

News Bulletin

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

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John Baron, RHAM teacher Karl Jancis and the Rev. Ron Kolanowski (pictured from left) stand together as the newest addition to Hebron's Witness Stones is revealed on May 30 at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Hebron. See related story below.

Belltown Budgets Fail at Referendum

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton officials are now tasked with figuring out the next steps to take, following the failure of both the proposed town government budget and the education budget at referendum Tuesday.

The proposed 2026-27 town operations budget of \$20.30 million, an increase of 2.55% over current year spending, was rejected by a 1,582-1,167 tally, according to unofficial results posted on the town website. The Board of Education's proposed budget of \$40.15 million, a 3.58% increase over the current year, failed by a 1,654-1,097 vote.

A separate proposal, a \$375,000 parking lot paving project at the middle school, also was defeated, by a 1,412-1,333 vote.

Reaction from many in town government was one of disappointment.

"Everybody's disappointed, I suppose, in one way or another," said Town Council Chair Dean Markham, a Democrat. "It's sort of commonplace in East Hampton for budget referendums not to pass on the first try so, you know, I'm a realist. I know that occurs."

"We put out a budget to the people that we thought took care of all the competing interests in the community," he said, "however, along the way we got hit with the revaluation. And inflation."

Town Manager Dave Cox said he too was not entirely surprised that the budget failed, given the current climate, and that the town now

needed to look ahead to figure out what needed to happen to get a budget that could pass a town vote. That, he said, would take work.

"I think there's work that we have to do now as a community to determine how we want to make reductions in the town's budget," he said, "and that process will have to start here in the next day or so, with conversations at the Board of Finance, the Town Council, the Board of Education, and among staff, to identify what are the reductions that will get made to satisfy the community."

Cox said the process would also take time. He estimated that it would be at least another month before voters would be able to weigh in at another referendum.

Board of Finance Vice Chair Daniel Finn, a Democrat, said he was "frustrated" with the results.

"I think we put out a very reasonable budget despite the significant structural cost increases we faced for both the town and education budgets," he said, while also lamenting the lack of community involvement.

"I'm disappointed that the turnout was predictably low compared to the turnout last fall, which means a minority of the town's voters made this decision," Finn added, "and I'm frustrated by the significant misinformation cam-

See *Belltown Budgets*, page 32

RHAM Students Remember at Stones Dedication

By Toriana Williams

On a chilly Saturday afternoon, community members, students, parents and educators gathered at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Hebron to honor two men whose stories had nearly been lost to history. Through the Witness Stones Project, RHAM Middle School students spent months researching the lives of Cesar Peters Jr. and Martin Powers, two African Americans connected to Hebron's history of slavery and freedom.

The dedication held on May 30 was not a mere history lesson. It was a celebration of remembrance, community and the power of young people to bring forgotten stories back into the light. As guests filled the historic church, RHAM Middle School teacher Karl Jancis opened the event by recognizing the students who had devoted countless hours to the project.

"First off," Jancis said, "to look at the number of students who came on a Saturday afternoon." He reminded the audience that attendance was voluntary. "They did not have to come and drag themselves here, or dance or speak in front of a whole bunch of people."

Jancis asked the audience to applaud the students, and then he turned his attention to the parents who had supported them. "I also want to thank, of course, the parents," he said. "The late nights, the supply runs, the headaches. A big round of applause to the parents."

He also thanked community volunteer John Baron and described him as "just a member of the community who decided to do all of this."

"All of this is the brainchild of Mr. Baron," Jancis said. "He decided to bring this program to our town."

The event was hosted by the Rev. Ron Kolanowski of St. Peter's Church, who then reflected on Hebron's history. "I have been in this town just shy of 10 years," Kolanowski said. "And the more I'm in town, the more I appreciate the incredible, incredible, rich history that is literally on this land."

He reminded guests that generations of people have lived in the area before them. "We're in this moment together," he said, "to remember these people who lived and died in this very community, who made this community the fab-

ric that it is."

Kolanowski also noted a special anniversary. "This building turns 200 years today," he told the audience. "We thought this is the perfect setting for you to gather and begin to tell a story."

Baron explained that the program was created to amplify voices that history often ignored. "The Witness Stones Project is an agency designed to magnify the voice of people who were not given a voice in the past," Baron said.

He explained that the movement began with a single school in Connecticut and has grown across New England. "Today, there are Witness Stones in seven states," he shared. "Over 300 Witness Stones have been placed throughout these states."

Hebron's participation has now entered its third year. "We now have five stones in Hebron," Baron said proudly. He praised the students for their research and dedication. "These people are now given a voice," he said. "So thank you."

One of the highlights of the afternoon was a documentary created by RHAM student Made-

See *RHAM Students*, page 14

Inside...

Portland	
<i>Carpino Endorsed</i>	pg 12
East Hampton	
<i>Town Planner to Depart</i>	pg 16
Hebron	
<i>Beautiful Baskets Win</i>	pg 25
Colchester	
<i>Deep Reductions Weighed</i>	pg 27
Andover	
<i>School Budget Increase Cut</i>	pg 29
Regional	
<i>Obituaries</i>	pg 31

Crossword Puzzle...Pg 30

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ad on page 39

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Girl Scouts from Hebron, Marlborough and Andover recently came together to assemble 'Birthday Party in a Box' kits to benefit local food pantries. One of the pantries that benefited from the boxes was the Hebron Interfaith Human Services (HIHS) Food Pantry, where (in the photo at right) director Christa Goodwin-Babka is shown with, from left, Brownie Ashley Robidoux, Junior Sarah Robidoux and Junior Adalyn DeLuca.



Girl Scouts Hold Camporee

In early May, the RHAM Girl Scouts held their Camporee at Camp Yankee Trails in Tolland. Each year, troops from Hebron, Marlborough and Andover come together for a full

weekend of camping badge-earning activities and a service project.

This year's Camporee theme was "America 250: An Era Tour," bringing fun and friendship

to the eras of American history: the Revolution, From Sea to Shining Sea, Industrialization, and the Space Race.

The Industrialization era included a service project where scouts lined up, assembly-line style, to fill 'Birthday Party in a Box' kits. Each of the 60 kits made included cake mix, frosting, sprinkles, a can of Sprite to replace the eggs and oil for shelf stability, a birthday card, plates, a decoration, balloons, and candles all placed in a cake pan for baking.

The 60 kits were distributed to local food pantries in all three RHAM towns: Hebron, Marlborough, and Andover. The kits were very well received by food pantry directors who claimed

that baking goods are oftentimes not received other than around the holidays.

Andover Food Pantry Director Joan Soucy stated in an email of thanks to the Scouts: "Your efforts in this project are so greatly appreciated by all the families who take them. One person that took a kit was absolutely thrilled to know that their loved one would now be able to have a little party on their special day. You've really made a big difference in that person's life."

Hebron Interfaith Human Services (HIHS) Director Christa Goodwin-Babka stated that she has seen adults that haven't had their birthday celebrated in many years.

Project Graduation Event Registration

Registration is open for AHM's Project Graduation event for RHAM graduating seniors! This year's event will be held at Spare Time Entertainment in Vernon on June 16, the night of RHAM High School graduation.

AHM's number one goal is to keep RHAM graduates safe on an evening that statistically ranks as the highest in car accidents due to impairment. AHM Youth & Family Services

coordinates Project Graduation and has done so for over 25 years, with thousands of graduates attending this celebration.

A scholarship is available for those who are experiencing financial hardship. Graduation signs are also available as a fundraiser for Project Graduation. Register for \$75 per person at ahmyouth.org/fundraisers-events/project-graduation.



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Cleared To Land... Last week, Hebron resident and State Representative Steve Weir (R-55) landed a helicopter at RHAM High School as a demonstration for Mrs. Last-rina's Aeronautical Engineering class. A few days earlier, Weir presented to students in the classroom about helicopter aviation and flight control systems. Weir landed at the school to give the students an up close/hands-on practical view of the helicopter, where the students could see and touch the aircraft. Weir noted that the classroom instruction is always important, but it's also important to see the practical, real-world application side of things.

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.

Hours are 9 a.m.-noon Monday through Friday. Families can choose to enroll for one to eight weeks. Children must turn 3 by Sept. 1 and be fully toilet-trained to participate.

Cost per week is \$125 (or \$100 for the 6/29-

7/2 week). 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, or contact Becky Murray at bec-kym@ahmyouth.org or 860-228-0871.

RHAM Senior Wins Registrars of Voters Scholarship

The Marlborough Registrars of Voters are pleased to announce that Maia Stock, a RHAM High School senior, has been awarded the Judi Beaudreau Scholarship in recognition of her service as a volunteer election worker during last year's municipal election, where she served as a ballot clerk.

Stock will be attending Eastern Connecticut State University in the fall, where she plans to major in business administration.

The Judi Beaudreau Scholarship is presented annually at the Registrars of Voters Conference to high school seniors who have participated in election work. Stock, who recently turned 18, says the experience sparked her enthusiasm for civic engagement.

"I am looking forward to being a part of the community and contributing to something this meaningful," she said. "Before volunteering as an election worker, I didn't fully understand the voting process — but afterward, I came away with a much deeper knowledge of how it works. I feel far more prepared to vote myself because of this experience."

High school students interested in participating in local elections are encouraged to contact their local Registrar of Voters' office to sign up for training.



Maia Stock

Summer Programs at AHM

This summer, AHM Youth and Family Services is offering programs for all ages, including First Steps in Music, Forest Fun, Brush, Braid & Bond, Macrame' Headbands, Yoga for Kids, and more.

Registration is open now, at www.ahmyouth.org.

AHM Launches New Podcast

AHM Youth and Family Services has announced its new "Here 4 You" podcast.

The premiere episode focuses on how parents can support their children's mental health. Megan Aldridge, AHM's clinical director, talks with Tressa Giordano, AHM's executive director, about the when and where to seek mental health supports for kids.

The full podcast can be accessed on Spotify @ AHM's Here 4 You Podcast and on YouTube @ ahmyouthandfamilyservices8196/podcasts, or at ahmyouth.org/here-4-you.

Sponsors Sought for Golf Tourney

AHM Youth and Family Services will hold its annual Golf Tournament Friday, July 17, at Blackledge Country Club in Hebron. AHM is currently looking for sponsors and players.

Go to ahmyouth.org for more info.



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From the Editor's Desk Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

You might have missed my always-illuminating observing and ruminating last week, but don't worry, all is well. I was on vacation. Many thanks to reporter Toriana Williams for filling in for me – particularly during a holiday week.

But, I'm back in the saddle, so it's back to business. And I have some news many of you might enjoy.

As you may know, a couple of months ago I instituted a new policy of noting in people's letters to the editor if they were a member of their town's Republican or Democratic town committee. It was the suggestion of a reader, and it seemed to make sense to me at the time, so I implemented it.

Well, the policy went over like a lead balloon. I received a bunch of pushback – and bipartisan pushback at that. Both Republicans and Democrats hated it. Most felt that adding that note was cheapening or invalidating their opinions somehow. No matter how often I explained it wasn't, they just weren't having it.

At the end of the day, it just wasn't worth it. Knowing that someone is a member of an RTC or DTC isn't as important as knowing if someone is on a town board or commission; at the end of the day, it doesn't really add much. If it's going to be such an unpopular move, it's just not really worth the hassle.

So, let's forget the move. If you want to disclose in a letter to the editor you're a member of your town's RTC or DTC, that's fine; I'll gladly take it. But I'm no longer going to mandate it.

I did notice that, while I was out last week, there were a few more budget rejections at referendum. And as you saw on the cover, East Hampton's proposed budget was shot

down by voters on Tuesday. So there'll likely be referendum previews and recaps continuing for much of June.

In my town of Manchester, the 2026-27 budget was adopted nearly a month ago, on May 12. There wasn't a referendum, or town meeting where residents voted. The Board of Directors – Manchester's equivalent of a Board of Selectmen or Town Council – passed it 9-0 at a town meeting, after holding a public hearing back in March. And I gotta admit... I do see the appeal of such a streamlined method.

I realize that might not be a very popular statement. People seem to love participating in the budget referendums – and I get that; it makes you feel like you're part of the process.

But think about it: the people on your Town Council or Board of Selectmen, you put them there. You vote them into office to represent you; you show you trust your judgment to handle town business. And part of that town business is determining an acceptable operating budget. If you don't like the budgets they pass, then you vote them out of office when the time comes.

I mean, you don't get to vote on the state budget, do you? No, you let the people you vote into state office determine it. Granted, the state budget is gigantic compared to the budgets for the *Rivereast* towns – and Manchester's is significantly larger as well, for that matter. So it's something of an apples and oranges situation; I admit that. But it's still true; we voted these representatives and senators into office, to represent us and make sound decisions on our behalf – and the state budget is one of those decisions. A pretty significant one, in fact.

Don't get me wrong – I'm not fully anti-



Scholarships Awarded... The East Hampton-Marlborough Rotary Club awarded a total of \$21,500 in scholarships to 12 local students during its Scholarship Night Awards ceremony on May 27. The annual scholarship program recognizes outstanding students for their academic achievement, leadership, service, and commitment to their community. This year's recipients are: Ella Briggs, Samantha Pugo, Ava Jedziniak, Ayomide Bamgbose, Julianna Korczak, Jack Cote, Chloe Wisniewski, Ava Archer, Aiden Gora, Madelyn Daniels, Ashley Johnson and Cecilia Zito. The East Hampton-Marlborough Rotary Club said that, through scholarships, service projects and community partnerships, it remains committed to supporting local youth and strengthening the community.

referendum or anything. But I do see the appeal of having the Town Council, or Board of Selectmen, or Board of Directors decide it. There are still public hearings and budget workshops along the way, where residents can voice their opinions. It's still a democratic process. It's just, when it comes down to the fi-

nal vote, it's up to the people *you have already voted to put in office* to decide it.

You elect people to do a job; so let them do it.

See you next week.

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Very Disappointing Again

To the Town Council and My East Hampton Neighbors:

Town Council your action to appoint Mark Barmasse to the Agriculture Commission is beyond belief. How could you even think he has the town's best interest in mind. This is the man who was the chairman of the WPCA, with a direct hand in promoting the biosolids project.

Note his name at the top of the POCD Infrastructure Visioning Session dated Feb. 19, 2026. This document's "Sewer Service Expansion Areas" map, shows the whole of Cobalt being sewered for economic development. It shows Middle Haddam being sewered for high-density housing. It has the historic district being sewered for public health. None of this is wanted or needed. No Chatham Health reports exist to support these expansions.

T/C, you are being watched. We deserve better. Stop performing badly. Remove him.

We hoped you would have started rebuilding the town's trust in your actions. But now you just poured gas on the biosolids embers. Shame on you. You are just not thinking.

Douglas Mackeown – East Hampton

One-Party Control

To the Editor:

Tip O'Neill once said all politics are local, tying politicians' fortunes to their constituents' pocketbooks. The Colchester BOE, BOF and the BOS proved him right – only this time the people said 'enough.'

The budget failure is the result of one-party holding the purse strings for too long; they get fat and happy and feel entitled to our money. Hartford is a good example of this entitlement. Like the lords of past, they order things to be done and expect that the people follow. Hartford now wants the small communities to pick up the overflow they can no longer afford, so their crime problem is shared equally.

Some people claim the budget failure was against education (those with kids or employees). Not so; it's about keeping Colchester affordable for everyone. Let those who want extra activities in schools pay for them or have fund raises for those interested. It has been proven time and again throwing money at education is not the answer; clean your house before asking others, which makes me wonder if Sullivan was paid all that money to shut him up.

Frank Grande – Colchester

Bulletin Board

"Good morning, Sunshine," I greeted my wife bright and early the other morning. She looked at me suspiciously.
 "It's a wonderful morning, isn't it?" I enthused.
 "It's raining," she said.
 "Ah yes. Liquid sunshine to nourish the earth."
 She frowned. "The other day you referred to rain as God's unhappy tears."
 "Yes, well. That was the other day. I've resolved to take a more positive attitude toward the world."
 "Oh. I thought maybe you'd had a stroke or something."
 "If I had a stroke, you could nurse me back to health. It would only bring us closer together," I remarked brightly (or as brightly as you can when someone suggests you're acting like a stroke victim).
 "No offense, but feeding you spoonfuls of oatmeal is a closeness I'd prefer not to experience if it's all the same to you."
 "I get it, honey. But when life hands you lemons, you need to make lemonade."
 "Oh my God. You have had a stroke."
 "No, my dear. I've had a revelation. Every time you turn around these days there's something bad happening in the world. War, inflation, anger and mayhem. It's crushing. The only defense is to find the positive in the negative."
 "Or you could just turn off the television."
 "Ignoring reality is not the solution," I counseled. "It's all about attitude. Take the price of beef, for instance. On the one hand, you can complain that you can't afford a steak. But how much better for your state of mind to view it as an opportunity to live a healthier and longer life by abstaining from red meat."
 "Gasoline prices?"
 "Encourages us to get more exercise by walking."
 "To Boston and back?" she muttered.
 "What?"
 "Nothing. How about the Donald Trump billion-dollar ballroom?"
 Oh boy, she's tough. "Um, will inspire a cultural renaissance in ballroom dancing. Also benefits anyone who owns stock in foreign steel companies. Oh, and it will provide a place to go now that the Rose Garden has been paved over."
 "The U.S. Congress."
 "Takes the pressure off nursing homes by giving old men someplace to hang out and call each other names."
 "Voter redistricting around the country."
 "Excellent for the jigsaw puzzle industry."
 "The Boston Red Sox."
 "Oh, c'mon."
 "Really, Mr. Sunshine. Where's the silver lining in their record so far?"
 "Cheaper ticket prices at Fenway?"
 "You wish."
 "You don't play fair," I said.
 "Hey, I didn't even mention the cost of bacon. Which, incidentally, I'm just not going to buy any more."
 "Okay, that's it. I'm done."
 "Where are you going?"
 "Back to bed."
 "It's nine o'clock in the morning."
 "I don't care. Wake me up when we can afford bacon."

Jim Hallas

RIVEREAST

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Who Does Weir Represent?

To the Editor: Why did Steve Weir, our elected representative of the 55th House District, choose to vote against much-needed state aid to its five towns? The budget that he voted against on May 2 allocates over \$600,000 towards our five towns to help relieve our stressed municipal budgets and lighten the load on us, the taxpayers. Thankfully, it passed with overwhelming bipartisan support – but not from Weir. I think it's worth asking as his current term draws to a close: Who exactly does Steve Weir represent? And does he really have the voters of the 55th's interests at heart?

Justin Bransfield – Marlborough

Food Drive Thanks

Dear East Hampton Residents and Postal Carriers: On behalf of the East Hampton Volunteer Food and Fuel Bank, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for your incredible support during our Mother's Day weekend food drive. The event was a tremendous success. It is a privilege to live in such a caring community. Your generous donations of food and funds allow us to continue assisting our neighbors with essential needs for their homes. Thank you for your continued generosity.

Best regards,
Sandy Fries, Director
East Hampton Food and Fuel Bank

Tired of AI

To the Editor: I'm so tired of artificial intelligence. There's not a day that goes by where I'm not bombarded with AI advertisements, emails, or graphics. It's everywhere. No doubt modern society has been completely transformed through the availability of these generative models, but it seems that the tradeoff for technological advancement is constant AI noise. Some schools have started to incorporate artificial intelligence education into their curriculums for fear of students "being left behind." Some schools have replaced teachers completely with AI. These tools are pushed into the classroom to replace "monotonous" tasks, busywork. Outlining essays, searching for sources, imagining ideas for a creative assignment, are all outsourced to save time and effort. We are not born with the inherent abilities to find credible research or organize a compelling argument or think of a witty idea. These are skills to be practiced. School is not just for learning about physics or history; it's for learning to think for oneself. The scramble to keep education tech savvy has turned into the scramble to limit any work that doesn't directly create a product. Sure, it's hard to imagine a world in the future where artificial intelligence is completely abandoned. That's a dream far gone. However, I don't agree with the sentiment that we all have to succumb to AI's "inevitability."

Thank you very much.
Jillian Snow
Bacon Academy
Class of 2026

Garden Club Thank You!!

To the Editor: The Belltown Garden Club would like to thank the public for their continuing support of our annual plant sale.

We would also like to thank Rick Walker for the usual donation of at about 250, Paul's for top soil, and to our friend of the club, and plant lovers in town who donated such healthy plants for our sale.

We are a community organization. Some of what our club supports is maintenance of the two gardens at the gazebo, the Comstock Bridge, and the library grounds.

Thanks for another successful year of our sale and the opportunity to share our knowledge of perennials.

Belltown Garden Club

Worried About Cuts to Services

Colchester Friends: No one is happy with the choices we have this year. But some are once again playing with words and making promises I don't think they will be able to keep.

I keep asking to be shown cuts/reductions that will not adversely affect students or residents of the town.

Call it whatever you like. If you trim less trees, there will be more power outages. If you plow less, there will be more snow on the roads, and if you eliminate teaching positions, then our kids will get less instruction/attention per student and the quality of these services will suffer.

I implore you to look to those who are offering or at least working to find actual solutions. This requires hard work and effort.

Many of those screaming the loudest that it should just cost less and putting out a lower number are not really helping anyone come up with the ideas that will move the town forward.

Inflation is real and this has consequences. Please consider the services we all want and use from the town and schools as you weigh our options and responsibilities as citizens of Colchester.

Respectfully,
Vincent Rose – Colchester

Note: Rose is a member of the Colchester Democratic Town Committee, but said he is writing as an "individual, concerned taxpayer and resident."

Lake Pocotopaug Boating Safety

To the Editor: "Boat on Lake Pocotopaug and do whatever you want because rules don't apply." What a nice reputation for our town to have.

The issues that occur on a daily basis are many, all of which are clearly in violation of federal/state/town statutes as listed in the 2026 Connecticut Boaters Guide Rules & Resources (https://portal.ct.gov/deep/boating//Connecticut-Boaters-Guide). Coincidentally, the majority of these offenses occur after 2 p.m. A large portion of these violators either live on the lake or nearby. Violations include:

- Operating a vessel at excess speed within 200 feet of docks/moored vessels (no water skier landing);
- Public urination;
- Trash tossed overboard (coffee cups/beer cans/cigarettes);
- Exceeding the lake 40 mph speed limit;
- Improper operation of a Personal Water Craft (PWC) – children in front of operators;
- No Personal Flotation Device (Kayaks/paddleboards/PWC);
- Expired or no registration;
- Operating a vessel after sunset with no navigation lights;
- Improper launching of people in the air on tubing devices;
- Riding on the bow/gunwales;
- No observer while towing skier;
- Operating a PWC after sunset;
- Jumping wakes within 100 feet of another vessel;
- Overloaded boats (pontoon/bow-rider/PWC);
- Daily BUI.

Unfortunately, our society's "Me First" attitudes of "don't tell me what to do, leave me alone, and mind your own business" prevails when it comes to boating on the lake. Boating in its various forms has long been a form of independence and self-expression, but many people see boating as way to "flip the bird" to the rules that apply to everyone, and the result is the behavior we see on the lake. Enforcing the laws is like "whack-a-mole". The East Hampton Police Department causes boaters to obey the laws while present, but once the police exit the lake, poor/illegal behavior returns immediately. In what should be a spirit of cooperation,

put aside the "Me First" attitudes and focus as a community to make the lake a safe place for all to enjoy. The solution requires the community to police itself, with support from the TC and EHPD as needed to ensure that our community can support lake safety now and in the future.

"We can value our independence and individual expression at the same time as we value belonging to community and society."

Bob Yenker – East Hampton

Seniors Be Aware!

To the Editor: In reviewing the outcomes from the most recent legislative session I was alarmed to see that our state representative from the 55th, Steve Weir, voted to reject \$630,000 in state aid to our district. Thankfully, he failed to prevent this economic aid from returning to the taxpayers of our towns but I am concerned that we will not be so fortunate in the future.

As we continue to watch difficult municipal budgets force small towns, in particular, to struggle with rising property taxes and an increasing population of retired seniors, we need to ensure our representatives in Hartford are fighting to bring tax dollars back to our district.

Seniors, in particular, should pay close attention to how our interests are being represented as taxes rise and towns are forced to bear the burden.

George O'Brien – Marlborough

Deep Reductions

To the Editor: As the Board of Finance works through the process of deciding the level of deep reductions to the Board of Education and town budgets, I find it disingenuous to hear the online chatter state that some BOF members are not listening and that they don't get it. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Following the Board of Finance meeting on May 21, where some initial town reductions were discussed and also some deeper reduction options, the public was very vocal online about not reducing hours at the library, not eliminating the new firefighter position and not reducing services at the transfer station.

