

Bacon Graduates Bound for Great Things

By Toriana Williams

On Friday, June 12, fickle weather forced Colchester's Bacon Academy to move its graduation ceremony indoors, trading the open air of Dodd Stadium for the familiar walls of the school gymnasium. Yet, if anyone worried the change in venue might have diminished the significance of the evening, the Class of 2026 proved otherwise.

The gym was alive with excitement long before the first diploma was awarded. A sea of blue and gold caps and gowns flowed in the room as families, friends and faculty packed the seats.

Cheers echoed through the building as graduates made their entrance. Proud parents waved signs adorned with their students' faces and others held oversized letters spelling out their names. The atmosphere was incredibly joyful, as one might expect.

Graduation always seems like it will just be a commencement ceremony. However, it truly was a celebration of growth, perseverance, friendship and the countless moments that shaped the lives of 2026 graduates.

Valedictorian Charlotte Garlarneau captured the spirit of the class by reminding her classmates that no single story could ever fully represent their shared experience.

"When I think of a speech given at a high school graduation," she said, "I think of a single address that summarizes the high school experience." But as she began reflecting on the past four years, she discovered something important.

"When I actually sat down to do this, though, I very quickly realized it was much more difficult than I had thought," she continued. "In fact,



At last week's commencement ceremony for the Bacon Academy Class of 2026, senior class officers Kylie Boerenko (president), Bela Dec (vice president), Kiley Filloramo (treasurer) and Emma Aivaliotis (secretary) took turns announcing the names of the graduating students.

it was impossible."

Looking across the gym at rows of students dressed in blue caps and gowns, Galarneau acknowledged how easy it might be to see the graduation class as one unified group. Yet, beneath those matching robes were dozens of unique journeys.

"Sitting here today as a class, we certainly look alike," Galarneau said. "It's tempting to think of us as a single entity, with a single story."

Instead, she celebrated the individuality that defined the Class of 2026.

"We are individuals as well," she said. "Each of us with a different story at Bacon Academy.

Each of us with our own unique strengths and weaknesses."

Drawing from her own experience on the school's fencing team, Galarneau described how Bacon helped her transform from a shy freshman into a confident senior.

"Being on the team helped me to come out of my shell," she said. "I became friends with so many people that I may otherwise have never spoken to."

Galarneau's message encouraged classmates to recognize the lessons that shaped them personally – whether those lessons involved confidence, perseverance, well-being or even the challenge of managing time.

"Whatever it is that you take away from your own experience at Bacon Academy, keep it with you," she said.

As the graduates prepared to begin new chapters, Galarneau offered a final challenge:

"Follow your own callings and your own strengths, no matter what you see those around you doing or what they expect you to do."

She concluded with a powerful expression of faith in her classmates.

"Each one of us has an ability or a perspective that sets us apart from those around us," she said, "and I know that because of this: every one of us will achieve great things."

While Galarneau celebrated the unique paths that brought each graduate to commencement night, salutatorian Benjamin Buyniski reflected on the shared journey that united the class.

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Grads Look to Future Without Fear of Mistakes

By Anne Lilburn

RHAM's graduation on Tuesday night was a festive occasion, with bursts of airhorns and confetti cannons (along with the occasional backflip from a graduating senior) punctuating the celebratory event.

The 189 members of the Class of 2026 entered to "Pomp and Circumstance," played by the RHAM High School Wind Ensemble, and heard performances from the RHAM chorus, including the national anthem and Billy Joel's "Vienna."

Class President Brenna D'Amico offered the welcome speech, in which she quoted Stevie Nicks in Fleetwood Mac's classic song, "Landslide":

"Well I've been afraid of changing, because I've built my life around you," she quoted. "But time makes you bolder, even children get older, and I'm getting older, too."

The song was a reminder, she said, that "change is not something to fear, but something to embrace."

"Time shapes us, challenges us and helps us grow into people we'd never imagined becoming. As we graduate and step into a new chapter,

we may not know what lies ahead, but like the song suggests, growth comes from being willing to face change rather than run from it."

