments. There are no exceptions.
Please make checks payable to: Town of East Hampton. Payments may be mailed to Collector of Revenue, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424. Pay online at www.mytaxbill.net/easthampton **Note: Your sewer account number is required when making a payment online.**
Hours of collection are: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, Tuesday 8:00 am - 6:30 pm and Friday 8:00 am - 12:30 pm.
Respectively Submitted,
Anthony DeSimone
Public Utilities Administrator

3TB 3/27, 4/10, 4/24

Place Your Classified Ad Online!

Visit www.glcitizen.com and click "Classifieds" Fill out the fields and submit payment via PayPal.

7-3-2025



Check that your kids are in the right seat at NHTSA.gov/TheRightSeat

LOVE PROTECTS
NHTSA

LEGAL NOTICE

Global Freestone LLC, 264 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480, will sell the contents of Unit GFCK, belonging to Christopher Komondy, PO Box 99, Chester, CT 06412, to satisfy a lien for unpaid rent under CGS §42 159-170. Property consists of personal property. Sale to be held on site at the above address on 4/7/26 at 10:00 AM, unless the balance is paid before the sale.

1TB 3/27

**LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON**

The East Hampton Town Council will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 6:30pm during the Special Town Council Meeting in the East Hampton Town Hall, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424. The Town Council will consider amendments to Chapter 146 of the Code of the Town of East Hampton regarding the Water and Sewer Authority. A copy of the draft ordinance is available in the Town Clerk's Office.

EAST HAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL
Dean Markham, Chairman
Jack Solomon, Vice Chairperson
Timothy Feegel
Ted Hintz, Jr.
Richard Knotek
Joelyn Leon
Karen Wanat

1TB 3/27

**LEGAL NOTICE of PUBLIC HEARING
April 15, 2026
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Town of Portland, CT**

Pursuant to Section 503(a) of the Portland Town Charter, the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Portland, Connecticut shall hold a public hearing on Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at the Portland Public Library, 20 Freestone Avenue, Portland, Connecticut at 6:00 P.M. to obtain public comments and questions regarding a proposal to appropriate \$109,000,000 for the following projects: (i) the renovation and expansion of Valley View Elementary School into a pre-K-Grade 2 school (the "Valley View School Project"); (ii) the renovation of Gildersleeve Elementary School into a Grades 3-5 school (the "Gildersleeve School Project"); (iii) various capital improvements at Portland Middle School (the "Middle School Project"); and (iv) various capital improvements at Portland High School (the "High School Project", and collectively with the Valley View School Project, the Gildersleeve School Project and the Middle School Project, the "Projects"); and to authorize the issuance of the Town's bonds or notes in an amount not to exceed \$58,000,000 to finance the appropriation, with the balance to be funded by grants received for the Projects. The Town is projecting reimbursement from the State of Connecticut in the amount of \$66,502,080 for the Projects. Public Access also through the Zoom link A - www.portlandct.org
Dated this 23rd day of March 2026
Attest: Michael A. Pelton, First Selectman

1TB 3/27

**TOWN OF COLCHESTER
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
LEGAL NOTICE OF DECISION**

At its Regular Meeting of March 18, 2026, the Colchester Planning & Zoning Commission made the following decision (s): **PZC2026-001 Frank Adams Site Plan Application to modify existing commercial site at 111 Loomis Road. 35 day extension granted.**
Planning & Zoning Commission
Joseph Mathieu, Chair

1TB 3/27

Legal Notice

In accordance with the requirements of The State of Connecticut, Section 7-394 of the General Statutes, the Annual Town Audit, for the year ending June 30, 2025, is on file in the Town Clerk's office at 127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, CT. You may also view a copy of the audit on our website at www.colchesterct.gov.
Respectfully Submitted,
Kayla Paulovske
Assistant Town Clerk

