

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Volume 47, Number 10

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

April 17, 2026

Echoes of 'The Weeping Time' at Hebron Church

By Toriana Williams

On Sunday, surrounded by the stark white walls of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Hebron, people shuffled across the bright red carpet and settled comfortably into pews.

The contrast was striking. A bright, almost celebratory color was beneath their feet, and yet there was also an unmistakable heaviness in the air. It was as if everyone there understood they were about to witness a performance that would demand both their attention and their hearts.

Above them, tall stained-glass windows shimmered in soft hues, casting light across the sanctuary. There were more than 50 people in attendance, each one quietly preparing for an experience that would be as emotional as it was historical.

The cast, which was to perform a theatrical reading, walked down the church aisle dressed in all black. It was as if they were in mourning – a fitting look for the story that was to be read. Their slow, deliberate steps padded against the carpet. It felt less like the beginning of a performance and more like the start of a vigil.

The Rev. Ron Kolanowski opened the evening with remarks that explained how the event came to be hosted at the church. He spoke of discovery, connection and the unexpected personal ties that emerged along the way.

The event itself marked a continuation of an annual tradition. It brought together the church, the Sanctuary of Performing Arts group and the Coalition on Diversity and Equity (CoDE) to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year's production centered on a devastating historical moment: the largest sale of enslaved



The performance of "Day of Tears" by Julius Lester held at St. Peter's Episcopal Church on Sunday, April 12, enthralled audience members as they learned about personal experiences during the largest auction of enslaved people in U.S. history. Pictured from left are cast members Frances McAlpine Sharp, Liston Filyaw, Leslie Bevans, Jacque Davis and Jomarie Pipilo. Photo by Laurie Maria Cabral.

human beings in United States history, known as "The Weeping Time."

Director Laurie Maria Cabral transformed

Julius Lester's Day of Tears into a version suited for a staged theatrical reading.

As the performance began, the church

seemed to transform. The cast's voices rang out through the pews, and the diverse cast offered a unique cast of voices for each character. Each line carried weight, and each character felt distinct, breathing life into a story that demanded to be remembered.

From there, the narrative unfolded with a raw intensity. The audience was transported to Savannah, Ga., in March 1857, where, as one character described, "It's been three days since we've seen the sun. ... the rain is coming down as hard as we breathe." Another voice followed, steady but trembling with meaning: "This is God's tears."

If God had a habit of speaking openly, perhaps he would have agreed.

The imagery was relentless. Rain pounding the earth, thunder rolling across the sky and human lives being auctioned off beneath it all.

One voice recalled, "Thunder rolled from one side of the sky. ... My heart was jumping like it wanted to run out of my body and find someplace to hide." The audience sat still and absorbed every word.

One character described the auction in chilling detail: "The slave-seller talks so fast you couldn't understand what he was saying. ... and then ... he'd shout 'sold.'" The randomness and cruelty of it all hung heavily in the sanctuary.

Another voice spoke of separation: "He sold my sister and her husband ... didn't even let her come in and say goodbye."

Throughout the performance, the cast navigated the emotional journey. See 'The Weeping Time', page 30

Portland BOS Sends Budget to Referendum

By Anne Lilburn

Portland's Board of Selectmen adopted the proposed town budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year at its regularly scheduled meeting on April 8. The overall budget came in at \$43,492,207, which Pelton said was a roughly 4.1% increase, with a corresponding 1.5 mill increase.

Each member of the board gave their thoughts and feelings about whether they supported it and why, as well as their concerns. The board eventually voted 6-to-1 to adopt the budget, which will now head to town referendum on May 11. Republican Bobby Hetrick was the lone selectman to vote against it.

First Selectman Michael Pelton, a Republican, said he was proud of the work that all of them had done to get the budget to this point.

"I believe everyone on this entire team — our side, the Board of Ed's side, the departments — have done their best to try to get down to the best number they can based on getting the job done for the various departments based on the goals of the town, based on what we can afford to do," he said, "and that's always a tough number to hit."

"There will be some people very happy with the budget, [and] there will be some people that will be very unhappy with the budget, no matter what the number is," he added. "I think most people will understand that. As a team, I'm really proud of how we did this. We all worked on it. We all squeezed every dollar we could out of this budget."

Hetrick said that he appreciated people's hard work, but that he was still unhappy with the budget, noting, among other things, that the Board of Education's budget was starting with a planned deficit.

"I know Charles [Britton, Portland's superintendent of schools] worked hard on his budget, but I think we're in the wrong area when we're starting a new budget year in the red," he said.

Hetrick said schools weren't his only concerns.

"I don't think we put aside enough money for our land acquisition and open space," he said, and added that, "I think we're wasting money on social services — certain ones should be eliminated, other ones we should bring into the town,

because the town can provide us better service with it — and I think we keep underfunding our capital budget."

"As much as everyone says we're trying to do things different," he concluded, "this is the same budget we've been passing in town for the last 30 years. There's no planning for the future, no saving for bigger projects."

Fellow Republican Vinnie Pitruzzello shared Hetrick's concerns about costs, but came to a different conclusion in the end, voting with the majority to adopt the budget.

At the end of the negotiations and deliberations, Pitruzzello said, "no single person really got everything that they wanted" — and he said he included himself in that statement — but he added he doesn't see that as a failure.

"All in all, when you think about some of the headwinds that are facing some of the other towns... all in all, we're better than most towns," he said, while noting, "Could we do better? Absolutely."

Pitruzzello said he told his colleagues previously. See Portland BOS, page 31

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Advertisement for Carl Guild & Associates featuring a logo with a house icon and the text 'THE FUTURE OF REAL ESTATE'. Below is a large 'H' logo and contact information for Jim Harrington: 860-966-9966, JIM@HARRS.COM.

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Glastonbury Yoga Studio Continues to Help People Move

By Olivia Cibula

For more than two decades, Fuller Yoga in Glastonbury has been helping people build strength, improve mobility and find a sense of community both on and off the mat.

Founded in 2004 by owner and lead instructor Lauren Fuller, the studio has grown into a space offering yoga, Pilates and specialty classes focused on improving alignment, flexibility and injury prevention.

Fuller said the studio's mission has remained the same over the years: "We want to educate and support students who want to move better, reduce pain and improve their quality of life," she said.

With more than 23 years of teaching experience, Fuller discovered yoga through a background in dance and creative movement. A graduate of San Francisco State University with a degree in dance, she was drawn to yoga for its expressive and transformative potential.

After completing teacher training in New York City, Fuller developed a teaching style centered on thoughtful movement patterns that build strength and flexibility in both the body and mind.

Today, Fuller Yoga offers a wide range of classes in a clean, judgment-free environment designed to help students connect with their bodies and reduce both physical and mental stress. The studio is complete with 10 instructors, a yoga room filled with mats, blocks, blankets, straps and more, as well as a Pilates studio with five Peak Pilates combo reformers. An individual infrared sauna room and massage room are also available to students.

"It's not a place where you're going to feel in-

timidated or judged," Fuller said.

When Fuller first opened the studio, yoga looked very different than it does today. Studios operated without modern booking systems, memberships or widely available equipment.

"We didn't have mats — you could not go to TJ Maxx and get a mat," Fuller explained. "I had to order mats ... and I cut them myself."

Despite early challenges, the studio steadily built a loyal following that continues to return year after year. "We've always been able to keep our people," Fuller said.

Over time, Fuller Yoga has become known not just for its classes, but for the connections formed within the studio. Many students attend regularly and friendships often grow out of shared practice.

The studio also attracts a wide age range of students, including many older adults. "Most of our clients are 50 to 80," Fuller said. "We even have some 84-year-olds."

While some people attend classes for fitness, Fuller said a large portion of students arrive looking for relief from pain, injuries or medical conditions. Over time, that demand helped shape the studio's focus. Fuller developed a specialty in working with people who have scoliosis or spinal issues, something she relates to personally.

"That's really my specialty — yoga for scoliosis," she said. "I have my own back issues that I was born with that I work on to stay pain free too."

Students frequently return to the studio after surgeries, injuries or physical therapy, using yoga to rebuild strength, balance and mobility.

For longtime student Julie Tooker, Fuller Yoga



Fuller Yoga in Glastonbury is celebrating more than 20 years in business. Owner and lead instructor Lauren Fuller is pictured at center, along with some of the instructors from the studio.

has become more than just a place to exercise. After suffering an ankle injury, she returned to the studio following physical therapy and credits the instructors and community for helping her continue her practice.

"The yoga community here is like I've never seen before," Tooker said. "These are women that really care."

Like many small businesses, Fuller Yoga faced major uncertainty during the COVID-19 pan-

demic. Fuller credited a supportive landlord and a quick shift to online classes with helping the studio survive. Teachers continued instructing from the studio while students joined virtually, and the class system was kept as consistent as possible.

"Life was so chaotic and people were so anxious," Fuller said. "I wanted them to see the same thing every time they logged on."

Sustaining her business for more than 20 years is something Fuller views as a reflection of adaptability and persistence.

"It just means resilience," she said. "That I have the ability to kind of see where we need to go and make adjustments."

To celebrate the milestone, Fuller Yoga is planning a series of community-focused events, including a pop-up shop with plant-based and nontoxic clothing brand Reprise Activewear, a silent disco yoga session and a live harp performance during classes.

Fuller believes yoga does not need to be intense or intimidating to be meaningful. Instead, she encourages consistency and patience.

"Doing yoga is like flossing your teeth," she joked. "You won't die without it, but you'll live better with it."

When giving advice for those new to starting yoga, Fuller kept it simple; "Allow yourself to be humbled," she said. "Don't try to have a goal. Just enjoy the process."

After more than 20 years, that philosophy continues to guide the studio helping students move better and build lasting connections along the way.

Fuller Yoga is located in Glen Lochen at 39 New London Tpke. in Glastonbury. For more information on the studio, memberships and events, visit fulleryoga.com.

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Grand Opening for CGA Middletown Office

Carl Guild & Associates (CGA) will host the grand opening of its Middletown office Saturday, May 2, from noon-2 p.m., and all are invited. The office is located at 32 Washington St., Middletown.

During the event there will be a ribbon-cutting with the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce, and CGA is also hoping to award a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating high school senior Middletown resident. This is part of the

real estate firm's scholarship program, which has seen it give out nearly \$50,000 over eight years to students residing in seven different towns: East Hampton, Portland, Colchester, East Haddam, RHAM, Glastonbury, and now Middletown for the first time.

Additionally, at the grand opening CGA will seal a time capsule, to be opened five years from now.

RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM • RHAM

Empty Bowls Dinner Event

Students and staff are prepping for their fourth Empty Bowls dinner event to be held Thursday, April 30, from 6-8 p.m., in the RHAM High School cafeteria.

At the last Empty Bowls dinner, in 2024, over 400 ceramic bowls were made and due to support from the community, over \$3,000 was raised for local food banks. For this year's dinner event, there are over 400 bowls made, a lineup of restaurants from the area donating food, and organizers said they hope to exceed the turnout from 2024!

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students

and children, and can be ordered at linqconnect.com/public/store/UALJFX/items. All proceeds will benefit the Hebron Interfaith Food Bank, Marlborough Food Bank and Andover Congregational Church Food Pantry.

At the event, guests enjoy a simple meal of soup and bread and choose a handmade ceramic bowl to take home as a reminder that there are always empty bowls in the world.

Additional monetary and food donations will also be accepted and t-shirts with our student designed logo will be sold at the dinner event.

KinderRHAMa Summer Camp Registration

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

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

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

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

Week 1: June 22-26 – Garden Adventures; Week 2: June 29-July 2 – Locomotion (No Camp July 3); Week 3: July 6-10 – Dinosaurs; Week 4: July 13-17 – Pirates; Week 5: July 20-24 – Ocean Commotion; Week 6: July 27-31 – Olympics; Week 7: Aug. 3-7 – Space Invaders; Week 8: Aug. 10-14 – Fun with Food

To register, go to ahmyouth.recdesk.com/Community/Program?category=4. Financial aid may be available for families who qualify by filling out the form at: ahmyouth.org/program-scholarship-application.

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

KinderRHAMa Registration is Open

AHM Youth and Family Services' KinderRHAMa Preschool, located at RHAM High School, has opened registration for students for the 2026-27 year. Children ages 3-5 can attend the program. Children must be 3 by Sept. 1, 2026, and toilet-trained in order to attend.

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

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

The two-day program is \$2,490/year; the three-day program is \$4,465/year; and the five-day program is \$7,400/year. The two-day program with extended day (Tuesday/Thursday from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.) is \$3,600/year, and the

three-day/week program with extended day (Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.), is \$5,400/year. Tuition can be paid in 10 installments. Financial aid may be available for families who qualify.

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

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

Take-Back Day April 25

AHM's Coalition for a Healthy and Empowered Community (CHEC), in partnership with the Connecticut State Police, will host a free drug take-back event Saturday, April 25, from 9 a.m.-noon, at the Hebron Police Department/Fire Department, 44 Main St.

Free take-back events are held each year in the spring and fall for community members to properly dispose of old and unneeded prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, and vitamins anonymously.

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From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

I don't often write here about the TV shows I'm watching, mainly because I figure, well, who would care? But I recently watched a (very) limited series that I so enjoyed I wanted to share about it.

In my early 20s, I regularly watched the sitcom *Malcolm in the Middle* on Fox. It was a simply hilarious series centered on a young genius and his very dysfunctional family. It ran for seven seasons, and while it's true the show got a little long in the tooth by the end, it was consistently very funny, at times heartwarming, and always very zany.

So I was quite intrigued when it was announced last year the *Malcolm* gang was getting back together again for a reunion special. The special would actually be broken up over four half-hour episodes, and centered on parents Lois and Hal's 40th wedding anniversary.

The episodes dropped last Friday, April 10, and I eagerly checked them out. And, dear readers, they were great. The show hadn't missed a step. I laughed out loud several times, and the ending was actually quite moving. Nearly all of the original cast – including many of the smaller, recurring characters – returned, and it was a lot of fun to see them all back together. The actors all slipped back into their roles seamlessly.

I won't say much more as I really don't want to spoil anything. If you have Hulu (or Disney+), the four episodes are streaming on there, and are cleverly titled *Malcolm in the Middle: Life's Still Unfair* – a reference to the original show's delightful theme song, performed by the excellent They Might Be Giants.

I enjoyed the reunion special so much that I was prompted to go back and rewatch some

episodes from the original series – which is also streaming on Hulu. You know what? It still holds up.

Hank Williams Jr. once asked if you were ready for some football. I have an alternate question: Are you ready for some softball?

If so, you may be interested in joining a new co-ed adult softball league that's starting up.

Teams are being formed in Colchester, East Hampton and Portland. Games may be played in all three towns in July and August. You have the option of registering with a team, or as an individual to be added to a team with open positions. Rosters must have a minimum of four women, and all rosters will be capped at 15 players.

The Colchester, East Hampton and Portland recreation departments will provide the fields, balls and umpires. Each team must provide their own bats and catchers' equipment.

The fee is \$550 per team to cover the town expenses associated with games.

Registration will close on June 1, at which point game schedules, rules and more information will be sent out.

For more information on this new league, call Colchester Parks and Recreation at 860-537-7297.

This sounds like my kind of race.

The Rotary Club of East Hampton will hold its first-ever 0.5K Race, an "extreme" test of endurance designed for those who prefer their marathons short and their impact large. This inaugural event will take place Sunday, June 7, at 11 a.m., at Sears Park, finishing at Lakeside Bar and Grill, promising what Ro-

Editor's Desk continued on page 6



A Time to Share... Joann Osmond, right, outreach coordinator at St Peter's Episcopal Church, recently presented a check to Tressa Giordino, left, executive director of AHM Youth and Family Services. Founded in 1983, the nonprofit organization provides services to the communities of Andover, Hebron, Marlborough and Columbia. These programs include helping to divert teens from juvenile court, provide community drug and alcohol prevention activities, mental health counseling and social work services, preschool programs, youth worker programs for senior citizens, and many other youth and family activities. St. Peter's shares a portion of each of its community event profits with a nonprofit in the region.

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

Liberals and Budgets

To The Editor,

I realize Connecticut is a liberal bastion and most towns *Rivereast* covers are Democrat-run. Recent articles state these towns are having financial problems, whether it's missing funds or huge budget increases that no one seems able to explain how any of this happened, except to blame anyone or anything other than those holding the reins.

I don't care how liberal you are, but if you're going to vote to increase the budget then you should also be kind enough to pay for those of us that voted against any increase; obviously that would be the liberal thing to do. The seniors on S.S. would also appreciate a property tax cut at half with no restrictions. I am sure you could afford to make up the difference.

I realize this is a stretch, because liberals are good at spending others money; isn't that right, Colchester?

On another note, state Sen. Needleman's message reads like a playbook from the Trump administration. He now wants to play nice after years of growing state government. He wants to give back as if he is becoming a fiscal conservative. If he and his cohorts can give us back all this, then why did they need it in the first place? Think about it, especially when you vote and for whom you vote.

Frank Grande – Colchester

This Isn't a School Budget; It's Damage Control.

To the Editor:

This year's school budget is the bare minimum. Not because that's what our students need, but because we're still cleaning up the mess from the school health insurance reserve fund debacle. The reserve fund should have been better managed. But here's the thing: we have to pay those health insurance costs no matter what. That bill isn't going away.

So why are our kids the ones footing it?

Look at the numbers. \$1.3 million has already been cut from the budget. \$3.2 million of what's left goes straight to health insurance. That's not an investment in education. That's a real-world cut to every school in Colchester.

The Board of Education is being asked to absorb the fallout from a financial failure unrelated to classrooms or students. That's not a school budget. That's damage control.

Colchester's students deserve better than whatever's left over after adults sort out their problems. We can do more than the bare minimum. We should.

John Farrell – Colchester

P.S: I am a proud member of the Colchester Democratic Town Committee, but I do not speak on their behalf. These are my own views as a Colchester citizen and a concerned parent.

Bulletin Board

My wife came in Saturday from some expedition to somewhere, lugging a bag of who knows what from who knows where. "I'm sick," she announced without preamble. "Absolutely sick."

This is never good news for me, as it means I may be required to actually make my own lunch or possibly have to figure out how to write a check or spend two hours on the phone trying to persuade a robot to let me talk to a live person about why the cable TV won't work. "What's wrong?" I hazarded.

"I just got gas," she said.

"Oh," I said, relieved. "I thought you said you were sick." Lunch may not be in great danger after all. "Just gas? I get gas all the time. And then it just goes away."

"Yeah, to poison everybody within 100 yards," she retorted.

"That was the dog," I protested. "She was the worst."

"Oh sure. Blame the dog. Always the dog The dog has been gone for years."

"She was not entirely innocent, believe me."

"Sure. How many times did the poor dog get put outside for a crime she didn't commit?"

"Actually, she was probably grateful to be outside," I admitted.

"Anyway," she said, "I'm not talking about your kind of gas. I'm talking about gasoline. What you put in your car."

"Oh," I said. "Why should that make you sick? Were you overcome with fumes or something?"

"I'm sick because it cost me \$60 to fill up the car this morning. SIXTY dollars!"

"Yipes."

"It was just over \$4 a gallon. FOUR dollars!"

"Geez."

"What are you doing with your phone?"

"Calculating."

"What—"

"Wait a minute. Okay. If the car gets 25 miles to the gallon and gas costs \$4 a gallon, that means—"

"It means it costs \$4 to go 25 miles."

"Right. You did that in your head?"

She groaned.

I turned back to my phone.

"What are you doing now?" she said.

"It's 350 miles to go visit your mother in New York," I said, concentrating on the phone's calculator. "That's one way."

"I don't think I like where this is going," she said, rather coolly.

"If you calculate the round trip, it's—"

"Seven hundred miles."

"Right. Seven hundred miles. At 25 miles per gallon, that adds up to...um, 28 gallons of gas."

"Yes?"

"Wow. That's a lot of gas."

"Yes. So?"

"So, at \$4 per gallon, that means it would cost us \$112 just to go see your mother," I said, boldly soldiering on. "And of course, that doesn't take into consideration the wear and tear on the car or the tolls on the New York Thru-way."

She didn't say anything. She just looked at me with no expression at all, as the temperature in the room continued to drop.

"And worth every penny," I added hastily.

"Indeed," she replied.

"So," I said, smiling brightly. "What's for lunch?"

Jim Hallas

Rivereast Hours of Operation

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

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Published Every Friday by The Glastonbury Citizen

87 Nutmeg Lane • Glastonbury, CT 06033

Telephone (860) 633-4691

Email: bulletin@glcitizen.com

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

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

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Thank You, Rivereast

To the Editor:
I'd like to thank the *Rivereast News Bulletin* and staff for their continued coverage of our local towns. We're lucky to have your coverage of our town politics and events, something not available to many citizens throughout the country any longer.

**Keep up the good work and thanks again,
John Fitts – Colchester**

Andover's Children are Watching

To the Editor:
I am writing as a parent, caregiver, taxpayer, and volunteer who is deeply concerned about the pattern of disparaging remarks made by some of Andover's elected officials. These comments reflect a broader national trend in which some leaders stray from the Golden Rule and the standards of respect expected of public service. When officials feel comfortable publicly diminishing children, it is not an extension of authority – it is a breach of trust.

At a recent Board of Finance meeting, the Chair of the BOS referred to preschool education as "daycare." Earlier, during a Board of Education meeting, a BOE official stated, "Every 2-year-old is a special ed kid." These are not simple misstatements. They are dismissive, uninformed, and harmful. They reveal a disconnect between those in power and the lived realities of families in 2026. They also undermine the dignity of children who deserve respect – not minimization – from the adults elected to serve them. These views reflect outdated notions of "daycare," far removed from today's NAEYC standards and mandated earlychildhood guidelines.

At the meeting where this remark was made, children in the room – including my own – watched our superintendent, principal, teachers, BOE chair, Board of Finance chair, Library Committee Chair, Town Clerk, and the moderator model professionalism and composure. They showed what leadership looks like. Those same children were present as statements and decisions were made about them – statements directly affecting them in real time.

I entered that meeting asking, "How are we protecting our children and the future of our town without a competitive school budget?" After hearing elected officials publicly diminish children, I now have to ask a harder question: How are we protecting our children and the future of our town at all.

Elected officials – volunteer or not – take an oath to uphold the responsibilities of their office. That oath requires understanding the laws they operate under, the impact of their words, and the weight of their influence. Andover governance would benefit from deeper participation and education in governance etiquette, ethics, publicmeeting conduct, early childhood, FAPE, and disability awareness—and from staying current with the needs of the families who sustain this town.

Strong communities are built on strong schools, and AES is central to Andover's future. Our children deserve leaders who rise to meet them.

Andover's children are watching. It's time our leaders were worthy of their audience.

**Doris A. Maldonado Mendez
Andover**

If You Snooze, We Lose!

To the Editor:
Portland: If you snooze, we lose!!
We are going to pay an enormous price if you don't show up to vote for the budget referendum Monday, May 11. Twenty percent of registered voters (that's 1,420 People) must vote or the school bonding referendum automatically fails.

If it fails, we lose a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to receive \$66.5 million in state funding for our public school building needs. Without it, you and I will pay for it in increased property taxes.

If you snooze, we lose!!

**Elwin Guild
Portland**

New York Yankees

To the Editor:
I enjoyed Mike Thompson's observation concerning the New York Yankees. The Yankees appear to be a joyless and tense group of players, under great pressure to win a World Series in order to call a season successful. Winning a World Series takes great talent and loads of luck. Injuries, batting slumps, and nasty opposing pitchers can frustrate a team striving to win it all. There is no shame coming in second or third. Baseball is a tough game decided by inches – and the best teams rise to the top together and claw each other in October.

The Yankees have won seven pennants and five World Series over the last 30 years. Even on off years, the Yankees are always in the hunt for a playoff spot. The Yankees have showcased the immense talents of Aaron Judge, Derek Jeter, Alex Rodriguez, Mariano Rivera and Roger Clemens, among others. They are a wonderful organization which will win everything again.

Meantime, the Yankees must lighten up and understand that winning a World Series is a terrific accomplishment but the "ride" is more important. People matter and they provide the fondest memories. Friends; foes; arguments; jokes; reconciliations; observations; interactions; crises; victories; defeats; births; deaths; joys; and sadness make life rich. Former Green Bay Packers coach Vince Lombardi, a New Yorker, once said that "Winning isn't everything; it's the only thing." Lombardi was wrong. The Yankees should disregard Lombardi's assessment and start enjoying the game of baseball.

Mark Shea – Moodus

DTC Supports School Plan

To the Editor:
On May 11, Portland voters will decide whether to approve a long-overdue investment in our elementary schools. The Portland Democratic Town Committee has voted unanimously to support this proposal and strongly encourages our Portland neighbors to join us in voting 'yes.'

For more than 30 years, our community has not made significant capital improvements to these buildings. The result is aging facilities that no longer meet the needs of today's students or reflect the standards our community expects. Attempting to address these challenges through piecemeal repairs is not only inefficient, but would be disruptive to student learning, risk costly building system failures, and ultimately cost taxpayers more.

This proposal includes the renovation and expansion of Valley View into a PreK-2 school, renovation of Gildersleeve into a grades 3-5 school, relocation of 6th grade to the Middle School to better utilize available space, and critical HVAC and roof improvements at our secondary schools. At the conclusion of construction, Brownstone Intermediate School would be turned over to the town for future use.