The night's featured speaker was Brendan Hall, a documentary filmmaker, best known for *Out There: A National Parks Story*. A member of the RHAM High School Class of 2012, Hall spoke of his success since graduating, from his filmmaking achievements to the opportunities his career has afforded him, including visiting all seven continents and being a finalist for a space expedition. Along the way, he joked, he had both appeared on the *Today* show and "even on the cover of the *Rivereast*." None of that would have been possible, he said, without the support he had gotten while a student at RHAM.

"You are surrounded by the friends and family who will be there for you in the years to come," he told the graduates, before reminding them, "This is your community, and never forget where you came from."

"Everyone knows something that you don't," he encouraged the graduates to remember, "and everyone is going through much harder challenges than you realize. In years ahead,

each of you will be the hero of your own story, and you'll be faced with questions of how you want to engage with the world: Do I want to be kind to this stranger? Do I want to listen to this teacher? Do I want to handle this situation in a way that I'm proud of? Choose wisely, every decision you make has a butterfly effect."

The class salutatorian, Aria Lagace, said she was challenged while writing her speech for the evening, noting that she struggled to find moments she wanted to share with the audience. Until her junior year, she said, she had rarely engaged in class or spoke with people she did not already know well.

Lagace said that changed only when she finally realized that "the person who judges you most harshly is yourself. Everyone else is too busy worrying about their own lives, their own insecurities and their own mistakes to spend too much time focusing on yours."

Realizing that, she said, gave her courage, and she hoped her fellow graduates would find some of that courage as well.

"I think many of us spend so much time wait-

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RHAM Youth baseball has launched the Challenger Division, allowing youth of all ability levels the opportunity to play America's favorite pastime.

RHAM Youth Baseball Launches Challenger Division

RHAM Youth Baseball has announced the launch of its new Challenger Division, providing children and young adults with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities the opportunity to experience the game of baseball in a supportive and inclusive environment.

The Challenger Division is designed to ensure that every player has the chance to participate, build friendships, develop confidence, and enjoy being part of a team. The program emphasizes fun, sportsmanship, teamwork, and community engagement while adapting the game to meet the needs of each participant.

Eric May, the president of RHAM Youth Baseball, stated the mission is to "provide an opportunity for the youth in our community to play baseball at all ability levels."

"The Challenger program truly exemplifies this mission, as it allows us to provide that opportunity to everyone, including athletes with disabilities, and gives them the same chance to learn and grow to love the game of baseball," added May, "Shawn Cyr deserves a tremendous amount of credit for spearheading this program and doing all the legwork to get it off the ground. We hope this initial offering will spark greater participation going forward."

Cyr, a longtime youth baseball coach and advocate for creating opportunities for all children to succeed both on and off the field, is the manager of the team.

"By taking a strength-based approach, we focus on what our athletes can already do and then modify or adapt as necessary," Cyr stated. "The Challenger Division allows every athlete to experience the excitement of being part of a team, making memories, and playing baseball. In addition, I am thankful for all of the support provided by our buddies. We couldn't provide this program without them."

The Challenger Division joins a growing movement across Little League programs nationwide to make baseball accessible to all participants regardless of ability. Games and activities are tailored to each athlete's needs, with the support of volunteer buddies, coaches, and family members.

RHAM Youth Baseball's hope is that the program will not only enrich the lives of Challenger athletes, but also strengthen the entire baseball community by fostering inclusion, empathy, and connection.

This spring, the team played a condensed season as a pilot, but Cyr said the goal is to, "Recruit more players, expand the season, and eventually play with other Challenger teams hosted by local towns."

For more information, including volunteer opportunities and future registration information, please contact RHAM Youth Baseball Challenger's Division at RHAMChallengerBaseball@gmail.com.

KinderRHAMa Summer Camp Registration

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

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

Cost per week is \$125 (or \$100 for the 6/29-7/2 week). To register, go to ahmyouth.recdesk.com/Community/Program?category=4. Financial aid may be available for families who qualify by filling out the form at: ahmyouth.org/program-scholarship-application.

