

News Bulletin

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

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Belton Seniors Get Creative at Easter Bonnet Contest

By Anne Lilburn

The East Hampton Lions Club hosted a joyful springtime event for local seniors at the VFW hall this past week, complete with an Easter bonnet contest, door prizes, and a concert featuring Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin songs.

The event drew dozens of attendees, many of them donning homemade Easter bonnets that showed off their creative sides. About 18 people entered the contest, with five of them winning gift baskets. In full disclosure, this *Rivereast* reporter served as one of the two judges.

Teresa Tacinelli, of East Hampton, decorated hers with plastic Easter Eggs, bunny ears, and even miniature lights. She said she had found inspiration on Pinterest, but made the bonnet her own. Tacinelli took fourth place in the contest.

Her friend, Lyle Couture, also of East Hampton, sat next to her at a table before the contest. Her contest entry was simpler, but very spring-appropriate: a purple golf visor, with artificial pansies attached to it. She said she found inspiration in a more practical place.

"I was getting my hair done, so I didn't want to flatten it," she laughed.

Contest winner Kathy Barber said she entered at the urging of her mother. Barber said she didn't consider herself a particularly crafty or artistic person, but her bonnet told another tale. She sported a straw hat that she had painted white, with hand cut and painted paper blades of grass around the center, and plastic eggs perched on pipe cleaners to serve as Easter flowers. A "Happy Easter" sign stood on a wooden stick in the middle of the hat, and a large pink bow secured the bonnet around her chin.

Sitting next to Barber at a front table during



The East Hampton Lions Club held an Easter bonnet contest on Tuesday, in a fun afternoon at the local VFW hall. Pictured from left are: first place winner Kathy Barber, second place winner Judy Parenteau, third place winner Cheryl Spack, fourth place winner Teresa Tacinelli, Best Man Jim Yuille, and Honorable Mention winners Bonnie Goodrich and Darla Pigeon.

the concert was second prize winner Judy Parenteau, who is turning 90 this month. Parenteau said she went for a "farmer's wife" theme, with chicks perched on a straw hat, a corn cob pipe, and straw stuffed into her clothing and boots. She laughed when she said the straw was itchy, and smiled and danced her way through the judge's parade.

Third-place winner Cheryl Spack got extra points from this judge for using real candy in her

design. A large blue plastic Peep bunny served as the center of her bonnet, with candy, blades of fabric grass, a bunny and a fence surrounding it. Honorable mention winner Bonnie Goodrich used a straw hat she already had at home, and adorned it with plastic eggs and a fuzzy baby chick decoration on top, while another honorable mention winner, Darla Pigeon, used *Sesame Street*-themed plastic Easter eggs in her design, with Elmo, Oscar the Grouch and Big Bird repre-

sented on top of a fuzzy, floppy-eared bunny hat.

Rounding out the top five was the winner of the Best Man award, Jim Yuille, who sported a simple black bowler hat with a white bunny attached.

While many of the winners went all out with wild designs, other attendees wore more traditional hats. A woman parading by in a hat with white flowers and cherries on it said it was 60 years old. Another guest wore a bright purple fascinator with feathers and ribbon, and one guest sported a small red hat with black feathers. Others wore large straw hats adorned with artificial flowers that looked like they might be appropriate for a traditional Easter celebration.

All the while, performer Jack Lynn brought back the Rat Pack, singing songs made popular by Sinatra and Martin while attendees paraded, socialized and snacked on cakes and other food items.

Lions Club event organizer Mary Krogh said they handed out over 63 raffle tickets to guests, who had the chance to win a wide assortment of donated prizes, including a foot massager, a vacuum, a new set of towels, fans, a car emergency kit and new smoke alarms.

Krogh said the Lions Club holds regular concerts for seniors at the VFW Hall, roughly every three months. The next one, she said, would likely be in the summer – so attendees should not expect to see Easter bonnets. Krogh said the Lions also host regular dinners for seniors, and urged people to follow the club's East Hampton CT Lions Club Facebook Page to stay current on upcoming events.

Millions Miscalculated in RHAM School Spending

By Toriana Williams

On March 26, Regional School District No. 8 (RHAM) sent a letter to local boards and town officials disclosing a significant financial miscalculation that has affected the towns of Hebron, Andover and Marlborough over multiple years. The miscalculation involved school budget surplus funds, when and how they were calculated and how they were dispersed to the towns that were owed.

RHAM is now in the process of correcting the mistake after it was spotted. However, the miscalculation has raised many concerns among local officials and residents alike regarding oversight, transparency and fairness to taxpayers.

What Happened

According to a letter from RHAM Board of Education Chair Heather Summerer and Superintendent of Schools Colin McNamara, the problem first began in fiscal year (FY) 2020. That year, the district's money left over at the end of the budget year was off by \$216,987. This happened because "a transfer of the FY2019 surplus to the reserve fund made in FY2020 was not factored into the calculation," the letter

stated, and there was also "a small discrepancy between audited and calculated amounts."

This initial mistake led to a larger problem that continued. In the years after, the district determined how much money to return to towns – called a "credit offset" – based only on the surplus amount of the previous year. However, the correct method should have used the total available fund balance, which includes money carried over from earlier years.

Because of this error, the towns received significantly less money back than they should have each year. Instead of being reduced, the fund balance just kept growing.

Why It Wasn't Caught

RHAM officials explained that the timing of the calculations played a large role in the error. The surplus was calculated after the audit. This meant important numbers ended up missing during the overall process. According to Summerer, "the figures used in the calculation did not have the credit offset amount from the prior year that should have been included."

Auditors also did not flag the issue. Summer-

er said this was because the funds were labeled as "assigned," which is allowed under state rules.

"Because of this designation, there was no indication that the surplus was not being calculated correctly," she explained. To address this, RHAM is now seeking "the services of a second accounting firm to conduct a review of our annual audits."

How Much Money?

By June 30, 2025, RHAM's assigned fund balance had grown to a whopping \$2,698,176. This total was divided into several parts – \$758,120 was assigned as credit to towns in the FY2026 budget, \$235,121 was assigned for a reserve transfer in FY2026 and \$1,704,935 was to be credited to towns. Of the \$1,704,935, \$830,212 came from the FY2025 surplus and \$874,723 came from prior years and represents underpayments to towns.

RHAM officials have since calculated how much money each town should have received since 2020. Hebron will receive \$849,497, Andover will receive \$255,234 and Marlborough

See RHAM School Spending, page 24

Inside...

RHAM	
'Cops vs. Kids' B-Ball Recap	pg 3
Portland	
Youth Wrestler Wins Title	pg 11
Marlborough	
Cuts, Costs, Concerns	pg 13
East Hampton	
Ziobron Seeks Return to Office	pg 17
Colchester	
Business Marks One Year	pg 25
Regional	
Obituaries	pgs 30, 31 & 32

Crossword Puzzle...Pg 24

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ad on page 39

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Jesus loves you!

CIT3-27-26

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

Last week I wrote about my Mets starting the season. They did indeed win Opening Day, and have had a.....so-so start to the season? Tough to panic after five games, but so far their offense looks as drab as I thought it would. I thought all off-season they didn't adequately replace the jettisoned Brandon Nimmo and Pete Alonso, and these first five games haven't really proven me wrong.

But, again, it's early yet; the roller coaster ride is just beginning.

Today's real news is that the Hartford Yard Goats have now also begun their season. Opening Day at the beautiful Dunkin' Park was Thursday – and with the new season comes a host of new gastronomical delights at the stadium's various concession stands.

On Monday, the Yard Goats announced several new food offerings that will be featured at the ballpark this year. Most sound amazing, some maybe a little less so, but all sound like wonderful calorie bombs your doctor probably doesn't need to know you sampled.

What happens at Dunkin' Park stays at Dunkin' Park.

The creations include:

-- Cinnamon Roll Burger: A burger patty with Swiss cheese, bacon and barbecue sauce nestled between two warm cinnamon rolls;

-- Aloha Chicken Sando: chicken thigh coated in a sweet chili sauce, with a pineapple slice and jalapeno peppers, all served in a burger bun;

-- Bird Dog: two chicken tenders coated in sweet chili sauce on a hot dog bun, topped with pineapple slaw, served with a side of fries;

-- Premium BLT: a hot dog wrapped in bacon, served with pico de gallo and shredded lettuce;

-- Summer Dog: a hot dog served with a pineapple slaw, BBQ sauce and crispy onion

pieces;

-- Garlic Parmesan Brussels Sprouts: Deep-fried Brussels sprouts coated with garlic parmesan sauce, and then dusted with parmesan cheese;

-- Hot Honey Pepperoni Pizza Slice: I think this is pretty self-explanatory;

-- Donut Chip Nachos: Mini-donuts pounded flat and deep fried to a crisp, served with nacho cheese, pico de gallo and jalapenos;

-- Frycutterie: A wonderful sampler platter of deep-fried delights: loaded tater squares (filled with cheese and bacon), cheese curds, French fries and pickle spears, served with "boom boom" sauce and ranch dressing; and last but certainly not least:

-- Brownie Sundae: A warm brownie with vanilla ice cream topped with chocolate chips, caramel sauce and whipped cream. Served in a Yard Goats souvenir helmet.

Which of the new offerings look best to me? Probably the Cinnamon Roll Burger, the Aloha Chicken Sando and of course, the Garlic Parmesan Brussels Sprouts. I love Brussels sprouts, and this version has the added bonus of being deep-fried and topped with cheese. (There go those nutritional benefits.)

And obviously, if I'm there with a group of friends, I need to try the Frycutterie platter.

Speaking of going with a group, the Yard Goats this year will have the Goat Feed Bucket Family Meal Deal, featuring two hot dogs, two burgers and French fries, all loaded up into a 130-oz souvenir goat feed bucket.

So definitely, head over to Hartford (the ballpark is right off the highway), bring your appetite and your credit card – and wear some elastic-waist pants, just in case.

See you next week.



Our American Heritage... Portland BSA Troop 2 recently took a weekend cabin camping trip to Camp Resolute in Bolton, Mass. A highlight of the trip was a visit to the American Heritage Museum in Hudson, Mass. Troop 2 is active in the Portland community and welcomes youth seeking outdoor adventure and leadership development.

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It's Not Over Yet

To the Editor:

To my East Hampton neighbors: It's not done yet.

It's time for the home team to win one. Knock it out of the park.

I ask you to vote 'yes' for no sewer expansion. Lock up 292 West High St. into open space.

Vote yes, on Tuesday, April 7, at Town Hall.

Douglas Mackeown – East Hampton

Hebron Town Budget

To the Editor:

With respect to the upcoming budget.

I respectfully urge the town to reconsider the proposed budget that would result in yet another increase in property taxes. Many residents are already feeling the strain of the current economic climate, and an additional financial burden will only make it more difficult for families to make ends meet.

This impact is especially concerning for our senior residents, many of whom live on fixed incomes and simply cannot absorb further increases in their housing costs. For them, rising property taxes are not just an inconvenience – they can threaten their ability to remain in their homes.

At the same time, it is troubling to see significant salary increases being approved for top administrative positions. While I understand the importance of fairly compensating staff, these decisions should be carefully balanced against the financial realities faced by the community as a whole.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Ruggiero – Hebron

They Knew Before the Vote

To the Editor:

My name is Michael Dubreuil, and I serve on the Colchester Republican Town Committee. When Republicans became fed up with our Board of Education, I led the effort to remove every one of them from the 2025 ballot. I took the hits for it, and I would do it again.

Because what was happening inside that Board was not just disappointing, it was unacceptable.

A well-liked superintendent was pushed out. His replacement began installing allies, friends and former colleagues, while claiming a "nationwide search." We were expected to believe the best candidate just happened to be someone he already knew.

Then came the pattern. Less transparency, more control. Freedom of Information issues. Public information withheld. Meetings structured to limit public input. Residents were silenced. And the budget, the document taxpayers rely on, was gutted from over 200 pages to about 20.

That was not transparency. Less information. Less scrutiny. More spending. That is why I acted. But what we have uncovered is far worse.

This was a financial failure that was known but not disclosed. A \$5 million problem in the health insurance reserve. And here is what every voter in Colchester should understand. As early as April 2025, before last year's referendum during a municipal election year, Democratic leadership knew they were not following the recommendations of their health insurance experts at Lockton.

Bulletin Board

You may have seen that Sirius XM Radio was recently fined \$28 million for making telemarketing calls to people on the National Do Not Call Registry.

Yeah, I'm as shocked as you are.

There's still a National Do Not Call Registry? And it actually did something to a violator? Wow. Look out your window, there may be unicorns frolicking in the backyard. . . If I sound bitter, it's because I'm really sick of being pestered by constant telephone calls from people who reveal their true intentions by hiding behind fake Caller ID numbers. Like that's a stellar way to gain somebody's trust. Pretend you live just down the street. Or in the same state. Or, for that matter, the same country.

Sirius XM, by the way, is a subscription radio service that allows you to listen to Gary Lewis and the Playboys or the Beachboys or whatever music you like all day long without commercial interruption. You probably know that already, but I am obliged by the rules of Newspaper Journalism 101 to avoid making assumptions that might leave you asking unnecessary questions. This is in contrast to TV news people (who seem to be mostly former Theater majors) who routinely promise to get back to you sometime in the future when they find out more information – like the name of the town they're reporting from, for instance.

My big question now is this. If Sirius Radio can get fined millions of dollars for violating a Do Not Call List, how is it that "Jason" gets to call me two or three times a day trying to sell me solar panels? Or why are Becky, or Rachel or Trent allowed to get away with calling from a hundred different fake numbers trying to persuade me to buy an overpriced health insurance supplement that will cover all my hospital costs if I get toe fungus? I'm looking at my cell phone right now and just yesterday I got 15 calls from somebody named "Potential Spam."

Fortunately, if there's one thing I'm good at, it's not answering the phone. Long before the arrival of Caller ID, I had this revelation that, contrary to popular opinion, you don't actually have to answer the phone every time it rings. You just have to be patient in the knowledge that eventually it will stop ringing.

This used to drive my wife nuts. The phone would ring when she was busy with something and she'd yell out, "Do you want to answer that?" (This was in the early days, before she learned to phrase her requests in the form of a direct order.)

"No."

"It could be important."

"Not to me."

"It might be my mother."

"I thought you said it could be important."

"I heard that!"

Of course, now, with Caller ID, she's come to her senses. There are so many rubbish calls that answering each one would be a fulltime job. Now, when the phone rings, whichever one of us is closest looks at the Caller ID and shouts out a report, like, "Do you know anybody in Omaha, Nebraska?!"

"No."

"Okay. It's crap. Don't answer it."

It's a pretty good system. It's sort of like in the Navy when the ship's loudspeaker comes on and reports, "Attention, all hands! Unidentified aircraft approaching from the starboard quarter!"

The difference, of course, is that, unlike the U.S. Navy, we can't simply blow nuisance callers into the Eighth Level of Hell where they rightly belong.

A pity, really.

Jim Hallas

RIVEREAST

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Telephone (860) 633-4691

Email: bulletin@glcitizen.com

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 373 • Glastonbury, CT 06033

Email classified line ads to admin@glcitizen.com.

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Kevin and Pat Rarey, Publishers

Josh Howard—Office Manager, Sports Editor

Mike Thompson, Editor

Staff Reporter:

Anne Lilburn - Portland and East Hampton

Toriana Williams – Colchester, Hebron, Marlborough & Andover

Advertising Representatives:

Jason Baran, ext. 104 • jason@glcitizen.com

Lisa Snietka, ext. 103 • lisa@glcitizen.com

Art Department

Jeanne Giovann and Julie Misuraca

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Rivereast Hours of Operation

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Among them was then BOE Chair Donna Antonacci, a Republican whom Democrats later placed on the Board of Finance. They knew the reserve was being mismanaged. They knew the numbers did not work. They knew the risk to taxpayers. And they said nothing.

They allowed voters to walk into that referendum without the full picture. That is not oversight. That is a failure to provide critical financial information before a vote.

After the referendum, Democrats protected their own. They bypassed the Republican Town Committee's nominee for Board of Finance and installed Antonacci into a position overseeing the town's finances.

This is what one-party control looks like in Colchester. Insiders protecting insiders, information controlled, and taxpayers left holding the bag.

Colchester residents were not given the full picture before a major vote, and now we are facing the consequences. Millions of dollars will have to come from somewhere. From us. And now taxpayers are left to pay for what they were never told.

Michael Dubreuil – Colchester

Note: Dubreuil is a member of the Colchester Republican Town Committee.

The Challenges are Many

To the Editor:

The former East Hampton WPCA was comprised of volunteers who dedicated our time to benefit the town, and took our responsibilities to oversee operations of the town's largest infrastructure investment very seriously. The challenges of managing an aging 45-year-old system while balancing costs, user fees and potential impacts on residents are many. The six members had close to 200 years of experience in the water/wastewater industries and endeavored to apply this knowledge apolitically to make system operations and badly needed upgrades more cost-efficient to minimize impacts on sewer user fees.

We regret and apologize for some statements by members made in a few minutes over the course of a nearly three-hour long meeting that we believe were flippant and not presented in full context. If you would listen to that entire meeting and other meetings, you would realize that these do not in any way reflect the true nature, intent and feelings of the WPCA. They would also learn that the WPCA had significant reservations on a potential biosolids facility, recommended that full due diligence investigations be pursued and never voted to support it or the potential sewer expansion proposal considered last year. The social media insinuations that the appointed WPCA members, who were volunteering their time to benefit the Town, may be corrupt or in any way benefiting from its actions are wrong and mean-spirited.

The Town Council is facing significant, complex and time-consuming challenges in managing our aging wastewater system, particularly without an experienced Public Utilities Administrator or knowledgeable WPCA in place. I trust that they take these challenges seriously, invest the time needed and do not let it fall victim to local politics.

Mark Barmasse – East Hampton

Note: Barmasse is former chairman of the East Hampton WPCA.



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Swap Shack Coming

To the Editor:

The Hebron Green Committee is pleased to announce that our 2026 Swap Shack will open on Sunday, April 12 at the Hebron Recycling Center and Transfer Station on Old Colchester Road. We will be open every Sunday, weather permitting, hours 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bring your lightly used (but usable!) items so others can make use of them.

Through our Swap Shack, we have been able to recycle probably thousands of items over the years and keep them out of the waste stream. Please note that certain items such as larger pieces of furniture are not accepted as we don't have enough space to accommodate them. Also, baby car seats are not accepted as people do not take them.

We look forward to seeing you at The Shack this year!

**Mike Harder
Hebron Green Committee**

Yellow Envelope Safety Program

To the Editor:

In an emergency such as a car accident or sudden medical event, first responders often have only moments to gather critical information. The Yellow Envelope Program is a simple, free resource that can help ensure important medical details are immediately available when they are needed most.

The Yellow Envelope is kept in your vehicle and contains essential information such as medical conditions, medications, allergies, and emergency contacts. This can be especially helpful for older adults, individuals with medical conditions, or anyone who may have cognitive impairments and may not be able to communicate clearly in a stressful situation. Having this information readily available allows first responders to provide quicker and more appropriate care.

State Rep. Christie Carpino will be joining us, along with school administrators who will be learning about this important program and how it can support students, families, and community members who may benefit from additional safety measures.

Recognizing that many families and caregivers may not be able to attend in person, the presentation will also be live streamed via Zoom to ensure accessibility for all.

The Portland Senior Center will host this event at the Portland Library, and we would like to thank the library for generously providing their space, wonderful technology, and the ability to share the presentation through Zoom so more individuals can benefit from this important information.

Please join us on April 7th at 1 p.m. to learn more about how this simple, no cost tool can help protect you or a loved one in a time of crisis. This program is free and open to the community.

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

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End Animal Testing

To the Editor:

As a resident of East Hampton, I am writing to bring light to a reality that many in our community may not be aware of: the ongoing and immense suffering of animals in laboratories.

While many of us share our homes with beloved pets, thousands of dogs – especially gentle beagles – and other animals are subjected to distressing experiments every day. These animals endure procedures like having toxic pesticides forced down their throats to test for chemical safety. This is not just “science”; it is unnecessary cruelty that often fails to accurately predict human reactions.

Modern, humane alternatives like human cell-based models and advanced computer simulations already exist. They are often more reliable and faster than animal testing. It is time for us to hold agencies like the EPA and FDA accountable and demand a faster transition to these ethical methods.

I urge my neighbors to join me in speaking out against these practices. We must ensure that our progress as a society is measured not just by our scientific achievements, but by our compassion for those who cannot speak for themselves.

**Sincerely,
Chloe Sun – East Hampton**

Good News You Might've Missed

To the Editor:

Everyone is talking about the Board of Education budget, so you might have missed that Colchester's town budget is in better shape than you might think.

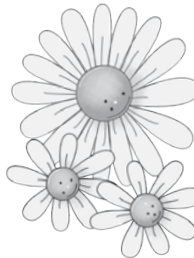
The proposed town budget focuses on what matters: maintaining services and funding public safety. Anyone who has driven Route 16 knows speeding has been a real problem for years. The town is already using grants to improve police coverage with minimal impact to the budget. That's the kind of practical problem-solving that doesn't always make the front page but matters.

The budget also doesn't flinch from the hard stuff. The Board of Education's insurance situation is going to put real pressure on this budget season, and the proposed town budget reflects that reality.

A lot of budgets would have looked the other way and hoped for the best. This one didn't.

It's a serious budget, built by someone who has been listening and thinking ahead. Colchester is in good hands.

John Farrell – Colchester
Note: Farrell is a member of the Colchester Democratic Town Committee.



Keep East Hampton Small

To the Editor:

Over the past month our little town has really come together against overdevelopment and back-door politics.

We moved here five years ago to raise our family. I had never lived here but my wife grew up here and has always had very fond memories of her little town, she remembers her grandfather owning the old Heidelberg and spending time with him on his farm, which is no longer there. She and I decided to move here and have not looked back at our old place; we've built quite a life here. We have met some incredible people, like our neighbors and other people in town.

So what I'm asking is that some of our leaders in town government please keep our town small and if you wish to live in a city please move to one and if you don't then please keep East Hampton small; the majority of us want to keep it that way!

Michael Pepin – Middle Haddam

Junior Achievement Day!

To the Editor:

Andover Elementary School recently offered our children an unforgettable experience: a full morning dedicated to Junior Achievement Day, delivered by parents, caregivers, community partners & Santander leaders from across Connecticut. For a small rural town like ours, this was more than a special event — it was a meaningful investment in our children's civic, social & economic futures.

Junior Achievement programs across Connecticut are designed to inspire & prepare young people for success by strengthening financial literacy, work readiness & community understanding. Those goals came alive in every classroom today. Students from kindergarten through sixth grade explored earning, saving, spending & giving through hands-on activities, animated videos & engaging stories featuring characters Jade & Jack. They learned how strong starts, supported families & thriving communities are built — and how they themselves are part of that story.

I was especially proud to help facilitate Junior Achievement Day for the third graders, partnering with another dedicated parent & supported by the phenomenal classroom teacher, Mrs. Godwin. Together, we watched students come alive with curiosity as they connected financial concepts to their own lives & communities. It was a privilege to stand beside them as they asked thoughtful questions, shared ideas &

See Letters, page 6

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The “East of the River” Real Estate Report

Why Overpricing Can Cost Sellers More Than They Realize

It's natural for homeowners to want to push the price when selling their home. After all, if buyers are active and some homes are receiving multiple offers, why not aim high and “see what happens?”

The reality is, overpricing often has the opposite effect. When a home first hits the market, that's when it gets the most attention. Buyers who have been actively searching are quick to notice new listings, and that initial window is where the strongest interest typically occurs.

If a home is priced too high, many of those buyers simply move on without ever seeing it. Today's buyers are well-informed and often working within strict budgets. If a home doesn't appear to offer value compared to similar listings, it can be overlooked quickly. As time goes on, the lack of activity can create a different kind of problem. Homes that sit on the market longer than expected can begin to raise questions. Buyers may assume something is wrong with the property, even if that's not the case. In many situations, the issue is simply pricing.