This plan is the result of over five years of careful study, public input, and evaluation by multiple committees. It is a thoughtful, well-developed approach that maintains the small elementary school experience our community values, improves educational environments, and makes better use of existing space across the district.

Importantly, this project has earned broad bipartisan support. The Democratic Town Committee is joining the Board of Education, Board of Selectmen, and Republican Town Committee in unanimously endorsing it. That level of agreement reflects both the strength of the proposal and the urgency of the need.

Financially, this is a responsible investment.

By approving the project now, Portland will secure approximately \$66.5 million in state reimbursement, funding that may not be available in future years. This significantly reduces the burden on local taxpayers and makes this the most cost-effective path forward.

This is a rare opportunity to invest wisely in our schools, our students, and our community's future.

We urge Portland residents to vote 'yes' on May 11. The polls will be open at Portland Middle School from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Absentee ballots are available through the town clerk's office.

**Sincerely,
Portland Democratic Town Committee**

Maguire's Troubling Strategy

To the Editor:
I am writing to express my profound disappointment regarding the comments made by Selectman Chair Jeffrey Maguire during the April 9th town budget meeting. By dismissing Andover's accredited pre-K programs as "just daycare," the chair demonstrated a troubling misunderstanding of early childhood education and the immense value it brings to our town.

While dependable childcare is an essential service for working families, an accredited Pre-K program provides a fundamentally different experience. These classrooms are governed by rigorous state and national standards, such as NAEYC accreditation, and are led by certified educators who specialize in early childhood cognitive and social development.

In a high-quality Pre-K environment, children are not merely being supervised while their parents work. They are actively engaging in research-backed curricula designed to build early literacy, foundational math skills, and crucial social-emotional competencies. Decades of educational research consistently show that children who attend accredited Pre-K enter kin-

See Letters, page 6

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The "East of the River" Real Estate Report

Why Two Similar Homes Can Sell for Very Different Prices

Homeowners are often surprised when two homes that seem very similar sell for very different prices. They may have similar square footage, the same number of bedrooms, and be located in the same town or neighborhood. So why does one sell quickly and for more money, while the other sells for less? The answer is that buyers don't purchase homes based only on statistics. They purchase based on overall value, condition, and perception. Presentation plays a major role. A home that is clean, decluttered, professionally photographed, and well-prepared for showings often creates a stronger first impression. Buyers today usually see a home online before ever stepping inside, so presentation can influence interest before the first showing even happens. Condition also matters.

Two homes may look similar on paper, but if one has an updated kitchen, newer roof, modern mechanicals, or better-maintained systems, buyers often place a premium on those improvements. Many buyers prefer paying more upfront rather than taking on projects after closing. Layout and functionality can also impact value.

Even homes with the same square footage can feel very different depending on room flow, natural light, storage space, and how usable the living areas feel. Then there is pricing strategy.

A home introduced at an attractive, well-supported price often generates more interest and stronger competition. A similar home priced too aggressively may sit longer, lose momentum, and eventually sell for less.

Timing and buyer demand can also play a role. A home listed when inventory is tight may attract more urgency than one listed when buyers have more choices.

The key takeaway is this: homes are not commodities. Even similar homes can produce very different results depending on preparation, pricing, and how they are brought to market.

For homeowners considering selling, small differences in strategy can create meaningful differences in outcome.

Market Snapshot – Past Week

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

Single-Family Homes

- 4 homes sold
- Average sale price: \$501,975
- Average sale-to-list ratio: 102%
- Average days on market: 113 days
- Median days on market: 97 days

Condos

- 1 sold at \$210,000
- Sale-to-list ratio: 100%
- Days on market: 12 days

Results vary by price point, condition, and pricing strategy.



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★ Letters, cont. from page 5

ergarten significantly more prepared to learn. They require fewer remedial services in later grades and have higher high school graduation rates.

As a parent raising young children here in Andover, I know firsthand how vital these formative years are. Our town's future success relies entirely on the educational foundation we provide to our youngest learners. Equating early education with basic childcare undermines the hard work and dedication of our certified teachers who spend their days shaping these young minds.

We need our town leadership to recognize the clear distinction between supervision and foundational education. Treating early childhood education as a glorified babysitting service is a disservice to our students, our educators, and our community's future. It is time we give our accredited Pre-K programs, and the professionals who run them, the respect and support they deserve.

Sincerely,
Jose David Rivera – Andover

Dennler Crisis Continues

To the Editor:

I am writing to strongly object to the proposed use of BOE Capital Reserve funds to offset the growing Health Reserve Fund deficit and to urge Colchester citizens and taxpayers to voice their opposition.

The BOE Capital Reserve Fund was established by a joint resolution in December 2005 under the leadership of the late First Selectman Jenny Contois, BOF Chairman Bruce Hayn, and BOE Chairman Bill Hettrick – leaders who ensured BOE capital assets would be maintained without unexpected taxpayer burdens. This resolution established the BOE unexpended funds/capital reserve policy, which has been respected by every first selectman, BOF chairman and BOE chairman since 2005, and reinforced by former CFO Maggie Cosgrove.

The current budget proposal, put forward under the administration of First Selectman Bernie Dennler and advocated by BOF Chair Karen Belding and BOE Chairman Stefanie Tracey-Calash, represents a departure from that established policy and raises serious questions

regarding compliance with governing rules and procedures. It also undermines safeguards put in place to protect both the town and the Board of Education.

Equally concerning, the Health Reserve Fund deficit – now reported in the range of \$4-5 million, with concerns it could reach insolvency by May 2026 – was known for over a year. Yet questions remain about what corrective actions were taken and whether sufficient measures were implemented to protect taxpayers. Instead of adhering to established financial policy, the proposal would divert BOE Capital Reserve funds to address this deficit, raising concerns about fiscal discipline and oversight.

This action – redirecting BOE Capital Reserve funds – contradicts established policy, undermines long-standing fiscal safeguards, and erodes public trust in the management of designated reserve funds.

Many questions also remain regarding the fiscal oversight and financial management practices of the current administration and finance leadership, and whether adequate steps were taken in a timely manner to address the Health Reserve Fund deficit.

This proposed action is inconsistent with the intent of the Town Charter and the 2005 resolution establishing the BOE Capital Reserve Fund. I urge First Selectman Bernie Dennler and town officials to halt this action, provide full transparency regarding the Health Reserve Fund deficit and its timeline, and pursue solutions that adhere to established policy while protecting taxpayers.

Colchester deserves better.

Cyndee Larabee – Colchester

A Call for Transparency and Unified Purpose

To the Editor:

I joined the Board of Education with a clear and simple goal: to serve our students, support our educators, and responsibly manage the resources provided by our taxpayers. Like many of you, my family moved here for our excellent schools, and I remain deeply committed to seeing them thrive. However, after our recent bud-

get meetings, I feel a bit dismayed by the process so far.

Serving on the Board of Education is a fiduciary responsibility. It requires asking difficult questions and seeking detailed data before committing to increases. This year, we will be voting on an 11% budget increase – a substantial figure for any town to absorb. When I suggested we take more time to review the research supporting the superintendent's contract increase, my intent was not to obstruct, but to ensure that our decisions are "just" and based on complete information.

I believe that for our schools to remain strong, our Board must reflect the needs of the entire community. This includes parents, teachers, seniors on fixed incomes and residents without children in the system. A budget that the whole town can support is the only way to ensure stable, long-term funding for our children.

Regrettably, my efforts to seek clarity and share simple facts with a small group of concerned citizens have been met with severe hostility. This culminated in a public call to form a committee to investigate my "actions." It is discouraging when a call for transparency is treated as a "wrongdoing" and a budget meeting culminates in booing towards seniors. We must be mindful that our children are watching us; when we meet disagreement with hostility rather than dialogue, we fail to model the behavior we expect of them.

I am concerned that the meeting ended before all voices were heard. Many people attended with the hope of being respected and understood. Moving forward, I hope we can set aside division and return to our shared purpose. Our town is at its best when we collaborate openly, ask thoughtful questions, and work toward a budget that honors both our students' futures and our taxpayers' realities.

Marcie Miner – Andover

Note: Miner is a member of the Andover Board of Education but said she is speaking as an individual.

Just Going Through the Motions

To the Editor:

I've grown increasingly concerned after attending numerous board meetings during this budget season. While it may have appeared that concerns were being heard, it often felt more like a formality than genuine consideration. When the Board of Finance was asked by the Town Council to reduce the budget and keep the mill rate increase under two mills, they were unable to do so. In fact, it doesn't seem that any cuts were made by the BOF. That raises an important question – why not? Is it possible that a lack of tenure or experience among the Board of Finance members is a contributing factor?

These are challenging financial times. With more than half of the population in Hebron over the age of 50, the current budget proposal does not appear sustainable. I hope residents will take the time to vote 'no' and encourage a more responsible reduction in spending.

Angela Coarentin – Amston

Marlborough Taxpayers, Be Aware

To the Editor:

It's budget season, and the usual process for introducing the budget to the taxpayers is not happening this year. The first public forum scheduled for April 20 is typically the time when residents see the budget presentation, look at the handouts, and ask questions and voice concerns to the Board of Finance. Immediately afterward, the BOF discusses what they heard at the public forum and decides whether to keep the budget as presented and move it forward to vote or make adjustments according to the public's concerns.

However, this year this process has not been followed. The BOF has finalized the budget, set the mill rate, and sent the information to the printers so that the ballots can be printed. These will be the ballots used for the May 5 referendum. This effectively does not allow you, the taxpayers, with the opportunity to scrutinize the budget and ask your questions. Your comments won't affect the bottom line.

You need to be aware of this.

I still encourage you to attend the public forum on the 20th. Ask your questions, voice your opinions, and be heard. If the budget fails to pass at referendum, the BOF will have valuable insight from the taxpayers before they adjust the budget. If it passes, so be it. We taxpayers pay the bills and have the right to make our voices heard. Come to the public forum on April 20 at 7 p.m., at the MES cafeteria. It's your right as a taxpayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Deb Bourbeau – Marlborough

Editor's Desk continued from page 4

tary calls a "grueling" 546-yard journey to the finish line.

Dubbed the "race for the rest of us," the Rotary said the East Hampton 0.5K is a lighthearted, community fundraiser where "athletes" of all abilities are encouraged to participate. The event mimics the traditional intensity of a 5K with a laid-back atmosphere, featuring a "carb station" at the beginning and end to ensure no one collapses from the exhaustion of walking two blocks.

The event will feature a 0.31-mile trek that is almost entirely flat (4" curb elevation) and guaranteed to take less than 10 minutes, even at a leisurely stroll. All participants who successfully cross the finish line will receive a commemorative medal and 0.5K oval car decal to proudly display their "athletic" achievement.

"Competitors" are encouraged to wear their most creative outfits, with prizes awarded for

the best dressed.

At the finish line, "exhaustion" will be managed with a snack and ticket for a beverage provided by Lakeside Bar and Grill.

Proceeds from the event will directly benefit the East Hampton Rotary Club's local initiatives, including community service projects that support East Hampton and Marlborough.

Tickets are \$30 for adults, \$15 for kids and \$5 for dogs (on a leash), and include a race T-shirt, a 0.5K sticker, a hot dog, a doughnut, and a beverage ticket for Lakeside. Interested participants will soon be able to sign up online through the Rotary's website (www.easthamptonrotary.org) or in person the day of event at Sears Park. A \$5 "day-of" fee will be assessed for those who don't pre-register.

See you next week.

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Quilt Show Thanks

To the Editor:
The Haddam Neck Congregational Church Ladies Aid would like to thank everyone who supported the church's 36th annual quilt show on April 11 and 12. The weather was fine and the quilts – more than 100 of them – were just exquisite. Thank you to everyone who donated fabric, yarn and notions to the Bits and Pieces Sale and to all who volunteered, cooked and attended the show during the weekend, supporting us in so many ways. This event is a labor of love for our church community and we are grateful to be able to host it each year and to celebrate the incredible talent of our quilting community both present and past.

Sincerely,
Haddam Neck Congregational Church Ladies Aid
Franky Dallas, Paulette Perkett,
Darcy Yuille, Deb Olsen, Dianne McHutchison,
Elizabeth Malloy and Melissa Pionzio)

Colchester Politics are Broken

To the Editor:
Colchester politics are broken, and anyone paying even a little attention can see it. What we have now is not healthy disagreement or thoughtful governance. It is a culture built on not-so-subtle shame, quiet intimidation, and an expectation of forced allegiance. The lively, sometimes messy, but ultimately productive spirit of open debate that used to define this town has been replaced with something far more damaging. Instead of honest disagreement, we get a kind of performative, toxic positivity layered over partisan tribalism.

I saw this firsthand when I served on the Board of Selectmen. Rosemary Coyle would often express frustration that I would challenge her publicly during meetings. Her preference was for me to go along in public, raise concerns privately, and maintain the appearance that everything is aligned. "We have to get along," she would say.

That is not leadership. That is not transparency. And it certainly is not good governance. When elected officials manufacture agreement in public, they are not fostering unity. They are misleading the very people they are supposed to represent. Disagreement is not dysfunction. It is essential. Many residents rely on those public debates to understand issues they otherwise would not have insight into.

This problem does not stop with elected officials. It has spread into the broader political culture. Just last week in the *Rivereast*, a member of the Colchester Democratic Town Committee once again complained about residents continuing to question their government. This, from a group that had no issue raising concerns when they were not in power.

The message could not be clearer. When we are in charge, sit down and stop asking questions. And if you do continue to speak up, your motives will be questioned and your character quietly attacked.

That approach is not just wrong. It is corrosive.

Progress does not come from blind allegiance to a party or a polished, artificial sense of unity. It comes from engagement, from disagreement, and yes, from uncomfortable conversations. We do not need to look far back in history to understand that spirited debate is part of the foundation of our republic.

Colchester should be encouraging more voices, not fewer. We should be welcoming engagement, not shaming it into silence. Right now, it feels like our leadership is doing the exact opposite, and that is a problem we cannot afford to ignore.

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

Eleven Percent? Let's Talk About That

To the Editor:
Ten-point-nine percent. That's the proposed Andover Elementary School increase. I understand if the number gives you pause.

Here is what that number actually means. Over the five years from 2020-21 to 2025-26, the AES budget grew 17%. Inflation over the same period ran 22%. In real terms, AES has lost roughly \$200,000 in purchasing power since 2020-21. This is not a school that has been spending recklessly. This is a school that has been underfunded and is now asking to catch up.

Some will say they're on a fixed income and can't absorb an increase. Fair enough; let's look at the numbers. Social Security benefits have increased by a cumulative 28.8% since January 2020 – faster than inflation, and nearly 10 times faster than Andover's total budget grew

over the same period. Meanwhile, enrollment grew. K-6 students are up roughly 22% since 2020-21, and including Pre-K, the population has grown 40%. More kids in the building, proportionally less money to teach them.

Connecticut publishes per-pupil spending for every district. The right comparison for Andover is not the big K-12 towns; we are an elementary-only district, running Pre-K through 6th grade locally and sending our older students to RHAM. Among the comparable elementary-only districts in Connecticut, Andover ranks near the bottom: 17th out of 21, at \$24,643 per pupil. The average for comparable districts is over \$27,000. We are not an extravagant school. We are a lean one.

The Board of Education and superintendent have earned this budget request. Last year, voters rejected the first referendum 271-310. The BOE did not argue. They went back to work, cut \$163,000 from the proposal, and came back with a budget that passed. That is what professional, responsible governance looks like. That restraint cost them. Now the bill is due. When they say they need what they're asking for, they have demonstrated that they mean it. Another flat year doesn't solve the problem. It makes it larger.

A full six-year budget analysis — per-pupil costs, enrollment trends, state comparisons, and full sourcing — is at <http://andoverct.info/budget2026>. I encourage you to read it before you vote.

The numbers make the case. So does the track record. Vote 'yes.'

Sincerely,
Scott Sauyet – Andover

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

Dementia Talks No. 56

To the Editor:
So, this morning I found myself in my bathing suit sitting next to Mom in the shower.

Why, you ask? Well, it is complicated. As Alzheimer's and other dementias progress, activities of daily living (ADLs) can shift from being something learned and natural, to something that is foreign and unwelcoming. And in some cases, the activity could be scary.

For example, walking down a sidewalk that has gaps in-between the slabs of concrete, and your loved one stops before the gap. They may see the gap as a hole that they might fall into, or see it as a "lip" that they need to step over. Either way as the brain shrinks/changes, these 'normal' situations to you and I, become not so normal to our loved ones.

Let's use the shower as another example. If you have a shower head that drips big blobs of water while it is on, you might think nothing of it. For someone with dementia, the big blobs of dripping water amongst the spray might hurt them if they stand under it. Or that the spray might be needles instead of warm cozy drops of water. Or the 'drip lip' to the shower to keep the water in, may look like something bigger and that they don't want to step over. Or what happens if the shower is on and someone else flushes a toilet and the water goes from cozy-warm to freezing-cold. You and I can like rationalize what happened, but someone with Alzheimer's that temperature change might be a full-on dealbreaker to getting clean.

This morning, I discovered that Mom didn't want to step into the shower because the shower floor was cold; we had to warm it up. Then the water temperature fluctuated, so Mom's verbal "ouch" wasn't from pain – it was from discom-

fort because the water became hotter. When the aide soaped up the washcloth and started to wash her back, Mom's "ouch" wasn't from pain – it was from discomfort because the washcloth was rough. These are just examples.

Sometimes we need to tease out the why around behavior instead of deeming our loved one as combative or difficult. In my world, someone with a shrinking brain can't be difficult – it's a matter of asking what can we do differently to make the experience better.

May you enjoy the spring showers and all-ways....and know that you are not alone.

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

Andover Budget, Lamont Taxes

To the Editor:
Hello. It's been a while since I've written but here it is, budget/tax season and in Connecticut and in our small town it's looking like higher taxes – again – and more burden on the working class and on small businesses. We never see Ned Lamont and his Democratic majority reduce spending despite billions of tax monies from the casinos, sports gambling and now cannabis. For years, Connecticut has been among the highest taxes states in the country with a very generous attitude with regards to welfare recipients, SNAP cards and illegal immigrants. Ned Lamont and his people – the Democratic majority – have to go. It's been way too long since we've had Republican leadership at the State Capital.

On Lamont's current agenda is to raise the minimum wage yet again, which will escalate

See Letters, page 8

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★ *Letters, cont. from page 7*

inflation raise retail prices and businesses will be forced to reduce their work force. Lamont also wants to establish an exit tax just like California. Connecticut is one of 11 states to tax social security benefits – deplorable!! He is making this state unaffordable to most seniors and those living on fixed incomes.

In Andover, I am very much opposed to the proposed 6.8% spending increase with a \$500K spending increase for Andover Elementary school alone. Our Board of Ed says it's "bare bones." Hardly!! Not for the seniors or those without children. > \$90K for a school psychologist. That's a sad state of affairs when elementary students need this. We are already over-challenged with rising living costs, heating oil, gasoline, food prices and the list goes on.

The Board of Finance has requests for an administrative assistant to our town manager. Our previous administrator was able to run our town and still had time to file for grants and he was really good at it.

They also want an assistant for the Community Center – another wish list item.

I urge our Board of Finance and the Board of Ed to revisit this budget and minimize yet another significant tax increase. I could support a 2-3% increase but 6.8% is a big hit. Be a voice and attend our town meetings.

Don Denley – Andover

East Hampton Zone Change

To My East Hampton Neighbors; T/C; P&Z; David Cox, Town Manager; and Juliet Hodge, Planning and Zoning Administrator:

The P&Z has accepted an application to change 18 acres from residential to commercial.

What/Where: PZC-26-003: William House: 200 West High St. (Route 66), across from RULE OF 3 BREWING

How Do You Know?: Go to www.easthamptonct.gov/DocumentCenter/Index/862. There on the lower left, you will find a "Heading" - PZ-26-003 200 WEST HIGH - Click to view --Another "Heading" that has "Application" in the Center of the page - Now you may Click on "Application" to view a 3-page PDF. Open it up and you see the complete application.

Discussion: These 18 acres are across Route 66 from Rule of 3 Brewing.

The 2006 POCD Future Land map (page 6-3) has this property listed as "very low density residential" - 1 dwelling per 2 acres. The 2016 POCD Future Land Map (page 116) again has this listed as "very low density residential" - 1 dwelling per 2 acres. The 2006 and 2016 POCD show that the CT DEEP has 15 of the 18 acres within the "Natural Diversity Database." (Page 3-13 and Page 45).

On today's GIS: the map shows the Pine Brook on the property.

For 20 years, the town has had this vision. Why the change?

Now, let's talk "creep": Once this R2 is changed to C, the abutter properties are easily changed to C. Once one, then the next, then the next. On and on the zone change creeps.

Action: Voice your opinion to the P&Z members before the next vote on Wednesday, May 6.

The P&Z should follow the 20-year vision of POCD's "very low density." It should not allow the zone to jump Route 66, to the north, which would open that side to commercial development. Where would it stop?

Douglas Mackeown – East Hampton

The Emperor's Budget

To the Editor:

At the April 8 Colchester Board of Finance budget meeting, the truth wasn't in the numbers. It was written all over their faces.

They know. They know it's too high. They know it relies on decisions that are not sustainable. And yet, they are pushing it forward anyway.

No real cuts. No serious debate about priorities. No willingness to make hard decisions. Just a quiet effort to move it along and hope the public doesn't push back.

This is *The Emperor's New Clothes* in real time. Everyone in the room can see the problem. No one will say it. So the illusion continues, and taxpayers are expected to pay for it.

Let's be clear: this is over a \$5 million increase in a single year. The library gets 1.25%. Teachers see about 3%. So why are the town and school budgets up 8%?

Some will point to rising health insurance costs. Those costs are real. But this was not unavoidable. It is the result of ignored warnings, poor decisions, and a failure to act. Now taxpayers are being asked to cover it.

And when it came to avoiding Connecticut's motor vehicle tax cap, they suddenly found precision. Razor-thin cuts, carefully calculated.

When optics mattered, discipline appeared. Everywhere else, it was absent.

They are even violating the town's BOE capital reserve policy to create the appearance of a lower mill rate. That is not budgeting. That is financial malpractice.

Trust me, the \$5 million referendum will not cover a new roof and AC at Bacon Academy. There is a capital list more than \$26 million long. That money will be needed. They know it.

If you want to understand priorities, look at the top. Nearly \$20,000 salary increases for the superintendent and First Selectman Bernie Dennler.

They will say this is necessary. They will say there is no alternative.

That is not leadership. It is avoidance.

They are choosing the easiest path for themselves and the most expensive path for taxpayers.

They know this makes Colchester less affordable. They know it shifts the burden onto families already stretched thin. And they are doing it anyway.

In the story, it took a child to say the emperor had no clothes. In Colchester, the public will have to do the same.

Michael Dubreuil – Colchester

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

After the School Consolidation

Dear Portland Residents:

I have not attended one school consolidation meeting; it is not that I do not care because I care very, very much ... but I am not an engineer, an architect, law enforcement, fire personnel, public works, etc. I trust that these people care tremendously about the children of this town and will make the right decisions. I trust that they are also cognizant of the fact that for many families, tax increases are a hardship. I will vote; I will pay.

What I am is a teacher and what I do know is what children need inside a structurally safe/secure building. When this is all said and done, please start advocating for foreign language instruction K-5 instead of 7-12. The research is abundantly clear - foreign language acquisition occurs best in the younger grades. Our children are not becoming truly multi-lingual. Fifty years ago, I started foreign language in 7th grade.

Our children are not going to be able to compete in this nation, never mind the global stage. Research is also clear that being multi-lingual improves problem-solving abilities and decreases age-related dementia among many other life enhancing benefits. In essence, we are spending \$100 to get a 10-cent return, when we could be spending \$100 and getting a \$500 return. I'm not that smart; surely some of you who are should be able to see that not only is this a wasteful investment monetarily, but I see this as an injustice to our children. It has been said, "When you know better, you do better." We know better.

There is tremendous beauty in the world - in the face of every child for sure, but the world is an increasingly complicated place. Sometimes I have to turn the news off because my stomach starts to bother me and I know I won't be able to sleep. We need to give our children every possible advantage. Please, obviously my voice is too small for anyone to do anything about this, but I am praying that some of you have more power. Parents are the greatest Mortal Advocates for their children!

**Kind Regards,
Debbie Law – Portland**

Hebron DPW 2012 Perspective

To the Editor:

As Hebron continues to make positive progress on the Department of Public Works project, a little history can add a lot of perspective. A Preliminary Program for the improvement of the DPW was presented to the Town of Hebron by CME Associates, Inc. on Nov. 5, 2012. The Executive Summary found on page three confirms the awareness that a problem existed almost 14 years ago, "The Town of Hebron, recognizing that the existing Department of Public Works facility at 550 Old Colchester Road in Amston provides inadequate space for normal operations and protection of equipment, engaged the services of CME Associates, Inc. to prepare a space needs analysis for use as a planning tool that will guide future development of a new facility."

Among several issues, the study notes the deficiencies in storage and workspace, which remains the same to this day, "Specialized equipment is necessary to build and repair roads,

install drainage and maintain roads particularly in the winter time... Critically, all of these expensive supplies and equipment need to be stored and maintained efficiently so that their value can be maintained over time... Storage facilities for equipment are lacking at present."