The Board of Finance has an obligation to initiate those deeper reductions following the decisive referendum vote, but also to make sure

See Letters, page 6

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The "East of the River" Real Estate Report

What Price Per Square Foot Actually Tells You

One of the most common numbers homeowners look at when evaluating a home's value is price per sq. ft. It's easy to calculate. Take the sale price and divide it by the home's square footage. But while it's a useful metric, it's often misunderstood. Many people assume that if one home sold for \$300 per square foot, then another home nearby should be worth roughly the same amount. Unfortunately, real estate isn't that simple. Price per square foot works best as a comparison tool, not as a valuation tool. For example, a recently updated home with a modern kitchen, renovated bathrooms, newer mechanical systems, and attractive landscaping will often command a higher price per square foot than a similar-sized home that needs significant updating. Location matters too. Two homes with identical square footage can have very different values based on privacy, views, neighborhood appeal, traffic, or proximity to amenities. Home size can also affect the calculation. Smaller homes frequently sell for a higher price per square foot than larger homes because certain costs — kitchens, bathrooms, utilities, and land — don't increase proportionally as square footage increases. In fact, looking at recent sales from our area, the price per square foot ranged from approximately \$232 per square foot to nearly \$393 per square foot among single-family homes that sold during the past week. Yet many of those homes shared similar characteristics on paper. The difference came down to condition, location, updates, and buyer demand. This is why appraisers and real estate professionals focus primarily on comparable sales rather than relying solely on price per square foot. The best use of price per square foot is to identify trends and provide context. It can help answer questions about the market, but it rarely tells the entire story. When determining value, the specific features of the property, recent comparable sales, and current market conditions will almost always provide a more accurate picture than a simple formula.

Market Snapshot – Past Week

Single-Family Homes	Condos
• 9 homes sold	• 2 sold at an average of \$328,500
• Average sale price: \$487,111	• Sale-to-list ratio: 104%
• Average sale-to-list ratio: 111%	• Days on market: 25 days
• Average days on market: 10 days	Results vary by price point, condition, and pricing strategy.
• Median days on market: 6 days	

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★ *Letters, cont. from page 5*

that the citizens of Colchester fully understand what these reductions mean for services especially on the Town side. Given the numbers brought forward at the Board of Finance meetings and those numbers floated online, it is unrealistic to expect minimal impact to programs and services.

The mission of the BOF is to balance the needs of Colchester with its ability to pay. The BOF needs to find the reduction number that meets the request of voters per the referendum with a clear understanding of what the citizens define as a “need.”

Taking the time to allow Colchester citizens to ask questions and clarify what these reductions will mean is the BOF meeting its mission.

Krista Kardys – Colchester

Note: Kardys is a member of the Colchester Board of Finance, but said she is speaking as an individual.

Rules, Regulations for Safe Recreation

To the Editor:

With summer fast approaching, we begin to make plans for fun under the sun at the town parks. The following list serves as a reminder of the safety rules and regulations for swimming, boating and recreation at Lake Terramuggus and other town athletic fields.

General Rules:

1. The following items are strictly prohibited at all town parks and fields: Use or sale of alcoholic beverages; Operation of unauthorized motor vehicles; Feeding or annoyance of wild-life; Unauthorized camping; Pets (except service animals); Smoking or vaping; Glass containers and Balloons of any kind; Firearms or weapons.
2. No mooring of boats or boats with engines greater than 3.3 horsepower.
3. Parking is restricted to designated areas.
4. Beach closings may occur if one or more inches of rain have fallen within 24 hours.
5. Take out what you take in.
6. Open fires and cooking is restricted to designated areas with permission only.
7. One or more lifeguards may be on duty between Memorial Day until the end of the season.
8. Parks and athletic fields are open from dawn to dusk.

For a full list, please visit the Parks and Recreation link through the www.marlbroughct.net homepage.

**Louise Concodello, Member
Marlborough Lake Advisory Commission**

Freeze School Staffing

To the Editor:

Andover Elementary School has a superintendent of schools who is concerned about class size for her 200 students. Years ago, the suburban Pennsylvania school district I attended also had a superintendent, but his purview included oversight of 12 elementary schools, two junior high schools, and one high school totaling more than 10,000 students. My senior graduating class alone had more than 1,200 students.

Throughout my six years of elementary school my typical class size was 48 students, led by one teacher. How was my school able to function with classes of that size while today's schools experience tremendous consternation enduring 18 students in the same classroom? Back then, schools used to employ a practice known as “tracking,” where students with similar academic performances were grouped together in the same classes. This allowed greater focus for the teacher and much more rapid and in-depth progression for each of that class's students.

I suspect modern classroom assignments are intended to model diversity and inclusiveness, so classes contain students of diverse academic accomplishments. Teachers are challenged with the necessity of presenting their subject material in a manner in which many diverse levels of students will be able to receive it. This would seemingly require teaching to the lowest common denominator in each classroom.

I pay more than \$1,000 in Andover property taxes every month, with the lion's share going to the schools. This is the greatest recurring expense I encounter, and after 25 years it's amounted to more than my initial mortgage! I've never used any of the schools and it's unlikely I ever will.

We go through this Kabuki dance every single year for the school budgets. You could cut and paste the exact same letters to the editor every year. Increasing taxes year after year (20% in just two years!) on people whose incomes don't rise nearly enough is not sustainable. As Milton Friedman was quoted as saying, “Things that cannot keep going on as they are – won't.”

No additional staffing should be permitted. Current staffing should be frozen, and no new programs should be implemented. It is irresponsible and negligent continuing to add even one more dollar to Connecticut's unfunded pension liabilities. Every dollar of salary increases are just more promises being made that can't be honored. It's disgraceful that cowardly officials continue kicking this can down the road.

Sam Prentice – Andover

One Month to Go

To the Editor:

Start your 4th of July celebrations this year by joining your fellow Hebronians to mark the 250th birthday of this great country. There is only a month to go! There will be a special program starting at 9 a.m. outside the Old Town Hall by the Douglas Library. It will include patriotic songs, music and poetry. Veterans will perform a commemorative flag ceremony. There will be an opportunity to purchase 250th commemorative merch and the raffle will open for a magnificent handmade quilt.

“William Williams,” our local signatory to the Declaration, in full 1776 costume, will read the Declaration of Independence assisted by members of Hebron scouts. A collage of what freedom means to many of your neighbors will be on display, and we will finish with a rousing speech on “Let Freedom Ring.”

So, make plans now to start your July 4th Celebration in the traditional way at 9 a.m. at the Old Town Hall.

Thank you, and God Bless America!

**David Rose a.k.a.
“William Williams”
Hebron**

Thanks from Art Association

To the Editor:

Our Art Show on May 16th was a great success! Perfect weather, beautiful art and great company! Congratulation to the winners: 1st Prize-Lori Neumann; 2nd Prize-Jennifer Chaffee; 3rd Prize-Elizabeth Sennett; 1st Honorable Mention-Skye Garafalo; 2nd Honorable Mention-Betsy Rich; 3rd Honorable Mention-Rita Gibbons. Thank you to all the artists who took part in this year's show displaying their wonderful art and their lovely and generous picture donations for our Art Auction.

We are thankful and fortunate that the Congregational Church again allowed us the use of their lawn and facilities for our annual show. We also owe a nod of appreciation to the East Hampton Rotary Club for the use of their sign board for our Art Show advertising; the *Riverast News Bulletin* for the good and frequent public notices they print for us; the East Hampton Library and staff for help with printing for our Art Show Booklet; and all the sponsors who helped make this show possible with their generous donations to our Association for Art Show prize money and programs throughout the year.

Thank you to our Co-Presidents-Geralyn Yo-

cher and Rita Gibbons for their hard work pulling this show together and their extensive work throughout the year. Also, Sherisa Yocher-Show Booklet cover art and production; Sarah Gibbons-Website and Facebook boosting; Ed Yocher and PJ Baton-Installation of snow fence for the Art Show; GERALYN YOCHER-Art Show Cream Puff Baker “Extraordinaire”; Elizabeth Sennett, Leslie O'Kelly, GERALYN YOCHER, Rita Gibbons-Fundraising; George Burger-Treasurer; and Jan Prentice-Art Show Judge. We also want to thank our other Officers for their work throughout the year: Betsy Rich-Recording Secretary; Emily Timreck-Hospitality; and Leslie O'Kelly-Corresponding Secretary.

Please consider joining our group! For more information: easthamptonctartsassociation.org.

East Hampton Art Association

A Horrific Scene

To the Editor:

On Saturday morning, May 23, driving on Route 16 to my grandson's baseball game in East Hampton, I slowed to a stop to watch a male Canadian goose lead his family across the road. As he passed the center line with two babies in tow, the female with three more goslings right behind, I watched in horror as a black SUV came at high speed from the opposite direction. The vehicle made no attempt to stop or even slow down. He hit the male goose with such force he was left in a cloud of feathers floundering in the road. The distressed female honking hysterically tried to gather and herd her babies back to the other side.

It was a horrific scene that has haunted me since. How could a normal person do this?

**Julia LeGrant – Glastonbury
Teacher, Mother, Grandmother,
and Animal Lover**

BOE Forensic Accounting Report

To the Editor:

I've read the Forensic Accounting Report, and I must be reading a different report than the one that some members of the Republican Town Committee (RTC) have been referencing in letters and on Facebook.

The following quotes are from the Forensic Accounting Report found on the BOE page under budget documents. I've abbreviated Board of Education to BOE. Ms. Linkkila was the BOE Director of Finance and Operations. Both she and the superintendent have resigned.

Page 7 - “Mr. Dennler stated that once he understood Ms. Cosgrove's calculations, he became concerned that there may be an error in the manner the formula was being applied in the BOE's calculations for the annual health insurance since 2023/2024. Mr. Dennler stated he met with Mr. Sullivan and Ms. Linkkila to share his concern, and that he was told that they stood by their calculations. Without access to Ms. Linkkila's spreadsheets for 2023/2024 forward, it is unclear how Mr. Dennler could have quantified the issue with Ms. Linkkila's health insurance calculations.”

The report clearly states that the superintendent and the BOE finance director stood by their calculations and without internal health insurance information belonging only to BOE staff, the first selectman could not have known. The town and BOE are separate branches of government with separate finance departments. Neither Sullivan or Linkkila worked for the first selectman.

Page 9 shows that the first selectman flagged the concern for BOE. Sullivan and Linkkila said that he was wrong. “Mr. Rivers stated he followed up with Mr. Sullivan and Ms. Linkkila asking them if there was a problem, and they told him the problem was on the town side.”

The report goes on to say that the BOE could not have known or found the issue.

Page 15 - “The same information would have been available to the BOE members and the public at large. However, without knowing the methodology used within Ms. Linkkila's calculations for the health insurance costs, it is unclear how the information that was available to them could have helped the board members identify the issue with the health reserve account balance prior to it becoming apparent.”

Statements being made repeatedly by some RTC members blaming the first selectman and some members of the BOE must be for political reasons or why would they continue to provide misinformation to the residents of Colchester? The actual facts matter.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Coyle – Colchester

Note: Coyle is a member of the Colchester Board of Selectmen, but said she is speaking as an individual.

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Exchange Club Thank You

To the Editor:
On May 14th the Exchange Club of Portland held their 37th Annual Charity Golf Tournament at the Portland Golf Course. The Exchange Club would like to thank the golfers & volunteers for their help and support in making this charity fundraiser extremely successful.

The Exchange Club would also like to thank the sponsors of the Tournament.

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From the support by Sponsors and Golfers, the Portland Exchange Club will be making donations to local charities in our community. We ask that all members of our community recognize these local businesses that supported our fundraiser. The best way to do this is by awarding them with your business.

Thank you,
Exchange Club of Portland

Shovel for Us, Wait for Them

To the Editor:
On Feb. 23, Colchester was hit by a blockbuster blizzard. The next day, Feb. 24, voters were asked to shovel out their driveways, clear their cars, and get to the polls to vote on the Bacon Academy and RecPlex improvements.

Residents were expected to go above and beyond to make local government work.

What we did not know then was how much local government itself was not working.

We did not know the public would later learn about the health insurance reserve issue. We did not know a forensic audit would implicate not just former administrators, but elected officials who were supposed to provide oversight. We did not know that while taxpayers were being asked to support new projects, serious financial warnings had already been circulating behind the scenes.

And we certainly did not know the superintendent would soon be "resigning" with a payout that would make many corporate CEOs blush.

Now contrast that urgency with what happened after the May 20 referendum.

Local government put forward two budgets voters clearly found unacceptable. Voters rejected both. The message was clear: cut the budgets and come back with something taxpayers can support.

So what happened next?
Two Board of Finance meetings. A lot of talking. Very little action. No clear number. No clear plan. No visible command of the problem.

It is almost impressive. Voters delivered a message that could not have been simpler - spend less - and our elected officials responded like they were handed a riddle written in ancient Greek.

As if the idea that taxpayers might reject roughly 18% increases over three years had never occurred to them.

Residents were asked to trudge through snow to vote for government projects, yet government cannot produce a revised budget with any urgency at all.

Voters do not need to be lectured for rejecting two budgets. They need elected officials to respect the result and produce a revised budget with urgency.

That is the problem.
The first selectman has found time to campaign for the budget voters rejected. The Board of Finance, meanwhile, has not found the will to meaningfully cut it. Apparently, selling the budget is urgent. Fixing it can wait.

Colchester voters already did their job. Now it is time for elected officials to do theirs.

Get to work.

Michael Dubreuil - Colchester

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

Incredibly Short-Sighted Anti-Education Crowd

To the Editor:
Colchester voters recently rejected both the town and education budgets. Ironically, the same small group of loud voices that has spent years attacking education funding helped create a situation in which both budgets suffered similar defeats.

Despite repeated claims to the contrary, some residents continue to demand high-quality schools while opposing nearly every effort to pay for them. The result is a never-ending cycle of outrage, budget cuts, and surprise when those cuts have consequences.

Perhaps the Board of Finance should simply give them exactly what they want.

Let's close the transfer station. After all, private companies can haul your trash. Why should taxpayers subsidize garbage collection?

Let's eliminate the senior center and transportation services. There are rideshare apps and social clubs. Problem solved.

Let's stop maintaining roads. The town got along just fine with dirt roads once upon a time. If potholes become a problem, residents can always switch to a horse and buggy.

And while we're at it, let's move fire and police protection to a pay-for-service model. Need

emergency assistance? Have your credit card ready when the truck arrives.

Of course, nobody seriously believes those are good ideas. We recognize that certain public services are essential to maintaining the quality of life that makes Colchester an attractive place to live. Education belongs in that category.

A few years ago, voters who thought the proposed budget was too low were ultimately rewarded with a modest increase. Today's 'vote no' crowd should not expect to burn down the entire budget process simply because they dislike the outcome. Reasonable reductions may be appropriate, but drastic cuts that undermine educational quality are not.

The Board of Finance plays an important role in moments like this. Its responsibility is not merely to count votes, but to exercise judgment. The board exists to evaluate competing priorities, separate rhetoric from reality, and recommend budgets that serve the long-term interests of the entire community.

Colchester's schools are not a luxury. They are one of the primary reasons families choose to live here, one of the strongest drivers of property values, and one of the most important investments the town makes in its future. The Board of Finance should keep that in mind as it considers the next steps.

Jeremy McKenzie - Colchester

Dementia Talks No. 61

To the Editor:
As I sit in a Starbucks at 6 a.m. off of Dupont Circle in Washington, D.C., ready to walk the halls of Congress and advocate for the Alz Screening and Prevention Act, I am reminded of the start of this journey.

It started in 2014 when Mom said she wanted to move to Hebron from Vermont. The stars aligned and in 2015 she moved in with us then shortly after that, into the house next door. We had the "real" path to grandma's house which her grand-dogs knew well.

In 2017 I joined Mom in a doctor's visit when we heard the word Alzheimer's for the first time in the spirit of now being directly introduced to the brain disease.

Since 2017, I have tripped over words. We would say Mom has a "broken brain," that we couldn't use "logic" brain, that "it" is a horrible disease, that Mom was now like a "child," that her brain is "shrinking" ... among many others.

At times these descriptions served a purpose based on where we were in our journey. As those that are on the journey know, it is unique for each person, caregiver and family. I am trying hard to shift to a positive approach to the disease to ensure that our support of my mom is positive. Mom is not Alz, she is Mom. At times

See Letters, page 8

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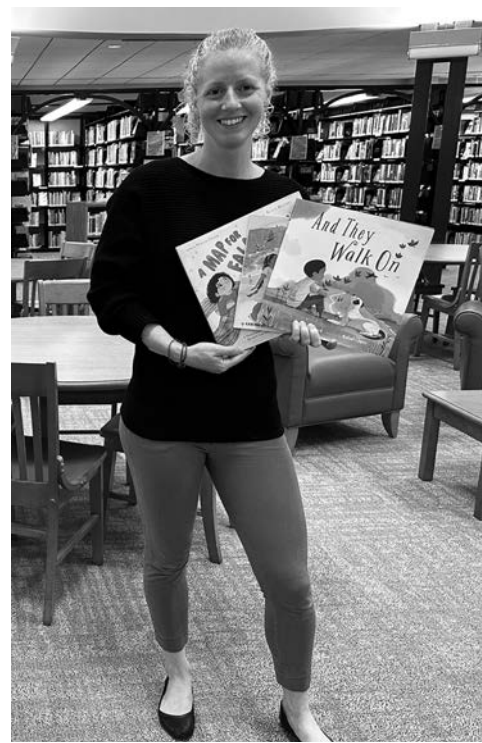
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The Coalition on Diversity & Equity (CoDE) recently conducted a book drive to benefit area libraries and childcare centers. Pictured from left are Richmond Memorial Library Director Aubrey Muscaro and Christi Moraga of CoDE; East Hampton Public Library Director Christine Cachuela; and Raya Eichmiller delivering books to Little People's Play Place in Marlborough.

Multicultural Books Donated to Local Libraries

Nearly 65 multicultural books were recently donated to local public and school libraries and childcare centers, as a result of a book drive organized by the Coalition on Diversity & Equity (CoDE). This is the third annual book drive CoDE has conducted.

The goal is to enhance and expand the library collections with an emphasis on stories that portray children and young adults from around the world and that represent diversity within the United States.

The libraries stretch across the five towns that CoDE serves: Andover, Columbia, East Hampton, Hebron and Marlborough. Specifically, boxes of books were delivered to Andover El-

ementary School and Andover Public Library, Porter School and Saxton B. Little Library in Columbia, East Hampton Public Library, Douglas Library in Hebron, and Richmond Memorial Library in Marlborough. The childcare centers that received books are: Little People's Play Place and Marlborough Cooperative Nursery School (both in Marlborough), Belltown Discovery Center and KOCO Child Care Center in East Hampton.

Each library or child care center director was able to choose the ones they wanted and needed. Some of books requested were:

Name Jar by Yang Sook Choi. This book is about a young girl who immigrates from South

Korea and the children in her class want to give her another name, an American name, but ultimately she embraces her real name and teaches her classmates and teacher how to pronounce it.

Churro Stand - a 2025 Americas Honor Book Award that celebrates community with the pop and sizzle of delicious churros. This book was available in English and Spanish.

Through the Telescope: Mae Jemison Dreams of Space by Charles Smith Jr. This is a poetic ode to the first Black woman astronaut in space.

A special gift this year to all the public libraries was The Narrative of Primus: A Lineage Woven into American History by local genealogist and historian John Mills. This is the tale of

10-year-old Primus, who survived the Middle Passage and endured decades of enslavement in colonial Connecticut.

Two local bookstores, River Bend Bookshop in Glastonbury and Folklore & Fable Booksellers in Colchester, participated in the drive. Customers could purchase books either online or in their stores.

"The bookstores, as well as the many volunteers involved, were key to making this drive so successful," said Christi Moraga, CoDE leader who organized the drive for the past three years. "And of course, we were only able to donate so many beautiful books because of the generous people who purchased them."

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★ Letters, cont. from page 7

it can be hard.

Some families deny the symptoms, some embrace the situation, some take time to accept and do what they can in the moment with the tools that they have.

Some lead with positivity, some lead with anger, some lead with confusion. Some lead with all these emotions and more.

I am grateful for those that choose to read these snippets. I am grateful for those that share their thoughts about what I write and about their own journeys.

If I have learned anything is that we learn from each other and some things will work and some things won't.

All we can do is try and do our best, and know we are not alone.

With peace and kindness, Tonya Maurer - Amston Alz Hotline 1-800-272-3900

A Profile in Filibuster

To the Editor:

We all know the great threats to Connecticut liberty. The overreaching regulator. The meddling bureaucrat. And, this spring, a bill asking out-of-state apartment owners to register with the towns where their buildings sit.

Senate Bill 274 grew out of the Concierge Apartments disaster in Rocky Hill, where an out-of-state firm let a complex rot until thousands of tenants had to be moved into hotels at public expense. The bill did two modest things. It raised penalties on landlords who rack up repeat fire and building-code violations, and it asked absentee owners to tell the towns they exist. It passed the Senate. It cleared its committee unanimously. The sort of thing most of us assumed was already the law.

Our representative, Steve Weir, drew the line. He did not vote against it, exactly. Voting leaves a record. Instead, on the session's last day, he and a few allies threatened to talk, and talk, and talk until the midnight deadline ran out and the bill quietly died, untouched by anything so vulgar as a roll call. It is a strange kind of courage, the heroism of running out the clock so that no one ever has to say where they stood.

I have tried to reconstruct the principle. A bold stand for the right of absentee landlords to stay anonymous? A defense of the crumbling stairwell against the tyranny of the smoke detector? Whatever it was, he held firm where the Senate and a unanimous committee had seen no

fight worth having.

It may help to know that our representative sits on the board of the Connecticut Apartment Association, has called himself "a service provider to apartments," and owns commercial property through an LLC. None of it appears in his official biography, though I suppose a man cannot list everything.

I do not expect my representative to vote for every bill. I would settle for him letting this one come to a vote.

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 he said he is writing as an individual.

What I'm Hearing...

Dear Colchester Neighbors:

Over the last week, I have been asking folks I see around town what they think is the right next step for the town and Board of Education budgets.

Voters are clearly demanding a more affordable budget. The Board of Finance needs to significantly reduce the proposed mill rate. I believe any increase has to be less than the cost of inflation. That will require major cuts across the town and BOE along with some creative solutions that cannot be developed overnight.

People are also angry and frustrated, and they want more information.

The Board of Education and town represent separate legal entities, but our finances are intermingled. Residents receive one tax bill. They need to trust their local government with their money - right now, that confidence is lost. It is the job of elected officials to restore public trust.

The Board of Selectmen, Board of Financ, and Board of Education need time to take concrete actions to address the findings of the Board of Education's forensic accounting report to put in place guardrails and oversight mechanisms to protect Colchester in the future. I have been discussing this with the chairs of the Board of Finance and Board of Education.

We believe some of these steps should include:

- Reintegration of the town and Board of Education finance departments to improve coordination and reduce administrative overhead where possible;
- Establishment of joint health insurance reserve fund policy;
- New coordination mechanisms between

boards that will ensure accountability and oversight to the extent allowed by law.

Officials should also make new opportunities to hear from people directly and to answer their questions. Next week, acting Superintendent of Schools Judy O'Meara and I will do a Q&A at the Colchester Senior Center on Wednesday, June 10, at 1 p.m., for senior center attendees. The BOF will also be scheduling a new budget workshop with Q&A. Other opportunities at different/times locations will also be announced soon.

I believe it is critical that all three boards work collaboratively to address these matters before scheduling another referendum.

Sincerely, Bernie Dennler Colchester First Selectman

Letters Have Added Confusion

To the Editor:

As if the facts surrounding the underfunding of the Colchester Health Reserve Fund were not troubling enough, recent letters to the editor have added further confusion by mischaracterizing the findings of the forensic audit report. Based on the letters from Michael Dubreuil and Jason LaChapelle published last week, readers might conclude that First Selectman Bernie Dennler was involved in either underfunding the account, or hiding that the account was underfunded. That is not what the report states.

Rather than relying on anyone's interpretation, I encourage readers to consider the report's own language:

"Mr. Dennler stated once he understood Ms. Cosgrove's calculations, he became concerned that there may be an error in the manner the formula was being applied in the Board of Education's calculations for the annual health insurance since 2023/2024. Mr. Dennler stated he met with Mr. Sullivan and Ms. Linkkila to share his concern, and that he was told that they stood by their calculations.

Without access to Ms. Linkkila's spreadsheets for 2023/2024 forward, it is unclear how Mr. Dennler could have quantified the issue with Ms. Linkkila's health insurance calculations."

The report's language regarding Mr. Dennler differs notably from its findings about other individuals involved. In discussing the former superintendent and former business manager, the report uses phrases such as "she knew" and "he should have known." No similar conclusions are drawn regarding Mr. Dennler.

The report also notes that the town's portion

of the fund had not been properly funded in the years before Mr. Dennler took office and that corrective action was taken during his administration.

I encourage Colchester residents to read the report for themselves and evaluate its findings directly, rather than relying on political interpretations offered by others. The underfunding of this reserve fund is a serious matter, and public discussion should be grounded in the report's actual findings rather than selective readings of its contents.

Sincerely, Erin Shuman - Colchester

Hidden, Then Handled

To the Editor:

The forensic audit on the school health insurance fund is public. So is the timeline. Read together, they tell a simple story: a problem stayed out of view for years, and then got handled in weeks.