Eventually, price reductions may be needed to re-engage buyers. But by that point, the home has already lost some of its initial momentum. In some cases, it can even sell for less than it might have if it had been priced appropriately from the start.

On the other hand, homes that are priced correctly from day one tend to attract stronger interest. In the right conditions, this can lead to multiple offers and better overall terms for the seller.

Pricing isn't about testing the market — it's about positioning the home to let the market respond. For homeowners preparing to sell, understanding this difference can have a meaningful impact on both the timing and the final outcome of the sale.

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

Single-Family Homes	Condos
• 3 homes sold	• 0 sold
• Average sale price: \$515,000	
• Average sale-to-list ratio: 103%	
• Average days on market: 10 days	<i>Results vary by price point, condition, and pricing strategy.</i>
• Median days on market: 4 days	

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★ Letters, cont. from page 5

saw themselves reflected in the invested adults leading their learning.

As a parent, I sought out a program that would engage & empower my children, one that would help them understand not only money, but also community pride & investment. What I witnessed today exceeded every expectation. My daughter, & so many of her peers, saw themselves reflected in the diverse volunteers & the women leading in finance & banking who stood at the front of their classrooms. During Women's History Month, that visibility carried special meaning. Representation is not symbolic; it is transformative. Watching young girls light up as they learned from women shaping Connecticut's financial sector was a moment of possibility & pride.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Santander's AVP Andrea Lopez, Principal Taylor Parker, educator Kristina Frazier, proactive dad Louis Mendoza, JA Education Manager Susan Lecki, the dedicated leadership of AES & the incredible caregivers who volunteered. Their commitment & belief in our children made this JA Day not only possible, but powerful.

Doris A. Maldonado Mendez – Andover

Great Work, Portland PD

To the Editor:

I would like to acknowledge the great work of Portland Police Department, who were recently awarded Connecticut Tier 1 police accreditation at a meeting of the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POSTC) on March 12.

As a recently retired police officer, I am very aware of the challenges and issues facing police departments across the state, and meeting police accreditation standards is one of them. When the Connecticut General Assembly passed Public Act 20-01 "An Act Concerning Police Accountability" in 2020, it mandated in Section 44 that all Connecticut police departments achieve accreditation, but did not provide any funding or supports to assist departments in this new, mandated requirement, thus

leaving many departments to have to navigate this complex process on their own.

The Portland Police Department is unique among Connecticut law enforcement units as a fully independent police force under First Selectman Michael Pelton as head of the law enforcement unit, working with Captain Scott Cunningham. Such charter-based arrangements are becoming less and less common across Connecticut in the 21st century, and both First Selectman Pelton and Captain Cunningham should be commended for prioritizing and achieving Tier 1 accreditation for the department.

For a small police department, the Portland Police delivers outstanding service to our town, with a detective and a K-9 unit, and a patrol division that demonstrates a solid commitment to community policing principles. Please join me in congratulating and commending the entire Portland Police on achieving state accreditation.

Respectfully,
Matthew Solak – Portland

Hebron's Unsustainable Trends

To the Editor:

With Hebron's budget process nearing another milestone, it's important to keep the focus not just on this year's proposal, but on the longer-term trends that have brought us here.

Over the past several years, spending in Hebron has continued to rise, with education budgets accounting for a significant portion of that growth. At the same time, enrollment has declined. Staffing levels, however, have increased, resulting in fewer students per staff member than in prior years.

Too often, our process focuses on incremental changes, adjusting last year's budget slightly up or down, rather than stepping back and asking a more fundamental question: are we structuring our budgets in a way that aligns with today's realities?

A more disciplined approach, similar to zero-based budgeting, would encourage us to

periodically reassess spending from the ground up. Not to reduce quality, but to ensure that resources are aligned with actual needs, enrollment levels, and long-term affordability.

For many residents, the impact of these decisions is not abstract. It shows up in household budgets, where rising property taxes must be absorbed alongside increasing costs for everything else.

Regardless of the outcome of this year's budget deliberations, the underlying trends will remain. Addressing them will require ongoing attention, transparency, and a willingness to ask difficult but necessary questions.

I encourage continued community engagement in this process, not just during budget season, but throughout the year, so that future decisions reflect both our priorities and our capacity to sustain them.

Rob Poudrier – Amston
Chair, HebronVOICE

Dementia Talks No. 54

To the Editor:

Two things to share this week.

First, I was reflecting on a conversation I had with someone about the number of people that are being diagnosed with "early onset" Alzheimer's. The term "early onset" takes on different definitions – in this setting it was touching on those being diagnosed early in the disease and those being diagnosed under the age of 65.

The person I was in discussion with said "isn't it sad" in reference to the number of people that are now saying they are diagnosed early in the disease and at younger ages.

My quick response was "no, it is not sad; this is great." It is not an "old person's disease." It lives within us long before symptoms are noticed.

Pause, what do you think?

My response was rooted in knowing that people are self-advocating, they are not taking the response "what you are experiencing is part of aging" or "you are stressed and need to manage that". And knowing that there are now diagnostics that can be used to rule out Alzheimer's as the cause of someone questioning memory loss or diminished cognitive function. And if

the cause is Alzheimer's there are treatment options to slow the progression with the hope that new treatment options will be born from research that might even slow the progression even more...or, we hope, finally stop the progression all together.

Second, our dementia journey continues. My sister and I are grateful we are involved with Mom's journey. That we are here for her, even if she doesn't understand what that means anymore. We touch her, smile at her, laugh with her, hide a tear from her, walk with her, sit with her during activities and meals. For someone with Alzheimer's it's not what you do – it is how you do it and how you make them feel. Our faces many be changing and unrecognizable to mom but our love never will be, it only grows.

May loving kindness guide your path and know that you are not alone.

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

Thank You, Po

To the Editor:

The Tango2 Research Foundation wishes to sincerely thank Po and her staff at Po's Rice and Spice in East Hampton for hosting a fundraiser last Thursday at the restaurant. Po donated a portion of the day's earnings to the foundation. Together with the support of the community over \$1,100 was raised.

Tango2 is a rare genetic disease that affects mostly children. These kids battle a mix of neuromuscular, cardiac and intellectual issues every day. The foundation strives to raise funds to support the families and ongoing important scientific research. The foundation has a strong group of doctors and researchers that are dedicated to finding causes and treatments of the disease.

Supporting this work is so important and is why The Foundation truly appreciates people like Po and her generosity. Thank you! For more information go to Tango2research.org.

Joanne Barmasse, Volunteer
Tango2 Research Foundation

Supports School Consolidation Plan

Dear Portland Residents:

In 2009, as a member of the Portland Board of Education, we began a discussion about school consolidation by considering the closure of Brownstone Intermediate School. A facilities study committee was formed and ultimately concluded Portland should continue to operate three elementary schools. Fast-forward 17 years and our community is facing a similar decision, but this time after spending nearly five years studying and discussing all options to address our aging school infrastructure. This included two separate school facilities committees, a townwide survey, and a failed referendum to combine three elementary schools into one.

The history is long and complex, but Portland is now in the strongest position to finally "right size" our schools and return nearly a million dollars a year in operating cost savings. The state reimbursement on this project may be the largest we will ever see. This is a \$109-million project, with a net cost of \$41.9 million to the town of Portland.

Anyone who has been in our elementary schools recently has seen firsthand the need to improve the health and safety of our schools for students and staff. This is best accomplished by supporting a "renovate to new" project for Valley View and Gildersleeve, some capital improvements at the Middle School/High School complex, and the eventual decommission and repurposing of Brownstone Intermediate School at the end of the project.

I encourage all Portland residents to take the time to review the information that is available about the school consolidation plan. Currently you can access information on the town website under the Board of Education, attend an informational session at Portland Middle School on April 6 at 6 p.m. in-person or via Zoom, view several videos that have been created on YouTube, listen to a podcast with our first selectman and superintendent of schools, and speak with your elected officials, town staff and other individuals who have devoted countless hours to provide Portland residents with the best plan for the future of our schools.

On May 11, Portland residents will vote on a bonding question to support the consolidation of our elementary schools. Please take the opportunity to be an informed voter and consider this important investment in our town.

Sincerely,
Andrea Alfano – Portland
Note: Alfano is a member of the Portland Board of Selectmen, but said she is writing as an individual.

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Please Do the Right Thing

To the Editor:
We have recently learned that those we trust to represent our interest are not always true to their word or their oaths of office. We have paid very high taxation without representation, and are tired of leaders ignoring constituents' desires. Given the climate we live in its hard to trust anyone to keep their word. It has been proposed by town officials of East Hampton to purchase the property at 292 West High Street. Once again it falls on taxpayers to stand up and check this out to make sure we are watching those put in charge.

The plan is to make this land now qualify as open space, a buffer between the waste water plant and neighboring homes. That sounds good at first glance. We have been left with trust issues after the reveal of secret meetings and the claims that those in charge of paying attention and keeping us informed have let us down. Did you tell us you were not aware of a two-year plan to welcome heavy industry into town and the initial plan to buy this land was not for expansion of the WPCA? Maybe we should inspect this town purchase one more time to see if it's in our best interest? Buying the land and saying it is open space is not enough when time proven incidents show that space buffers are only secure as open space for a short to medium time frame. People come and go and things change and this land needs permanent protection so nothing like this happens again. Land preservation decisions can be reversed through future legal process.

The answer to this seems to be allowing the town to purchase the land under the condition of guaranteeing its permanent protection by placing it into a Conservation Land Trust. This plan would hold the Trust to monitor and enforce restrictions; the land would now be under lock and key helping the tax paying public to reduce their trust anxieties. I am requesting that this land purchase issue become a permanent protection issue by turning the property over to the Middlesex Land Trust. Please do the right thing.

Many thanks,
Deborah F. Rindge - Cobalt

Failed Leadership

To the Editor:
What is leadership? Depending on the situation, you could get a dozen different answers. In some cases it is about vision. In others it is about decisiveness. But no matter the context, there are a few constants that never change. Leadership requires honesty. It requires accountability. And above all, it requires a willingness to put the people you represent ahead of yourself.

When it comes to elected officials, leadership should mean exactly that. Which is why what we have seen with the health reserve fund is so deeply troubling. Because it reflects the exact opposite.

We now know that those in charge were aware the schools were not following the recommended funding levels provided by our highly paid and prestigious insurance broker. That was not a minor oversight. That was a conscious choice. And instead of correcting it or even being honest about it, they allowed it to continue while the public was kept in the dark.

It gets worse. Many of our elected leaders, including First Selectman Bernie Dennler, knew there were serious issues and that a forensic audit was coming. Yet at the same time, they were asking residents to approve another \$20 million in spending at referendum. That is not leadership. That is dishonesty at best, and deceit at worst.

I served on the Board of Selectmen for two years. I was not perfect. Not even close. But every decision I made was guided by one principle: do what I believe is best for the people of this town. I understood that I worked for you. I needed you; you did not need me.

What we are seeing now is the opposite. Decisions are being made that clearly benefit political allies and personal friends, while the consequences are pushed onto taxpayers. The result is a failed reserve fund, no meaningful accountability, and now insanely higher taxes to clean up the mess. Their decisions, our burden. And all while Bernie and Superintendent Sullivan collect substantial raises.

This is not complicated. When leaders know

there is a problem, hide it, and then ask the public for more money anyway, they forfeit the right to our trust. When they refuse to take responsibility and instead pass the cost onto taxpayers, they forfeit the right to our confidence. And when they continue to reward themselves despite their failures, they forfeit the right to call themselves leaders at all.

Jason LaChapelle - Colchester

Note: LaChapelle is a member of the Colchester Republican Town Committee.

Listen to the Taxpayers

To the Editor:
Process. Institutions. Time and inertia. That need to do things because it's the way we've always done them.

I'm beginning to get the feel that Hebron, Eastern CT, the state of Connecticut have worked strenuously for decades to achieve a given way of living. An equitable place to live. And I believe the entities were achieving their goals. It worked until it didn't. The system, the goals, were set in a different economic time.

For Hebron, especially, the upwards trajectory of the town ended with the housing crash of 08. But the systems, philosophy, town mores set in motion in the previous three decades did not change.

I think we hope that our previous aspirations are still obtainable, and we seem to be trying to lessen, with stop gap measures, the impacts of declining infrastructure, flat grand lists and seniors crying for relief.

When the citizens of the RHAM district defeated the athletic fields bond referendum in 2021, the RHAM devised strategies to pay for the repairs. This strategy was presented in the April public budget hearing in 2022. The board and superintendent were questioned along the lines of: so the voters declined to pass the bond so you'll figure a different way for the taxpayers to pay for it. The answer was yes.

I am not exactly sure of how, but RHAM

plans on doing these repairs soon, I believe. I never really understood the financial ins and outs of the bookkeeping, but I believe the philosophy and strategy of achieving institutional goals grew over the years of good tidings and never changed once money became tight.

It is questionable if this philosophy can be defined as good governance. Time will tell on that. But I'm thinking the rules set in place to achieve goals such as new ball fields after a defeated bond issue are complicated and easily broached or not understood. And this would fall into my bucket of stop-gap measures mentioned above.

This particular project may not be the cause of the recently released letter on excess funding being missed. But this particular process shows that institutions using quickly thought up strategies that have complicated rules associated may not be doing the wise thing.

I actually think it might be wiser, from now on, to listen to the taxpayers.

Terry McManus - Hebron

Sound Thinking

To the Editor:
Hebron is building a new Public Works facility and the latest ideas are great:

- Catch basins associated with snow melt that treat the runoff before it's discharged.
- Radiant floor heating, in the mechanic bay.
- Solar power (or at least discussing it).
- Weigh stations for bulky waste drop off.
- Covers on bulky waste containers.
- A mezzanine for additional storage.
- Recycling truck wash water. (See industrial oil separators and gray water recycling online).
- While the Eversource land is not included, at this time, perhaps it will be at a future date. As complicated as that property is, it still acts as a nice natural buffer for the facility, as far as accidental spills and privacy, but it also has potential for open land and a small amount of room for

See Letters, page 14

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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

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-

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.

mates Betsy Bransfield Rose, Alex Castelli, Beverly Chester, Carol Clausi Karnilowicz, Richard Kearney, Nancy McKinstry Roch, Richard Pawiczik, 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.

First Congregational Church News

The First Congregational Church of Portland, UCC, located at 554 Main St., invites all to celebrate Easter this Sunday, April 5.

The first worship experience begins at 7:30 a.m. with the church's Sunrise service, where we will gather outdoors by the gazebo. Then at 10 a.m. there will be a traditional Easter worship service with scripture, sermon, and special music. Children are invited to remain in worship,

which will include a puppet conversation during the children's message. Nursery care will be available for infants through preschoolers.

Following the service, children will enjoy an Easter Egg Hunt; adults who like candy are welcome to join in.

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

Historical Society Selling Yard Goats Tickets

The Portland Historical Society invites all to buy tickets for the Hartford Yard Goats game at Dunkin' Park on Sunday, June 14 at 1:10 p.m., as part of a fundraiser. Kids can run the bases after the game.

Tickets are still available and an evening pop-up sale will happen next 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.

PVFD Easter Plant Sale

Portland Volunteer Fire Department Company No. 3 hold its annual Easter plant sale Friday, April 3, from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., and Saturday, April 4, from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. They will be located on Main Street next to the Portland Police Department at the arch pavilion.

Exchange Club Food Drive

The Portland Exchange Club will be at Adams Hometown Market on Saturday, April 4, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., collecting cash donations to benefit Portland Food Bank.

The cash donations will allow the Food Bank to purchase items that are needed the most.

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WHO Really Crucified Christ?



All are involved as can be noted in the following:

- 1. GOD THE FATHER** was involved because in His perfect plan He determined that the only solution must involve His **Holy Person**. God must step into humanity and be the perfect Saviour. "I, even I, am the LORD, and beside Me there is no Saviour... and there is no God else beside Me, a just God and a **Saviour**, there is none beside Me" (Isaiah 43:11; 45:21). "For **God** so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23). It pleased the Father to bruise His Son on the cross so that sinful men might be saved (Isaiah 53:10).
- 2. JESUS CHRIST** voluntarily "gave His life" and "laid down His life" so that all may be saved who place their complete trust in Him. "No man taketh it (My life) from Me, but I lay it down of Myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:11, 15, 17, 18).
- 3. THE DEVIL** played a major role in the crucifixion: "And supper being ended, the **DEVIL** having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him." John 13:2
- 4. PILATE** the governor played a part because "he delivered Him to be crucified." Matthew 27:26
- 5. THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS** persuaded the multitudes and they all cried out, "Let Him be crucified!" Matthew 27:20, 22, 23
- 6. THE ROMANS** crucified Christ because they nailed Him to the cross. Matthew 27:27, 31, 35

7. WE ALL MADE NECESSARY THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST!

For God, in His great love and grace, determined to save that which sin ruined. It was because of our sins that He suffered and bled and died. God, knowing our **HELPLESS** and **HOPELESS** condition, showed His mercy by giving His Son, even to the point of death on the cross, making it possible to save us. Christ perfectly took the penalty for our sins:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him **THE INIQUITY OF US ALL**" (Isaiah 53:6). "But God commendeth **HIS LOVE** toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, **CHRIST DIED FOR US**" (Romans 5:8). "**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord**" (Romans 6:23). "For Christ also hath once **SUFFERED FOR SINS**, the **Just** (Christ) for the **unjust** (that's us), that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

Yes, the **LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS** is able to reach us. God has **GOOD NEWS** for every hearing heart. God has issued His **ROYAL**, and **RIGHT** invitation for every heart to place its whole condition, course and cure upon **WHO HE IS** and **WHAT HE HAS DONE** – His death, burial and resurrection. You cannot enjoy the message and meaning of the Resurrection, its glorious **HOPE** and its immediate **HELP**, apart from a saving relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. "**BELIEVE** on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

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Fly Like an Eagle... Troop 2 held a Court of Honor ceremony recently to recognize Logan Prince for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. The creation of a cement pad and the installation of octagonal picnic tables to create a picnic area behind the Portland Senior Center was Logan's Eagle Scout project. Troop 2 is active in the Portland community and welcomes youth seeking outdoor adventure and leadership development.

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 psh26projectgrad@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.

Senior Center News & Notes

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

Mobile Food Pantry: The Food Share Mobile Pantry comes to the Food Bank every other Monday. The next date is April 6.

Weekly Programs: Unless noted, all programs are free. **Monday, 4/6: Light Aerobics,** 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, 4/7: Bears on a Journey, 9:30-11 a.m. – to donate light fleece for making teddy bears for cancer patients, call 860-342-0809; **Watercolor Class,** 9:30 a.m., for more information contact Bivenne at bivenne@yahoo.com; **Congregate Meal,** noon. Cost is \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: meatloaf with gravy, mashed potatoes, steamed carrots, peach cup, string cheese; **Coupons for Troops,** 1-4 p.m.; **Setback,** 1 p.m.; **SyncoCize,** 5-6 p.m., fee is donation to instructor.

Wednesday, 4/8: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; **Chair Yoga with Gia,** 10:30-11:15 a.m., fee is a \$5 donation to instructor; **Rug-Hooking,** noon; **Bridge,** 12:30-4 p.m.

Thursday, 4/9: Stretch & Tone, 9:30 a.m.; **Knit & Stitch,** 10 a.m.; **Congregate Meal,** noon. Cost is \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: turkey meatballs, ziti with marinara, mixed veggies, roll and butter, string cheese, apple; **Mahjong (FULL),** 12:30 p.m.; **Scrabble,** 1 p.m.

Friday, 4/10: 4/10: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; **Chair Yoga with Gia,** 10:30-11:15 a.m., \$5 donation to instructor.

Special Events: Unless noted, registration is required for all programs. Also, unless noted, all programs are free. **Monday April 6:** Lunch & Learn with Heritage Commons, noon. Learn about the day programs and independent living community at Heritage Commons.

Tuesday, April 7: At 1 p.m., state Rep. Christie Carpino (R-32) will explain the Yellow Envelope Initiative, a voluntary program designed to help people with disabilities feel safe and heard when interacting with first responders. The program will be held in the Mary Flood room at Portland Library. Participants may also attend via Zoom; go to portlandct.org/zoom and click "zoom A."

Wednesday, April 8: The workshop SMP Medicare Fraud, Abuse & Errors will be held by Senior Resources Agency on Aging at 1:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 9: Sweet Treats and Conver-

sation with Community Leaders, 1 p.m. This month's community leaders are Lou Pear and Rosario Rizzo with the Air Line Trail Steering Committee and Senior Center Walking Club.

Thursday, April 9: The Heart of Health & Community Wellness Series. This free event features a blood pressure clinic from 10:45-11:45 a.m. and Chatting with Chatham Health wellness presentation about The Importance of Sleep at 11:15 a.m. Don't forget to sign up for the Congregate Meal at noon. (Must sign up by noon the day before to attend lunch; suggested donation is \$3 for meal, must fill out form.)

Friday, April 10: Family History FUN with Ken Doney, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, April 13: AARP Safe Driving Course, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. When you take this course, you could be eligible for a 5% discount on your auto insurance. This course teaches proven driving techniques to help keep you and your loved ones safe on the road. Refreshments will be provided. Course cost is \$20 for AARP members, \$25 for non-members (payable to the instructor the day of, by cash or check).

Monday, April 13: Bingo with Sean from Ageless Insurance, 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 15: Lunch at Sans Souci. Leave the center at 11:30 a.m. Cost is a \$5 ride fee; pay for your own meal.

Thursday, April 16: Drumming Circle class, 2-3 p.m. No experience needed and instruments will be provided. A \$5 donation goes to the food bank.

Monday, April 20: Shopping Trip to Old Lyme: Big Y and Four Mile River Farm followed by lunch at Hideaway. Leave the center at 10 a.m. There is a \$5 ride fee.

Wednesday, April 22: Horizon Wings Raptor and Rehabilitation Education Program, 1 p.m. Experience the thrill of being up close to a magnificent eagle, hawk, falcon, or owl.

Monday, April 27: Monthly technology workshop, 11 a.m. The topic for this session will be understanding and using AI in everyday life for seniors.

Monday April 27: Hair by Jessica. Men's/women's shampoos, cuts and styling are offered. Call Jessica to make an appointment at 860-751-9215

Medical Rides: The center offers ADA-accessible transportation for seniors to medical rides. The fee is \$5/person, round trip. Please give a 2-week notice.

Foot Care: The center is taking appointments for a Foot Clinic with Stacey Cormier, RN; services starting at \$35. Call to register and for more information.

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: Good Friday, 4/3 – Stations of the Cross on the Brownstone Green at noon, and Good Friday service at 6 p.m. 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.

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.

Church Presentation on John Hall Sage

All are invited to Trinity Church, 345 Main St., on Sunday, April 12, at 11:30 a.m., for a special presentation by local naturalist Beau Doherty and Dr. Erin Kuprewicz of the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History at the University of Connecticut.

This program will explore the life and legacy of John Hall Sage (1847–1925), a noted Portland native and U.S. ornithologist, highlighting his scientific contributions, his 1913 work *Birds of*

Connecticut, and his faithful service to Trinity Church as a parishioner and vestry member.

The presentation will also look at how Portland's bird populations and landscape have changed since Sage's time, including examples from UConn's 5,000-bird collection.

A brief tour of items referenced in Sage's *Memorials and Other Gifts* in Trinity Church will follow. Light refreshments will be provided. All are welcome.

Registration Continues for Town-Wide Tag Sale

The Portland Historical Society's 30th annual Town-Wide Tag Sales Day will be on Saturday, May 9 – rain or shine. Online registration and payment for tag sales are still open.