Beyond the serious problem with equipment storage, the study reported even more serious issue with worker safety. "In addition, facilities for DPW personnel are severely deficient which affects the safety and well being of these town employees." The variety of hazards to Hebron's Public Works employees include a dangerously cramped garage where workers have to climb over equipment to access the vehicles.

Another serious issue is the lack of an adequate rest area, particularly important for snowplow drivers working extended hours during winter storms. It is unacceptable that these town

employees still have to sleep in their trucks. Not only creating a physical challenge, the lack of quality rest can lead to reduced reaction time with potentially tragic results for the drivers and the public.

The last sentence in the 2012 Facilities Study Executive Summary continues to carry significant weight, "An investment in improved and expanded DPW facilities in the town of Hebron will be a cost saving measure in the long term as current investment in equipment will be preserved as the equipment will be properly stored and maintained under optimal conditions." Not only will this investment preserve equipment, it will preserve our most important and valuable assets, the hardworking employees of Hebron's DPW.

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

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From the Committee on Solidarity

Americans watched and many celebrated as more than 120,000 men, women and children were removed from their homes and sent to remotely-located detention camps. Because of their imprisonment they suffered the loss of jobs, assets, homes and friends. A government investigation concluded that the incarcerations were "without individual review or any probative evidence" and was evidence that the U.S. government had failed to protect the rights of its citizens.

The highly critical report titled 'Personal Justice Denied' was written in 1982-1983 by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment (CWRIC) and reviewed the imprisonment, more than 40 years earlier, of Japanese American citizens. While Japanese Americans had suffered discriminatory treatment for decades before WWII, the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor allowed the U.S. government to convert that historic racism into national policy. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 authorized the Secretary of War "to exclude any and all persons, citizens and aliens, from designated areas in order to provide security against sabotage, espionage and fifth column activity." Consequently, all American citizens of Japanese descent were prohibited from living, working or traveling on the west coast of the United States.

Members of the CWRIC concluded not only that there was no military basis for the incarceration of Japanese American citizens but also that "the broad historical causes which shaped these decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership." In recognition of the grave injustice suffered by the incarcerated Japanese Americans, \$20,000 in compensation was paid, by the U.S. government in 1988, to those still-surviving victims of that unlawful act. One of those survivors lived in Portland for almost 50 years.

May is Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month and the Committee on Solidarity is proudly collaborating with the Portland Historical Society, the Portland Public Library, the Middlesex

County Historical Society, the Senior Center and the family of Nobuko (Nobu) Kumekawa Hibino - known as Ann Hibino - to present another 'Voices of Portland' event. Ann Hibino: Finding

Her Voice In Portland will be held on Saturday, May 2 at 10:30 am at the Portland Senior Center. Register now at portlandlibraryct.org/voices-of-portland.

In establishing the Committee on Solidarity in 2021, the Board of Selectmen offered six declarations as the basis upon which the committee was being established. The third states that "there is no room for bias, racism, bigotry, prejudice or violence in our town, state or nation..." As noted in the government report cited above, racism, even as national policy, must be challenged whenever it occurs.

As the Committee on Solidarity looks forward to Juneteenth and Pride events (that will be detailed in future columns), we are also planning activities and educational events related to White Supremacy, Disability Rights and Trans Day of Remembrance. Our meetings are open to the public and we invite Portland residents to attend in person or via Zoom. For more information, visit the town's website for our agenda, minutes and schedule.

Portland Committee on Solidarity

PHS Class of '76 50th Reunion

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

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

Anyone with contact information for class-

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

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

Planning Portland's Future

All Portland residents recently received a large postcard in the mail, which has information about two plans for Portland's future. One is the updating of the Portland Plan of Conservation and Development, and the other is a Plan for Portland's Downtown and Riverfront.

There are two committees working on these plans, and they ask residents to complete the surveys by either using the QR codes found on

the postcard, or by visiting www.portlandct.org and find the links for the sites and surveys.

On Saturday, April 25, all are invited to attend the Future Portland Downtown and Riverfront Masterplan Interactive Workshop from 10 a.m.-noon at the Portland Waverly Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave.

For further information or assistance, call the Portland planning office at 860-342-6727.

Registration Continues for Town-Wide Tag Sale

The Portland Historical Society's 30th annual Town-Wide Tag Sales Day is just three weeks away - Saturday, May 9, rain or shine. And just one week remains to register your tag sale.

To register online, visit www.portlandhist-soc.com and click on the big yellow banner; just follow the instructions online. Registration sheets are also available in the barrel at the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History located at 492 Main St. or you can download a form from the society's 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 next 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.

On Saturday, May 9, the society will have a Bake Sale of homemade goodies at the Callander House. Members and friends of the society will be baking pies, muffins, cookies, scones, cakes, brownies and more and packaging their specialties for this sale. Baked goods can be dropped off after 7:30 a.m. on Saturday morning. Bake Sale doors open at 8:30 a.m.

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.

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Grant Application, Substitute Teacher Contract Approved

By Anne Lilburn

Portland's Board of Selectmen held their regular meeting on April 8, and while the adoption of the town's budget was the main event, the board also attended to other business, including approving a bid waiver for the Board of Education's contract extension with a substitute teacher staffing agency.

The selectmen heard from Superintendent of Schools Charles Britton, who discussed the Board of Education's contract with ESS, a substitute teaching staffing agency, which handles onboarding, hiring and all HR actives for the district's subs.

Britton noted that, while the district did pay a markup on each substitute, it had been using ESS for the past ten years. Five years ago, he said, the district went out to bid and it was clear

that ESS was "by far the premium bidder."

He said the district had been very happy with their work and that it was a flat contract extension, with no increase in cost, so he was seeking a bid waiver to extend the existing contract. The board voted unanimously to approve the waiver.

The board also voted unanimously to approve a resolution for the town to apply for a grant from the state's Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), which funds emergency management programs overseen by Emergency Management Director Don Gouin, and to approve the town's participation in the state's Neighborhood Assistance Act grant program, which provides tax credits to community groups.

First Selectman Mike Pelton, a Republican,

also updated the board and the public on the ongoing construction activity at the Nordic Spa, which he said was still on track to open in November. He said that the spa had requested an easement on Brownstone Avenue and that the town was working through some details with the spa and Eversource regarding that easement.

Pelton also updated residents on Brainerd Place, adding that the outside of Sage House would be getting updates over the next month or two, with the inside following. On the Riverfront Access Project, he said he believed it would be ready for a ribbon cutting in roughly six weeks, around late May.

In terms of the town's new water well, Public Works Director Jason Morrocco said that the contract had been signed with Snyder Civil

Engineering and the town had gotten approval from the Department of Public Health to proceed with plans for the well's construction.

Lastly, the council reiterated its support for the school consolidation project. Voters will have the chance to vote on the bond issue at the May 11 referendum, and Pelton emphasized that they need to get 20% of voters out to the polls for the vote to be valid. He said he believed there were roughly 7,100 registered voters in town, meaning over 1,400 voters would need to turn out.

"We need 20% of people in town to vote for this thing. Whether it passes or fails, even if every person who voted for it came out, but we only had 19% of the registered voters come out, it still wouldn't pass," he said.

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.

Year-Round Giving: Pull tabs are collected year-round and donated to the Ronald McDon-

ald "House that Love Built," supporting families with seriously ill children. Zion recycles computer ink cartridges to support office supplies for Sunny Hill Preschool and Zion. Pull tabs and used ink cartridges may be dropped off at the church on Sunday morning, or by calling the church office.

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

Grange in Town-Wide Tag Sale

Hemlock Grange in Portland is 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.

No Yellow Tents for Historical Society

With just three weeks until Town-Wide Tag Sale Day on May 9, the Portland Historical Society reminds everyone that they will not be collecting items for Tag Sale Day this year.

Phase one of the re-construction of the 1841 Gildersleeve Store on the grounds of the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History at 492 Main St. will be happening in the next few weeks. Therefore, the society's own tag sale, which directly benefits the society, will not be

happening. However, if you are cleaning and tossing photos from the past, you're asked to contact the historical society to see if it would like to add them to its collection. These photos can be of people, places and events from Portland's past.

For more information about the Town-Wide Tag Sale, call 860-982-1486 or email PortlandC-Thistory@gmail.com.

Mysteries, Murders, Killers and Thrillers

On Saturday, April 25, from 1-2:30 p.m., a panel of crime writers from the Connecticut chapter of Sisters in Crime will speak about "Mysteries, Murders, Killers and Thrillers" at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave.

Sisters in Crime (SinC) is an international organization created in 1986 to represent and advocate for women crime writers. It has since grown into an inclusive community of all crime writers at any stage of their career, published or not.

The organization defines crime writing as "fiction and nonfiction, traditional and indie. It's serious and tragic or light-hearted and funny, sexy or sweet, suspense, spy, or serial killer. Crime writing is wide-ranging, bestselling, award-winning."

The four published authors speaking on the panel are Ang Pompano (moderator), Kathryn Orzech, Christine Falcone and Sharon Dukett. Pompano and Falcone have been in the same writing group for more than 25 years.

Falcone's book *Ruff'd Up* was released at the end of March, the fourth book in her Melanie Bass Mystery Series. She drew upon her 40-year career as an RN to shape her main character. Her books are based on the Connecticut shoreline.

Orzech is a Connecticut native, film fan, and news nerd. She writes suspense thrillers set in New England "and other exotic locations," with lead women characters who confront danger, flirt with romance, and brush with the supernatural. She's currently working on screen adaptations of her books and a third novel. Orzech credits Sisters in Crime with helping to refine her writing, learn about publishing, and form new friendships.

Dukett is the author of *The Shutdown List*,

first runner-up for the Eric Hoffer Award in Mystery/Crime, as well as a memoir, *No Rules*. Her background in information technology peppers her novels with computer crime. Duke-tt is the current vice president of the Connecticut chapter of SinC. She is currently working on a spin-off novel of *The Shutdown List*.

Pompano is the moderator of the panel. He is also an author, editor, and publisher. His first novel, *When It's Time for Leaving*, was nominated for an Agatha Best First Novel Award. His latest novel, *Diet of Death: A Reluctant Food Columnist Mystery*, was released in January. A co-founder of Crime Spell Books, he co-edits the *Best New England Crime Stories* anthology and has written many short stories featured in numerous anthologies.

Pompano is a long-standing board member of the Connecticut and New England chapters of Sisters in Crime and is currently the membership secretary for the Connecticut chapter.

Books will be available for sale at this event.

Scholarship Offered by Garden Clubs

Applications are now available for a \$500 scholarship offered by the Portland Garden Clubs.

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

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

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

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Riverfront Access Clean Up Day

The Riverfront Access Committee will host a "Riverfront Clean Up Day" Saturday, April 18, from 9:30 a.m.-noon. Meet at the Tilcon Asphalt Plant on Airline Avenue for assignments.

Activities will include trimming invasive vines, removing invasive seedlings and picking up trash. Please bring landscaping tools such as rakes, pruning shears and shovels. Also please bring eye protection and gloves.

If you have a question, email Lou Pear at louisjpear@gmail.com or Rick Sharr at rsharr51@gmail.com.

Brownstone Quorum Annual Meeting

The 2026 Brownstone Quorum Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, April 26, at 2 p.m., at the Waverly Center, 7 Waverly Ave.

After a short meeting to elect officers and announce awards, The Brownstone Quorum and the Portland Historical Society will host a talk by Beau Doherty. Doherty will share examples of notable birds, trees, plants and pollinators observed in the riparian habitat of Riverfront Park following removal of invasive species by the Brownstone Quorum.

All are invited. Light refreshments will be served.

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Connecticut-based band Seat of Our Pants will perform at Trinity Church Sunday, May 3, as part of the Brownstone Vital Connections music series.

Brownstone Music Series to Continue

The Brownstone Vital Connections music series will continue Sunday, May 3, at 4 p.m., at Trinity Church, 345 Main St.

The Connecticut-based band Seat of Our Pants will perform. The group specializes in country and bluegrass music, as well as many cover songs, including "Nights in White Satin," "Eleanor Rigby" and "Black Magic Woman." The band has played venues like the Buttonwood Tree and Mohegan Sun's Wolf Den.

The proceeds from Brownstone concerts and events are donated to local, regional and nation-

al nonprofit organizations. The proceeds from this event will be going to support the Middlesex Land Trust, whose mission is to preserve open space for the future.

Tickets are \$15 at the door. For more information, call 860-463-6444 or email trinityvitalconnections@gmail.com.

Spring Senior Mixed Golf

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

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

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

Absentee Ballots for Budget, School Referendums

Referendums on the proposed 2026-27 budget as well as the proposed school consolidation project referendum will be held Monday, May 11, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at Portland Middle School, 93 High St. There is no early voting for referendums.

The Portland town clerk's office will begin issuing absentee ballots for the referendum on Wednesday, April 22. Registered voters and property owners can obtain an application in person at the office, by calling 860-342-6743, or visiting the town clerk's page of the Town of

Portland website, www.portlandct.org.

Any applications or completed absentee ballots should be mailed back to the Town Clerk's Office at: P.O. Box 71 Portland, CT 06480, brought to the Town Clerk's Office in person, or left in the election drop box located by the rear entrance of the Town Hall. Completed absentee ballots must be received back no later than 8 p.m. on May 11 in order to be counted.

Portland residents can also obtain a voter registration card at the town clerk's office.

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.

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.

Participants Sought for Memorial Day Parade

Portland's Memorial Day Parade will be Sunday, May 24, rain or shine, and participants are sought.

Parade assembly will be on Victoria Road at 1:30 p.m., with float/vehicle assembly at 12:30 p.m. Step-off will be at 2 p.m. The procession will pause for a brief ceremony at the Civil War Monument on Bartlett Street, then continue down Main Street as usual. A reviewing stand will be located at Brownstone Intermediate School. The route will then proceed left onto Waverley Avenue, left onto East Main Street, and right onto Fairview Street, concluding at

Veterans' Memorial Park.

Details regarding parking restrictions and road closures will be shared in the coming weeks.

Registration forms may be picked up at 117 Main St. For more information, contact Sara Sterry Rutter, parade organizer, at 860-250-2041 or ssterryrutter@yahoo.com.

Volunteers are always welcome. Reach out to Rutter to join the committee.

Be sure to visit and "like" the Facebook page (Portland Memorial Day Parade), where additional updates and information will be posted.

First Congregational Church News

First Congregational Church, located at 554 Main St., holds worship Sundays at 10 a.m. All are invited. Pastor is the Rev. Judith Cooke.

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

Concert for Food Bank

Portland resident Tony Rome will hold a concert to benefit the Portland Food Bank. The concert will take place on Saturday, May 2, at 2 p.m., at Concentric Brewing Company, 91 Main St.

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

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.

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.

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.

POCD Survey

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

Residents are asked to complete the surveys by either using the QR codes found on the postcard, or by visiting www.portlandct.org; links for both surveys will come up in the rotating slides at the top of the page.

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

Knights Scholarship Applications Due

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

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

Applications are due today, April 17.

Jason A. Fedash Scholarship

The Town Tech Educational Partnership is now accepting scholarship applications for the Jason A. Fedash Scholarship.

Applicant must be a Portland High School senior planning to attend a two- or four-year accredited college in pursuit of a career in computer science, information technology, environmental science or the water industry. Students may obtain an application from the Portland High School guidance office.

All applications must be received by May 1.

National Day of Prayer

All are invited to celebrate the National Day of Prayer Thursday, May 7, at 5 p.m., at Town Hall, to come pray for the town, state and nation.

For more information, call Michelle at 860-978-1896.

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'Finding Her Voice in Portland: Ann Hibino'

The Voices of Portland Committee will present its first Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month event, entitled "Finding Her Voice in Portland: Ann Hibino," on Saturday, May 2, at 10:30 a.m. at the Waverly Senior Center; doors open at 10 a.m. Register and learn more about the Voices of Portland oral history series at portlandlibraryct.org/voices-of-portland.

This presentation focuses on the life and legacy of Nobu Kumekawa Hibino (known to locals as Ann), who was a resident of Portland from the early 1950s until her death in 1998. In 1991, Hibino was interviewed by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) about her life before, during and after World War II, when she and 120,000 other innocent Japanese American citizens and legal residents who lived on the West Coast were forcibly removed from their homes and communities and incarcerated by the American government. Hibino's daughter, Diane Hibino, will read excerpts from Ann's interview and discuss her life in California, in Utah (at Topaz War Relocation Center), and in Portland.

Hibino was a fierce advocate for civil rights, involved in many local organizations and causes, including the League of Women Voters and affordable housing. She was a founding member

of Community Action for Greater Middletown, was the first woman on the Board of Directors of Liberty Bank, serving for 17 years, and helped bring the Head Start program to Portland. Some current and former town residents will also remember Hibino as their Girl Scout troop leader or Sunday School teacher at the Portland United Methodist Church.

In 2003, Liberty Bank donated and dedicated the Ann Hibino Memorial Computer Center at Chatham Court, and for many years the Greater Middletown League of Women Voters gave a scholarship in her name to a graduating Portland High School senior.

This Voices of Portland project is made possible through the work of the Archives of the American Friends Service Committee and the support of the Hibino Family. This presentation is sponsored by the Portland Library, The Town of Portland's Committee on Solidarity, Portland Historical Society, Middlesex County Historical Society, Waverly Senior Center, and ConValley School of Music & Dance. Coffee and refreshments will be served.

Space is limited; registration is strongly encouraged on the library website listed above, or by calling 860-342-6770.

Redefining Dementia Through Storytelling

On Sunday, May 3, First Congregational Church, located at 554 Main St., will host a special gathering at 11:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall, following the morning worship service. All are invited to hear individuals living with cognitive change and their care partners share firsthand experiences — stories that inspire, educate, and challenge the assumptions many carry about dementia.

The event is organized through the EPN (Empowering Partnerships Network) Speaker's Bureau, sponsored by LiveWell. The bureau trains and supports people living with dementia and their care partners to speak publicly, bringing authentic, personal perspectives to communities and organizations across the region.

Speakers at the May 3 gathering will cover a

range of lived experiences, including: personal diagnosis journeys; finding the ongoing sense of purpose and joy that define life after a diagnosis; adapting to changing abilities; building connection and community; and healthy lifestyles that support brain health.

Rather than presenting dementia solely as a medical condition to be managed, these speakers center the human experience — the grief, yes, but also the resilience, the humor, the relationships, and the ongoing sense of purpose that define life after a diagnosis.

The event is free and all are welcome — whether you are personally touched by dementia, work in caregiving or healthcare, or simply want to listen and learn.

Portland Library News & Notes

Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave., has announced the following events. **Registration is required for all programs unless noted.** To register and for full program descriptions, visit the calendar of events at www.portlandlibraryct.org or call 860-342-6770. The library is also on Facebook and Instagram.

Hours: Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., - Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., - Saturday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. **Holiday Closings:** The library will be closed on Saturday, May 23, and Monday, May 25, for Memorial Day.

Passport to Connecticut Libraries Program: To participate, start at the Portland Library to pick up your Passport and collect your first stamp. Then take your Passport along as you visit as many of the participating public libraries in our state and collect a stamp from each one throughout April. If you visit at least five libraries, and then hand your passport back in here at Portland Library (due back by 5 p.m. on Monday, May 11) you have the chance to win a prize from the CT Library Association.

Children's Programs: Nutmeg Voting: This is the only book award in the state where kids pick the winner. Stop into the library or your school media center to vote on the 2026 Nutmeg Nominees by April 30. Nominees have been divided into four categories: Elementary (Grades 2-3), Intermediate (Grades 4-6), Middle School (Grades 7-8), and High School (Grades 9-12). Visit the Portland Library website for a complete list of nominees. Winners will be announced May 15, and next year's nominees will be announced May 1.

Teen Program: Break a World Record! Monday, April 27, 3:30 p.m. Kids in grades 6 and up are invited to come take on some of the world records found in the *Guinness Book of World Records* and try to beat them. Registration is required.

Adult Programs: Art Exhibit - Youth Art Month: The visual arts instructors for the Portland Public Schools present an art show showcasing the work of the Grade 7-12 students in celebration of Youth Art Month. This exhibit runs through April 18.

Butterflies and Raptors of the Portland Fairgrounds: Tuesday, April 21, 6:30 p.m. Michael Beck, wildlife photographer, and local naturalist Beau Doherty will show photographs and talk about birds of prey and butterflies found at the old Portland Fairgrounds and adjacent field. The presentation will be 40 minutes, with a Q and A after. Registration required.

Portland Library Seed Volunteer Work Session: Thursday, April 23, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Lead volunteer (and library board member) Melissa Kelley will run this volunteer work session.

Help is needed to sort and repackage the donated seeds for our seed library and packaging up the "One Seed, One Community" sunflower seeds. Registration is not required, but it is helpful to have your contact info in the event that we need to change the date for any reason.

Mysteries, Murders, Killers and Thrillers: Crime Writers Reveal Their Secrets: Saturday, April 25, 1-2:30 p.m. In celebration of National Library Week (April 19-25) the Connecticut chapter of Sisters in Crime will host a panel of crime writers: Sharon Dukett, Christine Falcone, Kathryn Orzech, and Ang Pomano. There will be time at the end of the presentation for the authors to meet audience members and sign their books. Registration required.

Adult Craft: Calligraphy That Inspired a Nation: Learn to Write Your Name Like John Hancock: Wednesday, April 29, 6 p.m. Calligrapher Debby Reelitz will present. Participants will get the opportunity to write in script, use a dip nib and ink and scribe a line from the Declaration of Independence. Space is limited.

Voices of Portland Presents Finding Her Voice in Portland: Ann Hibino: Saturday, May 2, 10 a.m. This presentation will focus on the life and legacy of Ann Hibino, a resident of Portland from 1951 until her death in 1998. This presentation is adapted from a 1991 interview by the American Friends Service Committee about Ann's life before, during and after World War II when she and 120,000 other innocent Japanese American citizens and legal residents who lived on the West Coast, were forcibly removed from their homes and communities and incarcerated by the American government. Hibino's daughter Diane will also share her own experiences growing up as a member of the only Asian American family in Portland in the 1950s and '60s. Registration is recommended and open now.

Book Clubs: Mystery Lovers Book Club: Tuesday, April 21, 1 p.m. *A Drink Before the War* by Dennis Lehane will be discussed. **Talk About Books:** Tuesday, May 5, 1 p.m. *The Lion Women of Tehran* by Marjan Kamali will be discussed. **1st Thursday Night Book Club:** Thursday, May 7, 6:30 p.m. *Once We Were Home* by Jennifer Rosner will be discussed.

Movie: Wednesday, April 29, 1 p.m. *Hamnet* (2025; rated PG-13) will be shown. Run time is 125 minutes.

Weekly Knifty Knitters Group: Every Saturday, 10 a.m. -12:30 p.m. Adults of all experience levels are welcome to drop in, share ideas, get helpful knitting tips and enjoy chatting with others who enjoy knitting and crocheting. Please note: There is no meeting on May 23, because the library will be closed.

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 May 4.

Weekly Programs: Unless noted, all programs are free. **Monday, 4/20: Light Aerobics,** 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, 4/21: 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: tuna sandwich, tomato soup, mixed veggies, string cheese, orange; **Coupons for Troops,** 1-4 p.m.; **Setback,** 1 p.m.; **SyncoCize,** 5-6 p.m., fee is donation to instructor.

Wednesday, 4/22: 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.

Thursday, 4/23: Stretch & Tone, 9:30 a.m.; **Knit & Stitch,** 10 a.m.; **Congregate Meal,** noon. Cost is \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: sausage & peppers, sub roll, Italian pasta salad, string cheese, cup of peas; **Mahjong (FULL),** 12:30 p.m.; **Scrabble,** 1 p.m.

Friday, 4/24: 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 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.

Sunday, May 3: Daffodil Festival at Hubbard Park, Meriden, 9 a.m. -1 p.m. Bus leaves the senior center at 9 a.m. Cost is \$5 for the bus. Free to get into the event.

Monday, May 4: Cooking for One with Marilyn, 11:45 a.m. Fee is \$10. On the menu for May is Schiacciata.

Wednesday, May 6: UConn Botanical Conservatory Preserve and Living Collections Tour, 10 a.m. This is a free event, but there is a \$5 ride fee.

Friday, May 8: Family History FUN with Ken Doney, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, May 11: Bloom Therapeutic Plant and Nature Program: Pollinator Garden Workshop, 10:30 a.m. Fee is \$20.

Monday, May 11: Bingo with Sean from Ageless Insurance, 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 13: Shopping Trip to Berlin Turnpike: Walmart, Ocean State Job Lot, and lunch at Joey Garlic's. Leave the center at 10:30. There is a \$5 ride fee.

Thursday, May 14: Trip to the Bushnell for "Oh What a Night" Travelers Chorale. Free event, but bring a non-perishable food item for donation at the door. Bus leaves the senior center at 6:30 p.m.

Friday, May 15: Mohegan Sun Casino Trip. Leave center at 11 a.m. There is a \$5 ride fee.

Monday, May 18: Bureau of Aging Workshop: Navigating the Caregiving Maze, noon. Learn how to understand informal caregiving and what services are available in Connecticut. Refreshments will be served.

Holiday Closing: Monday, May 25. The center will be closed for Memorial Day.

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.

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The Modern Riffs will perform at Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., Friday, April 24.

Modern Riffs Performing at Arts Center

The Modern Riffs (www.modernriffs.com), a Marlborough-based classic rock, jazz and pop band, will perform at the 4th Friday @ the Arts Café hosted by the Marlborough Arts Center, on Friday, April 24, at 7:30 p.m.