The reserve began to be drained with the 2023/2024 budget. Budgets stopped using the consultant's actual projected claims. The board only ever saw summarized figures. Detailed math moved into private spreadsheets managed by unelected officials. A formula error overstated available funds by about \$738,000.

Concerns were raised in spring 2025. Officials acted publicly to address the shortfall at the time. It was discussed in budget meetings on March 11, March 19, April 1, and June 25, 2025.

Elected officials asked questions. They were told the numbers were right and that this was a one-time fix.

Per the report: "It is unclear how the information that was available to them could have helped the board members identify the issue with the health reserve account balance prior to it becoming apparent."

Then a new board took office and hired a new broker. In January 2026, the broker flagged a nearly million-dollar shortfall. From there things moved the way they should when something is wrong: Board of Finance Jan. 28. Joint meeting Feb. 9. Superintendent's letter Feb. 10. Board of Finance Feb. 11. Newsletter and social media Feb. 13. Budget workshop Feb. 18. The full financial scope was made public before the referendum on Feb. 24.

Forensic audit commissioned Feb. 26. By then, the public already knew the price tag. The audit was about finding the root cause.

The audit found no fraud and no theft. It found weak processes and poor transparency

Rivereast Standout Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

Aiden Niderno - East Hampton High School (Track & Field): Niderno won both the javelin and high jump at the SLC championships at Coginchaug Regional High School on May 26. Niderno, a senior, tossed the javelin 149' 2" to win the event comfortably ahead of runner-up Logan Prince of Portland (132' 9"). He then won gold in the high jump with a personal-best leap of 6' 0", besting 15 other competitors. At the conference clash, Niderno also took 3rd place in the 110-meter hurdles and 7th place in the long jump. Niderno, who will study electrical engineering at the University of Connecticut, is also an all-conference basketball player and standout soccer player at EHHS.

Ellie Ballard - RHAM High School (Track & Field): Ballard won a state championship, winning the 3,200 meters at the Class M Championships at New Britain's Willow Brook Park on June 1. Ballard, a senior, ran a blistering 10:59.45 in the event, beating runner-up Callie DeLuise of Oxford by over 12 seconds and easily defeating the rest of the field, which featured 24 total competitors. Ballard had previously broken the school-record in the event, running a 10:58.93 at the Middletown Invite on May 2. Following her graduation from RHAM later this month, Ballard will continue her cross-country and track career at Central Connecticut State University where she will compete with the Blue Devils running programs.

Spencer Masterson - Portland High School

(Track & Field): Masterson won a conference championship, placing first in the pole vault at the Shoreline Conference (SLC) championships that took place at Coginchaug Regional High School on May 26. Masterson, a senior, cleared a personal-best height of 13' 6" to best runner-up Michael Bellemare (12' 6") and the rest of the conference competitors. On Monday (June 1), Masterson added a state championship to his resume, winning the Class S state title in the pole vault.

Riley Stolzman - Bacon Academy (Softball): Stolzman was named the Most Valuable Player (MVP) as the Bobcats captured a second straight Eastern Connecticut Conference (CCC) championship with a 3-2 victory over Montville on May 28. Stolzman, a junior, had a pair of stand-out performances during the tourney run, first striking out 10 and allowing only one hit during the team's 12-0 win over Lyman Memorial in the ECC Division II semifinals on May 26. She then fanned 11 in eight innings of work in the championship clincher, which went into extras before Gabby Russo scored in the top of the eight after being sent home by Briana Hawes. Stolzman also did damage from the plate in the two tourney wins, combining for four hits while scoring a run and driving in another.

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



Aiden Niderno and Madelyn Daniels were honored as East Hampton High School's CAS-CIAC 2025-26 Scholar-Athletes. The Scholar-Athlete Program annually recognizes two high school seniors from each high school whose academic and athletic careers have been exemplary, whose personal standards and achievements are a model to others, and who possess high levels of integrity, self-discipline and courage. The pair of Bellringers, who will both attend the University of Connecticut following graduation, were honored at the annual Scholar-Athletes banquet held at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville last month.

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stretching back years.

That is exactly how you want public officials to act once they understand a problem. Quickly, in public, with the receipts. Hidden for years, handled in weeks, and on the record.

John Farrell - Colchester

Note: Farrell is a member of the Colchester Democratic Town Committee, but said he is writing as an individual.

Thank You, Mr. Weir

To the Editor:

I was very thankful to be a part of the helicopter presentation and tour that Mr. Weir was willing to put on for the aerospace class. His selflessness in taking time out of multiple days of his schedule to come and present to ready-to-learn high school students was very appreciated. I know that not many people in high school aerospace classes would get a chance to see a live model of what they are studying up close.

We were very happy to welcome Mr. Weir and let him share his knowledge with us. Mr. Weir even let me come attend the presentation and check out his helicopter, knowing my passion for aviation, although I am not currently in that class. That shows an excellent inclusivity of others. Thank you again for coming to present at RHAM for us!

Sincerely,

Sawyer Montstream
RHAM High School
10th Grade Student

140 'no.' Regionally, the entire budget failed by just 149 votes (1,573 to 1,722). When thousands stay home, we let a tiny fraction of the town dictate our future.

We cannot afford to sit this out or let our kids be caught in adult political games. When a school system takes a hit, property values drop right with it, hurting every homeowner. On Tuesday, June 16th, the thousands of supporters who stayed home last week need to show up, vote 'yes' and protect Marlborough's future.

Sincerely,

Stacy Constantine - Marlborough

Weir's Vaccination Stand

To the Editor:

I was appalled to discover recently that Steve Weir voted against the Connecticut legislation passed to ensure the integrity of vaccinations in our state. The bill sought to ensure that the state would be able to make recommendations and continue traditional vaccine standards, given the recent federal chaos and meddling of vaccine recommendations by HHS and the CDC. The law did not make any changes, simply provided local, evidence-based control over vaccinations in the event of federal interference on this very important health and safety issue. It was endorsed by the Connecticut Hospital Association.

Let your voice be heard on Election Day and let's find someone else in the 55th District to lead us on this and other very important issues.

Jean Wilson - Marlborough

Note: Wilson is a member of the Marlborough Board of Education, but said she is writing as an individual.

Protect Marlborough's Future

To the Editor:

As a Marlborough parent and a public school teacher, watching our town vote down the RHAM budget for a second time was incredibly frustrating. Speaking as a mom, I want stability for our kids. Speaking as an educator, I know that dragging out a budget doesn't save a dime; it does the exact opposite.

This isn't a vote for luxuries. The RHAM budget covers the absolute basics: fixing leaky roofs, paying the electric bill, keeping class sizes normal, and running bus routes. I understand the frustrations over administration funding, but voting down an operating budget will not fix those top-level issues; it only hurts the classrooms. If we want to change how the district is managed, that work needs to be done when we vote for Board of Education members, not by defunding baseline school operations.

In reality, voting 'no' to save money actively wastes it. Every single re-vote forces taxpayers to foot the bill for printing ballots, paying poll workers, and running legal ads. Worse, it triggers a massive waste of time. We are literally paying town employees to do the same job three times over through endless emergency meetings and paperwork.

What makes this defeat truly painful is how few people decided it. Marlborough has thousands of voters, yet only 459 total cast a ballot on the operating budget: 319 'yes' and a mere

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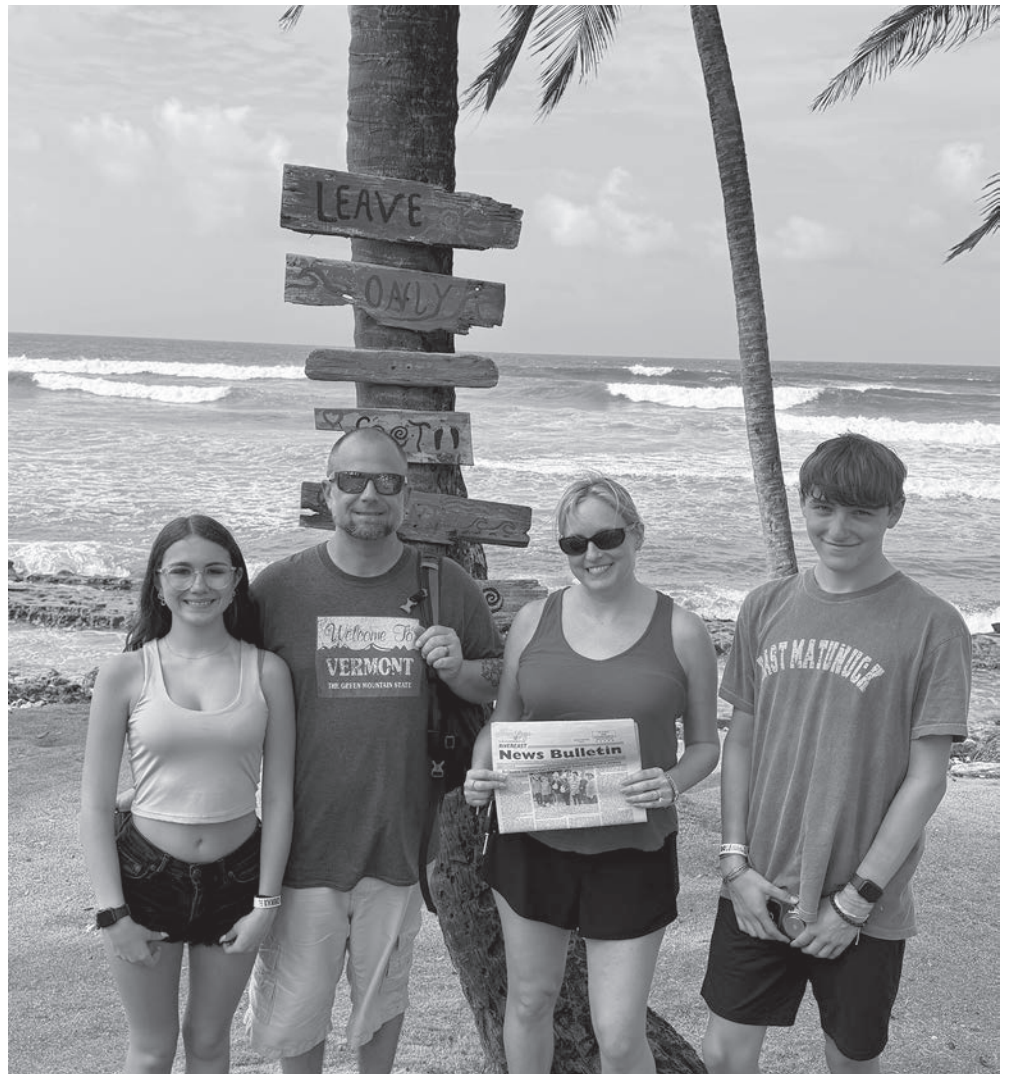
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Where in the World is the *Rivereast*?

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!



Dining in Greece... Mary Ann Wall of East Hampton and her family Pam, Tim, Sarah, and Lily Oakes of Chelmsford, Mass., brought the *Rivereast* to Anefani Greek Restaurant in Athens, Greece.



Spring Break in Barbados... During school April break, Hebron resident Erin Brown and her family traveled to Barbados – and of course brought along their favorite weekly newspaper! This picture was taken on the east coast, in Bathsheba. From left are Hailee Brown, Jeff Brown, Erin Brown and Michael Szegda.



The Paper at the Pantheon.... Deanna Rhodes of Marlborough brought the *Rivereast* to the Pantheon in Rome, Italy to celebrate her 60th birthday.



Three Generations in Italy!... Three generations of Italian heritage ladies recently returned from a holiday in Sicily where we visited and two of them hiked Mt. Edna. From left are Liliana Potter, Jill Potter from Columbia, and Nonna, Judi Meacham from Hebron.

Where in the World?

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

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Trinity Church News

Trinity Episcopal Church, 345 Main St., invites the community to worship each week. Services are on Sundays at 9:30 a.m., and Bible Study starts at 8:30 a.m. each Sunday. The schedule can always be located at www.trinitychurchportlandct.org.

and our church office is open from 2-4 p.m. each Friday. All are invited to join the Anglican Prayer beading sessions at this time too.

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

St. Mary Church News & Notes

St. Mary Roman Catholic Church, located at 45 Freestone Ave., invites all to attend its services and events. For more information, visit www.stmaryportlandct.org.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Baptism: Call Sue Ferraiolo at 860-342-2308 to

Car Show Celebrity Guest

Joe Furey, chief meteorologist of WTNH-TV News 8 will be the grand marshal for the Portland Annual Car Show hosted by the Freestone Knights of Columbus on Friday, June 26, in the parking lot of the Church of Saint Mary.



Joe Furey

The show will be filled with show cars from the owners of muscle cars, street rods, and other cars and trucks.

The show starts at 3 p.m. in the rear parking lot. Prizes will be awarded at 7 p.m. and snacks will be available along with a large charity raffle. This will be the eighth show the Knights have sponsored.

The Knights of Columbus Memorial Car Show is organized by Portland's Freestone Council 7 located at the Church of Saint Mary. The proceeds of this event are used to finance local charitable causes.

Portland Fair Planning Underway

Planning is underway for this year's Portland Fair, which will return to its "new" location at Chris Cote's Driving Range on Oct. 2, 3 and 4.

Crafts and Community Tent: This year, the Crafts and Community Tent continues its theme of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle while leaning into celebrating America's 250th birthday. The popular Trashion Show will return on Friday night. Another returning event is the Triple Crown of Baking held in partnership with the Guilford and Durham fairs. Melissa Kelley, chairperson for the tent, is seeking donations of leftover scrap fabrics for a community weaving project which will culminate in a banner for the tent.

Donations Welcome: The Friends of the Fair campaign continues through June 15. Donations of \$25 receive a two-day pass to the fair, while a \$40 donation receives a three-day pass. Support helps fair organizers continue to improve the grounds.

Chicken Barbecue: This third annual fundraiser will be held July 20 at Portland River-

front Park. This event is being held in partnership with Portland Fish and Game Club. All are invited for dinner and musical entertainment. Tickets are \$30 for adults and \$10 for children.

Volunteers Wanted: Volunteers are always welcome. There are open positions for a volunteer coordinator and ribbons/trophies coordinator. If interested in volunteering, email info@portlandfair.com.

Bereavement Support Group

St. Mary Church, located at 45 Freestone Ave., invites all to attend the Bereavement Support Group. The evening session meets the second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. and the afternoon session meets the fourth Tuesday at 3 p.m. - both in the church hall.

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



The Portland Housing Authority recently received an award from the Connecticut Green Bank. Pictured from left are Mackey Dykes, Executive Vice President of Financing Programs at Connecticut Green Bank; Katie Shelton, Senior Manager, Market Engagement, at Connecticut Green Bank; Allen Harrison, Executive Director of Portland Housing Authority; Carol Diaz, Deputy Director of the Portland Housing Authority; and Nikki Dow, Solar Project Manager at Connecticut Green Bank.

Housing Authority Receives Award

The Portland Housing Authority was recently honored by the Connecticut Green Bank.

The Connecticut Green Bank, a quasi-public agency that helps finance green energy projects in various sectors and markets, held its annual Green Bank Awards in March. The awards recognized outstanding partners, contractors, municipalities, investors, and community organizations that helped accelerate clean energy adoption and climate solutions across the state in 2025.

Specifically, Portland Housing Authority was recognized for its solar project at Quarry Heights. PHA was awarded "Outstanding Project for Solar MAP+." In a press release, Connecticut Green Bank said its Solar Marketplace Assistance Program (MAP+) makes it easier for multifamily housing providers, municipalities, and state agencies to add solar and battery storage to their properties by providing support that simplifies every step of the process.

"After Solar MAP+ expanded to serve affordable multifamily properties in 2024, the Portland Housing Authority took the initiative to

bring energy-saving benefits to their residents at Quarry Heights," the press release stated. "By advancing a solar project at Quarry Heights, the Authority demonstrated how clean energy can directly benefit residents while strengthening community sustainability. The 164-kW solar installation will deliver not only clean, renewable power but also more than \$12,000 in energy savings for its 70 tenants in the first year alone."

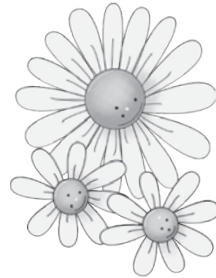
Kindergarten Registration

Valley View School is holding kindergarten registration for the 2026-27 school year.

Parents/guardians whose children will be five years of age on or before Sept. 1, 2026, should contact Valley View School at kregistration@portlandct.us to indicate if you will be registering your child for kindergarten. Please provide your child's full name, date of birth, phone number, address, and parent's names.

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

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Bob McDougall's landmark panorama project, "Three Decades of Change on Main Street 1995-2005-2015-2025," is currently on display at Portland Library.

'Three Decades of Change on Main Street'

Portland Library and Portland Historical Society proudly present the next chapter of Bob McDougall's landmark panorama project, "Three Decades of Change on Main Street 1995-2005-2015-2025," as part of Portland's America 250 Celebration. The exhibit includes four series, each 96 feet long, featuring 2,400 photographs of Main Street.

What began in 1995 as a "snapshot in time" has been expanded into a vivid, generation-spanning visual journey, which invites visitors to trace the evolution of Portland's Main Street with each layer of photographs. McDougall's original vision, to help viewers see "the way it used to be," now deepens into something even more powerful: how a single street can reflect the passage of time.

When asked what gave him the idea for the project, McDougall related a story about his early years with Portland Historical Society when he would listen to the elders telling stories about growing up in Portland and trying to describe where things used to be and what things used to look like. That sparked the idea to record how things are with photographs so that in the future when telling a story people could see what could be hard to describe.

"The focus is as much on the space between houses as it is on the houses," he said. "Most old photographs capture the buildings, but few focus on the open space, outbuildings and trees."

The photo mural attempts to capture the

whole picture, both the east and west side of Main Street from the Arrigoni Bridge to Indian Hill Avenue (a distance of about two miles), with series created decades apart, the changes and evolution of the area become obvious.

"This project is a remarkable gift to our community," said Library Director Jennifer Billingsley. "It allows us to see not only how Main Street has changed, but to reflect on how our shared history continues to shape who we are today."

The exhibit will be on display at the Portland Library for the months of May and June. An exhibit reception, sponsored by the Friends of the Portland Library with an opportunity to speak with McDougall, will take place at the library (20 Freestone Ave.) on Thursday, June 11, at 6 p.m.

McDougall, born and raised in Portland, has been a longtime student of town history. He joined Portland Historical Society as a charter member when he was in the sixth grade and currently serves as the Museum Director of the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History. In 2004 he authored *Images of America: Portland*. A graduate of Portland High School and the University of Connecticut, McDougall is a computer systems engineer by trade.

Portland Historical Society President Susan Bransfield said the society is proud to be a sponsor of the photo mural. "It is a remarkable exhibit loaded with historic and present-day pictures of our Main Street," she said.

YFS News and Notes

Portland Youth and Family Services (YFS) has announced the following items of interest. Call YFS at 860-342-6758 for more information.

Rent Rebate Program 2026: YFS is processing rent rebates for Portland residents. Call for information and an appointment.

Blast-Off to Summer: June 25, 4-6 p.m., at the Town Green (between Senior Center and the Library). Come celebrate with activities including a petting zoo, face-painting, bounce house and more.

Annual Juneteenth Celebration Returns

Portland's Committee on Solidarity/Juneteenth invites all to the annual Juneteenth Celebration on Saturday, June 20, from noon-5 p.m., at Portland Middle School. This marks the eighth year the Portland community has hosted this event.

Juneteenth commemorates the end of slavery in America. On June 19, 1865 a Union Army general informed over 250,000 enslaved Black people in Texas that slavery had been abolished at the end of the Civil War. They learned that two and a half years before, Abraham Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that "all persons held as slaves...hence-

Power-Up Portland - Prevention and Wellness: The mission of Power-Up Portland is to prevent substance abuse among the youth of our community. Community programs are organized to foster health and wellness, provide education and help everyone understand how to support people in recovery. All are invited the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Buck Foreman Community Center. Call YFS for more information.

forth shall be free." In 1979, Texas was the first state to make Juneteenth an official holiday; several others followed suit over the years. In June 2021, Congress passed a resolution establishing Juneteenth as a federal holiday.

The celebration will begin at noon in the auditorium with presentations from Barbara Shaw, from Voices of Portland; Eric Grant, the first and only Black police officer in Portland; and Robert Jefferson, from the Black History in Middletown project. There will be live music by the band At Last, and a variety of vendors from Black-owned businesses. There will be food to enjoy, and free ice cream for a sweet treat.

Families are encouraged to bring their kids, who can enjoy games and other activities.

Carpino Receives Republican Nomination For Reelection to State House

State Rep. Christie Carpino has been nominated by local Republicans to seek another term representing Connecticut's 32nd House District, which includes Cromwell and Portland.

Carpino, who has represented the district since first being elected in 2010, said she is honored and grateful for the confidence placed in her by Cromwell and Portland delegates and supporters as she prepares for the 2026 election. She currently serves as House Republican Caucus chair, a key leadership position within the House Republican caucus.

"I am deeply honored to receive this nomination for another term in the Connecticut House of Representatives," said Carpino. "Serving the residents of Cromwell and Portland has been the privilege of a lifetime. Together, we have worked to protect taxpayers, support local public safety and public health, strengthen our schools, and advocate for policies that keep Connecticut affordable for families and seniors."

Carpino said she will continue to fight for residents and families.

"Families continue to face rising costs, businesses are struggling with economic uncertainty, and communities need a fighter for them," Carpino said. "I remain committed to common-sense solutions that improve our quality of life and standing up for the interests of the people I represent."

Carpino thanked local supporters, volunteers, and residents for their continued trust and encouragement.

Portland Town Clerk Mike Tierney nominated Christie Carpino during the Republican convention. She was seconded by Cromwell



State Rep. Christie Carpino

resident Mike Cannata.

Tierney said Carpino "has a proven track record of success... and is a true asset to Portland, Cromwell, and Connecticut as a whole. It's my honor to nominate her."

As Carpino hits the campaign trail, she said, "I look forward to earning the support of voters, spreading my positive message, and continuing to serve the communities I proudly call home."

Dog License Renewal, Search for 'Top Dog'

The Portland town clerk's office is once again accepting donations of dog and cat food as part of its annual contest to determine which dog will wear the number one dog tag for the upcoming year. The pet food collected will go to the Portland Food Bank, for those in temporary need.

To enter, donate cans/bags of dog or cat food when registering your dog at the town clerk's office in June. For each can/bag donated, your dog will earn a ticket for a drawing to be held at 4 p.m. on June 30. Limit of 16 entries per dog, although additional donations are greatly appreciated. The first three tickets chosen will receive the #1, #2, and #3 dog tags.

All dog owners must obtain a license or re-

new their current licenses between June 1 and June 30 for the dog license year beginning July 1. A recent state law also requires an owner of a dog going to a kennel to be licensed. The state-mandated registration fee is \$8 for a spayed/neutered dog, and \$19 for a non-spayed/non-neutered dog. Certificate of spaying/neutering must be provided for first-time licenses to receive the \$8 fee amount. A rabies vaccination certificate must also be provided for first time licenses or if the previous vaccination has expired. After July 1, a \$1 monthly penalty will apply.

More information can be found at www.portlandct.org/licenses-certificates or by calling the town clerk's office at 860-342-6743.

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 June 1.

Weekly Programs: Unless noted, all programs are free. **Monday 6/8: Light Aerobics,** 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Tuesday 6/9: Bears on a Journey, 9:30-11 a.m. Help make fleece teddy bears for cancer patients. Bears on a journey are seeking donations of light fleece (one yard or more) for making teddy bears for cancer patients throughout the state. If you would like to donate, call 860-342-0809; **Watercolor Class,** 9:30 a.m. - for more info please contact Bivenne at bivenne@yahoo.com; **Congregate Meal,** noon - \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: meatloaf slice, mashed potatoes, gravy, steamed carrots, peach cup, string cheese; **Coupons for Troops,** 1-4 p.m.; **Setback,** 1 p.m.; **SyncoCize II,** 5-6 p.m. - fee is donation to instructor.

Wednesday 6/10: 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; **Bridge,** every other Wednesday, 12:30-4 pm

Thursday 6/11: Stretch & Tone, 9:30 a.m.; **Knit & Stitch,** 10 a.m.; **Congregate Meal,** noon - \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: turkey meatballs, ziti with marinara, mixed veggies, roll & butter, string cheese, apple; **Mah Jongg,** 12:30 p.m.; **Scrabble,** 1 p.m.

Friday 6/12: 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.

June Special Events: Unless noted, **registration is required for all programs.** Also, unless noted, all programs are free.

Monday, June 8: Bloom Therapeutic Plant

and Nature Program: Lovely Lavender Workshop, 1 p.m. Fee is \$20.

Wednesday, June 10: Bingo with Sean from Ageless Insurance, 1:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 11: Sweet Treats and Conversation with Community Leaders, 1 p.m. This month's community leaders are to be determined.