To register, visit www.portlandhistsoc.com and click on the link (the big yellow banner), and then just follow the directions. Registration sheets are also available in the barrel at the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History, located at 492 Main St., as well as on the society website. Completed paper registrations along with payment should be mailed to the society at P.O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480.

The fee to register is \$25 and all registrations must be received by 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. Each registered tag sale will be marked with a numbered pole sign corresponding to sale locations on the map.

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.

Zion Lutheran News & Notes

Zion Lutheran Church is located at 183 William St. All are invited to participate in worship. Sara Stall-Ryan is pastor.

Worship Notes: Zion offers Sunday worship each week at 9 a.m.

Learning: Sunday School classes, for children ages 3 through 8th grade, meet the first and third Sunday of each month, from 10:15-11:15 a.m. For more information, call Sylvia LeShane at 860-342-0658.

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

Easter Sunday Celebration: April 5 at 9 a.m.

Year-Round Giving: Pull tabs are collected

Grange in Town-Wide Tag Sale

Hemlock Grange in Portland is again participating in the town-wide tag sale on Saturday, May 9.

Individuals may join the tag sale and have a space in the parking lot. Individuals need to provide their own table. Fee is \$10.

The Grange will also accept donations of many items, including small workable appliances. No furniture or clothes will be accepted.

Someone will be at the Grange Hall on Friday, May 8, starting at 1 p.m., to accept donations. The hall will be open in the afternoon and evening. Hemlock Grange is located at 17 Sage Hollow Rd.

For more information, call Betty Jane at 860-267-7512. Leave your name and number and your call will be returned.

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.

PHS Sophomore Auction

The Portland community is invited to attend an evening of raffles and fundraising at the annual Sophomore Auction at Portland High School Thursday, April 30. The event will begin with a silent auction at 6 p.m., followed by a live auction at 7 p.m.

Attendees will have the chance to bid on a wide variety of items and experiences donated

by local businesses and community members. Auction items include specialty baskets, ski passes, driving classes, sporting events, theater tickets, and more. Admission is free.

Proceeds from the event will support the Portland High School class of 2028, helping fund class activities such as their senior trip and prom.

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Youth Wrestler Wins New England Title

By Josh Howard

Julian Fontanez, a 7th grader at Portland Middle School, has been making a name for himself in the wrestling community, both locally and beyond.

In March, Fontanez became a two-time regional champion by winning the 165 lbs. title in the 12U Open at the Youth New England Wrestling Championships, which was held in Fitchburg, Mass.

Fontanez, who wrestles for Overcomer Training Center (OTC) out of Middletown, pinned Rhode Island's Desmond Vota Cranston in the championship clincher.

In his journey to the title bout, Fontanez eliminated Caden Cook by technical fall (17-0) in the first round, AJ Lafferty by technical fall (16-1) in the quarterfinals, and then pinned Jayson Payero Jr. in the semifinals.

After competing and placing as the runner-up at New England championships a year ago, the 12-year-old grappler said he was more comfortable this year, but remained a "little nervous" as he aimed to finish the job this year.

In 2025, Fontanez won a 12U title in Connecticut before placing second overall at New Englands.

A year earlier, Fontanez competed in 10U, placing fifth in state before winning his first Youth New England title in 2024.

His success at the regional level can be attributed to his stiff competition locally. In Connecticut, youth wrestlers often compete against opponents older than them and once regionals roll around the qualifying Connecticut wrestlers are pitted against people their own age.

Because of his success in-state, Fontanez said that he came into this year's New England championship brimming with confidence and said his coaches at OTC — which include Mark Fong, Josh Fontanez, and John Brown — help put him in position to be successful.

Fontanez first started wrestling at the age of seven, following in the footsteps of his uncle, Josh, who wrestled in college and is now one of his coaches.

The young grappler noted that it's the physicality of the sport that he likes the most, stating,

"I like to tackle people."

His grandfather, Jose Fontanez, said he has seen his grandson grow leaps and bounds over the last few years, stating, "His confidence has just gone through the roof when he steps on the mat."

"He has made tremendous improvement," added Jose Fontanez. "He is the type of person that can see somebody do something and duplicate it instantly — it's amazing."

Following his latest triumph, the two-time regional champ will now prepare for his next challenge where he has been asked to be part of the CT National Team that will compete in Florida this summer.

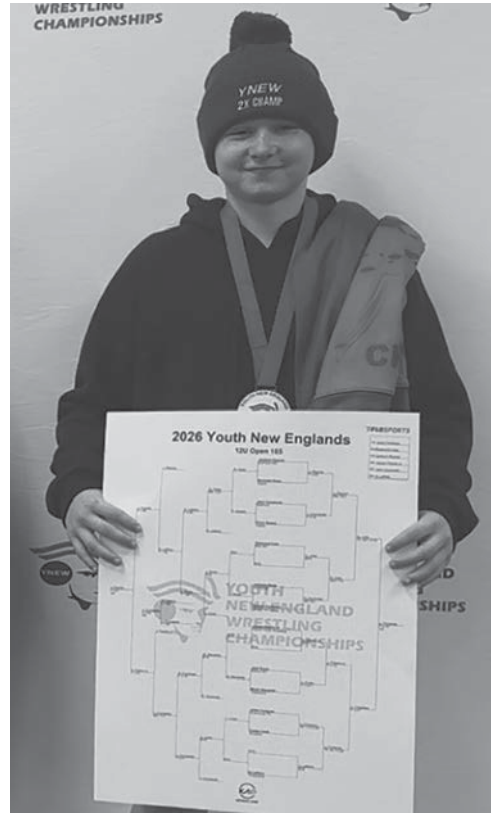
It will be the biggest test yet for Fontanez, who normally wrestles folkstyle and will have to train to wrestle freestyle for the Florida tourney.

Folkstyle, which is primarily used in high school and college, emphasizes control, mat wrestling and slower-paced scrambles. Freestyle, used internationally and in the Olympics, focuses on explosive, high-impact throws, and quick scoring.

In preparation for his trip south, Fontanez will compete in multiple freestyle tournaments locally.

For Fontanez, the tourney in the Sunshine State is the next chance to prove himself outside of Connecticut. He has already competed in most states on the East Coast, but Florida will be the furthest he has traveled for the sports that he said has become a "lifestyle."

"I'm just focused on wrestling," he stated. "I'm pretty excited about it."



Julian Fontanez, a 12-year-old from Portland Middle School, recently won a New England wrestling championship for the second time in the last three years.

Parks and Rec. News & Notes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Bereavement Support Group

St. Mary Church, located at 45 Freestone Ave., invites all to attend the Bereavement Support Group. The evening session meets the second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the Church Hall. The afternoon session meets the fourth Tuesday at 2 p.m. in the Rosary Room. Call Susan Bongiorno to register at 860-685-1966.



Holiday Closing

Portland town offices will be closed Friday, April 3, in observation of the Good Friday holiday.

Lions Accepting Scholarship Applications

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

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

All applications must be received by April 15 for consideration.

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.

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.

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.

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BOF Reduces Fire Fund Contribution

By Toriana Williams

The Andover Board of Finance meeting held March 25 unfolded as a careful, but also tense, effort to balance the town's budget while facing the ever-increasing costs and uncertain needs that lay ahead.

Much of the discussion centered on how to reduce spending without creating pressing financial problems later. Finance board members – as well as members of the Board of Selectmen, who were in attendance – repeatedly returned to the same core questions: how much can be cut now without harming essential services down the line?

Public Comment Pressures for Low Budget

It became clear that there was pressure to keep the budget as low as possible. Public input underlined this concern. Resident and former BOF member Joanne Hebert empathized with the board and said, "I know how painful it is for some of you to make cuts, but remember, this is a year that the town is kind of in a little bit of disarray."

She summarized the shared sentiment plainly and added, "I don't think you can take this budget as constructed. ... I don't want to see cuts either, but there's a job to do. So, good luck doing it." This set the tone for the rest of the discussion, where nearly every proposal suggested involved some kind of tradeoff to offset costs.

Fire Department's Fire Engine Fund

One of the most detailed and debated topics was the fire department's fire engine fund. The town had been contributing annually around \$137,000 to the fund. The question on the table was whether to reduce that amount for the coming year.

BOF Chair Robert England, a Democrat, started, "I would like to be careful with this fund, but at the same time, it's not clear to me that we need to put [\$137,000] into it like clockwork." Some members supported lowering the contribution to somewhere between \$100,000 and \$125,000.

Others strongly disagreed. They warned that cutting contributions this year could create serious problems later. Fire equipment is expensive and often needed with little advance warning. Without steady savings, the town could possibly face sudden, large expenses that could negatively affect the town. First Selectman Jeff Maguire,

a Democrat, advised against the idea.

"I think you guys should think long and hard about what you cut from the fire department's budget because their things that they need are really expensive," Maguire said.

The debate went on for some time, with board members clearly divided. Even those in favor of the cut expressed hesitation. "I don't love this cut," England admitted.

In the end, the Board of Finance approved a reduced contribution by a narrow 4-3 vote. Democrats Robert England, Nicholas Clark and Heather Van Cara and Republican William Desrosiers all voted in favor of the reduction, while Democrat Louise Goodwin and Republicans Liz Lokiec and Kimberly Person opposed the motion.

Building Maintenance Fund Increase

Another area of concern was the building maintenance fund. The fund had already been reduced by a significant amount in previous years, from about \$100,000 down to roughly \$33,000. Some members suggested increasing it again to avoid falling behind on repairs and upkeep. In contrast, BOF member William Desrosiers – a Republican – commented on the work that town buildings have already received, such as electrical upgrades, and said, "I'm not saying they don't need money, but I think in a year like this, leaving it at [\$33,000] would be appropriate."

Selectman Scott Person, a Democrat, questioned when the fund contributions might be increased to the level it was before being reduced. England replied, "When we have a year it's feasible?"

Desrosiers added, "This is what you sent to us, Scott. This is what the Board of Selectmen sent to us, was [\$33,000]."

If the \$100,000 funding level for previous fiscal years was indeed necessary, England suggested the BOS to provide a clear explanation to justify the need. He added that he would be in favor of setting aside funds in advance to prepare for future expenditures in a less financially constrained year. But without a clear and urgent need, he doesn't think it's justified to raise the funding right now.

Person then warned that a roof project for the public works building alone could consume

the remaining balance in the fund. Board members then began estimating additional costs, including roughly \$27,000 for the roof and about \$12,000 for a diesel tank meter, bringing expected expenses well beyond the \$33,000 that was currently allocated.

England, who had previously called for caution when discussing increasing the fund without a clear need, showed a change of mind given the newly identified costs. He noted that while the town could not realistically restore the fund to its previous \$100,000 level in a difficult budget year such as this one, he supported a more modest increase.

Given the overall pressure to keep spending down and the need to finish current projects, officials ultimately agreed to increase the building maintenance fund to a total of \$50,000.

School Board Budget Concerns

A more complex and somewhat heated discussion began concerning the Board of Education budget. The question was not just about numbers, but also about authority – specifically who had the power to make changes to the education budget itself. Different interpretations of the town charter and attorney opinions led to disagreement among members.

Tensions escalated over the proposed school budget increase after the BOF received a letter from the BOE rejecting the board's recommended 7.5% increase. The BOE preferred the originally proposed 11%. England summarized the letter as a clear refusal that stated school officials believed the lower increase would not meet their operational needs.

Vice Chair Liz Lokiec, a Republican, raised concerns and questioned how the letter could represent the full BOE if no formal meeting had

been held to discuss or approve the response.

The conversation then turned to an unresolved legal question regarding whether the BOF has the authority to reduce the school budget themselves. Member Louise Goodwin, a Democrat, asked whether there had been any final determination following opposing opinions on the issue. England explained that no definitive resolution had been reached and described the situation as involving "dueling" legal interpretations. This meant each attorney asserted a different conclusion.

Maguire then directly challenged England's portrayal of the legal dispute, bluntly stating, "That's not true." Maguire argued that the BOF should rely solely on the town attorney's guidance, emphasizing, "The town attorney is your attorney." He insisted that if that attorney said the board has the authority to act, "then you can do it."

England pushed back, citing his professional background and warning against oversimplifying the issue. He cautioned that acting with absolute certainty based on one opinion could lead to serious consequences, noting that "you can get yourself in real trouble."

Maguire dismissed that caution, arguing it had "no bearing" on the board's immediate responsibilities. He accused England of "taking both sides of this fence."

England responded with skepticism towards Maguire's legal argument and defended his measured approach. He later clarified that he had "zero problem" with the concept of the BOF reducing the school budget, but he said he remained reluctant given the ambiguity in the town charter and the unresolved legal disagreement. "This is the reason I'm being careful," he said.

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 Stampers: Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m.

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

Community & 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. High school students who need volunteer hours are welcome.

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, Chair Massage, 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: Shopping Trips: Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. Shop Manchester 4/14 and 4/28, and Willimantic 4/7 and 4/21. Also, on Thursday, 4/9, at 8:30 a.m., there will be a shopping trip to Trader Joe's and Michael's. Transportation is available.

Your Money Matters: Thursday, 4/23, 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 make smart financial decisions. Call 860-742-7305 ext. 4510 to sign up.

Beginner's Quilting with Tara: Mondays, 4/13, 4/27, 5/11, 5/18, 6/8, 5:45-8 p.m. Cost is \$8. In this beginner-friendly quilting class you

will learn how to create your own quilt from start to finish. Participants should bring a working sewing machine and basic sewing notions. This class meets every other week for five weeks. Contact the center to register.

Kids Art Class with Kim: Wednesdays, 4/8 and 4/15, 3 p.m. Fee is \$18 per class or \$35 for both, and there is a discount for siblings. Focus is on oil pastels and watercolor. This class is perfect for all skill levels. Space is limited. Supplies are provided. To register, call the center.

Senior Art Class with Kim: This class is expanding. Will meet Thursdays, 4/16, 4/23, from 10-11 a.m. Cost is \$8. All skill levels welcome. Space is limited. Supplies are provided. To register, call the center.

Family Bingo: Friday, 4/10, 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$10 per person and includes two slices of pizza, a pad of bingo sheets, and dessert. Additional bingo pads available for \$2. Registration is required & limited to the first 60 participants. Call the center to register by Wednesday, 4/8.

Open Art: Call the center if interested in participating in an open adult art class.

P.A.L. Program: Thursday, 4/23, 2 p.m. The People Across Lifetimes (P.A.L.) Program brings senior residents and Andover Elementary kindergarten students together to share lunch, laughter, and activities like being Pen Pals. Call the center to join or for more information.

AARP Driver Safety Class: Thursday, 4/23, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Cost is \$20 for AARP members, \$25 for nonmembers. Location is Bolton Senior Center. To register, call the center or 860-647-9196. Completion may save you money on insurance premiums.

Stained Glass: Friday, 4/24, 6 p.m. No prior experience is needed. This class fills up quickly. For students 16 and up. All materials included. To register, call the center.

Travel In Time Club: Friday, 4/24, 3 p.m. This is an intergenerational partnership with Andover Elementary School. Students and seniors will work on stories and interviews. Call the center to join or for more information.

Mohegan Sun Casino Trip: Friday, 4/24, 10 a.m. The bus will return at 3 p.m. Space is limited. To reserve a seat, call 860-498-2326.

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

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.

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.

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.

Reflective Address Markers

During an emergency, every second counts, and the Andover Volunteer Fire Department says having a highly visible house number helps firefighters get to you that much faster.

All are invited to stop by AVFD at 11 School Rd. on Sunday, May 3, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. The department will offer address markers free to Andover residents. There is a \$10 charge for non-residents.

Easter Plant, Bake Sale

The Andover Volunteer Fire Department will continue its annual Easter Plant Sale and Bake Sale Friday, April 3, and Saturday, April 4, from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. both days, and 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.

CPR and First Aid Class

All are invited to learn CPR and First Aid Sunday, May 3, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., at the Andover Volunteer Fire Department. Cost is \$20 for CPR or CPR and First Aid.

Classes include use of training materials, CPR for Adult, Child and Infant, AED training, Choking, first aid and two-year certification from the American Heart Association.

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

Donations Accepted for Clothing & Linen Sale

Andover Congregational Church, located at 359 Route 6, will hold a Clothing & Linen Sale on Saturday, April 11, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., with a box sale from 1-2 p.m.

Donations can be left on the back ramp of the church in the donation box.

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.

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Cuts, Costs, Concerns Dominate Special Meeting

By Toriana Williams

The Marlborough Board of Selectmen held a special meeting on March 11 to review the town's proposed budget, with a goal to ascertain where costs could be reduced while still maintaining important services.

Chair Susan McFarland, a Democrat, opened the conversation and said, "I would love if we could focus our discussion on where we think there are opportunities to reduce the budget." That focus shaped the entire meeting, as board members and Town Manager David Porter worked through major expenses line by line.

Concerns from Residents

Public comment highlighted concerns about inefficient staffing and transparency. Resident Elaine Adams spoke about the town's senior services, and noted that Marlborough has only one staff member supporting seniors. She explained that after visiting other senior centers, she realized nearby towns have "four to six staff members," while Marlborough relies heavily on one person. She urged the board to approve funding for a part-time assistant, calling it "a practical and cost-effective way to strengthen services."

Adams' husband, Robert Wall, added that relying on one person could create unintended and consequential risks. "Once they become overwhelmed, there is the issue of burnout," he said, warning that losing the current staff member would be "the most disruptive thing to the service."

Parks and Rec. Programs

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

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.

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-

William Guzman, a finance professional and Board of Finance member (speaking as an individual), raised broader concerns about the budget process itself. He said there was a lack of "clarity, detail and justification" in the proposed budget and emphasized that "this is about ensuring the budgeting process is transparent." He noted that the BOF depends on accurate and detailed information to make decisions on behalf of taxpayers. Guzman also thanked the board for posting videos of their meetings as he found them helpful in his work as a BOF member.

'Tight' Budget

Porter described the overall budget as already very slim. "The operating budget, by and large, is very tight," he said. He warned that cuts would be quickly felt because "there's not a lot of flop in the budget." Instead of major cuts, he suggested delaying or splitting large projects and carefully reviewing proposed staffing additions.

In addition, several major capital expenses were discussed. The Town Hall roof replacement is expected to cost around \$40,000 to \$50,000, based on contractor estimates, according to officials. McFarland noted that earlier estimates seemed too low, but newer quotes showed the figure was "in the right ballpark."

The Food Bank exterior painting was estimated at about \$20,000. Porter explained that because the building is a house, and not a commercial structure, "I think that \$20,000 is adequate to

paint that house."

As per Porter's earlier instruction, some projects may be delayed. A \$20,000 dry tank system could be deferred to a later date, especially if the town moves away from oil heating. Porter suggested possibly "nursing it along" instead of replacing it right away.

The Public Works roof was another major concern. Rather than replacing it all at once, Porter suggested splitting the project into phases or even exploring a solar partnership. He proposed that a company might pay for the roof in exchange for assisting in installing solar panels, which "might be a way to get the roof without burdening taxpayers at all."

Equipment and Vehicles

The board discussed purchasing a new single-axle dump truck, a recurring discussion, for \$225,000. Funding could partially come from speed camera revenue, which had reached about \$212,000 and was expected to increase slightly. However, Porter noted that speeding had gone down.

Vehicle maintenance costs were also questioned. Despite proposing \$50,000 for maintenance, past spending ranged from \$25,000 to \$60,000. McFarland suggested trimming the budget, and said, "based on historical spend ... It seems like we could save a little bit."

Porter explained the higher costs were due to an aging fleet. "The newest truck is from 2020. ... We have another one that is 20 years old," he said, noting that breakdowns during snowstorms can be a serious problem.

Staffing Decisions

Personnel costs were a major part of the discussion. Proposed additions included a heavily advocated senior center assistant at \$26,310, a public works maintainer at around \$42,865, a town hall assistant at around \$38,144 and a pay adjustment for the senior center director at \$15,908.

Porter encouraged prioritizing senior center positions. "I strongly support ... that both of the senior center ones should be the highest priority,"

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.

he said. However, he suggested the Public Works positions could be delayed if needed, due to upcoming changes in the department.

Other Budget Adjustments

The board also reviewed many smaller, but important, items. These included tree removal services that could be set at \$90,000, though spending was lower this year due to weather delays. Election costs, including food for workers, were questioned. Selectwoman Louise Concodello, a Republican, noted, "I think everybody that goes to work brings their own lunch." Additionally, legal fees could drop from around \$35,000 to \$30,000, however Porter cautioned against cutting further.

Fire Marshal and Safety Costs

The Fire Marshal budget drew significant attention. It had increased by 55%, from about \$18,000 to a proposed \$28,000. Some members suggested reducing it to \$20,000.

Porter warned against cutting the budget by too much. He explained that the role included inspections required by the law and that the town may need a deputy to keep up. "I would strongly recommend against that," he said, and emphasized the importance of meeting safety requirements.

Senior Center and Community Services

The senior center budget was also heavily debated. A proposed increase in program funding from \$6,000 to \$12,000 was seen as just too large by some members. "I think we're just going to have to prioritize," McFarland stated beforehand. She suggested a smaller increase to \$9,000 and emphasized that "everybody's paying too much for everything right now."

By the end of the meeting, the board identified several line items needing more information before making final decisions. "Let's see if we can't get that ... and then come back to it," McFarland concluded.

Easter Egg Hunt

The East Glastonbury Fish and Game Club will hold its annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 4. This free event is open to the public and designed for children up to 12 years of age.

The hunt will start promptly at 1 p.m., with staged areas to accommodate various age groups. Complimentary refreshments will be provided following the hunt. The club is located at the end of Planeta Road in Marlborough.

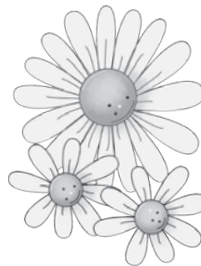
Check out the club's Facebook page for any changes or updated information.

MVFD Easter Plant Sale
The Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department, located at 7 Hebron Rd., will continue its annual Easter Plant Sale 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.

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St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Church is located at 30 Jones Hollow Rd. Pastor is the Rev. George S. Mukuka, Bill Gilles is deacon John McKaig is senior deacon retired. Heather Mancini is church secretary and can be reached at 860-295-0001; hours are Monday-Wednesday and Friday, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. People are asked to call before heading over or connect via email at stjohfisher30@yahoo.com. The church website is www.stjfisher.org.

Holy Week & Easter Mass Celebrations: 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 will be collected with your monetary contribution the week after Easter. Food drives are held weekly for the Marlborough Food Bank. Bags with specific shopping lists are available at the Masses. Sandwich-making and collection continues the last Thursday of the month for St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown. Other scheduled service opportunities can be found in the weekly bulletin.

Additional Programs and Offerings: For information on other programs, seasonal offerings, adult faith formation, youth group, OCIA, Knights of Columbus or other ministries, call the office, visit www.stjfisher.org, or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church).

Congregational Church News & Notes

Holy Week and Easter Services are scheduled at Marlborough Congregational Church, located at 35 South Main St. The Easter Sunday service will be livestreamed at mcc.marlborgcongregationalchurch.org for those who can't attend in person, and can be watched later through the church website, mcc.marlborgcongregationalchurch.org.

Good Friday, April 3: The church sanctuary will be open for quiet meditation from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. All are invited to walk the labyrinth that will be set up in the Thienes Lounge from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 4: The sanctuary will be open for quiet meditation from 9 a.m. to noon along with the labyrinth available to walk during these hours.

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

Good Friday Closing

All town offices will be closed Friday, April 3, in observance of Good Friday.

All are welcome at the Resurrection Celebration, 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 church pastor 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," accompanied by several bell choir members, to close the service.

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@marlborgcongregationalchurch.org, or contact the church office at office@marlborgcongregationalchurch.org.

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* Letters, cont. from page 7

expansion.

We learn something new every time we attend Department of Public Works Action Committee meetings. Sound thinking might seem ominous but it's really not. There are great websites explaining how this sensible technology works, or submit your questions to this committee at DPWAC@hebronct.gov.