This group, founded in 2008 by saxophonist Bruce Phelps, is a collaboration of high school musicians and long-time musicians. Marlborough Arts has hosted The Modern Riffs several times since 2008.

Admission to this program is subsidized by a Grant from the Marlborough Greater Together

Community Fund of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

Marlborough Arts Center is located at 231 North Main St. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the concert begins at 7:30 p.m. BYOW and nibbles to dine on. Other non-alcoholic beverages are available. There is ample parking, and the Marlborough Arts Center is fully accessible.

For more information, visit www.marlbrougharts.org, email info@marlbrougharts.org or call 860-467-6353. Marlborough Arts Center is a nonprofit regional center for the arts.

Ladies Luncheon and Tea

All women are invited to the Fellowship Community Church Ladies Luncheon and Tea, on Saturday, May 9, from 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., at the church, 24 South Rd.

The legacy of godly women will be celebrated at the Roots and Wings Mother's Day Ladies Luncheon and Tea. Come enjoy tea, food, fellowship and encouragement. RSVP by April 25 to Wendy Worley at shopgirl53@sbcglobal.net or text with name and number attending to 860-338-1060.

The speaker this year is Laurie Devernoe, a Christian speaker, author, and mental health coach. As a mother of five – including triplets – Devernoe blends scripture with relatable stories and simple practices to help faith take root in

everyday moments.

Devernoe is the author of the book *Coffee House Parenting*, where she invites parents to cultivate meaningful, faith-filled rhythms at home through humor, honesty, and hope. Her memoir, *Seeing Through the Darkness*, shares her journey through vision loss in one eye and spiritual awakening, offering encouragement, practical mental health tools, and a reminder that God is present.

Devernoe has been featured on numerous podcasts and most recently on local television, where she speaks openly about faith, mental health, and living fully. You can find more information at LaurieDevernoe.com.

Senior Center News and Notes

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

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

Events: 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.

CT Department of Insurance: Friday, May 8, 10-11 a.m. Learn how to read your home/auto/life insurance policies. Q&A session included.

Timeless Beauty: Monday, May 11, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Make-up tips from make-up artist and teacher Joby Rogers. Learn tips and tricks about everything from lip liner to foundation and more. Fee is \$10/residents, \$12/non-residents.

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.

Friendship Tours: City Island Lobster House - Lunch Feast: Thursday, June 4, departing at 8:30 a.m. and returning at 7 p.m. For ages 18 and up, open to all towns. Cost is \$171/per-

son. Enjoy a seaside village in New York. After lunch, shop Little Italy.

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

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

Renters Rebate: Rebates are available for renters age 65+ or disabled. Checks up to \$700 for singles and \$900 for couple. Rebate is based on a graduated income scale and the amount of rent and utility payments (excluding telephone) made in the calendar year prior to the year in which the renter applies. For more information call the assessor's office at 860-295-6201. For application assistance, call the senior center. Renter's Rebate runs through Sept. 30.

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.

Benefit Assessment

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

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

St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

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

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

Parks and Rec. Programs

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

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

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

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

Intergenerational Multicultural Club: For grades 5 & 6. Fridays, April 24-May 29, 3:30-4:30 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Students will fill culture boxes with objects such as dolls, coins, and brochures from countries of your origin. Then, decorate the boxes, talk about your heritage, and celebrate with ethnic

Congregational Church News & Notes

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

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

April 19: The worship service will be led by Seaver and will include an infant baptism. After worship all are invited to Coffee Hour in the Thienes Lounge.

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

Outreach: The church collects non-perishable food items year-round for Marlborough Food Bank with a basket located in the narthex for Sunday worshippers to bring donations. The next church-sponsored Drive Thru Café, for Marlborough Food Bank clients and their families with tickets, will be April 26. Second-quarter mission-giving will go to the AHM Mental Health Fund.

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

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

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

snacks. No cost to participate.

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

Adult Programs: Beginner and Intermediate Tai Chi: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1-2 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee is \$40/resident, \$45/non-resident.

Beginner Tai Chi: Mondays, 6-7 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee is \$40/resident, \$45/non-resident.

Zumba: Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee is \$50/resident, \$55/non-resident, or a \$10 drop-in fee. Class instruction provided by Anna Boose.

Adult Drop-In Volleyball: Thursdays, 8-10 p.m., at Marlborough Elementary School. Fee is \$5 per week. Session runs until June.

Adult Drop-In Basketball: Sundays, 8-10 a.m., at MES. Fee is \$5 per week. Session runs until the end of April.

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

Stretch and Strengthen for seniors, led by certified instructor Barbara LaBlanc, is held Fridays at 9:45 a.m. upstairs in the Thienes Lounge. The community is welcome. The weekly drop-in fee is \$25.

Second Blessings Thrift Shop is located on the lower level with easy access from the parking lot. The shop is open for shopping and donations Fridays from noon to 3 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Follow the shop through Facebook at Second Blessings Thrift Shop, Marlborough CT for updates. The eBay shop is open year-round at bit.ly/MCCebay.

Spring Tag Sale is Saturday, May 2, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Up to April 30, the public is welcome to bring donations to the Community Fellowship Hall during thrift shop hours.

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. The church does not pass a collection plate, but free-will giving boxes are found by the doors in the sanctuary. Donations can also be made through the church website, or mailed to the church at P.O. Box 57, Marlborough, CT 06447. For more information on the church or its programs, call Seaver's direct line at 860-295-0432, email her at pastorval@marlbroughchurch.org, or contact the church office at office@marlbroughchurch.org.

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Local Athlete Prepares for Special Olympics USA Games

By Olivia Cibula

Special Olympics athlete Jennifer “Jen” Carlson has spent more than three decades building not just a competitive resume, but a community. Now, the Marlborough resident is preparing to take that journey to the national stage in June.

Carlson will compete in bowling at the 2026 Special Olympics USA Games in Minneapolis, representing Team Connecticut alongside three fellow athletes and two coaches. The team will compete in singles, doubles and team events, carrying with them a message that extends beyond bowling.

For Carlson, the moment she found out she qualified for the USA Games was surreal.

“I couldn’t believe it,” she said. “I’ve been competing for over 33 years.”

Carlson’s journey with the Special Olympics began in the early 1990s after she first got involved through Challenger baseball. Since then, she has competed in snowshoeing, track and field, croquet and bowling.

Carlson said her goal in Minneapolis is simple: “to score the highest I can,” she said, adding she is especially excited to meet people from all over the country.

The impact of the Special Olympics in Carlson’s life goes far beyond sport. “I have made a lot of friends,” she said.

A graduate of RHAM High School, Carlson has worked within the community since 2007 as a cashier at Ted’s IGA in Hebron and she is an active member of the Marlborough Congregational Church and its women’s group. She especially contributes to outreach efforts to support those in need.

Within the Special Olympics, Carlson has taken on a leadership role as a Global Messenger, serving as an ambassador and public speaker for the organization. Among her proudest are becoming a Global Messenger as receiving

the Spirit of Life Award – an honor she said she “didn’t expect.”

Among those who have heard her speak say she leaves a lasting impression.

“She has great energy, she really commands a room when she speaks,” said Jule Facius, a marketing team member at Nirenstein, Horowitz & Associates P.C., a Glastonbury law firm sponsoring Carlson’s trip to the USA Games.

Facius said the firm’s connection to Carlson began at one of its lunch-and-learn events, where Carlson shared her story.

“It was emotional at times, hearing how much it really does affect their lives,” Facius said. “It was really sweet to see a family-oriented thing where the whole community comes together.”

The firm’s involvement with the Special Olympics began about six years ago, starting as a way to strengthen internal community and volunteerism. According to estate planning attorney John A. McCann, the relationship quickly grew into something more meaningful.

“We were looking for ways to build a community inside our firm, and we said to ourselves, ‘Why don’t we explore Special Olympics?’” McCann recalled. “We stayed with it, and they stayed with us.”

When Carlson earned her spot at nationals, supporting her was a no-brainer.

“When we heard she had earned a trip for the nationals, we said, ‘what can we do to help?’” McCann said.

McCann also emphasized that the partnership is far from one-sided, explaining that the experience is a humbling and inspiring opportunity to connect with a wider universe.

“Everything we put in, we get back and more,” he said. “We become better versions of ourselves by virtue of the example that athletes like Jen set.”



Marlborough resident Jen Carlson, center, is headed to the 2026 Special Olympics USA Games in Minneapolis this June. She’s flanked by Jule Facius, left, and John McCann, right – two members of the Glastonbury law firm sponsoring her trip.

For Carlson’s mother, Grace, the journey is just as personal. As a longtime coach with nearly three decades of involvement, she has watched the local program grow from just a handful of athletes to nearly 200 participants.

Grace credited the growth to the dedication of families, educators and local businesses, as well as the culture that makes the Special Olympics so unique.

“Everybody is rooting for everybody,” she said.

That sense of support is what keeps families coming back year after year.

“You could be having a bad day and then go to a practice and leave there feeling relieved and happy,” Grace said.

For Carlson, that environment has shaped

her entire social world, connecting her with teammates, coaches and friends who have become like family.

As Team Connecticut prepares to head to Minneapolis, that spirit of inclusion travels with them, strengthening the fact that the USA Games are about more than medals. The games represent perseverance, connection and showing what is possible.

And for Carlson, after more than 30 years, the journey continues to be just as meaningful.

“It’s about doing your best,” she said — and representing a community that has supported her every step of the way.

For those wanting to learn more or support Carlson’s journey to the USA Games in June, visit give.soct.org/fundraiser.

Spring Craft Fair

The Marlborough American Legion Auxiliary will hold a Spring Craft Fair Sunday, May 3, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., at Marlborough American Legion Post 197, 128 East Hampton Rd., Marlborough.

American Legion Golf Tournament

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

For more information, email don1bu@com-cast.net.

Spring Tag Sale at Congregational Church

The annual spring tag sale at Marlborough Congregational Church, 35 South Main St., will be held Saturday, May 2, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Community Fellowship Hall and several classrooms will be filled with a huge selection of household and seasonal items, linens, vintage, toys and games, collectibles, framed artwork, electronics, small appliances, clothing, furniture, and much more. Shoppers are asked to make a generous donation, as everything is price your own.

Donations to both the tag sale and Second Blessings Thrift Shop can be brought to the church during thrift shop hours, Fridays from noon to 3 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

MVFD Women’s Auxiliary Scholarships

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

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

American Legion 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.

Can & Bottle Drive Fundraiser

There will be a Can & Bottle Drive Saturday, April 25, from 9 a.m.-noon, at the Marlborough Elementary School parking lot.

All proceeds go directly toward the sixth-grade carnival.

Cemetery Clean-Up

The annual cemetery spring clean-up is scheduled for Saturday, May 2, at Marlboro Cemetery. Volunteers are invited to participate and are asked to meet at 9 a.m.

Residents are asked to remove seasonal pots and any personal items prior to the clean-up. All items found to be in violation of cemetery rules and regulations or a hindrance to maintenance will be removed. These items include shepherd hooks, glass objects, items hanging from trees, pots, or items beyond the front of the stone. If you plan to reuse the item next season, please remove and take home.

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New Town Administrator Brings Decades of Experience

By Toriana Williams

When Matt Streeter answered the phone in his new office at Andover Town Hall, there was little hesitation in his voice. "This is perfect timing," he said at the beginning of a recent interview with the *Rivereast*. He then settled quickly into a conversation that seemed to reflect both familiarity and experience.

For Andover's newly hired town administrator, the role is not a leap into the unknown but rather the continuation of a decades-long career that is rooted in public service, local government and community life.

Streeter brought with him a deep municipal resume. "I grew up in South Windsor," he began. "I went to University of Connecticut for my undergrad, and I got my master's in public administration from UConn as well."

His early involvement in local politics is what would become a lifelong career. "I was involved in the politics in South Windsor, including six terms on the South Windsor Town Council and two terms as mayor."

That experience, he noted, is foundational. "I have ... 22 years of elected experience," he shared.

From there, his career expanded across state lines. This included time as town manager for Palmer, Mass., and most recently as town administrator in Granville, Mass., where he served for a decade.

Yet, Streeter's public service extends beyond town halls. For the past 15 years, he has also served as one of nine commissioners on Connecticut's Freedom of Information Commission.

"That's like a part-time job that I've had for 15 years," he said. "I'm one of the longest tenured members currently on the board."

Streeter said the role has given him a strong footing in transparency and open government, as well as given him values he intends to bring into his work in Andover.

"I'm really a proponent of letting the public know how business is done," Streeter emphasized. "It's not done in cigar-filled backrooms like it may have been done in the 20th century. Everything that is done can be put on the inter-

net or social media within minutes."

For him, transparency is not just a principle but also a daily practice. "It's always important that whatever we do is seen to be above board and open to the public," he added.

Streeter's path into public service began much earlier, in his childhood. "I would say that it probably has to do with my parents," he explained. "I grew up in a house where my dad ... got involved in local politics, public service."

His father, also a former mayor of South Windsor, set an example of civic engagement that left a lasting impression.

"When I was growing up, he was always ... going to one of the boards or commissions," Streeter recalled. "If you're raised with it, you tend to do that."

Now stepping into his new role in Andover, Streeter is focused less on sweeping changes and more on continuity. "Really, I'm just trying to continue the projects that the previous administration had done," he said.

Those projects include infrastructure improvements, grant-funded initiatives and community amenities. "There's a lot of things that I just need to keep shepherding ... to fruition."

That approach reflected his broader philosophy about the town itself.

"People seem to really like the town that they live in," he said. "I'm not looking to change it. ... I don't want it to turn into a South Windsor or Granville because they have their own personality."

Instead, he sees his role as learning and adapting. "It'll take me a little bit of time to learn what [Andover's] priorities are," he admitted.

Andover's character, Streeter noted, is one of its greatest strengths.

"It's just a picturesque town. ... It looks really nice," he said, calling the town "sort of a hidden gem here on Route 6."

That sense of identity is something he hopes to preserve even as the town considers future growth. "There's something to be said for keeping the town the way [residents] grew up with it."

Balancing that preservation with develop-

ment will not be without challenges. Streeter pointed to infrastructure limitations as a key hurdle.

"We do not have any sewer or public water along Route 6," he explained. "Being a town that is all well and septic systems, it's difficult to try and draw economic development."

Still, he said he sees opportunity in collaboration with the state to expand those utilities and hopefully ease the path for responsible growth.

Internally, one of the immediate challenges he is facing is adjusting to a period of transition. "There are several new town employees, including myself," he shared. "So we're all trying to get the lay of the land."

Despite those challenges, Streeter's approach to leadership is to hold collaboration highly. "I consider myself somebody that can collaborate with all sides," he said. "I was a middle child, so I learned to ... try and reach consensus with varying groups," he laughed.

That ability will be especially important as the town navigates budget pressures and rising costs. "All towns are looking for ways ... for shared services or grants funds," he stated,

ALPOA Dinner Dance Fundraiser

The Andover Lake Property Owners Property Association (ALPOA) is having a Dinner Dance Fundraiser Event, with a live band, Friday, April 24, from 6-10 p.m., at Andover Pizza Bar, to support the association's beach improvements at the lake this year.

The event will feature food, a cash bar, music by the band NED, a chance to win a lake membership, and a 50/50 cash drawing.

Tickets are \$25 each, and can be purchased at andoverlakect.com.

Andover Art Club

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

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

After School Program at Library

On Thursday, April 30, children are invited to join Library Friend Ellen Repay for an Earth-themed craft and storytime. This program will be held after school, at 3:10 p.m.

Call the library with any questions at 860-742-7428.

History Museum Open April 18

The Andover Historical Society will open its Museum of Andover History this Saturday, April 18, from 4-6 p.m. New items are continuously being added to the display, so if you haven't visited in a while, stop in and see what is new.

The museum is located in the Old Town Hall on Monument Lane.

Preschool Openings

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

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

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

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

Community Fund Reaching Out

Members of the Andover Community Fund are working to better understand the needs of the community and the organizations that serve it. As such, the members are reaching out to learn more about the challenges nonprofits are facing today and to identify any unmet or emerging needs.

All organizations are encouraged to share their needs, and to keep the Andover Community Fund in mind when seeking grant support now or in the future. For more information, email andover@greaterhartfordgivescf.org.

noting that expenses like fuel and construction material are "out of control ... volatile."

On a day-to-day level, Streeter sees himself as the operational backbone of town government. "I'm the day-to-day operations of the town," he explained. "From opening the mail to making sure bills get paid, that emails are properly responded to."

At the same time, he maintains an open-door policy. "Residents are welcome to come and talk to me if they have any problems," he said. "I'm an employee of the town."

Outside of work, Streeter's life reflected a strong commitment to family. "I've been married 26 years," he said, and added that he and his wife have three sons. With his children now in or recently out of college, the move to Andover also represented a shift in personal priorities. "It was time for a change," he said.

As Streeter settles into his new role, he plans to focus on steady leadership, open communication and respect for the town's identity. "I didn't come into this job thinking that there was one thing that I want to do," he said. Instead, his goal is simpler. "They like the town the way it is ... and I think that's something worth keeping."

Scholarship Available for Local Students

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

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

Application deadline is May 1.

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.

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.

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 He-gener at 860-706-3074.

Bingo & Basket Raffle Night

Andover Congregational Church, 359 Route 6, will hold a Bingo & Basket Raffle Night on Friday, April 17, starting with dinner at 5:30 p.m. The game starts at 6:30 p.m.

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

Kindergarten Registration

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

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

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

Items Needed for Auction

The Andover Youth Basketball Program will hold a goods and services auction Friday, May 15, 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.

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: High school students who need volunteer hours – the center can help! 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 4/28 and Willimantic 4/21. 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

Sheena the Therapy Dog

All are invited to come read to or visit Sheena the Therapy Dog Saturday, April 18, from 11 a.m.-noon, at Andover Public Library, 355 Route 6.

Sheena, Queen of the Jungle, Therapy Dog Excellent (for making over 200 visits) will be at the library with her handler, Andover Friends of the Library member Dr. Jenifer Nadeau. Come read a spring or dog-themed book or any book to Sheena or just visit her.

school students make smart financial decisions. Registration required; call the center to sign up.

Open Art: Monday, 4/20, 5-7 p.m. Bring your current art project and connect, get inspired, and make time for your creativity in good company. This is not a traditional art class but more of a shared studio environment. All skills are welcome. Call the center if you are interested.

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.

Tai Chi & Qigong: Tuesdays, 6-7 p.m. Through gentle movements and mindful breathing, you'll improve balance, flexibility, and overall wellbeing. Perfect for all levels. Call the center to sign up.

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.

AARP Driver's Safety Class: Saturday, 5/30, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., at the center. Cost is \$20 for AARP members, \$25 for nonmembers. To register, call the center or 860-647-9196. Completion may save you money on insurance premiums.

'Democracy at Work' for Andover Budget

By Toriana Williams

The Andover Board of Finance held a town budget meeting on April 9 in the Andover Elementary School gym. The meeting brought together town officials, educators and residents for an important and detailed discussion about the proposed budget.

Many topics were covered. But the most intense debates centered on school funding, rising costs and how to manage taxpayer burden.

Budget Overview

Board of Finance Chair Robert England, a Democrat, opened with an overview of the proposed budget for the town.

He explained that it is made up of three primary components. One portion was roughly \$4.25 million for the RHAM school district, which represented about a 3% increase. The second included the town's combined operating and capital budget, which is rising by just under 4% at \$4,362,487. And lastly, the Andover Elementary School budget of \$5,063,651, an increase of 11%.

Altogether, the total proposed spending was around \$5.4 million. England then clarified that the figure does not directly translate to the amount residents will pay in taxes.

If the budget is approved, the tax increase would be approximately 6.7%, which is higher than in recent years. For a house valued at \$500,000, taxes would rise from about \$11,056 to \$11,725, which is an increase of about \$668.

England noted that, including this year's proposed budget, taxes have increased by 13.42% over the past six years, while the town spending during that same period has grown by about 28%.

Heated Debate Over Education Funding

One of the most emotional moments of the night came during a discussion about education spending – particularly concerning preschool and special education.

First Selectman Jeff Maguire, a Democrat,

said the town had been dealing with many changes. This included turnover in key positions like the town administrator, treasurer and assistant treasurer.

Because of these ongoing challenges, he argued that the focus should not just be on how to pay for this year's budget, but on how to manage it responsibly over time. Especially since the financial impact will continue into future years.

Afterward, Maguire sparked strong reactions when he added, "And for everyone here who thinks that I might be against education, that is far from the truth. What I have a problem with – and honestly I've had a problem with this for years – is that the Pre-K, which is daycare..."

This unfinished comment immediately drew loud disagreement from the audience, with exasperated shouts and arguments pouring forth. This forced a pause in the meeting and a point of order was called.

Several speakers pushed back strongly. Resident Jose Rivera said he was "very offended" by the remark, and he added, "The reason I moved to this town was the family priority among the staff of the school system."

Others emphasized the importance of education to the town's future. Melissa Loteczka, an Andover educator, reminded the room that nearly 20% of Andover residents are actually under 18.

"They don't vote ... but they are directly affected by these decisions," she said.

Loteczka also warned against cutting school funding, and added, "As taxpayers, we need to change the narrative. Stop asking about preschool and start asking how do we grow our tax base."

Special Education Costs Explained

Confusion rose concerning special education spending that led to a detailed explanation from Superintendent of Schools Valerie Bruneau. She made it clear that many costs are required by

law.

"That is non-negotiable. That is the law," she said when she explained that services like occupational therapy, physical therapy and individualized education plans (IEPs) must be provided.

She then described how staffing needs are determined.

"We don't just make that up," Bruneau said. "We look at those IEPs. ... it dictates to us how many hours of service a week [students] need."

This helped explain why costs can change year to year and why they are difficult to reduce, Bruneau noted.

Rising Costs and Fund Balance Controversy

A major driver of the budget increase is well known to be due to rising costs. England pointed to across-the-board salary increases of around 3% and a sharp jump in healthcare costs – about 21% increase in premiums, he shared.

These increases affect both town employees and school staff, and ultimately make it difficult to keep the budget lower, England said.

Additionally, one of the most debated issues was whether the town should use its \$2.1 million unassigned fund balance to reduce taxes. Resident Cathleen Desrosiers argued strongly in favor of doing so.

"This is money we've been taxed on," she said. "We need to use this money."

Desrosiers pointed out that state guidelines suggest towns keep 10 to 15% in reserve, and that Andover is closer to 15% or more.

England responded that the board had considered using the funds. However, in the end, it chose not to.

"We didn't feel comfortable putting that in at this stage," he said.

England emphasized that using savings now could create problems later, since it does not provide ongoing revenue.

Transparency, Transportation Costs

Another major theme was transparency in the budget, especially concerning school salaries.

Library Friends Membership Drive

Library Friends acting president Julie Victoria and membership chair Gretchen Stein announce the annual appeal and membership campaign in support of the Andover Public Library. The Friends group calls on all community members, including its already lifetime members, now 74 in number, to consider joining, renewing and giving generously.

Established in 1989, the Library Friends provide ongoing financial support for regular, large print and audio books, DVDs, children and adult programming, a \$1,000 educational scholarship for an Andover high school senior, a free summer concert, subscriptions, equipment, supplies and facility enhancements beyond the library's current budget.

Again this year, no increase in fees. A donation is all that is required to become a member of this 501(c)(3) non-profit organization: \$3 senior or student, \$5 individual, \$10 family, \$25 business, \$150 lifetime, \$500 patron. Donations of any amount are appreciated and can be mailed to: Andover Friends of the Library, P. O. Box 117, Andover, CT 06232.

Membership forms are emailed to current and former members and are also available by

Resident Anna Josh requested detailed line items. "I think town residents should be able to see line items for where the bottom line is," she said.

Bruneau explained that salary totals are based on contracts and projects. "We start every year at zero," she said. "We look at contracts ... We create a [salary projection] spreadsheet," she explained. However, she acknowledged that more detailed breakdowns could be provided in the future if requested.

Afterward, a resident raised concerns about a 27% increase in transportation costs. Resident Melanie Brooks asked why it was so high.

Bruneau clarified that the figure included multiple expenses. "That is the transportation costs for the students to take the bus as well as special education costs." She also noted that the school pays the town for vehicle use at \$3.50 per mile, which adds to the total in the end and possibly to the confusion as well.

Revenue Challenges and Tax Impact

Several speakers highlighted a key issue: the town's limited ability to grow revenue.

Loteczka urged leaders to think differently and said, "Our leaders should be seeking economic opportunities rather than pointing fingers. ... Where is the plan to attract the families, new businesses, new revenue streams?"

Resident Doris Maldonado added that Andover has a median age of 52 and must attract younger families. "Our long-term stability depends on the younger families coming in," she added.

Looking Ahead

Despite disagreements, the meeting ended with a sense of process and participation. Earlier in the evening, resident Sarah Becker had set the tone - "This is democracy at work. ... Some of us will have the outcome we desire and some of us will not."

In the end, a motion was approved to send the budget to a town-wide referendum, where voters will have the final say on May 5.

Donations Sought for Book Sale

Donations of gently-used books, DVDs, CDs and audiobooks are welcome for the upcoming Andover Friends of the Library's Book & Bake Sale on Saturday, June 6.

Bring your donations to the library on these days only: any Wednesday through May 27 between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m., or on Saturdays,

April 18, May 2 and May 16, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Do not leave items outside.

