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RIVEREAST
News Bulletin

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

Volume 47, Number 17 | Published by The Glastonbury Citizen | June 12, 2026

East Hampton Rotary held a grueling 0.5K charity event last weekend. Nearly 200 participants had lots of fun with the exhausting trek. Pictured from left are Rotarians Cap Egan, Kyle Chmielecki and Ashley Wolf.

Very Fun, Very Silly Rotary Road Race

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton Rotary's 0.5K charity event this past Sunday was a grueling slog, traversing an arduous 0.31 miles all the way from Sears Park to the driveway of Lakeside Bar and Grill.

Luckily, there were donuts. And costumes.

At the starting line, a man dressed in a hot dog suit and holding a microphone (later identified as Mark Cibula) advised participants to "pace yourself, hydrate responsibly, and remember, if any point, you feel overwhelmed, there's a donut station approximately 40 feet from the finish line."

The event drew 181 "competitors" and raised $12,000 for Rotary's charity efforts, according to their Facebook page.

While many of the walkers (and even a few runners) were dressed in regular summer clothes, more than a few dressed in patriotic attire, and a small subset took it a step further with proper costumes, including the hot dog, a horse, a man dressed in what he described as a "ghillie suit" (a camouflage outfit designed to blend in with brush), and a Portland woman dressed as Mrs. Frizzle from the *Magic School Bus* series, whose dog was dressed as a school bus. Also at the event was Mrs. Merry Claus, dressed for the part even in the summer weather, and handing out candy canes at the restaurant entrance.

Cierra Caron, aka Mrs. Frizzle, said she lived in Portland and had seen the event advertised on Facebook, and thought it would be fun.

"I don't know, the terrain, with it being so flat, it sounds like it might a little difficult for us," she joked, adding that it was her dog's first race, so they planned on taking it easy.

Tyler Harris, from East Hampton, wore the ghillie suit, and said added orange artificial flowers to what he said had been a long-time Halloween costume that he'd had since childhood. He said he chose his costume to give himself "the element of surprise."

Dawn and Scott Llaser brought their grandchildren, ages 3 and 5, to the event. Dawn said Scott had brought their boat over so they could take the boat back after the event, and said that they came out because they wanted to "support the local community."

As finishers turned to cross the street on their way to the finish line, a race volunteer jokingly shouted, "I cannot believe you folks did it!" Each finisher received a medal.

Prizes were awarded at the end, including "Best Not Dressed for Exercise" (to someone who was wearing a blanket), "Most Likely to Come Back for the Donuts" (awarded to a woman wearing donut-patterned shorts), and "Just Here for the Hot Dogs." Caron and her dog won an award after the race for "Most Enthusiastic Dog and Her Mom."

"What a day for the East Hampton Rotary Club .5K!" wrote event chairwoman Tracey

See Rotary Road Race, page 8

Top RHAM Students Share Lessons from Success

By Toriana Williams

As RHAM High School's Class of 2026 prepares to walk across the graduation stage next week, two students stand at the very top of their class. Valedictorian Cecilia Zito of Marlborough and salutatorian Aria Legace of Andover earned the highest academic honors in their graduating class. However, neither believe success is measured by grades alone.

Both students balanced demanding coursework, extracurricular activities, friendships and plans for the future. Along the way, they learned important lessons about hard work, time management and ultimately staying true to themselves.

In an interview with the *Rivereast,* Zito and Lagace reflected on their high school journeys, shared some favorite memories and looked ahead to their surely exciting college adventures.

Graduation will be held on Tuesday, June 16, at 6 p.m. at RHAM High School.

The Valedictorian

Becoming valedictorian was never the sole goal for Cecilia Zito. At the beginning of her junior year, she learned that she was ranked first in her class. While that news could have added pressure, Zito chose not to let the title define her high school experience.

"My oldest sister was valedictorian in 2022," Zito shared. "She always told me, 'Don't go for it. It's too much.' I wanted to stay a well-rounded student. I wanted to take hard classes and challenge myself, but whatever happened, happened."

Zito played volleyball all four years at RHAM and became part of one of the state's most successful athletic programs. She also spent time helping the lacrosse team after injuries ended her playing career, participated in National Honor Society and National Spanish Honor Society and enjoyed skiing during the winter.

Despite all those commitments, academics remained her top priority.

"I feel like just really focusing is important," she said. "Even if I'm exhausted or get home from a volleyball game at 11 o'clock, I'm still going to do my assignments to the best of my abilities."

One of the biggest challenges she faced was managing her time.

RHAM's volleyball program often requires practices before and after school, which left Zito little free time during the day. To stay on top of her workload, she learned to make every minute count.

"I have the majority of my homework done before I leave the building," she said. "I use my lunch, my study halls and any free time in class. I'm not just going to sit and scroll on my phone; I'm going to do my work."

She also learned that asking for help is actually a sign of strength and not weakness.

This year, AP Calculus BC pushed her outside of her comfort zone. Instead of struggling alone, she regularly attended math lab. "At first I was kind of embarrassed," Zito admitted. "I was like, 'I'm smart. I should be able to figure this out.' But then I realized I'm like any other student. I want to do well, so I'm going to get help."

That extra effort definitely paid off.

Outside of academics, some of Zito's favor-

See Lessons from Success, page 10

Inside...

RHAM
Budget Decrease Sent to Voters ..... pg 3

Portland
PHS Top Two Look Back.....pg 12

East Hampton
Meet Valedictorian, Salutatorian..... pg 17

Colchester
Students Shoot for the Stars .....pg 26

Colchester
Audit Shows How Fund Fell.....pg 27

Regional
Obituaries .....pgs 30 & 31

Crossword Puzzle...Pg 31
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BOE Sends 0.13% Budget Decrease to Voters

By Toriana Williams

Voters in Andover, Hebron and Marlborough will return to the polls next Tuesday, June 16, for a third referendum on the RHAM schools' proposed 2026-27 operating budget.

And this time, the budget voters will face is actually a decrease from current year spending.

The recently revised RHAM operating budget totaled $32,246,809, a 0.13% decrease from the current year's $32.05 million. The proposal was approved unanimously by the RHAM Board of Education after a public hearing and special meeting on June 1.

The district's Capital Improvement Plan budget of $331,307 was approved by voters during the May 26 referendum and will not return to voters.

The previously rejected operating budget totaled $32.83 million and represented a 0.65% increase over the current year. Although the proposal was down significantly from the original $33.66 million, voters said that was still too much.

0% Increase Request

The June 16 referendum came after multiple rounds of reductions and revisions. During the June 1 public hearing, Superintendent of Schools Colin McNamara said the budget process began with an initial proposal of $34.18 million, a 4.77% increase over the current year.

"That dollar amount and that percentage increase was after I had removed $800,000 of personnel, class equipment, supplies," and other requests prior to bringing the budget to the board, said McNamara.

The BOE ultimately adopted a $33.66 million proposed budget in April, which represented a 3.19% increase over the current year. After voters overwhelmingly rejected that budget, officials cut $839,837, which brought the proposal down to $32.83 million – which was also shot down at a second referendum.

Following the second rejection, board members directed administrators to identify enough reductions to achieve a 0% increase or lower.

"We did ask the administrators to go back and take a look at the budget and come up with a variety of items for us to consider that will get us to the 0%," said BOE Chair Heather Summerer, a Democrat.

Summerer detailed the proposed reductions and began with a voluntary furlough day for the district's central office leadership team, which would save $8,682.

"I think it's important to note that this is something that this group of people agreed to because they all have contracts," she explained. "They didn't actually have to agree to that."

McNamara explained additional savings related to negotiations and salary adjustments while preserving raises for many non-represented employees. "We would still give a … 3% increase … for the majority of the people in that non-represented group," he said.

One of the largest reductions involved eliminating two proposed positions that had been included in earlier budgets. "You may remember that there were two positions that we are interested in adding," Summerer said. "We won't be moving forward with those two positions."

The eliminated positions included the instructional technology specialist position and indoor-outdoor maintainer position, which would save a total of over $180,000.

Additional reductions included shortening administrative assistant positions from 12 months to 10.5 months, reductions in special education transportation spending, professional development, supplies and conference expenses. Administrators ultimately proposed more than $254,000 in additional cuts, which were approved.

During the hearing, school officials emphasized that voter turnout would be critical. "This is going to be the third vote," Summerer said. "It's going to be hard to get people out, especially in Marlborough and Andover because they feel like they voted already."

Summerer noted that Tuesday's referendum coincides with the RHAM graduation.

"It's also graduation night," she said. "People are going to be very busy. Families are going to be coming in. You're going to be getting torn in a lot of different directions. So I think it's just really important to encourage people that you know to come out and vote."

"Save our Schools"

Public comment reflected both frustration with the lengthy process and support for the district's efforts to find compromises.

Hebron resident Craig Donacki praised the board's willingness to consider alternatives. "I think the presentation tonight steps in that direction," Donacki said. "It shows some out-of-the-box thinking, some things that you're doing that you don't have to do, that are in good faith based on the feedback you're getting."

He also encouraged discussions after the budget season ends. "I think there's a huge opportunity for all of us to continue this dialogue and to instill better opportunity like this to happen earlier," he said.

Hebron resident Carol Connolly passionately urged residents to support the schools. "Parents, this is my message to you watching tonight. SOS, I'm sending it out – save our schools," said Connolly.

"You have to vote 'yes,'" she continued. "We have to remind parents to take all cuts seriously because a small leak will sink a great ship. This is a great ship we have here."

She also praised district leadership for its transparency throughout the process.

"You've done such a great job tonight," Connolly said. "You are transparent. Your presentation was right on mark."

Hebron resident Kim Kane echoed those concerns. "We can't rest until this budget passes," Kane said. "Please get out there and vote. Support our schools."

Kane noted that previous reductions had already affected staffing. "We've had seven positions cut. That's going to affect students," she said.

Marlborough resident Judy Benson-Clarke reminded attendees that the district included three communities. "We are a three-town community that come together," Benson-Clarke said. "We love RHAM."

Following the public hearing, the board began a special meeting to formally consider the reductions. The board then approved the full package of $254,442 in reductions before unanimously adopting the new operating budget of $32,246,809.

CHOREs & TASKs – Job Opportunity for Teens

Are you a teen looking for summer work? AHM Youth and Family Services' CHOREs & TASKs program is currently in need of teens aged 14-18 to work two-hour shifts for senior citizens age 60 and up living in Andover, Columbia, Hebron and Marlborough.

Senior citizens have chores completed at no charge around their home and yard. Teenagers age 14-18 can earn minimum wage and can choose multiple 2-hour shifts, a letter of recommendation for active involvement in the program, and learn communication, scheduling and time-management skills. Teens are paid by AHM Youth & Family Services.

For more information on these programs, and to apply for work, visit tinyurl.com/ahm-chores.

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 beckym@ahmyouth.org or 860-228-0871.

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.

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.

Volunteers, Raffle Prizes Needed: Also, AHM is looking for volunteers to chaperone the RHAM Class of 2026 Project Graduation event set to take place June 16 at Spare Time in Vernon. Go to tinyurl.com/gradvolunteers26 or contact ashleep@ahmyouth.org to sign up.

Raffle prizes are needed as well. Part of the fun for students at this event is winning raffle prizes. Help make this event special by donating an item from Project Graduation's Amazon wish list. To view the list, visit ahmyouth.org/fundraisers-events/project-graduation and click on 'purchase a raffle prize for event.'

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Golf Tournament Coming

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

I guess you could call it "clams for a cause."

Tonight, Friday, June 12, Goodwin University will hold its 12th annual Summer Clambake and Auction, one of the school's signature scholarship fundraising events for students with demonstrated financial need.

Starting at 6:30 p.m., under a party tent on the banks of the Connecticut River, guests will gather to enjoy a lobster feast including classic New England chowder and a raw bar provided by Flanders Fish Market and Restaurant of East Lyme. Meat and veggie options will be available as well.

This year's honorary chair will again be WFSB-TV Channel 3 personality Renee DiNino, host of the station's and *Hello Connecticut* talk show. Music and entertainment will be provided by DJ Adam of iHeart Media. A silent auction will round out the evening – and those who can't attend in person can still participate via an online auction.

Tickets are $175 per person and can be purchased at www.goodwin.edu/foundation/clambake.

All proceeds from the Clambake support Goodwin's student scholarship fund.

* * *

Ernie of the beloved children's classic *Sesame Street* used to sing about his rubber duckie making bathtime lots of fun. Well, in nearby Manchester next weekend, a rubber duckie has the potential to make lots of money as well.

The Manchester Lions Club will hold its 17th annual Duck Race Fundraiser Saturday, June 20, at Charter Oak Park, 50 Charter Oak St., Manchester. At 2 p.m., hundreds of rubber ducks will be released to race down Birch Mountain Brook through the park. The family-friendly event will be held rain or shine.

Tickets are $5 apiece for one or more ducks, and ducks can be purchased on site on race day. Cash prizes will be awarded for the first five ducks to cross the finish line: $1,000 for the first-place winning duck; $500 for second place; $250 for third place; $150 for fourth place; and $100 for fifth place. Duck ticketholders do not need to be present at the event to win.

Tickets are $5 per duck, and can be purchased at www.manchesterlionsclub.org/duck-race, or by contacting David DuBaldo for tickets and event details at 860-250-1500 or 860-645-1500, or at david@dubaldo.com.

Proceeds from duck sales will benefit the Manchester Lions Club Charitable Account that supports a variety of community organizations including the Manchester Area Conference of Churches (MACC), Manchester Public Library, Little Theatre of Manchester (LTM), Manchester Little League - Girls and Boys, and the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation.

* * *

See you next week.

Bulletin Board

I was painfully reminded this week that the world is passing me by. In fact, you might say that I'm hopelessly lost in the dust cloud left by humanity's race to the future.

The latest revelation of my increasing helplessness occurred when I ran out to buy some caulk to seal up a drafty window on the house. Having left my wallet in my wife's car, I grabbed some loose cash and drove over to a Lowe's building supply store across the river. Twenty minutes later, four tubes of caulk in hand, I looked for a checkout counter with a live person.

There was none.

The only way out led past six self-service checkout machines overseen by a lanky young whippersnapper sporting a struggling beard and a bush hat his grandfather probably wore in Vietnam. He probably regarded the thing as an antique.

As someone who struggled to master something as elementary as texting on my cell-phone, I hate self-service checkout machines and they hate me. I normally rely on my wife to operate the damn things, or else I seek out a checkout counter with a real person, but now it appeared I was completely at the mercy of what passes for progress in this country.

I should have simply put the caulk back on the shelf and skulked back out to my car, but I really needed to make this repair to the window. So, taking my courage in hand, I boldly approached one of the checkout machines like I actually might know what I was doing.

It looked at me and I looked at it. I touched one of the cues on the screen. Nothing happened. I tried again. Nothing. I looked pathetically at the kid in the bush hat. I was prepared to whimper if I had to, but he came right over and patiently guided me through the process of scanning my items. So far, so good.

"Where do I put the cash?" I asked, looking the device over for some sort of slot or whatever.

"Cash?" he said, as if I'd asked about bartering a chicken and a bushel of beets.

"Yeah," I said, brandishing a bill. "You know. Real money?"

"This machine doesn't take cash," he said.

"It doesn't take cash?"

"No. It only takes credit cards." He pointed. "You'll have to use that other machine over there."

I should have known this was God warning me to just leave while I still could, but, like I said, I really needed that caulk. So as the kid cleared the one machine of all my information, I went over to the cash machine and managed to scan my four tubes of caulk. The kid, possibly thinking I'd finally managed to master the device – or, more probably, hoping that if he didn't look at me, I'd eventually wander off and leave him in peace – was back at his post staring off into the distance. I looked the machine over for a cash slot.

I got nuthin'.

"Hey," I called. "Where should I put the money?"

To his credit, he didn't say what he was probably thinking. He came over and pointed to a slot that was right there in front of me. "Right there."

I fed the thing a twenty-dollar bill. It spit it back out. I tried again. It spit it out again.

"It doesn't like my money," I said.

He tried it. The bill came back out. He looked at the bill. "Is this real?" he asked.

"Yeah, it's real."

"It doesn't look like a regular twenty," he said.

"It's one of the older ones," I told him. "Before they changed them over to the new design. But it's good. I mean it's still money."

He looked skeptical, but apparently decided anyone this incompetent couldn't possibly be a counterfeiter. "This is probably a collector's item," he said, looking it over again.

I looked mournfully at my tubes of caulk. "It's all I've got," I said. "I left my wallet in my wife's car."

He took pity on me. "I think I've got a twenty in my wallet," he said. "I'll swap it with you." And he pulled out a twenty-dollar bill and fed it into the slot. The machine burped and spit out some change and the screen thanked me for my patronage.

I thanked the kid profusely, grabbed my tubes of caulk, and fled to my car. When I last saw my benefactor, he had returned to his post and was looking at my money. I bet he's spent the past week showing off that "weird" twenty-dollar bill to his friends and talking how he got it from "this old guy" who came into the store and didn't even know how to use a checkout machine.

They probably think I left on horseback.

Jim Hallas

Rivereast Hours of Operation

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

We Are the Champions… **On Saturday, June 6, the RHAM Youth Lacrosse U12 Junior Girls Gold Team Won the CVYL Championships for girls youth lacrosse.**

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

Correction

In the May 29 edition, an incorrect first name was reported for an appointee to the East Hampton Agriculture Commission. The correct name is Jackie Reardon not Cathy.

The *Rivereast regrets the error.*

The Real Issue

To the Editor:

Based on comments made by Town Council Chair Dean Markham in last week's Rivereast article, it appears the Democratic majority on the Town Council understood before the referendum that the proposed budgets faced significant opposition and were unlikely to pass. Yet they sent them to referendum anyway. Why?

East Hampton voters have repeatedly expressed concerns about budget growth. The issue is not one budget increase. It is the expectation that taxpayers will continue paying for larger budgets year after year.

If the Town Council majority knows taxpayers are concerned, knows the budget will likely fail, and sends it to referendum anyway, residents are left asking: Who is actually being represented?

The real issue is not inflation or revaluation. The real issue is that voters continue to send a clear message about affordability, and that message is not being reflected in the budgets placed before them. Our representatives should be addressing taxpayer concerns before budgets reach referendum and only presenting proposals that have a realistic chance of earning public support.

Shannon Turner – East Hampton

Respectfully I Disagree

To the Editor:

Hi Mike – I normally read your comments, enjoy most, roll with punches on others, but with humble respect in your Observations & Ruminations of June 5, 2026, I totally disagree. You mention the streamlined Manchester method of having the Board of Selectmen passing the town budget without any public referendum and that "I do (you) see the appeal of such a streamlined method." You further state "…you don't get to vote on the state budget," and by parallel thought neither do we get to vote on the national budget which is $39.6 trillion, the largest in modern history. You also state "we voted these representatives and senators into office, to represent us and make sound decisions on our behalf." But, what if they don't make sound decisions on our behalf as is/was the case in Colchester?

If the town selectmen and BOE had their way (without referendum) the community would have been facing a BOE budget increase of more than 7.5% and a town budget increase of 8.2%. – this after appropriations of $19 millions for school athletic field upgrades and Rec Center improvements – where were the sound decisions then? Unlike Manchester, whose Manchester Board of Directors approved a town budget which represents a 2.96% tax increase. This final figure was successfully reduced from the original $262.8 million proposal, which would have hiked the tax rate by 8.6%, and so we the Colchester community are now looking for our representatives to act in the same good faith and present us with a budget increase of 2.96% (or less).

Sincerely,
Ralph Bianco – Colchester

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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Published Every Friday by The Glastonbury Citizen
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Telephone (860) 633-4691
Email: bulletin@glcitizen.com
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Letter Writers: Letters must be 400 words or less, and must be submitted by **Tuesday** at noon. Email is preferred; send to bulletin@glcitizen.com. All letters must include the writer's town of residence and daytime contact phone number. Letters focused solely on national issues or national public figures will not be published. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters are subject to editing for grammar, spelling and clarity, and are also subject to fact-checking. No bullying or name-calling will be tolerated. There is no guarantee that all letters will be published.

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Kindness Overcomes Doubt

To the Editor:

On Saturday morning I hurried to Stop and Shop to beat the crowd and heat. As I was walking down Aisle 7, a boy and his big sister approached me and held out a $50 gift card to Stop and Shop. They said, "We want to give this to you." I asked them to repeat what they'd said, thinking I had heard incorrectly. In this age of skepticism I asked "Why are you doing this?" "Just to be nice," they said, smiling. "Wow," I said. "Tell me about this." "Our grandfather gave it to us to give to someone else."

I had just taken a $4.59 gallon of milk from the shelf and was stunned by their generosity. "Thank you so much," I said. "On Monday I am taking this to the East Hampton Food Bank so some people who need help can get it. Please tell your grandfather I say thank you." With that, they wandered off.

I realized how important goodness is in the onslaught of news we receive each day. Kindness overcomes doubt.

Judy Hoffhine – East Hampton

Boy Scout Troop 72 Thanks You

To the Editor:

Boy Scout Troop 72 had a very successful "Financial Records Shredding Project" on 6/7/26. We would like to thank all the people we saw during our event for their support. The scouts also received many requests to do another shedding project. We will certainly think about doing it again. Start collecting your financial and personal records for another project in May or June 2027.

Alphonse Letendre
Troop 72 Chairman

In Our Best Interest?

To the Editor:

Drive through Hebron and you see a town that runs lean. We argue over the school budget every spring. We watch the mill rate. We know what a few hundred thousand dollars means here, because we feel it on every tax bill.

So $270,166 is not a rounding error to us. That is what Senate Bill 1, the state budget adjustment, was set to send Hebron in new aid this year, money that takes some of the weight off local property taxpayers who are already stretched.

On May 2, the House passed that budget, 127 to 21. The money was real and headed our way. And our own representative, Steve Weir, voted 'no.'

I keep trying to picture how that goes. The state offers Hebron $270,000 toward costs we would otherwise cover ourselves, and the man we sent to Hartford says no thank you, not for this town, not this year.

What makes it stranger is that 28 of the 49 Republicans in the chamber voted 'yes.' They brought the money home. Weir didn't.

I don't need my representative to love every state budget. I do need him to fight for Hebron's share of it. On May 2, he did the opposite.

Greg Howard – Amston

Let the Budget Pass

To the Editor:

Along with the sunshine and songbirds, a few other predictable – but less welcome – events arrive each spring. Mayflies wasting their brief time on Earth buzzing in your face while you try to get the mail. Poison ivy invading the yard. Discovering mice ransacked the shed again.

As annoying as these are, perhaps the least welcome return is the debate over the Andover Elementary School's budget. Each year, the rhetoric gets more heated, the arguments less civil, the math thrown around less accurate, and the conspiracy theories more detached from reality.

I'm not going to try and persuade with rational debate or nuanced details. Like our national politics, reasonable conversation appears futile… this debate has more to do with emotion and grudges than facts. The people who blame AES for all our problems will always do so, and until it's replaced with a Dollar General they will plague this newspaper with the same tired misinformation, send mailers with skewed numbers, and stick vague, hyperbolic "SAVE ANDOVER!!!" signs in their front yards. It leaves no room to solve actual issues.

Here's the reality: The town needs a school. Young families will only come here if it's a good one, and they bring fresh energy to our community (and needed tax revenues). The teachers deserve classroom sizes they can manage and a salary worthy of their expertise. The school board needs to be transparent and accountable, but if you don't attend their meetings, don't complain. The Board of Finance works much harder to find balance than most realize. Finally, the superintendent deserves a fair salary that somehow makes being portrayed by detractors as a cross between Bernie Madoff and Cruella de Vil worthwhile. If we find waste or mismanagement, of course we should fix it, but don't assume the elementary school is out to rob you. It's not. It's just a school.

I realize gas and groceries prices are too high, and you may feel like your taxes are being spent foolishly, but that's not the school's fault. It's the wrong place to direct your anger. Maybe express that frustration with your vote this November.

Andover is beautiful, but things cost money, including the senior center, fire department, roads and the school. The kids deserve a great education (including pre-K). The latest round of cuts will already affect that, which is deeply unfortunate.

Let the budget pass, and let's do better next spring.

Jay Kamins – Andover

Understanding Colchester's Government & Budget Crisis

To the Editor:

Confusion persists at town board meetings regarding Colchester's ongoing budget crisis. Understanding how the town's government is structured helps explain why some commonly proposed solutions are not legally available.

Colchester operates under a selectman-town meeting government, blending traditional New England town meeting with elected representation. When in session, the town meeting serves as the legislature — it can approve, reduce (with limits), or deny the budget, enact ordinances, and must convene when the town acts on property or debt. Citizens can petition for a town meeting with signatures from at least 3% of registered electors. Critically, the Town Meeting holds only bottom-line budget authority over the Board of Education (BOE).

The first selectman (FS) is the chief executive responsible for day-to-day operations and has no authority over schools. He also serves as a voting member of the Board of Selectmen (BOS), which sets policy, authorizes contracts, proposes ordinances, and appoints officials.

The Board of Finance (BOF) serves as the town's independent fiscal watchdog. During the budget process, it holds line-item authority over town departments — but under CGS § 10-222, it is prohibited from altering individual BOE budget lines. Once the budget passes, that line-item authority over the town budget ends, and the BOE retains complete internal control of its own budget.

The BOE is a semi-autonomous legal entity that oversees personnel, curriculum, policy, and facilities, with the superintendent reporting to it — not to the FS, BOS, or BOF. The BOE is functionally and financially a separate entity from the town, and the town has no authority over it other than the BOF's authority to approve the top-line number before it goes to the town for final approval.

In short, the BOF has no authority to cut any line items, including administration, from the school budget. Even if it did, state law, federal mandates, contracts, and accreditation requirements would make the suggested cuts to administration difficult to implement and unlikely to produce the immediate savings some residents expect.

There are no easy solutions this year. The reality is that passing the budget — the original increase, which would cost the average taxpayer roughly $10–12 per week — remains the most straightforward path forward. I, for one, believe our town and children are worth that cost.

Jeremy M. McKenzie – Colchester

Portland Is a Special Town

To the Editor:

Over the course of the last month, I have been fortunate enough to attend three events in Portland – the National Day of Prayer, the blessing of the new Fire Truck at Company 2, and the ribbon cutting for the River Bend Kayak Launch. At each event, I have been overwhelmed by what individuals of this community have done, and continue to do, to make Portland a special town. They represent the best of us.

Some of these projects have taken many years to complete and have involved both local government and state government, countless hours of work, completion of volumes of paperwork, and numerous meetings. In many cases individuals overcame seemingly insurmountable hurdles, but they had a vision, and they executed their vision by giving unselfishly of their time and their resources to make our community better for all of us.

Every time I turn around, I see neighbors helping each other, and volunteers who quietly make Portland a wonderful place to live. Such is the spirit of America. Heartfelt thanks for all that you've done and continue to do.

Sincerely,
Anita Carpene – Portland

Unfair Tax Burden

Hello Neighbors:

I am opposed to even a 6% increase to the elementary school budget. I feel it is an unfair tax burden to be placed on the hard-working residents of Andover. While I understand that expenses to run the school have increased over the years, what the BOE needs to understand is that expenses have also increased for all residents in town. The only difference is we cannot ask for more money to support our household budgets. We must live within our means and so should Andover elementary school. Perhaps to cut costs we should do away with the needless preschool/daycare program. My generation and the generation before and after me survived without it and so will the kids today. Please join me in voting 'no' on this unfair tax increase.

Sincerely,
Vincent Grimaldi – Andover

Dementia Talks No. 62

To the Editor:

Ah, the infamous missing sock! Or in our case north of 8 socks!