Some ideas help with overall costs and preventing pollution. For example, weigh stations and covers on bulky waste. Because we pay for bulky waste based on poundage, the less it weighs, the less Hebron pays. If we weigh vehicles as they enter the bulky waste drop off site and weigh them again after unloading, the difference is the "poundage price" residents will pay for dumping their unwanted items. Simple right? But what happens, to the waste containers, and that old couch you dropped off, should it rain? They fill with water, right? Water that corrodes both the contents, of the container, and the container itself. Water that can then leach out, of the metal storage bins, and into surrounding groundwaters.

Secondly, water is heavy. A water laden container now weighs more...quite a bit more, especially when we consider your old couch is now water logged as well. However, covers prevent water from soaking the contents and increasing the weight. Covers prevent water from accumulating, becoming foul and/or corroding the containers. Residents would pay fees, based on pounds. Likewise, Hebron then pays its own disposal fees, also based on pounds. Lumber, mattresses, building materials, kitchen cabinets, whatever we throw out, costs money to dispose of, especially when wet. Covers and scales are sound thinking and only two interesting ideas for PW. #save17

Jean Tulimieri – Amston

Stop Talking

To the Editor:

Stop talking, Jeff. Just stop talking!

Why is First Selectman Jeff Maguire trying to be King of Andover?

Two years ago, he appointed himself to a Charter Review Committee and attempted to strip authority from the Board of Finance and Board of Education, concentrating it in his own hands. When that failed, he exploited a little-known charter provision to insert himself into those boards' meetings.

He seems to think ex officio membership entitles him to dominate their agendas and critique how they operate — all while crowing about having been a CPA. Guess what, Jeff? That doesn't qualify you to run the town's finances. It certainly doesn't qualify you to run any part of its schools. If you want to serve on those Boards, run for them.

There's something Jeff doesn't control, and it gnaws at him.

He runs his own meetings like a bully, abusing Board members and guests alike. Watch a BOS meeting. He is openly dismissive of Anne Cremé and often of Carol Lee, accusing Anne of being a shill for Education and berating her for holding opinions contrary to his own. Superintendent Valerie Bruneau receives similar treatment. He demands student and family financial

information that she has repeatedly explained is confidential under student privacy laws — and won't hear it, petulantly insisting that not getting his way is evidence of a lack of transparency. No, Jeff: the superintendent knows her job, knows the law, and follows it.

One example stands out. While Jeff was making an ass of himself at the January BOE meeting, Sharon St. Rock was doing what new members traditionally do: listening more than talking. That's how you learn the ropes. When she finally contributed to the discussion, his response was: "Stop talking, Sharon!"

Stop talking? You hijack a liaison role to insert yourself as a blustering obstructionist, and you want Sharon to stop talking? There is someone doing far too much talking here. It isn't Sharon. Look in the mirror, Jeff.

We haven't even touched on misogyny, FOIA violations, or the chaos at Town Hall. But it's time for me to stop talking too — for now.

Sincerely,

Scott Sauyet – Andover

Note: Sauyet is co-chair of the Andover Democratic Town Committee and is a member of the RHAM Board of Education, but said he is speaking as an individual.

Wonderful Walk in Hebron

To the Editor:

What a beautiful day for the Historic Watershed Walking Tour through 17 Kinney Rd./the Horton Property in Hebron! Among the bright sunshine and fresh breezes of last Sunday an enthusiastic group of nearly 30 Hebron residents, and one from New Britain, gathered to experience our distinctive history and explore this vibrant environmental gem. It was a real treat to see the wide range of individuals that participated, from the young family whose children ran through the fields, climbed fallen trees and collected unusual pieces of bark, to the steady paced seniors who strolled along with the help of friends and walking sticks.

The most poignant moment of the day came after discussing tales of powerful geological forces, human occupation over millennia and standing below a breathtaking ancient white oak tree. I was asked a thoughtful yet simple question, "Are there any organizations that can help preserve all this?" After some contemplation I am glad to say yes, there are many. These include Hebron's Open Space Committee and Historic Properties Committee, as well as outside groups like Joshua's Conservation Trust and the Connecticut Farmland Trust. In the end it is up to us, the residents of Hebron, to stand up for what we value and let Town Hall know the preservation of 17 Kinney Road is important.

As we walked and talked, the experience brought home the tremendous potential this landscape has as a learning tool and community attraction. The words of Yale History Professor John Demos came to mind, "There are so many different parts: geology, environment, indigenous people, colonists, enslavement, even the present. It could well be a history park, an outdoor museum..." That landscape has a real aura about it." This captivating aura was close at hand last Sunday as we made our way through the historic stone wall laneways and across the

watershed.

It would take some modest effort and no expense to the town for the Hebron Historical Society to expand on the QR Code Tour that already includes information on the Raymond Brook Preserve and 17 Kinney Rd. Even just two or three additional QR hitching posts could allow visitors to experience the broad range of history and beauty found in this unique landscape. The rare combination of the historical, the environmental and a sustainable economic engine offer a rich and powerful future. Please visit Save Hebron Center on Facebook for more information.

Sincerely,

Kevin J. Tulimieri – Amston

Where Healing Begins

To the Editor:

There's a simple moment most of us recognize.

A child gets hurt — not seriously, but enough — and instinctively runs to someone they trust. Not because that person has all the answers, but because they feel safe.

Before anything is fixed, before the wound is even cleaned, something important happens: connection begins the healing.

That truth doesn't just belong to childhood. It belongs to all of us.

Because if we're honest, most of us are carrying something. Physical pain that lingers. Stress that never quite turns off. Grief that shows up when we least expect it. Strained relationships. Quiet disappointments.

We live in a culture that often tells us to keep going, keep smiling, and keep it together. But healing doesn't usually start there. It starts with honesty.

This time of year, often called Holy Week, begins with a scene that looks like celebration — but underneath it is something deeper. The crowd welcomes Jesus with cheers, but the word they shout — "Hosanna" — actually means "help" or "save us." It's both praise and a cry for help. And that feels familiar. Many of us know what it's like to show up for life while quietly carrying our own version of that same prayer: I need help.

The story that follows throughout the week doesn't ignore that reality. It moves straight into it. It's a reminder that healing isn't about avoiding pain — it's about not facing it alone.

We often think healing means everything gets fixed quickly and completely. But more often, healing is slower and more personal than that. It can look like strength returning little by little. It can look like learning to carry something differently. Sometimes it simply looks like having someone sit with you in it.

That's where connection matters.

Our struggles — the very things we're tempted to hide — can become the places where we connect most deeply with others. When we're honest, it gives others permission to be honest too. When we listen without trying to fix everything, we become part of someone else's healing.

And sometimes the most powerful thing we can offer isn't advice. It's presence. "I'm here."

This week, wherever you find yourself, maybe the invitation is simple:

Name what hurts. Take one small step toward

healing. And be present for someone else.

Because healing doesn't begin when everything is perfect. It begins when we stop hiding — and remember we don't have to carry it alone.

Rev. Rose Nilson

Pastor, Andover Congregational Church

Did Dennler Hide the Truth?

To the Editor:

The March 25, 2026 BOF workshop revealed a shocking secret: Colchester's joint health reserve fund faces a \$1 million shortfall and a \$4 million deficit — hidden from the public for nearly a year.

During the workshop, Superintendent Sullivan admitted he misled the public and the BOF in 2025, claiming the schools relied on Lockton to determine health reserve fund contributions. In reality, internal estimates had been used.

Who knew what?

Sullivan revealed BOF member Jillian Vinci and BOE's Chris Rivers were aware of reserve shortfalls as early as April 2025. During a BOF meeting, when Tim Vaillancourt raised questions and concerns about the reserves, Vinci called him an "a--hole," implying he didn't understand insurance. BOE Finance Director Rachel Linkkila reported that \$325,084 in excess funds were transferred into the reserve account during the August 2025 Budget/Finance meeting, with BOE member Michelle Millington motioning the action — evidence that the reserves were underfunded and unable to cover projected expenses.

Where was BOE Chair Donna Antonacci during this crisis? Oversight of the reserve fund was her responsibility. Now serving on the BOF, the public deserves answers about her role and any conflicts.

Even more troubling is First Selectman Bernie Dennler's silence. He attended the Feb. 6 Health Insurance Subcommittee meeting, where the reserve fund was projected to be depleted by April or May 2026. Despite these warnings, Dennler pushed a \$20 million spending referendum on February 24. Two days later, the BOE requested a forensic audit — was the vote rushed to hide the truth? Still, at the March 19 BOS meeting, when asked what and when he knew about the crisis, he refused to answer.

Did FS Dennler know of Colchester's financial crisis as early as April 2025 — and deliberately hide it to help pass his budget increase, protect his reelection prospects, and push the referendum? Since taking office, Dennler has driven unprecedented spending, contributing to one of the largest tax hikes in Colchester's history, all while keeping the crisis secret.

The situation is even more alarming with the BOS, BOE, and BOF all controlled by Democrats, who appear to have engaged in partisan secrecy — concealing financial information while pushing costly spending increases onto taxpayers.

This goes beyond a misstep — it represents a serious leadership failure and a betrayal of public trust. Those responsible should resign. Colchester taxpayers deserve honesty, accountability, and officials who put the public first. The time for excuses is over.

Colchester deserves better.

Cyndee Laribe – Colchester

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Proposed Budget Presented to Finance Board

By Toriana Williams

The Marlborough Board of Finance held a detailed discussion about the proposed town budget for the 2026-27 Fiscal Year on Feb. 23. The meeting focused on explaining the costs, identifying challenges and answering questions from board members.

Budget Overview and Key Increases

The proposed budget included a 6.44% increase in operating costs and a 7.06% total increase when capital expenses are included. Town Manager David Porter emphasized that these numbers are only a starting point.

He explained, "budgeting is an exercise in prioritization," meaning that decisions must balance the town's needs with what residents can afford. He also acknowledged financial pressure on taxpayers, and stated, "the likelihood of ... being able to ask our residents for a 7% increase is slim to none."

Several major factors are driving the increase. One is a 3% cost-of-living adjustment for employees. This is a standard raise meant to keep up with inflation. Another major factor is a 15% increase in health insurance costs, which Porter described as "very significant ... and unfortunate." This increase is not unique to Marlborough, Porter said. "With the exception of maybe five [clients] ... everyone is looking at ... 13 to 20% increase."

Staffing Changes and Personnel Requests

The budget also included requests for new, or adjusted, staff positions. These included a pay increase for the human services director, a part-time assistant at the senior center, a new public works maintenance position, and a Town Hall assistant.

Porter emphasized that these changes were based on real needs. For example, he said the Human Services Director's raise is needed "to get her

compensated roughly in line with what similar positions ... are receiving" and to retain her.

The senior center request reflected a growing elderly population. Porter noted, "Marlborough has a ... rapidly growing senior population," and additional help is needed to support programs and transportation.

Rising Operating Costs

Beyond staffing, several other costs are increasing: electricity costs, election expenses, loss of grant funding and new accounting rules.

One example discussed was election costs. Porter explained that new requirements, including early voting, are raising expenses. "The cost of doing all of this is significantly more than it was in past years," he said.

Another factor is a new accounting rule related to "compensated absences." This refers to unused vacation or sick time that must be paid out when employees retire. Porter explained that towns must now budget for these future costs in advance.

Police and Technology Changes

The police department is also facing higher costs due to changes in how body camera footage is stored. Previously, the state handled storage, but now towns must pay for a new system.

Porter explained, "the state police are now transitioning away from that model ... so there is an annual fee," for both the devices and cloud storage. This change means the town must spend more money to continue to use body cameras.

Capital Projects, Infrastructure Needs

The meeting also covered planned capital projects, which are large, long-term investments. These include culvert repairs on Quinn and Johnson Road, roof replacements for town buildings, improvements to Firehouse 2, repainting the food

bank building and replacing equipment at the transfer station.

Porter stressed the importance of maintaining town facilities. For example, he explained that repainting the food bank building would protect it from damage. "I think that ... is money well spent regardless of what we decide to do with the property," said Porter.

Firehouse 2 improvements were also discussed. Porter noted that better facilities would help protect firefighters' health. Upgrading the bathroom at the station would allow firefighters to clean themselves at the station after responding to a fire, reducing the risk of bringing harmful contaminants back to their homes.

Currently, the facilities are in poor condition, which leads some firefighters to go home to shower instead. Improving these spaces would help protect both the firefighters and their families by encouraging decontamination on-site. "I really want them to ... take that initial shower at the firehouse so that ... contaminants can be contained."

Long-Term Planning and Debt Concerns

Board members raised concerns about long-term costs, especially related to bonding. One member warned about future risks: "We don't want to kick the can down the road, end up in a predicament. ... We don't want to overleverage ourselves."

Porter agreed that caution is needed. He said large projects, like school renovations, would likely require bonding but emphasized the importance of timing and affordability.

Shared Services and Cost Savings

The town is also exploring ways to save money

through shared services. For example, Marlborough plans to share a finance director with another town. This would be a positive step, Porter described, and he said it would reduce costs and improve operations. He also mentioned applying for grants to offset expenses, explaining, "you never get anything that you don't ask for."

Revenue and Uncertainty

The revenue side of the budget is still being developed. This includes money from taxes, grants and other sources. Porter explained that some numbers are still estimates. "I would characterize those numbers as very preliminary."

One uncertainty is whether the state will provide funding to help cover new election costs. When asked about this, Porter said, "[I] don't have a crystal ball. ... I just don't know what the legislature will do."

Audit Approval

At the end of the meeting, the board discussed and approved the contract for the town's 2026 audit. The costs total \$63,000, which includes \$56,000 for the main audit and \$7,000 for required additional procedures.

Porter said this price was reasonable compared to other towns and recommended staying with the town's current firm. Agreeing with Porter, the board voted unanimously to approve it.

Throughout the discussion, Porter emphasized the need for balance. The town must meet its needs while keeping taxes affordable and ensuring services. As he explained, the process is about making careful choices and continuing discussions to reach a final budget that residents will support at referendum.

Epoch Arts Accepting Tag Sale Donations

Epoch Arts will begin accepting donations this 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 News and Notes

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

Senior Center Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. **Holiday Closing:** The center will be closed April 3 in observance of Good Friday.

Events: 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.

Blood Pressure Checks (free) and Chatham Health Education Presentation: Monday, April 13. BP checks, 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m., followed by a presentation on the Importance of Sleep from 12:15-12:45 p.m.

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.

Chair Yoga: Next session: 5/12, 5/19, 5/26, 6/2. Cost is \$35/residents, \$40 non-residents. RSVP by 5/8.

FABBS Exercise: The next Flexibility, Agility, Better Balance and Strength workout class will be held 5/4, 5/11, 5/18 and 5/26, from 10:45-11:45 a.m. Movement and exercises are drawn from body building, yoga, ballet and more. Cost is \$40/residents, \$48/non-residents. RSVP by 4/27.

Line Dancing Lessons: All levels welcomed, ages 55+. May session: 5/7, 5/14, 5/21, 5/28, from 5-7 p.m. each week. Cost: \$50/residents, \$60/non-residents. RSVP by 4/30.

Transportation: Rides to medical appoint-

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

Social Services: Food Bank: Located at 3 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.

American Legion Setback Tournament

American Legion Post 197 will hold a Setback Tournament Friday, April 17, at the post, 128 East Hampton Rd. Registration is at 6 p.m. and games start at 6:30 p.m.

This is a Round Robin-style tournament, and cost is \$10 per person.

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

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

Connection to the Collection

Richmond Memorial Library has announced its April edition of "Connection to the Collection."

Passport to Connecticut Libraries runs through April 30. While you're visiting all the wonderful libraries Connecticut has to offer, try a nice hike and check out *50 Hikes in Connecticut* by Mary-Anne Hardy. Or explore using *Around Every Corner of Connecticut: 100 Towns to Explore Every Season* by Sarah Cody. More of a biker? Try *Best Bike Rides Connecticut: The Greatest Recreational Rides in the State* by David Streever.

Take the chance to read about libraries with *That Librarian: The Fight Against Book-Ban-*

ning in America by Amanda Jones, or pursue a visual treasure trove of bookish artifacts with *The Card Catalog: Books, Cards and Literary Treasures* by the Library of Congress. Teach your kids about the history of libraries with the delightful picture book *Miss Moore Thought Otherwise: How Anne Carroll Moore Created Libraries for Children* by Jan Pinborough, or show them how libraries work with *A Day with a Librarian* by Jen Kottke. Have fun with flashlights and illuminate the wonders of the library with *At the Library*, the Shine-a-Light book by Heather Alexander. Check out the Richmond Memorial Library and get our stamp in your passport!

Artists Sought for Spring Show

Marlborough Arts Center members are welcome to participate in the 2026 Marlborough Arts Center Members' Spring Art Show, which runs April 25-May 31.

Members are welcome to showcase up to three pieces for display and sale. A variety of media will be accepted, including paintings, drawings, photography, collage, sculpture, fiber art, woodworking and jewelry.

Eligibility: Artists must be a 2026 MAC Member to enter. You can join or renew online, marlborougharts.org and select Membership.

Entry Details: For information on submitting

your work, entry forms and labels go to: marlborougharts.org. Click on "Calling All Artists...."

Participating members will drop off artwork Sunday, April 12, from 2-4 p.m., and Monday, April 13, from 5:30-6:30 p.m. The show will be open Saturdays and Sundays, 1-4 p.m., from April 25-May 31. Reception is Sunday, May 3, from 1-4 p.m.

For more information, contact info@marlborougharts.org or call 860-467-6353 and leave a message. The Marlborough Arts Center is a nonprofit regional center for the arts located at 231 North Main St.

From the Town Manager's Desk...

The purpose of this article is to help residents calculate the impact of the proposed budget on their household's property tax bill. The real estate revaluation makes a year-over-year comparison a little more challenging than usual. Since some properties increased more than others, each property owner can and should estimate their taxes and compare it with the taxes they paid last year.

To estimate your real estate taxes, please do the following:

1. Use the Town of Marlborough Property Records Database (www.marlbo.info/propertyrecords) to look up the assessed value of your property. You can search by owner name or street address. When you find your property, you will see a header on the property record called Valuation. The first number in that section - Total Valuation - is the number you will use. Do not use Zillow or similar websites. Those sites might help estimate the market value of your home. The assessed value usually is significantly less than the market value.

2. Multiply your Total Valuation by 0.28 (the proposed mill rate) to estimate the proposed tax on your property. Compare the resulting figure with the taxes you paid last year.

It is also important to recognize that the revaluation shifts tax burden from motor vehicles to real estate. The tax on most homes will increase and the tax on most cars will decrease.

Each year, the assessed value of a vehicle decreases by five percent of the original manufacturer's suggested retail price. This year, due to the revaluation, the mill rate on motor vehicles also decreases from 0.3246 to 0.2800.

If the original MSRP of your vehicle was \$40,000, then the assessed value of your car decreases by five percent - or \$2,000 - each year. If the assessed value last year was \$27,000 then this year it will be \$25,000. Due to the combination of the lower assessed value and the lower mill rate, the tax bill for that vehicle will be \$176 less than last year.



Porter

David Porter
Marlborough Town Manager

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



Easter Bunny Pays a Visit... The Easter Bunny traveled all the way from Easter Island to the CT Draft Horse Rescue at 113 Chestnut Hill Rd., East Hampton to bring special eggs to Loki, a foal born on March 15. Loki invited the bunny to the rescue's 15th anniversary open house on Saturday, May 16, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and then he promptly took a nap. Being this cute is exhausting. For more information on CDHR, visit ctdraftrescue.org.

Christ Episcopal Church News

Christ Episcopal Church, 66 Middle Haddam Rd., Middle Haddam, holds in-person and Zoom services at 10 a.m. on Sundays. All are welcome. To connect electronically, go to www.christchurchmiddlehaddam.com 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.

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 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 donnadubehryb@gmail.com for more information.

A Night of Doo-Wop

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

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

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

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.

Haddam Neck Covenant Church News

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

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

available. All are welcome.

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

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

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

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 April: This month's artist is Leif Nilsson, a resident of Chester. His plein air impressionistic landscape compositions will be on display during regular library hours. An artist reception will be held Friday, April 10, from 4-6 p.m. All are welcome.

Double Play Returns!: Sunday, April 12, at 2 p.m., Double Play features a mix of live music performed by Cathy Kreger and Jon Swift.

Open Mic Night: Friday, April 17 from 6 to 8 p.m. Come and share your talent or just listen and enjoy. Performers, call the library to sign up at 860-267-9093.

Poetry with Music: Saturday, April 18, 6 p.m. East Hampton Poet Laureate "Sym-petalous,"

a.k.a. Stan Lindh, will read his original poems accompanied by musician Lynn Tracey just in time for National Poetry Month.

Foundry Saxophone Quartet: Saturday, May 23, 2 p.m. Enjoy an afternoon of folk, jazz, and modern standards. Let the library know if planning to attend. There is no charge to attend, but donations are accepted.

Chatham Community Chess Club: Wednesday, April 15, 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.

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.

Meet and Greet Trailblazers Meeting: Monday, April 6 at 11 a.m. All are invited to a short informational meeting about this group, which will start meeting again for morning walks on April 13 at the Air Line Trail State Park on Smith Street on Mondays.

Nature is Everywhere: Tuesday, April 7 at 10:30 a.m. Join Naturalist Lynn Kochiss for a

talk on Vernal Pools. In addition, a Vernal Pool Ramble to Highlawn Forest in Rockfall will be offered on April 8 leaving the Senior Center at 10 a.m.

Lotus Flower Workshop: Wednesday, April 8 at 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Make a traditional Korean Lotus Lantern, followed by the viewing of a short documentary on Korean culture. Cost is \$6 for supplies. The workshop is led by the Korean Spirit and Cultural Promotion Project.

Trips: Relaxed Ramble at Highlawn Forest: Join Naturalist Lyn Kochiss for a walk to see vernal pools at Highlawn Forest in Rockfall on Wednesday, April 8, leaving the Senior Center at 9:30 a.m. Bus donation is \$4. Kochiss will give a talk on Vernal Pools at the Senior Center on Tuesday, April 7, at 10:30 a.m.

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

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

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.



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Ziobron Seeks a Return to State House

By Anne Lilburn

A familiar local face is stepping back into the arena as a political candidate. East Haddam resident Melissa Ziobron is running for the Connecticut House of Representatives, seven years after she left that role in 2019.

Ziobron, a Republican, is running to once again represent Connecticut's 34th District, which covers East Hampton, East Haddam and part of Salem. The current holder of the seat, Republican Irene Haines, is not seeking reelection.

Ziobron had previously served three two-year terms in the state House; she completed her last term in early 2019, following an unsuccessful 2018 bid for state Senate. She ran that year for the 33rd District – which includes the *Rivereast* towns of Colchester, East Hampton and Portland – but lost to Democrat Norm Needleman, who remains the district's senator.

After leaving office, Ziobron stayed close to state politics, working at the Connecticut General Assembly as a senior fiscal policy staffer for the Senate and House Republican minority.

Now, says Ziobron, after many years watching from a close distance, she's ready to get back to the main stage – and she says she brings with her knowledge, both from serving in elected office in the past, and from her more recent staff role. She also said that many of the issues that mattered to her were the same as they were in the past.

"When I decided to run in 2012 for state rep," she said, "I did so with a lot of fire in the belly about issues that were happening in the state. We had the two largest tax increases back-to-back. We were in deficit, a projected deficit every single year, and I entered the race saying, 'Hey, I want to follow the money. Where is all this money going?'"

Ziobron said she is still motivated by fiscal and governmental transparency, but she also acknowledged that times had changed since she left office.

"There's a lot of divisiveness. There's a lot of angst in our in our universe and certainly in our local and state politics," she said. "And I just felt that I had made a difference before. I could do so again."