Things the Friends group doesn't want: VHS tapes, encyclopedias and textbooks, magazines, or *Reader's Digest* condensed novels.

The last day to accept donations for this sale is Wednesday, June 3.

Norton Commission Scholarship Available

The Norton Children's Fund Commission invites Andover high school seniors to apply for the \$1,000 Chester D. Norton Scholarship. The scholarship application can be found at tinyurl.com/chesternorton and can be submitted through 11:59 p.m. May 1.

Each year the Norton Children's Fund Commission awards at least one \$1,000 scholarship

to a graduating high school senior who is an Andover resident planning to attend a two- or four-year college or technical school after graduation.

Anyone wishing to apply for financial assistance can pick up an application at the town hall or use the digital application at tinyurl.com/nortonaid.

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 Stamps: Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m.

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.

Caregiver Support Group to Meet

The support group for caregivers will meet on Thursday, April 30, at 7 p.m., in the Andover Public Library on Route 6.

This gathering will feature eldercare attorney and probate judge George Baker, who will discuss health care directives, power of attorney, organizing important documents, and preparing for probate before death. The meeting will conclude with its usual "Show and Tell" segment, where participants share handy tips, tools, or gadgets that assist in caregiving.

The meeting provides a safe and welcoming space for individuals who are navigating the challenges, stresses, and rewards of caring for loved ones. This support group is designed to

offer a space to share experiences, learn about resources, and connect with others who understand firsthand the challenges of caregiving.

Participants will have the opportunity to discuss practical tips, tools, and strategies for daily caregiving, as well as gain insight into available resources. Whether you have recently stepped into the role of caregiver or have been providing care for years, this group aims to foster a sense of community, reassurance, and encouragement.

For more information, call co-host Dianne Grenier at 860-742-3033 or Cathy Palazzi at 860-916-6122.



They Say It's Your Birthday!... The Community and Senior Center marked birthdays on March 4 with a celebration featuring special guest, Amanda Slack from The Ivy at Ellington. Amanda provided the birthday cake and a Bingo prize. The Ivy is an Assisted Living Community located in Ellington. Pictured are Perry Lindley, Kim Hawes (Transportation Coordinator), Ellen Bernard, Amanda Slack (The Ivy), Betty Davis, and Tess Grous (Director).

East Hampton Explores Tax Relief Option

By Anne Lilburn

Property taxes, and property tax relief options for both seniors and veterans, have been front and center in East Hampton recently, particularly after a recent revaluation left some homeowners shocked by large assessed property value increases.

In recent weeks, the Town Council has sought to explore what options might be available to provide some relief, particularly to those who might be on fixed or limited incomes.

Council member Rich Knotek, a Democrat who is also an accountant, lamented the complicated nature of state property tax laws, and said that people may not realize that any property tax relief the town offers is limited by state statute.

“Anything we do is governed by state law,” said Knotek. “We cannot — we as a Town Council or any municipality — cannot do anything [or] come up with any program out of whole cloth, which isn’t addressed and allowed for us to do by state statute.”

He added that a lot of residents believed the town council had more power than it does on those issues. However, Knotek said, both at meetings and on a phone call with the *Rivereast*, that while he knew there was much the town couldn’t do on its own, he also believed there was room to explore what the town could do.

At the last Town Council meeting, he asked Town Manager Dave Cox to set up a meeting with the town’s assessor, and council member Jack Solomon, a Democrat, said he would join as well. Knotek said he hoped a discussion with the assessor would clear up any further options that were available to the town, and also the impact that any changes to the town’s tax policies would have on the collected tax revenue.

“I think unless we have an understanding of where we are right now and everything that we are allowed to do,” said Knotek, “we won’t know how to go forward.”

He also said that he hoped that any discussions would help simplify and clarify what options were available to people, pointing out that there were “at least 10” mandatory state programs that provided relief options to various different groups, from seniors to veterans to those with disabilities, but that they were all “very nitpicky” and often put the onus on taxpayers to seek out the relief.

“The thing is,” he said, “the more programs you have with the more hoops you’ve got to jump through, you know, most people just — you get it, they throw their hands up in the air and say, ‘Oh man, you know, I can’t deal with

this type of thing.”

Moreover, the complicatedness of state programs and regulations can make it hard to know what is being covered. Some of the veterans property relief programs provided a good example of that. At the March 24 council meeting, Cox briefed the council on current state regulations that mandate a 100% tax exemption on structures for veterans who are considered to have a 100% service-connected total disability, and which allow the town to add an additional exemption for up to two acres of land.

At that meeting, council member Ted Hintz, a Republican who is also an accountant, was a vocal proponent of bringing the town in line with all the possible tax relief options for veterans. It seemed like an obvious thing to want to support, he said at the time — but two weeks later, at the council’s April 7 meeting, Hintz said he was no longer so sure.

At that April 7 meeting, Hintz said he learned, after reviewing the state rules, that “100% disabled does not mean what I thought 100% disabled meant.” He said he discovered some veterans who were working full time were qualifying for that tax relief, while also qualifying for other benefits such as pensions, and he said that gave him pause on expanding that program at a local level.

Hintz also spoke about the reasoning behind the town’s current property tax relief program, for seniors with incomes below a threshold, as well as the challenges that that program poses. The program, which he was a part of establishing as a member of the Town Council in 2009, freezes qualifying seniors’ taxes at current rates, but places an interest-free lien on the property for the difference between what their tax would be and what they are paying.

“Currently, the [state] limits for ‘qualifying income’ are \$56,500 for married couples and \$46,300 for single individuals,” Cox wrote in the town council’s packet for their March 24 meeting. Hintz said he was open to increasing the town’s income limits for participating in the program to the state maximum.

With that said, many seniors, Hintz said, choose not to participate in the program, despite being eligible, because they want to pass their property down without a lien attached to it.

“Some of them want the house to go to their heirs, but is it the taxpayers responsibility to pay for a generational home?” he asked. “That’s putting a lot of burden on your neighbor to pay for your taxes so you can give it to your kid.”

Hintz said the situation posed real challenges to towns everywhere, not just in East Hampton.

“The fight is out there for the seniors not to pay any taxes because they have paid their share of taxes over the years, and that is a challenge with all of us,” he said. “However, the reality is that, there was the generation before them who paid for their kids to attend school and who paid their taxes and covered their expenditures, and at what point do you have to say, look, we understand, but right now the boomer generation ... they’re the ones that are getting the biggest wealth transfer ever in the history, which, you know, raises another challenge when you’re saying, we don’t want to pay taxes.”

“I have a problem with property taxes in general,” Hintz added, “because I believe that once you own your home, you should not have to pay to rent it from the town for your entire life.”

Hintz said he wished there were a more “consumption-based” form of taxation, but that as it stands, the town still needed to cover its budget. He added that sometimes, the same people who

complained about their taxes were also voting to approve the budget, and he urged people to consider the budget carefully.

“We’re [living] in a time where everyone feels entitled to something and there’s no consequences for actions,” he said. “Well, you know what? There are consequences for your actions and your vote is your action, and if you vote for an increase, then you’re going to get an increase in tax. It’s that simple.”

Both Hintz and Knotek cited unfunded state mandates, in part, for keeping town budgets, and taxes, high, particularly when it came to education costs.

“The state has really stepped back and turned away from, in my view, its number-one responsibility, which is public education,” said Knotek, leaving towns to fend for themselves.

Knotek said he looked forward to meeting with the assessor in the near future, and hoped that if nothing else, the town could make these programs simpler to access for residents.



Ray’s Rebels bowler Evelyn Nilsen (center) will head to the 2026 Junior Gold Championships in Minneapolis. She’s pictured with coaches Becky Godwin and Coco Patton.

Local Bowler Minnesota-Bound

Ray’s Rebels bowler Evelyn Nilsen, daughter of Collin and Jesi Nilsen from East Hampton, has qualified for and is on her way to the 2026 Junior Gold Championships in Minneapolis.

Evelyn participated in the CT River Travel Tournament on March 15, to compete along-

side more than 50 other participants. Only the top bowlers moved on to the 2026 Junior Gold Championships, which will be held in Minneapolis in July.

Evelyn will represent Ray’s Rebels, who bowl out of Kickback ‘N Bowl in East Hampton.



Ray’s Rebels bowler Adam Smith (center) will head to the 2026 Junior Gold Championships in Minneapolis. He’s pictured with coaches Becky Godwin and Coco Patton.

Local Bowler Minnesota-Bound

Ray’s Rebels bowler Adam Smith, son of Dan and Amanda Smith from East Hampton, has qualified for and is on his way to the 2026 Junior Gold Championships in Minneapolis.

Adam participated in the CT River Travel Tournament on March 15, to compete along-

side more than 50 other participants. Only the top bowlers moved on to the 2026 Junior Gold Championships, which will be held in Minneapolis in July.

Adam will represent Ray’s Rebels, who bowl out of Kickback ‘N Bowl in East Hampton.

Antique Engine & Tractor Meet

The Belltown Antique Car Club will present its 51st annual Antique Engine & Tractor Meet Sunday, April 26, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Firemen’s Recreation Area at Salmon River State Park on Route 16. (The entrance is across from the Comstock Covered Bridge.)

The event will be rain or shine, field conditions permitting.

There is no charge for admission or parking, though donations will be accepted. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

Food and refreshments will be available on

site to purchase.

Note to flea market vendors: Due to the club’s use permit for the show field, flea market vending will be restricted to items related to the engine and tractor hobbies. Household items, plants and general merchandise will not be allowed on the field, and displays and sales of guns and knives are forbidden. Also, no unauthorized food sales will be allowed.

For show updates and more information, visit www.belltowntantiquecarclub.org or call Peter Christianson at 860-510-3340.

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Recognition Sought for Local Farmers

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton is working to make itself a place that's friendly to farmers, with both a "Right-to-Farm" ordinance and an agricultural commission up for discussion at recent Town Council meetings. These are issues that have been simmering in the background for decades, but recent discussions, including last month's POCD focused discussion on agriculture, pushed them back into the foreground.

Connecticut is already a Right-to-Farm state, meaning that farms and farmers are protected from many kinds of nuisance claims, provided that they are operating in ways that are considered generally acceptable agricultural practices. Connecticut General Statutes, Section 19a-341, protects farms from five categories of nuisance claims, provided they are related to farming activities: odor (including those from livestock or manure), noise from farm equipment or livestock, dust created from plowing or cultivation, use of chemicals (provided they meet certain guidelines) and water pollution (provided they do not pollute drinking water supplies).

Town Planner Juliet Hodge drafted a Right-to-Farm ordinance for the council to consider at its most recent meeting, with much of it modeled off the state's existing Right-to-Farm statute. In the Town Council's meeting packet, Town Manager David Cox wrote that "the ordinance is intended to recognize that properly operating farms and related activities are im-

portant to East Hampton's heritage and future and that those activities are not nuisances and should not be treated as such. Further, the ordinance indicates that the right to farm should have a role in the town's planning and policy decisions."

"It's making a statement that we want to be vocal about our support for agriculture," Hodge said.

The council did discuss the issue, but its discussion and public comment at the meeting led council members to decide to work on seating an agricultural commission before voting on such an ordinance, in order to have the best guidance to address the full range of issues related to farming in town.

It's not the first time the town has broached these topics, and East Hampton resident Steve Strong, who owns Strong's Saw Mill, has been a part of these discussions for quite a while now. Strong, who spoke at the council meeting, said he's actively worked with both the state Farm Bureau and the regional agricultural commission for years, and said he was involved in setting up a town agricultural commission over a decade ago. That commission was never seated due to complicated membership requirements, Strong said, but he hoped things could be more straightforward this time. He laid out a basic plan for what he, as a farmer, hoped the commission could be and what it could accomplish.

"The agricultural commission should be made up of farmers and a few non-farmers that have an education in what a farm actually is and are willing to work with farms," he said, adding that he believed non-farmers and farmers sometimes understood each others' perspectives more than you might think.

"We're all homeowners," he said, "so we all have good neighbors, bad neighbors. We all know what that is."

Strong said he hoped that the commission would be able to make recommendations and guidelines for farmers and for those living in a farming community. He said that he hoped that the commission's work could help simplify and clarify existing land use guidelines that were unclear and that he believed might contradict current state Right-to-Farm law. He said he hoped that the commission might be able to make things clearer for both farmers and their non-farmer neighbors.

"My whole dream on the thing would be just to get just to get it simplified for everyone in town to make things operate much smoother," he said.

Hodge said that there was a lot of room for things to be clearer. While the town cannot take away those state-granted Right-to-Farm protections, she said, there was room to expand upon protections for farmers, as well as to "regulate the land use impact," through zoning regulations that might include setbacks, buffer areas and lot coverage for certain activities. She said that some towns had specific regulations, for example, governing lot sizes for roosters, or the number of roosters allowed on a smaller parcel.

She also said the town had the opportunity to establish specific guidelines about what is defined as a farm, for purposes of zoning regulations, and made the point that just because Connecticut is a Right-to-Farm state does not

mean that farms are exempt from all existing land use laws. She said the challenge was to find ways to serve all of a town's residents, while also protecting rights.

"What you want to do is not really limit farms like big commercial farms or even small commercial farms," she said, "but you do want to set some parameters around backyard farms because these are in small neighborhoods and the town has the obligation to protect all property values and all residents' quality of life and health and safety. And so, having 30 cows on your half-acre parcel is not appropriate."

Strong advocated for the town to establish guidelines for three types of farms: hobby farms, homestead farms and commercial farms. He also said he believed there was room for agritourism, such as outdoor weddings and farm events, but said the town needed to clarify what qualified.

Hodge agreed that agritourism was an area where there was a lot of room for discussion. She said the town had the opportunity to set permitting guidelines or to set specific requirements, including size limits or time restrictions for large events. Strong said he believed part of the challenge in agritourism was defining what was still agriculture. A brightly-lit nighttime soccer game on a farm field and a cut-your-own Christmas tree operation, he said, were very different activities in his eyes.

In the end, Strong said, he believed the town needed to remain true to its strong farming history, but also remain open to those new to farming. He said he hoped that an agricultural commission and a local Right-to-Farm ordinance would be a step in making that happen.

"If we're going to be a pro-farm town, let's be a pro-farm town," he said, "and let's be pro-farm to the to the new farmers that are coming in, because we need young farmers with new ideas."

Community Garden Announces Open Plots

The East Hampton Community Garden, located at Cranberry Bog off the Airline Trail on Smith Street, has announced that 20 garden plots are available for the 2026 growing season. Community members interested in gardening, growing their own food, or participating in a shared outdoor space are encouraged to apply.

Those awarded a plot are asked to support the overall care of the garden by participating in occasional work days and assisting with larger projects as needed. Gardeners are also asked to follow a few simple guidelines: only annual plants may be grown in assigned plots, and the use of chemical pesticides or herbicides is not permitted.

Residents interested in obtaining a plot, volunteering, or learning more are encouraged to contact the East Hampton Community Garden at e.hampton.community.garden@gmail.com.

The garden also welcomes community members to a planned maintenance work day on Saturday, April 18 from 9:30 a.m. until complete. Volunteers should park near the Air Line Trail

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 ehhsprojectgraduation.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.

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.

access and walk up to the garden site. Those attending are encouraged to bring gloves and any gardening tools helpful for weeding or cleanup, as well as buckets or wheelbarrows if available.

Community garden organizers extended thanks to Kevin Kiely and Family for donating the land, providing a new large water tank, assisting with its installation, and helping transport compost to the site. Appreciation was also extended to American Distilling for donating truckloads of mulch; Paul and Sandy's for providing landscape fabric; D.W. Excavating (Dave Erlandson) for donating equipment and operator support for compost work; Cibula Plumbing (Mark Cibula) for donating services to retrofit the new water tank; East Hampton ACE Hardware for donating materials to help clearly mark garden plots; the East Hampton Rotary for ongoing support; the Girl Scouts for volunteering during work days; and the Interact Club for their commitment to future volunteer efforts.

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.

Library Friends Book Sale

The Friends of East Hampton Public Library will hold a pop-up book sale at Rule of 3 Brewing, 201 E. High St., on Saturday, April 25, from 2-5 p.m.

There will be a selection of like-new books for readers of all ages, with all proceeds directly benefiting the East Hampton Public Library.

For more information, email friendsofsehpl@gmail.com.

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Belltown Garden Club Scholarship

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

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

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

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

Bethlehem Lutheran Church News

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

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

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

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New Business of the Month... The East Hampton Economic Development Commission has named Romeo's Jewelry Design, at 201 West High St., as its New Business of the Month. Romeo's is owned by town residents Joe and Nicole Romeo. It is located in the same plaza as Rule of 3 Brewing and other businesses. The shop is open Wednesdays through Saturdays, from noon-6 p.m., and by appointment. More information is found online at www.RomeosJewelry.com. Joe Romeo is pictured at center, with EDC Chairperson Mary Milewski and Vice Chair Evan Giza, at the March commission meeting that recognized the new business.

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.

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

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.

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.

RTC Meets Next Week

The East Hampton Republican Town Committee will next meet at The Dublin, 42 E. High St., at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 21.

All are invited to attend and learn about volunteer opportunities in the community. There are many ways to get involved.

For more information, email ehctgop@gmail.com or www.easthamptonrtc.com.

Epoch Arts Accepting Tag Sale Donations

Epoch Arts is accepting donations 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, bed-frames, 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 diapers

and fish tank pumps.

Drop-off times are 8 a.m.-2 p.m. on the following dates: April 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.

East Hampton Library News & Notes

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

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

Adult Programs: Tech Help: Thursday, April 23, 2-4 p.m. Basic technology help for phones, laptops, tablets, and e-readers. No registration required; just bring your device with you.

Belltown Book Brunch: Friday, April 24, 11 a.m. Meet to talk about what you're currently reading while enjoying coffee, tea, and a breakfast treat. Register or drop in.

Shelf Care: A Plant Swap: Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m. Bring a healthy houseplant, cutting, or seedling and trade with fellow plant lovers. If you'd like to contribute cuttings or plants, feel free to drop them off anytime beginning Monday, April 20, then come back and find something new on Saturday while supplies last.

Let's Grow! Annual Seed Starting 101: Wednesday, April 29, 6:30 p.m. All are invited for an evening of seed starting and light instruction to get your garden started. There will be dirt involved, so dress accordingly. Seeds will be available; bring extra seeds to swap and try something new.

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.

New Weekly Class - Sit Flex and Flow: Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. This new class offers chair exercises, balance work, playful movement, and, when appropriate, ground exercises. All levels welcome. Drop-ins welcome for \$5 a class.

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

Trailblazers Walking Group: Monday, April 20, 9 a.m. All are invited to this weekly morning walk on the Air Line Trail, 69 Smith St.

Chatham Health Chat: Monday, April 20, 11:30 a.m. A representative from Chatham Health will give a health education presentation on the importance of sleep. Please register in advance.

Blood Pressure Readings: Monday, April 20, 12:30 p.m. Provided by Chatham Health. Drop-

ins welcome.

Café Conversations with Holly: Tuesday, April 21, 12:15 p.m. Chat with Senior Center Director Holly Marrero and share thoughts, ideas or concerns.

Spring Seed & Seedling Swap: Wednesday, April 22, 2:30 p.m. Celebrate the start of the growing season with a seed and seedling swap. Bring extra seeds or seedlings to trade, discover new plants, and connect with fellow gardeners in the community. All are welcome.

Spring Mahjongg League: Thursdays from April 23 through June 11 at 9:30 a.m. National Mahjongg League 2026 card and rules. Two levels of play. Cost is \$10 - payable when registering. Email bjtkr_963@hotmail.com for information.

The Script Society with Val: Thursday, April 23, 2 p.m. Join actress and director Val Bozzi for this interactive program where participants bring stories to life by reading and exploring a variety of scripts together.

Bike Rides for Seniors: Friday, April 24, 10 a.m. Ride the Mario Cuomo Bridge Multi Use path, 333 S. Broadway, Tarrytown, N.Y. Bring your bike, helmet and water bottle. Call the center to register.

Save the Date for the Live Well with Diabetes Health Workshop: Thursdays, May 28 through June 11, from 1-3:30 p.m. This free six-week workshop on how to better manage your diabetes is offered in collaboration with the Senior Resources Agency on Aging, Chatham Health District and Connecticut Aging and Disability Services. Learn about what to eat, low and high blood pressure, what to do when feeling sick, dealing with stress, setting goals. Call 860-214-0308 to register.

Trips: Rescheduled Lunch for Seniors Trip to Windham Tech: Wednesday, May 6, leaving the center at 10:15 a.m. for an 11 a.m. seating. Enjoy a meal prepared by the school's culinary students. Cost is \$21 and includes transportation.

Shopping at Stew Leonard's: Monday, May 25, leaving the senior center at 11 a.m. for a rescheduled shopping and lunch trip to this Newington area store on the Berlin Turnpike. \$4 suggested donation for transportation. Lunch on your own.

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.

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Troop 57 Scout Earns Eagle Rank

Zachary Selger of Boy Scout Troop 57 in East Hampton earned the rank of Eagle Scout at a Court of Honor ceremony held Saturday, January 10, at the Congregational Church of East Hampton.

As part of the Eagle Scout requirements, Selger planned and led a service project benefiting the local community. He guided members of Troop 57 in building two picnic tables for the courtyard at Memorial Elementary School.

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 easthamptonctartsassociation.org.

In addition to his service project, Selger earned more than 21 merit badges, surpassing the requirements for Eagle Scout. His achievements include the Aviation merit badge, reflecting his interest in aerospace engineering – a field he is now pursuing at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Selger was recognized for his years of dedication, leadership, and commitment to service.

Education Foundation Offering Scholarship

The newly established Kathi Fearon Education Foundation is offering a scholarship of \$1000 to encourage East Hampton High School seniors to pursue careers in the teaching profession.

This scholarship exists to honor the memory and legacy of Kathi Fearon, a former third grade teacher at Memorial School.

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

HNCC BBQ Chicken

Haddam Neck Covenant Church is hosting a BBQ Chicken Dinner Drive-Thru Takeout Event on Saturday, April 25, by reservation only.

This is the same barbecued chicken recipe the church has sold at the Haddam Neck Fair for over 40 years. The dinner includes a barbecued thigh/leg chicken quarter, baked beans, coleslaw, dinner roll and water bottle, for \$15. Cash only, please.

Call in your reservation to the HNCC office at 860-267-2336 or email to officehncc@gmail.com and indicate your pick-up time, between noon and 5 p.m. Order deadline is April 21.

Haddam Neck Covenant Church is located at 17 Haddam Neck Rd. in East Hampton. Office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

'The Last Living Place' – an Epoch Arts Production

Epoch Arts will present an original two-act play, *The Last Living Place*, from Friday, April 24, through Sunday, April 26, at 7 p.m. all three nights, at Epoch, 27 Skinner St.

This play explores themes of brokenness, redemption, true community, and facing the monsters that rage in peoples' lives. Follow the stories of a rebel street artist trying to expose the lies and hypocrisy of the system, an outcast

desperate for redemption and a new identity, and a girl from the city growing increasingly frustrated as she tries to live up to an impossible standard.

Tickets are \$15 for general admission and \$12 for seniors. Email elizabeth@epocharts.org for reservations. For more information, visit www.epocharts.org.

KoC Scholarships, Grants Available

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

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

Applications are available at guidance offices and the parish center office at sjp2parishoffice@gmail.com. All applications must be received by April 17.

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.

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<p style="font-size: 0.8em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">14x36</p>  <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">With Ramp!</p> <p style="font-weight: bold;">Carefree Dutch Garage Reg \$21,304 SALE \$16,995</p>	<p style="font-size: 0.8em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">10x16</p>  <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">With Vinyl Siding, Loft and Ramp! Shown with optional Cupola and Weathervane.</p> <p style="font-weight: bold;">Carefree Cottage Reg \$10,164 SALE \$8131</p>	<p style="font-size: 0.8em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">12x20</p>  <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">With Loft and Ramp!</p> <p style="font-weight: bold;">Carefree Cottage Reg \$11,135 SALE \$8908</p>

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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. Refreshments are served after the service.

Spring Concert: The Music Worship event will be held Sunday, May 3, at 9 a.m. This is a celebration of Jesus' love through contemporary music. The Vocal Choir will be accompanied by violin, guitar, drums and keyboard.

Ladies Fellowship: Thursday, April 23, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Mary's house.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

The **Cobalt Lodge** monthly worship service will be held Sunday, April 19, at 11:15 a.m., following church.

Food Bank Donations: Food items for the East Hampton Food Bank may be placed in the black totes at the rear of the church.

Returnable Cans and Bottles: All are asked to place donations in the cans by the shed.

Bible Study: Contact Bobette Reed Kahn at

bobette@khan.com if you are interested in participating. Bible Study takes place via Zoom at 6 p.m. Wednesdays.

Lent Vitamin Drive: It's not too late to make a donation to St. Vincent's School for Handicapped Children in Haiti. Checks will be accepted until the end of the month; be sure to put "Missions," or "Vitamins" in the memo line.

Mothers' Day Diaper Drive: The Missions Team is collecting diapers for children in need, in conjunction with the church's DCF social worker through Covenant to Care. Place your contributions in the Parish Hall by May 10.

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

Guest Artist to Demonstrate Felting

Guest artist Kristen Walsh will demonstrate the art of "felting" at the next meeting of the East Hampton Art Association on Wednesday, April 22, at 7 p.m., in the East Hampton Public Library Function Room.