For more information, visit ahmyouth.org/programs-services/kinderrhama-preschool-program, or contact Becky Murray at bec-kym@ahmyouth.org or 860-228-0871.

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.

High School Plans to Destroy Records

Confidential special education records and academic records for those students who graduated or withdrew from RHAM High School in 2020 will be destroyed after July 10.

Records may be obtained prior to this date by contacting the special education office at 860-228-5302.

See More RHAM News, page 9

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From the Editor's Desk Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

*As we go on, we remember
All the times we had together
And as our lives change, come whatever
We will still be friends forever*

If you're of a certain age, you no doubt remember those words. They're from a song that was huge in the year 2000, and which is particularly relevant for this time of year: "Graduation (Friends Forever)" by pop artist Vitamin C.

I was a few years removed from my high school graduation by the time the song was tearing up the charts, but I was still young enough to know how big it was. And trust me, it was everywhere. The song had faded a bit from popularity by the time I graduated college in 2001 (the pop music world moves fast), but the lyrics were more about high school graduations anyway.

I often think of the song when it gets to be June, and the area high schools start holding their graduations. Which means it was on my mind this week – as it's once again graduation week in the *Rivereast*!

In this week's paper, there are stories about graduation ceremonies at all four of the high schools in *Rivereast*-land. As you've likely noticed by now, two of them are on the cover, and the other two are sprinkled inside. We've also jammed in as many photos from the ceremonies as we can fit, but if you want to see more, be sure to check out our Facebook page, at www.facebook.com/RivereastNewsBulletin. There are many more photos there, as well as a video or two!

In the meantime, congratulations to all the high school graduates out there! Best of luck with your many adventures still to come. And

remember the words of Colleen Fitzpatrick (sorry to disappoint, but Vitamin C is just a stage name): "I keep thinking that it's not goodbye; Keep on thinking it's our time to fly." * * *

Speaking of school days, last week we had our first heat wave of the summer season. By the latter half of the week, it was pretty freaking toasty out. So it wasn't surprising to see some schools had early dismissal on Thursday (and I think on Friday as well) due to the heat. Announcements were shared on Facebook – and, right on cue, there were comments from people who went to high school in the '60s, '70s, '80s, and even '90s, with the "back in my day...." whining.

All of the comments said more or less the same thing: "I went to school when it was hot out and I was fine; these kids should do the same thing."

I went to high school in the '90s, and mine certainly didn't have air conditioning. So yes, I remember those days when it got up into the 90s, and just how miserable it was in those classrooms. I remember the teachers would bring in window fans and place them on the floor, and would turn all the lights off, just in an attempt to keep things cool. It was futile, though; my classmates and I would still be sitting there, sweating away, unable to focus on anything but how many minutes until the clock struck 2 and we could finally leave that sweat box.

Yes, I lived. But that doesn't mean I'd wish it on other people – certainly not the youth of today. If kids don't *have* to deal with sitting there in that stifling heat, why should they?

Editor's Desk continued on page 5

Bulletin Board

Some years ago, shortly after we were married, my wife and I stopped at an indoor flea market in Upstate New York on our way to someplace I can't remember. And there, taking up an entire table of its very own among the clutter of chipped china, old frying pans and antique apple corers, was a true gem: a magnificent stuffed moose head with massive antlers. Only lightly motheaten, it was priced at about \$450. A bargain, I thought.

When (with the pitiful ignorance of a newlywed) I suggested that this treasure would not only decoratively fill the empty wall over our bed, it also had a practical purpose in that it could serve as my personal clothes rack, I was told: 1) We didn't have a spare 25 cents, never mind \$450; 2) It wouldn't fit in the car; 3) If we tied it to the top of the car, all the remaining fur would probably blow off; 4) She wasn't about to have some dead animal watching her sleep; and 5) I had to be crazy.

Actually, she already had me at #1. The rest was gratuitous. Nevertheless, I often think back on that moose head and sometimes it comes up in the course of conversation, mostly when I've been drinking and starting to feel nostalgic. Or deprived.