Friday, June 12: Family History Fun with Ken Doney, 10:30 a.m.

Saturday, June 13: Strawberry Festival at Olde Mystic Village. Leave the Center at 10 a.m. There is a \$5 ride fee.

Monday, June 15: Veterans Benefits Workshop, 10 a.m.-noon. Learn about programs and services offered to veterans and surviving spouses.

Wednesday, June 17: Walking Club, 9 a.m. Meet at the intersection of Breezy Corners and the Air Line Trail.

Wednesday, June 17: This month's Hiking Club meetup will be a special Birding and Butterfly Hike led by Beau Dougherty. Meet at the intersection of Breezy Corners and the Air Line Trail at 9 a.m.

Friday, June 19: Center closed for Juneteenth.

Monday, June 22: Technology workshop, 11 a.m. The topic for this session will be MyChart.

Thursday June 25: Drumming Circle, 2-3 p.m. No experience needed and instruments will be provided. Fee is a \$5 donation for the food bank.

Friday June 26: Shopping trip to IKEA. Leave the center at 10 a.m. There is a \$5 ride fee.

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.

Massage by Joan: Thursdays and Fridays, by appointment only. Call Joan at 860-301-6507.

Library Meeting, Book Collection

The Friends of Portland Library remind the community that the next Book Collection Day will be on June 13 from 10 a.m.-noon.

Bring your previously loved books, CDs, DVDs, puzzles and games that are in saleable condition. Volunteers will be at the back door of the library to assist with donations.

New Land Record Fraud Alert System

The Portland Town Clerk's Office is pleased to announce that property owners can now sign up for a free land record fraud alert. With Fraud Alert, you can receive an email alert whenever a document, such as a deed, mortgage or lien is recorded under your name. Documents can be viewed online or at the Portland Town Clerk's Office.

Residents and property owners are encouraged to participate in this free service. Sign up today at www.portlandct.org/town-clerk or see the Portland Town Clerk's Office for details.

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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 Closing:** The library will be closed Friday, July 3 and Saturday July 4 for Independence Day.

Children's Programs: Drop-In Playdates: Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m., June 10 and 17. Kids birth to 5 years and their caregivers are invited to drop into the Wagner Room for some open play with library toys. No registration required.

Summer Reading Volunteer Training: Wednesday, June 10, 3:30 p.m., for students going into grades seven and up. Stop by the library or visit the teen page of the library website to sign up for the Summer Reading Volunteer program. Volunteers will not be able to sign up for volunteer shifts unless they have attended this or another mandatory training session.

Coming Soon! Cook Up an Adventure Summer Reading Program: Visit the library on or after June 22 to pick up your reading log, or visit the Summer Reading portal on the library website to track your reading electronically. Each day you read 20 minutes or more counts towards your summer reading goal. Earn prizes each time you reach five days.

Summer Reading Kickoff: Michael OJ: Wednesday, June 24, 6:30 p.m., at Portland Middle School auditorium. This is a family-friendly magic show featuring audience participation and comedy. Registration requested, but not required.

Tasty Tales: Mondays at 10:30 a.m. June 22, July 6, 13, 20, 27, Aug. 3. Come to the Mary Flood Room to enjoy stories, rhymes and songs about some favorite tasty treats. A craft project will be offered at the end of each program.

Cooking Around the World: For kids going into grades K-2. Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. June 24, July 8, 15, 22, 29, Aug. 5. Travel around the world as you learn about different cultures through cooking and crafts.

Cooking Academy: For kids going into grades 3-5. Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. June 23, July 7, 14, 21, 28, Aug. 4. Take a new food-themed adventure each week, focused on science experiments, art projects, and cooking.

Red, White and Blue Tye-Dyed Tees: For kids going into grades 6-up. Thursday, June 25, 3 p.m. Come to the library flagpole to tie-dye a red, white and blue T-shirt just in time for the Fourth of July, and then continue the celebration by decorating your own tie-dyed cupcakes. All materials will be supplied. Space is limited.

Adult Programs: Book Clubs: Mystery Lovers Book Club: Tuesday, June 9, 1 p.m. *Murder Takes a Vacation* by Laura Lippman will be discussed. After this, the library book clubs will go on summer vacation. Check back in August to see what each group will read in September.

Movie: Wednesday, June 10, 1 p.m. *The Housemaid* (2025; rated R) will be shown. Run time is 131 minutes.

Adult Craft Night: Ribbon Flag: Wednesday, June 10, 6 p.m. Create an American flag out of ribbon to display in your home to celebrate America's 250th anniversary. Registration is open now. Space is limited.

Photo Exhibit Reception: Thursday, June 11,

5:30 p.m. This is a reception for "Three Decades of Change on Main Street, 2005, 2015, 2025," by Bob McDougall. Portland Public Library and the Portland Historical Society present the next chapter of Bob McDougall's panorama photography project, a four series visual journey, which includes 2,400 photographs. This exhibit is running from now through June 27.

Understanding Your Credit Scores: Tuesday, June 16, 6:30 p.m. Stephen Robert from Bedrock Credit America will teach on credit scores vs. FICO credit scores, what goes into the FICO scores, negative remarks on the credit and how to properly remove them, and changes coming to the FICO credit scores.

Adult Summer Reading Program: Cook Up an Adventure: When you sign up for the 2026 Adult Summer Reading Program, you receive a coupon for a free book/books (up to \$2 in value) from the Friends' ongoing book sale & another coupon when you log 2,000 pages. On June 22 register for summer reading and start logging the pages you read. For every adult who joins the reading program and reads at least one book this summer (including audiobooks and graphic novels) the Friends of Portland Library will donate \$3 towards two musical instrument rental scholarships for the 2026-27 school year for two students at Brownstone Intermediate School.

Intergenerational Drumming Circle: Monday, June 22, 6:30 p.m. Gather on the Waverly Town Green for a West African-inspired drum circle led by Mark Zarrillo, knowledgeable in West African music, culture and with 40 years drumming wisdom. Drums will be supplied.

The Full Rise - Sourdough Bread Demonstration: Tuesday, June 23, 6 p.m. This educational presentation that walks through the basics - what sourdough is and how it works. Each participant will bring home a 20g sourdough starter, a starter care card and a classic sourdough recipe. Space is limited; registration opens Monday, June 1, at 10 a.m. This project is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by Connecticut State Library.

Adult Craft Night: Wire & Sea Glass Jewelry: Monday, June 29, 6 p.m. Local crafter Laurie-Lynne of Creative Girl Studios will teach different techniques to make wire wrapped sea glass jewelry. Each participant will leave with a completed pendant necklace. Registration opens Monday, June 1, at 10 a.m. Space is limited.

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.

Sports Hall of Fame
Portland Parks and Recreation is partnering with the Portland Sports Hall of Fame to accept nominations for the class of 2026.
Nominations can be submitted to the Parks and Recreation Department digitally through its website, portland.recdesk.com (look for the Sports Hall of Fame entry in the program listings), or in person at the office, located at 265 Main St.
Nominations are due July 15.

First Congregational Church News

All are welcome to First Congregational Church, 554 Main St., for worship each Sunday at 10 a.m. Pastor is the Rev. Judith Cooke. This Sunday, June 7, Cooke will preach on the topic "Healing Touch."

Also, at 10 a.m., elementary aged children will meet for Church School in the newly reno-

vated classroom, and the middle school class will meet in the youth room. Infant through Pre-K children will enjoy playtime and an age-appropriate lesson.

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

Trip to Lancaster

Zion Lutheran Church is sponsoring a five-day/four-night trip to Lancaster, Pa., Oct. 26-30 - and a deposit is due soon.

Travelers will receive admission to the Sight and Sound Millennium Theater to experience their *Joshua*; a show at the Magic & Wonder Theater; the Amish Experience Fisher family homestead and school; and Jacob's Choice at the F/X theater. Also included is a guided tour of Philadelphia; a guided tour of Lancaster; and

a visit to the charming Kitchen Kettle Village.

The trip includes travel on a deluxe video-equipped motorcoach with restroom, four diners, four breakfasts, and four nights lodging in a single hotel. Cost of this trip is \$765 per person double occupancy (\$934 pp single or \$745 pp triple occupancy). A \$75 deposit is due by June 27; with the balance due by Aug. 19.

For details & reservations, please contact Barbara Shaw at (860) 262-3531.

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: 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. Contact Parks and Rec. to register.

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.

Junior Golf Workshops with Gerry (Grades K-2): Mondays, June 15-July 6, 4-5 p.m., at Portland West Golf Course.

Junior Golf Workshops with Gerry (Grades 3-5): Mondays, June 15-July 6, 5:15-6:15 p.m., at Portland West.

Junior Golf Workshops with Gerry (Grades 6-8): Tuesdays, June 16-July 7, 5-6 p.m., at Portland West.

Ladies Summer Golf Clinic for Beginners with Gerry: Tuesdays, June 16-July 14, 6:15-7:15 p.m., at Portland West.

Samma-Jamma Summer Basketball Camp: Monday-Thursday, June 29-July 2, 9 a.m.-2:15 p.m., at Brownstone Intermediate School. Open to children in grade 3-8.

Lawn Irrigation Inspections

Starting this month, town inspectors will conduct inspections of irrigation systems on the public water supply.

In order to do this your system must be activated. If for some reason it is not activated, please call the Public Works office at 860-342-6733 to schedule an appointment for a different time.

If the inspector comes out and your system is not activated, you will still be charged the \$75 inspection fee.

See More Portland News, page 33

River Bend Landing Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

There will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Portland's new River Bend Landing on Saturday, June 6 at 10 a.m. on 241 Airline Ave.

State and local officials will be on hand to share congratulatory words before the ribbon is cut to officially open the park. All are welcome to attend.

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Volunteer Opportunity to Run Food Bank

The Marlborough Food Bank is seeking a dedicated volunteer or volunteers to help support and run the Food Bank, which is a local nonprofit organization.

This position entails not only organizing food donations, stocking shelves, and distributing food to clients, but also ordering from Connecticut Food Share, enlisting student volunteers to assist the stable cadre of volunteers, and soliciting new volunteers as

needed.

The Food Bank is open each Tuesday of the week and set up for clients takes place on Monday mornings. Some lifting of light to moderately heavy boxes may be necessary during the Monday set up.

For more information, contact David Pratt or Dawn Tavoleri via email at marlborough-foodbank@comcast.net.

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.

Youth Programs: Netto Summer Day Camp: For grades K-7. June 22-Aug. 14, at Blish Park. Campers will enjoy camp games, arts & crafts, swimming, sports, field trips and special events. All campers are supervised by counselors and lifeguards trained in CPR/First Aid. Fee per week is \$185/resident, \$195/non-resident.

Swim Lessons: Begin the week of June 29. All lesson levels are offered. All lessons are held at Blish Park. Fee is \$65/resident, \$70/non-resident.

Lego – Radical Rides: June 23-27 at Marlborough Elementary School. Ages 5-7 are 8:30-11:30 a.m., and ages 7-12 are noon-3 p.m. Fee is \$155/resident, \$160/non-resident.

Safe Sitter: Saturday, June 27, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Designed to prepare students in grades 6-8 to be safe when they're home alone, watching younger siblings or babysitting. Fee is \$140/resident, \$145/non-resident.

Skyhawks Basketball Camp: June 22-26, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., at MES. For boys and girls ages 7-12. Fee is \$185/resident, \$190/non-resident.

Skyhawks Camp (Soccer, Baseball and Basketball): June 29-July 2 at MES. Mini-Hawk, for ages 4-6, is 9 a.m.-noon, and Multi-Sport, for ages 7-10, is 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Fee is \$130/residents, \$135/non-residents.

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: Tuesdays, noon-12:45 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 MES. Fee is \$5 per week. Session runs until June 2.

Pickleball: Mondays, 5:30-7:30 p.m., and Tues/Thurs, 9-11 a.m., at Blish Park. Open to all levels of play. Registration is free.

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, games and prizes on the bus. Fee is \$185 (400-level seating), or \$255 (lower-level seating). Bus picks up/drops off at Putnam park and ride in Glastonbury.

Country Line Dancing Fundraiser

There will be a Country Line Dancing Fundraiser Friday, June 12, from 6-9 p.m., at the Marlborough American Legion, 128 East Hampton Rd.

Aric Lemeix of Sound Train Music will DJ and lead country line dancing. Cost is \$15, which includes a buffet and dancing. Open to the public.

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

★ RHAM Students, cont. from page 1

line Decesare. Her film explored the history and purpose of the Witness Stones Project.

"Each and every one of those stones represents a life of a person whose story has largely been lost to history," she said. "Through the Witness Stones project, we're working on bringing back the stories, one by one, to the community."

The documentary traced the origins of the project to Gilbert School teacher Dennis Culliton and featured descendants and educators whose lives have been touched by the program.

Students then presented detailed biographies of the two men being honored.

Eleanor Isleib shared the story of Cesar Peters Jr., whose family narrowly escaped being kidnapped and sold into slavery despite having legal freedom. After years of struggle, the family secured their freedom and established a life in Connecticut.

Isleib painted a vivid picture of Peters' life as a farmer, husband and father. She helped the audience understand both the challenges and achievements of a man whose story might otherwise have been forgotten.

William Decesare then presented the life of Martin Powers, who was born in slavery and later gained his freedom. "The history of Hebron and slavery is a complicated one," he told the audience. He explained how Powers eventually became a property owner, taxpayer and voting citizen.

"So while there's not much information on Martin Powers," Decesare concluded, "the little information and sources we have tell us enough pieces to put together the life of a human being." "A man whose life was just as important as any human life is a life that we should never forget," he said.

Students Anna Bech and Lorette Heinen followed with a moving poem imagining two possible paths for Cesar Peters Jr.'s life – one in which he was kidnapped into slavery and another in which he remained free.

Another student, Thomas Case, presented a documentary about Connecticut's 29th Colored Regiment during the Civil War. He connected the regiment's history to descendants of the Pe-

ters family and highlighted the sacrifices made by African American soldiers.

"All of these soldiers sacrificed their lives to let others besides themselves be free," Case said.

After the indoor presentation concluded, guests made their way outside for the unveiling of the new Witness Stones.

"Thank you for being here," Baron said. "This is a wonderful moment that, you know, two centuries later, we're able to recognize and give voice to two people."

The stone honoring Martin Powers recognized him as an enslaved man who later became "a farmer, family man, property owner" and "a voting citizen until 1818." The marker for Cesar Peters Jr. described him as "born free," "almost kidnapped into slavery" and remembered him as a "farmer, family man, property owner."

After the dedication, the celebration continued with African drumming and a group dance presented by Nia Arts. Director EvaE Peart energized the crowd before the performance. "We're so excited to have partnered with the town on multiple occasions to bring you some West African dance," she said.

She encouraged everyone to participate. "The more positive, fun energy you put this way, the more it goes out that way," Peart said. "So we do this together as a community, as one."

Students then danced to the rhythms of West African drumming, circling around "King Jancis" in an exciting and joyful performance that drew smiles and applause from the audience.

Throughout the fellowship hall, visitors explored student-created exhibits that demonstrated their hard work and creativity. Displays included a 3D model of the Peters family home, information about the diet of enslaved people, a student-created newspaper titled *Ye Old Gazette*, exhibits about Hebron history and presentations on African culture as a whole.

Guests also enjoyed drumming demonstrations, storytelling, an interpretive dance performance, and a play entitled *The Life of Cesar Peters*.

As Baron reminded the audience, "Small voices have a big message to tell."

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 at stjohnfisher30@yahoo.com. The church website is www.stjfcchurch.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: Vacation Bible School will be Aug. 3-7, from 9 a.m.-noon daily. The theme is "Armour of God." Details may be found on the church website. Cindy Bryan, Eileen Gilles and Helena Thomas lead the programs for grades K-10, to include a high school youth group. Registration for the new academic year will be during the summer. Stay tuned on the church website with further information.

Ministry, Social and Parish Community Events: An adult choir practices weekly; men's and women's prayer groups, Knights of Columbus, Christian Outreach and Prayer Shawl ministry meet monthly; and an active book club

meets quarterly. Social activities are planned throughout the year to provide additional parish fellowship. The annual church picnic is on Sunday, June 14, from noon-3 p.m.

Community Outreach and Service: The Community Giving Garden is starting up and meets Mondays at 5 p.m. The garden yields fresh produce delivered weekly to the Marlborough Food Bank. All May, the church is holding a baby shower to support Caring Families in Willimantic and a fundraiser supporting Birth-Right in East Hartford. On Saturday, June 6, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., the church will host a drive for Journey Home, where gently-used household goods, new bed pillows and gently used furniture are accepted for those who are transitioning to sustainable housing; see details on the church website. Food drives are held weekly for the Marlborough Food Bank. Bags with specific shopping lists are available at the Masses. Sandwich-making and collection continues the last Thursday of the month for St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown. Other scheduled service opportunities can be found in the weekly bulletin.

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

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. The Christian Education team has provided quiet, activity bags, found in the narthex, for the youngest children to borrow and enjoy at summer services. Sunday School will resume in September.

June 7 is a Communion Sunday. Holy Communion is open to all, regardless of church affiliation, including children with parental guidance. The service will be led by Seaver. Her sermon title is "Just a Little" based on Matthew 9:9-26. After worship all are invited to Coffee Hour in the Thienes Lounge.

279th Annual Program Meeting: Sunday, June 7, in the meetinghouse at 11:15 a.m.

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 May 31. Second-quarter mission-giving will go to the AHM Mental Health Fund.

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 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Follow the shop through Facebook at Second Blessings Thrift Shop, Marlborough for updates. The eBay shop is open year-round at bit.ly/MCCebay.

Community Sings, led by Seat of Our Pants member Carolyn Brodginiski, is Saturday, June 6, at 7 p.m., upstairs in the Thienes Lounge. All who enjoy singing, including musicians, are welcome. Music is provided.

General Information: Marlborough Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming faith community and all are welcome. 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.

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: Free Art Classes: 6/10, 6/17, 6/24 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. No experience or supplies needed. Students will create three landscapes and one seascape using painting, collage and assemblage techniques.

MES Band Practice: Wednesday, June 10, 10 a.m. Students from the fifth grade band will perform a practice show. Coffee will be served.

AHM Grandparent Class: Are you a new grandparent or feel out of touch with this generation? Come join the conversation on Friday June 12th at 11 a.m.

Lunch and Tour of the Residence at Glastonbury: June 16; call the senior center for more information. Transportation available.

Friendship Tours: Lighthouse Cruise: Aug. 12, \$156pp, 18+, open to all towns. Prior to cruise, enjoy brunch at Quonset 'O' Club. 10:15 a.m. departure, 7 p.m. return. RSVP by July 10.

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 Mondays and Tuesdays only. 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.

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 open to qualified residents in need.

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program: Electronic benefit card, preloaded with \$40. For use at participating farmers markets to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, honey, and fresh cut herbs. Use at the Marlborough Farmers Market starting June 3 and running every Wednesday after. For Marlborough residents only. Income limit: Household 1 - \$2,461/month, Household 2 - \$3,337

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. Renters Rebate runs through Sept. 30.

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.

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Art Display at Town Hall

Marlborough Arts Center announces Linda Gotta's solo art exhibit at the Marlborough Town Hall. The exhibit runs from now through the end of July.

For the past two and a half decades, Gotta has dedicated her life to the art of pastel painting, although she has also explored working in watercolor and acrylic.

Gotta's compositions often feature landscapes of farms, beaches, and woodlands, as

well as intimate views of flowers, animals, and birds. Light and shadow play a pivotal role in her compositions.

Marlborough Arts Center presents three-month solo exhibitions for member artists in the Town Hall's hallway. For inquiries regarding Gotta's paintings, contact Lazzari in the Town Hall's tax collector's office or call Marlborough Arts Center at 860-467-6353 or email info@marlborougharts.org.

Resident Graduates a Year Early

Mackenzie L. Donnelly of Marlborough graduated a whole year early from Bryant University in Smithfield, R.I., on May 16. She earned her BSBA in business accounting, with a minor in communications.

Donnelly graduated summa cum laude with a 3.98 GPA, placing her in the top 5% of her class. She was also inducted into Beta Gamma Sigma, an international honor society, representing the highest level of national recognition for an undergraduate business management program.

Next Budget Referendum at Town Hall

In Marlborough, the third budget referendum will be held Tuesday, June 16. Voters will be voting on a revised 2026-27 budget for the RHAM middle and high schools.

The voting location is Town Hall in the large Conference Room. The polls will be open from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. To check your voter status, visit the secretary of state's office at voterregistration.ct.gov or contact the registrar's office at 860-295-6206.

New Class Offered at Marlborough Arts Center

The Marlborough Arts Center, located at 231 North Main Street, announced that Lori Neuman will be returning the afternoon of Sunday, June 28 to teach an acrylic painting class for all levels of students. This class will focus on combining brushwork, palette knife, and glazing to create transparent layers. The emphasis will be on painting sky and water.

Class cost is \$75 with all materials provided except for glazing material. Please go to MarlboroughArts.org and click on classes for more information on the class and how to register. To reach the center by phone, call 860-467-6353.

RTC to Host Bingo

The Marlborough Republican Town Committee will host a night of bingo on Friday, June 19, at the American Legion, 128 East Hampton Rd. Doors open at 6 p.m., and bingo starts at 6:30 p.m.

There will be cash and gift prizes, Tea Cup raffles, and door prizes. Food, snacks and refreshments will be provided.

Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. For more information or to reserve a spot, call or text Zina at 860-798-6038.



Marlborough Lion John Glynn (center) recently received the Melvin Jones Fellow Award. He's flanked by Lion Tom Reiser (left) and Past District Governor Ed Fenton (right).

Lion Receives Melvin Jones Award

The Marlborough Lions Club recently recognized Marlborough Lion John Glynn for his many years of dedicated service to the Lions and to his community. At the club's April 28 meeting, the Melvin Jones Fellow Award was presented to Glynn by Lions Club member Tom Reiser and Past District Governor Ed Fenton.

Glynn has served the Marlborough Lions since joining in 2009. Over the years, he has supported many Lions Club events and has also performed vision screening services at Marlbor-

ough's elementary school and at other locations around Greater Hartford.

The Marlborough Lions are always looking for new members. The Lions provide services worldwide to those with vision impairments and also support local charities right here in Marlborough such as the Marlborough Food Bank. Anyone interested in learning more about the Lions can call Lions President John Paul Bolduc at 860-798-2054 or Lions Secretary Ken Hjulstrom at 860-490-9116.

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Marlborough Farmers Market

Zina's Cucina is hosting the Marlborough Farmer's Market every Wednesday until Oct. 14, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Attendees can expect live music and artisanal goods such as goat milk soaps, fresh fruits and vegetables, baked goods, a variety of crafts and more.

The market will be held on the Marlborough Town Green, and the first 100 shoppers will receive a free Marlborough Farmers tote bag. Produce farms selling at the market will also be accepting WIC and senior vouchers.

Dog Licenses Available at Town Hall

Dog licenses are now available in the Town Clerk's office. Please check and make sure your dog's rabies certificate is up to date as licenses cannot be issued without a current rabies certificate.

If you register your dogs between June 1 and June 15 and bring an item to donate to the Marlborough Food Bank, your pup(s) will be entered into a raffle for the number one dog tag. The town will draw the winner on June 16. There is one entry per dog.

The fee for spayed or neutered dogs is \$8 and \$19 for unaltered. You must license your dog before July 1 or a \$1 late fee will be added each month. If you choose to get your license through the mail, please include \$1.23 for postage, and make your check out to the Town of Marlborough.

The Town Clerk's hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday; 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday; and 8 a.m. to noon on Friday.

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Town Planner Set to Depart in July

By Anne Lilburn

Town Planner Juliet Hodge is leaving East Hampton, roughly two years after joining the town. Hodge will be leaving to take a position with the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, the regional planning organization serving the northeast corner of the state.

East Hampton Town Manager David Cox said that Hodge's last day would likely be in early July, and that the town would be working on a plan to cover her role in both the short and long terms.

"I appreciate Juliet's work here in East Hampton and am thankful for the short time she brought her extensive experience to us," said Cox. "The town will be seeking a firm or private practitioner to fill the role on an interim basis as we search for a candidate to fill the role permanently. Filling this type of role with a quality and qualified candidate is challenging, but we are hopeful that it can be done in the next several months."

Several council members lamented the loss of a qualified employee.

"I'm very sad about it, quite frankly," said Town Council member Rich Knotek, a Democrat. "She was quite an asset, I think, to this

town, in a position that's so very tough."

Knotek said her job as town planner was a hard one, and that part of it involved "call[ing] balls and strikes the way she sees them according to our regulations." That umpire role could be particularly challenging, he said, when people didn't get what they wanted, because it was impossible to make all parties equally happy.

"I think she came in in a very challenging situation," said Town Council Chair Dean Markham, also a Democrat. "East Hampton was going and is going through a lot of soul-searching: [residents are considering] what they think they want and what they can get, particularly in the way of land use and planning."

He said that Hodge "came in with high expectations of how she thought the rules and regulations should be framed and implemented and applied, and this is an old Yankee community - hardheaded and things don't change that quickly - and I think that's what she may have run up against."