Walsh is a published author and self-taught artist. She has been felting for more than 20 years using fiber and felting as her primary medium. She is the originator of plein-air felting, requiring her to invent her own felting equipment to create her art outdoors.

She has won many awards for her work as well as having her art selected for publication in *Fiber Arts* magazine and *Cloth, Paper, Scissors* magazine. Her work is in private collections and has been selected for many juried gallery exhibitions around the United States. Recently she published her book *Layers: Felted Art Projects Sparked from the Soul*. Her work can be seen at WalshFineFelt.com.

Everyone is welcome. There is a suggested



Kristen Walsh

\$5 donation for non-members. Coffee and refreshments will be served.

Arts & Culture Grant Opportunity

The East Hampton Arts & Culture Commission has announced a call for community grant applications to support local arts and cultural initiatives that enrich the lives of East Hampton residents. The commission is a volunteer group dedicated to promoting arts, culture, and related community programming throughout East Hampton.

Applications are open to East Hampton resi-

dents and organizations with projects that advance these goals. The commission encourages proposals that foster creativity, community engagement, and increased access to the arts. Multiple grants of up to \$500 will be awarded.

Applications are available at the town manager's office at Town Hall and at East Hampton Public Library. Completed applications may be submitted at either location or via email to the town manager's office at csirois@easthamptonct.gov. The submission deadline is Friday, May 8.

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.

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.

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Helping Hands is open 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.

Congregational Church News

The Congregational Church of East Hampton, 59 Main St., welcomes all to Sunday worship at 10 a.m. On April 19, the Third Sunday of Easter, guest speaker will be Marianna Kilbride of the Congregational Church of New Canaan. A monthly potluck will follow in the fellowship hall.

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.

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.

Commission on Aging to Offer Update

The East Hampton Commission on Aging (COA) will update the public on its many projects and activities at a meeting on Wednesday, May 6, at 2:30 p.m. The meeting, which is open to all, will be at the Senior Center, 105 Main St. Light refreshments will be served. The meeting will focus on accomplishments over the past year, and plans for the future across several areas that the COA is involved in. The projects to be discussed include promoting senior center modernization, the expansion and improvement of services at the senior center, and the possibility of building a new senior center or community center. The update will also cover the success-

ful Home & Health Expo held in 2025 and plans for a Health & Wellness Expo on Nov. 7 this year. Other programs include improving transportation for older adults, improving housing options, maintaining a liaison with Bellwood Court and Chatham Acres senior housing, helping older adults live safely and happily at home, and exploring successful options in other towns. The commission will also explain and update residents on its East Hampton Community Cares program, which matches volunteers with older or disabled adults who need help with yardwork, errands or transportation, or simply would enjoy a friendly visitor. Questions and suggestions are welcome.

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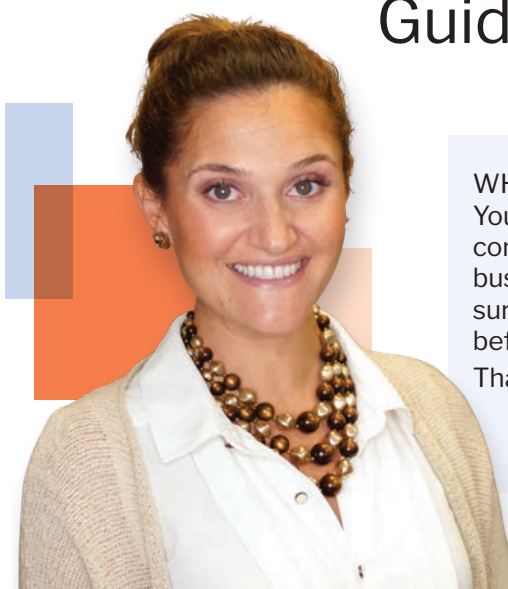
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RE11-29-24

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'Stories of Connecticut's Black Patriots'

As part of Hebron's 250th celebration, the Coalition on Diversity & Equity (CoDE) will present "Stories of Connecticut's Black Patriots" Thursday, April 30, from 6:30-8 p.m., at Russell Mercier Senior Center, 14 Stonecroft Drive. In this free program, attendees will hear powerful stories of brave Black American men who served their country during the American Revolution and Civil War.

John Mills, president of the Alex Breanne Corporation, will share stories from his newly released book, *The Narrative of Primus: A Lineage Woven into American History*. The book uncovers the story of a 10-year-old boy taken from his mother's bedside in West Africa and forced aboard a slave ship bound for America. That boy, Primus, survived the Middle Passage, endured decades of enslavement in colonial Connecticut, raised a family, and – through faith, resilience and grace – laid a foundation that would ripple across generations.

The book traces the lives of Primus' descendants from the Revolutionary War – where his son Job fought for American independence while enslaved, through the Civil War – where his second great-grandson Sgt. Daniel Stanley

Lathrop served with the 29th Connecticut Colored Infantry Regiment, and into the 20th century – where the lineage continued to serve in both World Wars and National Guard militias.

Attendees will also see a short film called *The 29th Connecticut Regiment and the Fight for Freedom*. This original documentary, which won Best Connecticut Film at the 2023 Mystic Film Festival, tells the story of the brave African American men who enlisted in Connecticut's 29th Colored Infantry Regiment during the American Civil War.

The film tells their story of sacrifice and heroism on battlefields in South Carolina and Virginia. Near the end of the war, the 29th Connecticut was sent to Brownsville, Texas where they were part of the federal force that occupied that town and brought news of the emancipation of the enslaved – celebrated today as Juneteenth.

Filmmaker Chris Barlow of the Berlin Equity Action Team, who created the film with Wide Awake Films, will discuss the making of the documentary.

To learn more about CoDE, visit www.code-diversity.org.

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Meeting on New Library Friends Group

A meeting to discuss the founding of a new Friends of the Douglas Library of Hebron will be held Wednesday, April 29, at 6 p.m., at Douglas Library.

The mission of this Friends' group is to support the Douglas Library by collaborating and working transparently with the library. On April 29, the group will meet, discuss proposed by-

laws, nominate an inaugural board, and commit to next steps.

Please RSVP to Maria at mariamw4library-friends@gmail.com if you plan to attend, if you are unavailable to attend but would like to be placed on the mailing list for future meetings, programs, events or volunteer opportunities, or if you have any questions.

The Worship Center News & Notes

The Worship Center, a non-denominational Christian church, holds services and programs at 99 Marjorie Circle (unless noted). For more information and full program descriptions, visit theworshipcenterct.org and click on the 'events/calendar' link, or call 860-228-4442.

Worship: Services are Sundays at 10 a.m. and are also broadcast on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TheWorshipCenterConnecticut and on YouTube at www.youtube.com/@theworshipcenter9733.

Adult Bible Study: Every Sunday at 9 a.m. The study, on the First Epistle of Peter, is led by Elder George Logan. The theme is "Standing Firm in Grace: A Call to Holiness in a Hostile World." All adults welcome to join in this study, where together they'll learn what it means to "stand firm in the true grace of God" (1 Peter 5:12).

Kingdom Women: Women's Bible Study: Meets in-person every first and third Thursday from 6:45-7:45 p.m., at the church. The study

will continue on the book of Psalms. Zoom access is available. Upcoming: Thursday, April 16.

Virtual Prayer Night: Tuesdays, 7-8 p.m., via Zoom. Contact the church office or website for a link and meeting ID.

One-to-One Confidential Christian Care: Provided by Stephen Ministry to people in difficult life situations. If in need of help, call the church office; there are several new ministers trained and wanting to help.

TWC Upward Running Club: This class, which began in January, will wrap up by participating in the VFW Post 3336 Reservoir Rush 5K in Moodus on Saturday, May 16. More classes will come! Stay tuned for more details, or contact the church.

Youth Ministry: Grades 6-12 are invited every first and third Friday of the month from 6:30-9:30 p.m. for activities, games, Bible lessons, dinner, dessert, and community.

Kingdom Men: Men's Breakfast: Saturday, April 18, 8-10 a.m. All men are invited.

St. Peter's News & Notes

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, located at 30 Church St. (mailing address: P.O. Box 513), welcomes all to worship and to be a part of the church community. Priest is the Rev. Ron Kolanowski. The church is located on Route 85, a quarter-mile south of the intersection with Route 66, at 30 Church St. For more information on St. Peter's, visit stpetershebron.com or search for St. Peter's Hebron on Facebook.

Sunday Worship: Services are at 8 a.m. (Traditional Rite 1) and 10 a.m. (Rite 2 with music and choir). A coffee hour is held following each service. Sunday School is offered at the 10 a.m. service.

Weekly Virtual Coffee Hour: Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Connects parishioners and friends via

Zoom for an online social gathering.

Project Hope Dinner Assembly: Saturday, April 25, 2 p.m. Meet in the parish hall to prepare meals for the homeless clients of Project Hope in Willimantic.

Spring Plant Sale: Saturday, May 2. The sale will feature hanging baskets, perennials, annuals and native plants. A portion of proceeds will benefit HIHS (Hebron Interfaith Human Services), the local food pantry.

Navigating the Hospice Journey: Wednesday, May 6, 2-3 p.m., at St. Peter's Phelps Hall. Rebecca Tamsin, LCEW, director of counseling at Masonicare Home Health and Hospice, will share information about how hospice care and hospice teams can provide maximum support (including pain management and emotional support) at home. There will be time for questions and discussion.

Outreach: Food donations support the local food pantries. A collection basket is in the church and outside the parish hall. St. Peter's maintains a nature preserve in the center of Hebron for use by local nonprofits. The church is also a supporter of Project Hope homeless shelter in Willimantic.

Recurring Meetings: Balance Class: Mondays, 10:30-11 a.m., \$5; **Book Club:** Mondays at 11:30 a.m.; **Connect:** Mondays at 2 p.m.; **Choir:** Wednesdays at 6 p.m.; **Monthly Meetings:** Building and Grounds, Community Events planning, Finance, Liturgy, Pastoral Care and Vestry.

St. Peter's Lasagna Dinner

St. Peter's Episcopal Church will hold a community dinner Saturday, April 18, from 4 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. or sold out. The menu will include your choice of meat or vegetable lasagna, Italian sausage, garlic bread, tossed salad and your choice of desserts. The cost is \$18.

This is a takeout-only dinner, with no pre-orders or reservations. Servers will come to

your car, take your order and payment, and bring your meal(s) back to your back seat or trunk. There is no need to get out of your car.

A portion of each meal sold will go toward supporting Project HOPE. For more details, please contact the church at 860-228-3244 or visit www.StPetersHebron.com. St. Peter's is located at 30 Church St. (Route 85) in Hebron.

Parks and Rec News & Notes

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

Summer Camp Registration is now open. For more information, contact Parks and Rec.

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

all fitness levels. No prior experience is necessary.

Hatha Yoga: Session III will be Tuesdays, May 12-June 16, at Gilead Hill School. Whether you're new to yoga or a seasoned practitioner, all are welcome.

Family Paint Night: Thursday, May 14, 6-8 p.m., at Hebron Elementary School.

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

Christ Lutheran Church News and Notes

Christ Lutheran Church and Early Childhood Center (daycare) is located at 330 Church St.

Worship Service with Pastor Matthew Hardaway: 9-10 a.m. Sundays. All are welcome. People unable to attend services in person can participate online at www.facebook.com/clch-hebron/live.

Bible Studies: Sundays at 10:30 a.m., following service and fellowship time. All are welcome. Also, there is a once-a-month **Men's Bible Study**, focused on "Seven Christian rules Christians should break as often as possible." There are two day/time options to attend: the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m., or the second Saturday of the month at 8 a.m.

Early Childhood Center (Daycare): Offers childcare, preschool, and before/after school care, and is open to all faiths. **Registration for summer camp (ages 5-12) is open now.** For more information, call director Jennifer Johnson at 860-228-5134. Application forms are at www.clecchebron.org.

Caring Shepherds Social Ministry Group: Open food pantry days held to distribute food staples, household and hygiene items as well as Bibles and prayers. All are welcome. For more information about donating or participating in food pantry days, call the church at 860-228-1152.

Calling All Hebron Artists!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Annual Fishing Derby is Sunday

Skungamaug Fish & Game Club will host its annual Fishing Derby this Sunday, April 19, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the club facilities, 423 Jones St. All are invited.

The contest entry fees are \$15 for adults and \$8 for children. Gift card prizes (\$100, \$75, and \$25) will be awarded for first-, second- and third-longest fish, respectively. There will also be a \$100 gift card for the smallest fish. In addition, there will be a Tagged Fish contest for \$5.

Food and beverage concessions will be available throughout the day. There will also be raffle tickets for prizes available for purchase.

Scouting for Food 2026

The Hebron scouts are on a mission to restock the Hebron Interfaith Human Services (HIHS) food pantry, and they are looking for help.

Drop off your non-perishable donations on Saturday, May 9, at Ted's IGA in Hebron between 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Most needed items are canned meats, hearty soups, pasta sauce, jelly, laundry detergent, and shampoo.

You can also contribute through "Neighborhood Collection" bins in the area. You can drop items there from April 25-May 8. Contribute directly to HIHS at hihsct.org/donate.

Free CERT Training Course

The town of Hebron is offering a free CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training course to any interested persons. Hebron residency is not required.

The course will teach skills in disaster preparedness and reacting to emergencies, including first aid and fire extinguishers. Those who complete the course will also have the option to join their local CERT team if they wish to help others in their community.

The course will run Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., from April 25 to May 16. Interested persons can sign up by contacting hebronemd@gmail.com or using the link on the Town of Hebron, CT Emergency Management and CERT Facebook page.

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Fire Strikes Hebron Home

By Toriana Williams

The Hebron Fire Department received a call at 3 a.m. on Monday morning, where fire officials responded to West Street for a reported structure fire with the resident still inside.

Crews arrived on scene quickly, where they discovered a single-family home filled with smoke and aflame. The occupant had managed to get out of the home

on their own, and was treated for burn injuries and released.

The fire was extinguished 16 minutes later, and the cause is under investigation by the Hebron Fire Marshal's Office.

Officials from Windham, Manchester, Andover, Marlborough, Bolton, Columbia, Colchester and Glastonbury responded to the fire.

Hebron Cleanup Walk

All are invited to celebrate Earth Day Saturday, April 25, with the Hebron Trail Rangers and Green Committee and a Cleanup Walk on Hebron's Town Center Trail.

Meet at 10 a.m. at the Ted's Foods parking lot, along the street trees area (furthest from the plaza businesses). From there, attendees will proceed along the stone dust-surfaced Hebron Center Trail, picking up trash and identifying/snipping invasive plants along the trail.

The Hebron Center Trail is a walking / biking trail through town open space connecting Ted's parking area at the Main Street sidewalk to Veterans Memorial Park. For more information on the trail, check out the Hebron Center Trail Brochure and Map at hebronct.com.

Please wear sturdy garden gloves, tick protection, and consider bringing a long-handled pruner/lopper and/or a trash grabber. No motorized tools, please. Compostable trash bags will be available, as well as a limited number of tools.

This event is 10 a.m. – noon, rain or shine, except for steady downpour or storm. No motorized tools, please.

If you are not able to join this free event, you're invited to pick up trash safely in your neighborhood or simply visit town open space to commemorate this Earth Day, which is next Wednesday, April 22. Check hebronpaths.org for a list of preserves to visit. If near a road, be sure to keep away from traffic, wear bright colors and stay visible.

Residents Advised of Bridge Repair

Construction has begun on repairs to the Old Colchester Road Bridge over Raymond Brook, and Public Works is asking residents of Old Colchester, Wood Pond, Pepperbush, and Heron Hill for their cooperation in the following ways:

Avoid parking on the street between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday-Friday, during the construction period.

Limit use of the roadway between Northam and Niles Road as much as possible. There will be a detour route implemented beginning Monday, April 13, and it will remain until the completion of the project. Residents who live in the blocked off area will still be able to exit and enter their driveways. RHAM, Hebron Public Schools and the bus company have been notified. Public Works said to stay updated on the school's response/plan for the detour routes.

Refuse and recycling schedules will continue to operate on their normal schedules. All-Waste and Casella have been made aware of the detour.

Drive no more than 10 mph to reduce flying dust.

Children must not enter the work zone or touch any equipment or supplies.

The Air Line Trail will remain open for the duration of the project, but Public Works said to expect minor delays when crossing and please use caution.

The bridge repair is a multi-stage project that can result in various contractors for bridge replacement construction. This process from start to finish may span over the course of the 2026 construction season (weather permitting).

For more information, call Public Works Director Paul J. Forrest at 860-228-2871.

Senior Center News & Notes

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

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

Men's 'Golden Oldies' Social Activities Group: Friday, April 24, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. If you are 60 or older and interested in participating is a social activities group with other men,

call social worker Dennis Farrar, MSW at 860-228-1700 ext. 204 to register.

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

Weekly Shopping Trips: Pre-registration is required by noon the day before the trip. Call 860-228-1700. Call the center for current schedule.

Gilead Congregational Church News

Gilead Congregational Church, an Open and Affirming Congregation located at 672 Gilead St., has announced the following. For more info, see the bulletin at gileadchurchucc.updates.church, email gcc@gileadchurch.net, or call the Parish House at 860-228-3077. The church office is open at the GCC Parish House Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Worship: Sunday worship is at 10 a.m., followed by coffee hour at 11 a.m. Services can also be viewed online at YouTube at www.bit.ly/GileadChurchUCC and on Facebook at tinyurl.com/GileadChurchUCC.

This Week's Scheduled Events and Meetings: Saturday, 4/18 – Spring Workday and Church Cleanup at 9 a.m. (Outdoors at Gilead Church); Saturday, 4/18 – Wise Warrior Yoga at 9:30 a.m. (Fellowship Hall); Sunday, 4/19 – Sunday Worship Service at 10 a.m. (Gilead Church's Sanctuary; Online; Livestreamed); Sunday, 4/19 – Coffee Hour at 11 a.m. (Fellowship Hall); Sunday, 4/19 – Card-Making with Gayle at 11:30 a.m. (Fellowship Hall classroom); Sunday, 4/19 – Gilead-to-Go Meals Planning Meeting at 11:30 a.m. (Parish House); Monday, 4/20 – Bible Study at 9:30 a.m. (Online via Zoom); Monday, 4/20 – Board of Christian Education meeting at 7 p.m. (Parish House); Tuesday, 4/21 – AA Meeting at 7:30 p.m. (Fellowship Hall); Wednesday, 4/22 – Wise Warrior Yoga at 9:30 a.m. (Fellowship Hall); Wednesday, 4/22 – Book Group at 10:45 a.m. (Fellowship Hall); Wednesday, 4/22 – Choir Practice at 7 p.m. (Gilead Church's Sanctuary)

Upcoming Events and General Announcements: Sunday Services: Please join Sunday's services in-person or online through YouTube or Facebook: YouTube: www.bit.ly/GileadChurchUCC; Facebook: tinyurl.com/GileadChurchUCC.

Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief

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

The maximum income limits set for the Oct. 1, 2025 Grand List year are: Single, \$46,300; Married, \$56,500. A completed 2025 federal income tax return with supporting documents

(if filed), including a 1099 Social Security statement, must be presented at time of application. Social Security disabled applicants must also present proof of disability dated within three years of application. If no tax return is filed, all taxable and non-taxable income statements must be presented at time of application.

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

Absentee Ballots for Budget Referendum

Absentee ballots for the May 5 Hebron budget referendum are available at the town clerk's office, located at 15 Gilead St.

Office hours are Monday through Wednesday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Thursday, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.; and Friday, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. For information, call 860-228-5971.

Voting for the May 5 budget referendum will be held at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St., from 6 a.m.-8 p.m.

Town-Wide Tag Sale

The Town Center Project will hold its Town-Wide Tag Sale Saturday, May 9, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Register to participate at www.thetowncenterproject.org/marketday (scroll to the bottom and complete the application).

Early registration gets you on the printed map. Registration fee is \$35 and 100% of the fee goes directly to TTCP's programs. Applications can be located at www.thetowncenterproject.org/marketday, or email tcp@thetowncenterproject.org.

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF HEBRON ANNUAL BUDGET REFERENDUM May 5, 2026

The electors and voters of the Town of Hebron, Connecticut, and any other persons entitled to vote upon any matters contained in the notice are hereby notified and warned to vote in the Annual Budget Referendum to be held at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church Street in Hebron between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 5, 2026.

- SHALL THE TOWN OF HEBRON APPROVE A FY 2026-2027 BUDGET OF \$44,962,595 AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE?
- SHALL THE TOWN OF HEBRON APPROVE A FY 2026-2027 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) BUDGET OF \$791,689 AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE?

Voters approving the recommendation of the Board of Finance will vote "Yes" and those opposing the recommendation of the Board of Finance will vote "No".

Absentee ballots will be available from the Town Clerk's Office. Dated at Hebron, Connecticut this 9th day of April 2026.

HEBRON TOWN COUNCIL
Tiffany V. Thiele, Chair
Jan Lawrence, Vice Chair
Keith Petit
Claudia Tejada Riley
Sean Fitzgerald

TOWN OF HEBRON BOARD OF FINANCE RECOMMENDED BUDGET May 5, 2026

	ADOPTED Expenditures 2024-2025	ADOPTED Expenditures 2025-2026	PROPOSED Expenditures 2026-2027
EXPENDITURES			
Town Government	\$9,646,664	\$10,002,479	\$10,746,516
Contr. to Capital Improvement	1,176,734	489,736	\$662,836
Contr. to Open Space Acq.	100,000	50,000	-
Contr. to Capital Projects	133,650	467,040	\$231,681
Contr. to Revaluation	40,000	-	-
Debt Service	843,216	597,646	\$539,759
TOWN GOV'T SUB TOTAL	11,940,264	11,606,901	\$12,180,792
Hebron Board of Education	13,663,914	14,336,533	\$15,623,930
RHAM Assessment	15,275,896	16,351,546	\$16,934,030
RHAM Debt Service	210,707	215,521.00	\$223,843
Total General Government	\$41,090,781	\$42,510,501	\$44,962,595
REVENUES			
ADOPTED Revenues 2024-2025	ADOPTED Revenues 2025-2026	PROPOSED Revenues 2026-2027	
General Government	\$1,260,855	\$1,464,386	\$1,337,264
Other State Revenues	492,924	727,240	\$986,303
Educational Cost Sharing Grant	5,997,693	5,997,693	\$5,997,693
Debt Management Contribution	862,000		
Fund Balance Contribution	500,000	500,000	\$250,000
Back Taxes / Lien Fees	400,000	400,000	\$1,200,000
Tax Revenue	31,577,309	33,421,182	35,191,335
	\$41,090,781	\$42,510,501	\$44,962,595
MILL RATE:			
Real Estate/Personal Property	34.50	36.85	38.79
Motor Vehicle	32.46	32.46	32.46

PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM BUDGET 2026-2027

Fire Panel - Hebron Elementary School	\$96,000
Replace Rescue 110 and Engine 110 w/ Rescue Pumper Lease/Purchase - Year 1	\$250,000
Road Resurfacing and Road Improvements	\$350,689
Mason Dump Truck (Replace Truck 5)	\$95,000
Total Recommended CIP Budget	\$791,689

PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM REVENUES 2026-2027

Balance from Previous Appropriations	\$15,929
LOCIP Funding	\$101,524
Funding from Other Sources: Public Safety Fund	\$11,400
General Fund Contribution	\$662,836
Total Recommended Revenue	\$791,689

TTB 4/17

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Paige Houston Memorial Scholarship Fundraiser

The Paige Houston Memorial Scholarship fundraiser will be hosted by Char and Tony at the Greenleaf Café, 47 Main St., on Friday, May 1 – and donations are currently being sought.

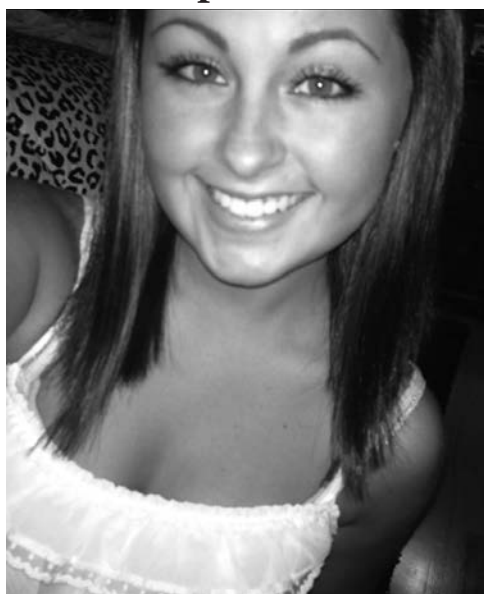
Paige died Aug. 6, 2013, just before the start of her senior year at RHAM High School. She was killed in a drunk driving accident. Her mother, Michele Houston, is a paraprofessional at RHAM.

“I honor my daughter by speaking to Mrs. Hills’ health class yearly about the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs,” Houston stated. “Paige wanted to become a teacher, so I teach in honor of her. I feel the students are more receptive when someone they see almost daily speaks to them about the reality of ‘my life,’ as opposed to a clip from an online source. It hits home a bit harder.”

Since 2014, there have been two \$1,000 scholarships awarded yearly to two RHAM students who apply in Paige’s memory. Houston said she feels this is a wonderful way to keep her daughter’s memory alive.

“Paige was such a bright light. She lit up a room with her smile and kindness. A true cheerleader!” Houston stated.