Fast forward to a week ago when we met my sister and her husband to spend a morning trekking through this enormous "antiques warehouse" operation in Hudson, NY. I don't know what the original building was used for – some kind of manufacturing, I suppose – but it had to be the size of four Walmarts combined. This place had everything from massive architectural salvage (like entire Victorian doorways and old store cabinet units, some of which measured at least 20 feet long and were probably 12 feet high) to booths with racks of "vintage" clothes, old magazines and rusty muskrat traps.

And then, there it was. Not just a moose head. Oh no.

This was an ENTIRE stuffed moose.

It reclined in a glass display case about the size of my dining room, gazing majestically out over an endless array of other people's junk, its view only partially blocked by a stuffed giraffe (more about the giraffe in a moment) and a really weird set of andirons made in the form of two googly-eyed owls.

But the moose! Ah, the moose. The inside of the case had been arranged as a woodland tableau, with little bushes and moss and stuff as though the creature was actually resting in its own natural habitat. It looked quite lifelike for something that was actually quite dead.

Apparently, the present owner of the moose had purchased the contents of a natural history museum or something because the moose had companions. This section of the building was inhabited by a whole taxidermy zoo of stuffed creatures, including a palomino pony (complete with saddle) against the far wall, another glass case with two deer sparring with their antlers, and a stuffed piglet (priced at \$4,500) hanging from the ceiling. And then of course there was the aforementioned giraffe (priced at \$32,000), which had to be at least 15 feet tall, just standing there patiently, waiting for a new home with adequate ceilings.

My sister, who thinks she's pretty amusing (and being sick and tired of my oft-told moose head in New York story), suggested that I should buy the giraffe for my wedding anniversary. I could put it in the living room, she added, cutting a hole in the ceiling so its head would project up through the floor of the upstairs bedroom.

I paid her no mind. My attention was fixed on the moose, priced at a mere (compared to the giraffe, at least) \$9,500. I was still admiring the beast when my wife wandered by and – knowing trouble when she sees it – stopped abruptly.

"It's \$9,500," I said, without taking my eyes away.

Gently taking my arm, she observed, as she might to a 5-year-old child, that: 1) While she didn't drink the stuff herself, \$9,500 would buy a hell of a lot of beer; 2) The moose wouldn't fit in the car; 3) It had a motheaten spot on the top of its head (this was hardly noticeable, in my opinion); 4) We'd never be able to get the display case into the house, nor would it fit in any of our rooms if we could; 5) It was dead; and 6) If I was serious about this thing, I had to be crazy.

I told her not to worry. She had me on #1.

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.



Softball Stars... On Saturday, June 13, the Portland 10U All-Star Softball team won the D'Amico Tournament in East Hampton. Pictured are, top row: Coach Lindsey MacDonald, Coach Amanda Morgan, Alexa Fotopolous, Emelia Moss, Zoe Greiner, Lindsey Dickson, Seraphina Kelley and Coach Ingrid Moss; bottom row: Paige Campbell, Kyleigh Morgan, Brielle Farmer, Chelsea MacDonald, Emily Slipkowski and Gretta Chenier.

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Deferring the Problem?

To the Editor:

June 15th's budget meeting, where the board discussed using savings and funds previously earmarked for other town projects such as roads, left me with a question: Isn't using these funds simply deferring the budget problem to next year?

The budget was voted down. That result seems to call for actual reductions in spending, not shifting money around to preserve an increase. Moving money may avoid difficult decisions today, but it does not eliminate the underlying issue.

The majority of the Board of Finance appears more interested in finding a way around the voters' decision than addressing the concerns that led to it. Using reserves and redirecting funds may create the appearance of reducing the mill rate without actually reducing spending. It may make the numbers work on paper, but taxpayers will still face the consequences later.

The cost does not disappear. It simply gets pushed into next year's budget cycle, where residents will likely find themselves having the same debate again while carrying the burden of this year's spending and any additional increases proposed next year.

East Hampton residents should watch this process carefully. Voters rejected the budget because they wanted spending addressed, not moved from one account to another.