She had a "very tough skin, no two ways about it," said Knotek. "She's a professional, she's experienced." He noted that the time period surrounding the community outcry about the

proposed biosolids facility had been challenging for many of those working in town government.

"It's tough for anybody to take, no matter how thick your skin is. And it's a shame [that] we had to really fall into that trap as a town," he said.

Knotek and Markham both said Hodge had accomplished significant work in her short time in East Hampton, with both pointing to the ongoing POCD (Plan of Conservation and Development) revision process as a highlight of her tenure. This revision, which towns in Connecticut are required to do every 10 years, involved a survey and many community outreach sessions.

"I think it's the first time in my lifetime, which is pretty substantial at this point, that they've ever had this kind of participation or openness in the process," said Markham.

The last few POCD revisions, he said, "just sort of rubber-stamped the previous report and didn't do any real thinking about the long-term future for the town, and this is, in my view, the

first time that's occurred."

"This whole POCD process, one which we've never really had before like this, I think it was good," said Knotek. "I think it really promoted citizen involvement, and that's what it's all about."

"There's going to be gives and takes and pulls and pushes, you know, and tugs of war between people with different views," Knotek said. "It's not always easy, but it's healthy, and I think she navigated this whole POCD very, very well."

In her last month in her position, Hodge will continue to support the town as it moves to revise the POCD. On Wednesday, June 10, the town will host a public community visioning session at 6 p.m. in the Memorial School gymnasium. The session, designed to gather community input on its priorities for the future, will involve hands-on and interactive activities. Topics discussed will include open space and conservation, economic development, housing and the village center.

America 250 Community Treasure Hunt

In celebration of America 250, Bevin Bros. Mfg., makers of Bevin Bells in East Hampton, is bringing patriotic fun to the community with a special treasure hunt: "13 Bells for 13 Colonies."

Beginning June 1, Bevin Bros. will hide 13 numbered bells around East Hampton, with each bell representing one of the original 13 colonies. Community members are invited to search for the bells while out and about around town.

Those who find a bell are encouraged to take a photo with it and either email the photo to sales@bevinbells.com or bring the bell to the

Bevin Bros. factory office at 17 Watrous Street in East Hampton. Photos may be shared by Bevin Bros. to celebrate the finders and the community spirit of the event.

As a special thank-you, anyone who brings a found bell to the factory office will receive a second America 250 commemorative bell to celebrate the nation's birthday. The treasure hunt will continue until all 13 bells have been found, so residents and visitors are encouraged to keep their eyes peeled. You never know where a bell might appear!

Bevin Bells to Host Open House Factory Tour

Bevin Bros., America's only dedicated bell manufacturer, will welcome the community for an open house factory tour on Saturday, June 20, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at its East Hampton facility, located at 17 Watrous Street.

The event will give visitors a behind-the-scenes look at the craftsmanship, equipment, and people behind Bevin's historic American-made bells. Founded in 1832 and now in its sixth generation of family ownership, Bevin Bros. continues to manufacture bells in East

Hampton, a town long known as "Belltown."

Guests will have the opportunity to tour the factory floor, learn about the bell-making process, meet members of the Bevin team, and see how traditional manufacturing techniques continue to support modern products, custom work, and American-made craftsmanship.

The open house will include guided tours, product demonstrations, and a Q&A with staff. Admission is free, and attendees do not need to register in advance.

Old Home Days 5K

The 2026 Old Home Days Rails-to-Trails 5K Run will be at 7 p.m. Friday, July 10. This is a point-to-point 5K race that will start at Connecticut Draft Horse Rescue.

Shuttle buses will be provided starting at 6 p.m., departing from Center School. There will be no parking at the start. New for 2026, the last shuttle bus departs Center School at 6:35 p.m. The race starts promptly at 7 p.m.

The first mile of the race leads you down Chestnut Hill Road to Route 16, crossing over Route 16 to Alden's Crossing and taking a right onto the Air Line Trail. You will continue approximately two miles down the shade covered Air Line Trail, crossing Forest Street, exiting at the Company One Firehouse on Barton Hill, left onto Main Street and right into the Center

school driveway to the finish line at the Old Home Days fairground.

Entry fee is \$25. If you pre-register before June 22, all participants that preregister will get a free 2026 race T-shirt. Last-minute registration and bib pickup will be at Center School gym Thursday, 5:30-7:30 p.m. and Friday, 4:30-6:30 p.m. There will be no bib pick-up at the starting line.

Register at www.EHOHD.org. For more information, contact Elisha Milton at 860-655-2743 or OHDrailstotrails@gmail.com.

Plaque Dedication Ceremony

The Board of Directors of the Middle Haddam Public Library invites all to a Dedication Ceremony of Memorial Plaques on Sunday, June 7, from 2-4 p.m., at the library, 2 Knowles Rd.

The plaques are in honor of Leonard Nelson Blake and Dr. Gerald Alan Peterson & Dr. Cynthia Wyeth Peterson. Light refreshments and beverages will be provided, and a string quartet will perform.

All are invited to come celebrate the library's new porch addition and celestial garden armillary.

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Win a 2026 Chevy Colorado Pick-Up Truck

The East Hampton/Marlborough Rotary Club is selling raffle tickets for its largest fundraiser of the year. The drawing will be held at East Hampton Old Home Days on Saturday, July 11, at 8 p.m., at Bevin Park on the Center School grounds. The grand prize is a 2026 Chevy Colorado LT crew cab truck.

The second prize is a cabin stay on Laurel Island, Lake Pocotopaug, third prize is an Estate Planning gift certificate at Kenneth Barber and Associates, and fourth prize is a \$250 gift certificate to Lakehouse Bar & Grill.

Only 800 tickets will be sold, at a price of \$100 each ticket.

Winners need not be present and are responsible for all federal and state taxes.

Most of the tickets are already spoken for but occasionally a longtime buyer decides it's time to pass the raffle ticket number off to someone else. If you would like to be added to the waiting list, call Rotarian Pam Greenwald at 860-965-4646 or email pjoslyngreenwald@gmail.com.



Cocaine, crystal meth and more were seized in a January drug bust conducted by the East Hampton Police Department and East Central Narcotics.

Cocaine, Crystal Meth Seized in Drug Bust

Cocaine, crystal meth and Adderall were among the drugs seized when the East Hampton Police Department, in collaboration with East Central Narcotics (ECN), conducted an operation targeting a known drug dealer within the community.

Police said recently that Katrina Ceceri, 22, of Old Lyme, was arrested Jan. 23 and charged with sale of more than half an ounce of cocaine/free base; use of drug paraphernalia; failure to keep narcotics in original container; sale of a narcotic substance; sale of a controlled substance - not narcotic/hallucinogenic; and possession of a controlled substance.

During the drug bust, the following items were seized, police said: 87.56 grams (3.08 ounces) of cocaine; 50 blue pills confirmed as extended-release Adderall; five orange pills identified as MDMA; 12.45 grams (0.44 ounces) of methamphetamine; 6.09 grams (0.21 ounces) of crystalline methamphetamine; three orange pills of 30 mg Adderall; six black cartridges confirmed as N, N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT); and other various items of narcotics and paraphernalia, police said.

According to the state judicial website, Ceceri is next due in court June 18.

VFW Auxiliary Offers Spaces at Tag Sale

VFW Auxiliary Post 5095 is offering indoor vendor spaces during the Chatham Historical Society Town-Wide Tag Sale on Saturday, June 20. The spaces will be at the VFW Hall, 20 North Maple St.

Vendor setup begins at 7 a.m., with tag sale hours from 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

Vendor details: Space Size: 8' x 8', Includes: 1 table, Cost: \$25 per space

The hall will be listed on the official CHS Town-Wide Tag Sale map.

Spots are limited and may not be available the day of the event. Pre-registration is recommended, by calling the post at 860-267-8837.

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Ambulance Association Takes Pride in Its Rapid Response

By Anne Lilburn

National EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Week took place a couple of weeks ago, from May 17-23, and the East Hampton Ambulance Association is taking the opportunity to celebrate some of its recent accomplishments.

Recently, EHAA Chief Chris Wherry and EHAA Board President Debra Mayer sat down with the *Rivereast* to talk about the association's successes and challenges as they head into summer 2026.

Wherry said that the ambulance association is coming up on its fifth year operating under its current, paid staff model, which began in mid-2021. Prior to that, it was a volunteer organization. Wherry said that, in 2021, as the nation was still in and beginning to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, ambulance services throughout the country were facing challenges and East Hampton's was no exception. In addition to the general strain placed on EMS providers by the pandemic, there were also "added responsibilities and requirements on volunteers," he said, including trainings and certifications.

The shift towards a paid staff model alleviated some of that staffing strain, said Wherry, adding that, five years in, the community is really seeing the benefits of operating in this way.

"If you look at the positive and what we are getting out of this from a response standpoint," he said, the results are substantial. In 2021, he said, the ambulance association received approximately 950-960 calls for service. Wherry said that his estimate was that East Hampton Ambulance responded to about 70% of those calls, with the remainder serviced by so-called "mutual aid" partners from surrounding communities. These days, Wherry said they respond to 100% of so-called "first calls," meaning calls

that come in when they are not already responding to another event.

That increase is huge, he said. While Wherry rushed to reassure the public that residents will always get an ambulance if they need one, he also wanted to make clear that a local response made for a faster response. Residents are more likely to get an ambulance quickly if it's dispatched locally, he said, as ambulances dispatched from neighboring communities may take longer to arrive.

Moreover, because the association can now afford to have staff always on call at their facility, even overnight, they are more efficient.

"We went from a volunteer, scramble crew type of a setup, to having people on call, in this building, 24/7, working a shift, ready to go," he said.

A backup crew, made up of individuals in the community, some of them volunteers, also is on call to respond when the first crew is already out with one of the association's three ambulances.

Wherry said the ambulance association's average response times in 2021 were running in the 15- to 25-minute range; now, response times are averaging eight minutes. It's a big difference.

"That's a national standard," said Mayer, noting that it was impressive for a rural community to be able to meet the same standards that are required by many larger municipalities.

Wherry said that quick response time makes a difference. He noted one case where the ambulance responded to a call needing urgent transportation to the hospital during one of the many snowstorms this past winter. If they had taken longer, he said, "I don't think the outcome would have been as positive."

Wherry credited former chief Donald Scran-

ton for making that transition away from the volunteer model.

"All that credit for making that transition in 2021 and 2022," said Wherry, "that credit is given to the previous chief of this department who was able to navigate that."

Wherry and Mayer both acknowledged that there were challenges in operating under a paid staffing model, many of them financial, with 60-70% of their budget attributed to staffing costs, according to Wherry. They both credited the town of East Hampton for being pro-active in supporting the association, including forming an Ambulance Task Force. The town also contributes to the association's operational budget, with \$126,000 allocated in the proposed 2026-27 town budget (which recently did not pass the recent referendum vote).

Town Manager Dave Cox said the ambulance service was a value to the community that people depended on, and that funding essential services these days "is a real challenge" not just for East Hampton, but for many communities.

Cox said volunteerism is starting to "wane" and that "people aren't able to dedicate the time that it takes to be a volunteer in these emergency services because of all the training that's now required."

Cox added that as volunteer participation "diminishes over time, we have to figure out how to make that up, because it's a service that we need to provide or at least provide for in some way."

Wherry said the ambulance association manages to do a lot very efficiently, and noted that, while they do bill for their services, they are limited by state law on what they are allowed to charge. Insurance and Medicaid reimbursements, he said, do not cover costs.

Put simply, said Wherry, "our operating costs are well above what our revenue is from the insurance reimbursement."

The ambulance association responds to everyone, regardless of insurance status, both said, something that's important to maintain quality of care.

"Our providers on the ambulance could care

less," he said. "They go. They want to save a life. They want to make you healthy and treat everybody the same. It has nothing to do with money."

Wherry and Mayer said that, currently, the ambulance association is able to self-fund to make up any shortfalls by drawing upon a reserve fund that exists from its time as a volunteer organization when they were able to save donations due to lower operating costs. Both said that the town's budget allocation, even though it does not cover their entire budget, allows them to draw from any reserves more slowly than they would otherwise. With that said, they are also dependent on outside donations.

Wherry said he was particularly grateful to the East Hampton Lions and the Rotary Club, as well as local businesses like Deliana, which he said featured a special menu for EMS Week a few weeks back. That special sandwich menu, which he said included creative sandwich names, like "The Lifesaver" and the "EMT." The deli then donated a portion of the proceeds from that menu to the ambulance association, which Wherry said totaled in the \$1,000 range this year.

The donations also help the association fund staff trainings, including those using their donated medical mannequin, and those focused on low-frequency, high-risk scenarios that EMTs may not see often, but need to be prepared for, including rarer medical events and pediatric patients.

The association will also be fundraising at this year's Old Home Days in July, and Wherry said he's made it easier for people to donate if they want to.

"I've created a new platform that people are going to be able to go online, scan a QR code, and if they choose, they can choose to donate on a monthly basis. They can choose to donate \$20 a month and get on a program," he said. "And in return, we're going to communicate with them. We're going to let them know where their money is going. We're going to let them know what great things that we're doing."

Town-Wide Tag Sale June 20

East Hampton's annual town-wide tag sale sponsored by the Chatham Historical Society will be held Saturday, June 20. Applications are now available at the library and the town clerk's office at Town Hall.

Applications must be received by June 12 to be included on the 200 free maps given out that day showing the addresses of all par-

ticipants. Official signs and balloons will be delivered to all participants indicating their support of the Chatham Historical Society Museum and one-room schoolhouse.

The rain date is June 27, at the vendor's discretion.

For further information, call Debbie Day at 860-705-0959 (cell) or 860-267-4732 (home).

Christ Episcopal Church News

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

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

Returnable Cans and Bottles: All are asked to place donations in the cans by the shed. Note: It would be very helpful if glass bottles and aluminum cans could be separated prior to drop off.

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.

Food4Lives Warm Weather Clothing Drive: Patty Kloof is collecting warm weather new or nearly new clothing for un-housed persons in Middletown. Needed are t-shirts, shorts, pants, light sweaters, hoodies, sweatshirts, sandals/sneakers and underwear in adult sizes small to XXL. Clean items should be placed in the blue tote in the Parish Hall.

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

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Goff House Donations Welcome

Donations to the 2026 Joseph N Goff House Gazebo Concert Series are still being accepted.

All concerts are held in the East Hampton Village Center Gazebo on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m., starting June 18 and running through Aug. 6 (except for Old Home Days week). Concerts will feature a different local talent each week.

Donations, which are tax-deductible, help pay for the bands and promotional materials.

Checks made out to Joseph N. Goff House Inc. can be mailed to P.O. Box 337, East Hampton, CT 06424. Any amount is appreciated, or donate by level:

Special Grants or Awards, Over \$250; Maestro, \$250; Soprano, \$150; Alto, \$100; Tenor, \$50; Bass, \$25.

For further information, call Melissa Pionzio at 860-993-5311.

Senior Center Upcoming Trips

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

Newport Flower Show "Pearl of Newport": Friday, June 19, departing the Stop & Shop parking lot at 8:30 a.m. Rosecliff Mansion is the backdrop for the Newport Flower Show where participants can stroll the first floor of the mansion and the grounds filled with floral arrange-

ments, shop the marketplace and have free time in downtown Newport. Cost is \$136.

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

Congregational Church News

The Congregational Church of East Hampton, 59 Main St., welcomes all to Sunday worship at 10 a.m., with the Rev. Robin Bloundon providing the sermon. This week, the congregation will be honoring young members who are graduating with a reception after the service.

This Week's Church Happenings: Sunday, June 7 Second Sunday after Pentecost and Graduation Sunday - 9 a.m., choir and 10 a.m., wor-

ship service, followed by Mission and Ministry meeting after services; 7 p.m., AA Meeting.

Monday, June 8: 5:30-6:30 p.m., Cub Scouts; 6:30-7:30 p.m., Cub Scouts.

Tuesday, June 9: 7-8 p.m., Scouts.

Thursday, June 11: 7-8 p.m., Choir Rehearsal.

For more information, visit cc-eh.org or call the office at 860-267-5989. Office hours are Monday and Wednesday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

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, bedframes, high chairs, cribs, car seats, computers, printers, keyboards, TVs, VCRs, exercise machines, textbooks, encyclopedias, old-style phones, large toys, doors, ironing boards, strollers, single chairs, paint and cleaners, file cabinets, office chairs, large dog beds, lighting that can't be plugged in, medicine, animal diapers

and fish tank pumps.

Drop-off times are 8 a.m.-2 p.m. on 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 the building or on any other drop off days.

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

Senior Center News & Notes

East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., announces the following. **Advance 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/easthampton-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.

Community Care Connection Program: Tuesdays, 2-6 p.m., with Ria Irons, a certified community health worker, who will provide services on help with medication, communicating with health care providers, understanding care instructions and connecting with local resources. Health insurance will be billed for this service when possible. Call for an appointment.

Trailblazers Walking Group: Monday, June 8, 9 a.m. Join us for a weekly morning walk on the Air Line Trail, 69 Smith St.

Digital Mike: Tuesday, June 9, starting at 10 a.m. Get answers to your cell phone, table or lap top technical questions with help from Center volunteer Mike Crutchfield. Call the center for an appointment.

Nature is Everywhere - Caterpillars!: Tuesday, June 9, 10:30 a.m. Join naturalist Lynn Kochiss for a talk on the world of caterpillars. A ramble on the East Hampton Senior Center grounds to see caterpillars in their environments will be offered on Wednesday, June 10 at 10 a.m. Please register.

Yoga with Kate: Wednesdays, June 10-Aug. 12, 1:15 p.m. Cost is \$20 for the series. Please register and pay in person.

Short Story Discussion Group: Wednesday, June 10, 2:30 p.m. Join staff member Melissa Pionzio for this monthly discussion group, fea-

turing a different short story each session. June 10th features the Norwegian short story *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*.

Honoring the Journey: Thursday, June 11, 11 a.m. A continued discussion group to help individuals navigate their feelings around loss and prioritize safety, validation, and the transition from pain to integrated memory.

Bike Rides for Seniors - Friday, June 12 at 10 a.m. Ride at the Farmington Trail, 480 Cornwall Avenue, Cheshire. Ride to New Haven and stop for lunch. Bring your bike, helmet and water bottle. 860-267-4426 for ride information and to register.

Linefit: Every other Monday until Aug. 18, at 2:30 p.m. Drop-ins welcome for \$5. Class taught by Marianna Sigleski.

Yarn Yogis: Starting this month, the Knitting Club from East Hampton Congregational Church will meet at the senior center for the summer, on Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

Trips: New Britain Museum of American Art: Wednesday, June 10. Transportation included. Depart from the Senior Center at 10 a.m. for an 11 a.m. guided tour of the American Canvas exhibit followed by lunch, that you bring, at the nearby Walnut Park. Drink and dessert provided by Senior Center. Cost is \$22.

East Hampton Lunch Bunch: Enjoy lunch together on Friday, June 19, at Two Brothers Café in East Hampton. Choose your meal from a specially-priced menu for senior citizens or the café's regular offerings. Depart from the senior center at 11:30 a.m. using Xtramile. Payment due from each diner to the restaurant.

Lavender Farm in Killingworth: Thursday, June 25. Depart from the Senior Center at 11 a.m. and enjoy a day at this lovely farm, stroll the grounds filled with many lavender varieties, browse the gift shop and enjoy your lunch - drink and dessert provided. Cost is a \$4 donation for the bus ride.

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. Call the center to sign up.

Artwork Sought for Display

The East Hampton Arts & Culture Commission is seeking to purchase an original piece of artwork by a local East Hampton artist for permanent display at the East Hampton Senior Center.

The commission is looking for a vibrant, welcoming wall piece approximately 18" x 24" in size that will bring warmth, color, and visual interest to the senior center space. Artists are encouraged to submit colorful and uplifting works such as still lifes, abstract pieces, collage, mixed media, or other framed wall art suitable for public display.

As part of its mission to promote local art and

support East Hampton's artistic community, the Arts & Culture Commission is proud to provide opportunities for local artists to share their work in public spaces throughout town.

The selected piece should arrive professionally matted and framed and ready for hanging. The Arts & Culture Commission will pay up to \$300 for the artwork.

Local artists interested in being considered may submit images of available work, along with dimensions, medium, and pricing information, to the town manager's office via email at csirois@easthamptonct.gov. All submissions must be received by Friday, June 5.

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.

Men's Group: The Men's Group will meet on Wednesday, June 10 from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. to share scripture around what the Bible says about being a man. There will be coffee, pastries and conversation.

Baby Bottle Drive: The Baby Bottle Drive to benefit the ABC Women's Center will end on Father's Day, June 21. Bottles are available at the church.

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 10:15 a.m. in the chapel. The next study will resume in the fall.

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

Middle Haddam Public Library News

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

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

Featured Artist for June: Nancy Riella of Colchester. Her coastal and nautically themed watercolors can be viewed during regular library hours. There will be an artist reception with Nancy on Friday, June 12, from 4-6 p.m.

Chatham Community Chess Club: Wednesdays, June 17, 6-9 p.m. All ages and skill levels welcome; lessons available. For more information contact pjhoffman1@juno.com.

East Hampton Library News & Notes

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

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

All Ages: Summer Reading Kick Off!: Friday, June 26, 5-7 p.m., at Memorial School. There will be an inflatable obstacle course, a dunk tank, free ice cream from the Ice Cream Dream truck, a farm petting zoo with Xen's Critters, and face-painting by Epoch Arts. This is a chance to learn more about the Summer Reading Program.

Adult Programs: Library Yoga (Sears Park) with Amie Meacham: Tuesday, June 9, 6:30 p.m. Library Yoga heads to Sears Park for the summer! Bring a mat if you have one and meet at the pavilion for an hour of gentle yoga for all levels.

Craft + Crumbs: Adults & Grades 8-12: Tuesday, June 16, 6:30 p.m. Come to this snack program that happens to involve crafts. Learn embroidery stitches as you create embroidered flower tea bag bookmarks. No experience needed.

Belltown Book Brunch: Friday, June 19, 11 a.m. Meet to talk about what you're currently reading while enjoying coffee, tea, and a breakfast treat. Register or drop in

Teen Programs: Middle Grade D&D: Create a Character! For Grades 5-7: Monday, June 8, 6-7:30 p.m. Learn to create a character for *Dungeons & Dragons*. Beginners and returning players welcome. All supplies provided; incoming fifth-graders welcome.

Ultimutt Study Break with Jovie the Therapy Dog: Tuesday, June 9, 5:30 p.m.-6 p.m. EHHS students can stay paw-sitive during final exams with the ultimutt study break. Visit with Jovie, the library's favorite therapy dog. She'll give you a little love and help with that calculus study guide, probably.

Exam Prep & Plan: Through June 17, stop by for snacks, study supplies, and surprise perks for exam prep. Powered by the Teen Advisory Board.

Teen Advisory Board: Grades 8-12: Tuesday, June 16, 6 p.m. Help plan programs, improve the Teen Space, and take a leadership role in

how the library serves teens.

Children's Programs: DIY Days: K-8: Saturday, June 6, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Children and families in grades K-8 are invited to create a different toy, game, or treat together. No registration required; just drop in.

Read to a Therapy Dog: Grades K-3: Thursday, June 9, 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Readers will be assigned a 15-minute time slot between 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. to read to Jovie, a certified therapy dog.

Drop-In Sensory Play: Wednesday, June 10, 10:30 a.m.-noon. Drop in for a sensory play time where children can explore water play, themed sensory bins, and a variety of textures, materials, colors, and tools at engaging stations. Caregivers and children are invited to move at their own pace.

Mommy and Me Yoga: Monday, June 15, 10:30-11:15 a.m. Caregivers will be guided through gentle yoga poses and movement, while little ones are welcome to join in alongside them or play freely in the space as they feel comfortable. For caregivers with children ages 18 months to 5 years. Please bring your own mat or blanket; registration required.

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.

East Hampton, Let's Celebrate America 250!

This summer, as July 4 nears, the EH America 250 committee is inviting homeowners and businesses around East Hampton to help celebrate America's 250th anniversary by decorating your homes in the spirit of America 250.

Bring out the flags, bunting, red, white, and blue lights, patriotic porch décor, and historic flair. Fill the streets with American pride so that everyone who drives through town can see East Hampton celebrating in a big way.

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0.5K Extreme Endurance Challenge

The Rotary Club of East Hampton will hold its first-ever 0.5K "Extreme Endurance Challenge" Sunday, June 7, at 11 a.m., at Sears Park, finishing at Lakeside Bar and Grill.

The event will feature a 0.31-mile trek that is almost entirely flat (4" curb elevation). All participants who successfully cross the finish line will receive a commemorative medal and 0.5K oval car decal.

Participants are encouraged to wear their most creative outfits, with prizes awarded for the best dressed.

At the finish line, all participants will receive a snack and ticket for a beverage provided by Lakeside Bar and Grill.

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. 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.)

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

Contact Tracey Gardiner at Cladalass24@hotmail.com or 401-556 8172.