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.

Organizers say that, due to the bad winter, as well as the flu and COVID-19, blood drives across the state are missing targets for blood collection.

To make an appointment, call 1-800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter East Hampton. All that donate will receive an exclusive American Red Cross Life is Good T-shirt, while supplies last.

Helping Hands Open Twice Monthly

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.

Ziobron said she hoped her candidacy would inspire others to get involved in local government.

"I really believe in the vision of a public servant," she said. "I really believe in volunteer-style government where you have local boards and commissions, and I feel like the divisiveness in our nation has contributed to people being afraid to get up and talk about their beliefs."

Ziobron described herself as a "moderate Republican" who is unafraid to depart from the party majority on some issues, describing herself as "some would say liberal socially." She noted her active role on cannabis legalization during her last term, and pointed out that she was a supporter of gay rights, adding that she supported "people being able to marry whoever the hell they want and for government to stay out of their bedroom."

She also described herself as pro-choice, something that may break with traditional stereotypes about Republicans, but she framed it in a way that pivoted towards more traditionally Republican talking points on issues like vaccination and homeschooling.

"In the arena of bodily autonomy," she said, "I believe in pro-choice for abortion, but also, you know, for vaccines. People, I think, have the ability to make choices by themselves."

She said she was "very supportive of the Republican caucus' position regarding homeschools and vaccines recently," and expressed her opposition to the current homeschooling bill has been making its way through the state's General Assembly.

One issue where voters may see her working across the aisles is environmental protection, particularly when it comes to state parks and fisheries. She told the *Rivereast* that working to secure funding for state parks in her prior time in the state House of Representatives was an accomplishment that she took pride in, but also said she still had "unfinished business" regarding Sunrise State Park in Moodus.

A former vacation resort, Sunrise was later acquired by the state and established as a state park. Ziobron said she wanted to know why, af-

ter 10 years, "we still don't have a sign on Sunrise State Park."

Ziobron was also recently elected to the East Haddam Board of Education, and said that she supported efforts at the state level to tie the state's current education cost sharing (ECS) grants, which distribute state education funds to local districts, to inflation.

Ziobron said voters in East Hampton, Haddam and Salem who see her name on the ballot should "expect fearless advocacy on behalf of the district."

"I am not afraid to call people out," she said. "I'm not afraid also to meet them where they are."

Ziobron said she also knows that, in the country's current political climate, she may find herself up against people who might have considered voting Republican in past elections, but won't this time.

"There are some people who really, that's enough for them, and you won't be able to win their support," she said. "When somebody says to me, 'Oh, Trump,' I say, 'I understand why you have those personal feelings. I'm not running because of President Trump. I'm running despite President Trump, because we have problems and the first problem we have is, we have people who don't know how to talk to each other anymore.'"

"I am a Republican," she said, "and I'm here to say that, you know, it's okay to be a Republican and stand for things, whether they're deemed right-wing issues or left-wing issues. Don't be afraid to run for office just because you have a letter after your name."

At the same time, she said, "I'm also a realist. I also know that there is a tone out there that, 'If you're a Republican and you've ever supported



Melissa Ziobron

President Trump, then you're dead to me and I can never vote for you.' I think that there are a handful of people that have that opinion out there, and there's nothing I could do – nothing."

Ziobron said she hopes people will consider more than just the letter after her name, though she supports the state Republican caucus on many issues. She said she hopes voters will look at her past record and decide accordingly.

"I am still Melissa Ziobron," she said. "I'm still the same person I was in 2012 except frankly, I'm a little smarter because of all the time I've spent on the budget committee. I wear glasses. I have to wear sneakers, no more high heels in my life, I have an extra 20 pounds on, but everything else is the same."

East Hampton Library News & Notes

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

Hours: Monday - Wednesday, 10 a.m.- 8 p.m.; Thursday - Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. **Holiday Closing:** The library will be closed for Good Friday, April 3.

Adult Programs: 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.

Paint & Pastries: Spring Edition: Adults & Grades 8-12: Monday, April 13, 11 a.m. Celebrate the season of spring with a morning of painting and pastries. Follow along with a guided activity or paint what you want. No experience needed, all materials provided.

Teen Program: Magic: The Gathering (Grades 7-12): Saturday, April 18, 1-3 p.m. Whether you already know how to play the card game, or want to learn, come together and play

with people of all skill levels. Bring your own decks or use one of ours.

Children's Programs: DIY Days: Grades K-8: Saturday, 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.

Create Your Own Country with The GIANT Room!: Friday, April 17, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Create a name, laws, a flag, and a map of your very own country in this hands-on workshop. Participants will then transform their countries into printed trading cards which will be available for pickup a few weeks after the event. Registration is required but families can drop in anytime to participate. Please register just one member of our family; your registration covers the whole group. An America250 program.

Easter Bake Sale

Christ Episcopal Church, 66 Middle Haddam Rd., will hold an Easter Bake Sale on Saturday, April 4, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Items for sale include candy, cookies, scones, granola, pies, cakes and bread. Jams, jellies and preserves will also be available.

Call to Artists

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

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

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

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

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Making Homes Beautiful a Passion for Piela

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton resident Andrew Piela is the proud owner of Piela Enterprise, LLC, an East Hampton-based home improvement business that he started over 15 years ago, and while he learned much of his trade from his father, Piela says he learned a lot about business while serving in the United States Army.

Piela enlisted in 1999, he said, a few years after arriving in the United States from Poland.

“What the military teaches you,” he said, is to “do things on time, be disciplined, keep your promises, deliver to the people who are depending on you and always stand with the guys that you’re working with.”

That commitment to accountability is something that he said he now brings with him to each job.

Piela’s journey to his current career as a successful business owner was a slow one. After leaving the military, he said he had jobs in various industries, but always worked construction jobs on the side. Construction and renovation work, he said, was something that he learned from his own father, who was a handyman.

“I learned from my dad,” he said. “We were always working on stuff and I was learning from him throughout my youth.”

After years of working for other people, Piela finally started Piela Enterprise, LLC, in 2010. By 2015, it was successful enough that he made it his full-time job.

“We started as a home improvement company/home handyman service,” he said, “and as the time progressed, we started specializing more and more in kitchens and bathrooms, and that’s where our path took us, so for about eight years or so, most of our jobs [have been] kitchens and bathrooms.”

Piela Enterprise is a family operation. Today,

Piela runs the business with his wife and includes his 21-year-old son among his employees. Piela said his son had learned well, having accompanied him to job sites since he was 10 years old.

One of the things that Piela Enterprise offers that others don’t, said Piela, is a showroom.

“We did open a showroom two years ago,” he said, “which allows us to deliver white glove service to my clients.”

By that, he means that he is a one stop shop, where customers can work with him to come up with a design and then leave the rest — from hiring all the other workers, such as plumbers and electricians, to dealing with any permit requirements — to him.

“We take pride in our work,” he said. “We deliver quality products and quality workmanship to our clients. We stand behind our work. Should there be a rare occurrence of any issue, we will be there within hours, if not minutes, to handle the problem that may occur, especially if it’s more serious, so that’s what differentiates us.”

Piela also said that he works hard to keep up with the latest trends, products, materials and techniques. As an example, he said that the way showers and bathrooms are constructed is different than it was 10-15 years ago, due to newly available products and materials, and Piela said you have to keep up if you want to offer the best service to your customers.

“We are learning every single day,” he said. “In this trade, there’s nobody who knows everything, I’m learning, I’m learning every single day.”

At the end of the day, Piela said he hopes that clients will notice the personal touch that comes from working with a family-owned, local business.

“Clients see me on the job sites,” he said,



Piela Enterprise, located at 35 West High St., is a true family affair, as Andrew Piela runs the home improvement business with his wife, and counts his 21-year-old son among his employees. From left are Matthew Piela, Agnes Piela, Andrew Piela and Ana Andriyashko.

“making sure that I oversee those job sites well, that the progress is going the way they expect. If I’m not on the job site, my wife will be on the job site checking on everything, and my son is

also on the job site. We all have the same last name and the company is the same thing, so we all carry that with pride.”

Rotary Club Scholarship

The deadline is today for to apply for East Hampton Rotary Club’s 2026 scholarship. Any high school senior graduating in 2026 who resides in either East Hampton or Marlborough is eligible.

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.

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.

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: 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.

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.

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.

Bellringer Market at EHHS

There will be a Bellringer Market Saturday, April 25, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St.

Local artisans and student artisans will be featured.

Rain date is Sunday, April 26.

Pet Donation Drive

The East Hampton High School Student Council will hold its fourth annual “Drive & Drop” pet donation collection on Saturday, April 11, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Donations will be collected in front of the high school. There is no need to get out of your car; just drive up and students will collect your donations.

Some items in need are laundry detergent, garbage bags, cat & dog food, treats, kitty litter, gently used beds, dish soap, used towels & blankets, toys, and tennis balls (used are fine). This year all items donated will support the Change of Life Rescue and the Humane Society.

Volunteers are wanted to help out at the event. For more information, email rbullett@easthamptonct.org.

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Easter Sunday at Congregational Church

East Hampton Congregational Church, located at 59 Main St., will hold its Easter Sunday service this Sunday, April 5, at 10 a.m.

There will be special choir and bell music, along with a 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@churchcheg@gmail.com.

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.

American Legion to Meet

The next meeting of the Treadway Cavanaugh American Legion Post 64 will be held Tuesday, April 14, at 7 p.m., at the VFW, 20 North Maple St.

All members are encouraged to attend. Any veterans interested in joining are also welcome.

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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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.

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.

This summer, YPCCA will present Disney's hit musical *Frozen*. The story follows Anna as she embarks on a perilous journey alongside a rugged mountaineer, his loyal reindeer, and a magical snowman to find her estranged sister, Queen Elsa, whose uncontrolled icy powers have trapped their kingdom in an eternal winter. Performances will take place July 23–25 at East Hampton High School. Auditions for the show will be held prior to the start of camp.

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

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

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

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.



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Zuppa D' Mussels Sautéed in fresh tomato sauce or white wine sauce
Fried Mozzarella Topped with marinara sauce
PASTA COURSE
Penne Aglio Olio • Penne with garlic and oil • Penne Marinara
Penne Alla Vodka Asparagus, sun dried tomatoes in a vodka blush sauce
SOUP OR SALAD Cup of soup of the day or garden salad
DINNER CHOICES
Chicken Parmigiana
Eggplant Rollatini Rolled eggplant stuffed with ricotta, prosciutto and roasted peppers
Stuffed Pork Chop Stuffed with broccoli, gorgonzola cheese and ritz crackers in a brown cognac sauce
Chicken Marsala Sautéed with mushrooms, shallots in a marsala wine sauce
Stuffed Sole Crab meat stuffing served over spinach
Balkan Meatballs Beef meatballs sautéed with scallions, roasted red peppers, grape tomatoes in a marsala cream sauce
DESSERTS — Ask your server for our selections
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March Madness – Bowling Edition... The 2026 March Madness Senior Bowling Tournament was held Wednesday, March 18, at Kickback n’ Bowl. Congratulations to the winning team: Brian LaRoe, Dave Burke, Nancy Ninesling, Barbara Falcha and John Sciacca.

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 east-hamptonpubliclibrary.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.

Antique Appraisal Day

The Chatham Historical Society will host its 29th annual Antique Appraisal Day on Saturday, April 18, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., in the Town Hall conference room at 1 Community Drive.

Up to four experienced appraisers will be on site. The fee is \$6.00 per item, and no appointment is necessary. Bring your heirlooms and discover their value—whether you’re deciding to keep them or finally let them go.

This event is a fundraiser supporting the ongoing maintenance of the society’s two museum buildings and the 1840 one-room schoolhouse.

For more information, call 8605390988.

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Petite Spa of Wellness Soon to Celebrate One Year

By Toriana Williams

Patricia Sanford didn't set out with a definitive plan to become a small business owner. Instead, her journey unfolded gradually, through years of hands-on experience, repeated opportunities and ultimately a decision to say yes when it mattered most.

Today, nearly a year into running her own massage therapy practice – Petite Spa of Wellness – in the Colchester area, Sanford reflected on a career rooted in care, adaptability and an appreciation for the human body in all its beautiful complexity.

"I've been a massage therapist for nearly 20 years," Sanford started. "I graduated in 2007 ... and now I've opened up my own massage business, and I still do wedding hair on the side, too."

Her path into massage therapy wasn't linear. Sanford originally attended a vocational school focused on cosmetology, where she trained in hair, skincare and nail services. That foundation introduced her to anatomy in a practical way; She learned the muscles and structures of the hands, face, neck and legs.

"When you're learning facials and manicures and pedicures, you have to learn the muscles and the structure," she explained. "I graduated hair school thinking to myself, 'Okay, I have basically the back left. I should go learn that.'"

That led Sanford to pursue massage therapy in a formal sense, which expanded her skill set into an overarching approach to wellness. Over the years, Sanford worked in a wide range of environments, from spas to chiropractic offices, steadily building both technical expertise and a deep understanding of client needs.

"I worked at Norwich Inn for quite some time, about six years. I worked at Saybrook Point Inn for multiple years. I've worked at small little places ... multiple different chiropractic offices as well," she said. Despite her extensive experience, Sanford didn't immediately jump into entrepreneurship. In fact, she admitted she turned down the opportunity several times before finally embracing it.

"The opportunity kept presenting itself to me," she said. "And I've turned it down multiple times. ... This time, it came to me again and I said, 'How many times is the opportunity going to present itself to me ... before I finally say yes to it?'" Her perspective became more decisive: "How many times is the universe going to knock on your front door before you finally open it?"

That moment of clarity came during a particularly transformative period in her life – while she was on maternity leave with her youngest child. "It was definitely something. The opportunity presented itself to me while I was still on maternity leave, and I thought to myself, 'it's now or never,'" she said.

Balancing a new and growing business with

family life is no small feat and certainly not for the faint of heart. Sanford is a mother of two, including a 1-year-old son and a 7-year-old daughter. She acknowledges the challenges but also embraces the rewards. "I still have serious mom brain," she said with a laugh, "but it's rewarding, absolutely."

An important part of her success has been the support of her husband, whose role has been both practical and foundational. Sanford shared that he didn't just encourage her, he actively helped bring the business to life. From setting up the physical space to supporting her transition into full independence, his contributions have been instrumental as he helped to quite literally build the business from the ground up.

Now operating her own practice, Sanford has found fulfillment in both the autonomy and impact of her work. "My favorite part? Really, all of it," she said. "I like making my own hours. I like being able to say, 'this is what's on the menu.' I can't find anything that I would consider to be a headache ... because all of it's worth it."

Her approach to massage therapy, said Sanford, is deeply individualized. "It has to be," she said. Rather than applying a one-size-fits-all method, Sanford has tailored each session to the specific needs of the client. "You have to [personalize], because no two people have the same things they want to work on," she explained. "Everybody's going to come in with different things ... and you always have to be able to adjust to their preferences and their needs."

Her client base reflects the diversity, spanning decades in age and a wide range of lifestyles. "Most of my clients vary in age anywhere from ... 20, 25 all the way up to 85," she said.

That range requires flexibility in technique and intention. A younger client recovering from an intense workout may need a completely different approach than an older client seeking relaxation and relief from chronic tension.

While immediate relief is often the goal for both her and her clients, Sanford also emphasizes long-term wellness through education and simple habits.

"My number one tip is always a stretch," she said. "Who couldn't benefit from stretching?" Though she admitted that specific advice often emerges organically during sessions, she values the interactive nature of her work. "Their questions trigger little things that are hidden in my brain ... I'm like, 'oh yes, I remember, you could do this too,'" she said.

In addition to massage therapy, Sanford continues to offer on-site bridal hairstyling, blending her original training with her current practice. She travels to venues to style bride and wedding parties, contributing to meaningful life events in a different but complementary way.



Patricia Sanford is about to mark one year of owning her own business – the massage therapy practice Petite Spa of Wellness, located on Middletown Road.

Both avenues of her work allow clients to feel better on the outside and inside as well.

As she nears closer to the one-year anniversary of her business opening, Sanford is focused on growth, both in clientele and community presence. She has begun connecting with other local business owners through community networking groups and is exploring other opportunities like farmers markets and events.

"So far, I would say it's growing," she said. "I would like it to grow some more. Wouldn't we all?" she added with a laugh.

For Sanford, success isn't defined by a single milestone or moment. Instead, it's built through consistent, meaningful interactions with clients,

many of whom leave her practice feeling not just physically better, but genuinely cared for.

"You get a lot of 'thank you so much, that helped me so much,'" she said. "Those things, they stick with you. They accumulate, and you really hold them near and dear. ... It makes you want to continue to do your job to the best of your ability every single day."

Petite Spa of Wellness is located on 752 Middletown Rd. in Unit A. Learn more about Sanford's services through her website, www.messagebook.com/therapists/petite-spa-of-wellness?src=external, or on Facebook or Instagram @petitespaofwellness. Call 860-884-7030 with questions or to book a massage as well.

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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.

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. **This Friday:** Good Friday Service at noon. **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.

History Museum Opens Sunday

The Colchester History Museum will open for the season this Sunday, April 5, from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. This spring you can view the museum's newest exhibit: "Every Possible Means: Colchester's Role in the Revolutionary War." Discover Colchester's early commitment to help defend Boston in 1775 and the individuals who made a difference in the conflict. Get ready for the nation's 250th Anniversary by learning more about Colchester's contributions. Experience histories of people and places in the "ABCs of Colchester History" exhibit. Stroll down memory lane with Ye Olde Well, Gregory's Soda Shop or Levine and Levine. Do you know when the first telephone came to Colchester? The Colchester History Museum is located at 24 Linwood Ave., will be open for the season each Sunday through the end of De-

ember. The museum, adjacent to the Cragin Memorial Library, is free and offers both permanent and special exhibits all highlighting the people and events in Colchester's history. Current exhibits include the history of the Bulkeley Family, including the story of the discovery and excavation of the Gershom Bulkeley tomb. A special exhibit, "Emerging from the Shadows: Colchester's School for Colored Children, 1803-1840," explores the nearly forgotten history of education of African and Native American students in the early 19th century. "Colchester's Roots in Agriculture: Then and Now" highlights centuries of farming through original documents, imagery and objects. Guided and self-guided tours are available. For more information, contact the Colchester Historical Society at mail@colchesterhistory.org or 860-537-3240.

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).

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, April 6: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign, Passover Celebration; 11 a.m.-noon, Haircuts; 11 a.m.-noon, Fitness Orientation by appointment; 12:30 p.m., Mah Jongg, Bridge, Set Back.

Tuesday, April 7: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10:30 a.m., Spring Centerpiece Workshop; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1 p.m., Cornhole, AARP Meeting; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 6 p.m., Spring Centerpiece.

Wednesday, April 8: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Walking Group; 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Reflexology; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Hand and Foot Card Game, Sit & Be Fit Video; 10:30 a.m., Life Review Writing; 1 p.m., Sew-cial Time; 1:30 p.m., Cardio; 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming.

Thursday, April 9: 9 a.m., Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling; no Yoga today; noon, Senior Benefits Counseling; 12:05 p.m., Chair Massage; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes; 1 p.m., Knit & Crochet; 6 p.m., Mindfulness for Everyday Living - Class 1.

Friday, April 10: 9 a.m., Social Service Hours, Open Art Studio; 10 a.m., Sit & Be Fit; 10:30 a.m., Choral Group; 10:45 a.m., Blood Pressure Clinic; no Yoga today; 11:15 a.m., Chatham Health Education Series; 12:30 p.m., Charcoal Mini Class; 1:15 p.m., Bingo.

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.

Journey with Joni: Tuesday, April 14, 6 p.m. This month, try different snacks from Poland and watch a brief travel video. There is no cost,

but registration is required. **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.

Trivia Night: Tuesday, April 21, 6 p.m. Snacks will be provided, and prizes will be given. Cost is \$7.

Oil Painting with Brianna: Thursday, April 23, 6 p.m. All levels welcome. You will leave with a finished painting that evening. Cost is \$20.

Evening Documentary - Martha: Tuesday, April 28, 5:30 p.m. Martha Stewart built an empire with her impeccable taste and business acumen. One phone call changed everything. She tells her story in this 2024 documentary, which runs one hour and 56 minutes. No registration required.

Ultimate Bingo: Thursday, April 30, 6 p.m. Space is limited for this monthly game, where you pay to play and the prizes are bigger. Cost is \$10, and registration is required.

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.

'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. 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.

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Hygienist to Retire from Dental Group

Colchester Dental Group and Dr. Marty Zase have announced the retirement of Sheryl Postemski, one of the practice's hygienists.

Postemski plans to retire mid-April after 38 years.

"We are very grateful for her devotion and commitment to improving dental health within our community," the dental group said in a press release. "We are proud of the work she has done, the difference she has made, and the lives she has touched. We wish her all the happiness in her future endeavors, whether it be gardening, walking, swimming, traveling [or] kayaking."

The practice added, "May her retirement bring endless time to do all the things she loves."

Zase said he would like to reassure Postemski's patients that she has left them "in the capable hands of our other compassionate, talented, skilled and gentle hygienists Sue and Robyn."



Sheryl Postemski

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: 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.

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.

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.

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

★ **RHAM School Spending, cont. from page 1** will receive \$600,205, all in credits for FY 2027.

Impact on Taxpayers
For residents, this most likely means they have been paying higher taxes than necessary over the past several years. Hebron Board of Finance Chair Brian Thibeault confirmed this. "According [to] the memo provided by Region 8, the total additional credit offset for all years combined is \$849,497." However, he also noted that the correction should benefit taxpayers moving forward and said, "It is likely that the additional credit offset will be used to reduce taxes."

Similarly, Andover Board of Finance Chair Robert England said he hopes the correction will directly lower taxes for residents. "My initial response is that I would hope that it is applied directly to reduce our 2026-2027 levy figure (by \$255,234 for Andover)... which would reduce the amount we'd have to raise by taxation by about 2.5%," England in a response to the *Rivereast*.

'A Failure of Oversight'
Multiple town officials have raised one major issue: town boards have limited control over RHAM's finances. RHAM is a regional school district and therefore operates as a separate legal entity. As Thibeault explained, "The Hebron Board of Finance has no oversight authority with the Region 8 school district."

Hebron Town Council Chair Tiffany Thiele also echoed this point and said, "It's important to reiterate that RHAM is a separate legal entity. ... The Town Council and Board of Finance have no purview over the RHAM budgetary process." Because of this structure, RHAM's budget goes directly to voters after a public hearing.

Some officials have expressed clear frustration about how long the error went unnoticed. Thiele – who said she was speaking as an individual – said, "While I want to be respectful of board sovereignty, in this case, it is difficult for me to remain silent when our town's taxpayers have been overcharged for the RHAM levy for five years. To me, this represents a failure of oversight."

She continued, "I hope that the RHAM Board

of Education and administration takes this seriously and implements all necessary controls so that this doesn't happen again. However, to reiterate a good point made by one of our colleagues, the taxpayers who have already left Hebron won't receive the tax credit that's being granted to us this year, so that's the more unfortunate point."

Next Steps and Changes
RHAM has outlined several steps to prevent this error from happening again in the future. Surplus calculations will now be done at the end of the fiscal year and not after the audit, the calculations will be reviewed during the audit process, a second accounting firm will review audits dating back to FY 2020 and any recommendations will be implemented and shared publicly.

Summerer emphasized, "Now that this issue has been discovered, we will ensure that appropriate funds will be included in determining the credit offset."

Communication and Public Response
Some local officials have also raised concerns about communication. Thiele noted that RHAM representatives were unable to attend a recent town meeting due to short notice even after being requested to do so.

Thiele said that while Summerer "provided some written responses to questions posed by the Hebron Board of Finance, she did not answer all written questions, and instead noted in writing that further answers would be provided if we attended the RHAM Board of Education meeting on April 6."