Back in March, when I was caring for Mom during the first part of her COVID isolation, I had gone through all her clothes. I found that she had about 8 single socks in her sock drawer.

I inquired with the community and received a response that they would check with staff but, honestly, it felt that it would be a low priority since these are the types of situations that happen all the time. Actually, there is a letter posted in a Cario cabinet in one of the hall ways that talks about mis-matched socks and that in the end it didn't matter because this person's loved one was well looked after.

As I think of Mom's missing socks, I do rewind that letter in my head and move on.

I had checked her dresser drawers again in April, and found some more single socks; rinse and repeat … well until the first week of May! That is when the "missing sock mystery" was solved!

In early May, I walked into Mom's room and saw that one of the hoses had popped off her hospital bed (a very special gifted bed). I proceeded to scoot down onto the floor, figured out how to get the hose reconnected, restarted the pump on the bed, then panned my head and saw a sock! Then I looked down the wall, under the bed, and saw more socks!

Eureka! There were over 8 single socks found

See Letters, page 6

Great Gift Ideas for Dads & Grads!

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The "East of the River" Real Estate Report
Selling a Home That Needs Work
One of the biggest misconceptions homeowners have is that they need to fully renovate their home before putting it on the market.
In reality, many homes sell successfully every year with outdated kitchens, older bathrooms, worn flooring, or deferred maintenance.
The key is understanding the difference between a home that needs updating and a home that has major issues. Most buyers expect some level of cosmetic updating. Paint colors may be dated. Cabinets may be older. Flooring may not reflect current trends. These items rarely prevent a home from selling if the property is priced appropriately.
What buyers tend to be more concerned about are major systems and costly repairs. Roofs nearing the end of their life, failing septic systems, foundation concerns, water intrusion, outdated electrical systems, or significant structural issues can have a much greater impact on value and buyer interest.
One mistake some sellers make is spending tens of thousands of dollars on renovations they never fully recover. A homeowner might invest heavily in a new kitchen or bathroom, only to discover that buyers would have preferred different finishes or designs. In many cases, sellers are better off pricing the home appropriately and allowing the next owner to make those decisions.
That doesn't mean preparation isn't important.
Even homes that need work should be clean, decluttered, and well-presented. Addressing small repairs, improving curb appeal, and making the home easy to show can significantly improve buyer perception.
The truth is that every property has a buyer.
Some buyers want a move-in ready home. Others are specifically looking for a property they can update and customize.
The goal isn't necessarily to create a perfect home. The goal is to understand what improvements are worth making, what improvements are not, and how to position the property to attract the right buyers.
For homeowners considering a sale, getting professional advice before starting major projects can often save both time and money.

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

Single-Family Homes	Condos
• 4 homes sold	• 1 sold at $285,500
• Average sale price: $448,750	• Sale-to-list ratio: 114%
• Average sale-to-list ratio: 103%	• Days on market: 5 days
• Average days on market: 12 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*

on the floor under mom's bed!

I sent off an email to the community leadership sharing that I had fixed mom's bed, and that I found her missing socks.

Three things came out of our missing sock adventure… first, housekeeping will now clean under beds monthly; second, that spot checks of rooms will start; and third, the realization that situations can be desensitized and that continuing to voice concerns is the only way to make change so that not only your loved one's situation can be better; but also, it can be better for those in your loved one's circle.

Yeah, perhaps missing socks aren't worth losing sleep over; however, when systemic issues are uncovered as a result – then perhaps they are worth losing sleep over. It's the little things that can make a big difference.

Hoping you are enjoying the summer weather and know you are not alone.

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

Can We Support Weir?

To the Editor:

Is Connecticut's 55th district receiving exemplary representation from Steve Weir? Other writers pointed to his votes not being in our interests – we who are his constituents. The $630,000 he voted against for the extra school funding for our district towns doesn't make sense. Is there an ideological reason driving him? We all know how much we need these funds given how tight our town budgets are.

Voting at a time when our country celebrates 250 years since our founding underlines the importance of having exemplary people represent us at all levels of government.

And Weir stood up for the administration's war against the universities in his 2025 Hartford Courant op-ed. He must know that the now-vice president made a speech five years ago (September 2021) stating "universities are the enemy" at the Teneo network conference. The initiative was launched to diminish those who may challenge unchecked federal power.

Can we support Steve Weir who is not supporting us, his constituents? Can we support this candidate for the 55th District who stands up for an administration seeking absolute power over our lives, making state and local governments useless? Isn't this contrary to the reasons "we the people" established this country where "all men are created equal?"

Dave Porteous – Marlborough

Garden Club Gratitude

To the Editor:

The Colchester Garden Club would like to thank Family Pizza Restaurant & Grill for hosting our recent "Night Out" and all the people who supported the event by dining out that evening. We saw so many people we knew, our meals were delicious and the service was great. And, we didn't have to cook!

Your generous donation is greatly appreciated. It will help us to continue to deliver programs in the community and maintain the community gardens and town planters. For more information about the Colchester Garden Club please email colchestergardenclub@yahoo.com.

Thank you again to the staff and everyone at Family Pizza!

Mary Spalter, Co-President
Colchester Garden Club

Out of Touch, or Just Don't Care?

To the Editor:

Public feedback overwhelmingly pushed for less spending and desperately needed tax relief as East Hampton approached the June 2 budget referendum. Despite this, the Town Council majority gave the proposed budget a rubber stamp and sent it to a vote, knowing it would not pass.

"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," said Town Council Chair Dean Markahm (D) in last week's Rivereast.

If he knew it wouldn't pass, why did he and the rest of the majority under his leadership pass it on to a referendum as submitted?

As council member Ted Hintz Jr (R) said in the same article, "(w)e just wasted $5,000 on a referendum that should never have been put forth to the taxpayers."

At first glance, the Town Council majority seems out of touch with the challenges many of their neighbors face to make ends meet.

Council member Joelyn Leon (D) attempted to appear sympathetic during the May 12, 2026, Town Council meeting, but came off as entitled by listing ways struggling families could cut household spending.

"I understand when households making cuts, I mean streaming services, cutting going out to dinner each week or month, if you're lucky. Cutting vacations. It's not the same as cutting public education," said Leon. As if to say taxpayers' sacrifices are only frivolous expenses and their financial challenges are less important than the school budget.

But as Hintz responded in that same meeting, "There are people in this community who can't do any of those things. They can't go on vacation; they don't have streaming services to start with. You are assuming that everyone lives the way you do."

This was a true Marie Antoinette "Let them eat cake" moment for Leon, showing ignorance of how many neighbors have struggled under high taxes and the cost of living. But not all council members appear so out of touch; some just don't care.

"We fully understand the impact that real estate taxes are going to have, especially because of the reval," said souncil member Rich Knotek (D). "But I say this because there are a lot of people, easily a thousand, there's probably more than a thousand households in this town who value the educational system and everything else this town offers."

Voting to keep your hard-earned money for your family's needs does not mean you undervalue education or town services. That claim is simply a tired old attempt to silence concerned taxpayers. The message here is that they know people are suffering financially, but a small minority matter more to them than the rest of us.

Bryon Turner – East Hampton

Vote 'Yes' to Move Forward

Dear Hebron Residents:

The latest iteration of the Hebron town budget is a 0.11 mill rate increase. This budget was needed to be responsive to our neighbors who are struggling with bills, coupled with a desire to keep town spending and property taxes low. It's important to understand that it came at a cost. Services will be impacted. Our Hebron elementary schools will lose a principal and several other staff members who directly work with students.

The budgets have been responsive to the 'no' voters. Now, I'm hoping we can move forward as a town and vote 'yes.' A new town manager can set a new way of budgeting in our town, and it is an exciting opportunity for Hebron. We don't want to start July 1 without a budget in place, which creates problems of its own. And, I am sure we don't want to see services further reduced and more capital projects delayed.

It's time. This budget is not perfect. Budgets rarely are. I'm asking for everyone to join me in voting "yes" on June 16th to move Hebron forward.

Sincerely,
Tiffany V. Thiele – Hebron

Note: *Thiele is the chairwoman of the Hebron Town Council but said she is writing this letter as an individual.*

They'll Be Just Fine

To the Editor:

I can relate to Sam Prentice; my school district had even larger student body, everyone didn't get a one-on-one, the class size was large and all survived that traumatic experience that those here in the Colchester fear is a fate worse than death.

Reading the BOE, BOF, BOS responses to the budget defeat by a huge margin, they still don't seem to get it. The people are sick of the constant bombardment of asking for more and Dennler offering to give back 20K is a slap in the face; how about you forgo the $20 million turf field, that you snuck past us on that snowy day.

I also doubt the $3 million you are even discussing will pass muster; from what I see you had better sharpen that pencil and be prepared to make some cuts. The little darlings will be just fine.

Frank Grande – Colchester

Garden-Inspired Artistry

To the Editor:

Nestled between natural green leaves and grasses are a beautiful assortment of aesthetically appealing painted rocks! Clearly, the Pollinator Demonstration Garden in the Raymond Brook Preserve has been the inspirational location for an anonymous artist to place their painted rocks within the flower beds. Thank you to our humble local artisan! From a bouquet of flowers to singular dragonfly visitors are treated to beautifully rendered stones that add to the joy of witnessing the wildlife and flowers throughout the seasons. Gardens do that, drawing upon the aesthetic sensibilities of painters and photographers alike.

The Hebron Pollinator Pathway (HPP) welcomes such initiatives and is working on a date to gather artists to paint and photograph en plein air (French for "in the open air") later this month. In the meanwhile, keep your eyes open for the rocks that adorn the garden and a meet up date to create at the preserve.

Michele Sinkez
Hebron Pollinator Pathway

Dennler and the Health Reserve Crisis

To the Editor:

Recent records raise serious questions about First Selectman Bernie Dennler's statements that he was not aware of the severity of the health reserve crisis and that he had no control over the joint health reserve fund.

The forensic audit and related documents show the reserve declining from approximately $3.4 million in November 2023 to about $1.5 million by spring 2025, and ultimately to roughly $350,000 by April 2026.

A May 6, 2025, email from Board of Education Finance Director Rachel Linkkila states that "Michelle (Town Deputy Finance Director) came over yesterday and told me she brought it to Bernie's attention," referring to concerns that the health reserve was "depleting faster than expected." The same email also notes that the town suggested transferring approximately $1.2 million in unexpended BOE funds into the health reserve account. This proposed transfer directly contradicts public statements by First Selectman Dennler that he had no knowledge of the severity of the health reserve crisis and had no role or control over the health reserve fund.

Taken together, these records indicate that by early May 2025, FS Bernie Dennler had been fully informed the health reserve was declining at an accelerated rate. Yet he never brought the issue to the attention of the Board of Selectman. Why?

Despite Dennler's continued public statements attempting to minimize his role in the health reserve account, the Town serves as fiscal agent for the shared health reserve and holds plan funds in a joint account, establishing an administrative and oversight role in managing and monitoring the fund.

The fact that key discussions occurred in person and through informal channels rather than in written communications raises serious questions about FS Dennler's transparency on this issue. Was he trying to hide the seriousness of the issue? It sure appears that way.

The central question is therefore why residents were not informed promptly once the severity of the issue was known. Was it because FS Bernie Dennler was running for reelection during this period? The timing certainly raises that question.

Public trust depends on timely transparency when significant financial risks emerge. The record now available suggests the Dennler administration was fully aware of the accelerating decline in the health reserve account and also raises serious questions about why this information was not fully shared with the public.

Colchester deserves better.

Cyndee Laribee – Colchester

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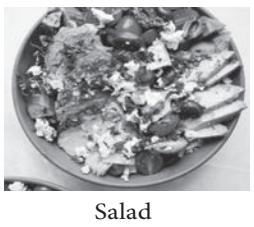
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Groundhog Day in East Hampton?

To the Editor:

Will there be meaningful transparent discussions concerning the new budget proposal among the Board of Education, Board of Finance and Town Council or will it be behind closed doors with the same old attitude?

The BOE didn't even discuss the budget at their June 8 meeting. What?

Budget discussions are on the agenda for the Town Council for June 9. They will likely put off any discussions till the Tri-Board meeting on June 11.

Will we get the usual "We can't do…" answers to money-saving suggestions like regionalizing AP classes and eliminating positions created during Covid with grant money?

Will the BOF and council look at items like regionalizing the transfer station or other services, eliminating police officer positions that have been vacant for a couple of years but are being included in the budget and making new arrangements for sidewalk snow removal in the greater village center?

Let's hope that these discussions are open and transparent with a real desire to respond to the voters who took the time and interest to vote. We should all demand some open thinking and problem solving, not just the same old attitude. I'd rather see a "can do" attitude.

Will this be "Groundhog Day" all over again?

Alannah Coshow – East Hampton

Thanks, Local Businesses

To the Editor:

The Bacon Academy Boys Lacrosse players, coaches and families would like to thank the many local businesses for their contributions during the 2026 spring season.

Both Oz N Bones and The Inishmor Pub hosted event dates in which they donated a percentage of sales to the boys lacrosse team. These generous monetary donations greatly benefit our program.

Colchester Donut and Cafe donated two-dozen delicious donuts and The Plum Tomato donated a sheet pizza for our Senior Day which was celebrated on May 23. Dollar General donated several ice cream cones, cheesecakes, and various other meals and snacks to the team. These donations were utilized for Senior Day, the End-of-Season banquet, and practices and brought so much joy to the boys.

We are grateful to live in a community where many local businesses support our athletic programs.

Marci Ashley,
on behalf of the
Bacon Academy Boys Lacrosse
Families and Coaches

DPWAC Update

To the Editor:

Hello fellow residents. As of this edition of the *Rivereast* we are preparing to vote on the third referendum for our town budget! I personally am exhausted trying to keep up with Town Council meetings, Board of Finance meetings, BOE, and RHAM BOE meetings and I am trying to understand what people perceive as truth on Facebook. Is the third time truly the charm?

We have our next DPWAC meeting on Monday 6/15/26 at the Town Hall, lower level, at 6:30 p.m. I encourage any and all town residents to attend. We have been working on plans A, B and C. We shared with the Town Council, at their second meeting in May, some thoughts on separating the transfer station rebuild from the garage and salt shed rebuild with a new dog pound. We also discussed the use of a scale to accurately and consistently price the bulky waste items. The TC approved spending a little over $16,000 to have Silver Petrucelli & Associates investigate the cost to separate the transfer station rebuild from the entire project. The idea is to reduce the cost of the entire project. Also shared with the TC were the pros and cons of outsourcing the dog pound operation and not building a new facility.

The flip side of that is building a new dog pound and being a resource for other towns to use where Hebron can benefit financially by charging other towns for the service. Many moving parts, please stay tuned for more updates. As always please email any questions to DPWAC@hebronct.gov and visit the Town of Hebron's website at: www.hebronct.com and read and review the Frequently Asked Questions, FAQs to familiarize yourself with the Department of Public Works rebuild project.

Thank You,
Todd Habicht, Vice Chairman
Hebron DPWAC

Key Ingredients for Healthy Aging

To the Editor:

On June 17, members of the Portland Senior Center will travel to the Springfield Museums for a day of exploration, learning, friendship, and fun. Participants will enjoy five world-class museums, beautiful exhibits, and lunch at the Blake House Café, all while experiencing something that researchers have long recognized as an important component of healthy aging: meaningful engagement.

When many people think about aging well, they think about doctor appointments, medications, exercise classes, or nutrition. While those things certainly matter, healthy aging is about much more than physical health. It is also about remaining curious, connected, engaged, and inspired.

Arts and culture play a powerful role in supporting cognitive health, emotional well-being, and quality of life. Studies have shown that participation in cultural activities can reduce feelings of isolation, stimulate memory and conversation, encourage creativity, and promote a greater sense of purpose. Visiting museums exposes us to new ideas, history, science, and artistic expression while encouraging lifelong learning, something that benefits people at every age.

Just as important are the social connections formed during these experiences. A shared meal, a conversation about a favorite exhibit, laughter on the bus ride, or meeting someone new all contribute to building the relationships that help people remain connected to their community. Social engagement is one of the strongest protective factors associated with successful aging and aging in place.

At the Portland Senior Center, we believe that aging should not mean shrinking one's world. Instead, it should be a time to continue exploring, discovering, and participating fully in life. Whether attending a museum, joining an exercise class, learning new technology, volunteering, or participating in a support group, every opportunity to stay engaged helps strengthen both individuals and our community as a whole.

Trips like this remind us that learning never stops, friendships can continue to grow, and there is always something new waiting to be discovered. We look forward to a wonderful day together at the Springfield Museums and are grateful for the opportunity to provide experiences that support healthy aging, lifelong learning, and community connection. Registration is required, so don't miss this opportunity to explore, learn, connect, and experience firsthand how staying engaged can support healthy aging and overall well-being.

Sincerely,
Sarah Elliott-Caratasios, LMSW
Senior Services Administrator
Portland Senior Center

Not Misinformation

To the Editor:

It appears that some of our elected leaders, and those who regularly defend them, have once again reached for their favorite response to criticism. Rather than addressing the substance of concerns being raised, they simply dismiss them as "misinformation."

What is striking is that they rarely engage with the actual facts being presented. Instead, they attack the person raising them. Calling someone a liar is much easier than addressing uncomfortable questions.

Since several people have accused me of spreading misinformation regarding the recently released forensic audit, I think it is worth pointing readers directly to the report itself.

On page 9, Board of Finance member Jillian Vinci described attending an April 17, 2025 meeting involving Board of Education Vice Chairman Chris Rivers and Finance Director Rachel Linkkila. In that meeting Ms. Linkkila stated that she had discussed the health insurance reserve account with Superintendent Sullivan and that he "was aware that the Board of Education had not been using Lockton's projected amounts." The report further states that Ms. Linkkila said during that meeting that Mr. Sullivan believed "the increase in employee related insurance was too large."

The audit also addresses Mr. Rivers' involvement. In addition to participating in that same April meeting, auditors reported that Mr. Rivers stated First Selectman Bernie Dennler had personally contacted him regarding concerns with the health reserve account and had shown him spreadsheets related to the issue. According to the report, Mr. Rivers said he did not understand the spreadsheets.

As for the first selectman, the audit states that Mr. Dennler told investigators he began looking into the health reserve account in early 2025 after the town's Finance Director raised concerns that the account was being depleted.

These are not opinions. They are not rumors. They are not misinformation. They are statements contained within the forensic audit itself and are available for anyone to read. And they prove precisely who knew what, and when.

Reasonable people can debate what these facts mean, who bears responsibility, and what should happen next. What should not be up for debate is whether the report says what it plainly says.

When public officials and their supporters respond to documented facts by simply shouting "misinformation," they do not strengthen public trust. They weaken it. Citizens deserve answers, accountability, and honest discussion, not attempts to dismiss concerns that are supported by the very report commissioned to uncover the truth.

Jason LaChapelle – Colchester

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

Paul Over Weir

To the Editor:

I do not know state Rep. Steve Weir personally. People who do know him have told me he is a personal, likeable individual who participates and helps out in community affairs a great deal. However, despite his affable character, he does not serve the towns he represents very well as a state legislator. His vote against the state providing additional funds to the towns he represents, towns that are having tough budget years, is evidence that he does not appreciate the financial struggles the towns and his constituents are going through this year. Fortunately the bill passed with the help of some of Republican Representative colleagues of Mr. Weir who understood such struggles of towns and their constituents. His delaying of Senate Bill 274 which would help identify individual owners of apartment complexes so they could be held accountable for the poor conditions of their apartments shows he is not on the side of people who desire a habitable place to live.

See Letters, page 8

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★ *Letters, cont. from page 7*

The 55th state legislature district has elected Republican representatives for several decades. For most of that time the legislature has had a majority of Democrats in the legislature. As, such our 55th district representatives have not been in the room where legislative priorities are decided and which of the many bills will be put on the floor for a vote. The only actions that the minority party representatives have are to delay bills that they might not want to be put to a vote and to hope that the Democrats will listen to their ideas. State Sen. Cathy Osten has had to fight alone for grants to the 55th towns and for legislation that will benefit the 55th.

I believe that electing Ellen Paul as state representative would help Cathy in such fights as a partner, not as an opponent as Rep. Weir demonstrated with his vote against additional monies for the 55th. Ellen has a great background as a staff member of a U.S. representative and for working with people as a librarian, a job that entails contact with numerous and diverse people. I hope that you will join me in voting for her.

I write this as an individual, but I am proud to be a member of the Marlborough Democratic Town Committee.

Robert Larson – Marlborough

Time to Move Forward

To the Editor:

On June 16, Hebron residents will once again have the opportunity to vote on the town budget. I encourage my fellow residents to vote 'yes.'

This budget has already been reduced multiple times in response to resident feedback and now represents only a very modest increase over last year. Both the town government and our elementary schools have made significant cuts and difficult decisions to bring spending down while attempting to preserve essential services.

It is time to move forward. Another failed budget could risk reductions in services that residents rely on and could result in the postponement of maintenance to our roads, buildings, and other public infrastructure. Delaying these investments often increases costs later.

No budget is perfect, but this proposal reflects compromise, restraint, and a genuine effort to balance affordability with the needs of our community. I believe it is a responsible budget that deserves our support.

Please join me in voting 'yes' on June 16.

Sincerely,
Brian Thibeault – Hebron

Note: *Thibeault is a member of the Hebron Board of Finance but said he is speaking as an individual.*

Prescient Comparison

To the Editor,

This aged well: "Maturity over Age," in the Reader Forum of the Oct. 20, 2023, issue of the *Rivereast*, compared then-candidate for Colchester first selectman, Bernie Dennler, to Erin Stewart, who was elected as mayor of New Britain at 26 years old. Yes, that Erin Stewart, who is currently being investigated by the state and the FBI and will likely be charged for misuse of city funds among other transgressions. Considering the debacle with Colchester's depleted health insurance reserve, I find this comparison to be funnily prescient.

The "Forensic Accounting Report On Colchester Board of Education: Health Insurance Reserve Matter" indicates, "Mr. Dennler stated he first started looking at the health reserve account in early 2025, and that Ms. Marceau had raised concerns with him that the health reserve account was being depleted.…he contacted Ms. Cosgrove to understand how she calculated the health insurance in past years, and that Ms. Cosgrove provided him both a historical overview and an explanation of how the calculation was completed…Mr. Dennler stated he met with Mr. Sullivan and Ms. Tracey-Calash in February 2026 to show them how the Board of Education calculations worked using Ms. Cosgrove's spreadsheet. Mr. Dennler stated Mr. Sullivan said he thought the Board of Education would not have enough money and should consider changing its health insurance plan."

Does this constitute fraud equivalent to that alleged of Ms. Stewart? No, but does it constitute willful neglect? Possibly. Lack of transparency? Definitely. Woeful ignorance? Well, since being woefully ignorant means lacking crucial information or having a severe, often embarrassing deficit of knowledge in a specific area, that would be a definite yes. That's what you get when you elect someone at 27 with no professional degree and little experience. However, the board members who work in insurance or finance or even wrote a book on reimagining wealth and power should've understood better. Sometimes even with the pretense of education, woeful ignorance can be inescapable. Colchester deserves elected officials who are at least capable of understanding when the math ain't mathing. Do you care? If keeping the town solvent is important to you, then you should.

Whether Colchester citizens heed the warnings or not, I'm still over here doing my "I told you so" dance on this and many other issues Colchester is facing.

Appalled with my current town government,
DeAva Lambert – Colchester

Won't Get Fooled Again

To the Editor:

Twice now, Andover's first selectman has mailed every household a flyer urging a 'no' vote on the school budget. Both times the mailing landed after the *Rivereast*'s deadline, too late for any correction to reach print before we voted. Twice is not a coincidence. It is a method: make the scary claim, and arrange things so no one can answer it in time.

So let me answer it now, before the next one arrives.

Both flyers were built on numbers designed to alarm, and both fell apart the moment anyone checked. The first implied the preschool drains the town's budget; in fact it saves us over $100,000 a year. The second implied that adding one student costs the town more than $81,000, a figure no honest reading of the numbers supports: treating the average cost of running the whole school as if it were the cost of one more child. I documented every correction, with the town's own audits and the state's own data, at andoverct.info. The flyers did not link to their sources. My site does.

Here is something worth remembering. Our first selectman reminds us, often, that he is a CPA. The accounting profession's own code of conduct asks its members to "serve the public interest, honor the public trust, and demonstrate a commitment to professionalism." Mailings engineered to mislead, and timed so the truth can't catch up, honor none of those things. (pub.aicpa.org/codeofconduct/ethicsresources/et-cod.pdf#page=15)

Now the budget itself. After last year's cuts and this year's failed votes, what remains is a 6% increase. Even at 6%, the school must either cut programs (library? art? music?) or keep some grades at 25 to 30 students in a single classroom. That is the real choice in front of us. Not a hidden fortune, not a runaway school. A lean budget, and class sizes that are already too large.

We have also seen, more than once, how this First Selectman treats the residents who dare to disagree with him in public. That is not how a town of neighbors should speak to itself.

So if a third flyer turns up this weekend, full of frightening figures and conveniently impossible to answer before Tuesday, you will know exactly what it is. You have seen this movie twice.

Vote 'yes' on June 16. This time, we won't get fooled again!

Sincerely,
Scott Sauyet – Andover

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

Thank You, Voters of East Hampton

To the Editor:

Congratulations to the voters of East Hampton for standing up to our tax/spend town officials and the BOE to say 'no' to the proposed budgets. As a result, those voters that showed up to vote 'no' are being labeled "anti-education", a voting "minority", and the vice chairman of the BOF called the 'no' voters "Republicans" in the 6/5 Rivereast article. I guess demonstrating fiscal responsibility is a bad thing.

Officials used words like "disappointment, "lack of community involvement" regarding the rejection of the budgets which only emphasizes the disconnect between poor fiscal control and reality that our town leaders refuse to acknowledge (not you, Mr. Hintz). Historically, about 30% of the registered voters appear, so if the budget passed, does that mean there would not have been "lack of community involvement"? Holding our town officials accountable is our responsibility as voters, and there should be no shame in that, as officials would have us believe we are at fault for their failure to curb egregious spending, especially by the BOE.

The BOE continues to assume that taxpayers have unlimited funds, ignoring other options such as zero-based budget, pay-to-play, per-student fees, administration cost reductions, and fundraising events that would take some of the burden off the taxpayers. And as to the parking lot, it's a *parking lot*, not a playground, not an airport runway, not a dance floor, not a scenic byway, not historically significant, and by no means a vital roadway. If anything, spend the money on hiring a police officer, hire a P&Z enforcement officer or fund a clean lake; all actions that benefit the entire town.

Voters should not be admonished or chastised for rejecting a budget; they need town officials to respect the result, listen to the voters and create a budget that is realistic, not idealistic. To paraphrase Mr. Prentice from Andover, "We go through this Kabuki dance every single year. Increasing taxes year after year on people whose incomes don't rise nearly enough is not sustainable." Hopefully, our TC, BOF and BOE will do what needs to be done without calling voting taxpayers names. Because we can still vote 'no.'

Bob Yenkner – East Hampton

Hebron's Living History

To the Editor:

It was with deep appreciation that I read last week's cover story, "RHAM Students Remember at Stones Dedication" by Toriana Williams. The unveiling of two new Witness Stones at St. Peter's Church is a vivid reminder that history is alive and well and surrounds us everyday. As noted in the article, "It was a celebration of remembrance, community and the power of young people to bring forgotten stories back into light." Indeed, the efforts of the RHAM Middle School students is the foundation of Hebron's Witness Stones project and has resulted in the placement of five memorials.

This year's stones were dedicated to Cesar Peters, Jr. and Martin Powers, both of whom were born enslaved in the 1700s and gained their emancipation in the early 1800s. As so eloquently stated by student William Decesare, "So while there's not much information on Martin Powers, 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."