1TB 3/27

**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

LEGAL NOTICE

Residents in the Sewer District in the Town of Marlborough are notified that Benefit Assessment bills are due to the Marlborough Water Pollution Control Authority (MWPCA), April 1, 2026. The last day to pay without interest is May 1, 2026. Delinquent bills will be charged 1.5% interest per month reverting to the due date of April 1 or 18% per year. Minimum interest is \$5.00. Checks must be payable to MWPCA. Sewer bills cannot be paid online. Payments may be paid at the Marlborough Town Hall, Tax Collector Office, or mailed to MWPCA, P.O. Box 29, 26 North Main Street, Marlborough, CT 06447. There is a Drop Box, checks only – NO CASH, to the left of the Town Hall front door. Normal office hours for the Tax Office are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:30 am- 4:30 pm, Tuesday 8:30 am-7:00 pm, and Friday 8:30am to Noon.
Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Lazzari
Tax Collector

3TB 3/27, 4/10, 4/24

**TOWN OF COLCHESTER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

The Colchester Conservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on April 8, 2026, beginning at 7:00 PM in the Colchester Town Hall Meeting Room 2 at 127 Norwich Ave, Colchester, CT, to hear and consider the following application: **W2026-3135 - 611 Norwich Ave, Bacon Academy High School; Bernie Dennler - First Selectman - Applicant/ Owner; Assessor's ID 05-04/06A-000, Athletic Fields turf project with a proposed improved emergency access path with direct impacts to a wetland & watercourse.**
At this hearing, interested persons may be heard and written communications received. A copy of this application is located in the Land Use Department, Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue, and may be inspected during regular business hours (8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday). Application materials are also available on the Colchester Conservation Commission webpage at <https://www.colchesterct.gov/colchester-conservation-commission>.
Conservation Commission
Falk Von Plachecki, Chair

2TB 3/27, 4/3

**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

**LEGAL NOTICE OF ACTIONS
HEBRON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
15 GILEAD STREET, HEBRON CT**

At its March 12, 2026 meeting, the Hebron Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commission took the following actions:
Petition 2026-01: 523 Church Street, Amston, J. Williams Estates, LLC. Construction of a Mini Self-Storage Facility, which is Listed as a Special Permit Use within the AV Zone. Activities with a Direct Impact Consist of Construction of Riprap Outlet Protection at the Stormwater System Discharge Point (90sf) and Placement of Fill within an Intermittent Watercourse Associated with the Access Driveway (40lf). Activities within the 100' URA Consist of Clearing, Grubbing, Excavation, Filling, Driveways, Buildings, Drainage, Utilities, and Erosion and Sedimentation Controls – **approved**, with the following conditions:
1. The Wetland Agent will be contacted at the commencement of construction for the inspection of sediment and erosion controls.
2. The Wetland Agent may have free access to the premises during construction for inspection purposes.
3. This application is subject to the approval of the Plan by the Town Engineer and the resolution of his comments and directives.
4. During construction, the applicant will ensure weekly observation reports of any of the noted DEEP NDDB-listed threatened / endangered species and prevention or relocation actions taken, pursuant to the DEEP protocols incorporated into the Plan.
Petition 2026-02: 550 Old Colchester Road, Hebron, Town of Hebron Public Building Committee - DPW Action Committee. Demolition and reconstruction of the Hebron Department of Public Works and Transfer Station in the Residence-1 District. Proposed regulated activities include approximately 0.46 acres of disturbance in the upland review area of an existing stormwater management basin. Approximately 0.23 acres of disturbance in the basin, itself a regulated resource, will include its use as a temporary sediment trap during construction activities and restoration (sediment removal, invasive plant removal and stabilization) following construction – **approved**, with the following conditions:
1. Addition of an oil / water separator near the fueling station AST.
2. All Town Engineer's comments and directives will be incorporated into the design and the applicant must return to the Conservation Commission in the event of significant changes in the design.
3. The Wetland Agent will attend the pre-construction meetings where soil management plans will be discussed.
4. Stormwater Inspection Reports will be available to the Conservation Commission.
5. The Wetland Agent will be contacted prior to construction for inspection of sediment and erosion controls, and the Agent will have free access to the premises during construction for inspection purposes.
James P. Cordier, Conservation and Inland Wetlands Agent
For: Thomas Loto, Chairman, Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commission
A video recording of the Conservation Commission Meeting can be seen using the following link:
<https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#!/s/Gedd88d9ebb58d06070c36e251db8b0c3c541932b3d10e763a666505603d2468>