Thiele added, "Speaking as an individual, this is not what I would define as working collaboratively with the elected boards. Therefore, we encourage everyone to attend the meeting on April 6 to come and engage with the process. We are continuing to do our part to get answers," Thiele said.

Meanwhile, England acknowledged that many details remained unclear. "I have asked exactly how they plan to handle it for the referendum, but do not yet have an answer," he stated.

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.

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. 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 but walk-ins are also welcome. Show dates are June 25 and 26 on the Town Green. Contact parksandrec@colchesterct.gov with any questions or to reserve an audition time.

Spring Clean-Up: Sunday, April 25, 8 a.m.-noon. All registered participants will receive an email with more details about two weeks prior to the event. After cleaning, enjoy free ice cream at noon at Mel's Downtown Creamery. The first 50 people to register will get a free T-shirt.

Bike Rodeo: Saturday, May 2, at 10 a.m., at the Guardian Angels/St. Andrew parking lot, 128 Norwich Ave. This free event will feature hands-on safety instruction, obstacle courses, helmet fittings, and interactive skill stations. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Registration encouraged, but walk-ins will be welcome as space allows.

Trail Medallions: Starting April 14, you can find medals on the Air Line Trail (Colchester/Westchester section), Cohen Woodlands, Sablitz Preserve, and Bulkeley Hill Preserve! Medallions will be ready for finding beginning April 14. Keep your eyes peeled, and don't forget to register your medallions at colchesterct.gov/medals.

Puzzlepalooza: Friday, April 24, 6-8 p.m.,

at Colchester Senior Center. Cost is \$25/team. Max of 10 teams of four allowed. Children can be included on a team, but there must be at least two adults on each team.

Beginner Pickleball Lessons: Wednesdays, 7:30-9 p.m., April 8, 22, 29, May 6, at the Colchester Elementary School gym. Cost is \$55/resident, \$60/non-resident. Minimum of six participants needed, with a maximum of 12. For new players only.

COMMIT Dance Fitness: Wednesdays through May 20 (classes started April 1; no class April 15), 6-7 p.m., at Jack Jackter Intermediate School, for ages 15 and older. Cost: \$60/resident, \$65/non-resident, though drop-ins are welcome, at \$12 per class. Minimum of four participants needed, with a maximum of 30.

Golf Lessons: Wednesdays, April 22-May 20, 6-7 p.m., at Chantclair Golf Course. For ages 16 and up. Cost: \$100/resident, \$105/non-resident. Minimum of four participants needed, with a maximum of eight.

Pinterest Crafting Class – Hand-Sewn Recycled Floral Brooch or Pendant: Wednesday, April 8, 5:30-7:30 p.m., at Colchester Senior Center, for ages 15 and up. Cost is \$15/person. Minimum of four participants needed, with a maximum of 16.

Spring Awakening: Plant ID & Mindful Nature Walk: Saturday, April 25, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., at Ruby Cohen Woodlands. All ages are welcome; beginner-friendly. Cost is \$15/person (children accompanied by a paying adult are no charge). Minimum of four participants needed; no maximum.

Women's Basketball: Tuesdays, April 21-May 26, 7-9 p.m., at JJIS, for ages 18 and over. Cost: \$25/resident, \$30/non-resident. Minimum of 10 participants needed, with a maximum of 24.

Krav Maga and Kickboxing for Teens: Tuesdays and Thursdays, April 7-May 7, 5:45-6:30 p.m., at 360 Defense, 52 Mill St, for ages 12-15. Cost: \$120 for 10 classes (two classes per week for five weeks). Minimum of one participant needed, with a maximum of 10.

Yoga, Mindful Tools, and More!: Wednesdays, May 6-20, after school until 4:30 p.m., at CES, for students in grades K-2. Cost is \$40. Minimum of six participants needed, with a maximum of eight.



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Not to be combined with any other offers. Valid thru 4/16/2026.



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860-537-6888 Fax 860-537-1678

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www.ichibancolchester.com

Fish Fry Fridays Wrap Up

The Colchester Fish and Game Club will hold one more Fish Fry dinner today, 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 Friday.

Polka Dinner Dance

The St. Joseph's Polish Society, located at 395 South Main St., will host a polka dinner dance Sunday, April 12.

Dinner will be served at 1 p.m. and will include choice of meatloaf or corned beef, baked potato, vegetable, salad, roll with butter and dessert. The Eastern Sound Band will play from 2-6 p.m.

Advanced tickets only. Tickets are \$25 each and can be purchased at the club. Call 860-537-2550 for more information.

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 April.

For each bouquet sold at the Linwood Avenue Stop and Shop through April 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 the 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.

Polish Club Fish Fry

The St. Joseph's Polish Club at 395 South Main St. will host its 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.

Spring in Bloom Vendor Fair

Colchester Federated Church will hold its annual Spring in Bloom Vendor Fair Saturday, May 2, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

All are invited to come support local artisans, crafters and farmers. Also, take a chance at the Raffle Table, enjoy a homemade treat, and wander through the tag sale.

There are a few tables left to rent; if you would like a table to sell your goods, reach out to Renee Misbach at rouillette01@snet.net as soon as possible.

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF PORTLAND

A certified list of party-selected candidates for the Republican Party in the Town of Portland for participation as Delegates to the conventions of said Party specified below is on file in my office at:

33 East Main Street, Portland, Connecticut, and copies are available for public distribution: CONVENTIONS State Convention Congressional District 1 State Senate District 33 Assembly District 32 Probate District 14

Attest: Michael V. Tierney Town Clerk of Portland Dated at Portland this 31st day of March 2026

1TB 4/3

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 (1 1/2% 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

2nd Installment SEWER USE LEGAL NOTICE

Second Installment Sewer Use Bills are due and payable April 1, 2026. The billing rate is \$672.00 which may be paid in two equal installments, the first installment was due October 1, 2025 and the second installment being due April 1, 2026.

Second Installment Payments must be postmarked or received no later than May 1, 2026. Payments that are unpaid as of May 2, 2026, will be charged interest of 1.5% per month retroactive to the installment due date per State Statute 12-146.

To make payments by check, please make check payable to: Town of Hebron. Payments may be mailed to: Town of Hebron, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, CT 06248. If desired, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a receipt. There is a drop-off box attached to the Town Office Building located next to the entrance on the lower level, south side. In addition, there is a box inside the building located in the hallway between the Tax and Assessor's Office. Payments left in the box after the close of business will be retrieved the following morning.

The Collector's office is located in the lower level of the Town Hall at 15 Gilead Street. Hours are Monday through Wednesday 8:00am to 4:00pm, Thursday 8:00am to 6:00pm, and Friday 8:00am to 1:00pm. Please note Monday - Thursday the office is closed for lunch from 12:30pm - 1:15pm.

Respectfully, Revenue Collector

3TB 3/13, 4/3, 4/17

www.creators.com METALLIC

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Rivereast Standout Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

Jordan Murphy - East Hampton/University of Hartford (Track & Field): Murphy finished the 2026 indoor track and field season as a two-time All-American after competing in the Division III National Championships in Birmingham, Ala. Murphy, a 2023 graduate of East Hampton High School, became the first women's All-American in University of Hartford history as she helped the Hawks placed 12th overall at the national event. Murphy, who shined in the pentathlon and the high jump, is now in the beginning stages of her junior outdoor track and field season at UHart.

Breckin Burke - Portland High School (Track & Field): Burke placed fourth overall in the 1,500 meters in the 15-19 age bracket at the Rising Stars Youth Championships last month in Massachusetts. Burke, a senior, will now compete for the Highlanders outdoor track and field season this spring before he turns his attention to college athletics where he has committed to run cross-country and track at Southern Connecticut State University.

Noah Hoffman - RHAM High School (Cheerleading): Hoffman was selected Class M All-State by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association (CHSCA) and was recognized at the CHSCA Cheerleading Banquet at the Aqua Turf in Plantsville on March 25. Hoffman, a senior, was coming off an All-Central Connecticut Conference (CCC) selection as a junior last winter.

Jameson Grant - Bacon Academy (Wrestling): Grant wrapped up his sophomore year on the mats with a trip to the New England



Jordan Murphy, a 2023 graduate of East Hampton High School, became a two-time All-American this winter while competing at the University of Hartford.

Championships in Providence, Rhode Island. Grant earned a trip to the regional tournament after finishing sixth overall in the 120 lbs. division at the State Open that took place at the Floyd Little Athletic Center in New Haven. At the Class S championship, Grant placed fourth in his respective weight class to earn a spot in the State Open.

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.

Legal Notice

Notice is hereby given that there will be a caucus of all enrolled Republicans electors of the Town of Portland on Wednesday May 20, 2026, at 7 Waverly Ave, Portland at 7:00PM. The purpose is to endorse a Republican candidate for the office of Registrar Of Voters to be on the ballot for November 3rd, 2026. All registered Republicans are invited and encouraged to attend. For more information, please contact us at GOPPortlandCT@gmail.com. Timothy Lavoy, RTC Chair Karen Renner, Secretary

1TB 4/3

LEGAL NOTICE OF ACTIONS PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION HEBRON, CONNECTICUT

The Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission took the following action at their Regular Meeting, which was held on Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 7:00pm on the following: **Petition 2026-01** - Petition of the Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission to revise Section 2.E.8 of the Hebron Zoning Regulations to increase the size of accessory structures permitted in Residential Districts. **Approved.** **Petition 2026-02** - Petition of Megan Armes to operate a dog training and grooming facility in existing space at 522 Church Street in accordance with Section 3.E.2.1.7 of the Hebron Zoning Regulations, Amston Village District. **Public Hearing Continued to April 8, 2026.** The video recording of the Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting can be seen using the following link: <https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#/s/4443b267e3f8bad2254dc57f9cc565b81252c64d15c14541116354605051d11>

1TB 4/3

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF PORTLAND

A certified list of party-selected candidates for the Democratic Party in the Town of Portland for participation as Delegates to the conventions of said Party specified below is on file in my office at:

33 East Main Street, Portland, Connecticut, and copies are available for public distribution: CONVENTIONS State Convention Congressional District 1 State Senate District 33 Assembly District 32 Probate District 14

Attest: Michael V. Tierney Town Clerk of Portland Dated at Portland this 30th day of March 2026

1TB 4/3

COLCHESTER HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE

The Historic District Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, April 13, 2026, at 7:00 P.M., in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 127 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415 to hear and consider the following petitions:

Certificate of Appropriateness- COA 2026-003 Sharon Tucker - for exterior improvements including the removal of vinyl siding and the replacement of windows at 144 South Main Street, (MBL # 11-00/044-000).

At this hearing interested parties may be heard and written communications received. A copy of this petition is available for public inspection in the Planning and Zoning Department at Colchester Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester CT 06415 and may be inspected during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday) Historic District Commission Ellen Sharon, Chair

1TB 4/3

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 Denner - 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 EAST HAMPTON ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing at their Meeting on Monday, April 13, 2026 at 6:30pm at the East Hampton Town Hall - 1 Community Drive, Room 117 and via Zoom to consider the following application:

ZBA-26-002: 11 Skinner Street LLC. Variance requested to Section 5.3.D Area & Dimensional Standards to increase Max Lot Coverage from existing 59% to 65% on 11 Skinner Street, Map 02A/ Block 49/ Lot 1-1.

ZBA-26-003: West High Enterprises. Requesting the following variances to Section 5.2.D (Area & Dimensional Standards) to facilitate the separation of the existing residence and Commercial Daycare onto 2 individual lots as shown on the Site Plan submitted:

LOT 1 (Residence): Reduce Minimum Lot Area from 40,000sf to 17,825sf; Reduce Rear Setback from 25' to 14' and reduce Minimum Lot Depth from 175' to 110' on 12 Long Crossing Map 12/ Block 36 / Lot 2.

Applications are on file in the Land Use Office and Town Clerk Office 860 267-7450

2TB 4/3, 4/10

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

The Colchester Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on April 15, 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):

PZC2026-004 Town of Colchester Planning & Zoning Commission Regulation change application to add new Section 8.13.1.A Twelve Month Moratorium on Manufactured Home Parks (MHPs).

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 4/3, 4/10



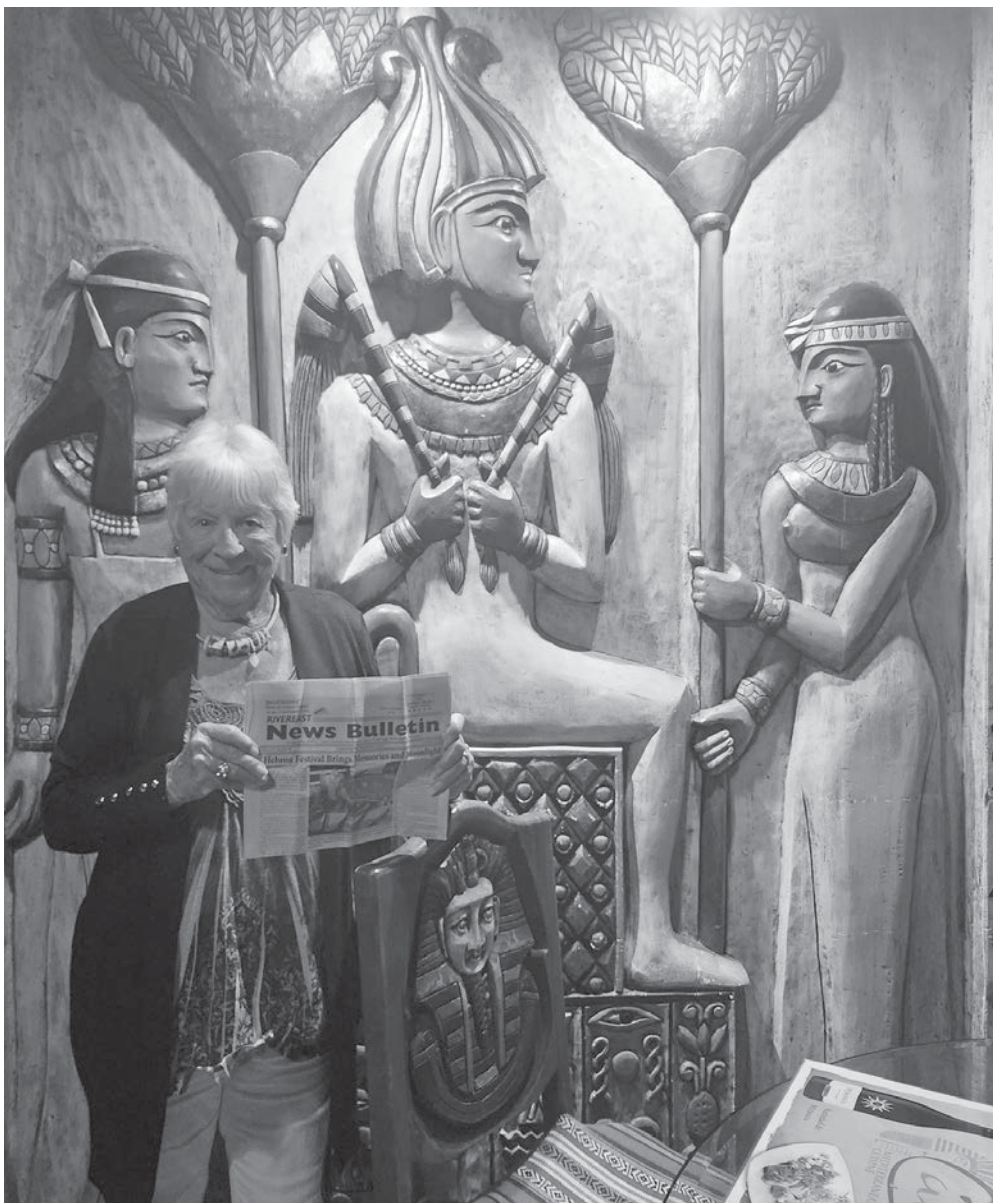
Mahjongg and the Rivereast... Pictured is Barb Hahn of East Hampton holding the *Rivereast*, and, from left, are Brian LaRoe (Marlborough), Donna Marsden (East Hampton), Mark Page (Marlborough), Jean Mykiety (East Hampton) Claudia Soliwado (Wolcott), Teresa Tacinelli (Marlborough), Paul Mykiety (East Hampton), Jeanne Bishop (Portland), and Linda Anderson (East Hampton) at the Marlborough American Legion Post 197. The group is shown after hosting a very successful and fun-filled Mahjongg Fundraiser to benefit the Legion on Sunday, March 22. "We didn't travel far, but we all had an amazing day!" Hahn said.

Where in the World is the *Rivereast*?

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



Enjoying Iceland... Holly Rinell of East Hampton, along with Kim Clouser, traveled to Reykjavik Iceland to experience this beautiful country of geothermal spas, glaciers, geysers, volcanoes, and northern lights.



Some Enchanted Evening... Jane Muskatallo of Portland recently spent a magical evening at El Cairo Restaurant in San Juan, Puerto Rico – and she brought along the *Rivereast*, of course!



The Paper Goes to Portugal... Cecelia Tamburro of Andover recently to Portugal – and brought along the *Rivereast*! She took this photo at the Miradouro da Senhora do Monte, the highest point in Lisbon.

Where in the World?

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

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

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

\$25 GIFT CARD

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Obituaries

East Hampton

Robert Watkins
Celebration of Life

A Celebration of Life event for the late Bob Watkins, formerly of East Hampton, will be held Saturday, April 25, from noon-4 p.m., at the Elks Lodge, 44 Maynard St., Middletown.

Robert "Bob" Paul Watkins passed away Sept. 28, 2025, at the age of 79. Bob's wish was to have a Celebration of Life with family and friends, with his favorite music playing.



Portland

Eileen Donnelly Muirhead



Eileen Donnelly Muirhead, 89, of Portland, died Monday, March 23, after a blessed life. She was predeceased by her husband of 64 years, Donald W. Muirhead; parents, Ann and John Donnelly; and a brother, John Donnelly.

She leaves three children, Donald Muirhead and his wife, Anne; Andrew Muirhead and his wife, T'Ann Wolfe; and Christina Muirhead; three grandchildren, Caroline and husband Yahel Nachum; Elizabeth Muirhead, and John Muirhead; and a great-granddaughter, Esther Nachum.

Eileen grew up surrounded by family in Clifton, N.J., and ventured forth to UConn to start her life as a college student. She and Don were introduced by a mutual friend and Eileen was immediately swept off her feet by Don's exuberance and energy, his keen mind, and above all, his kindness. He was equally smitten with her and they began their life together. By age 26, they had settled in Portland, where their young family grew to include three active children who were the highlight of her life. Summers involved family camping, trips to the lake house her father had built on Lake Grinnell in Sparta, N.J., and visits with her brother John's and his brother Rick's families.

Eileen began her career as a school teacher, teaching at several of Portland's schools for 15 years. She eventually obtained an advanced degree in math and brought her expertise to the Connecticut Department of Labor, where she worked as a systems analyst, enjoying the new challenge and retiring in 2003 after many fulfilling years.

As their children became adults, their time, once again, became their own. Eileen and Don started buying and selling glassware, spending their weekends traveling to glass shows, tag sales and flea markets throughout New England. They also took many trips to Europe, including traveling to Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and France to explore family ties and practice the French she had worked so hard to learn. They also fulfilled a lifelong dream to explore the many wonderful sights of the U.S. by taking a meandering drive home after visiting family in California. After their grandchildren were born, they enjoyed many trips with their son Don and his family to Florida and to Mont Tremblant in Quebec. Summers were spent gardening, reading, studying French and enjoying their home in Portland.

During the final years of Eileen's life, she was lovingly cared for by her daughter, Christina. They shared many lunches and outings as Christina worked to make sure that her mother enjoyed her days. Afternoons with her son, Don, and visits with her infant great-granddaughter, Esther, also brought her joy in her final years. Calls and visits from Andy and T'Ann were cherished and valued.

Eileen was a beloved wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She valued her family more than anything else and will be greatly missed.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held Monday, April 6, at 10:30 a.m., at St. Mary Church, Portland. Burial will follow at the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown. Friends may call at the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, on Monday, April 6, from 9 a.m. until 10 a.m.

Moodus

Richard Tedford Sr.

The Moodus Noises rumbled the morning of Sunday, March 15, as if to mark the passing of Richard "Ted" Tedford Sr, just two months shy of his 93rd birthday.

Ted was a lifelong Connecticut resident whose ancestors can be traced back over 10 generations. He and his wife Dolores "Dee" Calo-Tedford set an example of steadfast devotion in their 67 years of marriage.

He was a wonderful father to Richard Jr. (Barbara), Janice (Bruno) Passacantando, and Douglas (Patty), a loving Pop-Pop to Lianne, Rob (Nicole), Ryan (Hannah), Jody (Michael), Shelby (Brandon), Emily and Abbey (Joshua) with four great-grandchildren to love.

Over his career, Ted rose through the ranks within the Connecticut State Department of Corrections, which included being a founding instructor at the Criminal Justice Academy in Haddam. He later worked as an evidence expert with Aetna Insurance. He also dedicated more than 10 years of volunteer service to the East Haddam Ambulance Association and provided continuous support to the local food bank.

Ted's skills included word puzzles, carpentry, mechanics and home maintenance. He had a unique sense of humor, with familiar jokes and expressions that endeared him to family and friends.

In keeping with his wishes, Ted donated his body to the Anatomical Gift Program at Quinnipiac University for medical education and research.

There will be no services at this time. Interment will occur at the Veterans Cemetery in Middletown at a later date.

Colchester

Theresa H. Violette

Theresa H. Violette, fondly known as Terry, of Colchester, passed away Friday, March 27, peacefully at home, with her loving family attentively by her side. She was 81 years old. Terry was born Dec. 27, 1944, in Stafford Springs, to the late Frank and Adele (Kuliesh) Bernat.

Terry worked for Aetna Insurance after high school for four years before she met and married the love of her life, Jean-Paul Violette, on May 27, 1967. As a devoted and loving wife and mother, Terry chose to be a homemaker while she raised her children. In 1986, she began a career with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and retired as the administrative assistant of Traffic Engineering in 2007 after 21 years of service.

Terry was a woman of strong faith. She was a communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester. In her free time, she used her talent for knitting to create beautiful baby blankets, sweaters, and hats which were donated to benefit unwed mothers through the Bright Light of Grater Meriden. Terry also volunteered at the Harrington Court Convalescent and Rehab Center in Colchester. As an avid reader, she was often found relaxing with a good book. Most importantly, Terry will be remembered with everlasting love for the devotion to her family as a woman who cherished and adored them all.

She is survived by her husband, Jean-Paul of 58 years; her children and their spouses, Paul (Kristina) Violette of Colchester, Christine (Richard) Kilby of Bristol; grandchildren, Brendan Paul Violette of Colchester, Laurelanne Kilby of Bristol, Courtney Violette, Victoria Violette, both of Colchester; sister, Rosalie Martin of Berlin; and many extended family members and friends.

In addition to her parents, Terry was predeceased in death by her brothers, Edward and Ronald Bernat.

Services will be held from the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, on Friday, April 10, beginning with a calling hour from 9:30-10:30 a.m. The funeral Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial will follow in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Terry's memory may be made to the Juvenile Diabetes Association, please send donations to 20 Batterson Park Road, Ste 302, Farmington, CT 06032.

For online condolences or to share a story of Terry, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneral-home.com.



Manchester

Darlene Solomson

"Well Done Faithful Servant"

With heavy hearts, we share the news of the passing of Darlene Agnes Sweeney Solomson. A cherished wife, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt and friend, she left us Tuesday, March 24, after leading a life full of love, strength and kindness.

Darlene was the devoted wife of Raymond F. Solomson for 56 years and together they loved and raised their children Tracey Eileen Solomson Neumuth, and Raymond (RJ) Francis Solomson Jr. in Manchester and South Windsor. She adored her bonus son, Mark Neumuth, who cared for and loved her as we did. Her precious gifts from God, her grandchildren, Sydney Eileen, Grace Catherine and Jude Harrison Neumuth, were the joys of her life and she loved them "to the moon and back."