The lives of both Cesar Peters, Jr. and Martin Powers are closely tied to the history and the landscape of Hebron center. The account book of Governor John S. Peters has extensive entries for both Cesar Peters, Jr. and Martin Powers, an important documentation of their activities on the land owned by Governor Peters, now known as the Horton Property at 17 Kinney Road. A small part of the entry for Cesar Peters, Jr. runs from July 27, 1823 through July 23, 1827, and includes over 45 individual entries. Most interestingly, these are credits owed to Governor Peters by Cesar Peters, Jr.. Research suggests these are payments for farmland rented and cultivated by Cesar Peters, Jr..

The Hebron community is tremendously fortunate to have the same farm fields worked by Cesar Peters Jr. and Martin Power still in cultivation and surrounded by the distinctive stonewall laneways these two individuals walked. Please stop by the Witness Stones at St. Peter's and take a moment, turn around and you will see, through the trees, the same view of the same fields. This is living history and worthy of preservation, the same way the lives of Cesar Peters Jr. and Martin Powers and so many others are worthy of remembrance. Please visit Save Hebron Center on Facebook for more information.

Sincerely,
Kevin J. Tulimieri – Amston

Central Issue Is Disclosure

To the Editor:

Colchester's public debate over the forensic audit is getting lost in side arguments about who understood which spreadsheet and when.

That is not the central issue.

The central issue is disclosure.

The audit shows the health reserve was deteriorating over time. In November 2023, the reserve balance was about $3.4 million. By spring 2025, when Deputy Finance Director Michelle Marceau raised concerns that the reserve was being depleted, it was about $1.5 million. By April 2026, it was about $350,000.

The audit also says First Selectman Dennler began looking at the health reserve in early 2025 after Marceau raised those concerns. By spring 2025, several town and school officials were discussing the Board of Education's health insurance calculations and the reserve account behind the scenes.

That is the part residents should focus on.

The question is not whether every person knew every formula or could fully quantify the problem at that time. The question is whether serious financial warning signs were plainly shared with the public.

They were not.

Colchester voters were later asked to support major Bacon Academy and RecPlex improvement projects. Those projects may have had merit, but voters deserved the full financial picture before being asked to approve more spending.

They deserved to know that, behind the scenes, officials were already discussing a depleted health reserve and disputed health insurance calculations.

And the audit may not be the end of that timeline. Additional records raise even more questions about how clearly the problem was understood in spring 2025, and why the public was not told sooner.

Public trust is not only about having the final number. It is about being honest when warning signs appear.

The audit does not erase those concerns. It confirms why residents have them.

Michael Dubreuil – Colchester

Note: *Dubreuil is a member of the Colchester Republican Town Committee but said he is writing as an individual.*

★ *Rotary Road Race, cont. from page 1*

Gardiner in an email. "We had more participants than expected turn out for the world's most achievable race, and the weather couldn't have been better. Sunshine, smiles, costumes, laughter, and plenty of community spirit made for an amazing event. Thank you to everyone who came out to support the fun and help make the day such a success. Whether you raced, walked, cheered, volunteered, or just enjoyed the festivities, you helped make this year's .5K one to remember!"

Town Council member Jack Solomon, attending as a Rotarian, said that he showed up to support to the community events the organization does. He said the event had been the brainchild of Alan Gardiner, who saw a similar event elsewhere and decided to bring the idea to East Hampton. Gardiner's wife, Tracey, he said, had done much of the organizing for the event.

In a Facebook post, the Rotary club thanked community members for coming out and celebrated raising over $12,000 to support Rotary's "local community initiatives, scholarships, service projects, and programs."

Rotary Vice President Cap Egan said she was thrilled with the great turnout and already looking ahead to next year.

Calling it "a beautiful day of fun, laughter, and community spirit," Egan said in an email that the Rotary was "so grateful to our runners, walkers, Rotarians, volunteers, sponsors, and [Police] Chief Dennis Woessner for helping make this event possible. A huge thank you as well to Alan and Tracey Gardner for bringing this wonderful idea to our club and for all the hard work [they] put in to make this event such a success. The support from our community exceeded all expectations, and we couldn't have done it without each and every one of you. We look forward to bringing the .5K back in 2027 and making it even bigger and better!"

See more pictures from the event at the *Rivereast* Facebook page, at www.facebook.com/RivereastNewsBulletin.

TOWN OF HEBRON
LEGAL NOTICE

At their meeting on June 4, 2026, the Town Council declared a vacancy on the Hebron Board of Education. The Council designates Friday, June 12, 2026, as the posting date for the vacancy notice. The 35th and final day by which nominations shall be received is Friday, July 17, 2026. The Town Council is now notifying the political parties and the general public of this vacancy.
Interested candidates should attend a meeting of the Board and discuss with the Chairman the frequency of meetings and the time commitment involved.
All residents of Hebron who are registered to vote are eligible.
Letters of interest or questions may be addressed to Donna Lanza, Interim Town Manager, Town of Hebron, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, Connecticut 06248 or call 860-228-5971.

1TB 6/12

LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF PORTLAND

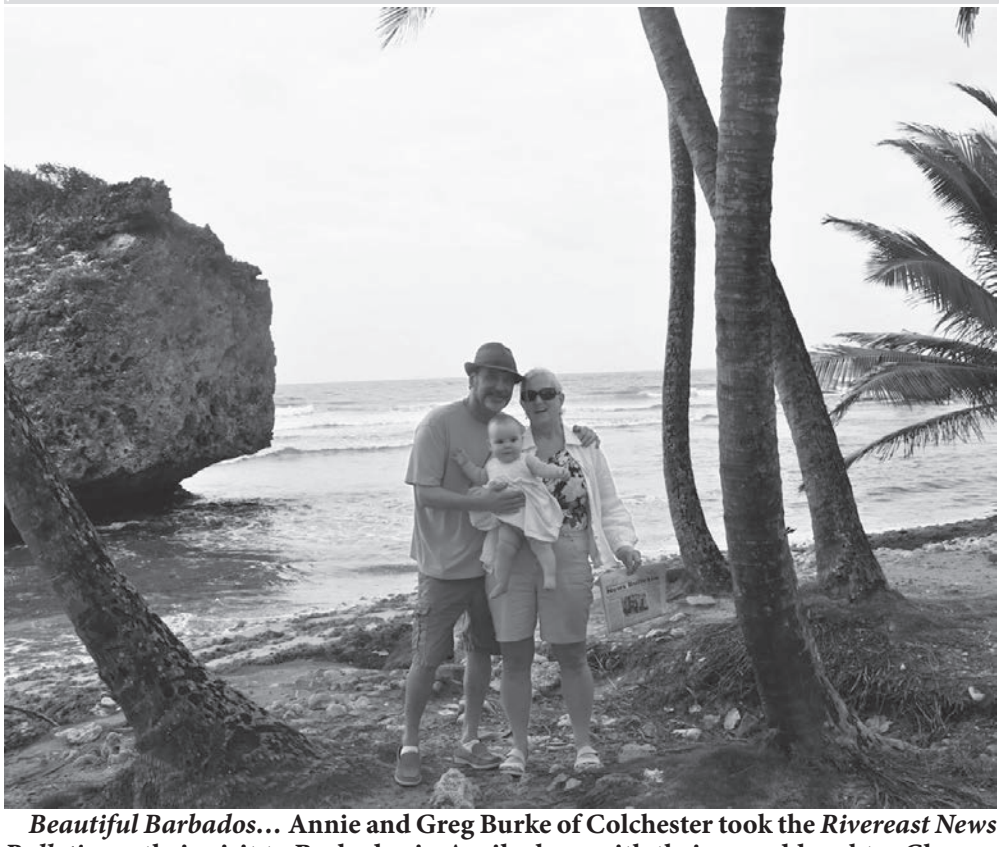
Notice is hereby given, pursuant to Section 157 of Public Act 17-2 (2017) of the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut, that copies of Portland Board of Education current collective bargaining agreements with the following administrators are available for public inspection at the Portland Town Clerk's office, 33 East Main Street Portland, CT and posted on the Portland Board of Education website.

Portland Federation of Paraprofessionals Local #4659 AFT, AFL-CIO
Dated this 4th day of June 2026
Michael V. Tierney
Portland Town Clerk

1TB 6/12

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!



Beautiful Barbados… **Annie and Greg Burke of Colchester took the *Rivereast News Bulletin* on their visit to Barbados in April, along with their granddaughter Clover.**

Rivereast Boarding the Riverboat… **Rennie and Lisa Poirier are pictured about to take a riverboat ride on the Mississippi River in New Orleans, La.**

Rivereast Goes to the Netherlands!… **Pictured is Nancy Palinski (seated) at the Keukenhof Gardens in the Netherlands – with the *Rivereast* in hand! These gardens are open for just seven weeks each spring displaying tulips and other flowers. Also checking out the gorgeous displays are Ken Sek from South Windsor and Rich and Beth Loftis, formerly Coventry residents now retired to Virginia.**

A Horse is a Horse, Of Course, Of Course… **CT Draft Horse Rescue volunteer Maria Tralongo participated in the East Hampton Rotary's .5k on June 7 as a fundraiser for the rescue, raising a total of $2,010 in donations including $118 received on race day from other participants. Tralongo wore a full horse costume for the event including a halter and lead line. She is pictured with a Rotarian at registration check-in. The rescue, which just celebrated its 15th anniversary, is located at 113 Chestnut Hill Rd. in East Hampton and gratefully welcomes visitors on Saturdays/Sundays, 10 a.m. to noon. The rescue is fully volunteer run and donation supported.**

Where in the World?

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

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

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★ *Lessons from Success, cont. from page 8*

ite memories came on the volleyball court, especially during RHAM's annual breast cancer awareness Dig Pink event.

"Every single spot in the stand is completely filled," she described. "Everyone's covered in pink head to toe. It's just the most amazing thing."

As graduation approaches, Zito is excited about what comes next. This fall she will attend the University of Tennessee, in Knoxville, Tenn., where she plans to study industrial and systems engineering. She may also pursue a minor or second major in project management.

Engineering first caught her attention through RHAM's engineering courses. "I was obsessed with Legos as a kid," she said with a laugh. "I loved taking things apart and putting things together."

Today she sees engineering as a field filled with endless possibilities. "You can do it in almost any industry," she said. "I'll figure out more specifically what I want to do as I go through college."

Zito said her engineering teacher, Eileen Lastrina, played an important role in encouraging her to pursue the field. "She's just like the sweetest, most uplifting person," she said and added that she helped her realize engineering was a path she wanted to follow.

While Zito is excited for classes, she is equally excited for life on campus. "I cannot wait to go to football games," she said. "It's literally life-changing."

Looking back instead of ahead, Zito credited much of her success to her family. "My parents' work ethic is something I can't even begin to comprehend," she said. "Seeing how hard they work has inspired me my whole life."

She also praised her sisters, whose accomplishments showed her what was possible. "Having them as role models has been so helpful," she smiled. "They've always been there for me."

The Salutatorian

Aria Lagace never expected to finish near the top of her class. So when she learned she was salutatorian, she was surprised.

"I've never been someone who had to spend hours and hours studying," she said. "That's one reason I was so shocked."

Instead, she focused on staying organized, completing assignments early and asking teachers for help whenever she needed it. "I made sure not to wait until the night before," she explained. "I wanted my work to reflect my best effort."

Lagace challenged herself with a demanding course load that included AP Physics, AP U.S. History and several other advanced classes. She was also careful not to overload herself. "You have to think about what it's worth," she said. "You have to balance things."

That theme of balance appeared throughout her entire high school experience.

Although she wasn't heavily involved in activities during her early years at RHAM, she gradually found ways to become more engaged. She participated in peer tutoring and peer helpers, which helped incoming freshmen adjust to high school life.

"I was really nervous when I started high school," she admitted. "So I wanted to help freshmen feel included and encourage them to get involved."

Outside of school, Lagace discovered a passion for running. Last year she completed both the Disney Princess Half Marathon and the Providence Half Marathon.

"It's becoming something I really love," she said.

Her favorite RHAM memories include the Dig Pink volleyball games and pep rallies. "The screaming contest is always hilarious," she laughed.

Lagace also credited several teachers for helping her grow, especially AP U.S. History teacher Daniel Martin. "He made the classroom feel like such a community," she said. "He's one of the biggest reasons I became more confident in myself."

Zito quickly agreed. "You're more than a number," she recalled Martin telling students. "That's something I needed to hear."

This fall, Lagace will attend Florida State University in Tallahassee, Fla., where she plans to double major in finance and history.

History has always been a favorite subject of Lagace, but she also enjoys mathematics and business. Her long-term goal is to attend law school and possibly become a business lawyer.

"I want to do things that interest me," she said. "I want to be successful, but I don't want to force myself into something I don't enjoy." She hopes college will provide opportunities to explore new places, meet new people and continue running.

As she reflected on her accomplishments, Lagace remained focused on the bigger picture. "In 50 years, being salutatorian isn't going to be the most important thing," she said. "It's going to be the people you met and experiences you had."

Cecilia Zito, left, and Aria Legace are the valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, of the RHAM High School class of 2026.

She credited much of her success to her father, who always encouraged her without placing pressure on her. "All he's ever wanted for me is to try my best," she said.

Although their paths after RHAM are heading in different directions, Zito and Lagace shared a similar message for future students. Work hard. Ask questions. Stay involved. But don't forget to enjoy the experience.

"Live a well-rounded life," Zito advised. "Academics come first, but don't put all your eggs in one basket."

Lagace offered similar advice. "Don't stress too much," she said. "Put in your best effort and have fun. Life is about living and doing what you want to do."

Dean's List

Portland resident Dylan Jensen made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Western Connecticut State University.

Jensen is majoring in audio and music production.

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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Selectmen Decide How to Use State Funding, Set Mill Rate

By Anne Lilburn

Portland's Board of Selectmen met for a regularly scheduled meeting on June 3, where the bulk of the discussion surrounded the setting of the town's mill rate. The item had been held over from a previous meeting so the town could clarify the rules and restrictions on how it could use the additional state funding that was announced in late April following 2026-27 budget adjustment legislation.

The additional funding, according to a press release from Governor Ned Lamont's office, was intended to "close critical funding gaps in school budgets and town finances without forcing communities to raise property taxes. By targeting these dollars directly at the gaps straining local budgets and school systems, this state funding gives municipalities the breathing room they need to stabilize or even reduce mill rates, addressing the affordability concerns that so many Connecticut residents and community leaders have raised."

Portland was allocated $52,900 in supplemental town aid, and $527,951 in supplemental education aid. The total amount of extra funding amounts to $580,851.

First Selectman Mike Pelton, a Republican, said that the big question in setting the mill rate was "How do we split the money from the state?"

"It has been a legitimately confusing thing," Pelton said. "The intention was initially for education, and that's what they started with and it ended up with a concoction of different things, and there was competing press releases regarding the money that was confusing, not just to our town and to residents, but to many towns."

The town eventually got clarity, Pelton said, that it can be used for both, and "it's up to this board to decide," he said.

Before the board made its decision, Superintendent of Schools Charles Britton had a chance to explain why the education budget was starting the year with a deficit of roughly $200,000. That deficit, Britton said, began when he was working against an early deadline to have the Board of Education budget finalized before they could know health insurance costs.

When those insurance costs went up more than expected, the Board of Education, said Britton, was left with a $146,000 deficit for next year's budget. The Board of Selectmen later asked the Board of Education to cut $50,000 more from the budget, he said, and he said he had winced, but agreed to it at the time, because he was "confident that Hartford [was] going to provide us with some relief," which it has.

Pelton put forth three proposals to the Board of Selectmen. In the first, the selectmen would allocate $200,000 to the Board of Education to "make whole" their budget, and use the remaining $380,000 for tax relief. In a second scenario, he proposed splitting the $527,000 of education supplemental aid between the Board of Ed and the town for tax relief, and in a third scenario, he suggested that $300,000 could be allocated to the Board of Education, based on the fact that its budget was roughly 62% of the town budget, he said.

Across the board, support was for the lowest, $200,000 appropriation to the Board of Ed, with only Andrea Alfano, a Democrat, preferring the second scenario, which involved splitting the funds equally.

In the end, the board voted 6-1 to allocate $200,000 to the Board of Education, thereby establishing the town's mill rate at 36.36 mills for all property except motor vehicles. For motor vehicles, the mill rate will be 32.46 mills. That's a reduction from the previously estimated 36.8 mills for non-motor vehicle property.

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 retuning 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 Riverfront 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.

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.

Slamma-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.

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. Admission is free.

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…henceforth 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 Portland celebration begins at noon in the school auditorium with presentations by the Rev. Barbara Roane of Zion First Baptist Church in Middletown; Portland First Selectman Michael Pelton; 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.

Following the opening program, visitors can enjoy live music by At Last, explore educational exhibits and community organizations, and browse a variety of vendors featuring Black-owned businesses. There will be food from local vendors and free ice cream from Ice Cream Emergency for a sweet treat.

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

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 15.

Weekly Programs: Unless noted, all programs are free. **Monday 6/15: Light Aerobics,** 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Tuesday 6/16: 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: sweet and sour chicken, steamed white rice stir-fry veggies, chocolate chip cookie, milk, applesauce; **Coupons for Troops,** 1-4 p.m.; **Setback,** 1 p.m.; **SyncoCize II**, 5-6 p.m. – fee is donation to instructor.

Wednesday 6/17: 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; **Fiber Arts Group,** noon.

Thursday 6/18: Stretch & Tone, 9:30 a.m.; **Knit & Stitch,** 10 a.m.; **Congregate Meal**, noon – $3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: baked ziti with meat sauce, cauliflower and broccoli, roll and butter, string cheese, apple; **Mah Jongg**, 12:30 p.m.; **Scrabble**, 1 p.m.

Friday 6/19: Center closed for Juneteenth.

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

There will be **no Family History FUN** with Ken Doney in July or August.

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

Monday, June 15: Lunch at Bill's Seafood. Leave the center at 11:30 a.m. There is a $5 ride fee; pay for your own meal. Registration required.

Wednesday, June 17: Trip to Springfield Museums and lunch at Blake House Café. Leave the center at 9 a.m. There is a $5 ride fee, and a $17.50 admission fee gets you into all five museums. You pay for your own meal. Registration required.

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.

Wednesday, July 1: Trip to Elizabeth Park and Lunch. Leave the center at 9:30 a.m. There is a $5 ride fee; pay for your own meal.

Monday, July 6: Heart of Health & Community Wellness Series. There will be a Blood Pressure Clinic from 10-11 a.m., and a Chatting with Chatham Health wellness presentation from 10:45-11:15 a.m.

Monday, July 6: Bloom Therapeutic Plant and Nature Program: Growing a Tea Garden, 1 p.m. There is a $20 fee.

Wednesday, July 8: Bingo with Sean from Ageless Insurance, 1:30 p.m.

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.

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.

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.

Dean's List

Portland resident Nathan Nadolski made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

A member of the Class of 2028, Nadolski is majoring in business analytics.

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.

Dean's List

Alexander Dawson of Portland made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Western New England University in Springfield, Mass.

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CIT 4-2-26

PHS Top Two Focused on Helping Others

By Anne Lilburn

Portland High School's valedictorian and salutatorian have grown up together since elementary school, with valedictorian Lily Gaetani having been born here and salutatorian Allison Tine moving here in first grade.

Both students are now heading to UConn, and they say it'll be hard to say goodbye to Portland.

"It's definitely the end of an era," said Gaetani of graduating with the small class of only 80 students. "I kind of grapple with the fact that it's ending. It doesn't even feel real because this is all that we know, so it's exciting but it's also scary that we get to move on from something that's so comfortable and so just normal for us to every day."

Tine agreed, and said she recently found herself considering how pivotal graduation – which will occur Monday, June 15, at 6 p.m. – would be for many of the students.

"It's crazy," she said. "I've been thinking about it in the whole process of writing our speeches too: this has been our whole entire lives leading up to this moment, but then, in a couple years, we're going to be 30" and this whole era, she said, will be in the distant past.

"It's a little scary. It's a little intimidating," agreed Gaetani.

She said she appreciated the opportunities that Portland High School had provided her over the years.

"Our school does a good job of letting you find the things you're interested in and still be able to do everything," she said, adding that, for example, "you can do music and still be really invested in sports."

Valedictorian Gaetani, who played clarinet and saxophone in the school band, is heading to UConn to study music education. She was recently honored at Portland High School's Arts Banquet this spring.

Choosing to study music education was not always a given for her, she said.

"Honestly I did not know [what I wanted to study] forever, but I mean, the music stuff has always been a constant for me," she said. Gaetani said she had considered engineering until recently, even applying to colleges for engineering, but then, three months ago, she decided to go for music. She said that being named valedictorian, which qualified her for a full tuition scholarship to UConn, helped her decide.

"The opportunity for the tuition being paid came," she said, "and I was like, 'I'll regret if I don't go in and try this,' because I've been touched by so many amazing teachers who have shared their passion for music with me, and I love the idea of being able to do the same, and teaching kids that same passion for music, that feels like a way of giving back."

Salutatorian Tine said that she planned to study biomedical engineering at UConn. For her, too, her choice of study area was a recent one.

"I never really knew what I wanted to do until this year," she said, though "I always knew I wanted to go into engineering, because I'm really into maths and sciences."

"I knew I wanted to go into engineering and I knew I wanted to do a type where I [could] help people and that's definitely why I wanted to go into biomedical," she said. "There's so many different things you can do with it, too. Right now I'm really leaning towards tissue development and growing organs, which sounds really cool, and cancer research and stuff like that. That would be so cool to do: to say, I'm researching cancer and helping people across the world with the things that I do."

Like Gaetani, Tine also performed in the high school band, playing flute, piccolo and later saxophone. Both students named band director Kristin Novak as one of their favorite teachers.

Tine said that Novak had pushed her to "to try new things," like suggesting she learn saxophone so she could be in the jazz and pit band, and encouraging her to step out of her comfort zone.

Both Tine and Gaetani also mentioned class advisor Dylan Bernard and Principal Kathryn Lawson as positive and supportive educators.

"I think there's a lot to be said for the way our staff is," Gaetani said. "Whatever you put in, you're going to get out. I think that there's nothing too big or too small to ask with somebody who's going to go out of their way to help you, especially with our class advisors. I appreciate them so much and they're honestly nice and funny people and still so open and supportive of us."

In addition to being part of the band, both Gaetani and Tine were National Honor Society members and also served as class officers. Tine also was part of the school's DECA club and threw discus and javelin on the school's track and field team. She was honored as a scholar athlete this spring.

Portland High School Class of 2026 valedictorian Lily Gaetani, left, and salutatorian Allison Tine are both headed to UConn in the fall.

Finding out that they were valedictorian and salutatorian didn't come as a huge surprise to either student, but Tine said she had moved up over the past year, partially due to taking extra honors courses. She didn't find out she had moved from third into second place until last month, and said she was happy to have qualified for the UConn scholarship, which valedictorians and salutatorians are eligible for, as a result.

Gaetani said she hadn't been super competitive over the years, but that she had "tried everything and I think I worked really hard" to get the title of valedictorian. Getting to speak at graduation, she said, was definitely an honor for her.

Both Gaetani and Tine said they were a little nervous about both writing and delivering their graduation day speeches.

"It felt really daunting a task," said Gaetani of writing her speech. As for speaking in front of that many people, the audience might be large, she said, but they are "people that you have known, people that are happy to see us going onto the next thing, so that makes it easier. They know that we've worked hard and this is them celebrating us, and that makes it easier — and it's an opportunity to be able to thank them"

Tine said she was excited for new opportunities, but a bit sad to be living farther away from her family. Gaetani, too, said she would miss home next year.

"We definitely have a tight-knit community and that's something special," she said. "There's something notable about that. I came from a small town and even though it was small, you still made such great memories.

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 Playdate: Wednesday, June 17, 10:30 a.m. 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.

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.

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: Photo Exhibit: "Three Decades of Change on Main Street, 2005, 2015, 2025," by Bob McDougall. Portland Library and the Portland Historical Society present the next chapter of McDougall's panorama photography project, a four-series visual journey, which includes 2,400 photographs. This exhibit runs 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.

Movie: Wednesday, July 8, 1 p.m. *You, Me & Tuscany* (2026; rated PG-13) will be shown. Run time is 105 minutes.

America 250 Book Discussion: *George Washington's Secret Six: The Spy Ring That Saved the American Revolution*: Thursday, July 9, 6:30 p.m. When George Washington beat a hasty retreat from New York City in August 1776, many thought the American Revolution might soon be over. Instead, Washington rallied – thanks in large part to a little-known, top-secret group called the Culper Spy Ring. Copies of the book are available at the library and on Libby for all patrons with a Portland library card. Space is limited

Book Clubs on Hiatus: The library book clubs are on summer vacation. Check back in August to see what each group will read in September.

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.

Chicken Barbecue July 18

The Portland Agricultural Fair and Portland Fish and Game Club will sponsor their third annual Chicken Barbecue on Saturday, July 18, from 4-7:30 p.m., at Portland Riverfront Park, 284 Brownstone Ave.

Adult meals cost $30 each and will consist of half a barbecued chicken with an ear of corn and French fries. A child's meal, for children under 12, will consist of chicken tenders, an ear of corn and French fries. Soda and water will be available for purchase. Meals can either be eaten onsite or take them to go. Entertainment will be provided by Paul Christopher and Round 3. Also, the raffle will be held once again.

Tickets can be purchased from any Portland Fair or Portland Fish and Game member or at Bud's Café on Main Street.

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.

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.

Library Friends Book Collection Day

The Friends of the Portland Library will be accepting donations of gently used, clean and resaleable books, CDs, DVDs and puzzles on Saturday, June 13, from 10 a.m.-noon. Friends and volunteers will be available to assist at the side door of the library. The library is located at 20 Freestone Ave.

The donated materials are resold at the ongoing book sale and at the Fall Book Sale. Proceeds support the many adult and children's library programs; the purchase of new materials; and sponsorship of museum passes that offer free or reduced admission to local museums.

Remember that all donated items must be in a saleable condition. Items that are dirty, moldy or in poor condition cannot be accepted. No textbooks, business books, computer books, VHS videos or magazines, please. Donations are tax-deductible and acknowledgement forms will be available. Visit www.friendsofportlandlibraryct.org for more information.

Brownstone Arts' Spring Exhibition

Brownstone Arts' annual spring exhibition and sale will continue this Saturday and Sunday, June 13 and 14, from 1-4 p.m., at the Hubbard Farmstead Gallery.

The gallery is located in the restored barn on the historic 1852 property owned by Elwin Guild and Joan Giesemann at 332 Middle Haddam Rd.

Brownstone Arts consists of members from towns up and down the Connecticut River Valley. The artists work in a variety of mediums including oils and acrylics, watercolors, pottery, pastels, photography, sculpture and printmaking.

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 is Children's Day. Enjoy an intergenerational worship service featuring special music, a conversation with Lewis the Puppet, a slideshow highlighting the church's children's ministries, and a blessing of the children. Fellowship Hour will follow for a time of refreshments and conversations.

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

Pollinator Week Buzzes into Portland

From June 22-28, Pollinator Week is coming to Portland with a Pollinator Week Scavenger Hunt sponsored by The Portland River Valley Garden Club. Participants are invited to visit Portland gardens and use clues to find pollinator friendly plants.

Clue sheets with directions will be available at The Portland Public Library beginning Monday June 22. To earn a small prize, answer sheets should be completed and turned back in to The Portland Public Library by Monday, June 29. All correct answer sheets will be entered into a drawing for a free pollinator-friendly perennial plant.