1TB 3/27

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ALIASSES

LEGALS

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN ANDOVER BOARD OF FINANCE BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026 7:00PM

Notice is hereby given that the Andover Board of Finance will hold a Public Hearing, to be conducted virtually via Zoom, on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., for the purpose of presenting and discussing the Proposed Annual Town Budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. Dated at Andover, Connecticut, this 24th day of March, 2026.
Andover Board of Finance
Directions to join the virtual meeting via the Zoom platform:
Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87269138989>
Meeting ID: 872 6913 8989
Passcode: 161979
Dial by your location
1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

1TB 3/27

**TOWN OF PORTLAND
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
LEGAL NOTICE OF DECISION**

At the March 19, 2026 meeting, the following actions were taken:
Approved with conditions Application #25-11: 1401 Main Street. Proposal to construct a 30 ft by 100 ft hitting pavilion. Application and property of Cote Range LLC. Map 68 Lot 1. Zone FP, RI and R-25.
Approved with conditions Application #25-13: Proposed Amendment to the Portland Zoning Regulations. Changes to section 8.3 lighting regulations. Application of the Town of Portland.
Dated at Portland, CT this 24th day of March 2026
Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission

1TB 3/27

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON NOTICE OF SPECIAL TOWN MEETING TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026

A special town meeting of the electors and citizens qualified to vote in town meetings of the Town of East Hampton, Connecticut, will be held at the East Hampton Town Hall, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, Connecticut on Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. for the following purpose:
1. To consider and act upon the following resolution,
RESOLUTION OF TOWN MEETING APPROPRIATING \$105,000 AND APPROVING THE ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 292 WEST HIGH STREET FOR USE OPEN SPACE AND BUFFER LANDS; AND RESERVING THE RIGHT TO REIMBURSE THE TOWN FROM FUTURE BORROWING PROCEEDS
RESOLVED,
1. That the Town of East Hampton appropriate \$105,000 for costs associated with the acquisition of a specific parcel of land known as 292 West High Street from the undesignated, unencumbered General Fund balance. This land is situated in the Town of East Hampton, County of Middlesex, and State of Connecticut. It is shown as "Tax Map 6 Block 6 Lot 3B EXISTING AREA 135270.41 SQ. FT. 3.11 ACRES REVISED AREA 122376.20 SQ. FT. 2.81 ACRES" on a map entitled "Land of Coughlin Road and West High Street, East Hampton, Connecticut REVISED PROPERTY LINE." The map was drawn by Warren Surveying and recorded in the Office of the Town Clerk of East Hampton in Book 77, Page 15.
The appropriation may be spent on title insurance, adjustments and closing expenses, legal fees, and administrative costs related to the acquisition. The Chairman of the Town Council, the Town Manager or any other proper officer or official of the Town is authorized on behalf of the Town to enter into any agreement, to execute any documents, and take any other actions necessary or desirable to acquire said real estate.
2. That the Town Council, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Town Council, the Town Manager, the Finance Director, and other proper officers and officials of the Town are authorized to take all other action which is necessary or desirable to acquire said parcel of land.
3. That the Town hereby declares its official intent under Section 1.150-2 of the Federal Income Tax Regulations (the "Treasury Regulations") that project costs may be paid from temporary advances of available funds, which are paid within sixty (60) days prior to and any time after the date of passage of this resolution in the maximum amount of \$105,000 for the ACQUISITION OF REAL ESTATE AT 292 WEST HIGH STREET (the "Project"), and that (except to the extent reimbursed from grant moneys) the Town reasonably expects to reimburse any such advances from the proceeds of bonds, notes or other obligations (the "Obligations") in an aggregate principal amount not in excess of \$105,000 for the Project. Such Obligations shall be issued to reimburse such expenditures not later than eighteen (18) months after the later of the date of the expenditure or the substantial completion of the project, or such later date the Treasury Regulations may authorize, but in no event more than three years after the original expenditure is paid. The Treasurer, or designee, is authorized to pay expenses of the project in accordance herewith pending the issuance of reimbursement Obligations. The Town is authorized to amend this declaration of official intent (except as to the maximum amount) as they deem necessary or advisable and to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the Obligations. This resolution is adopted solely for purposes of compliance with the Treasury Regulations and may not be used or relied on for any other purpose.
Dated at East Hampton, Connecticut, this 24th day of March 2026.
PER ORDER OF THE EAST HAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL
EAST HAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL
Dean Markham, Chairman
Jack Solomon, Vice Chairman
Timothy Feegel
Ted Hintz, Jr.
Richard Knotek
Joelyn Leon
Karen Wanat