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Parks & Rec. News and Notes



East Hampton Parks & Recreation has announced the following items of interest. For more information or to register, call 860-267-7300 or www.easthamptonrec.com.

Golf Tournament: At Blackledge Country Club in Hebron Thursday, June 4. There is a 10 a.m. shotgun start. This is a four-person scramble format. Lunch/dinner and two drink tickets are included for every golfer. Not a golfer? Register just for dinner (\$50), Sponsorship options available as well. There will be a fundraiser raffle, on course contests and prizes. The tournament benefits Sears Park playground, Seamster Park playground and the Jefferey Leith Memorial scholarship. Cost is \$140.

Beginner Pickleball Clinic: Saturdays, June

6-20, 10-11:30 a.m., at the East Hampton High School tennis courts. Fee: \$110/residents, \$115/non-residents.

Junior Golf Clinic: With instructor Gerry D'Amora, golf pro, at Portland West. D'Amora will focus on teaching the fundamentals of the game starting with teaching the proper grip, alignment and swing. Grades K-2 are Thursdays, 4-5 p.m., June 4-25; grades 3-5 are Saturdays, noon-1 p.m., June 6-27; and grades 6-8 are Wednesdays, 4-5 p.m., June 10-July 1. Fee is \$120 per person.

Golf Clinic for Ladies: With instructor Gerry D'Amora, golf pro, at Portland West. Tuesdays, 5:30-6 p.m., June 10-July 8. Fee is \$150 per person.

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Old Home Days Parade to Return

The Old Home Days Parade will return Saturday, July 11, at 11 a.m.

The theme of this year's Old Home Days is "Bells, Boats and Birth of our Nation." The parade will celebrate the town's history as Belltown, its connection to ship building, Lake Pocotopaug, and America's 250th birthday.

It's not too late to join the parade; visit www.ehohd.org to register. For information, contact Bo Tinson at 860-414-9712 or RLinson@gmail.com.

HNCC BBQ Chicken

Haddam Neck Covenant Church is hosting a BBQ Chicken Dinner Drive-Thru Takeout Event on Saturday, June 13, 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 June 9.

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.

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Chicken Marsala Sautéed with mushrooms, shallots in a marsala wine sauce

Stuffed Pork Chop Stuffed with broccoli, gorgonzola cheese and ritz crackers in a brown cognac sauce
Stuffed Sole Crab meat stuffing served over spinach

Balkan Meatballs Beef meatballs sautéed with scallions, roasted red peppers, grape tomatoes in a marsala cream sauce

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RE6-5-26

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It's a Grand Old Flag... Deepak and Sohum are pictured with East Hampton Cub Scouts Pack 57 supporting Flags over East Hampton.

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YPPCA Taking Registrations for Summer Theater Camp

The Young People's Center for Creative Arts (YPPCA) is now accepting registrations for its 2026 Summer Theater Camp for students entering grades 6–12. The four-week program will run Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., June 29 through July 26, and will be held at East Hampton High School. Fee is \$775 per child; additional children in a family are \$725. Scholarships are available for

families with demonstrated financial need. In Summer Theater Camp, mornings are devoted to skill-building workshops, and afternoons are dedicated to rehearsals for the camp's mainstage production – which this year will be Disney's hit musical *Frozen*. For more information or to register, visit www.yppca.org or email info@ypcca.org.

CDHR to Host Car Show

All are invited to the fourth annual Horsepower Car Show, hosted by the CT Draft Horse Rescue on Saturday, June 6 (rain date is June 7) at Powder Ridge Mountain Resort, 99 Powder Hill Rd., Middlefield. There will be live music by Beth & the Boys, raffles, games, food/drink, and trophy awards. There will also be a special appearance by Sam and Pete, the CDHR ambassador Clydesdales. Cars arrive from 9–11 a.m., gates open at 11 a.m., and awards will be given at 2 p.m. Car entry fee is \$20, and no pre-registration required. General admission is \$5 per person.

Proceeds from the event go towards the care of the equine residents of CDHR, a nonprofit organization, located in East Hampton, that is dedicated to saving the lives of neglected or abused draft horses as well as draft horses heading to slaughter. For more information visit www.ctdraftrescue.org or www.facebook.com/ctdraftrescue. The event's premier sponsor is Tine Dale Electrical Contractors. For questions and sponsorship inquiries, email cdhrcarshow@gmail.com.



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Help Keep Lake Pocotopaug Healthy

Homeowners who live both on Lake Pocotopaug and in the watershed can take advantage of the town's LakeSmart Program to help keep the lake clean.

The LakeSmart program offers advice on things homeowners can do to their properties – such as limiting use of fertilizers (especially bad ones with high phosphorus or nitrogen contents). Homeowners can learn about things to do to prevent water runoff, such as adding plantings on downhill slopes, creating permeable pathways, and the proper use of gutters and

downspouts on houses.

The Friends of the Lake Association also offers a \$100 reimbursement (with receipts) to any homeowner in the Lake Pocotopaug watershed area who has consulted with the LakeSmart Program and uses their specific recommendations to make improvements to their property.

For more information or to set up a no-cost appointment with members of the Conservation Lake Commission, call John Purple at 860-416-2992 or Shawn Mullen at 860-267-7300.

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Time to License your Dog

June is dog licensing month. All dogs 6 months or older require a license each year in the town where they reside. A current rabies certificate for all dogs, and a neutered/spayed certificate for first time licenses are required.

Dog license fees: neutered male/spayed female, \$8; unneutered male/spayed female, \$19; kennel licenses, 10 for \$50 plus 10 cents per tag, or 20 for \$100 plus .10 per tag. Late licensing penalty is \$1 per month after June, and fee is 50 cents to replace a lost tag.

Dog licenses may be obtained at the town clerk's office Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Tuesday, 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Licenses may also be obtained by mail; include a check for the proper fee, made payable to the East Hampton Town Clerk; all certificates; and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Send all mail requests to the Town Clerk, Town Hall, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424. All certificates required will be returned with the new license and tag.

Renewals – and only renewals – can be completed online through the town clerk's dog renewal system. To renew online you must have a current rabies certificate on file with the town clerk's office. Access the online dog renewal system at www.easthamptonct.gov/town-clerk/pages/dog-licenses.

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ERTA Helps Build Independent Futures

By Toriana Williams

For many students, graduation is the finish line. At Colchester's East of the River Transition Academy (ERTA), it's just the beginning.

ERTA serves young adults ages 18 to 22 who have completed high school but still need support as they transition into adult life. The program, a collaboration between the Colchester and East Haddam school districts, focuses on employment, independent living, social skills and community involvement.

"We're kind of launching them into adulthood," said transition coordinator Alisha Natelle.

The program began in 2019 and expanded through a partnership with East Haddam in 2020. Since then, more than 30 students have participated. Every student follows an individualized plan designed around personal goals, strengths and future ambitions.

According to Natelle, the overall goal isn't just classroom instruction. "Everything's for a purpose. There's no busy work," she said. "This is a space for adults."

Instead of spending most of their days at desks, students work throughout the community. ERTA has developed partnerships with more than 40 local businesses and organizations which give students opportunities to gain real-world experience.

"We are so, so, so lucky," Natelle said. "We have a community that is so willing to work with us."

Those partnerships include local businesses, nonprofits, farms, restaurants, retailers and community organizations. Students rotate through different work sites, learning everything from customer service and stocking shelves to landscaping and childcare.

Natelle believes the community connections are one of ERTA's greatest strengths, and Eve Hurley, Director of Pupil Services, agrees.

"We always say that good inclusion in the community gets our students, young adults, out in the work and familiar with their community, but it also gets the community familiar with us, too," Hurley said. "Inclusion is really a two-way

street." Inside ERTA's building, students practice skills many adults use every day. Students grocery shop, create budgets, prepare meals and learn to share common spaces. Staff intentionally treat the program more like an apartment than a traditional school.

"If you have a roommate, they're not going to be happy if you leave rotting bananas on the countertop," Natelle joked.

"Or you take their sandwich bread and they need lunch for five days of work," added Hurley. Students purchase groceries with money earned through work experiences and then prepare lunches and meals for the week. Every activity becomes an opportunity to practice independence.

The academy also operates student-run projects. One popular venture is a dog treat business which student Amber proudly explained as, "We're doing Canine Confections." The students make the treats, package them and deliver them. Proceeds help fund community activities and field trips.

"They've really managed the whole thing," Natelle said. "Everybody has a role. No matter what our skill set is, everybody's involved with it."

One ERTA student, James, has found a particularly meaningful placement at a cooperative nursery school. While helping supervise children during a community event, James explained his role.

"Mostly just walking around, making sure everyone stays safe and more or less occupied," he said, all the while holding an adorable baby who seemed right at home in his arms.

James said the transition program has already exposed him to several different workplaces, but his favorite work experience involves children. And they love him too. "They never want me to get up," James smiled. "They love sitting in my lap."

When asked why he enjoys working with kids, James said, "I've been wanting to do this for a long time." His experience extends beyond

ERTA. "My church has a lot of kids stuff there, too," he added.

The nursery school's director, Michelle Donahue, praised James' growth and professionalism. "He's just amazing," Donahue said. "He just does great work with us."

She noted that James willingly takes on new responsibilities and works effectively with both children and adults. "Always willing to take on what I ask of him," she said. "Never shies away from anything."

Donahue believes programs like ERTA are essential. "This transition program is so important to our communities," she said. "Giving people chances is huge."

Another student, Omar, has developed skills through work at Cold Spring Farm. When asked about his favorite responsibilities, Omar answered quickly with, "feeding the pigs." According to Omar, pigs apparently consume "sour milk." Who knew?

Working on the farm has exposed him to many different tasks, including caring for animals, feeding livestock and helping with agricultural projects. The farm partnership gives students hands-on work experience while teaching responsibility and teamwork.

Much of ERTA's success depends on its job coaches, who work alongside students at employment sites. Job coach Lynn Orsatti described her role as "being supportive of them in the community." She helps students with everything from employment skills to grocery shopping and social interactions.

Natelle believes their work is invaluable. "Our job coaches are the absolute backbone of our program," she said. Job coaches help students learn workplace expectations, communicate with supervisors and develop independence. As students gain confidence, coaches gradually step back.

James is one example. According to staff, he

has progressed so much that he no longer needs a job coach regularly and can work more independently. "That will more than likely transition to long-term employment for him when he exits us," Natelle said.

Through all the support the academy receives, Natelle emphasized truly how much they encourage strong community bonds. Local businesses, farms, schools and organizations have embraced the program and its students. That support helps young adults gain practical experience while also helping the community better understand and welcome people with disabilities.

"We want the community to know us," Natelle said.

Students like Amber, Omar and James show what can happen when young adults are given opportunities, guidance and trust. Whether they are making dog treats, feeding animals or helping preschoolers learn their ABCs, they are building skills that will last a lifetime.

Donahue summarized the ERTA program's inherent value, as well as the students': "They have so much to offer, and they are such an important part of our community."

Garden Club Plant Sale

The Colchester Garden Club plant sale will be held Sunday, June 14, during the Colchester Business Association's Tag Sale on the Green. The club will sell houseplants, annuals, perennials, herbs, shrubs, and garden/plant related items from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on the Colchester Town Green.

Rain date is June 28.

Purchases support our community beautification efforts, public education programs, youth activities, and senior center programs. For more information about the Colchester Garden Club contact colchestergardenclub@yahoo.com.

Local Scout

Leads Food Drive

Colchester's Troop 13 is rallying behind Life Scout Anthony DePaola as he works toward completing his Eagle Scout Service Project - a community food drive benefiting Catholic Charities of Norwich.

DePaola is collecting non-perishable food items such as canned vegetables, soups, pasta, rice, and other longlasting staples. Residents can drop off donations at a drive through event at St. Andrew's Church, 128 Norwich Ave., in Colchester on June 7, June 14, and June 21 from 9:45 a.m. to noon.

Special Education Records Disposal

The Colchester Board of Education will destroy any and all special education records and section 504 records of students who graduated or would have graduated with the class of 2020.

If any student, as described above, would like a copy of their special education or 504 records, they must request a copy of the records prior to destruction on July 15.

Forward all requests to the Dept. of Pupil Services and Special Education, 380 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415, or by calling the Pupil Services office at 860-537-3103.

Upon request, records will be available for pickup only at the Dept. of Pupil Services.

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 pastor.

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

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

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

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

Donuts with Don: Fridays at 10 a.m. This is a relaxed gathering and open discussion on the theme: "How does God fit in this thing called life?"

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

Senior Center News & Notes

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

Monday, June 8: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne, CoA Meeting; 10 a.m., Sittercize; 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Haircuts; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 11 a.m.-noon, Fitness Orientation by appointment; 12:30 p.m., Mah Jongg, Bridge, Setback.

Tuesday, June 9: 9 a.m., Making Memories; no Tai Chi today; 10 a.m., LTCOP Meeting, Rag Wreath Workshop; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 6 p.m., Teacup Floral Arrangement.

Wednesday, June 10: 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. and 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming; 2 p.m., Staff Meeting.

Thursday, June 11: 9 a.m., Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling; 10:30 a.m., Shopping Trip; 11 a.m., Yoga; noon, Sr. Benefits Counseling; 12:05 p.m., Chair Massage; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes, Needlework Club; 6 p.m., Trivia Night.

Friday, June 12: 9 a.m., Social Service Hours, 9 a.m., Open Art Studio; 10 a.m., Sit & Be Fit; 10:30 a.m., Choral Group; 10:45 a.m., Blood Pressure Clinic; 11 a.m., Yoga; 11:15 a.m., Chatham Health Series; 12:30 p.m., Charcoal Landscapes; 1-3:30 p.m., Open Ping Pong; 1:15 p.m., Bingo.



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BOF Weighs Deep Budget Reductions

By Toriana Williams

The Colchester Board of Finance met on May 27 and for three hours discussed how to revise both the town and education budgets. This is after voters rejected both budgets at the referendum held on May 20.

The board members considered how much to cut from the budgets, whether to delay the next referendum, concerns about public trust following the Board of Education health insurance reserve fund controversy and how to better communicate budget information to residents.

Some members suggested reductions of around \$3 million between the town and school budgets, while others argued more information was needed before setting specific targets.

To recap, the previously proposed town budget of \$19.52 million, a 7.93% increase, failed by a vote of 1,725 to 1,084. The proposed BOE budget of \$50.87, a 7.55% increase, was rejected by an even wider margin, with 1,872 voting no and 928 voting yes.

Clear Public Frustration

During public comment, many residents expressed frustration with the current budget situation.

First Selectman Bernie Dennler, a Democrat, announced that he, department heads and other town officials were willing to take three unpaid furlough days during the 2026-27 fiscal year to help preserve services.

"I know there's a lot of talk about shared sacrifice right now," Dennler said. "We all care about the services that we provide ... and we are willing to accept that in order to hopefully facilitate being able to provide services that would otherwise be lost."

The unpaid furlough days would amount to

around \$20,000 in savings.

Town employee Heide Perham urged the board not to place additional cuts on town services. "To make any further cuts to the town is like cutting off your nose to spite your face," she said. "Any additional cuts at this point will be detrimental to services the town currently provides."

Other residents argued that all three major boards shared responsibility for the current situation. "The three boards have all really led us to this crisis that we're in right now," said resident Jeff Mattson. Several speakers also referenced the recently released forensic audit involving the BOE's health insurance reserve fund and called for greater accountability and transparency.

Next Referendum Debate

Board members discussed whether the town should attempt to hold another referendum before July 1 or to delay it to allow more time for public discussion and budget revisions. Board Chair Karen Belding, a Democrat, noted that many residents remained confused about budget details and potential consequences of future cuts.

"There are things they don't understand about how they're evaluating what their next choice would be," Belding said. "Clearly we need to give some time and some space and some work into making sure people at least feel like they understand the numbers and the choices."

Board member Jillian Vinci, a Democrat, agreed. She said misinformation had become a serious problem. "There is a lot of information out there," Vinci began. "It's like that game of telephone where someone starts something and then by the time it gets to the 10th person, it's

just completely something else."

Others worried about the financial and administrative costs of delaying a budget vote. Former BOF member Bruce Hayn argued that failing to have a budget in place by July 1 would create unnecessary expenses.

"Not having a budget in place on July 1 is irresponsible," Hayn said. "It's costing the town money."

However, the board members ultimately leaned toward allowing additional time to gather information and rebuild public trust before returning proposals to voters. Officials noted that each referendum held costs around \$5,000, with around \$10,000 already slated to be spent.

How Much to Cut?

The most significant portion of the evening was spent in debate about the potential size of budget reductions. Board member John Thomas, a Republican, took the strongest position. He shared that conversations with residents convinced him the cuts discussed previously were not large enough.

"My number was wrong. It's too low," Thomas said. "The number I heard combined between the school and the town was \$3,000,000."

Using what he described as a 75-25 split between education and town spending, Thomas suggested roughly \$2.25 million in reductions from the education budget and \$750,000 from the town budget.

"The town spoke very loudly and they said too high," Thomas said. "We have to reduce this considerably."

Not everyone agreed. Board member Sean Gillespie, a Democrat, said he remained closer to a reduction between \$1 million and \$1.5 million for the school budget. As far as going higher, "I'm definitely willing to listen," he added.

Belding said she remained near a \$1 million reduction target, but she wanted more information before making a final decision.

Member Krista Kardys, a Democrat, warned residents that large reductions would inevitably affect classrooms. "If you cut \$2.25 [million]

from the Board of Ed budget, it is unrealistic to believe it will not touch a teacher," Kardys said. "It's unrealistic."

Town Impacts Could Be Severe

Dennler cautioned that a \$750,000 reduction of the town budget would have major consequences. "To move the needle of \$750,000, you are talking some very, very radical interventions and changes in the structure of town government," he explained. "It is probably the dismantling of some department somewhere."

Dennler noted that previous discussions had already considered eliminating a firefighter position and reducing library hours. Both were proposals that received significant opposition from the public.

When Thomas pointed out that the furlough proposal would save only about \$20,000, Dennler acknowledged the savings were relatively small. Dennler then emphasized that larger reductions would dramatically alter services.

"If you believe the town is asking for a \$750,000 reduction," Dennler said, "I cannot begin to quantify what a \$750,000 reduction to the town budget would do."

Calls for Better Communication

Throughout the meeting, board members repeatedly returned to the issue of public trust. Thomas said many residents were angry and confused. "Every single person is mad at everybody," he said. He then urged the board to move carefully.

"We have to slow down, take our time, allow our beautiful citizens to have their questions answered," Thomas said.

Belding agreed that more outreach would be necessary before another referendum. "I don't want to just run referendums to run referendums," she said. "I think that's a very bad strategy."

Several members suggested holding additional workshops where residents could ask questions and receive more detailed explanations about budget choices and potential service impacts.

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.

Senior Center Upcoming Trips

Colchester Senior Center has the following upcoming trips. 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.

Amish Country Two-Day Adventures: June 23-24, departure time TBD. Experience an authentic Amish dinner prepared by an Amish family and see the play *Joshua*. Cost is \$509/person (double or triple occupancy) and includes transportation, one night hotel, one breakfast, one dinner, admissions, tour escort, driver and tour director gratuity.

Goodspeed - Annie and Lunch at Gelston House: Thursday, Sept 24, 7:45 a.m. The musical that stole America's heart comes home to celebrate its 50th anniversary on the stage where it all began! Cost is \$105 per person. This includes transportation and lunch at the Gelston House. Space is limited.

Majestic Cities of Central & Eastern Europe: Oct. 4-17, departure time TBD. Enjoy multi-night stays, local tours, food and more in Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, and Krakow. The 14-day, 13-night trip includes airfare, ho-

tels, and meals (12 breakfasts, one lunch, and six dinners). Contact senior center staff for availability and pricing.

Ocean City, Maryland: Oct. 13-16, departure time TBD. Spend three nights directly on the beach. Cost is \$949/person (double or triple occupancy).

Germanfest - Inn at East Hill Farm, Troy, N.H.: Thursday, Oct. 8, 7:45 a.m. Enjoy a homemade Oktoberfest luncheon at the Inn at East Hill Farm, live German music, and more. Cost is \$158/person and includes transportation and lunch.

Studio Two - The Beatles Tribute Band: Thursday, Oct. 15, at 10 a.m. Enjoy music and a family-style menu at the Farmington Polo Club. Cost is \$132/person, and includes transportation, entertainment and lunch.

Presentations on 2027 Trips: On Sept. 2, at 10:30 a.m., there will be a presentation on the **Discover Mackinac Island** trip running May 1-9, 2027. This tour of Illinois and Michigan runs nine days, eight nights, and cost is \$4,299 (double occupancy). Then, on Oct. 19, at 10:30 a.m., there will be a presentation on the **Cultural Treasures of Japan** trip running Oct. 7-20, 2027. This trip is 14 days, 13 nights, and cost is \$9,999 per person (double occupancy).



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Remembering Kim... The Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Company was recently provided with a home-cooked meal in honor of what would have been the 50th birthday of past member Kim Perkowski. Perkowski, an 18-year member, passed away in 2024 from cancer. Pictured are Jodi & John Savage, Perkowski's sister and brother-in-law.

Auditions for CCT Summer Theater

The Colchester Community Theatre (CCT) will hold its Summer Children's Theater Workshop in July – and auditions will be Sunday, June 14, from 1-3:30 p.m., and Monday, June 15, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Auditions will take place at the Congregation Ahavath Achim (Colchester Synagogue) on 84 Lebanon Ave. The workshop is open to all children entering grades 2-12. Every child must audition to attend the program. There are no exceptions. All children who enroll are accepted. Auditions are solely for the purpose of cast placement. Each child is to bring sheet music or an instrumental recording and be prepared to sing. An accompanist will be provided. This year, CCT will produce Disney's *Dare to Dream JR.*, a musical revue featuring vari-

ous Disney songs, including newer fan-favorites from *The Princess and the Frog*, *Coco*, *Encanto* and *Frozen II*. Required pre-registration must be completed at www.colchestercommunitytheatre.com/summer-workshop. The workshop fee is \$140/child. Additional forms required to be completed by a parent/guardian will be available at auditions. Children only need to attend one audition, not both dates. The workshop will be held at Bacon Academy auditorium July 6-17, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m.-noon, culminating in a show on July 18 at 2 p.m. Contact Diane Ozmun at 860-908-9286 or email info@colchestercommunitytheatre.com for additional information.

Land Trust Upcoming Events

The Colchester Land Trust (CLT) is hosting the following upcoming events. All are invited. Visit ColchesterLandTrust.org for all details on upcoming 2026 events so far.

Connecticut Trails Day! Forest Bathing at Salmon River State Forest: Sunday, June 7, 10 a.m.-noon. Join Lisa Hageman and Liza Sivek for a moderately slow-paced, three-mile hike with the practice of Forest Bathing. For this meditative, quiet hike, meet at the Air Line Trail South/"Hairpin Turn" parking lot at 280 Bull Hill Rd., Colchester (see directions on the site). From there, walk to the Salmon River Forest trail nearby. There is no fee for this hike; it is free to all for Connecticut Trails Day. Rain postpones to a date to be announced. This hike is not suggested for smaller children, and it is not stroller-friendly. Sign up at colchesterlandtrust.org.

Fairy House Builders Wanted! The second annual Fairy House Trail is coming to Colchester – but CLT needs help to make the magic happen. Want to build a fairy house for the trail? All ages and skill levels welcome! Groups, individuals, and businesses welcome. There will be a Popular Vote for favorite houses. Had a house

in last year's trail? Bring it again! Email/call/text lizasivek@gmail.com or 203-278-5492 with questions. Adding your fairy house to the trail is free; however, there are a few rules to keep the fairies, nature, and wildlife safe. Please read the guidelines online. Sign up at colchesterlandtrust.org.

Trail Crew Volunteers Needed: The third Sunday of each month (weather permitting). Volunteers meet up at one of CLT's properties each month to fight invasives, maintain meadows, and other needed stewardship tasks. This event is led by board member and stewardship chair Kevin Byrne, and he can be reached at: kevbyrne@gmail.com. Trail crew work parties are held the third Sunday of every month usually from 1 p.m. until no later than 3 p.m. (Volunteers can stay for all or part of the hours.) Details of each month's plan will be emailed to you. Sign up at colchesterlandtrust.org.

CLT at Farmers Market: The CLT Booth will be at the Colchester Farmers Market on the Green on Sundays, July 26, Aug. 23 and Sept. 27. All are invited to stop by and learn more about the land trust.

Summer Book and Bake Sale

The Friends of Cragin Memorial Library will hold its Summer Book and Bake Sale at Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave., from June 5-10.

On Friday, June 5, from 4-7 p.m., there will be a pre-sale admission charge of \$5 to pick the "cream of the crop." There is no admission charge from Saturday-Wednesday. The schedule is:

Saturday, June 6, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, June 7, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; Monday, June 8, and Tuesday, June 9, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; and Wednesday, June 10, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

There will be a Monday-Wednesday special:

fill a box or bag for \$5.