All adults are invited to the May 1 fundraiser for a free pasta dinner, raffles, and live music by



Paige Houston

Jack Hammer.

If you would like to donate a raffle item, or make a donation, please contact Michele Houston at 860-729-3305 to arrange pick up. Donations can also be dropped off at Greenleaf Café.

Tax Abatement Applications Available

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

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

Under the ordinance, taxes that are abated

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

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

Lions Announce Scholarship Opportunities

The Hebron Lions Club is offering a total of \$12,000 in educational scholarships to support local students in their pursuit of higher education and career aspirations.

This year, the Hebron Lions will award two \$4,000 scholarships for students entering a four-year college program, and two \$2,000 scholarships for students pursuing an associate degree or trade/career education.

The scholarships are open to residents of Hebron and Andover, as well as active RHAM Leos members in good standing.

Applications are now available on the Hebron

Lions website under the Lions Scholarships section (www.hebronclions.org/lions-scholarships). Completed applications must be submitted by May 1 and can be sent to Hebron Lions Club Scholarship Committee, 347 Gilead St., Hebron, CT 06248. Alternatively, applications may be emailed to RStrumskas@HebronLions.club.

The scholarships will be awarded during a special ceremony on Wednesday, June 3, at 7 p.m., at the Hebron Lions Fairground/Den.

For further information, email Russ Strumskas at RStrumskas@HebronLions.club.

‘Hebron Celebrates America 250’ Seeks Volunteers

Hebron Celebrates America 250 and The Town Center Project are looking for volunteers – and will hold a meeting at 9 a.m. Saturday, April 25, at Town Hall, 15 Gilead St. All are invited.

Volunteers are needed to help organize and produce events, to work with committees already established to help individual events

run smoothly, and to engage with the Hebron community.

The committee will try to meet every two weeks. Individual committees meet when it is convenient for their group. Can’t make a meeting but want to help? Email ttcp@the-towncenterproject.org for more information.

West African Community Drum Circle

There will be a West African Community Drum Circle with Bolokada Conde on Thursday, April 30, from 6:30-8 p.m., at Gilead Congregational Church, 672 Gilead St. Fee is \$30.

All are invited to meet and drum with Bolokada Conde, who is one of the most celebrated master drummers in the world. As a humanitarian, Conde supports his home village of Mo-

rowaya in Guinea, West Africa. This event is a fundraiser to help purchase an ambulance for the medical clinic.

Visit his nonprofit website to see the projects he has successfully completed, and to donate, at www.belokadafriends.org.

To reserve a seat and a drum, call Carla Pomrowicz at 860-377-1007.

TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH BOARD OF SELECTMEN TOWN MEETING LEGAL NOTICE

Thursday, APRIL 23, 2026 7:00 P.M.

ELMER THIENES/MARY HALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAFETERIA

The legal voters of the Town of Marlborough and eligible Property Owners with a Property Assessment of \$1,000 or more are hereby notified and warned that a duly called Town Meeting will be held at the Elmer Thienes/Mary Hall Elementary School Cafeteria, 25 School Drive, on Thursday, April 23, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. for the following purpose:

To consider approval and act upon:

- Transfer \$119,000 from Capital Non-Recurring Fund Public Works and \$70,000 from Capital Non-Recurring Fund General Government to the South Road Culvert Project contingent on the town receiving a Transportation Rural Improvement Program (TRIP) grant from the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Dated at Marlborough, Connecticut this 7th day of April 2026

Board of Selectmen, Susan McFarland, Chair 1TB 4/17

TOWN OF COLCHESTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF DECISION

Notice is hereby given that at its Regular Meeting on April 8, 2026, the Colchester Conservation Commission made the following decision: 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. - APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS Dated April 13, 2026 Conservation Commission Falk von Plachecki, Chair 1TB 4/17

TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH BOARD OF FINANCE BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Marlborough Board of Finance will hold a Public Hearing at the Elmer Thienes/Mary Hall Elementary School Cafeteria, 25 School Drive, and on Zoom, on Monday, April 20, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. for the following purpose: 1. To present & discuss the Proposed Annual Town Budget for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 to include Town Operations & Capital Budgets, Local Board of Education Operations & Capital Budgets, and RHAM Regional School Operations & Capital Budgets, and Town Debt Service Payments. 2. To Present & Discuss the termination of Capital Non-Recurring Projects.

Topic: Board of Finance Public Hearing Time: April 20, 2026 6:30 p.m. Eastern Time (US and Canada) Join Zoom Meeting https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89524636469?pwd=LsGCcaybMCALE5pyvUsvmfyTYh2nEC.1 Meeting ID: 895 2463 6469 Passcode: y3e1t1 Copies of the various budgets are available for public viewing in the Office of the Town Clerk, Richmond Memorial Library, and on the Town Website at: https://town-marlborough-ct-clear.doc.cleargov.com/22885/883821/d Dated at Marlborough, Connecticut this 1st day of April 2026 Board of Finance Michael Natri, Chair 2TB 4/10, 4/17

MIDDLE HADDAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING THURSDAY, April 23, 2026 6:30 P.M. AT TOWN HALL LEGAL NOTICE

Public hearing will be held to consider the following: Application 622 for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Owen Flannery of 28 Keighley Pond Road, Middle Haddam, to replace eight window sashes on first floor with vinyl clad thermal windows with full screens, to build a dormer on the front left side of house and to remove a double window on the left side and replace with a single window. Application 623 for a Certificate of Appropriateness for David and Melissa Baribault of 33 High Point Drive, Middle Haddam, to replace existing, original asphalt roof with “slate metal” roofing. The foregoing applications are available for public review at the East Hampton Town Hall. At this hearing interested persons may be heard and written communications will be received. 1TB 4/17

LEGALS

MARLBOROUGH CONSERVATION COMMISSION NOTICE OF ACTION

The Marlborough Conservation Commission, at their regular meeting on April 6, 2026, took the following action: APPLICATION APPROVED: APPLICATION #01-26 Mark Friend (Applicant) Jones Hollow Associates, LLC (Owner) 382 Jones Hollow Road, 1 lot Resubdivision -Construction of a house, driveway, septic system and assoc. grading with in the 200’ upland review area YVONNE BOLTON, CONSERVATION COMMISSION CHAIR 1TB 4/17

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Fees for Services Public Hearing Colchester Sewer and Water Commission 6:00 p.m. – Tuesday April 28, 2026 Meeting Room 2 127 Norwich Avenue – Colchester, CT. The Colchester Sewer and Water Commission will hold a Public Hearing to present and gather public comment on the proposed rates and fees for Sewer and Water utility services for Fiscal Year 26-27. Copies of the draft rate schedule will be available in the Town Clerk and the Public Works offices of the Colchester Town Hall as of April 15th, 2026. Joseph Leone, Director of Public Works, Town of Colchester 2TB 4/17, 4/24

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INITIALS

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 8 TOWNS OF HEBRON, ANDOVER AND MARLBOROUGH NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING MAY 4, 2026 AND BUDGET REFERENDUM MAY 5, 2026

The electors and those persons eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting of Regional School District 8 are hereby notified that said Annual Meeting will be held virtual only on Monday, May 4, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. for the following purposes via the following Google meet: Video call link: https://meet.google.com/nvd-hiya-igb Or dial: (US) +1 385-374-0187 PIN: 219 877 489# More phone numbers: https://tel.meet/nvd-hiya-igb?pin=9241662832681

- 1. To choose a Moderator to preside.
 - 2. To discuss a budget in the amount of \$33,661,483 for Regional School District 8 for the fiscal year from July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.
- The Moderator shall adjourn the Annual Meeting at its conclusion and the budget shall be submitted to vote upon the voting machines in each of the District’s member towns of Hebron, Andover and Marlborough on May 5, 2026, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Sections 10-51 and 7-7, as amended, between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M., under the following heading: QUESTION 1. “SHALL THE BUDGET OF \$33,161,483 FOR THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 8 PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM (RHAM) FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2026 TO JUNE 30, 2027 BE APPROVED?” QUESTION 2. “SHALL THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM BUDGET OF \$500,000 AS RECOMMENDED BY THE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 8 BOARD OF EDUCATION (RHAM) FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2026 TO JUNE 30, 2027 BE APPROVED?” Voters approving said Questions will vote “Yes” and those opposing said Questions will vote “No”.

Voting will be in the following polling places:
Town of Hebron: Hebron Elementary School 92 Church Street Hebron, Connecticut
Town of Andover: Andover Town Hall 17 School Road Andover, Connecticut
Town of Marlborough: Marlborough Elementary School 25 School Drive Marlborough, Connecticut

Persons qualified to vote at the Annual Meeting who are not electors will vote in their respective polling places. Pursuant to Connecticut law, no person who is eligible to vote in more than one town in the District is eligible to cast more than one vote at the referendum. If a member of the public requires a physical space and the equipment to attend a fully virtual meeting in real-time, a request must be made to Jessica Rainville via email at jessica.rainville@rhamschools.org at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting start time. Dated at Hebron, Connecticut, April 9, 2026.

By Order of the Chairperson of the Board of REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 8 Heather Summerer, Chairperson 1TB 4/17

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BOF Continues to Grapple with Health Insurance Shortfall

By Toriana Williams

The Colchester Board of Finance meeting on April 8 focused heavily on a growing and controversial financial problem. How will Colchester decide to cover a major shortfall in the town and school's health insurance account without cutting services or placing too much burden on taxpayers?

The discussion was detailed, sometimes tense, and showed a clear difference in opinion about where the money should come from. During the meeting, residents and officials raised concerns about trust, school funding and long-term planning.

Insurance Deficit Sparks Debate

The most urgent issue was the insurance fund deficit. Board Chair Karen Belding, a Democrat, laid out the numbers clearly. Over the final three months of the fiscal year, around \$1.6 million is expected to go into the insurance accounts.

However, projected claims total about \$2.37 million. That leaves a gap of roughly \$763,488. "We can't not pay claims," said Belding. She explained that the board must find a way to cover the shortfall.

To stay ahead of the problem, the board discussed putting in about \$900,000 to keep the ac-

count stable. However, the Board of Education suggested going slightly higher, recommending \$945,000.

School board chair Stefanie Tracey-Calash explained that March was "a couple of hundred thousand" over budget. "And that's, again, not something we can necessarily predict," she added. In other words, she said, recent claims have become unpredictable, making it safer to plan for a larger cushion.

The volatility of insurance costs became a central concern. Some months came in under estimates, but some others were far above. This caused planning to become more difficult and raised fears that the deficit could grow even larger if more high-cost claims arrived.

A major debate followed about where the money should come from. One proposal was to use a mix of two sources: about \$508,000 from unspent school funds and \$437,000 from unexpected state "excess cost" reimbursements tied to special education. These reimbursements are funds the town receives when special education costs exceed a certain level.

Not everyone agreed with this plan. Board member Jillian Vinci, a Democrat, argued for a

different approach. She suggested that the burden should fall more heavily on the school side.

Vinci pointed out that the town makes up only about 20% of the insurance pool. She then added that she would "rather see it be more of an 80/20 split." Her concern was that the town had already made many cuts and should not take on more.

First Selectman Bernie Dennler, a Democrat, emphasized the importance of balance between town and school needs. "The town and the schools both need to be strong," he said. Dennler described them as part of the same "ecosystem."

Ultimately, the finance board voted to transfer \$750,000 from the town's unassigned fund balance to help offset the unexpected health insurance spike. This decision was approved unanimously.

Officials explained that the town's fund balance is currently in a "high confidence" zone.

This means that some spending is considered safe. Still, there was caution about taking too much. Dennler warned that unexpected events – like infrastructure failures – could require emergency spending in the future.

Residents Raise Concerns

During public comment, resident Michael Dubreuil warned about setting a bad precedent by taking the funding from the unassigned fund balance. He also suggested that past decisions and lack of transparency may have damaged trust between boards and political groups.

Other residents focused on protecting students.

Vince Rose warned against solving financial problems at the expense of education. "This is not the students' fault," he said. "We cannot have this be at the expense of the students."

Jeremy McKenzie echoed that point, and said, "Students and teachers shouldn't be punished for mistakes that others made."

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.

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.

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.

COMMIT Dance Fitness: Wednesdays through May 20 (classes started April 1), 6-7 p.m., at Jack Jacker Intermediate School, for ages 15 and older. Drop-ins are welcome, at \$12 per class.

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.

Spring Awakening: Plant ID & Mindful Na-

ture 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.

Colchester Cares Meets April 21

Colchester Cares, a giving group that supports various causes in Colchester, will next meet at the Carl Guild Community Room, 392 South Main St. (right across from the Polish Club), on Wednesday, April 21, at 7 p.m.

At the meeting, members who commit to donating \$100 a quarter present current needs in town, and then vote online after the meeting on

where to send the group's collective donations.

Colchester Cares always welcomes new members who are interested in giving back to the community. To learn more about the group, attend the April 21 meeting or visit the group's website, www.colchestercares.org. You can be a member – suggest causes, vote, and donate – all online. Attending meetings is not mandatory.

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.

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

Prayer Meetings: Thursdays, 10 a.m. and Fri-

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

Men's and Women's Breakfast: Meets monthly on Saturdays at 8 a.m. The men meet the first Saturday of the month, and the women meet the third Saturday of the month.

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

Call the church office at 860-537-3082 for more information, or visit AbundantL.com.

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.

Coffee House Gathering

The next Colchester Coffee House gathering will be held at Cragin Library, 8 Linwood Ave. on Saturday, April 18, from 10 a.m.-noon.

All former and current military members are welcome to join. Call Mary Gura at 860-537-2921 with questions or suggestions for presenters.

Classifieds Pay

The Glastonbury Citizen & Riverast News Bulletin





Call 860-633-4691 or email your classified line ad to admin@glcitizen.com



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Learning About Environmental Conservation... The scouts of Cub Scout Pack 13 in Colchester check out Environmental Conservation Officer Josh Hurlburt's patrol vehicle during their March Pack meeting at Saint Andrews Church in Colchester. The scouts learned all about Officer Hurlburt's job as an Environmental Conservation Officer during his visit. Cub Scout Pack 13 is a co-ed pack for kids in grades K-5. They meet the third Friday of the month in the church hall at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave. For more information on the pack, visit www.beascout.org.

Colchester Federated Church News

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

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

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

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

Westchester Church News

Westchester Congregational Church, located at 98 Cemetery Rd., holds worship Sundays at 10 a.m. All are welcome to attend. The church choir always welcomes new members. Services are also available on Zoom; visit www.westchestercongregation.org for login information. Sunday School for children meets during the worship service.

Twelve-Step Meetings: Al-Anon meets in Canney Hall Wednesdays at 7 p.m. AA meets in Canney Hall Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

Scouts: The church sponsors Scouting America Troop 109. During the school year, Troop 109 meets on Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

Outreach and Other Opportunities: Knit-

ting Group meets Thursdays at 10 a.m. Many knitted, crocheted, and quilted items have been sent to Native American reservations, hospitals for babies, and other places to help those in need. The Blessings Box is at the end of the church parking lot and contains donations of non-perishable food, personal care, and other items for those in need. Take what you need; donate what you can. Also, the church sponsors the Wounded Warrior Project, a donation opportunity to help veterans.

For more information, visit westchestercongregation.org, email westcongregation@gmail.com or call the church at 860-267-6711. Pastor Ron Lake can be reached at 860-428-3460.

Colchester Honors 250 Years of Heroes

On Sunday, May 24, Colchester will hold its annual Memorial Day Parade. The theme of this year's parade will be "Colchester Honors 250 Years of Heroes." All local groups are encouraged to participate to make this event a success. Parade applications are now available online at www.colchesterct.gov; select 'First Selectman's Office' under 'Town Services.'

Each contingent willing to march or bring a float must obtain an application online or contact the first selectman's office by email aeward@colchesterct.gov and return it to the first selectman's office at Town Hall. The parade committee expects to have several military units represented. They included the Army National Guard 1109th TASM-G, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Reserve, U.S. Coast Guard and the Air Force

Reserve.

Some of Colchester's residents are veterans of World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam and the Middle East wars. This parade will be a special time to honor their service and the veterans of all the great wars. The grand marshal will be Paul Spedalieri. The parade will also feature state Rep. Mark DeCaprio (R-48) as the guest speaker during the gathering on the Veterans Green. Marching units and floats should arrive at the William J. Johnston Middle School by 11:30 a.m. and the parade will start promptly at 12:30 p.m.

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



Funds for Honor Guard... St. Joseph's Polish Club recently made donation to the Colchester Veterans Honor Guard. The funds resulted from the club's Polish Dinner fundraiser.

Co-Ed Adult Softball

Colchester is now accepting registration for a newly formed co-ed adult softball league.

Teams are being formed in Colchester, East Hampton and Portland. Games may be played in all three towns in July and August. You have the option of registering with a team, or as an individual to be added to a team with open positions. Rosters must have a minimum of four women and will be capped at 15 players. Town recreation departments will provide the fields, balls and umpires – each team must provide their own bats and catchers equipment.

The fee is \$550 per team to cover the town expenses associated with games.

Registration will close on June 1, at which point game schedules, rules and more information will be sent out. If you have any questions, please reach out to Colchester Parks and Recreation at (860) 537-7297.

To register in Colchester, go to colchesterctrec.recdesk.com/Community/Home. To register in East Hampton or Portland, use their town websites.

Local Potter in 'Clay Crawl'

The Connecticut Clay Guild will host the first-ever Connecticut Clay Crawl from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday, May 2, and Sunday, May 3 – and a Colchester pottery studio is among the participants.

Purring Pottery, located at 167 Lebanon Ave., will be among 14 pottery studios taking part in the 'Clay Crawl.' The Crawl connects visitors with Connecticut's ceramics community through open studios, demonstrations, and hands-on experiences. Participating studios will

offer insight into the creative process and information about classes and workshops available throughout the year.

Founded in 2025, the CT Clay Guild supports a growing network of ceramic artists through meetings, workshops, and collaborative events like the CT Clay Crawl, which brings together artists, studios, and the public across the state.

Learn more, view locations, and plan your visit at www.ctclayguild.com/clay-crawl.

Book-Signings with Local Author

Colchester resident Elaine M. Alexander, an award-winning author known for bringing ocean science to life for young audiences, has released her newest book, *Giant Cuttlefish: Chameleon of the Sea*.

To celebrate, she will be hosting several events across the region, including book-signings and interactive storytimes designed to engage curious, ocean-loving kids.

Upcoming events include: Sunday, April 19, 12:30 p.m. – Earth Day storytime and craft at

Salem Community Park Pavilion; Saturday, May 30, 11 a.m. – Storytime and signing at Bank Square Books in Mystic; Saturday, June 27, 11 a.m. – Storytime at Salem Public Library.

These programs introduce children to marine animals like the giant cuttlefish and anglerfish through storytelling and hands-on activities.

Alexander is a lifelong Connecticut resident currently residing in Colchester. She is the author of *Anglerfish: The Seadevil of the Deep*.

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.

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

Ahavath Achim Schedule

Congregation Ahavath Achim, 84 Lebanon Ave., has announced the following schedule:

Services: Fridays at 6:30 p.m., live and on Zoom; Saturdays at 10 a.m., live and on Zoom.

Classes on Tuesdays: Folklore of the Talmud at 6 p.m., followed by Talmud at 6:30 p.m., and Kabbalah at 8 p.m.

For more information, or Zoom links, call 860-537-2809. Office hours are Wednesday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

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.

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Pierogies Sale

St. Mary Ukrainian Church in Colchester once again will have a pierogies sale on Saturday, May 2. There will be about 200 dozen available.

To place your order, call Brenda at 860-365-0281 as soon as possible.

Ukrainian Catholic Church News

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

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

Spring Bark for the Park

The 12th annual Spring Bark for the Park is Sunday, May 17, from 10 a.m.-noon, on the Town Green; rain date is Sunday, May 31.

Featured will be a Lucky Duck grab bag for the dogs, May Baskets, and a blessing of the dogs. There will also be many pet-related vendors and food.

The event is presented by the Colchester Dog Park. Email tagnobark@gmail.com for more information.

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Easter Bunny Fun... Colchester Youth and Social Services recently held its Breakfast with the Easter Bunny fundraiser. CYSS served breakfast to over 35 families, had mini carnival games, face-painting, an Easter egg hunt, and pictures with the Easter bunny!

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.



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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.

Upcoming Events: 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 is now open Sundays from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. through the end of December.

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, located at 24 Linwood Ave., is free and offers both permanent and special exhibits all highlighting the people and events in Colchester's history. 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 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 20: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Movie Time; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 11 a.m.-noon, Fitness Orientation by appointment; 12:30 p.m., Mah Jongg, Bridge, Set Back; 2:20 p.m., Jack Jakter Volunteer Program.

Tuesday, April 21: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10 a.m., Book Club, Mixed Media Art Class; 11:30 a.m., Bingo Luncheon; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 4 p.m., Tech Time with Harry; 6 p.m., Trivia Night.

Wednesday, April 22: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Walking Group; 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Reflexology; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Hand and Foot Card Game, Sit & Be Fit Video; 1 p.m., Sew-cial Time;

1:30 p.m., Cardio; 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming.

Thursday, April 23: 9 a.m., Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling; 11 a.m., Yoga; no Senior Benefits Counseling today; 12:05 p.m., Chair Massage; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes; 1 p.m., Knit & Crochet; 5:30 p.m., Pizza & Movie; 6 p.m., Mindfulness for Everyday Living, Oil Painting with Brianna.

Friday, April 24: Senior center closed for a special event - no programs, lunch or transportation; 10 a.m., doors open for a 10:30 a.m. Volunteer Appreciation Event, by invitatioj only.

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.

Vendors Wanted

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

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

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

Colchester Spring Clean-Up

The Colchester Garden Club will clean up the pollinator garden at Cohen Woodlands, 96 McDonald Rd., on Saturday, April 25. Clean-up will begin at 8:30 am.

Volunteers are welcome. Volunteers are encouraged to wear gloves and to bring water to drink. Sign up for this event at www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department/events/142796.

In the event of rain, the clean-up will be canceled.

Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony

Bacon Academy's Hall of Fame Committee invites all to its first Hall of Fame induction ceremony on Friday, April 24, at 5:30 p.m., at Bacon Academy, 611 Norwich Ave.

The following people will be inducted: Stephen F. Austin, Amy Davis, Ron Goldstein, Annette Jervasi, Dolores Sawchuk, Dave Shea, Lyman Trumbull, Dr. John R. Watrous, Ron Wotus, and the 1981 Bacon boys basketball team.

Ladies Guild Offering Trip to See Joshua

The St. Andrew Ladies Guild is sponsoring a trip from Sept. 16-18 to Lancaster, Pa., to see the new production *Joshua*.

In addition, the Ladies Guild will have dinner with an Amish family, travel through the Amish countryside, visit Kitchen Kettle Village, and visit the Seltzer's Smokehouse.

Trip cost is \$699 for a double room, or \$849 for a single. Transportation will be on a deluxe motorcoach. For more information, contact Barbara Gozzo at 860-208-4121 or barbogzzo@gmail.com.

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Obituaries

Lebanon

George Richard Koch

George Richard Koch, of Lebanon, passed away Tuesday, April 7. He was 57 years old. George was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Sept. 6, 1968. He was the son of George and Dorothy (Enrichs) Koch.



After high school, George worked as a security guard for Guards Mark. He retired several years ago. In his free time, George enjoyed marksmanship and target shooting, wrestling, cars and planes. George was a wonderful brother.

He leaves his sisters, Kathy and her husband, Randy Sherman, Joann and Dorothy Koch; nieces and nephews, Andrew and wife Andrea Sherman, Rebecca and Jamie Sherman.

There will be a graveside funeral service at New Lebanon Cemetery, Waterman Road, on Saturday, April 17, at 10 a.m.

The Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with the care of arrangements. For online condolences, or to share a story of George, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Louise Plocharczyk

Louise Gertrude Plocharczyk, of Dunnellon, Fla., formerly of Colchester, CT, passed away on April 6, 2026. She was 76 years old. She was born on April 15, 1949, in Hartford, CT to the late John and Gertrude Pasette.



After graduating from Glastonbury High School, she married Robert Crowell and together they had three sons whom she raised in Colchester. On Feb. 13, 1997, she married Alan Plocharczyk, who sadly predeceased her in 2023. For 18 years, Louise drove the bus for the Colchester Senior Center. After retiring, she moved to Florida. Louise was a faithful communicant to her local Lutheran church and was active within her church community. In her spare time, she enjoyed lounging in the pool and spending time with her beloved dogs. More than anything, she loved spending time with her grandchildren, especially taking them to Norwich Navigators baseball games.

Louise will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by her children and their spouses, Robert Crowell Jr. (Tammy), John Crowell (Kim), and Tim Crowell (Kelly), all of Colchester; her grandchildren, Kirsten, Nicholas, Kaitlyn, Noah, Isabella, Maya, TJ, Jenna, and Kinsley; her great grandchildren, Oliver and Sebastian; and numerous extended family members and friends.

A visitation will be held at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home on Thursday, April 23, from 4-7 p.m. A celebration of Louise's life will take place at the funeral home on Friday, April 24, at 10 a.m. and a burial will follow at Linwood Cemetery in Colchester.

To share a memory or leave a condolence for the family, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Marjorie Fitzgibbons

Marjorie Fitzgibbons, 79, passed away peacefully at her home on Wednesday, April 8, surrounded by her loving family. Born and raised in Portland, she remained rooted in her hometown after marrying her husband, Carl Fitzgibbons, where together they raised their two children.