For more information, visit Please visit The Portland River Valley Garden Club website at portland-river-valley-garden-club.blogspot.com, or look for the club on Facebook.

Historical Society Museum Open Saturday

The Portland Historical Society's Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History, located at 492 Main St., will be open tomorrow, Saturday, June 13, from 1-3 p.m., to celebrate Connecticut Open House Day. Admission is free.

The museum will join over 200 tourism attractions across the state.

The Callander House Museum will open its doors to visitors from 1-3 p.m. Items of special interest this Saturday are the photographs of Portland High School's senior class trips from 1935-1950 and American flags from the museum's collection. Displays cover Portland's rich past in quarrying and shipbuilding as well as the Wangunks who lived along the river and inland. There will be information about the Society's special project for America's 250 Celebration, the rebuild of the 1821 Gildersleeve Store from Portland's heyday as a shipbuilding center along our riverfront.

The society will have the Callander Cupboard available for your shopping pleasure. Of special interest for graduation, Father's Day and summer birthdays are the popular baseball hats sporting Portland's 06480 zipcode. For the Portland history buffs, there are several books loaded with local and regional information.

Car Show to Feature E-Bike Auction

The Knights of Columbus Freestone Council 7 will host its annual Car Show Friday, June 26, from 3-8 p.m., in the parking lot of the Church of Saint Mary.

This family-friendly community event promises many vintage cars and trucks, as well as a silent auction featuring a Trek Fx+1 MidStep electric bike (retail value $2,200) along with $3,000 worth of other prizes.

This year's car show is dedicated to Portland Youth and Family Services. Ten new bikes and helmets for kids 12 years old and under will be given away via a free raffle during the car show.

"We want to do more than just showcase beautiful classic and custom cars; we want to give back to the children in our community and put them in the driver's seat of their own outdoor adventures," said Jerry Poulin, 4th degree knight and car show committee chair.

A Trek Fx+1 MidStep electric bike, valued at $2,200, will be offered during a silent auction taking place at the Knights of Columbus Freestone Council 7's annual Car Show.

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 renew 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.

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.

Birding and Butterfly Hike

The Air Line Trail Committee and the Waverly Center are once again co-sponsoring a gentle hike, led by Carol Bozena, Air Line Trail Committee member and local naturalist Beau Doherty, on Wednesday, June 17, at 9 a.m.

The hike begins at the new parking lot where Breezy Corners Road and the Air Line Trail bisect. Doherty will point out various types of birds, their habitats and their migration patterns. He will also point out the butterflies seen this time of year. If you like, bring your binoculars.

This hike will take an easterly path focusing on different habitats.

Town Offices Closed for Juneteenth

The Portland town offices will be closed Friday, June 19, in observation of Juneteenth.

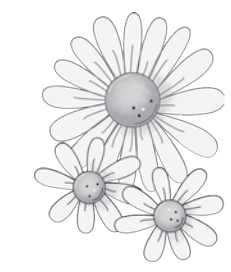
Also, there will be no late office hours on Tuesday, June 16.

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.



Always a good time, the annual Connecticut River Raft Race will return Saturday, July 25.

Connecticut River Raft Race to Return

Organizers have officially announced the 52nd annual Connecticut River Raft Race, set for Saturday, July 25. This event – the oldest and largest self-supporting raft race in Connecticut – promises another day of homemade vessels, teamwork, laughter, and unforgettable memories on the water.

The race traces its roots all the way back to 1975, when it first launched from Deep River Landing to Goat Island. Over the decades, the course has shifted (including stops at Hurd State Park and the Arrigoni Bridge area), but the spirit has remained the same: ordinary people building extraordinary, human-powered rafts and racing them downriver for charity and glory.

Watercraft like *Lee Jet* (with a record 12 victories), *Triceratops*, and *Raft America* have become local legends, while thousands of participants and spectators have turned the event into a floating festival of ingenuity and community pride.

This year, the race starts at 10 a.m. on the shoals off the south end of Gildersleeve Island (hug the eastern shore for the fastest route!), and finishes at Birdon Marina, 37 Riverview St. Distance is approximately 3.6 to 4 miles down the scenic Connecticut River

There will be a Captains' Meeting (mandatory for registration) on Saturday, July 11, at 10 a.m., at Birdon Marina

Expect a festive atmosphere at the finish line with live music, food, awards, and plenty of shore-side cheering. All proceeds from the race — a 501(c)(3) nonprofit — benefit local children's charities in the Portland and Middletown area.

Whether you're aiming for speed in the competitive America Class, cruising with friends in the Cruising Class, or going big and wild in the Horrendous Class, there's a spot for every style of adventurer.

To participate, there needs to be a minimum crew of three people per raft. Minimum raft size is 4'x8' at the waterline. Rafts must be 100% homemade; no commercial hulls. Use foam, plastic barrels, buckets, scrap wood, or recycled materials. Rafts must be human-powered only (paddles, oars, poles, sails, pedal power — get creative!). Life jackets (Coast Guard-approved) are required and must be worn at all times. Sneakers or appropriate footwear are also mandatory.

Every raft also needs a support boat, for towing to the start and safety.

Cost is a $25 donation per crew member. To enter, download the form and hold-harmless agreement from www.ctriverraftrace.org. Notarize it (a notary will be available at the Captains' Meeting) and submit with your donation.

The official event booklet and website offer basic and advanced raft-building guides, safety tips, and full rules. Past racers have floated everything from picnic-table rafts to elaborate themed masterpieces.

Visit www.ctriverraftrace.org today for the entry form, 2026 promotional materials, tide information, raft-building resources, and more. For more information, call the race committee at 860-342-4735 or check the site for the latest updates.

News from America250 Committee

The America 250 Portland CT Committee has extended the period both to offer suggestions and submissions for the town time capsule as well as advertising in the commemorative booklet.

For information, email terryagrady@aol.com (place America 250 in the subject line) or call 860-342-2262.

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 dinners, 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.

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Flute Loops, a Connecticut-based adult flute choir, will perform at Marlborough Arts Center on Friday, June 26, at 7:30 p.m.

Flute Loops Coming to Arts Center

The Marlborough Arts Center will hold a 4th Friday Arts Café concert with Flute Loops & Ala Carte, on Friday, June 26, at 7:30 p.m., at the arts center, 231 N. Main St.

Flute Loops is a Connecticut-based adult flute choir founded by flutist Erin Vivero. The group is known for its humorous, highly theatrical and educational performances. Its performances have included showcases at the National Flute Convention in Chicago and San Antonio; performing the national anthem at a Hartford Yard Goats game; and more. The evening's concert will not just include Flute Loops but a quartet of Vivero and friends that include piano, bass and drums.

For more about Flute Loops go to erinvivero.com/flute-loops.

Doors open at 7 p.m. and the concert begins at 7:30 p.m. BYOW and nibbles to dine on. Other non-alcoholic beverages are available. There is on-site parking, and the arts center is handicapped-accessible.

Admission to this program is subsidized by a grant from the Marlborough Greater Together Community Fund of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

For more information, visit www.marlborougharts.org, email info@marlborougharts.org or call 860-467-6353.

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.marlcongchurch.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 and youth group will resume in September.

June 14 service will be led by Seaver. Her sermon title is "Shake It Off" based on Matthew 9:35-38; 10:1-14. After worship all are invited to Coffee Hour in the Thienes Lounge.

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

Outreach: The church collects non-perishable food items year-round for Marlborough Food Bank with a basket located in the narthex for Sunday worshippers to bring donations. The next church-sponsored Drive Thru Café, for Marlborough Food Bank clients and their families with tickets, will be June 28. 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.

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 freewill 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@marlcongchurch.org, or contact the church office at office@marlcongchurch.org.

Senior Center News and Notes

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

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

Events: Free Art Classes: 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.

Lunch and Tour of the Residence at Glastonbury: 6/16; call the senior center for more information. Transportation available.

Birthday Club: June birthdays will be celebrated 6/23 from 1-2 p.m., with cake. Open to all friends and family. It does not have to be your birthday month to celebrate. However, if it is, please RSVP.

Advanced Care Directives: 6/24 from 2-3 p.m. A Greater Hartford legal aide will present on Advanced Care Directives, with a Q&A.

Line Dancing Lessons: All levels welcomed; for ages 55+. July session: 7/2, 7/9, 7/16 and 7/23, 5-7 p.m. Cost is $50/residents, $60/non-residents. RSVP by 7/2.

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.marlboroughct.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 every Wednesday. 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. Renter's 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.

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 dog(s) by 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.

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 marlboroughfoodbank@comcast.net.

Vacancies on Town Boards, Commissions

The Town of Marlborough is seeking residents to serve on various town boards and commissions. All residents of Marlborough who are registered to vote are eligible.

Interested candidates should go to the town website and search 'Vacancies' in the search bar, then click on 'Vacancies – Marlborough, CT' and then click 'Application for Appointment to Boards, Commissions, or Committees for the most recent application.

Please submit applications for position(s) on the following committees by the date indicated:

June 30: Zoning Commission – alternate;

June 30: Water Pollution Control Authority – full & alternate.

Applications can be dropped off at the Town Hall in the Town Clerk's office, or you can mail them to: Marlborough Town Hall, Town Clerk's Office, P.O. Box 29, 26 North Main St., Marlborough, CT 06447.

Summer Classes at Arts Center

Marlborough Arts Center, located at 231 N. Main St., is offering a number of classes this summer.

Christine Allison, the art teacher at Marlborough Elementary School, will teach a one-day workshop on Sumi-E Painting: Serenity in Japanese Painting. The workshop will guide makers of any ability level through an art experience that embraces zen, simplicity, and imperfections. After practicing brush strokes in exercises, you will then create a full sized finish piece of art.

Due to popular demand for Rebecca Moran's classes, the center will add another six-week Watercolor II session on Mondays starting June 29. This series is for anyone with previous experience using watercolor. Students will apply techniques and compositions to their own paintings. And for continuing and new students, Alan James returns for another six-week series of Impressionistic Watercolor, in which you will compose a new painting on each day of the workshop. If away on vacation and you miss a session, he will work with you on a make-up session.

More workshops may be added before summer's end and there will be a good lineup for fall, the arts center said.

For details on each workshop and to register, go to www.marlborougharts.org. Or for more information, call 860-467-6353.

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

Marlborough Farmers Market

Zina's Cucina is hosting the Marlborough Farmers 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.

Dean's List

Ally Bernier of Marlborough made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Assumption University in Worcester, Mass.

***

Marlborough resident Sadie Eppinger made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Fairfield University.

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.

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.

DTC Tag Sale

The Marlborough Democratic Town Committee is holding its fifth annual Tag Sale at the Marlborough Green on Saturday, June 13, from 8 a.m.-noon, with a rain date of June 14, also from 8 a.m.-noon.

Bring your entire family because there will be something for everyone, the DTC said.

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.

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.

Jillian LaCaresse and daughters portrayed Abigail Buell and daughters in 1776 at the recent Reenactment Day in Marlborough. Meanwhile, C.S. Dunn (right) played the part of Enoch Freeman, a Black man whose people were not permitted to be buried with the town's white residents.

Reenactment Day a Success

Despite the rain and wind, Reenactment Day on May 30 in Marlborough was a great success, organizers say.

Between 20 volunteers and over 70 visitors, nearly 100 people braved the elements to learn history of Marlborough through a historic walk. This event was sponsored by the organizations who participated in the Mini-Fair set up at the Marlborough Congregational Church: The Marlborough 250th Committee, the Marlborough Preservation Society, the Richmond Memorial Library, the Colchester Fife and Drum Corps, and CoDE (Coalition on Diversity & Equity). Every family that participated received a stamp in their little passport and a raffle ticket to win an 1803 penny, year of Marlborough's incorporation, at Marlborough Day to be held on Aug. 23.

The tour began in 1776, 250 years ago, with Abigail Buell and her daughters telling about life in a small village on the brink of war. Second stop was on the front steps of the church where Patience Lord and the Little Drummer Boy demonstrated an ancient drum. Next, across the street and down the hill, the Buell cousins William and Enos, explained about their gunnery, displayed an authentic Buell musket, and demonstrated successfully (despite the dampness) how colonial guns were shot.

Up the sidewalk each group walked to Century Cemetery to hear from Enoch Freeman, a Black man whose people were not permitted to be buried with the white residents, and David Buell, who in 1876, the year of the Centennial, looked at his family history while pointing out Buell tombstones. The sixth stop was in front of the library in 1903 (centennial of the town) where Mary Hall proudly told her struggles to become the first Connecticut Woman attorney.

Each group crossed Main Street again and entered the warm church to hear Steve Pozzato, church historian, tell about the role of Congregational churches in general and especially in Marlborough. He gave participants the opportunity to ring the church bell. Finally, the circle was complete by returning to the Fellowship Hall to hear Red Oak, Wangunk Tribal Leader, recall tales of his ancestors who lived around Lake Terramuggus.

The three guides were Romano Ghirlanda, Lisa Seethaler and Christi Moraga. Ghirlanda evaluated the day this way: "People have commented on how much they loved the actors, the demonstrations, the amount of knowledge and information provided, and how well organized it was regarding the flow of time."

Parks and Rec. Programs

Marlborough Parks & Recreation has announced the following. For full program descriptions – including listings of July programs – or to register, visit www.marlboroughct.gov. For more information, call 860-295-6203.

Youth Programs: Netto Summer Day Camp: For **g**rades 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.

Family Beach Yoga Night: Tuesday, June 23, 5:30 p.m., at Blish Park, for ages 3-10. Bring your own yoga mat or towel. Parent/guardian must be present. The class is geared toward children ages 3-10 and their families, but all kids welcome. Registration fee is $25/resident, $30/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.

Mad Science-Red Hot Robots with Coding: For grades K-6. June 22-26, 9 a.m.-noon, at MES. Children will learn the basics of robotics by constructing their own age appropriate robot throughout the week. Supplies included. Registration fee is $193/resident, $198/non-resident.

Horseback Riding Lessons: Ages 5 and up. Lesson days and times are flexible. 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.

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.

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

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RE6-12-26

Epoch Arts will hold a Teen Game Night Summer Bash Friday, June 25. Pictured are two girls playing air hockey at the last Teen Game Night.

Teen Game Night Summer Bash

Epoch Arts will hold a Teen Game Night Summer Bash Friday, June 26, from 7-9:30 p.m., at Epoch, 27 Skinner St.

Teens in grades 6 and up are invited to come celebrate that school is out and summer is here. Play some old school games as well as some new ones like DDR, XBox, Chess, Corn Hole, and a variety of other games. There will be ice cream, snacks and drinks all night long.

For more information, visit www.epocharts.org.

Senior Center Upcoming Trips

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

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

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.

Recreation News

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

Mad Science Camp: July 13-17, 9 a.m.-noon, at Center School, for ages 5-10. Cost is $115.

Art Explosion Camp: July 20-24, 9 a.m.-noon, at Center School, for ages 5-10. Cost is $115.

Hoop it Up Basketball Camp: July 13-17, 9:30-11:30 a.m., at Center School, for grades 1-6. Cost is $140.

Coastal Christmas in July: July 29, 6:30-8 p.m., at Town Hall. Fee is $45.

Camp Wildwood at Lake Pocotopaug at Sears Park: Aug. 17-21, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., for ages 6-12. Cost is $225.

Golf Tournament: Has been rescheduled to Sept. 3. The event will feature 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. A highlight to this year's tournament will be a Hole-in-One contest, where golfers will have a chance to win a 2026 Nissan Rogue SV. There will also be a raffle contest and prizes. The tournament benefits East Hampton Sears Park Playground equipment. Cost is $145 per golfer.

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RE11-6-20

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.

Food4Lives Warm Weather Clothing Drive: Patty Kloo 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.

Summer Breaks: Bible Study, Sunday School and Choir are all on break for the summer months.

Cobalt Lodge Service: The monthly Cobalt Lodge worship will be held immediately after church on June 20.

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

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.

Celebration: This Sunday, the church will celebrate its Sunday School class, with the kids taking part in the service.

Men's Group: Will meet Wednesday, July 8 from 7-8 a.m., to share scripture around what the Bible says about being a man. There will be coffee and pastries.

Chicken Barbecue: The drive-thru Chicken Barbecue will be held Saturday, June 13, from noon-5 p.m., at the Church field.

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.hncovenantchurch.org.

East Hampton Library News & Notes

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

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

All Ages: Summer Reading Kickoff!: 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. (Note the location change to Memorial School.)

Adult Programs: 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.

Book Club Al Fresco (Sears Park): Wednesday, June 24, 6:30 p.m. Grab a copy of this month's selection and come to Sears Park for a casual discussion with lakeside views.

Tech Help: Thursday, June 25, 2-4 p.m. Basic technology help for phones, laptops, tablets, and e-readers. No registration required; just bring your device with you.

Teen Programs: 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.

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.

Science Heroes Presents: Diggin' It!: Saturday, June 27, 11 a.m. In this interactive S.T.E.M. show for the whole family, conduct experiments about the changing states of matter, pressure, and more while raising a shovel to scientist who work with dirt. Best for Grades K-5. Register or drop in.

Strawberry Shortcake Sale

The Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam Missions' Committee will sell strawberry shortcake on Flag Day, Sunday, June 14, from 4-6 p.m., takeout-only, for $14 per serving. Proceeds will be donated to local food bank and local charities.

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.

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.

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.

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RE3-26-21

Top Two Bellringers Say School Gave Them a Chance to Shine

By Anne Lilburn

For East Hampton High School graduating seniors Madelyn Daniels and Sofia Aresco, graduating high school means stepping into something bigger.

Both Daniels, the 2026 class valedictorian, and Aresco, the salutatorian, are headed to UConn, and both say that, while they're sad to say goodbye to their hometown, they are excited to be headed onto new adventures.

The two students have been in school together since kindergarten, along with most of their graduating class of 116 students. They've shared classes, and both served in the school's Save Promise club and as class officers (Daniels as vice president and Aresco as secretary). That their activities overlapped was not surprising, said Aresco.

"You get to know your grade really well when it's a small school," she said.

Daniels agreed, and said she was looking forward to branching out.

"It's a little bit comforting to know everybody," she said, talking about growing up in a small town, "but I think a lot of us are ready for a fresh start. We'll always treasure this experience, but most of us have never had the opportunity to meet new people really."

As for the end of the school year, Aresco said it had somewhat snuck up on her.

"It hasn't really hit me yet," said Aresco. "The only thing I'm super sad about is teachers, because it's such a small school that you have the same teachers so many times, so it makes me sad that I'm not going to see them on the daily."

Daniels agreed, saying she would especially miss English teacher Amy Zupan, who also served as their class advisor for several years.

"She's brought out a leader in me over the past couple years," Daniels said.

Last year, Zupan came close to not returning to East Hampton High School, following budget cuts that almost eliminated her position. School budget cuts are one East Hampton tradition that both Daniels and Aresco said they would not miss. They happened "almost every year," said Daniels.

"It's stressful. It's sad and it's stressful," said Aresco.

One program that Daniels was especially passionate about was the high school's Beginner Bellringer Preschool, a program where EHHS students operate a preschool for community families. Daniels said she spent three years working in the program, which counts as a college level class. She said she was the Family Liaison during her junior year, reaching out to families, handling paperwork and advertising the program.

Unsurprisingly, Daniels is planning on studying education at UConn, with eventual career aspirations to be either an elementary or secondary English teacher. She said that's in part because she says she loved her own English teachers so much.

"I have just had such a great educational experience," she said. "My favorite thing is school. I love school, I love notes, I love reading. I couldn't picture myself [working] anywhere else."

In choosing education as a career, Daniels will be following in the footsteps of her mother, a second grade teacher in Meriden. She will also follow in her mother's footsteps as a UConn cheerleader.

Daniels said she had started cheerleading in sixth grade, but that her roots were in gymnastics. She competed throughout high school as a member of the club team at Dunne's Gymnastics in Hebron. She said it was only recently that she had considered cheering in college.

"I think it was around my junior year that I really decided I wanted to cheer in college," she said. "My mom was actually a UConn cheerleader, so it's always been something in the back of my mind, but I wasn't sure it would be a part of my path."

Once she committed to the three-day tryout this spring, though, she said it became a class-wide pursuit, and Aresco agreed.

"There was a month where I actually thought about it every waking moment of my life," said Daniels.

"We all, the whole group, were going through the journey with her," said Aresco.

Sofia Aresco, left, and Madelyn Daniels are the salutatorian and valedictorian, respectively, of the East Hampton High School Class of 2026. The class will graduate tonight, June 12.

"I'm such an open book," said Daniels. "Everyone knows what's going on in my life, so we were all just kind of on the edge our seats. It was a big try out, and a lot of girls came out, I wasn't sure if I was going to make it or not, but I learned a lot that weekend and I made the team and I'm super thrilled about that."

As for Aresco, the salutatorian, she played volleyball in the fall and tennis in the spring, in addition to serving in school government and the Interact club.

At UConn, she says she plans on pursuing a political science major, with the intention of eventually going on to law school after college. She said she wasn't sure what field of law most interested her, but she is leaning towards corporate law. Law, she said, suited both her interests and her personality.

"I really like history and civics and current events," she said, and at the same time, "I like things that are ordered and have a set process."

Aresco said she wasn't surprised to find out she was salutatorian, but that, when the topic of class rank first came up, she wasn't familiar with it. East Hampton High School, she said, "wasn't really overly competitive or anything. Our school isn't cutthroat; we're all friends."

"I didn't even know that class rank was an actual thing until sophomore year, it wasn't even on my mind," she added.

Still, she said finding out she was salutatorian was important to her when it came to choosing a college. Both Aresco and Daniels, as valedictorian and salutatorian, are receiving UConn's Presidential Scholars Award, which provides a full tuition scholarship.

Both said they were looking forward to life at a bigger school — and with bigger sports.

"I'm really excited about the sports at UConn," said Aresco, noting that EHHS was so small it didn't even have its own full football team. She said she was excited to watch UConn basketball in person.

Daniels said she would miss East Hampton's small-town ways.

"It's such a storybook town. I just loved growing up here," she said. "There's so many things, from Old Home Days to Pumpkintown to Santa on the firetruck."

She also said she appreciated the opportunities a small high school provided.

"For me, growing up in a place where my graduating class was 116, I feel like that was really important," she said, "because me and other kids at the top of our class got to shine and feel special and that allowed us to more confidently step into the persona of, 'I'm a leader, I'm a good student.'"

At bigger schools, she said she thought students might not feel as "special."

Aresco agreed, saying that EHHS gave everyone plenty of opportunities to shine, and to feel ready to step out of East Hampton and into a bigger world.

East Hampton High School graduation is tonight, Friday, June 12, starting at 6 p.m.

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/east-hampton-senior-center for more information and a list of regular weekly and monthly activities, including games, quilting, the Trailblazers walking group, 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.

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.

Simply Social Women Group: Monday, June 15, at 10 a.m. This is a low-key opportunity to meet others and share resources. New members and ideas for topics welcome.

Chatham Health Chat: Monday, June 15, 10:30 a.m., featuring a talk on balance and fall risks with a representative from Chatham Health.

Blood Pressure Readings: Monday, June 15, 12:30 p.m. Check your blood pressure with a free reading provided by Chatham Health. Drop-ins welcome.

On the Move: East Hampton Transportation Information Meeting: Tuesday, June 16, 10 a.m. The presentation will cover transportation options that exist and why it is important to know your CT Regional Mobility Manager to help you with transportation when other options cannot help you.

Honoring the Journey: Thursday, June 18, 11 a.m. This group can help participants to navigating loss and prioritize safety, validation, and the transition from acute pain to integrated memory.

Design & Create: Thursday, June 18, 1:30 p.m. Help create props for the East Hampton Senior Center's Old Home Day Float! "Bells, Boats and the Nation's 250th" is this year's Old Home Day Parade theme.

Bike Rides for Seniors: Friday, June 19, 10 a.m. Ride at Airline North, 249 Columbia Ave., Route 66, Willimantic. For riders 55 and older. Bring your bike, helmet and water bottle. Call 860-267-4426 for ride information and to register.

Kayak Club Kickoff Meeting: Friday, June 19, 10 a.m. Get all the info on this new club, upcoming plans and details for anyone interested in participating. All experience levels are encouraged to attend.

Family Tree: Friday, June 19, 10:30 a.m. Learn how to research your family history with Ken Doney. Bring your electronic device to the class. Note: there are no sessions is July and August.

Drum Circle with Mark Zarillo: Friday, June 19, 12:45 p.m. This interactive program uses only drums to create energizing beats and build a sense of community. No experience needed. Cost is $5 per session.

Trips: 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.

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.

Dean's List

Sonoma C. Steiner made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts.

Steiner is majoring in chemistry and received a 3.925 GPA for the term.

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RE6-12-26

Council Eyes Mill Rate, Removes Barmasse from Commission

By Anne Lilburn

The Town Council Tuesday discussed setting a temporary mill rate following the failure of the town and education budgets to pass at a recent town-wide referendum.

The council also considered the at-times contentious issue regarding the recent appointment of former WPCA member Mark Barmasse to the newly seated town agricultural commission. In the end, the council voted to remove him from the position.

It was all part of a busy evening for the council. The June 9 meeting also featured a presentation from Congressman Joe Courtney's office honoring the late Nikki O'Neill, a public hearing on Epoch Arts' participation in the Neighborhood Assistance Act grant program, and more.

The Town Council first heard about Epoch Arts' application for the state's Neighborhood Assistance Act, a tax credit program which allows business to receive tax credits for donations made to qualifying organizations. Elizabeth Namen, the executive director of Epoch Arts, began by thanking the council for approving its participation in the program from the previous year, saying that funding they received last year allowed them to replace old or missing windows with energy efficient windows.

Namen explained that the organization was seeking $40,000 through the program to support upgrades to its building, including replacing old exterior doors that Namen said sometimes "let critters in" and also replacing electrical equipment. Current donors that they have lined up, she said, include Eversource, CNG and Connecticare.

The council voted unanimously to approve the organization's application for participation in the program.

Matt Reich, who grew up in East Hampton and works for Congressman Courtney, appeared before the council to honor former First Lady of Connecticut and East Hampton resident Nikki O'Neill. The widow of former Governor William O'Neill passed away last month at the age of 90.

Reich said Courtney had officially placed into the Congressional record "a tribute to her life, her achievements and everything that she meant to so many people in the community." He presented a framed copy of this entry into the record, to be on display at Town Hall.

Reich read from what Courtney submitted into the record, sharing in part, "When Governor Grasso resigned in ill health, Bill took over to finish out her term and Nikki wholeheartedly committed herself to serve as First Lady alongside him. Although she left her years of formal teaching behind, in this new role, she visited schools across the state, encouraging children to read and attend career days, school plays and concerts. Her decade and a day of service as First Lady of Connecticut was marked by her consistent leadership in civic, cultural and charitable efforts and that has held true very much as First Lady of the state and in the remaining years of her life, and now continues now I think with all that she's imparted on us."

Mill Rate Discussed

Later in the meeting, Town Manager Dave Cox updated the council and the public on the next steps following the failure of the town and education budgets at referendum. Cox said the chairs of the boards of finance and education, as well as the Town Council, had made the decision to hold a tri-board meeting on June 11, which will happen after press time this week. Council chair Dean Markham said that, if all went according to plan, the new referendum would be held July 14.

Since the budget did not pass at referendum, the council addressed setting a temporary mill rate, to cover expenses while there is no approved budget. Cox said that later in the month, the council will also be asked to approve a monthly budget for July.

Some debate ensued about the "fairest" way to set the mill rate, particularly due to the grand list adjustment that resulted from the recent property revaluation. In the end, the council voted unanimously to set the temporary mill rate at 27.79. That adjusted rate, Cox said, would "net the town the same amount of taxes that it collected last year on motor vehicles, personal property and real estate."