Born in Hartford Connecticut, on July 9, 1947, Darlene was the beloved daughter of Thomas J. and Agnes (Deeley) Sweeney. She adored her siblings, their spouses and children and showered them with love and loyalty. She was predeceased by her precious brothers, Barry and Tommy. She is survived by Sister "Sister" Elaine Sweeney, PhD, her twin, Doreen and Jim Anderson, Deirdre and Bryan Palmer, Brian and Valerie Sweeney, Terrance (Terry) Sweeney, Andrea Sweeney and Ann Sweeney, Stephen Solomson, Peter Solomson and Chris Feeney, Michael and Cindy Solomson and Richard and Jeanne Solomson and Michael and Mary Lou Vasquez and family. She also leaves her nieces and nephews Charity, Tammy, Danny and Marie, Kate and Adam, Kyle and Victoria and Amy, Kelly and Peter, James and Yvette, Brendan, Erin, Ian and Kara, Morgan, Darby, Cody and Carlei, Jared, Collin, Conor, and Kellan. She leaves countless Sweeney cousins whom she loved dearly...you know who you are.

Darlene dedicated her life to caring for others, guided deeply by her faith and an unwavering devotion to her most precious gifts, her family. A steadfast and devoted Irish Catholic woman, she lived with grace, resilience, and compassion in all that she did. Darlene answered any call and was always there to listen, and would jump into action on a moment's notice when needed. She leaves behind a lasting legacy in the hearts of all who knew and loved her, one defined by faith, generosity, and the enduring power of a mother's love.

She graduated from St. James School, East Catholic High School and Mary Ward Secretarial School. After a career at Pratt & Whitney, she dedicated the next chapter of her life to raising her children, alongside her large extended family. As her children grew, she returned to work for Allied Construction, Inc., where she proudly worked with her brother Brian.

She loved to travel with Raymond, and family and was always up for adventure from Hawaii to Florida to Ireland and countless place in between. She cheered with great spirit for the UConn Huskies, and ANY team Tracey, RJ and grandchildren were on (pick a sport - she was there!) always wearing the best gear to show her pride. She was the original pasta party thrower - even when the power went out (#18). Darlene loved to read, dance, golf with her Beaded Ladies and swim on the beaches of Cape Cod with her grandchildren. Her potato salad, chocolate chip cookies and apple pie, made with love, were requested at every family gathering.

While our hearts are mourning the loss of Darlene's physical presence, we are comforted knowing that her bright light will shine eternally through all those she loved and touched.

Our family would like to extend our most heartfelt appreciation to the devoted Dr. Yusra Anis-Anwar and Dr. Saud Anwar, for the exceptional care and compassion they have always shown Darlene and our entire Sweeney family, but particularly during this difficult time. We also thank the dedicated staff of Glastonbury Healthcare and St. Francis Hospital.

Friends and family called at John F. Tierney Funeral Home, 219 W. Center St., Manchester, on Monday, March 30. A funeral liturgy was celebrated Tuesday, March 31, at St. Bartholemew Church in Manchester. A private burial will take place at a later date at the Connecticut State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Cardiology Electrophysiology Program (Fund 90571) at Boston Children's Hospital, in memory of Darlene Solomson. www.bostonchildrens.org/giveinmemory

Checks are payable to: Boston Children's Hospital Trust, 401 Park Drive, Suite 602, Boston, MA 02215-5301. Please include the Honoree's name in memory.



East Hampton

Margaret Mott

Margaret Arlene Zeuner Mott of East Hampton, widow of the late Frank Mott, passed away Monday, March 23, surrounded by the family she devoted her life to. Born Jan. 14, 1941, in Brooklyn, N.Y., she was the daughter of the late Mae and Valentine Zeuner.

Margaret spent many years working as a dedicated nursing assistant, caring for others with the same compassion and steadiness she brought to every part of her life. After retiring, her greatest joy became watching her grandchildren grow. She poured her heart into them, offering love, guidance, and the kind of unwavering support only a grandmother can give.

Fiercely protective of her family - almost to a fault - she was the one everyone knew they could count on. Her generosity was boundless. Margaret opened her home for every holiday, every barbecue, every gathering that brought people together. Her table was always full, and so was her heart.

Margaret is survived by her children, Kim Moon (Kenny), Lisa Seymour (Whitman), and William Mott, as well as her daughter-in-law Karen Mott, who will forever carry her strength, and her love within them. She is also survived by her 11 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren with three more arriving shortly.

She was preceded in death by her husband Frank, her son Frank, her grandson Scott Evans, and her daughter-in-law Deborah Mott.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Saturday, April 11, from 9:30-11 a.m. A service will immediately follow.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the Middlesex Hospice Program at middlesexhealth.org/donate, in honor of her lifelong commitment to caring for others as well as the wonderful services and care they provided to her and her family during her final month.

Her family takes comfort in knowing that her legacy lives on in the traditions she created, the love she gave and the countless lives she touched.

To leave online condolences, please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Mila Smith

Mila (Kuritz) Smith, 97, passed away peacefully in her sleep Monday, Feb. 2, at Fox Hill nursing home in Vernon. She was a lifelong resident of East Hampton, daughter of German immigrants Fred and Mila (Jordan) Kuritz, and will be sadly missed and joyfully remembered.

Mila is predeceased by both her first husband, Robert W. Read Sr., and second husband, David L. Smith, and by three of her children, Andrew, Holly and Kenneth Read. She leaves two surviving children, Robert W. Read Jr. of East Hampton and Daniel L. Smith of Manchester, and a grandson, Alan Gilman. She is also predeceased by her sister Lillian (Kuritz) Joy and Fredrick Kuritz.

Mila was born in Chicago in the roaring 20s, lived in New York City as a small girl before moving to Haddam Neck/ East Hampton where she spent the remainder of her long and adventurous life. She loved to tell how as a young girl she would skip to the schoolhouse in Middle Haddam chanting "I'm gonna live to be 100!" ... and she sure did come close. Mila and her sister Lillian went back to New York City after high school to pursue acting/modeling careers but it wasn't for them.

Mila was a lifelong advocate, mentor and example for women's rights. She was owner of MK Smith Realty in the 1960s, when only men dominated the field. She revived her father's business (MacKensey's Homemade Peanut Brittle) after his passing. She was an instructor of parapsychology at Middlesex Community College and a Connecticut-licensed hypnotherapist. She also was a member of the East Hampton Ethics Commission. Above all this, Mila tried her best to keep the family a priority.

Many people in town remember Mila for her uncanny psychic abilities. She helped countless people with tarot card and psychic readings. She always felt close to the white light of the spirits and angels, forever seeking to be of more service to all who would open their minds and hearts to her. Mila spent her last days and moments doing what she loved most; as she came closer to



Obituaries

the other side, she helped others cross as well.

Thanks to all the outstanding nurses and CNAs who cared for her at Fox Hill Center in Vernon.

A private graveside service for family and friends will be held at Rock Landing Cemetery in Haddam Neck. To leave online condolences, please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Richard Steven Zalusky

Richard Steven "Ski" Zalusky, 92, died at his home on Friday, March 6, with his loving family at his side. He was born on June 18, 1933 in Aliquippa, Pa., the eldest child of Stephen and Elizabeth (Ross) Zalusky.

He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in August 1952. During his four years of service he was stationed in San Diego, Calif.; the U.S. Naval Air Station in Patuxent River in Maryland, and the Naval Submarine Base in New London. While stationed in Connecticut, he met the love of his life, Joan A. Cope, at a USO dance in Hartford. The sailor and the dancer married on New Year's Eve, 1955. In late summer of 1956, the newlyweds moved to Aliquippa for six years, where they welcomed daughters Lisa and Paula.

In 1962, the family returned to Connecticut and moved to Colchester after Richard was hired at General Dynamics in Groton as an outside machinist. As the 1960s drew to a close, son and brother Richard was born.

Throughout his life, he was fascinated by astronomy and, while back in Pennsylvania, bought a telescope to view the stars and planets just a bit closer. He followed every NASA space mission and, on July 20, 1969, he made sure the family was gathered together around their first color TV to watch the moon landing.

He loved classical music. On Sundays after the early afternoon meal, everyone would go into the living room and listen to the works of Bach, Beethoven, Vivaldi, or Tchaikovsky, always at rock concert volume.

He was a skilled carpenter, from building small pieces of furniture to finishing off the upstairs of the house. While in his basement workshop he could often be heard singing "Maria" from *West Side Story*, among other favorites, and what a voice!

In December 1994, he retired from EB as a 2nd shift outside machinist supervisor. He was well-liked and respected by the men and women who worked for him. Recalled Archie, who became a lifelong friend, "Ski was an amazing boss, person, and everyone loved him."

He loved making films of the family, and had all kinds of cameras and equipment to do so for holidays, birthdays, reunions, Tuesdays, Saturdays... His granddaughters, Kasia and Melanie, were two of his favorite stars. He'd splice footage together and create films. Stand up the screen, cue the projector.

Richard was and is so loved by his family and he is missed deeply. His voice, wit, sense of humor, laugh, favorite phrases, and facial expressions will keep him forever alive in our minds and hearts.

Among those favorite phrases were "hell on it," "working on it," and "continue." He would end every phone call and every visit with it. And, continue is what he asked his family to do before his passing. And, well, they're working on it.

The family is ever thankful for caregiver/angel Lilly who, over the last three years, has become a member of the family. Lilly went above and beyond - baking (but not too much sugar), cooking...and treating both our parents to "spa day Fridays." She is a member of our family, still with us, continuing caring of our mother.

Richard was predeceased by his parents, sister Patricia Fletcher, brother Steven "Peto" Zalusky, sister-in-law Ida Zalusky, brother-in-law Robert Fletcher, and nephews Robert Meuse and Christopher Zalusky.

He is survived by his wife, whom he called "Joanne," of 70 years; daughters, Lisa Kristoff of Boothbay Harbor, Maine and Paula Zalusky of Colchester; son, Richard M. Zalusky of Colchester; granddaughters, Kasia Kristoff and Melanie Kristoff Hall; and two great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother, Paul Zalusky (Irene Carr) of San Diego, Calif., and sister, Susan Dunn of Aliquippa, Pa.; and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

As per his wishes, a formal service was not held. A private remembrance of him for family and friends is planned for early summer.

Donations may be made in his memory to the Colchester Fire Department, the American Heart Association, or the American Diabetes Association.



East Hampton

Carl Herman Klatt

Carl Herman Klatt, 78, of East Hampton, beloved husband of 53 years to Sandra (LaRocco) Klatt, passed away peacefully Monday, March 23, at his home. Born June 18, 1947, in New Britain, growing up in Hartford, he was the son of the late Herman F. and Edith M. (Henderling) Klatt.

Carl proudly served his country in the U.S. Army in the Vietnam War. Upon his return, he worked in the printing industry and then began his own catering business, "Carl's Lunch," serving workers in the Ellington and Somers areas for 44 years before retiring in 2013. Carl enjoyed cooking and taking care of his home of 50 years in East Hampton, especially his lawn and garden. Carl's greatest joy in life was his grandson, Ryan Andrew Klatt, and watching him play sports.

Besides his wife Sandra he is survived by his son, Andrew and daughter-in-law Erin Klatt of Chaplin; his grandson, Ryan Klatt; his brother, Kevin Murning and wife Georgette of Middletown; his sister, Barbara Gervais and husband Marcel of Wethersfield; and several nieces and nephews.

A graveside service with military honors was held Tuesday, March 31, at 10 a.m., at the CT State Veterans Cemetery on Bow Lane in Middletown.

To leave online condolences, please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Salem

Carol Ann Chappell

Carol Ann Chappell, 81, of Salem, passed away peacefully Wednesday, March 25, surrounded by her loving family. She was born March 12, 1945, in Rockville, to the late Esther and Ken Wetmore.

A proud graduate of Rockville High School, Class of 1963, Carol went on to build a fulfilling career, working for Phoenix Insurance Company, S&S Worldwide, and Johnson Marine. Known for her strong work ethic and kind spirit, she formed lasting friendships everywhere she went.

In 1975, Carol married the love of her life, Herb Chappell Sr. Together, they built a warm, welcoming, and beautiful life in Salem, a place Carol cherished deeply.

Carol was a woman of many joys. She loved spending quiet afternoons reading, relaxing evenings watching Westerns, and creative moments crocheting. She nurtured a lifelong passion for gardening, found happiness attending local fairs especially to watch the ox pulls her family had competed in for decades, and cherished watching her son's many sporting events as he grew up. Above all, she deeply loved her family and her pets - especially her devoted dog Brutus, as well as her beloved dogs Yankee and Noah who welcomed her home in Heaven.

Carol is survived by her loving husband, Herb Chappell Sr. She leaves behind her son and stepdaughters: Beverly (Kenny) Moulton of Massachusetts, Cindy (Cecil) Chappell of South Carolina, and Herbie (Colleen) Chappell Jr. of Connecticut. She is also survived by her sister, Nancy Wetmore of Florida; her eight cherished grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild, all of whom brought her immeasurable pride and joy.

She was predeceased by her parents; her brother, Norman Wetmore of Maine; and her

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stepdaughter, Jill O'Brien, of Pennsylvania.

Carol will be remembered for her gentle heart, her unwavering love for her family, and the warmth she brought into every room. Her legacy lives on in the generations she lovingly nurtured.

A graveside funeral service was held Monday, March 30, at the Salem Green Cemetery, Hartford Road, Salem.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with care of arrangements. For online condolences, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com

Portland

Louise O'Neill-Mejia

Louise "Dolly" O'Neill-Mejia, of Ibarra, Ecuador, formerly of Hartsdale, N.Y., passed away peacefully at home, on Sunday, March 22, with her husband of over 50 years, the Rev. Marco Mejia Montesdeoca, by her side. She was born on Feb. 21, 1936 in Holyoke, Mass., to the late James (Jim) and Louise O'Neill and grew up in Middletown and Portland.

Following her graduation from Portland High School in 1954, she devoted the next 17 years of her life to the congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, teaching at several Connecticut schools. The next phase of her life brought her to Port Chester, N.Y., where she met Marco, the love of her life, and spent the next several decades teaching English as a second language in the public school system until her retirement. Following retirement, Dolly and Marco retired to Ecuador where they lived, surrounded by family and friends.

In her retirement, Dolly was a passionate member, donor and leader within Soroptimist International of the Americas, America del Sur Region and founder of her club in Ibarra, Ecuador. Soroptimist is a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to education and training to achieve economic empowerment. She traveled the globe supporting this mission, positively impacting the lives of many women.

Dance was always a major driving force in Dolly's life. After years of dancing with the late Helyn Flanagan, at the age of 13 she began teaching dance to young children in both Middletown and Portland. She continued dancing throughout her life. Her sister Sharon was her first dance partner. Dolly's vivacious personality and her dancing feet made her the life of the party whether at gatherings at her home in Ecuador or the Middletown and Portland High School class reunions she prided herself on never missing during her annual visits to Connecticut. Her anthem was "Hello Dolly!"

Dolly is survived by her husband, Marco; her only sister, Sharon O'Neill Mulcahy and husband Cole Mulcahy of Glastonbury; her very special nieces, Tina Anstett and husband Chris Schnell of Portland, and Erika Anstett France of East Hampton; her great nephew, Mason France of Portland; and her great niece, Ava Rose France of East Hampton. She also leaves numerous family members and friends in both the United States, Ecuador, and around the world.

Dolly will be greatly missed. Her remarkably full life filled with love, laughter, and service to others, truly made a difference in the lives of many.

A celebration of life will be held this summer at the convenience of her family. Donations in Dolly's memory may be made to soroptimist.org.



Portland

Brian Joseph Flynn

The bright, wonderfully witty, and deeply loved Brian Joseph Flynn, 49, originally of Portland, formerly of Watertown, Mass., passed away unexpectedly Sunday, Jan. 18, in Sandringham, Melbourne, Australia, where he had lived for the past seven years.

Brian grew up in Portland, the son of Mary and Jeff Flynn, and brother to Michael, Mary Cristina, and K.C. He attended Portland schools and was active in youth sports, including St. Mary CYO basketball, Portland Dukes football, and Little League baseball. He attended Xavier High School in Middletown, where he excelled academically and as a member of Xavier's first lacrosse team. During these years he also taught himself guitar and how to cook, followed his favorite bands on tour, and still found the study-time to graduate at the top of his class.

Of all the ways you could try to describe Brian, perhaps the phrase that rings most true is that he was an adventurer. Brian loved animals, nature, and exploring. As a child, he was frequently racing home to show off the new frog or critter he found, beaming with pride. He always had a turtle stashed somewhere in a cardboard box and took the best care of the family dogs. He spent summers at the Jersey Shore with his cousins in the sun, surf, and the joyful rhythm of a big Irish Catholic family.

Brian began college at Wesleyan University, but staying close to home didn't suit his adventurous spirit. He was eager to broaden his world, and Seattle became the perfect next chapter. He immersed himself in the city's culinary scene, sharpening his cooking skills in a local dining spot while completing a rigorous biology degree at the University of Washington. He later returned to the Jersey Shore for an internship studying the dolphins he had watched from the beach as a child, turning early fascination into the foundation of his senior thesis.

He went on to build a 25-year career in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical fields primarily at Genzyme and Sanofi, leading teams responsible for ensuring the quality and availability of medicines for people facing rare diseases. He bought his first home in Watertown, Mass., and spent recreation time at his property in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

Family needs brought Brian and his wife, Simone, to Australia, which became his home and offered new opportunities for exploration, work, and connection. His work took him to board rooms and manufacturing facilities in China and Malaysia, and his travels carried him to India, Thailand, and Ireland. He ran marathons in rugged terrains.

Brian had a way of knowing something about most everything - history, poetry, music, nature, and countless other subjects. Endlessly curious, he followed his heart and chased joy to the furthest corners of the world, gathering wisdom through conversations and genuine interest in others, and we were always captivated by the stories he carried home.

Brian's cherished daughter, Poppy, inherited his curiosity, sense of adventure, care for all creatures, and his humor. He was never happier than when they were together - at the beach, cooking something creative, or encountering

See Obituaries, page 32



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kangaroos while camping in the Outback. Being a dad was his greatest adventure, and Poppy filled it with wonder and delight. His spirit and his love will be with her on all the roads she travels in life, and we'll make sure she hears all his stories.

Brian approached life with genuine warmth, humor, and deep appreciation for the world around him. He treated others with selflessness, kindness, and generosity. He loved hard and laughed loud, experienced life from every angle, and saw horizons and vantage points most could only imagine. He was our curious, adventurous, brilliant seeker, and he left us far too soon. He will be profoundly missed by all who were fortunate enough to know him.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, April 18, from 3-6 p.m., at the Glastonbury Riverfront Park Boathouse.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the "Save the Tassie Devil" Appeal through the University of Tasmania - a cause close to Brian and Poppy's hearts. Donate at www.utasalumni.org.au/devil-appeal.

Marlborough

Elaine M. Morrison

(08/14/1941 - 03/21/2026)

With heavy hearts and deep gratitude for a life well lived, we announce the passing of our beloved Elaine M. Morrison, 84, of Marlborough, who died peacefully Saturday, March 21, with her family by her side. Elaine was a woman of extraordinary strength, grace, and compassion whose presence touched all who knew her.



Elaine was predeceased by her parents, Annie and Walter Young of New Waterford, Nova Scotia; her devoted husband, Francis "Moe" Morrison; her daughter, Debby Morrison of Billerica, Mass.; and her sisters, Patricia Drohan of Sydney, Nova Scotia, Colleen Fletcher of Barrington, N.H.; and Florence and Doreen Young, of New Waterford, Nova Scotia.

She is survived by her loving daughter, Colleen Brown, and son-in-law, Patrick Brown, of Marlborough; her adored grandchildren, Francis and Lilly Brown, who were the lights of her life; and many cherished nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews.

Elaine was born in New Waterford, Nova Scotia, where she was raised by her mother alongside her sisters after the tragic loss of her father in a coal mining accident. Despite early hardship, she found joy in life's simple pleasures and in the love of family -- a resilience she carried with her always. She later built a warm and welcoming home in Billerica, Mass., with the love of her life, Moe. Her door was always open, and her kitchen became a gathering place where family, neighbors and friends shared tea, stories, and laughter.

Her greatest joy was being a mother to her "girls," who brought her immeasurable happiness. Her love extended beyond her immediate family to include her beloved nieces Ann and Karen and nephew Bob, with whom they shared a duplex and a close, enduring bond.

After the heartbreaking loss of their daughter, Debby, Elaine and Moe moved to Connecticut, where they helped to lovingly raise their grandchildren. Elaine's devotion to her family was unwavering, and her grandchildren remained her greatest pride and joy. Known affectionately as "Aunty Elaine," she held a special place in the hearts of her many great-nieces and great-nephews.

Elaine lived with a deep love for others and an enduring appreciation for life. She found happiness in gardening, walking, and offering a helping hand wherever it was needed. She had a remarkable gift for connection - meeting strangers who quickly became friends - and always made others feel valued and cared for. Her kindness, warmth, and compassion will be remembered by all.

The family extends heartfelt gratitude to the Hartford Healthcare Hospice team and the caregivers at TheKey Home Care for the comfort and support they provided. They also thank the St. John Fisher Homebound Communion Ministry for helping Elaine remain connected to her faith when she could no longer attend Mass.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at St. John Fisher Church in Marlborough on Saturday, April 11, at 11 a.m., followed by a reception.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. John Fisher Church of Marlborough at osvhub.com/stjfisherchurch/giving/funds/one-time-gift.

Elaine's legacy of love, resilience, and kindness will live on in the hearts of her family and friends forever.

Columbia

Fredrick Chowanec

Fredrick Chowanec passed away at the age of 91 on Sunday, March 29, at his home in Columbia. He was the loving husband of Rosemary (St. Hilaire) Chowanec.

Fred was born March 19, 1935, in Hartford, to the late Harry Chowanec and Alice (Evans) Chowanec. He was also predeceased by a sister Marjorie (Chowanec) Smith and brother-in-law Jim Smith.

Fred worked for Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford before moving on to work for the University of Connecticut's fire department as a firefighter. He was a proud veteran serving in the U.S. Army stationed in Oklahoma and then Germany. Fred often spent his leisure time either deep sea fishing or deer hunting.

He leaves behind his wife of 71 years, Rosemary (St. Hilaire) Chowanec; his two children, Rick Chowanec of Columbia, Kathy (Chowanec) and husband Walt Smolenski of Colchester; four grandchildren, Megan (Tim) Messenger of Webster, Mass., Rachel (Hogan) Kaney of Orangeburg, SC, William (Lilly) Chowanec of Pelzer, SC, and Evan (Julia) Chowanec of Lakenheath U.S. Air Force Base in England, eight great-grandchildren and one on the way. A niece and several nephews along with many cousins.

Calling hours will be held on Monday, April 6, from 4-6 p.m., at Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St., Willimantic. The family will hold a burial at a later date.

Donations in honor of Fred can be made to The Columbia Fire Department, 167 Route 66, Box 26, Columbia, CT 06237.

Portland

Bernard Heizman

It is with profound sadness that we share the sudden passing of Bernard "Bernie" Heizman, 74, of Portland, on Tuesday, March 24. Bernie was the beloved husband of Patricia "Pat" (Ortisi) Heizman and son of the late Bernard and Josephine Heizman.

Bernie is survived by his devoted and loving wife, Pat; his cherished children, Laura and Peter Zinnen of West Suffield, and David and Loren Heizman of Ardsley, N.Y.; and his six treasured grandchildren, Michael, Leah, and Will Heizman, and Grayson, Nadia, and Sophia Zinnen. In addition, he is survived by his siblings, Thomas Heizman, Janet Heizman, Donald (Patricia) Heizman, and Robert (Deborah) Heizman, as well as many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews.