Marjorie dedicated 50 years of service to Wesleyan University, where she was a valued and respected member of the community. Outside of work, she found her greatest joy spending time with her cherished grandchildren, creating lasting memories for each of them. She also enjoyed cooking, reading, Scrabble, and was famous for her gardening skills producing enormous zucchini and never ending grape tomatoes.

Marjorie is survived by her daughter, Amy Fitzgibbons, and her son, Kyle Fitzgibbons and his wife Reagan. She also leaves behind her beloved grandchildren, Tara, Paige, Colin, Sean, and Saoirse; her sister Sandra; and brothers Buddy and Philip. Additionally, many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by her husband Carl.

In accordance with her wishes, Marjorie was buried in private family service. The family appreciates your thoughts and prayers during this time.

East Hampton

Michael Christopher Poe

Michael Christopher Poe, 51, born Oct. 22, 1974, passed away unexpectedly Wednesday, April 8. Michael was predeceased by his maternal grandparents, Eugene and Mary Ross; his paternal grandparents, George Sr. and Dorothy Poe; and his father, George Poe Jr.



He is survived by his devoted wife, Krista (Randall) Poe, and his children, Shaun (Hill), Julianne, and Calvin, who were the center of his world. He also leaves behind his mother, Susan Jane (Ross) Poe; his brothers, Tom (and wife, Rhonda) and Jeffrey; multiple aunts and uncles; as well as several cherished nieces and nephews.

Michael was a man of incredible strength, resilience, and heart. He faced life's challenges with determination and courage, always emerging stronger and inspiring those around him. Above all, he was a deeply devoted husband and father. He and Krista shared a rare and beautiful bond - true soulmates who stood side by side through every joy and hardship life brought their way. Their 18 years together were filled with love, partnership, and unwavering support.

As a father, Michael was truly exceptional. His children meant everything to him, and he dedicated himself fully to their happiness and well-being. He was not only their father, but their best friend - someone they could laugh with, lean on, and love endlessly.

Michael's passing leaves an immeasurable void in the lives of those who knew and loved him. He will be remembered for his strength, his loyalty, his sense of humor, and the deep love he had for his family.

A celebration of life will take place at a later date and all are welcome to attend.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Heart Association.

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

Colchester

James William Bansemer

James William Bansemer, 75 of Colchester, went to Heaven on Good Friday, April 3, after living a full, loving and beautiful life. Born Oct. 9, 1950, in East Hartford, "Jim" was a devoted husband to Coleen Bansemer for 50 years, and they shared a genuine, loving marriage that was a joy to their entire family.



Jim, a loving father, grandfather and brother, leaves behind his two sons, Jesse Bansemer and wife Heather and Benjamin Bansemer and wife Elizabeth; two daughters, Elaina Tamilio and husband Mike and Marie Giordano and husband Anthony; 24 beloved grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; two sisters, Heidi Bengraff and husband Bill and Jackie Almeida; as well as many beloved extended family members.

Jim loved Jesus with all his heart and centered his life on Christian principles. He spent his years caring for and helping his family through the work of his hands by building and renovating their homes, repairing everything from grandchildren's bicycles to entire properties, and keeping every family member's vehicle running or replaced. He built something for them, fixed something for them, or bought something for them. His example and generous spirit touched his family's lives leaving a profound legacy of integrity and faithful service, as well as an unwav-

ering love for God that will continue to inspire his family and community for generations.

Jim was sole proprietor of General Builders & Remodelers, and built not only complete homes but did renovations and additions as well. He exercised the same integrity and craftsmanship in his professional life that he upheld in his personal one.

Calling hours were held April 15 at the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury. A private memorial and burial will be in North Carolina.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Warrior Notes School of Ministry at kevinzadai.com.

For online condolences, please visit www.mulryanfh.com.

Andover

Barbara C. Perry

It's with terrible sadness I tell of the passing of Barbara Chessey Perry at 80 years. Born Oct. 21, 1942, we lost her on May 28, 2023, to dementia. She brought so much joy and happiness to all around her.

She was predeceased by her brother James Massey. She is survived by her younger sister Gail Andrews who lives in Bridgeton, Maine, with her common-law husband Scott Willoughby. She was married for many years but divorced from Thomas Perry who lives in California with her oldest of two children, Suezane D. Waters. Her youngest, Thomas Dayton Perry, lives in Middletown.

Barbara will be sadly missed.

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★ 'The Weeping Time' cont. from page 1

gated language and themes that were deeply painful. During the post-performance discussion, cast member Leslie Bevans reflected on this challenge. "The first few times we did it, it was really, really hard. ... particularly having to listen to someone you like ... say [racial slurs] next to you."

She continued, emphasizing the importance of truth in storytelling. "We can't be afraid to say them. ... I just try to remember saying these words for people that never had a chance to have a voice."

The performance did not shy away from complexity. It showed not only the suffering of the enslaved, but also the rationalizations of those who enslaved them. One story character chillingly claimed, "Slavery has been the best thing ... because it helps civilize them."

And yet, there were also moments of humanity, fragile and fleeting. One character remembered love separated by the auctions: "All I know is I had to be with her, or I was going to die." Another described the desperate search for family after emancipation. "The roads were filled ...

husbands looking for wives ... children looking for their parents."

By the end, the emotional weight was undeniable, and the performance received two standing ovations.

People rose slowly at first, then all at once, as if compelled by something deeper than appreciation. It was almost something closer to gratitude, or perhaps acknowledgment. The applause filled the church, reverberating off the same white walls that had earlier seemed so still.

In the discussion that followed, one audience member captured the feeling in the room. "This was so powerful. So incredibly sad that humans have experienced this."

The evening closed not with resolution, but with reflection. The story of "The Weeping Time" remained unfinished in the minds of those present. Its echoes carried out of the sanctuary and into the night.

Outside, the world continued as usual. But inside, for a few hours, the past had spoken - and it had been heard.

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS NOTICE OF ACTION

At its Regular Meeting held at 6:30 pm on April 13, 2026 via ZOOM, the Zoning Board of Appeals acted on the following variance requests:
ZBA-25-002: 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 **APPROVED**
ZBA-25-003: 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. **APPROVED**

TOWN OF PORTLAND ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Portland Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, April 23, 2026 at a meeting to start at 7:00 p.m. in the Buck Foreman Room (2nd Floor), 265 Main Street, Portland, CT.
Application #25-03: 5 McDonald Drive. Request for a variance from Zoning Regulation Table 4.2.1 for the rear yard setback with a setback of 9 feet where 25 feet is required. Application and property of Steve and Robyn Johnson. Assessor's Map 37, Lot 37. Zone R-10.
 At this hearing interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications will be received. A copy of this application is available for public review in the Portland Land Use Department.
 Dated at Portland, CT this 6th day of April 2026.
 Kurt Peterson, Vice Chair

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE TOWN OF ANDOVER PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

The Andover Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a hybrid in person and online Public Hearing Tuesday, April 21, 2026 to hear the following applications and receive public comments:
Application 26-3SP: Special Permit application to provide a gunsmithing and firearms transfer service Home Occupation pursuant to section 4.12a(2) of the Andover zoning regulations. Property of Sarah Hayowyk 780 East Street, Andover CT, applicant Seth Cane. Assessor's map 19 block 17 lot 1F.
Application 26-4SP: Special Permit application to construct a market rate detached accessory apartment pursuant to Andover zoning regulation 4.11.3. Property of Ronald & Suzanne Langlois, 332 Hebron Road, Andover CT. Assessor's map 25 block 22 lot 8-7. Comments, questions or concerns may be presented at the public hearing or submitted in writing to the Andover Building and Land Use Office, 17 School Road, Andover, CT 06232.
 Applications are on file in the Building and Land Use Department for public inspection or online on the Town of Andover's website. Instructions for joining the public hearing via Zoom are posted on the town's website in the Calendar.
 Wayne Kasacek
 Zoning Agent

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★ **Portland BOS cont. from page 1**

ously that, “the only way that I’m going to be in favor of this budget (and I am by the way), is we’ve absolutely got to create a productivity, efficiency, and cost-cutting committee.”

“I know I’m freaking a lot of people out when I say that,” he said, “but we really got to go after our fixed costs and I think we’ve got to look at everything.”

“The only thing that we control as selectmen is the money,” he added. “We control the budget, and some of the things, if we got a good committee in place and we start really peeling back the onion and start to look at what some of the real costs are and looking for opportunities, we can get ahead of this.”

Pitruzzello lamented the ongoing challenge of education costs and the state’s stagnant reimbursements to towns for unfunded mandates, and said he knew that “we can’t do anything about what happens in Hartford, but we certainly can control where we spend our money.”

Democrat David Kuzminksi, who worked for the town in various capacities over many decades prior to his retirement, said he had been a part of the budget process before, but that this was his first time “on this side of the table.”

Kuzminksi said that, as someone who had worked as the town’s IT director, “I see both sides,” adding that he agreed with others about the need to consolidate services across departments to reduce costs, particularly in the area of technology.

“With technology and especially with phones, which are considered a fixed cost,” he said, “there are ways we can bring those costs down and make them more manageable.”

“As Vin said, nobody’s getting what they want, but I think we all really worked hard,” said Kuzminksi, before adding, “I think the school is going to be a big driving factor, as far as renovations and so forth, but looking at the state reimbursement funds that were very advantageous, I think we would be remiss if we missed out on those opportunities.”

Selectman Andrea Alfano, a Democrat, said that much of the challenge in making the budget work had come down to working with to tweak the things that they could and realizing there were some areas that could not change.

“So much of this budget is contractual and it’s people costs,” she said, “and I think for the most part, every department in this town did their due diligence and a great job in trying to bring to us something to keep their people, getting their people their raises and so forth, and not asking for more than what we absolutely need to run the town. It’s very difficult.”

She noted that “maybe as high as 78%” of the budget is contractual, and that trying to find any sizable chunks to lose in that remaining 22% was a huge challenge.

Alfano said when she first saw the 4 percent increase, “I did say, ‘Oh, gosh, I just wish it could be better, because I know that we’re also asking the town for this very important school project,’” but she said that rising health insurance costs had not made things easier, on either the town or education side of the budget.

“Our health insurance costs in this country, it’s a broken system to begin with,” she said, “and Portland really got hit hard with that.”

“Our employees have to have healthcare coverage and unfortunately, without that, we might have been in a little bit of a better place,” she said, “but I think sitting here with all of you, that we all shared and we did the best that we could do to bring a budget that makes sense to me.”

Democrat John Dillon said that struggling with budgets each year was part of “the benefit and the curse of living in a great small town.”

“We are small,” he said. “We have 7,000-plus taxpayers that have to foot the bill for emergency services, general government, senior services, the library, the schools — and as Andrea said, the vast majority of this is costs that are contractual.”

Dillon added, “It’s very easy to say, ‘Cut here, cut there,’ but the reality is, for those folks who work still work or used to work, every year you’re looking forward to your [cost of living adjustment], every year you’re looking forward to your raise — so why shouldn’t the people who work for the town of Portland as well?”

Dillon, too, lamented the high costs of health insurance.

“This was a very odd year,” he said. “I mean, how do you plan and expect to see an over 20% increase in your medical insurance and then try to adjust for that? There’s no way anybody could’ve seen that coming.”

Dillon said that he agreed with Hetrick that the town needed to increase its “rainy-day” fund. He also agreed with Pitruzzello that they should establish a committee, containing members from the board of selectmen and the board of education, “to look for efficiencies, to look for

cost savings, maybe to look at some of our existing vendor contracts and see if there’s a way they could be renegotiated or rebid for better costs, is there any regional sharing that could be done.”

“I think you can’t wait until a month before every budget season and try to count your pennies,” he said. “We need to spend that entire year looking for ways to find savings, and I think if we make a habit of this and we do this throughout every year and look for ways to cut, we may not see a huge savings in year one, but if we make a habit of doing this, I think we can get the most efficiency out of the dollars that we use.”

“As far as where we stand, I think I’m OK with this budget,” said Dillon. “I think the taxpayers should have their say.”

Jim Tripp, a Democrat, agreed that this year had posed unique challenges.

“It’s a very challenging year when you look at 80% of your budget, plus or minus, that is directly due to contractual obligations and healthcare costs, and very little discretionary,” he said.

He said he thought that, going forward, the board needed to be “looking for those efficiencies, [and] how can we consolidate across different areas, different departments.”

“We have a history of running our budgets in the black in our town, which is good,” he said. “This past year, because we were able to operate with a \$238,000 surplus last year, we were able to take some of the capital costs and fund them that way versus collecting that money with this year’s taxation.”

With that said, he emphasized the need to be “very careful and very prudent with every nickel that we spend,” and he said he did still have some reservations.

“I wish we could put a little bit more in the capital budget,” he said, and “I wish we could put a little bit more in to position ourselves in the open space budget, because that’s where some of our future economic development opportunities are going to come from.”

He also said he agreed with others on the importance of the school project.

“Operationally,” he said, “one of the reasons for consolidation, just like we’re talking about consolidating services and looking at how we can consolidate things internally to operate more efficiently, consolidating two schools down to one would give us an operational savings estimated at about a million dollars annually, and that I mean, that’s a full mill, so there are a lot of reasons why we need to be successful doing that.”

With all that said, “I think we came to about as good of a place as we could at this time,” given the limitations, Tripp said.

Pelton agreed with Tripp that the school project was tied to the town’s budget.

“The school project and this budget to me are very tightly entwined,” he said, “because we’re really trying to change some fundamental things about the town. One of the struggles we’ve had over the last 20 years is we’ve had an extra school. We’ve had three elementary schools. That’s added a million dollars to our budget. That makes it difficult to put capital in there.”

“No matter how good any of us might have tried to do it back then,” he continued, “it would have been difficult, so by tightening that up, at the same time as making sure we’re paying attention to every dollar, 365, 24/7, I think that allows us to go forward more ‘lean and financially mean,’ so I think we need to get right on that.”

In the end, he encouraged voters to show up at the polls no matter what their opinions were.

“Whether it’s a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’ — I hope we’ve earned your ‘yes’ vote, but either way — have your voice heard out there,” he said.

**LEGAL NOTICE
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
HEBRON, CONNECTICUT**

The Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing at a meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 22, 2026 at 7:00 P.M., to be held virtually through the GoToMeeting Platform, on the following:

I. **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. **Continued from March 25, 2026.**

Planning and Zoning Commission
Apr 22, 2026, 7:00–10:00 PM (America/New_York)
Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://meet.goto.com/414277309>
You can also dial in using your phone.
Access Code: 414-277-309
United States: +1 (872) 240-3311
Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:
<https://meet.goto.com/install>
Dated at Hebron, Connecticut, this 8th day of April 2026.
Frank Zitkus, Chair

2TB 4/10, 4/17

LEGAL NOTICE

Town of East Hampton
Town Council Public Hearing
Tuesday, April 28, 2026
East Hampton Town Hall Town Council Chambers #107
and Via Zoom
6:30 p.m.

The East Hampton Town Council will hold a Public Hearing at the above date and time to discuss the fiscal year 2026 – 2027 Town Budget.

At this hearing, interested persons may be heard and written communications received. A copy of the proposed budget is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk, East Hampton, CT and on the town website at www.easthamptonct.gov.

Information to log into the meeting will be available on the Public Hearing agenda on the town website at www.easthamptonct.gov. Written comments on the budget will be accepted via email at budget@easthamptonct.gov or by mail to the East Hampton Town Hall, Attn: Town Manager’s Office, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424.

EAST HAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL
Dean Markham, Chairman
Jack Solomon, Vice Chairman
Timothy Feegeel
Ted Hintz, Jr.
Richard Knotek
Joelyn Leon
Karen Wanat

1TB 4/17

**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

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INITIALS

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE PAGE 26

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CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Neil Manausa

ACROSS

1 Free from doubt
5 Hall of Famer batting champ Rod
10 1944 battle site
14 Turkey or fox follower
15 Pavarotti’s “___ mio”
16 Miami team
17 Star of “The Defenders”
19 Besides
20 Chick or sweet
21 Part of a list
22 Hairy, in botany
24 “___ Almighty”, 2007 film
25 Not at all
26 Type of engine
29 Nonsense!
32 Meet feature
33 Ceremonies
34 Baseball stat
35 Chantilly or Brussels
36 Weighty works
37 Cut
38 Akkadian god
39 Praise
40 Place for élèves
41 Complainer
43 Juries
44 Jumbo leader

DOWN

1 Watch your ___!
2 Press
3 Campagnano di ____, Italy
4 Zeta follower
5 Pertaining to ribs
6 Wan
7 Wander
8 Right angle extension
9 Greetings with pleasure
10 Soft, pliable leather, sp?
11 “Seven Pillars of Wisdom” author
12 Endure

45 Compos mentis
46 San Luis ___
48 Nazimova
49 Turkish title
52 Unpleasantly moist
53 Author of “The Catcher in the Rye”
56 “Picnic” author
57 City in Minnesota
58 Starr of Green Bay
59 Empty ___ syndrome
60 Camp sights
61 James Bay people

13 Indigenous Nebraskan
18 Metal fastener
23 Resistance units
24 Feudal toiler
25 A flat and C sharp
26 Procrastinate
27 Late Mrs. Trump
28 Author of “the enormous room”
29 Indonesian island
30 Bay window
31 Records
33 Copland ballet score
36 Fast aircraft
37 “Auld Lang ___”
39 83rd governor of Georgia
40 Hawaiian porch
42 Revolutionary weapon
43 Bright asteroid
45 Virgule
46 Wotan
47 Opposite of boon
48 “It’s ___ to tell a lie”
49 Culture medium
50 Actor Richard
51 Late comic Johnson
54 ETO’s boss
55 TV monogram



The Rivereast Travels to Spain!... Pictured is Matthew Domonkos of Portland on vacation visiting his friend David Radomski of Wallingford, in Palma de Mallorca, Spain.

Where in the World is the *Rivereast*?

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



Rivereast in Qatar... Kayleigh Kinsella of Portland is pictured with a the *Rivereast* with the crescent-shaped Katara Towers in the background, taken from Pearl Island, a man-made island built to mimic Venice, in Doha, Qatar.



The Bulletin in Belfast... John and Maryna Kulawy of Colchester went to northern Ireland and checked out the Titanic Museum in Belfast, where the Titanic was built and launched.



Hi from Shanghai!... Valerie Greco Hurst and Alan Hurst, from East Hampton, took the *Rivereast* along to The Bund in Shanghai, China.

Where in the World?

**Going on a trip?
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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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.



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STORAGE UNITS AVAILABLE: East Hampton Self Storage. 196 E High Street, East Hampton. Text 860-267-4858.

MARLBOROUGH ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS COMMISSION NOTICE OF ACTION
The Marlborough ZBA Commission, at its meeting on April 8, 2026, took the following action:
APPLICATION APPROVED:
APPLICATION #ZBA-02-26 – Richard & Carrie McMahon (Applicant/Property Owner) 59 Lakeridge Drive – Front yard Setback of 14.1 to accommodate 22' x 28' garage
MATT WILSON, ZBA COMMISSION CHAIR

LEGAL NOTICE of SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

Monday, April 27, 2026 at 7:00 P.M.
Portland Middle School Auditorium, 93 High Street, Portland, CT 06480
The electors and those persons eligible to vote in town meetings of the Town of Portland, Connecticut, are hereby warned and notified that pursuant to Chapter V, Section 503(a) of the Town Charter, a Special Town Meeting will be held on **Monday April 27, 2026 at 7:00 P.M.** in the Portland Middle School Auditorium, 93 High Street, Portland, CT for the following purpose:
ITEM 1. To discuss a Resolution:
(a) To appropriate \$109,000,000 for the following projects: (i) the renovation and expansion of Valley View Elementary School into a pre-K-Grade 2 school (the "Valley View School Project"); (ii) the renovation of Gildersleeve Elementary School into a Grades 3-5 school (the "Gildersleeve School Project"); (iii) various capital improvements at Portland Middle School (the "Middle School Project"); and (iv) various capital improvements at Portland High School (the "High School Project", and collectively with the Valley View School Project, the Gildersleeve School Project and the Middle School Project, the "Projects");
(b) To finance said appropriation by issuing the Town's bonds or notes in an amount not to exceed \$58,000,000, with the balance to be funded by grants received for the Projects;
(c) To authorize the First Selectman, Deputy First Selectman, Director of Finance, or any two of them, to determine the terms, conditions, and other details of the bonds or notes;
(d) To declare the Town's intent to finance the Projects so that project costs may be temporarily advanced; to authorize the First Selectman, Deputy First Selectman, Director of Finance, or any two of them, to enter into agreements to bind the Town in connection with financing the Projects; and
(e) To authorize the First Selectman and Director of Finance to apply for and accept or reject grants-in-aid for the Valley View School Project, the Gildersleeve School Project, the Middle School Project and the High School Project, and to authorize the First Selectman to execute agreements and other documents on behalf of the Town for the Projects and the financing of the Projects.

A copy of the complete resolution to be voted on is available for public inspection in the Town Clerk's Office and on the Town's website at www.portlandct.org.
The Moderator shall adjourn the Special Town Meeting at its conclusion and the above item as required by Section 1204 of the Town Charter shall be submitted to a referendum vote on the voting tabulators or paper ballots by Town electors and qualified voters for approval or disapproval on Monday, May 11, 2026 between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M. Item 1 above shall be placed upon the voting tabulators or paper ballots under the following heading:
QUESTION 1.
"SHALL THE TOWN OF PORTLAND APPROPRIATE \$109,000,000 FOR THE RENOVATION AND EXPANSION OF VALLEY VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL INTO A PRE-K-GRADE 2 SCHOOL, THE RENOVATION OF GILDERSLEEVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL INTO A GRADES 3-5 SCHOOL AND VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AT PORTLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL AND PORTLAND HIGH SCHOOL AND AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF THE TOWN'S BONDS OR NOTES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$58,000,000 TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION, WITH THE BALANCE TO BE FUNDED BY GRANTS RECEIVED FOR THE PROJECTS?"
YES NO
Voters approving said Resolution will vote "Yes" and those opposing said Resolution will vote "No".
Portland Middle School, 93 High Street, Portland, Connecticut shall be utilized by Town electors for purposes of the referendum vote on the voting tabulators or paper ballots. Absentee ballots will be available from the Town Clerk's Office. Voters qualified to vote who are not electors shall vote at the Portland Middle School, 93 High Street, Portland, Connecticut in accordance with the procedures contained in Section 9-369d of the Connecticut General Statutes, which procedures the Town hereby chooses to apply. Dated this 16th day of April 2026.
Attest: Michael A. Pelton, First Selectman



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EMPLOYMENT

GLASTONBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY-SEASONAL MAINTAINER/GROUNDSKEEPER: The GHA is seeking individuals to perform a wide variety of semi-skilled tasks in connection with the maintenance of apartment grounds and buildings, and landscaped areas. Must possess a valid CT Motor Vehicle Operator's license and be at least 18 years of age. Seasonal: Mid-May to August. 40hrs/week. Job application and full job description available at the Main Office, 25 Risley Road, Glastonbury, CT 06033 or from our website at www.glastha.org. No phone calls please. Deadline: Until Filled AA/EOE.

HELP WANTED IMMEDIATELY: 2 person cleaning team to thoroughly open/clean large home to prepare for weekly Summer rentals. Additional cleaning needed after weekly renters. Call/text 860-985-4534.

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.

TOWN OF HEBRON TRUCK DRIVER / MAINTAINER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
The Town of Hebron is seeking a candidate for the position of Truck Driver/Maintainer in the Public Works Department. Applicant must have a CDL Class A or B license. Must have a minimum of a High School Diploma or GED. Three years of truck driving experience including snow plowing and public works operations or an equivalent combination required. Experience should also include working with heavy trucks and heavy equipment. Applicant must be available nights and weekends during winter months. Must be able to pass a complete physical examination and pre-employment drug test. This is a bargaining unit position. Letters of interest or resumes should be mailed along with a Town of Hebron employment application to Town Manager, Town of Hebron, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, CT 06248 by May 15, 2026. Hebron is an equal opportunity employer.

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TOWN OF ANDOVER CT VACANCY Accounting Associate

The Town of Andover is seeking applications for a full -time Accounting associate. This position is responsible for the daily operations of the finance department at the town of Andover. This position involves the performance of a variety of professional accounting and financial control functions for the Town of Andover.

The job description and application for this position are available at www.andoverct.org. This position is 30 hours per week, Monday-Thursday. This position is in the AFSCME local 1303 of Council #4 AFL-CIO and subject to collective bargaining.

To apply, send a Resume and Cover Letter to the Office of the Town Administrator, Town Hall, 17 School Rd, Andover, CT 06232, or email it to adminassistant@andoverct.org.

This posting will remain open until the position has been filled. EOE M/F Salary Commensurate on Experience and Qualifications

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RES-15-24

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.marbo.info/employmentapp or the Town Clerk's Office. Completed applications are to be submitted to the:

Marlborough Town Clerk
26 North Main Street
P.O. Box 29
Marlborough, CT. 06447

2TB 4/10, 4/17

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>

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1 Community Dr., East Hampton, CT, 06424

RE4-3-26

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CITB-5-24

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RE4-17-26

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RES-20-26

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RES-7-26

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RE3-27-26

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RES-20-26

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RE4-10-26

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RES-18-22

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