Barmasse Out

Towards the end of the meeting, council member Tim Feegel, a Republican, made a motion to revoke the appointment of Mark Barmasse to the town's newly seated Agriculture Commission. Barmasse, who had previously been chairman of the town's WPCA, was caught up in the happenings surrounding the firing of former Public Utilities Administrator Anthony DeSimone, notably a WPCA meeting where DeSimone joked about odors related to a local pig farm.

"I've received more phone calls, more outreach, than you can even imagine," Feegel said. "The emails, phone calls, people stopping me on the street. He's just not going to be a proper fit in this area."

Council Chair Dean Markham, a Democrat, clarified that Feegel had previously voted for Barmasse's appointment, and Feegel said he had, noting "that's why I'm also doing this tonight."

Knotek, who along with Feegel and council member Karen Wanat, a Democrat, helped select members to appoint to the commission, seemed caught off guard by Feegel's motion.

"The three of us sat together in committee, Tim, you know," said Knotek, a Democrat, seemingly surprised and upset by the motion.

Though calm, Feegel also seemed upset, saying, "I don't think he's going to be a proper fit, and I'm going to stick with that."

Wanat said that she, too, had had residents reach out.

"It's a difficult situation," said Wanat, "and I do have to agree with Tim."

Knotek said he understood the community's concerns, but respected Barmasse's expertise. He said that Barmasse had expressed regret and suggested that he believed Barmasse had been "put down irresponsibly, in my view."

In the end, the motion to revoke Barmasse's appointment passed, five members voting for it, Knotek voting against it, and Jack Solomon, a Democrat, abstaining.

"It certainly is unfortunate that we as a town have to go through that," said Markham. "Maybe it will be a learning experience for all."

In Other News

Chief Dennis Woessner also appeared via the council, via Zoom, to ask the council to consider an update to its body camera and dashboard camera policy. These changes were being made to comply with the Police Officer Standards and Training Council's official guidance in light of changes to state law. The changes will allow a police officer to review camera recordings when those recordings are being reviewed as a part of a disciplinary action against that officer. The council voted to approve those changes unanimously.

The council also heard from Cox regarding some suggested changes to the official job description for the town's vacant Public Utilities Administrator position. The changes would shift some emphasis in the job description to emphasize managerial duties, while also eliminating some of the specific technical requirements, including, according to Cox, "the water distribution license and other various water treatment licenses that were included as a requirement."

This change, said Cox, would emphasize the managerial role in "overseeing a department of people who have the technical knowledge to operate the system." Those operations positions would still be staffed by people with those licenses, allowing the Public Utilities Administrator to supervise those roles.

To address council member concerns, Cox also agreed to ensure that the language included something about the administrator's "duty to protect ratepayers" into the job description and the council voted unanimously to adopt the suggested changes.

* * *

The Town Council's next regularly scheduled meeting will be held June 23.

Bevin Bell Events Coming Up

The Chatham Historical Society has teamed up with the Bevin Bell factory for two special events on Saturday, June 20.

Town-Wide Tag Sale: 9 a.m.-2 p.m. The tag sale will be at 6 Bevin Blvd. Check out old and new items set up in the one-room schoolhouse. Free parking is available. From the one-room schoolhouse it is a short walk down to the Bevin Bell Factory tour (see below). Take a left on Summit and a right on Watrous.

Bevin Bell Tour: 10 a.m.-1 p.m. This is an open house and factory tour. Park for free at the Chatham Historical Society Museum, 6 Bevin Blvd a, s there is limited parking at the factory.

YPPCA Taking Registrations for Summer Theater Camp

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

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.ypcca.org or email info@ypcca.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.

Open Mic Night: Friday, June 19, 6-8 p.m. This event might be held outdoors on the lawn, weather permitting, so plan to bring your lawn chairs. Come and share your talent or just listen and enjoy. Performers, please call the library to sign up: 860-267-9093.

Save the date: For a performance of blues and jazz with musicians Lynn Tracey and Hannah Ardens on Sunday, July 19 at 5 p.m. Original poetry selections provided by Sympetalous – AKA Stan Lindh.

Mahjong: Mondays, 10:30 a.m. All levels of experience welcome. Contact the library for more information.

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

Yoga with Erin Day of Ten Summit Yoga: Mondays and Saturdays at 9 a.m., and Tuesdays at 7 p.m. Cost is a $17 drop-in fee. To register, email tensummitst@gmail.com or call 860-262-0246.

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 participants. 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).

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.

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.

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.

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.

Chancellor's List

Kristoffer Lintz, of East Hampton, made the spring 2026 Chancellor's List at the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

Litz is enrolled in the mechanical engineering program.

Resident Graduates

Drew Di Stefano of East Hampton recently graduated from the University of Connecticut College of Engineering.

Di Stefano received a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering. Di Stefano also won Best Poster Paper 2026 at the Connecticut Microelectronics and Optoelectronics Consortium.

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Assorted
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$9.99
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$11.99

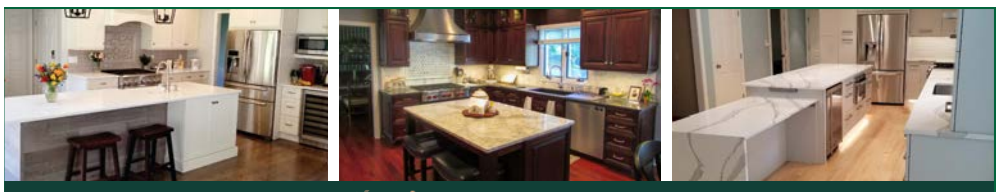
FISHERS ISLAND LEMONADE 4 PACKS
Assorted
$13.99

CAVIT ASSORTED WINES
1.5 Liter
$11.99

BROKEN SHED VODKA
1.75 Liter
$29.99
Mobile Rebate $20 OFF 2 Bottles net price $19.99 btl.

CHATEAU STE. MICHELLE CHARDONNAY
750 ml
$9.99

All Items Subject To Availability. Not Responsible For Typographical Errors.



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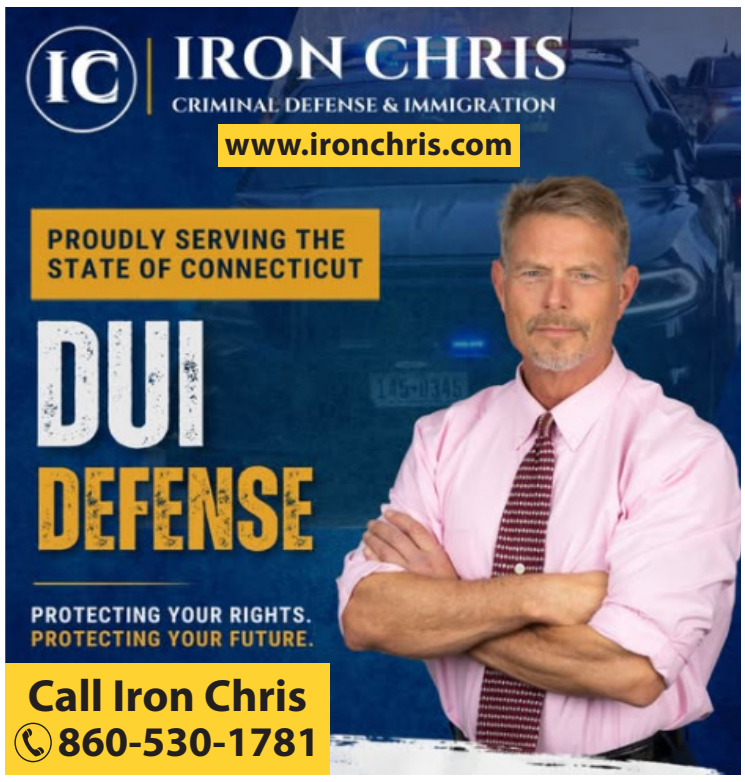

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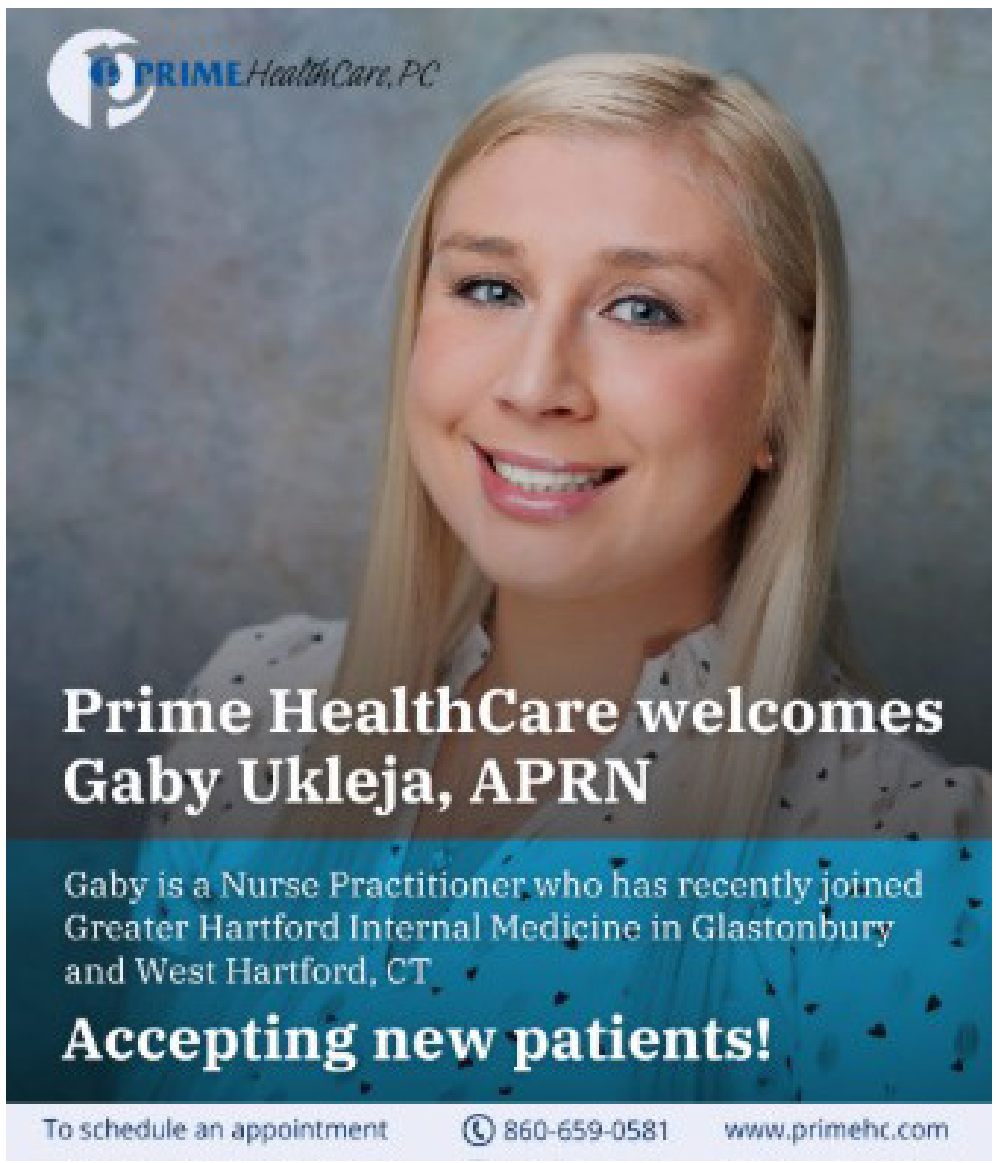
These Rocks Rock!... Nestled between natural green leaves and grasses are a new assortment of painted rocks. The Hebron Pollinator Pathway said the Pollinator Demonstration Garden in the Raymond Brook Preserve has clearly been the inspirational location for an anonymous artist to place their painted rocks within the flower beds.



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CIT6-11-26

Third Time the Charm for Hebron?

By Toriana Williams

Hebron voters are set to head to the polls on June 16 for the town's third referendum, after budgets overwhelmingly failed twice before. Residents can vote at Hebron Elementary School from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The revised overall operating budget heading to referendum is now $43.73 million, after the Board of Finance approved another $150,000 in cuts during a June 3 special meeting. This is a 2.9% increase over the current year's budget of $42.5 million. The previously rejected proposal stood at $44.02 million.

The Board of Education revised budget will also be voted on and now totals $15,248,930, a reduction of about $75,000 from the previously rejected proposal of around $15.32 million. This is around a 6.4% increase from the current year's $14.34 million.

The proposed mill rate is 36.96, a 0.11 mills increase compared to last year's rate of 36.85.

Officials Work to Rebuild Trust

The town government portion of the revised budget approved by the Town Council on June 4 totaled $11,905,792. That figure included the $10,553,726 for town government operations and $565,936 for capital improvement projects. The CIP was the only proposal passed during the last referendum.

During the Town Council meeting on June 4, councilors reviewed possible cuts suggested by department heads and town staff. Officials discussed delaying the hiring of a Department of Public Works truck driver, removing a planned Senior Center van purchase, reducing part-time payroll at the Senior Center and cutting several capital projects. Councilors also agreed to remove replacement windows for the Town Office Building from the capital plan.

Additional discussion centered on whether the town might need short-term borrowing if another budget failed before July 1, which is the start of the fiscal year. Councilor Keith Petit, a Republican, said he did not believe borrowing would be necessary because of Hebron's healthy fund balance.

The BOE budget had already been reduced by $300,000 before the May referendum and totaled $15,323,930, which represented a 6.89% increase. During the June 3 Board of Finance meeting, members discussed whether further discussions should be made to education spending after voters rejected the budget twice.

Several residents spoke during public comment in support of maintaining school funding. Parents and residents said strong schools are important to Hebron's identity and ultimately helped attract families to town. Others urged town leaders to focus on limiting tax increases and controlling spending.

BOF member Ryan Herrick, a Democrat, argued against additional cuts to the education budget and said further reductions would likely result in layoffs of current employees. Herrick pointed to rising insurance costs, contractual salary increases and growing special education expenses as major budget drivers.

Some residents at the meeting said voters were sending a clear message that they wanted lower spending. BOF Vice Chair James DeDonato, a Republican, said the board's challenge was to create a budget that could both pass at referendum and still provide necessary town services and school funding.

Town officials have acknowledged frustration among residents following two failed referendums. During the meeting, Thibeault said there is a lack of trust in the budget process. He added that town leaders must work to rebuild confidence by improving communication and providing clearer information earlier in the budget season.

Fatal Crash in Hebron

By Toriana Williams

Amston resident Dylan Owen Keefe, 21, died after his motorcycle struck a sedan on Gilead Street Saturday night, according to Connecticut State Police.

The accident took place on Gilead Street, where a 71-year-old Hebron resident, driving a sedan, was making a left turn into a private driveway. This was when Keefe, driving a motorcycle, attempted to pass the vehicle on the lefthand side.

According to the police, the motorcycle "went airborne across the driveway and off the left side of the roadway down an embankment" where Keefe sustained serious life-threatening injuries.

He was transported to Hartford Hospital where he was later pronounced deceased.

Police have asked that anyone with information regarding this collision to contact TFC Greg DeCarli at Troop K at 860-465-5400.

Independence Day Celebration

All are invited to begin their Independence Day celebration in true Hebron fashion by gathering at 9 a.m. on July 4 outside the Old Town Hall in the center of town.

This year's program will feature the presentation of the 250th Oratorical Essay Contest Award, where the winning student will present the winning essay.

The one-hour program will also include patriotic music, songs, and poetry, along with a commemorative Flag Ceremony conducted by local veterans. Hebron Scouts will assist in a public reading of the Declaration of Independence.

Also, visitors will have the opportunity to view a community collage reflecting what freedom means to many neighbors, purchase commemorative 250th anniversary merchandise, and enter a raffle for a magnificent handmade quilt. The program will conclude with an inspiring address, "Let Freedom Ring."

Pride Month Events on June 12, 13

Hebron's fourth annual Pride Celebration will include two events, which will be held on June 12 and 13.

On June 12, Elizabeth McCain will give a performance called *A Lesbian Belle Tells* from 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. at St. Peter's Church, Hebron. This is a collaboration between St. Peter's Church and Small Town Pride - CT.

McCain will perform a comedic one-woman play based on her real-life events. *A Lesbian Belle Tells* relates to the LGBTQ+ community and beyond, with universal themes of self-discovery, acceptance, family struggles, forgiveness, loss and love. Following her performance, there will be a reception in the parish hall. Register at tinyurl.com/dmde9m6w. Tickets are $20 for adults and $5 for youth.

On June 13, the Pride Celebration will be held from 10 a.m.–3 p.m. at AHM Youth and Family Services, 25 Pendleton Drive. This is sponsored by Small Town Pride - CT, a project of the Coalition on Diversity & Equity (CoDE).

There will be vendors, arts/crafts, and refreshments from 10 a.m.-noon. Then, from 1 p.m.–3 p.m., Elizabeth McCain will lead a workshop on "Telling your Story." She will share the "power of storytelling through writing and sharing your own stories."

Hebron Celebrates America 250

Hebron CT Celebrates America 250, along with its community partners, has planned a variety of events for June. All are invited to attend any or all of the following:

A Lesbian Belle Tells: Friday, June 12, 6:30 p.m., at St. Peter's Church, 30 Church St. A Lesbian Belle Tells is a humorous, one-woman play developed by Elizabeth McCain. According to Hebron CT Celebrates America 250, it affirms and validates the LGBTQ+ community and beyond. Tickets are $20 for adults, $5 for youth. Sponsored by Sanctury Performing Arts, Small Town Pride and the Coalition of Diversity and Equity (CoDE).

Defining a Sense of Place in an Age of Cyberspace: Saturday, June 13, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at Old Town Hall. In celebration of the country's 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Hebron Historical Society has created a new exhibit celebrating 10,000 years of Hebron's past. The exhibit is organized around the theme that the land in Hebron has been reshaped by the people and events that occurred in its past and it will continue to evolve in the future.

Soccer Watch Party!: Friday, June 19, at 2 p.m., at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St. All are invited to cheer on and celebrate Team USA as they play Australia. The fun starts at 2 p.m., and the game kicks off at 3 p.m. There will be refreshments, activities and more. Children under 17 must be with an adult. Sponsored by Hebron CT Celebrates America 250, The Town Center Project, Hebron Parks and Rec, RHAM Soccer and RHAM Youth Baseball.

"What to a Slave is the Fourth of July?": Friday, June 19, 6:30 p.m., at St. Peter's Church, 30 Church St. Join Sanctury Performing Arts and CoDE as they present the famous Frederick Douglass speech given at the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Society on July 5th, 1852. This speech cast light on the chasm between America's founding principals and the institution of slavery. Tickets are $20 for adults, $5 for youth.

Olde Time Base Ball Game, Family Picnic: Sunday, June 21, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., at Veterans Memorial Park, 66 Wall St. There will be an Olde Time Base Ball Game, a Family Picnic, and a performance by I Will Follow, a U2 tribute band. The Hebron CT Celebrates America 250 and The Town Center Project are organizing this event. Join the Hebron Maple Leafs for a game of base ball played by rules and guidelines from yesteryear with vintage base ball team The Woodstock Hilltoppers!

Follow Hebron CT Celebrates America 250 and/or The Town Center Project, Inc. on Facebook, for more information on these events and more.

United Brethren of Hebron Synagogue News & Notes

United Brethren of Hebron Synagogue, located at 10 Church Street (Route 85) in the center of Hebron, invites you to their next Shabbat service on Friday, June 12 at 7:15 p.m. All are welcome to attend. Dessert will be served following the service.

Prior to the service, they will provide a potluck dinner at 6 p.m. If you would like to join for dinner, email ubofhebron@gmail.com to let them know what dish you will bring and how many people to expect.

United Brethren of Hebron offers a flexible, inclusive approach to Judaism. The synagogue combines elements from both the Conservative and Reform traditions in our services and our membership includes interfaith families and couples.

If you're interested in donating to their capital campaign to help fund a new roof and other major renovations, visit their GoFundMe site at www.gofundme.com/f/support-united-brethren-hebrons-vital-work.

If you are interested in attending services, becoming a member, joining for the high holidays in the fall, or would like to learn more about the synagogue, visit www.ubofhebron.org or email them at ubofhebron@gmail.com. More information about upcoming events and services can be found on the synagogue's Facebook page.

Dean's List

Sean Connolly of Hebron made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Stonehill College in Easton, Mass.

Dean's List

Hebron residents Owen Bergquist and Trent Sargent, and Amston resident Kaylee Macca, made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Assumption University in Worcester, Mass.

Senior Center News & Notes

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

A Walk in Their Shoes - Dementia Simulation: Two separate presentations, Monday, June 22 at 11 a.m. and Tuesday, July 7 at 11 a.m. Join Heather Toutain from The Residence of Glastonbury as she will take you through a simulation experience to better understand with what living with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia can be like. We will guide you through the challenges of compromised vision, hearing and dexterity which all affect cognition. Please call to register 860-228-1700.

Sunshine Singers Kick-Off to Summer Concert: Thursday, July 2, 11:30 a.m. The group will sing a variety of songs. The concert is free; light refreshments served. RSVP requested. .

Weekly Shopping Trips: Fridays unless otherwise noted. Pre-registration is required by noon the day before. Call 860-228-1700 to register and for departure times. Schedule: June 12, Stop & Shop; June 19, Big Y; June 26, Stop & Shop. On Wednesday, July 1, at 8:30 a.m. (as the center is closed July 3), there will be a trip to Big Y. Other July trips: July 10, Walmart; July 17, Stop & Shop; July 24, Big Y; July 31, Walmart.

Recurring Daily/Weekly Happenings: Some programs have a fee, and some are no-cost, and most require pre-registration. More information in the monthly newsletter or at the senior center.

Monday through Friday: Exercise Equipment Room, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., or 9 a.m.-noon on Fridays.

Mondays: Enhance Fitness via Zoom with Paul Smith, 9-10 a.m.

Tuesdays: Knitting/Crocheting Group, 10:15-11:45 a.m.; Hand and Foot Canasta (cards), 12:45-3:15 p.m.; Card-Making, 1-2:15 p.m. (pre-registration required).

Wednesdays: Enhance Fitness via Zoom with Paul Smith, 9-10 a.m.; FABBS, 10:45-11:45 a.m.

Thursdays: Massage, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Yoga, 9-10 a.m.; Sunshine Singers, 10:15-11:45 a.m.; Tai Chi, 10:15-11:15 a.m.; Mahjongg, 12:45-3:15 p.m.; Bingo, 1-3 p.m.

Fridays: Enhance Fitness via Zoom with Paul Smith, 9-10 a.m.; FABBS, 10:45-11:45 a.m.; Caregiver Support Group (3rd Friday), 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; Golden Oldies Men's Social Group (4th Friday), 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

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Help Shape Future of Town Center

The Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) is seeking input on the evolvement of the Town Center and will hold a Community Listening Session Wednesday, June 17, from 6:30-8 p.m., at Douglas Library. All are welcome.

This listening session is an opportunity for all residents, business owners, property owners, and town commissions to share their ideas on the center. Specifically, the PZC seeks input on: priorities for our Hebron Town Center; types of businesses, public amenities or housing that may be needed; how to encourage community and economic vitality in conjunction with preserving and promoting historic and natural assets; and suggestions for zoning and planning regulations.

The PZC said it wants to ensure that Hebron zoning regulations: encourage desired public areas/amenities, economic development and enhance historic/cultural assets; clarify town center zoning rules; ensure efficient permitting processes; and ensure compliance with Connecticut Public Act 25-1, which requires that town regulations allow for/promote ample affordable and diverse housing options.

No decisions have been made; the PZC said; feedback at the listening session will help guide future discussions.

If you cannot attend, you can share your thoughts by emailing mbordeaux@hebronct.gov.

The Worship Center News & Notes

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

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

Adult Bible Study: Every Sunday at 9 a.m. The study, on the First Epistle of Peter, is led by Elder George Logan. The theme is "Standing Firm in Grace: A Call to Holiness in a Hostile World." All adults welcome.

Kingdom Women: Women's Bible Study: Meets in-person every first and third Thursday from 6:45-7:45 p.m., at the church. The study will continue on the book of Psalms. Zoom access is available. Next class is June 18.

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

One-to-One Confidential Christian Care: Provided by Stephen Ministry to people in difficult life situations. If in need of help, call the church office.

Youth Ministry: Grades 6-12 are invited every first and third Friday of the month from 6:30–9:30 p.m. for activities, games, Bible lessons, dinner, dessert, and community. Upcoming: June 19.

TWC Upward Running Club: Upward Running at The Worship Center. This class is designed to improve faith, fitness and fellowship within our community through a walking and/or running program custom made for your fitness level. Download the app, or contact the church office for more details. Training Sessions still meeting at the church on Saturdays from 8–9 a.m.

St. Peter's News & Notes

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, located at 30 Church St., welcomes all to worship. Priest is the Rev. Ron Kolanowski. For more information, visit stpetershebron.com or search for St. Peter's Hebron on Facebook.

Sunday Worship: Summer hours are underway. Services will be at 9 a.m., followed by a coffee hour in the parish hall. Rite 2 will be celebrated through July, and Rite 1 in August. The service is streamed live on Facebook; visit www.stpetershebron.com to join.

Weekly Virtual Coffee Hour: Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Connects parishioners and friends via Zoom for an online social gathering.

Blood Drive: Thursday, June 18, 1-6 p.m.

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

Recurring Meetings: Contact the church for more information on the following: Balance Class: Mondays, 10:30-11 a.m., $5; Connect: Mondays at 2 p.m.; Virtual Zoom Coffee Hour: Wednesdays at 10 a.m. – contact office for access information; Choir: Wednesdays at 6 p.m.; Weekly Weeders/Garden Group: Mondays at 4 p.m.

Monthly Meetings: Building and Grounds, Community Events planning, Finance, Liturgy, Pastoral Care and Vestry. The Women's Club typically meets the third or fourth Sunday each month for crafting and fellowship. A Meditation Class takes place the fourth Wednesday of the month at 4:30 p.m. in the church sanctuary. All are welcome. The St. Peter's 200th Anniversary Celebration Planning group meets the third Thursday of each month at 5 p.m. All are welcome to join.

Good Shepherd Parish News

The Church of the Holy Family (CHF), located at 185 Church St. (Route 85), Hebron, is yoked with St. Columba Church (STC) in Columbia, and together are members of the Catholic Community of the Good Shepherd, with the Rev. Michael Phillippino serving as pastor. The parish office can be reached at 860-228-3727 ext. 105 Tuesday-Friday, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. through Labor Day.

Mass Schedule: Mass is offered at CHF Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 10 a.m., and at STC Sunday at 8 a.m. There is no longer a Sunday Mass at 11 a.m. Visit www.goodshepherdct.org for weekday Mass times.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: The pastor is available for the sacrament at CHF on Thursdays at 7 a.m. and on Saturdays at 4 p.m., and at STC on Wednesdays and Sundays at 7:15 a.m., or by appointment (church phone ext. 110).

Praise Band and Choir Rehearsals: Held at CHF. New members (voices and musical instruments) are welcome. Choir rehearsals are Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m., and Praise Band rehearsals are Thursdays at 7 p.m. For details, contact Nicole Bernier, Music Ministry, at music@goodshepherdct.org or see her after Mass.

Youth Ministry: The next meeting will be held on June 13. The topic for discussion centers on looking at life through the lens of faith, hope and love.