1TB 3/27

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WANTED TO BUY

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

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

WANTED TO BUY:

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

WANTED JUNK CARS:

and unfinished projects. Contact 860-216-8144.

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

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CIT-12-23

EMPLOYMENT

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Classifieds Pay
The Glastonbury Citizen & Rivereast News Bulletin
Call **860-633-4691** or email your line ad to admin@glcitizen.com

TOWN OF HEBRON SENIOR CENTER PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Town of Hebron is seeking a Senior Center Program Coordinator. This 36 hour per week position assists the Senior Services Director develop, promote, initiate, supervise and otherwise conduct a broad range of group and individual activities and services to respond to the diverse needs and interests of older adults, their families and caregivers. A complete job description is available through the Town Manager's Office. Please send a letter of interest, resume and employment application to Hebron Town Manager, Town of Hebron, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, CT 06248. Salary dependent upon experience. Position open until filled. EOE

1TB 3/27

EMPLOYMENT

**HELP WANTED – SEASONAL LABORERS
TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH**

The Town of Marlborough is accepting applications for three (3) **Seasonal Laborers:** This is a seasonal position within the Public Works Department with up to 40 (forty) hours a week for the summer. The successful candidates will be expected to perform general work in mowing, landscaping, and light repair work of town grounds and facilities. \$21.50/hour. Positions open until filled.

Requirements: Familiarity with, and an ability to operate, grounds maintenance equipment and small power equipment. Ability to use hand tools and a valid Connecticut driver's license are required.

Employment Application available at www.marbo.info/employmentapp or the Town Clerk's Office. Completed applications are to be submitted to the:

Marlborough Town Clerk
26 North Main Street
P.O. Box 29
Marlborough, CT. 06447

1TB 3/27

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For our day support program, which is from 8am-4pm and 2pm-5pm, the towns are in Salem, Groton, Hebron, Lebanon, Higganum, East Haddam, New London, Norwich, East Hampton, Colchester.

For our group home positions we have Monday-Sunday open second and third shift which is 3pm-11pm and 11pm-7am. These positions are in Colchester.

If you are interested in becoming a part of our team, please feel free to call us and ask for more information at **860-531-9426**

RE3-15-24

Westside Manor is searching for Attendants to fill our part time 1st, 2nd and 3rd shift position.
7AM-3PM, 3PM-11PM and 11PM-7AM

Attendant Responsibilities: Housekeeping, Meal prep and Medication administration required for the position. Medication Certification Course is mandatory and offered with paid training.

Interviews are done by appointment only, Monday thru Friday. Please call 860-267-4401 or email us at Simona@westsidemanor.com to schedule an interview today!

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Job Type: Part time: 24-hours per week. Salary: \$17-18.75

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Please contact Tony at Gano's Power Equipment at 860-537-3431 or by e-mail at ganos@snet.net

RE3-20-26

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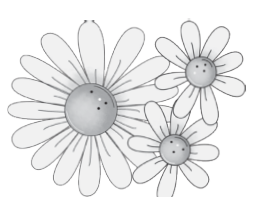
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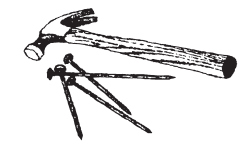
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