The Friends will have many books, including large-print books and audiobooks. The Friends will also have music, movies, puzzles, and games.

Also at the sale, the Friends will celebrate America 250th by offering an accessible table with books and media related to America during the Revolutionary period.

Baked goods will be for sale, and will be individually wrapped.

The Friends said that while it cannot accept debit cards or credit cards, an ATM is close by.

All proceeds support library programs that benefit the patrons of Cragin Memorial Library.

Tag and Bake Sale at St. Andrew

There will be a Tag Sale and Bake Sale at St. Andrew Parish Hall, 128 Norwich Avenue on June 6, from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. A variety of items will be available. The church requested "no early birds, please."

For more information, call Barbara at 860-303-7814.

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 an interactive storytime Saturday, June 27, at 11 a.m., at Salem Free Public Library. The program will 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*.



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BOF Votes to Cut School Budget Increase to 6%

By Toriana Williams

Following a divided budget referendum and extensive debate over education spending, the Andover Board of Finance voted May 27 to reduce the proposed Board of Education budget increase to 6% from the previously revised 9.8%.

The reduction – which passed by a tight 4-3 vote – will “definitely” lead to staff cuts, the school board chair predicted.

The Board of Finance approved the revised school board budget of \$4,839,390, a reduction of roughly \$174,000 from the budget proposed that failed at referendum – but still an increase of about \$274,000 from the current year’s \$4,565,462 budget.

The new proposal equates to a total town budget of \$13,338,412, which includes \$4,153,318 for RHAM’s assessment. The proposal represents an overall 3.4% increase over the current year. The proposed mill rate currently stands at 31.68, a 0.3% increase.

The new spending plan will return to voters on June 16.

According to referendum results, the town budget passed by a vote of 412 to 367, while the AES budget failed by around an 80-vote difference of 343 to 431. Although Andover voters approved RHAM’s budget locally, the regional budget failed overall.

Public Petition Called for 3.5% Cap

During public comment, resident and Democrat Registrar of Voters Linda Derick presented a petition signed by 86 residents asking the BOF to limit the school budget increase to 3.5%. The amount of signatures is roughly equal to the margin of difference of the failed education vote.

“We urge the board to reconsider the current budget proposal and take the necessary steps to reduce the increase to a maximum of 3.5%,” said Derick. She argued that education spending was consuming too large a share of local tax revenue.

“Right now ... with RHAM being 30%, the school being 37%, leaving 32% of all tax monies for the running of the whole rest of the town does not seem fiscally sound,” she said.

Several residents echoed concerns about affordability and transparency. Others urged the board to protect educational services.

Board of Education Chair Caitlin McIntosh Greenhouse, unaffiliated, warned that any additional reductions would directly affect students.

“Whatever you end up cutting from the school budget will directly affect the kids,” she stated matter-of-factly. “It will directly affect the number of classroom teachers that we have or the number of [paraeducators] that we have.”

Sharp Divide on School Spending

During the discussion on what percentage of increase to propose, Democrat Louise Goodwin supported the petition’s recommendation and said voters had clearly expressed their wishes.

“The people have spoken twice to us stating that the AES budget is too high,” said Goodwin. “We need to do our civic duty and appease our fellow people in our town.”

Board member Liz Lokiec, a Republican, also supported a larger reduction. She argued that the BOE failed to adequately adjust after last year’s budget cut.

“We have to come up with a number that the taxpayers will accept,” Lokiec said.

She questioned decisions made after last year’s budget reduction and argued that the BOE proceeded with staffing additions despite budget concerns. “They completely disregarded that cut and hired those people anyway.”

Others argued that major fixed costs made deep reductions completely unrealistic.

Board member Heather Van Cara, a Democrat, said a 3.5% increase would not even cover rising benefit costs. Democrat Nicholas Clark reached a similar conclusion after reviewing budget figures, noting, “We got a salary increase for all staff.”

Board member William Desrosiers, a Republican, strongly opposed the 3.5% proposal.

“These are not fluff, icing-on-the-cake, made-up things,” Desrosiers said while discussing contractual salary increases, insurance costs and the loss of grant funding. “You’re talking about slashing our kids’ education.”

At one point, he challenged supporters of deeper cuts directly. “I don’t know how you can have a conscience and say 3.5%.”

BOF Chair Robert England, a Democrat, spent much of the discussion attempting to find a compromise. “I certainly don’t want to drag this out anymore,” England said. “I want to get it passed.”

England acknowledged that the board’s previous \$50,000 reduction had failed to appease voters but cautioned against cutting too deeply.

“The cut that you’re talking about is so drastic that I can’t, honestly, I can’t support that even though I really want to get a budget passed, and I really want to be responsive to the vote to the referendum results,” he said.

England repeatedly urged members to seek a middle ground between the failed proposal and the 3.5% increase advocated by petition supporters. “We need to flip those referendum results,” he said.

The board first considered a 4% increase, and the motion failed by a 4-3 vote, with Lokiec, Republican Kim Person and Democrat Goodwin voting for it. Democrats England, Heather Van Cara and Clark and Republican Desrosiers voted against the motion.

Members then debated an increase of 5%, 5.5% and then 6%. During discussion, Desrosiers argued that a 6% increase represented a painful but necessary compromise. “I don’t feel good at 6, but I know we got to pass something,” he said. “I’m still not going to sleep tonight.”

Lokiec responded that difficult decisions were unavoidable. “We got here because they didn’t listen to the voters last year,” she said.

After some back and forth, England was prompted to remind everyone of their shared goals.

“What I don’t want to do, guys, is have a bunch of cross talk again about who cares about the kids and who doesn’t,” he said. “We all care about the town.”

Tuition, Staffing and Long-Term Costs

First Selectman Jeff Maguire, a Democrat,

argued that additional revenue options should be explored before taxpayers shoulder larger increases. “No one has discussed tuition for the pre-k and if that number is appropriate,” he said. He suggested preschool tuition rates should be reviewed and warned that rising personnel costs could create long-term financial challenges.

“You have to make the Board of Education work. Pull every lever that they can for the benefit of the community,” Maguire said. “It’s unsustainable moving forward.”

Superintendent of Schools Valerie Bruneau pushed back strongly against suggestions that staffing levels or teacher compensation were excessive. “We knew that was what we needed. It was what was right for children and we have no choice,” Bruneau said in regards to staffing decisions made after last year’s budget cut.

She also defended the district’s transparency after it was called into question.

“I don’t think transparency is the issue. I think it’s a double standard,” she said.

Final Vote

A motion to set the school budget increase at 6% passed by a 4-3 vote. England, Clark, Van Cara and Desrosiers voted in favor, while Goodwin, Lokiec and Peron opposed the measure.

England noted that the reduction represented more than triple the size of the previous cut made by the board. The decision drew immediate criticism during public comment.

Greenhouse said the consequences would be significant. “To say ‘devastation’ would probably be putting it mildly,” she said. “There will definitely be staff cuts for sure.”

Teacher Julie Gourdet expressed similar concerns. “I’m preemptively disappointed and upset in how the cuts are going to affect the students that I see everyday,” she shared.

Resident Patricia Kelly called for greater cooperation moving forward. “I hope that in the future that there can be more collaboration between the school and the town because we are all working toward the same goal,” she said.

Community & Senior Center Happenings

The Andover Community and Senior Center (ACSC), located at 25 School Rd., is open Monday-Thursday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m.-noon. All are welcome. For more information, call director Tess Grous at 860-742-7305 ext. 4510 or at 860-798-6862.

The center’s monthly newsletter is available online 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. Also call the center if **interested in volunteering**. Evening hours are available. Call or stop by the center if interested.

Transportation: Call 860-498-2326 to schedule transportation. Provide a one-week notice for all appointment requests. Transportation to town events, voting, and ACSC activities to Andover seniors, veterans, and disabled are welcome.

Regular Weekly and Monthly Programs: For a list of regular weekly and monthly events, such as Movies, Luncheons and Special Speakers, Yoga, Dominos, Tai Chi, trips to the library and the food pantry/Foodshare truck, Chair Massage, and more, see the monthly newsletter. Transportation is available.

Special Upcoming Events: Step into the Summer Kickoff MOVEMENT: This is a celebration of movement in all its forms. Check out the new June activities and refreshed favorites to get everyone involved.

Shopping: Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. Shop Willimantic 6/16, 6/30. Shop in Manchester on 6/9, 6/23. Transportation is available. Thursday 6/18, 8:30 a.m. shop Trader Joe’s & Michael’s.

Kid’s Art Class with Kim (BAF): Wednesday, 6/10, 6/17, 3 p.m. \$18 per class or \$35 for both. There is a discount for siblings. This class is perfect for all skill levels. Space is limited. Supplies are provided. To register, contact the center.

Open Art: Tuesday, 6/16, 5-7 p.m. Bring your current art project. 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.

Walking Club: Tuesdays, Thursdays, 2 p.m. Low-key, no-pressure walking club. Groups forming now for walks along the Rails to Trails, the track at Long Hill or indoors at the center. Contact the center if you are interested.

Lawn Games: Tuesdays, 1 p.m. Enjoy classic lawn games including Yahtzee, Tic-Tac-Toe, Yard Pong, Ring Toss, and Cornhole. Lemonade

will be served. All are welcome. To register, contact the center.

Foodshare Truck: Wednesday, 6/17, 9 a.m. Free transportation to Andover Congregational Church is available; contact the center. For more information on other available dates and times, contact Joan Soucy at 860-208-3226.

The Summer Scoop! A Passport to Ice Cream: Friday, 6/5, Kloter Farms Ellington; Friday, 6/19, Shady Glen in Manchester. The center hosts a summer-long journey for residents where passports will take you to area ice cream shops. Call the center to register and pick up your passport.

Father’s Day Breakfast: Thursday, 6/11, 9-10 a.m. Free. Enjoy a special brunch as you celebrate and share appreciation for Fathers and role models. Registration is required. Call the center.

Senior Art Class with Kim (BAF): Thursday, 6/11, 10-noon, \$15. Focus – Watercolor Book student choice. This class is perfect for all skill levels. Space is limited. Supplies are provided. To register, call the center.

Zumba Gold: Thursdays, 6/18 and 6/25, 10 a.m. This is a free Intro to Zumba class. No experience needed. Seated class available.

Photography Class 35MM: Saturday, 6/13, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Fee is \$85. Learn everything necessary to use your 35mm digital camera. Registration is required; call the center.

Foot Care with Sue: Thursday, 6/18, 9 a.m. \$42. Routine nail trimming and care, callus and corn reduction, foot assessments and skin care, early identification of potential concerns, education on proper foot health and prevention. Call the center for an appointment. Transportation is available.

Lavender Ridge Farm: Friday, 6/19, 11 a.m. \$15 per person. Take a walk through the lavender fields. Pick your own lavender, enjoy lavender cookies and tea, take home a lavender booklet and peruse the shop. Caution: uneven terrain & plenty of bees. Maximum of 12 attendees. Sign-up is required; call the center.

Stained Glass: Friday, 6/26, 6 p.m. \$65. No prior experience is needed. Focus - Fairies. This class fills up quickly. For students 16+ & all materials included. Registration is required. To register, call the center.

Casino Trip: Friday, 6/26, 10 a.m. Hop on the bus for a trip to Mohegan Sun. The bus will return at 1 p.m. Space is limited. To reserve a seat, call 860-498-2326.

Congregational Church News

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

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

Food Pantry: Mondays from 5-7 p.m.

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

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

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

Tag Sale: Saturday, June 6, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Bingo and Baskets: Friday, June 19. Dinner at 5:30 p.m., games at 6:30 p.m. Fee is \$15 per person.

Funky Monkey Artisan Fair

The Funky Monkey Artisan Fair is on Saturday, June 6, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., on the grounds of Over AndOver’s store location and Scott’s Tree Farm, with an open trail connecting both properties.

The fair will feature artisan vendors, food trucks and a gift basket gallery to benefit charity partner, Shine Your Light CT. This event also marks the 10-year anniversary of Over AndOver Barntique, located on Route 6 in Andover.

Vendors will offer items ranging from jewelry to furniture, glass-art, salvage finds and treasures, reclaimed metal and wood, lighting & functional art, pottery, wall art, soaps & candles, mixed media, repurposed fabric goods, handbags, holistic and intuitive resources, decorative signs and homespun bath and body products.

For food trucks you will see Christina’s Greek American Street Food and Long Meadow Farm micro-bakery. Plus, there will be live entertain-

ment on the main stage including: at 10 a.m., CT Dance Hub dancers; at 11 a.m., Two Guitars & A Dame; and from 1-3 p.m., NED the Band.

Be sure to peruse both sides of the fair to see all of the vendors and food options by walking up and down the trail to and from the farm and the shop. Golf cart rides will be available, sponsored by MyTech Plumbing & Heating.

Parking will be at 11 Bunker Hill Rd., home of Fitch Family Farm and Scott’s Christmas Trees.

For more information, email overandoverct@gmail.com, or, for weather inquiries, check for updates @overandoverct and www.overandoverct.com.

Exploring American Ideals in Musicals

The Andover Public Library invites you to join them on Tuesday, June 16 at 6:30 p.m. as they welcome Michael Langlois - a performer, lecturer, and storyteller - and his program, “From Liberty To Legacy: Exploring American Ideals In The Musicals ‘1776’ and ‘Hamilton.’”

During this presentation, Mr. Langlois will look at these two Tony Award-winning musicals which tell the story of the founding of the nation. He’ll explore the contrasting visions of American society at a crossroads. While it’s not necessary to RSVP, it is helpful for space planning purposes. Call the library at 860-742-7428.

Book & Bake Sale

The Andover Friends of the Public Library are holding a Book & Bake Sale on Saturday, June 6, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., at the Town Hall Community Room, 17 School Rd.

There will be a selection of both brand-new-old-stock books from a closed bookstore, and gently-used books that have been donated for the sale. There are also some DVDs and CDs. Prices range from .50 to \$2.

Proceeds benefit the Andover Friends of the Library, which financially supports many of the library’s programs and services. For more information, call 860-742-7428.

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Tag Sale This Sunday

Andover Congregational Church, located at 359 Route 6, will hold a Tag Sale Saturday, June 6, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Call the church at 860-742-7696 for more information.

Transfer Station Stickers Available

Andover Transfer Station stickers for the 2026-27 fiscal year are currently available at the town clerk's office at Town Hall. Cost is \$50, payable by cash or check.

Bring your vehicle registration, and the vehicle must be present at the time of issuance.

The current year's Transfer Station stickers expire June 30.

Note: The town clerk's office will remain open until 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 26 (the day of the next budget referendum), for sticker sales.

For more information, call the town clerk's office at 860-742-0188 ext. 4218.

WAIM Flea Market

Windham Area Interfaith Ministry (WAIM) – whose service area includes Andover and Hebron – will hold a "Fifth Floor Treasures" flea market Saturday, June 27, from 8 a.m.-noon, at 866 Main St., Willimantic.

The market will feature framed art, glassware, décor, collectibles, household finds, and unique surprises. Payment options are cash, charge or check.

Support helps WAIM continue its mission as a social-service nonprofit strengthening families and neighbors across the region.

For more information, call 860-456-7270 ext. 104 or Kathy Callahan at 860-228-0873.

President's List

Cameron Allen of Andover made the spring 2026 President's List at Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester, N.H.

Robinson Endorsed by Democrats for Probate Judge

Manchester attorney Thomas Robinson was endorsed last night (Thursday, May 21) as the Democratic candidate for Probate Judge in the state's 13th Probate District, which includes the towns of Manchester, Andover, Bolton and Columbia.

Robinson received the endorsement of the Democratic Party at a convention of delegates from the district's four towns, which was held at the Manchester Country Club. Voters will select a new probate judge for the district this November, with the retirement of Judge Michael Darby.

Robinson said, "I am honored to have the support of the Democratic Party for my effort to be elected as our next probate judge. I've devoted my legal career to helping families navigate the kinds of challenging issues that come before this court. As a result, I am confident that I can serve our community with fairness, compassion, and integrity."

The Connecticut Probate Court system is a system of 54 probate courts located throughout the state of Connecticut. The jurisdiction of each court extends to the legal affairs of the deceased, estates, some aspects of family law and children's matters, conservatorships, and several other matters requiring specific legal decisions.

Robinson is a native of Manchester, and a graduate of that town's public schools. He holds degrees from Trinity College, Hartford, Conn., and Tulane Law School, New Orleans, La.

Robinson is currently a partner in the Manchester law firm of Falkenstein, Meggers, Paul and Robinson. For almost 30 years, his practice has focused on the types of issues addressed by the probate court.

Robinson is a member of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys and the Probate Section of the Connecticut Bar Association. He also has served as chairman of the Manchester Board of Education and head election moderator for the office of the Manchester registrar of voters. Robinson also serves on the Benet Housing Corporation and the Manchester Scholarship Foundation.

"The work of the probate court is focused on protecting our most vulnerable friends, neigh-



Tom Robinson

...bors, family and many other deserving individuals at times when emotions can run high and challenging decisions must be made," Robinson said. "I believe I have the subject matter and procedural expertise, the depth of experience, and the necessary temperament to ensure that our probate court provides an effective forum in which parties and their attorneys are treated with respect and courtesy and positive and helpful outcomes can be reached."

Manchester's Democratic Town Committee Chairman Michael Pohl said, "Tom Robinson will provide our probate court with strong leadership, a sense of compassion, and solid judgment. Anyone in this district who has business in our probate court will benefit from Tom's presence there."

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1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13					14					15				16
17				18						19				
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45	46	47						48				49	50	51
52								53						
54								55				56		
	57							58				59		

CREATORS NEWS SERVICE By Neil Manausa

ACROSS

1 "Thy hair ____ a flock of goats"

5 Terrible time for moms

9 Shorts, for short

13 Dieter's dish

14 "What is so ____ as a day . . ."

15 Screams

17 Prince

20 Atrociously

21 Animal in a Williams title

22 Composer Speaks

23 Wildebeests

24 They come in last

27 Lapdog, for short

28 "Casablanca" role

31 Fictional barbarian

32 Smelter residue

33 Physicist Isidor

34 King

37 Crusaders captured it

38 Deco and nouveau

39 Divert

40 Deficient

41 Prejudice

42 Certain rifleman

43 Unruffled

44 O of REO

45 Stir

48 Grisly

52 Queen

54 Love not wisely, perhaps

55 Swag

56 Palindromic name

57 Pup ____

58 Anagram of 59 Across

59 Some answers

DOWN

1 Red flannels effect

2 London restaurant area

3 Worshipful distance

4 Replacement

5 Israel had twelve

6 Without force

7 Saturnalia

8 Six, in 18 Down

9 Wingtip, for example

10 COVID

11 Qatar's capital

12 The man

16 Patty Hearst's kidnapper, abbr.

18 La Scala city

19 Maidenhair tree

23 Meshed teeth

24 Now and then, briefly

25 Sponge

26 Door

27 City maps

28 Showed a sign of convalescence

29 Invective

30 Corner joint

32 Get lost!

33 Forgiveness

35 Caught

36 Surface spacecraft

41 Black Wedgwood ware

42 Gets rid of

43 Chili spice

44 Papal scarf

45 Wee hrs.

46 Absorbed

47 Clarinet's kin

48 Govt. agents, of old

49 Numerical prefix

50 Fischer word

51 Country of baseball

53 V-mail handler

Dog Licensing is Underway

It's time for dog owners to renew their dogs' licenses. Current licenses expire June 30. All dogs six months of age and older must be licensed.

Licenses may be renewed or obtain by mail by sending a current rabies certificate (for renewals, only if the certificate on file has expired), proof of spay/neuter for new licenses, a self-addressed stamped envelope for return of the license and a check payable to the Town of Andover - \$8 for spayed or neutered dogs and \$19 for unaltered dogs.

Residents may also renew or obtain licenses in person at the Town Clerk's Office, 17 School Rd. For more information, contact the Town Clerk's office at 860-742-0188, ext. 218.

LEGAL NOTICE

A certified list of Democratic party-endorsed candidates for the Town of East Hampton for election as Democratic Registrar of Voters will be on file with the Office of the Secretary of the State, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut, and copies thereof will be available for public distribution.

A Primary will be held August 11, 2026, with August 3rd through 9th for early voting, if the required primary petition(s) for opposition candidate(s) is filed, pursuant to Sections 9-382 to 9-450 of the Connecticut General Statutes, not later than 4:00 p.m. on June 9, 2026. Petition forms, instructions and information concerning the procedure for filing of opposing candidacies, including schedules, may be obtained from: Lisa Gravel, Democratic Registrar of Voters, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton. Patricia Burnham East Hampton Town Clerk 5/27/26 1TB 6/5

LEGAL NOTICE

A certified list of Republican party-endorsed candidates for the Town of East Hampton for election as Republican Registrar of Voters will be on file with the Office of the Secretary of the State, 165 Capitol Ave., Hartford, Connecticut, and copies thereof will be available for public distribution.

A Primary will be held August 11, 2026, with August 3rd through 9th for early voting, if the required primary petition(s) for opposition candidate(s) is filed, pursuant to Sections 9-382 to 9-450 of the Connecticut General Statutes, not later than 4:00 p.m. on June 9, 2026. Petition forms, instructions and information concerning the procedure for filing of opposing candidacies, including schedules, may be obtained from: Rosemarie Hecht, Republican Registrar of Voters, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton. Patricia Burnham East Hampton Town Clerk 5/27/26 1TB 6/5

TOWN OF PORTLAND ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS LEGAL NOTICE OF DECISION

At the May 28, 2026 regular meeting, the following action was taken: APPROVED Application #25-04 - 311 Main Street. Request for a variance from Zoning Regulation Table 5.5 for minimum required lot area to reduce the area of the parcel by 1,301 ft to 18,662 ft. Application and property of Miller Street Properties LLC. Assessor's Map 29, Lot 255. Zone B-3. Dated in Portland, CT this 1st Day of June 2026 Kurt Peterson, Chairman Zoning Board of Appeals 1TB 6/5

LEGAL NOTICE HEBRON HISTORIC PROPERTIES COMMISSION HEBRON, CONNECTICUT

The Hebron Historic Properties Commission will hold a public hearing at a special meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 11, 2026, at 6:30 P.M., in the Peters House, 150 East Street, Hebron, CT, on the following: Application for the establishment of historic properties, submitted by the Town of Hebron Historic Properties Commission, for property known as the United Brethren of Hebron Synagogue located at 10 Church Street, under the provisions of Chapter 224 of the Town of Hebron Code of Ordinances and under Section 7-147q of the CT General Statutes. Maryanne Foote, Chair 2TB 5/29, 6/5

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing at their Meeting on Monday, June 8, 2026 at 6:30pm at the East Hampton Town Hall - 1 Community Drive, Room 117 and via Zoom to consider the following application: ZBA-26-005: Kenneth Barber, Requesting the following variance to section 4.4.E Area & Dimensional standards to allow reduction of front setback (Pecauset Trail) from 50' to 20'.88" and front setback (Daly Rd.) from 50' to 43'.4", and increase Maximum Lot Coverage from existing 12.6% to 14.4% for construction of 24' x 32' Barn, on 39 Daly Road, Map 33/ Block 87/ Lot 5A. Applications are on file in the Land Use Office and Town Clerk Office 860 267-7450 2TB 5/29, 6/5

LEGAL NOTICE MARLBOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION NOTICE OF ACTION

The Marlborough Planning Commission at their meeting of May 26, 2026, at 7pm in the Town Hall, 26 No Main Street VOTED TO CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING: #P-01-26 Amendment to Subdivision Regulations

- Section 6.1 Dedication of Open Space changes from 20% to 10% for conventional subdivision
- Section 5.2.8 Open Space changes from 20% to 10% for conventional subdivision
- Delete Section 4.14.10 minimum buildable area
- Delete Section 4.16.21 minimum buildable area
- Amendment Section 5.21 minimum requirements

MARK PAUL, PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR 1TB 6/5

Obituaries

Lebanon

William Timothy Bennison

In loving memory of William Timothy Bennison, 81, of Lebanon.



Born in 1945, Bill lived a life defined by kindness, humility, loyalty and generosity. A proud Viet Nam veteran and accomplished professional insurance executive, he carried a strong work ethic throughout his life while always making time for the people and experiences he loved most.

Bill was a deeply social man who treasured friendships and family connections. He found joy on the golf course, out fishing, and behind the stove preparing memorable meals for those he loved. He especially enjoyed road trips in search of good food, beautiful scenery, and the simple pleasure of watching a good sunset.

Those who knew Bill will remember his warm spirit, easy conversation, and giving nature. He had a way of making others feel welcome and valued, leaving lasting impressions on friends, family, and everyone who was fortunate enough to know him.

Bill was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Sandra Moore Bennison, and his brother, John Jr. Bennison. He is survived by his niece, Dawn Bloom, and her son, Kyle Bloom; his niece, Laura Bennison; and his partner Ann Hartford, along with many dear friends and extended family members who will miss him greatly.

His memory will live on in the stories shared, meals enjoyed, sunsets admired, and love he gave so freely throughout his life.