Cereal & Meatloaves for CSK: The Community Outreach Committee collects breakfast cereal each month for Covenant Soup Kitchen (CSK) in Willimantic; the next date is June 14. Cereal donations are also welcome any time; place bagged donations in the oak collection box near the CHF Robing Room. The parish also provides meatloaves to CSK each month. Parishioners can deliver a cooked meatloaf to the freezer in the garage (use side entrance) closest to the CHF Parish House or the freezer in the STC church hall by the 4th Tuesday of the month. Meatloaves are delivered the next day. The next due date is June 23. Contact Diane (860-508-9959) for more information.

Homebound Ministry: The parish ministers to homebound parishioners who wish to receive the sacraments. Call the parish office (860-228-3727 ext. 105 or 110) to set up a schedule.

Health Ministry: This ministry has wheelchairs and walkers available to parishioners who may need them. Contact the parish office (see info above) or email parishhands@goodshepherdct.org for more information and where to donate.

Collection for Project HOPE, Inc. (Homeless Shelter): The parish supports the shelter by providing much-needed items. Greatest needs: TP, paper towels, dish soap, laundry pods & dryer sheets; new combs & hair brushes; toiletries & women's personal hygiene products; household cleaning products; men's crew neck T-shirts & boxer briefs (M,L XL,2XL) & women's briefs (sizes 6-10); men's & women's crew & quarter socks and new or gently-used clean sweatshirts, sweatpants & hoodies; and 8x10 tarps (green or brown, no blue) for the Outreach Program. Place bagged donations in the oak collection box next to the CHF Cry Room or the designated bin in the STC entryway. Contact Monica (860-228-4211) for more information.

July 4th Parade Float: The parish is sponsoring a float in the Columbia 4th of July parade honoring the 250th birthday of the country. Contact Phyllis Dunn at Phyllis.dunn14@gmail.com if you can help with designing, decorating or manning the float.

Hebron Summer Concert Series

The Town Center Project (TTCP) announces the return of the Hebron Summer Concert Series. Concerts will take place Friday nights starting June 19 and running throughout July and into August, on the side lawn of 17 Main St., Century 21. Picnics welcome!

The lineup is:

June 19: Modern Riffs – a blend of experienced musicians and talented young people, delivering a combination of jazz, classic rock and swing;

June 20: A bonus concert, featuring The Teals – classic rock roots with a touch of blues and soul;

June 26: The Patty Tuite Band – blues, jazz and rock.

July 10: The Big Deal – featuring Motown and southern rock;

July 17: ZZ Not – a ZZ Top tribute band;

July 24: The Bart Bryant Band – he's performed original music on this stage and at Hebron Maple Fest in the past.

July 31: Bonnie Jacobson and Friends -- Local, veteran musician who performs regularly with acoustic originals;

Aug. 14: One Part Harmony – a local duo playing folk, country and rock music.

TTCP is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that completely runs on volunteers. Follow on Facebook at facebook.com/towncenterprojectinc for current updates, or at www.thetowncenterproject.org for more information on TTCP, its events and its mission.

Sneak Preview of Historical Society Exhibit

On Saturday, June 13, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at the Old Town Hall (26 Main St.), the Hebron Historical Society will offer a sneak preview of its upcoming exhibit "Hebron – Defining a Sense of Place in an Age of Cyberspace."

This exhibit funded in part by the Hebron Greater Together Community Fund will trace the town's past from shortly after the retreat of the glaciers 10,000 years ago to today. While the exhibit is still a work in progress, visitors will be able to engage with some aspects of Hebron's history, particularly those events that led up to the Revolutionary War.

At that time, Hebron became a town divided between those who supported rebelling against England, those who felt rebellion was not warranted and those trying to remain neutral. Sixty Hebron men marched to Massachusetts after the Battle of Lexington and Concord in 1775. Hebron selectmen attempted to confiscate the property that is now Burnt Hill Park from Abigail Peters and her large family when her husband died supporting the British cause. Enslaved Cesar Peters, Pomp Mundo and their families were dispossessed by the Connecticut legislature because their owner was in England, but it didn't free them, leaving their futures unresolved.

Throughout the exhibit is a theme that people and events in Hebron's past changed the land itself. While Indigenous hunting and farming slightly modified the land, early settlers cleared the forests for fields. This created soil erosion, exposing the glacial cobbles below. Hebron's numerous stonewalls are evidence of this major modification to the land. Improvements in roads and automobiles created suburbs in former fields. Today, suburban driveways and roofs redirect rain runoff, while lawns create monoculture habitats very different from the natural environment.

By looking at the past, visitors will better understand why Hebron appears the way it does today and reflect upon how the town will develop in the future, the Historical Society said.

Gilead Congregational Church News

Gilead Congregational Church, an Open and Affirming Congregation located at 672 Gilead St., has announced the following. For more info, visit gileadchurch.ucc.org. church, email gcc@gileadchurch.net, or call the Parish House at 860-228-3077. The church office is open at the GCC Parish House Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Worship: Sunday worship is at 10 a.m., followed by coffee hour at 11 a.m. Services can also be viewed online at YouTube at www.bit.ly/GileadChurchUCC and on Facebook at tinyurl.com/GileadChurchUCC. This Sunday, June 14, is Children's Sunday.

This Week's Scheduled Events and Meetings: Saturday, 6/13: Hebron Eagle Scout Court of Honor Ceremony at 2 p.m., Fellowship Hall; Monday, 6/15: Bible Study via Zoom at 9:30 a.m.; Tuesday, 6/16: AA Meeting at 7:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall; Wednesday, 6/17: Wise Warrior Yoga at 9:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall; Wednesday, 6/17: Book Group at 10:45 a.m., Fellowship Hall; Thursday, 6/18: Church Council Meeting at 7 p.m., Parish House.

Upcoming Events and General Announcements: Children's Sunday: Worship Sunday, June 14, at 10 a.m., will celebrate the participation and accomplishments of the youth in Gilead's Sunday School and Youth Group programs throughout the year.

Summer Hours to Start: On Sunday, June 21, the church will transition to its summer hours, with worship at 9:30 a.m. and Coffee Hour at 10:30 a.m. Watch for dates for the once-monthly outdoor worship summer services.

Card-Making with Gayle: Sunday, June 28, 11:30 a.m. Create one-of-a-kind seasonal cards for $15, with a portion of proceeds benefitting the Connecticut Food Bank.

Summer Potluck and Prayer Gatherings: All are invited for two special evenings of food, fellowship, and prayer this summer. Just bring a sweet or savory cookout dish to share. The first gathering is Wednesday, July 22, at 6 p.m.

Outdoor Garden Summer Worship: This summer, the church will offer two opportunities to worship outdoors in the church's garden space. Outdoor worship will be Sundays, July 12 and Aug. 23, at 9:30 a.m. Remember to dress for the weather and bring your water and lawn chair. Note: in case of inclement weather, worship will move indoors to the sanctuary.

Time to License Your Dog

Hebron dog owners are reminded this is the month to licence your dog.

All dog owners are asked to purchase their licenses online, through the mail or in person at the town clerk's office. For online and mail requests, your tag(s) and license(s) will be sent to you via the U.S. Postal Service. You are welcome to visit in person if that is your preference.

Dogs 6 months and older must be licensed during the month of June. The fee is $8 for a spayed/neutered dog and $19 for a dog that is not spayed or not neutered. After July 1 there is a penalty fee of $1 added to the charge for each month the dog is not licensed.

A rabies certificate must be presented indicating an expiration date. If your dog is spayed or neutered, documentation must be presented as well.

Check the town clerk's page of the Town of Hebron website, at hebronct.com/town-departments/town-clerk/ for details. Or, call for more information at 860-228-5971 ext 125 during the normal business hours of Monday through Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Thursday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Friday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

If you no longer have a dog that was previously licensed, please contact the town clerk's office so that your records may be updated.

Juneteenth Weekend Coming Up

All are welcome to attend two special events celebrating Juneteenth in Hebron.

On Friday, June 19, at 6:30 p.m., there will be a special performance at St. Peter's Church (in a collaboration between the Sanctuary Performing Arts and CoDE). Actor Fred Morsell will give a portrayal of Frederick Douglass, reading his famous speech, "What to a Slave is the Fourth of July."

This speech was given by Frederick Douglass to the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society on July 5, 1852, criticizing the chasm between America's founding principles and the institution of slavery. Douglass lamented that Independence Day wasn't a day of celebration for enslaved people.

For tickets ($20/adults, $5/youth), visit www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/juneteenth-3.

The next day, on Saturday, June 20, Hebron's fifth annual Juneteenth Celebration will be held from noon-3 p.m. at the Peters House, 150 East St. (in Burnt Hill Park) in Hebron. This is a collaboration among the Coalition on Diversity & Equity (CoDE), the Peters family, and the Town of Hebron.

At the Juneteenth Celebration, there will be singing, drumming and dance, storytelling, spoken word, children's activities, soul food and dessert, and discussions about the lives of Cesar Peters and his descendants.

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Make Music Day

On Sunday, June 21, The Town Center Project (TTCP) will be bringing Make Music Day to Main Street, Hebron for the eighth year.

Make Music Day is an International Day of Music celebrated by over 120 countries around the world. Always held on the summer solstice, it is a way to welcome the new season with the community.

Concerts will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. along Main Street. This year's lineup includes many community favorites and a few newcomers. For more information on the lineup, follow on Faceback at The Town Center Project, Inc or at thetowncenterproject.org. Special shout out to Melissa and Bill Rood, November Sound for opening the old-time base ball game with the Star-Spangled Banner, at Veterans Memorial Park at 11 a.m. A Kazoo Parade will take place during the 7th inning stretch!

TTCP said it would like to thank all the performers, volunteers, local businesses and the Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut Office of the Arts and Make Music Alliance that support Make Music Day Hebron each year.

The Town Center Project, Inc. is an all-volunteer-driven 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. It is run solely on donations, grants and volunteers. To join, donate or volunteer, visit www.thetowncenterproject.org or on Facebook, at facebook.com/towncenterprojectinc.

Parks and Rec News & Notes

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

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

Peaceful Poses Chair Yoga: Wednesdays until June 24, 10-11 a.m., at Pathways to Peace Yoga, 269 Church St. Chair yoga is a gentle practice allowing participants to enjoy yoga while seated or using a chair for support. It is suitable for beginners, seniors, and those recovering from surgery.

Drumming Circle: Thursday, June 25, 6-8 p.m. No experience needed. Bring a drum if you have one; if not, one will be provided. Participants will create and decorate an egg rattle to take home, providing a reminder of the experience. Instructor: Beth Norton, Shamanic Practitioner.

Wet and Messy Camp: July 6-10, 8-11 a.m., at Hebron Elementary School. In this camp your child will make slime, goo, puffy paint, oobleck, engage in experiences, and more.

Christ Lutheran Church News and Notes

Christ Lutheran Church and Early Childhood Center (daycare) is located at 330 Church St.

Worship Service with Pastor Matthew Hardaway: 9-10 a.m. Sundays. All are welcome. People unable to attend services in person can participate online at www.facebook.com/clchebron/live.

Bible Studies: Sundays at 10:30 a.m., following service and fellowship time. All are welcome. Also, there is a once-a-month **Men's Bible Study**, which will next meet Wednesdays, July 1 and Aug. 5, at 7 p.m. both nights. The current series is: "Seven Christian Rules Christians Should Break as Often as Possible." There is also a **Weekly Podcast** during which Hardaway discusses biblical topics. Next week's topic: The Book of Romans. To access the podcasts, go to clchebron.org and click on "Our Pastor," or access via the CLC Facebook Page

Early Childhood Center (Daycare): Offers childcare, preschool, and before/after school care, and is open to all faiths. **Registration for summer camp (ages 5-12) is open now.** For more information, call director Jennifer Johnson at 860-228-5134. Application forms are at www.clecchebron.org.

Caring Shepherds Social Ministry Group: The next open food pantry day will be Saturday, June 13, at 8 a.m., to distribute food staples, household and hygiene items as well as Bibles and prayers. For more information about donating or participating in food pantry days, call the church at 860-228-1152.

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Weir Unanimously Endorsed for Third Term

State Rep. Steve Weir accepted the unanimous endorsement of the Republican Party from Connecticut's 55th House District at the district convention held on May 21 in Hebron.

The 55th District includes the towns of Andover, Bolton, Hebron, Marlborough, and portions of Glastonbury. Weir is currently serving his second term in the Connecticut House of Representatives.

"It is an honor to serve as state representative, and I am deeply grateful for the unanimous support of the delegates who have entrusted me with the opportunity to seek another term," said Weir. "Their confidence is both humbling and motivating as I continue working on behalf of the residents of the 55th District."

Weir highlighted the role local volunteers play in Connecticut's representative democracy.

"Our towns are run by dedicated volunteers who devote countless hours to public service," he said. "Their endorsement of my candidacy reflects our shared commitment to serving our communities, our state, and our nation."

As the nation commemorates the 250th anniversary of American independence, Weir emphasized the principles that guide his public service.

"As we reflect on our nation's 250th birthday, I am reminded that every vote cast, every constituent conversation, and every decision we make is rooted in the freedoms that define our country," Weir said. "Those freedoms continue to inspire my work in Hartford and throughout the district."

State Rep. Steve Weir

Weir also expressed enthusiasm for the campaign ahead.

"I look forward to meeting with voters across the district and asking the communities of the 55th District for the opportunity to continue serving as their representative," he said. "Together, we can keep building a stronger future for our families, businesses, and towns."

Quinnipiac Dean's List

The following area residents made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Quinnipiac University:

Amston: Zachary Bulkovitch, Christina Leshak, Calvin Pancavage.

Colchester: Olivia Adams, Devin Burton, Thomas Doyle, Sophia Falkowski, Malachi Kearns, Katelyn Macht, Michael Whipple, Benjamin Winicki.

East Hampton: Carys Dinunzio, Maya Dobson, Autumn Gardner, Danielle Healy, Emma Kelly, Madison Lockhart, Sierra Selger, Neha Sidana, Kelsey Smith, Andrew Wagner.

Hebron: Olivia Chomick, Michael Poncini.

Marlborough: Kaden Hutchins, Megan Migliaro, Lily Murphy.

Portland: Clare Bankoski, Selena Shukis, Pierson Webster, Summer Wright.

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Ellie Ballard and Roger Pryor were honored as RHAM High School's CAS-CIAC 2025-2026 Scholar-Athletes. Both were standout track and field athletes and excelled in both the classroom and community. Following graduation, Ballard will compete collegiately at Central Connecticut State University and Pryor will study bioengineering at P.C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science at Lehigh University. 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 two were honored at the annual Scholar-Athletes banquet held at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville last month.

Rivereast Standout Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

Roger Pryor – RHAM High School (Track & Field): Pryor, a senior, broke the school record in the 100 meters with a time of 11.04 seconds this spring before competing in three events (100 meters, 200 meters, and 4x100 relay) at the Class M state championships. Pryor, who also played baseball during his time at RHAM, will now study bioengineering at P.C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science at Lehigh University.

Charlotte Bunting – Bacon Academy (Golf): Bunting, a freshman, wrapped up an impressive first season on the high school links with a pair of standout performances. On May 29, Bunting shot a career-low 40 to win by seven strokes as the Bobcats took on Stonington and East Lyme at Chanticlair Golf Club in Colchester. Bunting's performance qualified her for the Division II state tournament as an individual where she shot another career-low (89) over 18 holes as she placed ninth overall at Tashua Knolls Golf Club in Trumbull. Prior to the state championship, Bunting placed sixth overall – shooting a 44 – at the Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) championships at the Quinnatisset Country Club in Thompson.

Michael Bellemare – East Hampton High School (Track & Field): Bellemare, a senior, placed second overall in the pole vault at both the Shoreline Conference (SLC) championships and Class S state championships, which qualified him for the State Open where he placed 12th overall. At the Class S meet, junior Luke Garcia also had a runner-up finish, placing second overall in the 800 meters with a time of 1:59 as the Bellringers placed third overall at the championships.

Breckin Burke, Hayden Burke, Brady Daggett, Connor Libby – Portland High School: The Burke brothers along with Daggett and Libby combined to win the 4x800 at the Class S state championships at Willow Brook Park in New Britain on June 1. The four combined to run a time of 8:09.03 to beat the runner-up foursome from Haddam-Killingworth (8:11.29) and the other 16 relay teams in the competition. Following the win at the class championships, the Highlanders relay team qualified for the State Open.

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

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Bacon Students Shoot for the Stars

By Toriana Williams

When the Bacon Academy Class of 2026 graduates tonight, Charlotte Galarneau and Benjamin Buyniski – the valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively – will stand on stage in a "position of prominence," said Principal Amy Begue, as they congratulate their fellow classmates tonight for all their hard work.

Graduation will take place Friday, June 12, at 6 p.m. at Dodd Stadium, 14 Stott Avenue in Norwich.

While neither Galarneau nor Buyniski entered high school determined to earn the top academic honors, both of them developed strong habits, balanced busy schedules and committed themselves to doing their best.

Recently, the top two students sat down with the *Rivereast* to share their experiences at Bacon, the activities that shaped them and their plans for the future.

Valedictorian

For Charlotte Galarneau, becoming valedictorian was never the primary goal. Instead, she focused on learning and challenging herself academically.

"I've always kind of had the mindset of trying to do my best in school and to push myself to do as best I could," she said. "So that definitely put me on track to where I am now. But, yeah, I would say it was not until maybe this past year or two where it was actually on my radar."

Galarneau said she believes strong time management played a major role in her success. Throughout high school, she balanced challenging coursework with numerous extracurricular activities.

"I would say a lot of it is probably about time management," Galarneau explained. "It's important to kind of plan out my assignments, plan out what I want to do to make sure I have it done."

She also emphasized the importance of communicating with teachers whenever she missed class or needed additional help.

"Pretty much both, like, preventing myself from missing anything in the first place, and if I do, making sure I can fix that by talking to my teachers," she said.

Galarneau shared she has always loved learning, and that's what motivates her most.

"I've always enjoyed learning, both inside and out of [school]," she said. "I feel like that's also part of it that really motivates me to do my best in school because I really value what I'm getting out of it."

Outside the classroom, Galarneau has immersed herself in both athletics and music. She spent four years on Bacon's fencing team and became heavily involved in the school's music program, performing with the wind ensemble, jazz band and pep band.

Music also extended beyond school walls. She plays piano with the Glenn Hansen Orchestra and performs with Modern Riffs, where she plays both the French horn and the piano.

It's no surprise her favorite high school memories came from those activities. "I definitely have a lot of great memories from the fending team," she recalled. "I've met so many great people there that I may not have connected with otherwise." She also enjoyed the camaraderie that developed during competitions and team celebrations.

Her musical accomplishments include earning a spot in the All-State Orchestra on French horn this year. "I had a lot of fun there," she shared. "I really enjoy playing in the All-State bands, because I feel like I'm really pushed to do my best."

Another highlight was a band trip to Virginia Beach. "We played in the competition there, and then we also spent a lot of time going to different places afterward," said Galarneau. "It's just fun."

When she reflected on teachers who influenced her most, she immediately pointed to band director Margaret Kirwin.

"I feel like Mrs. Kirwin has definitely been very supportive of me," said Galarneau. "I learned so much when I had her as my band director."

She added that Kirwin constantly challenged her to improve. "I always feel that she supports me and will push me to do my best in different ensembles."

This fall, Galarneau will attend the University of Connecticut to study physics. Her passion for the subject can be traced back to a lifelong fascination with space.

"For my entire life, as long as I can remember, I've had an interest in space," she explained.

That curiosity eventually led her toward astrophysics.

"I'd like to eventually get involved in astrophysics research at UConn and hopefully pursue a PhD in the future," she said.

What excites her most is how much remains unknown.

"I think it's so fascinating to me, both how much we've been able to learn about space, just from where we are on Earth, but also how much we still have left to learn," she said. "There's so much out there that we have no idea about."

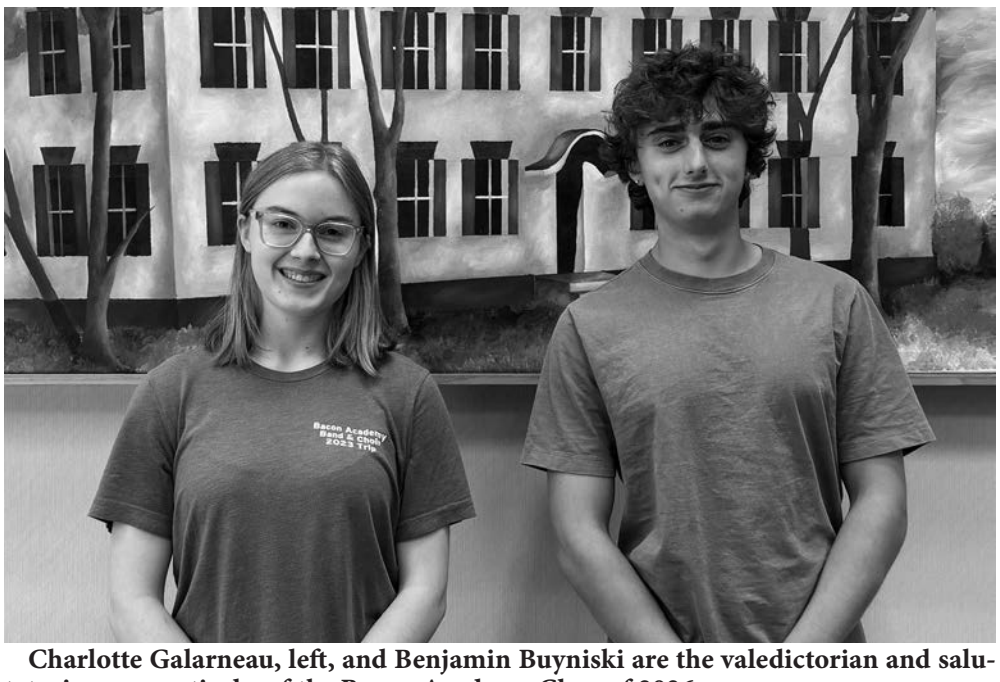
As she prepares to deliver her speech at graduation tonight, Galarneau admitted she was initially nervous. "I was definitely nervous at first," she said.

However, after multiple drafts and revisions, she has grown more comfortable with the task. "I thought about what I thought was most important to me," she said, "and also what I thought maybe other people in my class would find inspiring."

The Salutatorian

Like his classmate, Benjamin Buyniski never entered high school with the specific goal of becoming salutatorian.

"I've always pushed to be good in school," he said. "But it wasn't really until my sophomore or junior year that I really decided that going for the top was something I wanted to do."



Charlotte Galarneau, left, and Benjamin Buyniski are the valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, of the Bacon Academy Class of 2026.

For Buyniski, success came down to building strong habits over time.

"For me, it just came down to habits," he explained. "Throughout middle school and high school, I just developed ways that I could do my work when I have free time in between my sports and music and everything else."

When he did have free time, he made the most of it.

"Just focusing hard when I do have that time, get my work done," he said. "That's all that I really needed."

Buyniski has always enjoyed learning and appreciates what his education has provided.

"I do have a passion for learning," he shared. "I really appreciate now what high school has done for me and the opportunities that I've had."

His schedule was packed with extracurricular activities. He serves as treasurer of the National Honor Society, plays trumpet and guitar and has spent three years as a varsity pitcher for the baseball team.

Some of his favorite memories came from those experiences.

"Freshman year, I went with the band to Disney," he recalled, adding with a bright smile, "That was just a great introduction to high school."

Another standout moment for Buyniski came during his junior year when the baseball team won a conference championship. "That was really exciting," he said.

Music also played a major role in his high school experience. Through regional ensembles and music festivals, he had opportunities to perform alongside other talented musicians.

"I got to meet a lot of similarly minded people in terms of music," said Buyniski. "That was awesome."

Looking back, he is amazed by how quickly the four years passed.

"High school kind of felt like it flew by," he said. "I can remember my freshman year just so vividly, and it's crazy that that's going to be over."

When discussing influential mentors, Buyniski highlighted someone who has supported him for years – reading specialist Renee Anderson at Jack Jacter Intermediate School.

"She has just been a really big part of my life through high school and everything," he said.

This fall, Buyniski will also attend the University of Connecticut, where plans to study actuarial science. "You basically use data analytics to predict risk," he explained, "to protect insurance companies and financial companies from uncertainty in the future."

His interest in the field began surprisingly early.

"My dad said one time, 'Oh, you should become an actuary,'" Buyniski recalled. The idea stayed with him as he developed a love for mathematics.

"I found out it was something that was going to be challenging for me," he said, "but it was to connect directly to what I was passionate about."

As for his graduation speech, Buyniski said his perspective on life has evolved throughout high school and inspired his message.

"The way that I think about the world and what I want to do is changing pretty drastically throughout my high school career," he said.

When asked what advice he would give younger students hoping to achieve similar success, Buyniski's answer was pretty straightforward.

"There's no reason not to give it your all, give it your 100%, because you've got one chance, and you might as well make the most of it," he said.

Meanwhile, Galarneau encouraged students to focus on learning rather than rankings.

"Try not to get stressed under the pressure of it," she said. "Just focus on what you're getting out of your academics."

Storytime 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*.

Special Education Records to be Destroyed

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.

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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.

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: kevbyrnect@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 Maket: 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.

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 Church, 128 Norwich Ave., on June 14, and June 21 from 9:45 a.m. to noon.

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.

Forensic Audit Reveals How Health Fund Fell

By Toriana Williams

An investigation into the Colchester Board of Education's health insurance reserve fund has revealed a series of apparent mistakes, poor oversight and questionable budgeting practices. In turn, millions of dollars gradually drained from the fund over several years.

The report, completed by Forensic Accounting Services, LLC on May 20, examined what happened to the BOE's account between July 2021 and February 2026. Investigators concluded that there was no single event that caused the crisis, but instead, they found "a series of events" that led to the near depletion of the fund by the 2025-26 school year. The report was released on the tail of Superintendent of Schools Daniel Sullivan's resignation.

The health insurance reserve account exists to ensure there is enough money available to pay employee medical claims. Under Colchester's self-insured health plan, both the town and the BOE contribute money into the reserve account. It is then used to pay healthcare costs for employees. However, when the reserve account becomes too low, there is a risk that future claims cannot be paid.

According to First Selectman Bernie Dennler, a Democrat, concerns about the BOE's side of the fund began surfacing publicly throughout 2025. He explained that BOE officials repeatedly assured elected leaders that a planned increase in funding would solve the problem.

"Board of Finance members and the public were repeatedly reassured that this was a one-time fix," Dennler said in an email to the *Riverast*.

However, the problem turned out to be much more serious.

Dennler said he first became suspicious after speaking with former Chief Financial Officer Maggie Cosgrove about how health insurance calculations had been performed before the town and the BOE split their finance departments in 2022. After reviewing the old methodology, he believed there was an issue with a specific budget line item.

"I raised this concern to the then-superintendent and business manager who told me they stood by the calculations," wrote Dennler. The forensic report later confirmed that Dennler's concerns were justified.

Investigators found that health insurance costs in the annual school budgets were not being calculated using the full insurance projections provided by Lockton, the town's insurance consultant. Instead, projected claim costs were reduced, adjusted and offset by unrelated budget changes. The report stated that "Lockton's projected amounts were adjusted downward and offset by other changes unrelated to health insurance…"

One of the seemingly most troubling findings involved adjustments that had nothing to do with health insurance. Investigators discovered that savings or costs from completely different areas of the budget were being put into health insurance calculations.

The report found that "adjustments made to other financial areas such as cost savings or increased costs were included as adjustments to the health insurance projected claim Excel cell formula."

Dennler expressed strong frustration after learning this.

"I was also shocked, and frankly angry, to learn that adjustments unrelated to health insurance were being balanced against this account," he said. "This is especially frustrating because we budgeted appropriately on the town side so that we could bring the town portion of the fund positive."