Bernie was predeceased by his parents, sister Joanne, sister-in-law Janet and his in-laws Angelo and Wanda Ortisi.

Born Sept. 19, 1951, in Queens, N.Y., he moved with his family to Middletown when he was seven years old. He attended local schools and met Pat at Middletown High, where they became high school sweethearts and shared a loving bond that lasted for the next 58 years. They celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary last August.

Bernie graduated from CCSU with a BS degree in marketing. Professionally, Bernie spent several years in management at McDonald's before joining *The Middletown Press*, where he worked for many years. His time there was defined not only by his dedication to the job but by the many friendships he built and the deep connections he formed within the community.

Together they raised two adored children, Laura and David. Bernie loved sports and enjoyed sharing that passion with others. He coached both his children in soccer, basketball, baseball, and softball, and over the years, he also coached and mentored many children in the Portland community. A diehard Yankees, New York Giants and UConn fan, he loved attending and watching all of his grandchildren's sporting events and musical performances. They were his most cherished blessings and brought him his greatest joy. His grandchildren loved their grandfather "Papa" beyond measure.

The funeral liturgy was held Wednesday, April 1, at St. Mary Church, 45 Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial followed at St. Mary Cemetery.

Those who wish may send memorial contributions to the American Heart Association, P.O. Box 840692 Dallas, TX 75284-0692 or a charity of your choice.

To share memories or express condolences online, please visit www.biegafuneralhome.com.



Colchester

Margaret Belle O'Brien

Margaret Belle O'Brien (Marge), of East Windsor and formerly of Colchester, passed away Friday, March 27, with her family by her side. She was 86 years old. Marge was born in Middletown on August 21, 1939. She was a daughter to the late Frank Porter and Mildred (Boynton) Falbowski.

She married Robert O'Brien on May 26, 1979. He survives her.

Marge was valedictorian of her high school class, graduating in 1957 from Bacon Academy in Colchester. She had an associate degree from Three Rivers Community College. She worked as a real estate agent for many years and at the Southern Auto Auction in East Windsor.

Her greatest joy was researching her family's genealogy, and she spent many hours in the basements of various churches scanning through microfilm and in town offices looking for clues. Marge would share her findings with any family member that would listen. She enjoyed taking photographs of family and friends, gardening, art, and some crafting. She leaves behind an extensive collection of family genealogy research and pictures. She also enjoyed watching UConn basketball, especially the women Huskies and she was very proud that her grandchildren were UConn alumni.

Marge will be sadly missed but remembered with love by her husband, Robert; her daughter, Roxanne and her husband, Richard Roy of East Haddam; siblings, Dorothy Zadroga of Middletown, Frances Stiwinter of Oakdale, Ruth Schoenlein of Michigan, Sue (Bob) Leone of Lebanon, sister-in-law, Stella Chabot of East Hampton and brother-in-law, Cornelius Banta of Bozrah; grandchildren, Joshua Roy, Chelsea (Bill) Long, four great-grandchildren, all of Colchester; as well as numerous nephews, nieces and friends. In addition, she has four stepchildren, Robert of Willimantic, James of Pennsylvania, John of Colchester and Maureen (Tom) Moore of Hebron; seven step-grandchildren; and seven step-great-grandchildren.

Besides her parents, Marge was preceded in death by her son, Willard "BJ" Miles, a brother, Frank Porter; a sister, Joan Banta; brother-in-law, Earl Stiwinter; her first husband, Willard "Bill" Miles; and her stepfather-in-law, Alex Falbowski. In addition, she was predeceased by Robert's parents Edward and Felicia (Strach) and Robert's brother Edward, his sister Patty and a daughter-in-law, Jill O'Brien.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date to be announced.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with care of arrangements. For online condolences or to share a story of Margaret, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

William Theodore McHugh

William Theodore "Ted" McHugh, of Colchester, and formerly of Old Lyme, Norwich and East Haven, passed away peacefully at his home Saturday, March 28, with his beloved family by his side.

Born Oct. 20, 1938, in New Haven, to the late William and Katherine (Hannan) McHugh, Ted enjoyed 87 vibrant years filled with love and laughter. He was a proud member of the first graduating class of the new Notre Dame High School in West Haven in 1956.

Following high school, Ted enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving in Germany as a member of Battery "C" 552nd Missile Battalion, and became a charter member of the "Honorable Order of the Bronzed Mustache." He remained a proud veteran and patriot throughout his life.

Upon returning home, he attended the Connecticut School of Electronics in 1964 and went on to further his education at the Bridgeport Engineering Institute. Ted's distinguished and varied career spanned decades; he worked as an engineer for Machlett Laboratories for over 20 years, served in the U.S. Postal Service, founded and operated McHugh Realty, and managed the Sunny Waters Mobile Home Park and Benson Christmas Tree Farm alongside Sandra.

Ted enjoyed ballroom dancing, which is how he met the love of his life, Sandra Benson. They married in 2000, sharing 25 wonderful years together and eventually retiring to their home in Colchester. Ted's favorite pastimes centered around creat-



ing memories with his family and friends, whether that meant playing cards and board games or cheering on the Red Sox and Giants.

Christmas was undoubtedly Ted's favorite time of year. A cherished family tradition was his reading of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas. He would playfully pause and point to one of the children to recite the next line, continuing round-robin style until the story concluded in a room full of laughter. These joyful holidays were always spent playing games and singing carols, beautifully accompanied by his grandchildren on the piano and guitar.

Remembered as a hardworking, devoted family man, Ted possessed a wonderful sense of humor and a legendary gift for telling jokes. He was treasured as a husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, uncle, and friend.

His loss is deeply mourned by all who knew him, especially his wife, Sandra; his children, Patrick "Scott" (Ana) McHugh of Branford, Debra (Scott) Palmer of Branford, Kim (Dan) Waters of Griswold, and Amy Harmon of Wilmington, N.C.; his grandchildren, Niko Toschi, Samantha (Michael) Cronin, Erica and Brendan Palmer, Kayleigh and Cormac Waters, and Ella and Lucas Harmon; his great-grandchildren, Michael and Francesca Cronin; and many extended family members and friends.

In addition to his parents, Ted was predeceased by his son, William "Billy" McHugh, and his brother, Brian McHugh.

Funeral services will be held at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, on Thursday, April 9, with visitation beginning at 9:30 a.m. A funeral Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. at St. Andrew Catholic Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester, with full military honors and a reception to follow. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Ted's memory may be made to the American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org), Connecticut Foodshare (www.ctfoodshare.org), or the Wounded Warrior Project (www.woundedwarriorproject.org).

For online condolences or to share a favorite story about Ted, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Andover

Robert F. Burbank

Robert "Bob" F. Burbank, 80, longtime resident of Andover, passed away Thursday, March 26, at Hartford Hospital. Bob was born Nov. 5, 1945, son of the late Theodore A. Burbank and Alice (McDougall) Burbank. He was preceded in death by his wife Marie (Regan) Burbank on June 27, 2015.

Bob grew up in Pembroke, Mass., and attended Silver Lake High School. After graduating, Bob joined the U.S. Navy, where he became a plank owner of the USS America on the original crew, active during the Vietnam War. When he completed his service, he met the love of his life Marie, and raised their family in Andover. He worked as a salesman with multiple companies.

Dedicated to public service, Bob donated countless hours to his town on multiple boards and committees, and eventually leading the town for 10 years as first selectman. He had a natural knack for town politics and took great pride in helping guide the Town of Andover out of financial distress. He was also especially proud of his contribution to the construction of the covered bridge on Route 316.

Bob enjoyed anywhere on the water, especially his family vacation home on Frye Island, Maine. He was happiest on his boat, giving anyone who visited a tour of Sebago Lake and then sitting on the beach enjoying a good cocktail and laughs with friends and family. Bob also enjoyed vacationing with his wife, usually a Caribbean cruise. He was a fan of the Patriots, Red Sox, Celtics, UConn and whatever sports his children or grandchildren were playing. He will be truly missed by all.

Bob is survived by his four children and their spouses, Robert (Julie) Burbank Jr. of Bloomfield, Michael (Carrie) Burbank of South Carolina, Allen Burbank of Andover, and Noelle (Paul) Egan of Tolland; eight grandchildren, Robert III, William, Vincent and Ellie Burbank, Logan Burbank, Alexander, Benjamin and Cayden Egan; a brother, James Burbank of Plymouth, Mass.; and many loved nieces and nephews.

Along with both parents and his wife Marie, he was also predeceased by his brother Theodore Burbank, and his dear friend Richard Clarke.

Relatives and friends are invited on Tuesday, April 7, from 4-7 p.m., for visitation at John F. Tierney Funeral Home, 219 W. Center St., Manchester. Bob's Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Wednesday, April 8, at 11 a.m., at the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St., Amston, followed with burial in Townsend Cemetery, Andover.

For condolences online, please visit www.tierneyfuneralhome.com.



**LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF HEBRON**

A certified list of party-selected candidates for the Hebron Democratic & Republican Parties for participation as DELEGATES to the below specified conventions of each Party is on file in the office of the Hebron Town Clerk, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, CT for public inspection:

CONVENTIONS
State Convention
Assembly District #55
Senate District #19
Probate District # 6

Dated at Hebron, CT
April 1, 2026
Francesca Villani
Hebron Town Clerk

1TB 4/3

**Truck Driver
Wanted**

Driver needed to drive 26' box truck for deliveries to local post offices. No CDL required. Between 10 and 15 hours a week.

For more information, e-mail jim@rarereminder.com

**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

**LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF ANDOVER
ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING
Thursday, April 9, 2026 - 7:00 p.m.**

The Electors and Citizens qualified to vote in Town Meetings in the Town of Andover are hereby notified that the Annual Budget Meeting for the Town of Andover will be held at the Andover Elementary School Gymnasium – 35 School Road on Thursday, April 9, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. for the following purpose:

1. To choose a Moderator for said meeting;
2. To receive the budget for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 as prepared by the Board of Finance.
3. To approve a budget for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027
4. Adjourn

Copies of the Budget are available in the Town Clerk's Office and Online. Voting by absentee ballot is not permitted for this meeting.

Dated at Andover, CT this 30th day of March, 2026.
Andover Board of Selectmen

1TB 4/3

**TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH, CONNECTICUT
Invitation to Bid Blish Park**

Sealed Bids for Blish Park Basketball System Replacement will be received by the Town of Marlborough at the Town Clerk's Office until 10:30 AM local time on Monday, April 20, 2026. Received Bids will be publicly opened and read aloud at this time. Bids shall be Lump Sum.

Prospective Bidders may examine the Bidding Documents on-line at marlboroughct.net or CT DAS CT Source website and may obtain copies of the Bidding Documents from the Building Land Use/Building Department by calling 860 295 6202 or e-mail Building@marlboroughct.net. To receive the documents via package services, send a completed pre-paid pickup label from either UPS or FEDEX to the Issuing Office. PDF copies are available upon request after receipt of the non-refundable fee.

The date that the Bidding Documents are transmitted by the Issuing Office will be considered as the Bidder's date of receipt of the Bidding Documents. Partial sets of Bidding Documents will not be available from the Issuing Office. Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for full or partial sets of Bidding Documents, including Addenda if any, obtained from sources other than the Issuing Office.

A pre-bid meeting will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 9, 2026, Blish Memorial Park, 32 Park Road, Marlborough, CT. Attendance at the pre-bid meeting is highly encouraged but is not mandatory.

The successful Bidder will be required to provide a Performance Bond in the amount of one hundred percent of the Contract Price. The Owner is exempt from payment of Sales and Use Taxes on all materials and equipment to be permanently incorporated in the Work. These taxes shall not be included in the Bid.

Attention of bidders is particularly called to the requirement for all contractors and subcontractors to provide affirmative action to ensure equal opportunity employment as noted in the Governor's Executive Orders 3 and 17.

The bidder agrees that its bid shall be good, capable of being accepted, and may not be withdrawn for a period of sixty [60] days, Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays excluded, after the opening of bids.

The Town reserves the right to waive any technical defects in the bids; to reject bids which do not conform to the terms and conditions described in the specifications; to reject any, any part of, or all bids; to waive informalities or irregularities in the bidding process; and to accept that bid which the Town deems to be in its best interest, whether or not it is the lowest dollar proposed.

All work to be performed in connection with the proposed project will be subject to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, and regulations.

If the Town determines, in its sole discretion, to proceed with the work, the successful bidder must execute and deliver an Agreement and furnish valid Certificates of Insurance with full policies, a Performance Bond, and to the Town prior to the start of any work. It is the responsibility of the bidder to ensure that it has received all addendums to this Invitation to Bid prior to submitting a bid. This Invitation to Bid is not binding in the Town.

The Town reserves the right to revise or amend the plans and specifications from time to time as it deems necessary. This Invitation to Bid has been prepared solely to solicit bids and does not constitute a contract offer.

The Town reserves the right to amend, cancel, postpone, withdraw, or resubmit this Invitation for Bid at any time if it is in the best interest of the Town to do so.

The Town is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Minority/Women Business Enterprises are encouraged to apply.

Town of Marlborough, Connecticut
By: David R. Porter, Town Manager
Date: March 30, 2026

2TB 4/3, 4/10

**TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH
RIVENDELL DRIVE CATCH BASIN TOP REPLACEMENT PROJECT
INVITATION TO BID**

The Town of Marlborough will receive Sealed Bids for the Catch Basin Top Replacement at the Town Clerk's Office until 10:00 AM local time on Monday, April 20 2026. Received Bids will be officially opened and read aloud at this time. The Project consists of replacing 11 catch basin tops.

Prospective Bidders may examine the Bidding Documents on-line at marlboroughct.net or State CT Source website and may obtain copies of the Bidding Documents from the Building Land Use/Building Department by calling 860 295 6202 or e-mail Building@marlboroughct.net. To receive the documents via package services, send a completed pre-paid pickup label from either UPS or FEDEX to the Issuing Office. PDF copies are available upon request after the receipt of the non-refundable fee.

The date that the Issuing Office transmits the Bidding Documents will be considered the Bidder's date of receipt of the Bidding Documents. Partial sets of Bidding Documents will not be available from the Issuing Office. Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for full or partial sets of Bidding Documents, including Addenda if any, obtained from sources other than the Issuing Office.

A pre-bid conference will be held at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at Town Hall, 26 North Main Street, Marlborough, CT. Attendance at the pre-bid conference is highly encouraged but is not mandatory.

The successful Bidder will be required to provide Performance in the amount of one hundred percent of the Contract Price. This project is utilizing Town funds and prevailing wage is not anticipated, however, any bidder exceeding the State of CT Prevailing Wage project values must utilize prevailing wage rates.

The Owner is exempt from payment of Sales and Use Taxes on all materials and equipment to be permanently incorporated in the Work. These taxes shall not be included in the Bid.

Attention of bidders is particularly called to the requirement for all contractors and subcontractors to provide affirmative action to ensure equal opportunity employment as noted in the Governor's Executive Orders 3 and 17.

The bidder agrees that its bid shall be good, capable of being accepted, and may not be withdrawn for a period of sixty [60] days, Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays excluded, after the opening of bids.

The Town reserves the right to waive any technical defects in the bids; to reject bids which do not conform to the terms and conditions described in the specifications; to reject any, any part of, or all bids; to waive informalities or irregularities in the bidding process; and to accept that bid which the Town deems to be in its best interest, whether or not it is the lowest dollar proposed.

All work to be performed in connection with the proposed project will be subject to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances and regulations.

If the Town determines, in its sole discretion, to proceed with the work, the successful bidder must execute and deliver an Agreement and furnish valid Certificates of Insurance with full policies, a performance bond, and to the Town prior to the start of any work. It is the responsibility of the bidder to ensure that it has received any and all addendums to this Invitation to Bid prior to submitting a bid. This Invitation to Bid is not binding on the Town.

The Town reserves the right to revise or amend the plans and specifications from time to time as it deems necessary. This Invitation to Bid has been prepared solely to solicit bids and does not constitute a contract offer.

The Town reserves the right to amend, cancel, postpone, withdraw, or resubmit this Invitation for Bid at any time if it is in the best interest of the Town to do so.

The Town is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Minority/Women Business Enterprises are encouraged to apply.

Town of Marlborough, Connecticut
David R. Porter
Town Manager
Date: March 30, 2026

2TB 4/3, 4/10

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WANTED TO BUY

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

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

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

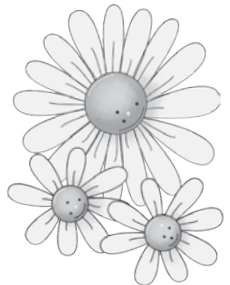
WANTED TO BUY: All antiques; toys, military, watches, advertising, jewelry, coins, clocks, signs, all musical instruments, guitars, saxophones, keyboards, trumpets, amplifiers, accordions, vintage electronics, hi-fi stereo, amplifiers, pro-audio, radios, ham equipment, tube type equipment, plus more.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

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

PETS

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

PURE BRED SHITZU: For sale. 1 female left, 7 weeks old. looking for her forever home. 860-978-0587.



CASH PAID for any Toyota
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RENTALS

BEACH VACATION HOME: Give your family the vacation they deserve!! Narragansett RI, walking distance to Scarborough beach. Price reduced for June, & August Rentals. 4 & 6 bedroom home, Central AC, with deck & gas grill, renting Saturday to Saturday. Contact Debbie 860-833-8930 email narragansettrentals@gmail.com.

CANDLELIGHT APARTMENTS, GLASTONBURY: RENT NOW, one bedroom available, renovated, first floor. Rent is currently \$1,750 per month. Includes heat/hot water, trash, sewer. Onsite storage and assigned parking available. Property is a SMOKE FREE Complex. Please call via text or call 860-913-6723, Office 860-529-1725.

FOUR ROOMS, 2ND FLOOR APT: Portland. Excellent condition. Stove, refrigerator, new washer/dryer. No pets. No smoking. \$1,150/monthly plus heat/utilities, two months security. Call 860-916-7482.

GLASTONBURY - LOVELY LARGE FURNISHED HOME: with all utilities included. Flat screen TV, WiFi to share with professionals. \$950/monthly. Call 860-716-1227.

STORAGE UNIT AVAILABLE: Located in East Hampton. Text 860-267-4858.

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stephaniestarr@bhhsnc.com
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RE4-3-26

EMPLOYMENT

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN SOUTH GLASTONBURY: is seeking a reliable and conscientious individual to serve as sexton/custodian. Responsibilities include maintaining clean and orderly buildings, managing supplies, preparing spaces for worship services, rituals, daily use, and special events (including setup and takedown), and coordinating with clergy and staff to ensure all spaces are ready for use. Qualified candidates will have prior custodial or maintenance experience and the ability to perform physical tasks (lifting up to 25 pounds, bending, and standing for extended periods). The ideal candidate demonstrates strong attention to detail, dependability, and respect for the church's mission and community. This is a part-time position (up to 30 hours per week) with flexible scheduling, including some weekends and occasional evenings. No benefits are offered. Please submit a resume and brief statement of interest to Lynne David, 860-633-4651, extension 2, lynneadavid@southchurch2.org.

ARTISAN BAKERY SEEKS PROFESSIONAL BAKER: Professional Artisan Bread Baker needed. Must have strong scratch baking experience and work independently to produce consistent quality breads; light pastry helpful. Early mornings. Part-time, growth potential. Email belltownbakery@gmail.com.

PCA NEEDED PART-TIME: Early mornings and evening hours available. Approximately 15-20 hours weekly. For personal care, cooking, cleaning, and errands. Bending/lifting, must be able to lift 40+lbs. Time & half for holidays. Weekly pay through payroll company. \$23/hr. Background check and drug test required. Willing to train. 860-949-7016.

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**HELP WANTED – PUBLIC WORKS FOREMAN
TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH**

The Town of Marlborough is accepting applications for applications for a Public Works Foreman. This is a full-time (40 hours per week) position responsible for leading the crew that maintains town roads, stormwater drainage systems, vehicle and machinery fleet, transfer station, town buildings, playing fields, cemeteries, and parks. The Foreman reports to the Town Manager, schedules crewmembers, and plans daily operations. Applicants should have a high school diploma or GED, a current CT CDL, and experience paving and maintaining roads. Experience leading teams or training others is preferred. The expected wage range is \$40.00-\$45.00 per hour, depending on experience and qualifications. The total compensation package includes health and dental insurance, employer HSA contribution, 457 defined contribution retirement plan with employer match, employer sponsored life insurance, tuition reimbursement, professional development, accrued leave time (vacation and sick), and 12 paid holidays. Employment Application available at www.marlbo.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 4/3

EMPLOYMENT

The East Hampton Public Schools is seeking qualified candidates for the position of:

Human Resource (HR) Generalist

Applicants must have a bachelor's degree in human resource management or business, and a minimum of three years of direct experience working in an HR-related field.

An equivalent combination of experience and education will be considered.

Salary Range: \$55,000 – \$62,000
(health insurance eligible, competitive benefits package)

Please see posting below for further qualifications and responsibilities.

Please apply on-line at
<https://jobs.redroverk12.com/org/easthamptonct>

The Town of East Hampton is an Equal Opportunity Employer.
1 Community Dr., East Hampton, CT, 06424

RE4-3-26

Public Works – Mechanic/Maintainer III:

The Town of East Hampton is accepting applications for the full-time position of Mechanic for the Public Works Department. Responsibilities include skilled work in the maintenance and repair of a variety of complex automotive & department equipment, and will be called upon to assist in other Public Works related jobs. Applicant should have in-depth knowledge of the standard practices and equipment of the automotive mechanic trade. CDL with class B (air brake endorsement) required. The starting hourly rate is \$26.04.

Applicants should submit a cover letter, resume and employment application to the Town of East Hampton, Department of Human Resources, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424, or by email to lseymour@easthamptonct.gov, by April 14, 2026, or until filled. A job description and employment application may be found at: www.easthamptonct.gov. EOE/AA/M-F.

1TB 4/3

Westside Manor is searching for Attendants to fill our part time 1st, 2nd and 3rd shift position.

7AM-3PM, 3PM-11PM and 11PM-7AM

Attendant Responsibilities: Housekeeping, Meal prep and Medication administration required for the position. Medication Certification Course is mandatory and offered with paid training.

Interviews are done by appointment only, Monday thru Friday. Please call 860-267-4401 or email us at Simona@westsidemanor.com to schedule an interview today!

9 WEST HIGH STREET, EAST HAMPTON

Job Type: Part time: 24-hours per week. Salary: \$17-18.75

RE3-13-26

New Beginnings for Life

is a smaller company with a big heart that cares for individuals with intellectual disabilities. We are seeking kind, patient, and passionate candidates to join our team. We have individuals who need care and companionship in Colchester and surrounding towns. We have great benefits, and the rate of pay is \$17.25 per hour.

For our day support program, which is from 8am-4pm and 2pm-5pm, the towns are in Salem, Groton, Hebron, Lebanon, Higganum, East Haddam, New London, Norwich, East Hampton, Colchester.

For our group home positions we have Monday-Sunday open second and third shift which is 3pm-11pm and 11pm-7am. These positions are in Colchester.

If you are interested in becoming a part of our team, please feel free to call us and ask for more information at 860-531-9426

RE3-15-24

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.marlbo.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 4/3

HELP WANTED

Full time 45+ hours per week service manager for busy power equipment store. Job entails taking service calls, organizing daily mechanics schedules, completing finished service orders, customer estimates, filing warranties with manufacturers and helping customers at the counter. Applicant must be organized, courteous, computer literate and have basic knowledge of power equipment and engines. Benefits include health insurance, 401 K, vacation and sick time.

Please contact Tony at Gano's Power Equipment at 860-537-3431 or by e-mail at ganos@snet.net

RE3-20-26

TREE & LANDSCAPING



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Marlborough, CT

RE3-13-20

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