Services will be private and the family will announce details at a later date.

Marlborough

Joan Whiting

Joan Barbara Whiting, of Marlborough and formerly of Colchester, passed away on May 29, 2026, at Marlborough Rehab and Health Center, where she resided for several years. Joan was born on January 30, 1939, and was raised in Niantic, CT. She was the youngest of four children and the daughter of Esther and Howard Whiting.



Joan retired after a successful career as an executive secretary from various companies including the Hartford National Bank in New London, General Dynamics in Groton, IBM in Chicago, Ill., and London, England, and Aetna Insurance Company in Hartford.

In addition to her parents, Joan was predeceased by her siblings, Doris Fithian and Ellsworth and Ralph Whiting; and a brother-in-law, Lewis Fithian. She is survived by her sisters-in-law, Patricia Whiting of Lakeland, Fla., and Rosemarie Whiting of Waterford; and numerous nieces, nephews and grand nieces and nephews.

Joan will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by all who knew her, especially her dear friend and caregiver, Lynne Pinto of Colchester.

A graveside service was held Thursday, June 4, at the Jordan Cemetery in Waterford.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Joan's memory can be made to Marlborough Rehab and Health Center in Marlborough.

For online condolences of to share a memory, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Martin Van Le

Martin Van Le, born in Saigon March 3, 1968, passed away peacefully Friday, May 22, after a short illness, surrounded by his family.

Martin will be remembered for his quiet strength, devotion to those he loved, and the care he showed to his family. His presence will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

He is survived by his wife, Laura Le; his son, Allen Le, and daughter-in-law Courtney Le, and their two children, Annie and Mac; his daughter, Leanne Abbott, and her husband, Matt Abbott and their children, Emily and Madelyn; and his daughter, Melissa Tweedie.

Private services will be held with family. Spencer Funeral Home has care of arrangements.

Marlborough

Patricia Ann Green

Patricia Ann (Novak) Green, 72, passed away peacefully, leaving behind a legacy of love, kindness and devotion to her family, friends, and community.



Patricia was a devoted mother, grandmother, sister and friend whose warmth and caring nature touched countless lives. She dedicated many years to caring for children at CLECC, where she shared her patience, compassion, and nurturing spirit with generations of children and their families. Caring for others was not simply her profession – it was one of her greatest joys and gifts.

Family was the center of Patricia's world. She treasured every moment spent with her loved ones and took great pride in her children and grandchildren. Her home and heart were always open to those in need of comfort, guidance, or a listening ear.

She held a special love for Ireland and the breathtaking beauty of the Cliffs of Moher. She found joy in nature, family gatherings, and the simple moments that created lasting memories.

She was preceded in death by her beloved daughter, Monica Erff; her parents, Thomas E. Novak Sr. and Patricia (Novak) Harriman; and her stepfather, Donald R. Harriman.

She is survived by her loving daughters, Tracy Green Durost (Keith) and Amy Green Knox (James); her cherished grandchildren; her brother, Thomas E. Novak; her sister, Deborah A. Novak; along with many nieces, nephews, extended family, son-in-law Robert Erff III, longtime best friends Jeri, Manes, friends from her community, and all those whose lives were enriched by her love and kindness.

Patricia will be remembered for her compassionate heart, unwavering devotion to her family, and the love she shared so freely with others. Her legacy lives on in the countless lives she touched, the children she cared for, and the family she loved beyond measure.

She will be deeply missed and forever loved. "Perhaps they are not stars in the sky, but rather openings where our loved ones shine down to let us know they are."

Colchester

Theresa Mary Prudente

Theresa Mary (Paczynski) Prudente, 96, of Glastonbury, formerly of East Hartford and Colchester, beloved wife of the late Anthony Prudente, passed away peacefully with family by her side Monday, Jan. 5, at Hartford Hospital. She was born March 14, 1929, in New York City to the late Nicholas and Katherine (Rzenik) Paczynski.



After graduating high school, Teri was a full-charge bookkeeper in retail, primarily at Federated Department Stores in Manhattan. After starting a family, she worked part-time at Levine & Levine Co. in Colchester and later as a buyer assistant at G. Fox & Co. in Hartford. She also ran an amazingly successful Avon business for several years.

Teri was full of personality and loved to socialize. She was a proud native New Yorker who exuded the energy and verve of the city, with just enough sass to keep it interesting. She often shared memorable stories of simpler times while growing up in New York City, when people focused on family and friends. She was also proud of her Polish-Ukrainian heritage, often referring to herself as "one tough Pole." And was she ever – living independently in her house of 34 years, tending to her meticulous gardens and constantly on the go with her daily business, always stylishly put together, up until the time of her passing. She was a hot ticket.

Teri was also a natural in the kitchen, delighting her family with traditional Polish and Italian dishes (the latter learned from her in-laws), as well as classic American cuisine. She loved cooking for holiday gatherings. Christmas was her favorite time of year, when she enjoyed spending hours preparing holiday specialties for family. Warm memories of those feasts will always remain with those who attended.

Teri is survived by her son Joe and his wife Yvonne, and daughter Kathi, all of Glastonbury; by her grandchildren (whom she absolutely adored) Corinne of Astoria, N.Y., and Mark of Glastonbury; and by several nieces, nephews and close friends. She was predeceased by her younger sister Katherine (Kitty) Galletto.

A celebration of life will be held Saturday, Sept. 12, at 2 p.m. at the Minnechaug Village Clubhouse, 17 Fairway Crossing, Glastonbury.

Memorial donations may be made to BrightFocus Foundation Macular Degeneration Research (www.brightfocus.org/macular/).

For online condolences, please visit www.mulryanfh.com.

**LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON
IWWA ACTIONS**

At the Regular Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency Meeting held on Wednesday, May 27, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. at the East Hampton Town Hall and via ZOOM, the following decision was made:
IW-26:004: 12 West Point Road, PegArch Architecture, Construct addition, deck, concrete pad for swim spa and remove asphalt parking, ramp, and concrete pad in Upland Review Area, Map 05A/Block 83/Lot 15 - Approved
Chairman Joshua Wilson

1TB 6/5

Colchester

Evelyn Blanche Harris

Evelyn Blanche Harris, of Manchester and formerly of Mansfield, peacefully passed away into the arms of her Savior Saturday, May 30. She was 88 years old. Evelyn (Ebby) was born June 9, 1937, in Brattleboro, Vt. She was the daughter of the late Arthur and Evelyn (Bell) Edson.



She attended school in Vermont where she grew up and married the love of her life, Wallace Henry Harris, on April 16, 1960. The couple settled in Waterford where they made their home and raised their family. Wallace predeceased her on March 27, 2013. Evelyn, who had amazing organizational skills, worked as a secretary for the Waterford Public Schools. After retirement, they lived in Ft. Pierce, Fla., for a time. A beach lover, Evelyn found joy walking along the shore collecting sea glass and shells. While in Florida, Wallace and Evelyn owned and operated a travel agency called All the Places You'll Go. They enjoyed spending time together playing golf.

Evelyn was a talented seamstress, sewing dresses for her granddaughters and even Raggedy Ann dolls, along with knitting sweaters for her grandchildren. Evelyn loved skiing, dancing, music, and playing the piano throughout her life. A sports enthusiast, she loved watching sports, especially the Boston Red Sox and the Celtics. When she was able, Evelyn enjoyed attending the Presbyterian Church of Coventry. Always proud of her family, she especially loved to support and encourage her grandchildren in their endeavors and talents. She will be remembered fondly as a loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother and friend to all who

See Obituaries, page 32

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RE8-29-25

Obituaries cont.

knew her. She will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by her children, Deborah (Ken) Goodale of Coventry, Pamela (Donald) Sullivan of Colchester, Timothy (Karen) Harris of Byfield, Mass.; two sisters, Joyce Reischuck, and Phyllis Teeson; eight grandchildren, Harison, Samantha, Timothy, Hannah, Holly, Ha-leigh, Ryan, Molly; and 10 great-grandchildren, James, Leon, Talulah, Maria, Swift; Charlotte, Keegan, Callahan, Niall, and Malcolm; as well as many extended family members and friends.

In addition to her husband and parents, she was predeceased by two brothers, David and Richard Edson.

A memorial service will be held at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd, Colchester on Saturday, July 25, with visitation from 10:30-11:30 a.m. followed by a celebration of life service from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Reception to follow at Blackledge Golf Resort in Hebron from 1-3 p.m. Donations in her memory may be made to Hospice.

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

Hebron

Michael P. O'Donnell

Michael P. O'Donnell, 71, of Hebron/Lebanon, sadly passed away Monday, May 11, after a long 10-year battle with cancer.

Raised in Hebron, he attended Hebron Elementary School and graduated from RHAM High School. Then he joined the U.S. Navy, where he spent four years, after which he applied at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, where he worked as an engineer until retirement.

During his time, he enjoyed riding his Harley through the country roads as well as his antique Roadrunner, along with his time building his home in Lebanon, where he spent his remaining life of 40 years. Soon his courageous battle with cancer ended.

Mike is survived by a sister, Mari Kay; a brother, William; and brother, Doni.

There will be private burial as per his wish.

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

Notice is hereby given that the Portland Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, June 18th, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Portland Public Library, 20 Freestone Avenue, to consider the following: PZC Application #25-19: Proposed Amendment to the Portland Zoning Regulations. Changes to sections 2.4, 5.1, 5.4, 6.1, 7.3.4.A, 10.5.1.4, 10.6.2. These changes are being made in response and to comply with Public Act 25-1. Application of the Town of Portland. PZC Application #25-20: Proposed Map Amendment to the Portland Zoning Map. Creation of a Parking Management District overlay zone that will cover a large portion of the downtown as well as the parcels fronting route 66. These changes are being made in response and to comply with Public Act 25-1. Application of the Town of Portland.

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY PUBLIC HEARING

The Marlborough Water Pollution Control Authority Control Commission will hold the following public hearing on Tuesday, June 09, 2026 at 6:15 P.M. at the Marlborough Town Hall, 26 North Main Street, Marlborough, CT. To consider the following: 2026-2027 Operation, Maintenance & Repair Budget 2026-2027 EDU Property Allocation 2026-2027 Fee Schedule Proposed 2026-2027 Equivalent Dwelling Unit User Charge of \$659 per EDU DATED at Marlborough, Connecticut this 26th day of May 2026, MARLBOROUGH WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY Benjamin Levin Chair 2TB 5/29, 6/5

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, June 10, 2026 at 7:00 P.M., to be held virtually through the GoToMeeting Platform, on the following: I. Petition 2026-03 & 04: Petition of the Town of Hebron Department of Public Works Action Committee for Special Permit and Site Plan Modification, in accordance with Section 2.C.4.1 of the Hebron Zoning Regulations, to demolish and reconstruct a new Department of Public Works and associated facilities, including Transfer Station at 550 Old Colchester Road, R-1 District. Planning and Zoning Commission Jun 10, 2026, 7:00 - 10:00 PM (America/New_York) Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone. https://meet.goto.com/440080213 You can also dial in using your phone. Access Code: 440-080-213 United States: +1 (646) 749-3122 Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: https://meet.goto.com/install Dated at Hebron, Connecticut, this 21st day of May 2026. Frank Zitkus, Chair 2TB 5/29, 6/5

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING

The Marlborough Zoning Board of Appeals will hold the following public hearing on Wednesday, June 10, 2026, at 7:00 P.M. in the Marlborough Town Hall, 26 North Main Street. APPLICATION #ZBA-03-25 - Diane Prentice (Applicant/Property Owner) 33 Myrna Drive - is seeking variance of Article Three A.1, Minimum Requirements, Article Three A.3 Conformity of Buildings & Land, Article Three A.5 Reduction of Lot Areas or Minimum Required Yards, Article Three A.9 Minimum Required Yards, Article Six D. 2 b Side Yard Setback, in order to construct a garage with a Side Yard Setback of 7.1 feet where 15 feet is required. APPLICATION #ZBA-04-25 - Heather Burgess (Applicant/Property Owner) 85 North Main Street - is seeking variance of Article Three A.1, Minimum Requirements, Article Three A.3 Conformity of Buildings & Land, Article Three A.5 Reduction of Lot Areas or Minimum Required Yards, Article Three A.9 Minimum Required Yards, Article Six D. 2 a Front Yard Setback, & Article Six D.4 Building Coverage, in order to construct a deck with a Front Yard Setback of 26.7 feet where 40 feet is required and building coverage of 13.5% where 10% is allowed. Interested parties can review the application materials in the Land Use/Building Department during normal Town Hall hours. Written testimony should be sent at least 24 hours ahead of the public hearing date to building@marlboroughct.gov, and oral testimony may be given during the public hearing. 2TB 5/29, 6/5

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* Belltown Budgets, cont. from page 1

paign engaged in by some of our community leaders who clearly care more about winning than they do about integrity and truthfulness."

Finn said that one key obstacle that East Hampton, and all towns, faced when it came to budgets was the lack of education funding from the state, even despite a small increase that towns will receive this year.

"The simple truth is that we need more from the state than an election-year Band-Aid over the gaping wound which is the static ECS [Education Cost Sharing] funding for the last 13 years," he said. "Every year the state funding hasn't kept up with inflation, the budget ends up being balanced on the backs of taxpayers and students and we've clearly reached a breaking point."

Finn also said he was disappointed that the middle school paving project did not pass, blaming saying he found it "unfortunate that the Republicans in town came out so strongly" against it.

"I would have thought that they would appreciate saving money on the total project cost with no new taxes rather than pay a higher cost for the project with new taxes," he said.

In an email, Superintendent of Schools Timothy Van Tassel wrote. "While we're disappointed in the outcome of the referendum, East Hampton's results are consistent in what has occurred in many other communities across the State of Connecticut. As we look forward, our focus is to continue offering the types of programs and opportunities that have provided students with strong educational experiences in our schools; however, the funding challenges that we are facing today present a new challenge that will not easily be overcome."

Van Tassel said many in the community had been aware of where cuts might be made if the budget did not pass. One program that had been discussed often publicly and which had caused concern among residents was the Smart Start Preschool Program.

Cox said that, on the town side, there would be cuts as well.

"Certainly things that we hoped to do in this budget, we may not be able to do at all," he said. "There were people in this budget that were going to do some things at the senior center and try and improve the way we handle land use and things of that sort, plus making sure that we take care of infrastructure and those sorts of things. Now it becomes a conversation about, what are

the priorities and what things are we ready to scale back?"

One person who didn't seem terribly disappointed was Town Council member Ted Hintz, a Republican, who said he didn't believe the budget would pass unless it was equal to current year spending.

"I don't know if I would say I am pleased with the results," said Hintz. "Definitely not pleased, because we just wasted \$5,000 on a referendum that should never have been put forth to the taxpayers."

Hintz called out the education budget in particular, and argued that East Hampton's rejection of its proposed budget was not unique for the area.

"You have to look around the state," he said. "Colchester just failed again for the second time. Hebron went a second time. Every town you look around, they're failing continual referendums, because the taxpayers in Connecticut have finally stood up and said enough is enough."

"I don't foresee a budget passing unless it comes in at flat from last year," said Hintz. "And even at that, I believe it's going to be a challenge with the revaluation."

Cox said he had heard the calls for a 0% increase, "flat" budget, but that he didn't think that was possible without making serious sacrifices.

"I think that winding back of the clock, so to speak, ignores the fact that the cost of everything goes up every year, and so, as many people will remind us, flat really means reductions, and that's been sort of my mantra," he said.

A flat budget, he said, would be about a \$1.8-\$1.9 million reduction in expenses from the proposal that was defeated Tuesday.

"That's a lot of expenses," he said, "and where do those come from? What are the people that would undoubtedly go away from the organization? What did those people do? Because we probably can't do those things anymore."

If the town went to a flat budget, Cox said, "people will notice. If we were to go to a flat budget, things that we have done in the past, we may not be able to do anymore." With that said, he said that, "if that's the charge of the community, then together we'll figure out what that looks like."

Van Tassel, for one, stayed optimistic that the town would find some sort of compromise in the coming weeks.

"From our perspective, the margin between residents who voted in support of the budget versus those who did not was not as significant as it could have been," he said. "With this, we remain hopeful that it will be taken into consideration when deciding what will be the next iteration of the education budget will be."

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF ANDOVER 2026 - 2027 NOTICE OF ANDOVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUDGET AND RHAM NET OPERATING BUDGET REFERENDUM, JUNE 16, 2026

The Electors and Citizens qualified to vote in the Town of Andover are hereby warned to meet at their polling place in said Town on Tuesday, June 16, 2026 for the following purposes: 1. To adopt the Andover Elementary School Budget for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. The location of the polling place is as follows: Community Room of the Town Office Building - 17 School Road - Andover, CT The polls will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Absentee Ballots will be available on June 9, 2026 in the Town Clerk's Office for anyone who is eligible to vote in the Town of Andover who will not be able to vote in person at the polls. Copies of the proposed Budget will be available in the Office of the Town Clerk. The Regional School District #8 Budget Referendum will be held simultaneously in the same polling place. Dated at Andover, Connecticut this 3rd day of June, 2026. Roberta Dougherty Andover Town Clerk 1TB 6/5

LEGAL NOTICE OF ACTIONS PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION HEBRON, CONNECTICUT

The Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission took the following actions at their Regular Meeting, which was held on Wednesday, May 27, 2026 at 7:00pm on the following: Petition 2026-05: Petition of the Hebron Lions Agricultural Society for the sale of beer and wine during the Hebron Harvest Fair from September 10 through September 13, 2026, pursuant to Section 5.O.3 of the Hebron Zoning Regulations, 347 Gilead Street, R-1 District. Approved, with conditions. Petition 2026-06: Petition of the Hebron Lions Agricultural Society for the sale of beer and wine during the Hebron Harvest Fair from September 13, 2026, pursuant to Section 5.O.3 of the Hebron Zoning Regulations, 347 Gilead Street, R-1 District. Approved, with conditions. The video recording of the Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting can be seen using the following link: https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#/s/9c7b67c8a5c4866f85381b198e345437efe75e312ab52b8d97cce86e1113096 1TB 6/5

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 8 TOWNS OF HEBRON, ANDOVER AND MARLBOROUGH NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 15, 2026 AND BUDGET REFERENDUM JUNE 16, 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 as virtual only on Monday, June 15, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. for the following purposes via the following Google meet: Video call link: https://meet.google.com/ydw-ivtd-daj Or dial: (US) +1 508-835-8147 PIN: 180 043 049# More phone numbers: https://tel.meet/ydw-ivtd-daj?pin=2590176187543 1. To choose a Moderator to preside. 2. To discuss the operating budget in the amount of \$32,246,809 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 June 16, 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 \$32,246,809 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?" Voters approving said Question will vote "Yes" and those opposing said Question 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, June 2, 2026. By Order of the Chairperson of the Board of REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 8 Heather Summerer, Chairperson 1TB 6/5

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Left photo: Pictured from the left, Diann Amici, Samuel Tucker, Joyce Ghent and Lilliana Tycz. Right photo: Pictured from the left, Don Chamberlin, five year member Debbie Kramer, 10 year member Elaine Akley, 15 year member Amy Jensen, 25 year member Jeannie Ziomek, 35 year member Allene Kalisz. Missing from the photo: Sarah Barrett, Alice Pollard, five year member Cathy Riggs.



36th Anniversary Scholarship Winners

After performing their spring concert, the Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords recently celebrated their 36th year of lifting spirits and soothing souls with song. The celebration included recognizing members for their time with the Vocal Chords.

At their recent concert, scholarships were awarded to three Middlesex County students planning on majoring in either music or nursing. This year's recipients were: Ashley Kelley, Haddam-Killingworth High School, attending Eastern Connecticut State University's Nursing

Program; Evelyn Hair, Portland High School, attending Sacred Heart University's Nursing Program and Lilliana Tycz, Mercy High School, attending University of Connecticut's Nursing Program. Congratulations to all. Over the years the Vocal Chords have awarded \$94,000

in scholarships to deserving students in Middlesex County.

Their next semester will commence on Tuesday, August 25 to begin preparing for their annual holiday concert on Dec. 6. For more information, visit vocalchords20.org.

Exchange Club Seeks New Members

The Exchange Club of Portland is looking for new members.

The club started in 1945 and, through such projects as the Exchange Club Golf Tournament, Touch-A-Truck, Bingo Nights, the "Give a Kid a Flag" program, and food concessions at the Portland Fair, it is able to help various charities and

awareness programs. These include Middlesex Hospital Family Advocacy, New Horizons Domestic Violence Prevention Group, Portland Food Bank, Middlesex Hospital Hospice, Portland Fuel Bank, and scholarships for Portland students.

If interested in joining, and for more information, visit portlandexchange.org.

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 for children ages 3 through 8th grade will be on hiatus for the summer and resume in the fall. Classes normally meet twice a month at 10:15 a.m. following worship.

Adult Education and discussion takes place each Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

Men's Ministry: Zion is initiating a Men's Group that will discuss and work on church projects and service projects around town. Call Jerry Peuse at 860-894-2880 for additional details.

Sponsored Trip to Lancaster PA: Deluxe motorcoach trip to Lancaster, four days five

nights, meals included. Oct. 26 to Oct. 30. Admission to several shows and tours of both Philadelphia and Lancaster included. The cost is \$765, double occupancy. Contact Barbara Show at 860-262-3531 for additional details and reservations. A deposit of \$75 is due by June 27.

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

Fall Soccer Registration Open

Portland Soccer Club has announced fall 2026 registration is now open.

The state is moving to new birthday cutoffs for soccer teams. Players will be grouped according to birthdays on or after Aug. 1 of each year with kids born up to July 31 of the following year. The state has implemented a new registration system. When you log in at clubs.bluesombrero.com/portlandsoccerclub, the registration system will ask for your player's information, including birthdate. New Travel players will need to upload a birth certificate for age verification.

Travel Season: Register by Friday, June 12. Cost is \$170. Late registrations are not guaranteed a spot on a travel team. New players will receive uniforms, included in the registration fee. The season begins in September and runs until late October or early November. Evaluations are mandatory and are held at the Portland Rec Complex; dates and times will be announced. Players bring cleats, shin guards, a water bottle, and an appropriately sized ball. Please do not wear any gear with any local children's soccer

club logos.

Travel is for the following groups of players by birthdate: U9: 8/1/2017 to 7/31/2018; U10: 8/1/2016 to 7/31/2017; U11: 8/1/2015 to 7/31/2016; U12: 8/1/2014 to 7/31/2015; U13: 8/1/2013 to 7/31/2014; U14: 8/1/2012 to 7/31/2013.

Rec Season: Registrations will be due in late August or early September. Cost is \$75. Late registrations are subject to a late fee. Each Dribbler and Kicker player will receive a team jersey. Each Pre-K player will receive a jersey and a size-3 ball. The season is from September to October. All games are Saturday mornings at the Portland Recreational Complex. Kickers have an additional practice on Wednesdays.

Rec is for the following groups of players by birthdate: U4: 8/1/2022 to 7/31/2023 (PreK); U5: 8/1/2021 to 7/31/2022 (Dribblers); U6: 8/1/2020 to 7/31/2021 (Dribblers); U7: 8/1/2019 to 7/31/2020 (Kickers); U8: 8/1/2018 to 7/31/2019 (Kickers).

Financial assistance is available on a limited basis for both Travel and Rec soccer.

For additional questions about Travel and Rec soccer, contact Chad Wilson (president) at nosliw.dahc@gmail.com; Chris Donahue (recreational director) at Donahuecj@sbcglobal.net; or Jeffrey LaBonte (assisting with registrations) at 714jrl@gmail.com.

Murdercycles Rodeo

Murdercycles MC will hold its 10th annual rodeo Saturday, July 11, at the Exchange Club Fairgrounds, 1348 Main St.

The event will feature the famous Thunderdome, as well as biker games, food, a minibike throw-down, live music, vendors, inflatables, and more.

Admission is \$20; children under 13 are free. Murdercycles said it reserves the right to refuse anyone.

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Deadline is every Tuesday at 10am for that week's papers.

Lions Club Roars Again

The Portland Lions Club will hold its third annual "Lions Roar Cycling for Our Community" event Saturday, June 20, with registration at Brownstone Park on Brownstone Avenue and Bransfield Park on Rose Hill Road, depending on the route you plan on riding.

Riders from across Connecticut participate in this event. One hundred percent of the funds are used for supporting charitable projects such as childhood cancer, hunger, disaster relief, diabetes, vision, hearing and more. To register for the ride, go to bikereg.com/lions-roar.

To make a donation in support of the Lions Club please send them to P.O. Box 283, Portland, CT 06480.

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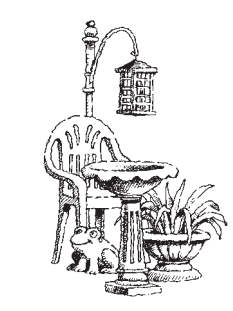
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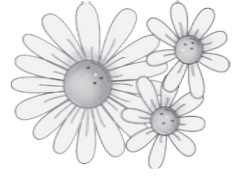
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