The report also identified an overwhelming lack of oversight. Although monthly reports that showed reserve balance and claims activity were publicly available, investigators found no evidence that anyone was formally tracking the trends or analyzing the information during the budget process.

A key passage in the report stated, "While both Mr. Sullivan and Ms. Linkkila [Director of Finance and Operations] were aware the health reserve account was reconciled and reported monthly, neither indicated that any formal tracking and trending of the activity had ever been performed to be used in the budget process."

Dennler highlighted this section as one of the report's most important conclusions. "The report reveals many things that would have never been known without bringing in a third-party to get their hands on the spreadsheets used internally in the Board of Education finance office," he said.

The investigation also found that detailed budget spreadsheets created by Linkkila were never shared with the BOE members. Instead, board members received summarized budget figures that combined many costs into broader categories. Investigators said this made it difficult for elected officials to fully understand how health insurance figures were being calculated. Linkkila had also resigned since the investigation began.

BOE Chair Stefanie Tracey-Calash, a Democrat, said that many board members were unaware of the seriousness of the problem.

"As a board member for the past three years, the health insurance fund came up at a few meetings, but the reserve state was not made apparent to us," Tracey-Calash wrote in a response to the *Rivereast*.

She explained that the situation only became clearer after Dennler met with school officials in early 2026.

"In early 2026, after stepping in as chair, FS Dennler held a meeting with the former Superintendent and myself to express concerns with the reserve and with the outdated funding methodology that was being applied in our budget. It was at this time that the severity of the situation became clear to me," wrote Tracey-Calash.

Soon afterward, the BOE agreed to hire outside forensic accountants to investigate.

Tracey-Calash praised the final report and said, "The forensic accounting report … was a comprehensive account of exactly that. It outlines how the fund was depleted, and how we can prevent that in the future."

Both Dennler and Tracey-Calash emphasized that the focus is now on fixing the problems and preventing them from happening again.

Tracey-Calash said the board is already working with a new insurance broker and discussing stronger financial controls. She stressed the BOE's commitment to openness.

"We are committed to being transparent and upfront with taxpayers and all members of the Colchester and [Colchester Public Schools] community," she said. "While the report outlines past mistakes, our hope is that making those mistakes public is a clear indication that we aren't shying away from these hard realities."

Dennler echoed that message while calling for closer cooperation between the town and BOE. He argued that many of the problems may have been avoided if both sides had continued sharing a single finance department.

Dennler explained that the split between the finance departments occurred in 2022 after Cosgrove's retirement. Town and school leaders chose to create separate finance offices rather than try to replace her with a single person overseeing both entities.

"I believe none of this would have happened if the town and Board of Education still shared a finance department as they did for two decades," said Dennler. "I believe now is the right time to move to reintegrate the offices so we can return to a model of shared oversight and responsibility."

Board of Selectman member Tim Vaillancourt, a Republican, was also among the local officials who reacted strongly to the findings of the forensic audit. He, too, believes many of the problems identified in the report can be traced back to the separation of the finance departments.

"That's where all the trouble started because the Board of Ed stopped being accountable to anybody but themselves," he said. "We are in talks now … about joining them back together because obviously this does not work."

Vaillancourt then sharply criticized Sullivan. While noting that he is not an accountant and cannot independently verify every technical finding in the report, he said the audit's conclusions raised serious concerns about Sullivan's leadership.

"It's clear to me that the superintendent should have been fired for cause, and the town should have gone to battle and fought him on it," he said. "It's clear to anybody who reads that you can see what was going on."

Vaillancourt also expressed frustration over the separation agreement reached with Sullivan. Based on conversations he said he had with people at Town Hall, Vaillancourt said he believes local officials have little to no ability to pursue legal action against the former superintendent.

"They way I understand it … they're pretty much stuck with it," he said. "It's an ironclad agreement."

Looking ahead, Vaillancourt said residents should continue demanding openness and accountability from school officials.

"They should demand transparency," he said. "The people have been awoken and they're not going to be satisfied with lip service."

Youth Services Summer Programs

Summer is almost here—and so are Colchester Youth Services summer programs.

Registration is now officially open, and spots are already filling up fast. Most of the programs are designed for youth entering grades 4-12, with a variety of activities planned all summer long.

To secure a spot, and for more information, visit colchester-youth-services.jumbula.com/home.

Vendors Sought for Tag Sale

The Colchester Business Association is looking for vendors for its annual Colchester Tag Sale event. The event will be held on Town Green on Sunday, June 14, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. A rain date will be scheduled for June 28.

The CBA plans to have over 100 vendors selling products and tag sale items. There will also be food vendors. Spaces for tag sale and non-business are $35.

For applications, visit Colchestercba.com or email info@colchesterctbusiness.com.

Flag Day Ceremony

The American Legion, the Colchester Honor Guard and VFW will be having a flag retirement ceremony Sunday, June 14, on Flag Day. The public is invited to attend the flag retirement ceremony at 6:30 p.m. on the Town Green. Old and damaged flags will be accepted on the evening of the ceremony.

Additionally, there are used flag collection containers located on the left side of the stairs of the old Colchester Senior Center and at the gate of the Colchester transfer station, for people who cannot attend the Flag Day ceremony.

CBA Tag Sale on the Green

The Colchester Business Association's annual Tag Sale on the Green will take place Sunday, June 14, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., on the Town Green.

Shop a variety of vendors and enjoy local food trucks. Local businesses and organizations will also be spotlighted.

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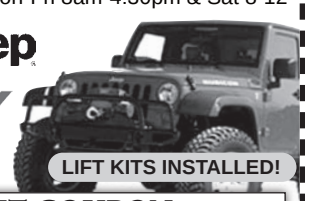

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RE5-24-24

Colchester Cares recently voted to give $1,833 each to the Historic Bacon Academy restoration for continued work to make this landmark fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Pictured from left are Historic Bacon Academy members Andrew Norton, Tom Dessureault, Cathy Johnson, Helen Malchow, Sandy Cameron Adams and Stan Soby, along with Brian Talarczyk, co-founder of Colchester Cares.

Colchester Cares Makes Donations

Colchester Cares, a giving group that supports various causes in Colchester, recently made its second quarter donations totaling $5,500.

The group voted to give $1,833 each to: the Historic Bacon Academy restoration for continued work to make this landmark fully ADA compliant; the Bacon Academy track and field team to support expenses due to a shortfall in fundraising because of the Bacon Academy Athletic Complex renovations; and the Colchester History Museum gardens renovation for the purchase of new three-season plants and shrubs.

Colchester Cares members, who commit to donating $100 a quarter, present current needs in town and then vote on where to send the group's collective donations. The group was established in 2020 and since its inception has donated over $80,000 to Colchester causes. Colchester Cares always welcomes new members. You can be a member without having to attend meetings; suggesting worthy causes, voting, and donating can all be done online.

The next quarterly meeting will be held Wednesday, July 29, at 7 p.m., at the Carl Guild Community Room, 392 South Main St. For more information, visit www.colchestercares.org or follow the group on Facebook.

Don't Forget to License Your Dog

June is dog licensing month in Connecticut. The law requires you to, by the end of the month, license any dog that is 6 months or older. You can obtain your license in the following ways:

Come into the town clerk's office in person;

License by mail, be sure to include a stamped, self-addresses envelope, proper documentation and a check made payable to "Town of Colchester";

Online at colchesterct.gov/townclerk/pages/dog-licenses.

A Rabies Certificate as well as validation of being spayed or neutered is required at the time of licensing. If you are renewing a license, be sure a current rabies certificate is on file with the town clerk's office. Office hours are Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., and Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.

By state law, penalty charges are added if licenses are not renewed by June 30. The penalty is $1 per month starting July 1.

For more information, email dogowners@colchesterct.gov or call 860-537-7215.

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

Men's and Women's Breakfast: Meets monthly on Saturdays at 8 a.m. The men meet the first Saturday of the month, and the women meet the third Saturday of the month.

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

Call the church office at 860-537-3082 for more information, or visit AbundantL.com.

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Christian Life Chapel News

Christian Life Chapel is located at 392 S. Main St. For more information, call 860-398-9119 or email chapel.colchester@yahoo.com. The Rev. Don Rivers is 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.

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 various 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.

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

Ocean City, Maryland: Oct. 13-16, departure time TBD. Spend three nights directly on the beach. 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).

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 15: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Inspired by Art; 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 16: 9 a.m., Making Memories; no Tai Chi today; 10 a.m., Movie Time – *Cloudburst*; 10:30 a.m., Book Club; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 6 p.m., Bunco.

Wednesday, June 17: 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; 11 a.m., That's Amore Luncheon; 1 p.m., Sew-cial Time; 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming.

Thursday, June 18: 9 a.m., Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling, Card-Making with Barbara; 11 a.m., Yoga; noon, Sr. Benefits Counseling; 12:05 p.m., Chair Massage; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes, Needlework Club, Crystals Workshop; 5:30 p.m., Pizza & Movie.

Friday, June 19: Senior center closed for Juneteenth holiday.

Men's Breakfast: Tuesday, June 23, 9:30 a.m. The center is looking to start a new initiative for its male members by holding a quarterly men's breakfast. June's breakfast will be an open discussion to get your feedback about possible speakers and topics for this quarterly forum. A breakfast of bagels, pastries, fruit, coffee and juice will be served. The cost is $5 per person. Transportation cannot be provided for this event.

Healthy Food Series – Ice Cream Alternatives: Tuesday, June 30, 11 a.m. Take a look at healthy ice cream alternatives, with and without an ice cream maker. Samples provided.

Journey with Joni: Tuesday, June 23, 6 p.m. This month, you'll try different snacks from Thailand and watch a brief travel video. This event is free.

AARP Driver Safety Course: Wednesday, June 24, 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Learn the rules of the road, defensive driving techniques and how to operate your vehicle more safely. You'll learn how you can manage and accommodate age-related changes in vision, hearing, and reaction time. You may qualify for a discount from your insurance provider. Open to anyone 50 and over. Cost is $20 for AARP members and $25 for non-members. Register by June 18.

Decoupage Studio Workshop: Thursday, June 25, 12:30 p.m. Create some fun and funky sneakers to wear for summer. You'll customize a pair of canvas sneakers using printed napkins and a sealant. Shoes will be hand washable and water-resistant. The center will supply all the materials including various printed napkins, but you will need to purchase a pair of white canvas sneakers for this class The cost of the class is $5 per person.

Ultimate Bingo: Tuesday, June 30, 6 p.m. Space is limited for this monthly game, where you pay to play for bigger prizes. Cost is $10.

President's List

Alex Sanchez of Colchester made the spring 2026 President's List at the University of Bridgeport.

Andover Battles Concerns Ahead of Referendum

By Toriana Williams

Andover voters will return to the polls on June 16 to decide the fate of the remaining portions of the town's proposed 2026-27 budget after a months-long budget season. Polls will be open 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Town Hall.

The upcoming referendum will focus on the proposed Board of Education budget for Andover Elementary School (AES). After voters rejected a proposed $5.01 million on May 26, the Board of Finance voted to reduce the increase from 9.82% to 6%. The revised BOE budget now totals around $4,839,389.72, a reduction of about $174,000 from the previously rejected proposal.

The town operating budget has already been approved by voters, which now stands at roughly $13.31 million after additional reductions were made after the May 26 referendum. BOF officials said the latest proposal would keep the town's mill rate essentially flat at about 31.58, compared to 31.59 this year.

Real Cuts Mean Real Consequences

Andover held a town budget meeting on June 2, where much of it was focused on what the reduced BOE budget could mean for students and staff.

BOE Chair Caitlin McIntosh Greenhouse, unaffiliated, warned residents that the cuts would have real consequences.

"There will have to be cuts with the 6% increase," Greenhouse said. "Real, real substantial cuts for us to get to that number. So, if you're going to ask if it's going to affect students directly, 100% it will. We don't have a way around that."

Resident Ashley Johnson asked school officials how the lower budget would affect students and whether volunteers could help fill any gaps. Superintendent of Schools Valerie Bruneau responded with a detailed list of possible reductions currently under review.

"What's on that table so far," Bruneau began, "is the loss of two paraeducators." She added that other possibilities included "the not hiring of a new teacher for sixth grade," "the loss of the library," "the loss of Spanish," reducing art instruction and potentially combining classrooms in lower grades.

"Beyond a shadow of a doubt, there's a loss of staff," Bruneau said. "That's not a maybe at this point. That's a definite."

Spending, Privacy, Classroom Concerns

The meeting also highlighted continuing disagreements over spending levels and long-term financial planning.

Resident Donald Denley said he supported the BOF's effort to lower the school increase.

"We all support education," Denley said. "We have a great school. We have good enrollment. We have a terrific, thoughtful superintendent. But obviously, 11% was too much and 9.82% is still too much."

Denley added later, "I think it's time to pass this budget and with [the Board of Education] go to work to trim it down and carry on."

When asked how the BOF arrived at the 6% increase, England acknowledged there was no exact formula.

"It's by its nature arbitrary," England said. "It's an attempt to get it passed, and at the same time, try to preserve a functional school." He said board members debated increases ranging from 3.5% to 7.5% before ultimately settling on 6%.

The discussion became more intense when First Selectman Jeff Maguire, a Democrat, criticized what he described as a lack of information available to finance officials.

"No one here is looking to hurt the children," he said. "The superintendent is not looking to hurt the children. The Board of Education isn't going to hurt the children. There's teachers who aren't going to hurt the children."

Maguire then argued that the debate should focus on spending growth rather than how the town will pay for it. "Focus on spending…" he said. "It's about what we spend."

England then responded that historical spending increases have not consistently reached high figures.

"There is not a track record of going up 6%," said England. "You go back and you look at the AES budgets going back five years and it was -4, it was flat and it was 1%. We are, in the last two years, dealing with these increases."

Later in the meeting, Maguire said that there is "$34,000 a year we spend on RHAM to send our children there," and called it "a monster number." He argued that residents need more details before making budget decisions. "They need more information to make better decisions. That's the truth," he added.

RHAM Board of Education member Scott Sauyet, a Democrat, responded by defending school officials and explaining that federal privacy laws limit what information can be shared publicly. Sauyet cited FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) and HIPAA Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) regulations – which Maguire accused the BOE of hiding behind – and said the laws prevent the district from releasing certain student and employee information. He criticized Maguire's accusations. "That is not leadership. That is misleadership," Sauyet said pointedly.

The conversation turned to class sizes. Greenhouse pushed back against suggestions that larger class sizes should be considered normal.

"When we talk about class size and you guys talk about that we need to have a normal size and you're saying normal is 25 to 30 – for our area, for our region … that is not the average," said Greenhouse.

Bruneau also defended the district's enrollment projections and noted that enrollment has risen since 2020.

"We've been fighting tooth and nail to get back the six and a half staff members that were decreased from 2015 to 2020," she shared.

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, 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.

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.

Bingo & Basket Raffle

Andover Congregational Church, located at 359 Route 6, will hold a Bingo & Basket Raffle night on Friday, June 19, starting with dinner at 5:30 p.m. Game starts at 6:30 p.m.

Admission is $15, and includes dinner, drink, dessert and bingo. No reservations required.

Leave a message at the church at 860-742-7696 with questions.

Congregational Church News

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

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

Food Pantry: Mondays from 5-7 p.m. Bring your own bags. The **Foodshare Van** comes to the church every other Wednesday from 8:30-10 a.m.; **Senior Pantry** is on the opposite Wednesdays.

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

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

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.

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.

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, 6/17, 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.

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.

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.

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 be 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.

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.

For more information, call the town clerk's office at 860-742-0188 ext. 4218.

Library to Hit the Beach

Andover Public Library is visiting the Andover Lake Beach on Monday, June 22, from 3-5 p.m. The library is going to officially kick off the summer season with book giveaways for adults and kids, as well as all kinds of info about summer programming.

Children's programmer Lisa Kurtz will provide some crafting opportunities -- and Library Friend Ellen Repay (a lake resident) may join as well.

In the event of rain, the beach visit will be Tuesday, June 23, also from 3-5 p.m.

For more information, contact the library at 860-742-7428.

Obituaries

Portland

Caron Poitras

Caron Poitras (Solek), born on Feb. 18, 1960, in Middletown, passed away peacefully Sunday, May 31, at home, surrounded by loved ones, after a long illness.

She is survived by her beloved husband of 42 years, Gary Poitras; her daughters, Jenna Gianni (Poitras) and her husband Lorenzo Gianni of Cromwell, and Danielle Delucco of Portland; and her son, Matthew Poitras of Manhattan, New York. She also leaves behind her three cherished grandchildren, Nico, Fiona and Luca, who lovingly knew her as "YaYa."

Caron dedicated much of her life to helping others through her work with the Portland school system as a paraprofessional and during her 15-year career with DaVita Dialysis. Together, Caron and Gary built a loving home that was always open to family, friends, and anyone in need of warmth and kindness.

A Celebration of Life will be held Sunday, June 14, from 3-5 p.m., at 1 River Road, Cromwell. Family and friends are invited to gather to share memories, celebrate Caron's life, and honor the love and kindness she brought to so many.

Amston

Lori Bansavich

Lori Bansavich of Amston passed away Friday, June 5, at the age of 67.

Lori's greatest joy was her family. She married her high school sweetheart, Lenny, in 1979. They raised three children alongside their many beloved pets.

Lori was preceded in death by her daughter, Lori-Lynn French of Dallas, Pa.; her son, Leonard E. Bansavich III of Mooresville, N.C.; her sister, Veronica Niver-Coveney of Peabody, Mass.; and her parents Daniel and Rita (Schadtle) Niver of Glastonbury.

To cherish her memory and mourn her loss, she leaves behind her husband of 47 years, Lenny, her daughter, Victoria (Matt) Cavanaugh of Andover; son-in-law Paul French of Dallas, Pa.; grandchildren, Paul Jr., Brian, Lily and Junior; siblings, Daniel Niver Jr. (Myra), Kathy Niver (Skip Harvey), Janet Giola (Tom), Paula Hansen (Peter); brother-in-law, Steve Coveney; and many in-laws, aunts, cousins, nieces, nephews and friends.

A graduate of Glastonbury High School, she was a distinguished member of the FFA where she held the office of chapter president and competed in competitions at its national convention in Kansas City, Mo. She was the proud owner and operator of Lori's Mobil on the Run, where she was recognized for her outstanding entrepreneurship by being named a top 100 Mobil station owner in the nation six times.

Please join us for a gathering of remembrance at the family home at 386 Old Colchester Rd., Amston, on Saturday, June 27, at 2 p.m. All who knew and loved Lori are welcome.

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East Hampton

Robert Matthew Berloni

Robert (Bob) Matthew Berloni, 47, of Middletown, formerly of East Hampton, passed away at his home on Thursday, June 4. Born July 24, 1978, in Middletown, he was the son of Robert J. and Susan (Savage) Berloni. He was a graduate of East Hampton High School and of the University of Connecticut.

Bob was employed as a warehouse manager and supervisor for Manchester Tobacco and Candy Company. Bob was a heavy metal music fan and, in his youth, enjoyed playing baseball, soccer, basketball and volleyball. He was an avid Raiders fan and a UConn basketball and N.Y. Yankees fan. He enjoyed to travel and see new places. Other hobbies of his included reading, and collecting comic books and CDs.

Besides his parents, he is survived by his girlfriend Christina Jacobson of Sandy Hook; his brothers, Ryan Berloni of East Hampton and Michael Berloni and his girlfriend Courtney Seifel of Waterford. He adored his cat, Ruby Rose.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Saturday June 13, from 9-11 a.m. Burial will follow in Lake View Cemetery.

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

Andover

Richard Walton

It is with heavy hearts that we announce that Richard (Chromie) Walton went to join his beloved wife, Louise, in heaven on Saturday, June 6.

Richard was a lifelong resident of Andover. He was employed by the town highway Department for many years. He was an avid gardener, feeding the neighborhood with his crops. He also enjoyed stock car racing of any model, spending lots of time at Stafford and Thompson Speedways.

Richard was predeceased by his wife of 67 years, Louise Palmer Walton, and his parents, Louis & Gertrude Smith.

He is survived by his 5 children. John (Cathy) of Maine, Joseph (Janie) of Florida, Lucy (Leo) of Storrs, Twig (Ope) of Andover and Leigh (Mark) of Lebanon. He is also survived by one sister, Beverly Smith of Rockville. He has 11 grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

The family would like to give special appreciation to Deb from Home Instead, for the wonderful and loving care she provided him for the last few years. Also, a very special thank you to his granddaughter Michelle Valliere and her fiancé Brad Hazzard who have lived with and taken care of him for the last five years and who made it possible for him to live out his days in his own home.

Services will be private, at the convenience of the family. A celebration of life for Richard and Louise will be held Saturday, July 11, at 4 p.m., at their residence, 173 Hendee Rd., Andover.

Memorial contributions, in his honor, can be made to Andover Volunteer Fire Dept., 11 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232.

To send an online expression of sympathy, please visit www.adamscremationct.com.

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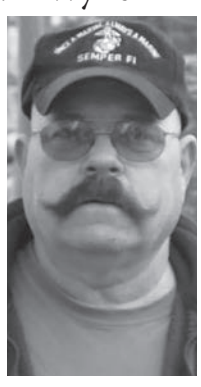
East Hampton

David William Wylie



David William Wylie, 78, of East Hampton, widower of the late Paula (Riley), passed away Thursday, June 4, at Apple Rehabilitation in Colchester. Born April 10, 1948, in Middletown, he was the son of the late Homer W. and Ebon (Gustafson) Wylie.

David was a graduate of East Hampton High School and proudly served his country in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. He had been employed by the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation until his retirement. He was a member of the East Hampton VFW Post. He is survived by his stepdaughter, Colleen Gosselin and her husband Michael of North Franklin; his grandchildren, Christopher Gosselin, Sharon Gosselin and her partner Erik Lopez, Rachel Gosselin, Marilyn Eldridge and her husband Zachary; and his great-grandchildren, Mia and Ozwin.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, June 10, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Friends called at the funeral home Wednesday morning before the service. Burial followed in Skinnerville Cemetery.

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

Amston

Dylan Owen Keefe

Dylan Owen Keefe, of Amston, passed away Saturday, June 6. He was 21 years old. He was born on July 16, 2004, in New Britain to Daniel Keefe and Debra Garrison. He graduated from RHAM High School and began working in landscaping.

Dylan was known for his easygoing nature and the time he spent doing the things he enjoyed most. Dylan enjoyed playing sports like baseball and especially football throughout school, which made his dad so proud. He loved fishing, riding motorcycles, snowboarding, and working out at the gym. Whether he was out on the water, on the slopes, or on the road, he appreciated staying active and making the most of his time.

More than anything, Dylan enjoyed being around the people who mattered to him most. He spent a lot of time with family and friends, creating memories through everyday moments, conversations, and shared experiences. He was also a devoted pet owner and loved spending time with his cat, Diamond, and his dog, Jax, who were important parts of his life as well.

Dylan will be sadly missed but always remembered with love from his father, Daniel Keefe; his mother, Debra Garrison; his sister, Haley Guyette; his uncles, Rick, James, Jeffrey and Todd Keefe; his paternal grandmother, Phyllis Keefe; his maternal grandmother, Kathleen; his cousins, Jennifer Zimmermann and Melanie Marcaurel; his girlfriend, Sophia Espinoza; and numerous extended family members and friends.

He was predeceased by his grandfather, Richard Keefe; grandmother, Linda Lyon; and his aunt, Cheryl Keefe.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the ASPCA.

A visitation and celebration of life will be held at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester on Friday, June 19. The visitation will begin at 10 a.m. and the service will begin at noon. A burial will follow in St. Peter's cemetery in Hebron.

For online condolences or to share a story or memory with the family, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

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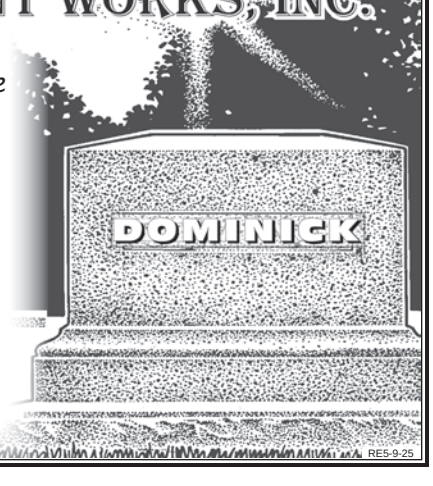

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East Hampton

Steven L. Vezina

Steven L. Vezina, 74, of East Hampton, widower of Sandra (Wanchik) Vezina, passed away Friday June 5, at his home. Born Jan. 12, 1952, in Springfield, Mass., he was the son of the late Lawrence and Dorothy Vezina.

Steven had worked as a chemical engineer for Praxair Corp. until his retirement. He was a member of the East Hampton Lions Club along with his late wife Sandra.

He is survived by his son, Steven Vezina Jr. of East Hampton; his daughter, Stacey Vezina and her partner Colt Comier of Tolland; brother-in-law, Mark Wanchik and his wife Denise of Pennsylvania; and several nieces and nephews and cousins. He was predeceased by his sister Louise Vezina.

Friends called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Thursday, June 11. A funeral service took place that evening.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the East Hampton Lions Club at P.O. Box 153, East Hampton, CT 06424.

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

Colchester

Charles Bengston Sawchuk

Charles Bengston Sawchuk, 67, of Canterbury, formerly of Colchester, fondly known as Chuck or "Mad Dog," passed away peacefully at his home on Wednesday, June 3. Chuck was born in Middletown on Sept. 4, 1958, son of Dolores (Bengston) Sawchuk of Colchester and the late Walter Henry Sawchuk.

Chuck grew up in Colchester and graduated from Bacon Academy with the class of 1976. Chuck began his career working in the family business, Walt's Country Motors, and ended his career at Falvey's in Norwich. He was a car and motor vehicle enthusiast. Chuck was talented with mechanics and naturally gifted with anything involving nuts, bolts, and engines. He had a magnetic personality and was friendly with everyone he encountered from friends and colleagues to customers.

On Feb. 15, 2019, Chuck married the love of his life Sherrie (Razee) Fletcher at St. Joseph Polish Club in Colchester, where he was a longstanding member. Chuck enjoyed spending time at the Polish Club with his lifelong friends and neighbors. He always stayed connected to his Colchester community. Chuck was a perpetual teenager who never wanted to grow up. As his pastime he loved anything with an engine, go carts, dune buggies, car shows, four wheelers; he enjoyed building anything that would go fast.

Chuck was a devoted husband and father. He was a man who felt things deeply, always looking for a fun time and ways to make connections. He liked to pass family time by driving around with no destination, playing card and board games, and making events and dates special for those he loved.

Chuck is survived by his wife, Sherrie; his mother, Dolores; his daughter, Madeline and her husband, Curtis Flanders and their daughter, Sophia; his brother, William Sawchuk; stepsons, Michael and Joshua Fletcher; many nieces and nephews, including Tessa and Grayson who held a special place in his heart. In addition to his father, he was predeceased by his brothers, Walt (Corky) and John (Sudsy) Sawchuk.

A graveside funeral service will be held on Monday, June 15, at 10:30 a.m., at the Swedish Cemetery, 184 William St., Portland. Following the burial, a celebration of Chuck's life will be held at noon at St. Joseph Polish Club, 395 S. Main St., Colchester.

The Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home has been entrusted with care of arrangements. For online condolences or to share a story of Chuck, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Obituaries cont.

Amston

Mary Catherine Daniels

Mary Catherine Daniels, of Columbia, passed away Wednesday, May 13, at the age of 78. She was born June 23, 1947, in Glencolmcille, County Donegal, Ireland, the daughter of the late James and Mary (Cunningham) Boyle.

At 17 years of age, Mary immigrated to the United States and worked for a family on Fishers Island, where she met the love of her life, William Daniels. They were married June 17, 1972, and shared a life of love and adventure. They lived in Groton and Gales Ferry before settling in Higganum, where they raised their family. In later years, they retired to Columbia to be closer to their grandchildren.

Mary was proud of her Irish heritage and enjoyed watching her grandchildren play Gaelic sports at the Irish American Home Society in Glastonbury. Mary retired after working as a certified nurse's aide and as a food service worker in the local public schools. In her free time, she enjoyed making pottery, knitting, and doing puzzles, and she loved collecting ceramic dolls. She loved going to the casinos, talking on the phone for hours with her sisters and watching her grandchildren participate in their hobbies.

Above all, Mary will be remembered as a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and friend. She is survived by her husband of nearly 54 years, William; her children, Charles Daniels of Amston and James Daniels of Virginia; her grandchildren, Isabella, James Jr., Bryce, Mason, Piper, and Bodyn; two brothers; four sisters; and many extended family members and friends.

Funeral services will be held at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, on Saturday, June 13, beginning with calling hours from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., followed by a memorial service at 1 p.m. at the funeral home. A reception will follow the service at the American Legion in Hebron.

Donations in her memory may be made to the American Cancer Society for breast cancer research (www.cancer.org) or to benefit the Compassion for Cats of New London County.

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

Hebron

Daniel R. Mixter

Daniel R. Mixter passed away from complications of Parkinson's disease Friday, May 22, in Hebron, with loved ones by his side. He was 76 years old. Born in Mineola, N.Y., and raised in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., he spent his adult years in Connecticut.

Dan approached life with curiosity, humor and an open heart. He was a musician, traveler, avid reader, lifelong lover of learning, always interested in people, places and ideas that make life rich and meaningful.

Music was one of the great passions of his life. Whether playing guitar, discovering a new artist or attending a live show, music brought him joy and connection and remained a constant throughout his life.

Dan was known for his warm smile, quick wit, and unforgettable hugs. He had a gift for making others feel welcome and a genuine desire to help those around him. Through friendship, mentoring, conversation, laughter and quiet acts of kindness, he touched countless lives over the years.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Linda Mixter; his daughters Alexis Mixter and Whitney Mixter; stepsons Ryan Martens and Tim Martens; brothers Tryg Mixter and Peter Sieger, and his five grandchildren, Owen, Colin, Kinsley, Calvin and Mecca, all of whom brought him immense pride and joy.

His absence leaves a space that cannot be filled, but his spirit lives on in the stories he told, the music he loved, the lessons he shared and the many lives he touched. He will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, July 18, at 11 a.m., at Gilead Congregational Church, Route 85, Hebron.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Michael J. Fox Foundation dedicated to finding a cure for Parkinson's disease.

LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF HEBRON
ANNUAL BUDGET REFERENDUM
June 16, 2026

The electors and voters of the Town of Hebron, Connecticut, and any other persons entitled to vote upon any matters contained in the notice are hereby notified and warned to vote in the Annual Budget Referendum to be held at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church Street in Hebron between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 16, 2026.

1. SHALL THE TOWN OF HEBRON APPROVE A FY 2026-2027 BUDGET OF $43,732,669 AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE?
Voters approving the recommendation of the Board of Finance will vote "Yes" and those opposing the recommendation of the Board of Finance will vote "No".

Absentee ballots will be available from the Town Clerk's Office.
Dated at Hebron, Connecticut this 4th day of June 2026.

HEBRON TOWN COUNCIL
Tiffany V. Thiele, Chair
Jan Lawrence, Vice Chair
Keith Petit
Claudia Tejada Riley
Sean Fitzgerald

TOWN OF HEBRON BOARD OF FINANCE RECOMMENDED BUDGET June 16, 2026

	ADOPTED Expenditures 2024-2025	ADOPTED Expenditures 2025-2026	PROPOSED Expenditures 2026-2027
EXPENDITURES			
Town Government	$ 9,646,664	$ 10,002,479	$ 10,628,726
Contr. to Capital Improvement	1,176,734	489,736	$ 565,936
Contr. to Open Space Acq.	100,000	50,000	-
Contr. to Capital Projects	133,650	467,040	$ 171,371
Contr. to Revaluation	40,000	-	-
Debt Service	843,216	597,646	$ 539,759
TOWN GOV'T SUB TOTAL	11,940,264	11,606,901	$ 11,905,792
Hebron Board of Education	13,663,914	14,336,533	$ 15,248,930
RHAM Assessment	15,275,896	16,351,546	$ 16,354,104
RHAM Debt Service	210,707	215,521.00	$ 223,843
Total General Government	$ 41,090,781	$ 42,510,501	$ 43,732,669

REVENUES	ADOPTED Revenues 2024-2025	ADOPTED Revenues 2025-2026	PROPOSED Revenues 2026-2027
General Government	$ 1,260,855	$ 1,464,386	$ 1,337,264
Other State Revenues	492,924	727,240	$ 986,303
Educational Cost Sharing Grant	5,997,693	5,997,693	$ 5,997,693
One Time State Revenue BOE			$ 239,908
One Time State Revenue Town			$ 30,258
Debt Management Contribution	862,000		
Fund Balance Contribution	500,000	500,000	$ 250,000
Back Taxes / Lien Fees	400,000	400,000	$ 1,200,000
Tax Revenue	31,577,309	33,421,182	33,691,243
	$ 41,090,781	$ 42,510,501	$ 43,732,669

MILL RATE:			
Real Estate/Personal Property	34.50	36.85	36.96
Motor Vehicle	32.46	32.46	32.46

1TB 6/12

"PET OF THE WEEK"

Four year old **Stevie Nicks** is ready to be the star of the show, just like her namesake! While a bit anxious at first, this sweet lady is going to completely sparkle and shine with a kind and patient person. Her eyes say it all… love me! Stevie is waiting to be your one and only kitty in a quiet home.

Meet 6 year old **Wisdom**! Wisdom is a friendly and talkative fellow. He seems like he's medium to low energy, until you find the toy he really likes. He's the perfect blend of active and easy. Wisdom is cheerful and affectionate, completely adorable inside and out. A volunteer favorite, Wisdom endears himself to everyone he meets.

FOR MORE INFO ON ADOPTING CATS OR DOGS, CALL 860-569-0722
VOLUNTEERS & FOSTER HOMES NEEDED – CALL: 860-569-0722

Protectors of Animals, Inc. 144 Main St., Unit O, E. Hartford, CT 06118
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WWW.POAINC.ORG

RE6-12-26

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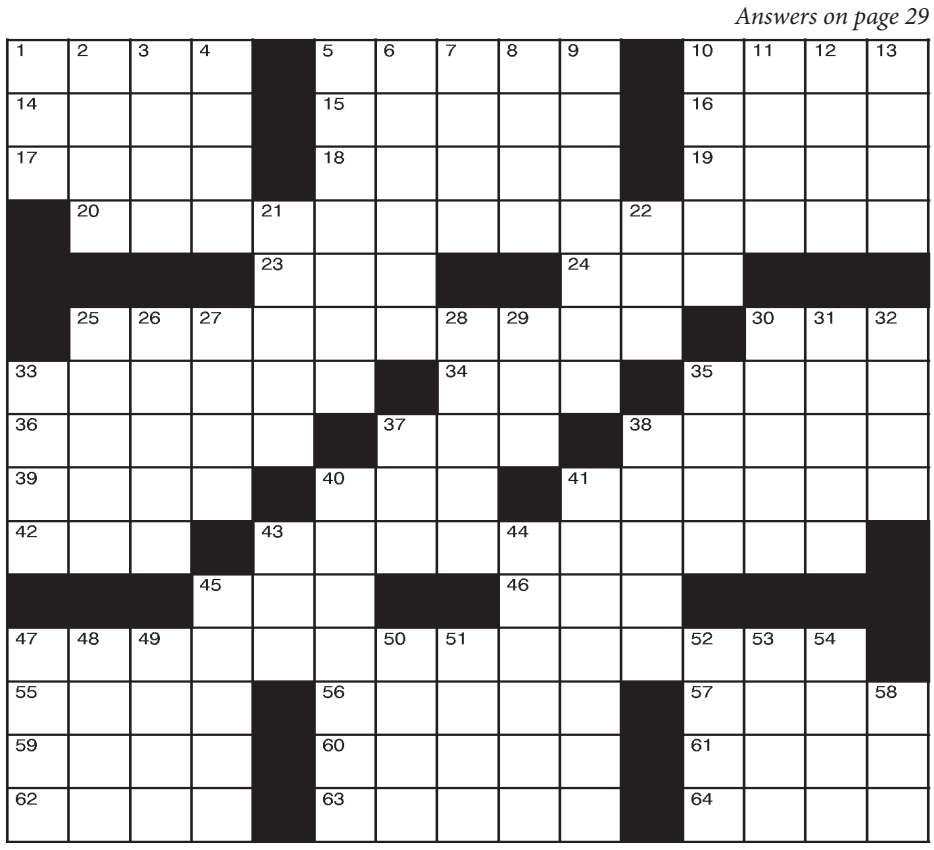
RE1-31-25

FOREIGN CAPITALS

Answers on page 29



CREATORS NEWS SERVICE By Neil Manausa

ACROSS

1 Havana is its capital
5 Signs of healing
10 Qatar's capital
14 ___ roof: place for Williams' cat
15 "Ulalume" auth.
16 Arab capital or gulf
17 Capital on the Aar
18 Iowa communal society
19 Coke's nut source
20 Gesso
23 Addams cousin
24 Scull
25 Author of "The Sea-Wolf"
30 Brit. honour
33 After-dinner party
34 Hanoi's river
35 Where Bamako is capital
36 Hangs out to dry
37 Biblical man of patience
38 Hinder
39 Windward's antonym
40 Groove
41 Term of office
42 Legal matter
43 Vodka cocktail
45 Weapon
46 "I'll Be Seeing ___"
47 Belgian youngster?
55 Wine: comb. form
56 Vaquero's rope
57 Surveyor's nail
59 Where Bismarck is capital: abbr.
60 Card game for three
61 South American capital
62 Vincent Lopez theme song
63 Sudden gush
64 Nonpareil

DOWN

1 Hansom
2 Western Athletic Conf. member
3 Engage in logrolling
4 English governess ___ Leonowens
5 Puget Sound metropolis
6 Regained consciousness
7 On ___ with
8 Late congressman Sonny
9 Scampi, for one
10 Senegal's capital
11 Redolence
12 Port lead-in
13 Literary collections
21 Oliver Twist's foe
22 Greek man-beast fertility god
25 Thermodynamics unit
26 Buenos ___
27 One-time dominant Canadian tribe
28 Campus marine military org.
29 Coming-out girl
30 Afghanistan capital
31 Trumpet tantara
32 Ireland, in Ireland
33 Cicatrix
35 PC display
37 Roast beef au ___
38 Hesitate
40 Family of guitarists
41 Type of harmony
43 Malaprop or Miniver
44 See 9 Down
45 King of India: 3rd C. B.C.
47 Former capital of West Germany
48 Fix over
49 Single
50 Flaccid
51 Hollywood's "Elephant Boy"
52 Norse capital
53 ___ arms: aroused
54 Domesticate
58 ___ es Salaam

MARLBOROUGH CONSERVATION COMMISSION NOTICE OF ACTION

The Marlborough Conservation Commission, at their regular meeting on June 1, 2026, took the following action:
MOTION CARRIED:
APPLICATION #03-26 – Marlborough Lakeside Village, LLC (Applicant/Property Owner) 156+ No Main Street, three lot Residential Subdivision. The commission made a motion to forward a favorable report to the Planning and Zoning Commission
YVONNE BOLTON, CONSERVATION COMMISSION CHAIR
1TB 6/12

HEBRON SELF STORAGE Auction Legal Notice

Facility operator's sale for non-payment of storage charges pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 42-159 through 42-169. For the satisfaction of the facility operator's lien, the following property will be sold at public auction on Friday, June 26, 2026 @ 10 AM, on the premises of Hebron Self Storage, 555 Church Street, Hebron, CT 06248. Hebron Self Storage reserves the right to cancel a sale at any time for any reason.

UNIT#	OCCUPANT	CONTENTS
O	Eric Schiffer	Household Goods

1TB 6/12

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS NOTICE OF ACTION

At its Regular Meeting held at 6:30 pm on June 8, 2026 at the East Hampton Town Hall - 1 Community Drive, and via ZOOM, the Zoning Board of Appeals acted on the following variance request:
ZBA-26-005: Kenneth Barber, Requesting the following variance to section 4.4.E Area & Dimensional standards to allow reduction of front setback (Pecausett 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. - **APPROVED**
1TB 6/12

NOTICE OF SALE OF PROPERTY

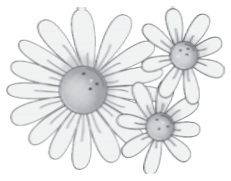
Please be advised that the Town of Portland, Connecticut, shall conduct a sale of surplus property online. The address of the auction site is govdeals.com. The surplus property is being sold in an "as-is" condition without express or implied warranties.
The online auction will be held starting in June until various end dates throughout September 2026, and the surplus property being sold is as follows: public works equipment and other town vehicles, grounds department equipment, town and school computers and networking equipment, and library equipment. See the GovDeals link on Town's website www.portlandct.org for additional information.
All bidders must pre-register with GovDeals at govdeals.com. The Town of Portland, Connecticut reserves the right to accept or reject any bids submitted.
Submitted by: Tom E. Robinson, Finance Director
Dated: June 12, 2026
1TB 6/12

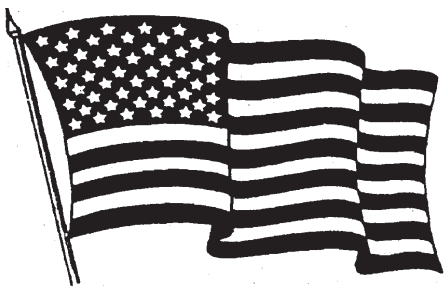
LEGAL NOTICE MARLBOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

The Marlborough Planning Commission will hold the following public hearing on June 23, 2026, at 7pm in the Town Hall, 26 No Main Street
#P-02-26 Marlborough Lakeside Village, LLC. (Applicant/ Property Owner) 156+ No Main Street, three lot Residential Subdivision
MARK PAUL, PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR
2TB 6/12, 6/19

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION NOTICE OF ACTION

At its Regular Meeting held at 6:30 pm on June 3, 2026, at the East Hampton Town Hall - 1 Community Drive, the Planning and Zoning Commission took the following action:
PZC-26-005: Lakewood Estates, LLC, Amendments to Sections 6.3 G, and K of the Zoning Regulations relating to acreage and open space requirements for a Housing Opportunity Development - DENIED
1TB 6/12





Hello! Remember Me?

The Red, White and Blue?

Remember when I led the parade? Hats came off and hands were placed over one's heart as I approached and passed by.
Remember where I have been and what I stand for– ANZIO, NORMANDY, LEYTE, IWO JIMA, KOREA, VIETNAM, the ongoing war on terror and the present war with Iran. The MEMORIAL HONOR ROLLS of those who did not come back are saluted when you salute me.

REMEMBER THE 31-WORD PLEDGE:
I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE… I am RESPONSIBLE as an INDIVIDUAL not to take our freedom for granted and thus to risk losing it.

…AND TO THE REPUBLIC FOR WHICH IT STANDS… Not a DEMOCRACY (Rule by the Ruled) but a REPUBLIC (a Constitutional Republic governed by law where I am represented). The word DEMOCRACY does not appear in our documents of LIBERTY (The Declaration of Independence, The Articles of Confederation, the Constitution or the Bill of Rights).

…ONE NATION, UNDER GOD… our right to know that LIFE and LIBERTY are GOD-GIVEN RIGHTS, not the GRANT of GOVERNMENT. Our Constitution gives us a government limited to the delegated authority that "WE THE PEOPLE" allotted to each branch of civil government.

…WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL… LIBERTY is the love of individual independence, being free from tyrannical rule and control– a LIBERTY that does not degenerate into license. The Liberty Bell and the Statue of Liberty are fitting symbols. JUSTICE is "the virtue which consists in GIVING TO EVERYONE WHAT IS HIS DUE." Thus justice calls for law and equity, right rules and fair play for all. This explains the once prevailing concept in America– PUNISHMENT TO FIT THE CRIME.

To lose the meaning of OUR FLAG is to encourage the loss of our Republican form of government and our God-given, responsible pursuit of LIFE and LIBERTY.

"REMEMBER, O LORD, Thy tender mercies and Thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. **REMEMBER** not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to Thy mercy **REMEMBER** Thou me for Thy goodness' sake, O LORD." (Psalm 25:6-7). "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him. For he knoweth our frame; **HE REMEMBERETH** that we are dust" (Psalm 103:13,14). **"REMEMBER ME,** O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation" (Psalm 106:4).

May you be **BOTHERED** to the point of being BLESSED. May our GRAND OLD FLAG remind us of our great American HERITAGE, "one nation **under God"** without Whose grace we cannot survive the erosion and corrosion of our day. May you look to the GOD OF TRUTH in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ (who said, "I am THE TRUTH"– John 14:6), so that you might REST in the TRUTH of God's Word ("the TRUTH shall make you free"– John 8:32) and the TRUTH of God's Son ("the SON shall make you free"– John 8:36). To RECEIVE HIM is to receive the **LIFE** and **LIBERTY** He alone can give (John 1:12).

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6:30 pm Evening Worship
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7:30 pm
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RE6-12-26

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-**Glastonbury Citizen**, mailed Thursdays to 5700 paid subscribers in Glastonbury

-**Rivereast News Bulletin**, mailed Fridays to 27,500 homes in Portland, East Hampton/ Cobalt/Middle Haddam, Marlborough, Hebron/Amston, Andover and Colchester.

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CIT4-30-26

LEGALS

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

Notice is hereby given that the Portland Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Virtual Public Hearing on Thursday, June 25th, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. Public access is through Zoom link A at www.portlandct.org to consider the following:
PZC Application #25-21: Proposed Amendment to the Portland Zoning Regulations. Changes to sections 7.5, 8.2, 9.1.3.H. These changes are being made in response and to comply with Public Act 25-1. Application of the Town of Portland.
At this hearing interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications will be received. A copy of this application is available for public review in the Portland Land Use Department.
Dated at Portland, CT this 9th day of June 2026
Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission

2TB 6/12, 6/19

LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF HEBRON
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
DOUGLAS LIBRARY CLEANING SERVICES
RFP 2026-16

The Town of Hebron is accepting proposals for Cleaning Services at the Douglas Library of Hebron. All proposals must be submitted in accordance with Town specifications and on forms supplied by the Town. Forms and specifications are available by contacting the Office of the Town Manager, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, Connecticut, or at https://hebronct.gov/bids/. Proposals will be received until and read publicly at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, July 10, 2026. The Town of Hebron reserves the right to reject any or all submissions.
Donna Lanza
Interim Town Manager

1TB 6/12

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.
At this hearing interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications will be received. A copy of this application is available for public review in the Portland Land Use Department.
Dated at Portland, CT this 3rd day of June 2026
Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission

2TB 6/5, 6/12

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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BUYING COLLECTIONS & ACCUMULATIONS, FREE REVIEW: Comic Books, Vintage Toys, Sports Cards, Adv Signs/Cans (Soda, Beer, Gas Station), Zippos, License Plates, Jewelry, Postcards, Etc. Call/Text 860-817-4350

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WANTED: Individual firearms, collections & estates including, military & related items. Federally licensed firearms dealer. Appraisal. Richard Pleines. 860-663-2214.

WANTED TO BUY: your sterling silverware, tea set, or any item made of sterling. Top cash price paid on the spot. I can come to your home or meet you at a place of your choosing. Call/text Dominic at 860-836-5013 or email dmbappraisal@sbcglobal.net.

WANTED TO BUY: All antiques; toys, military, watches, advertising, jewelry, coins, clocks, signs, all musical instruments, guitars, saxophones, keyboards, trumpets, amplifiers, accordions, vintage electronics, hi-fi stereo, amplifiers, pro-audio, radios, ham equipment, tube type equipment, plus more. 1 item or entire estate. Call 860-707-9350.

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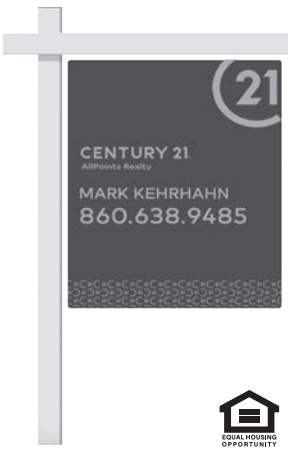

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RE6-12-26

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RE6-12-26
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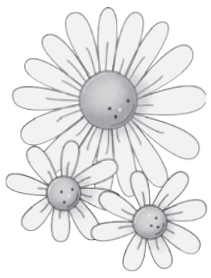

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Mon - Fri & some Sat mornings.
40 hours/week. Salary based on qualifications.
Must have own tools.

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RE6-12-26

Planning and Zoning Official

The Town of East Hampton is seeking a qualified and motivated Planning and Zoning Official to support and guide the municipality's planning, land-use management, and development initiatives. The successful candidate will play a key role in compliance with planning regulations, and the effective implementation of municipal development policies.
The Planning and Zoning Official is responsible for overseeing implementation of a new Plan of Conservation and Development, administering and enforcing the zoning and wetlands regulations and other relevant Town Ordinances as well as providing staff support to all land use commissions and other boards and commissions, as necessary.
Master's degree in planning and minimum one-year experience preferred, along with supervisory and budgeting experience, or other combination of education and experience may be considered. Salary range: $88,728.10 - $104,386.00 per year, plus benefit package. This is a bargaining unit position.
Applicants should submit a cover letter, resume and employment application, no later than July 1, 2026, (or until filled), to the Town of East Hampton, Department of Human Resources, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424.
An employment application may be found at www.easthamptonct.gov. AA/M-F/EOE.

1TB 6/12

New Beginnings for Life is a smaller company with a big heart that cares for individuals with intellectual disabilities. We are seeking kind, patient, and passionate candidates to join our team. We have individuals who need care and companionship in Colchester and surrounding towns. We have great benefits, and the rate of pay is $17.25 per hour.

For our day support program, which is from 8am-4pm and 2pm-5pm, the towns are in Salem, Groton, Hebron, Lebanon, Higganum, East Haddam, New London, Norwich, East Hampton, Colchester.

For our group home positions we have Monday-Sunday open second and third shift which is 3pm-11pm and 11pm-7am. These positions are in Colchester.

If you are interested in becoming a part of our team, please feel free to call us and ask for more information at 860-531-9426

RE3-15-24

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Call or stop by and obtain an application and possible interview time.

RE6-12-26

TOWN OF ANDOVER CT
PART-TIME BUILDING CUSTODIAN/MAINTENANCE

The Town of Andover is seeking applications for a part time custodian, 4-6 hours per week to perform general cleaning and building maintenance and repair for town buildings. Compensation DOE. The job application and full description for this position are available at www.andoverct.org.
The ideal person will be responsible for general cleaning and also repair and maintenance of the town hall, library, and community center to include change of light bulbs, cleaning of gutters, checking caulking, inspecting roofs for needed maintenance or repair, painting and drywall repair, checking filters and service logs of town heating and air equipment, inspecting and repairing windows, doors, cleaning gutters, etc.
This position might involve deep cleaning of facilities as needed.
This position requires the applicant to have and use own vehicle and tools. The individual shall be responsible for maintaining their own insurance. In some cases, tools can be supplied by public works or rented.

To apply, please email your cover letter, resume and job application to the Office of the Town Administrator, Town Hall, 17 School Rd, Andover, CT 06232, or email it to adminassistant@andoverct.org
This posting will remain open until the position has been filled. EOE M/F

RE 6-12-26

TREE & LANDSCAPING

LAWN MOWING: Local! Professional, competitive rates. 30 years of experience. Call Thomas 860-267-7515.

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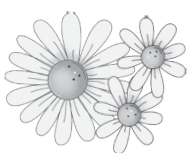
TREE SERVICES: Beech leaf disease management, arborvitae maintenance, tree pruning, shrub pruning, removals, consulting by licensed arborists. LaPila Arborists, LLC 860-965-5546.



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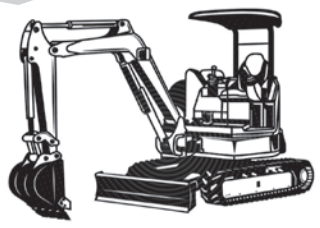

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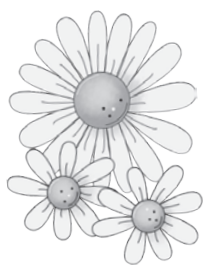

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BAY POINT CLUB NEIGHBORHOOD TAG SALE: 24 Spellman Point Rd, East Hampton. Saturday, 6/20, 8am-3pm. Early Birds welcome (7am). Everything from kitchenware to hardware. Biggest and the Best!

ESTATE SALE: 375 Olde Stage Rd, Glastonbury. June 13th, 9-1. Everything 1/2 priced. Antiques, furniture, lamps, linens, bedding, clothing, glass & bake ware, corningware.

FUNDRAISING TAG SALE: for Susan G. Komen of Hartford. June 20, 2026 9-3. 1103 New London Tpke, Glastonbury. Something for everyone. 100% goes to the foundation. One day a world without breast cancer.

HUGE & MULTI FAMILY TAG SALE: 6/12 & 6/13, 8-4. 62 Coolidge Ave, Newington. Kitchen items, golf, dog book, small furniture, tires, DVD's, clothing and many other items.

HUGE MULTI-FAMILY TAG SALE: Saturday, June 13th, 8am-1pm. 400 Lake Road, Andover. Treasures for everyone!

HUGE TAG SALE: 6/13, 8-2. 48 Depot Hill Rd, Cobalt. Rabbit hutches, John Deer Mower, bikes, toys, household, plants, furniture, power tools, decluttering, much more.

TAG SALE 6/13: 8am-12pm, Marlborough Town Green. Rain Date 6/14. Household, Father's Day, Jewelry, Vera Bradley, kids' corner, crib, porch swing, plants and more. MDTC Fund Raiser.

TAG SALE FRI/SAT: 19th-20th, 8am-3pm. 672 Ash Swamp Road, Glastonbury. Antique wood boards, tools, garden implements, hand tools, oak cabinets, housewares, and much more!

TAG SALE SAT/SUN: 13th-14th, 8am-3pm. 467 Addison Rd, Glastonbury. Tools/ Antiques, old albums, large American Flags, dishes, home/holiday décor, Halloween costumes, clothing, books, crafts.

TAG SALE SATURDAY 6/13: 8am-2pm. 78 Ladyslipper Lane, Glastonbury. Bunk Bed, Loft Bed, Furniture, college dorm stuff, appliances, kitchenware, games, gaming chairs, wire shelves, suitcases, car roof cargo carrier, etc.

TAG SALE: Saturday, June 20th, 8am-2pm at 21 Young Street, East Hampton. Furniture, housewares, decorations, kitchenware, and more! Rain date Sunday, June 21st, 8am-2pm.

TAG SALE: Church of St. Andrew the Apostle, 331 Orchard St, Rocky Hill. Saturday June 13th 8am-4pm and Sunday June 14th 9am-12pm $0.50 admission. Early birds Saturday 7-8am $5 admission. Purchase bags to fill $5 Saturday 3-4pm and Sunday 9am-12pm.

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