Shannon Turner – East Hampton

Kings, Not Leaders

To the Editor:

Monday night's Tri-Board meeting confirmed something many residents have suspected for a long time: Colchester does not have leaders. We have kings.

The budget was rejected by voters in a landslide. Not by a few votes. Not by a narrow margin. It failed by roughly two to one. In any healthy democracy, that would be a message impossible to ignore. Instead, our elected officials have chosen to listen to the small minority that agrees with them while dismissing the overwhelming majority of taxpayers who could not have spoken more clearly.

What was most striking Monday night was not the discussion of cuts. It was who was expected to bear them.

Once again, the proposed reductions largely avoid the departments and positions of the people who created these budgets in the first place. Once again, the burden falls on everyone else. Employees are asked to take unpaid days. Workers are asked to accept pay freezes. Teachers are left wondering whether their jobs are safe. Yet the people making those decisions refuse to even discuss sharing the sacrifice themselves.

Our leaders are willing to sign off on employees losing three days of pay, but become outraged when anyone suggests examining their own raises, their own departments, or their own positions.

We've seen this movie before. Not long ago,

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the Board of Education warned residents that a band teacher position would be cut, saving roughly \$75,000 a year. Then, only months after the budget passed, it spent nearly \$150,000 remodeling the central office. Just last year we were told teachers and programs were at risk if the budget failed. Then, less than a month after the budget passed, the board rushed to give disgraced Superintendent Sullivan a pay raise with funds they claimed they didn't have to spare.

The pattern is impossible to miss. When sacrifices are needed, someone else is expected to make them. When money becomes available, the priorities suddenly shift to themselves.

These are not leaders. Leaders share burdens. Leaders listen when voters speak. Leaders hold themselves accountable.

What we have instead are elected officials who seem to view themselves as untouchable, sitting comfortably on a throne above the taxpayers who pay the bills and the workers actually making a difference in our lives.

Jason LaChapelle – Colchester

Thanks from Garden Club

To the Editor:

What a great day on the Colchester Town Green last Sunday! We wanted to take a moment to thank everyone who stopped by our booth at the CBA's Tag Sale on the Green. It was fun to help customers with their purchases, to chat with so many people, and to answer questions.

We want to thank: The Colchester Business Association for holding this wonderful community event and: Jack Faski and Julie Shilosky for donating their spaces for our use; Members of our club for their donations of plants and their time; These local businesses for their donations: Ballek's Garden Center, Burnett's Country Gardens, Gray House Farms Garden Center, Paul and Sandy's Too, Stop & Shop – Colchester, Tractor Supply – Colchester, and Treefort Naturals.

Your purchases and donations help to fund our work which includes maintenance of 7 community gardens in Colchester, maintenance of 14 town planters, activities with youth, activities with seniors, educational programs with Friends of Cragin Memorial Library, Colchester Free Seed Library, educational booth at Colchester Farmers Market, seasonal crafts for Meals on Wheels recipients and more.

If you would like more information about the Colchester Garden Club or to make a donation, please contact us at colchestergardenclub@yahoo.com or via USPS at P.O. Box 371, Colchester, CT 06415.

Sincerely,

**Joan Aubin and Mary Spalter
Co-Presidents, Colchester Garden Club**

Financial Moves

To the Editor:

Monday night's Board of Finance meeting was enlightening. The people of East Hampton are lucky to have individuals who are very knowledgeable in the world of finances to serve the public good. That said, I couldn't help but notice the discussions were carried heavily by the Democratic majority on how to move forward and help alleviate the current situation at hand, getting a budget to the people that can be accepted.

Dan Finn presented a solid plan to pay down future CIP debts to help lower the mill rate. This was met with opposition, not in an exact argument but in a generalized response of "No, we'll have to agree to disagree" by Jim Radavich who would rather have the excess funds of this year just sit in the town's account, not working to help bring down the tax rate. That seems to be the RTC slogan when debating; no actual suggestions, just blanket dismissal and disagreement.

People have asked for out-of-the-box thinking and getting things done at the same time. I believe the Democrats on the board did just that. They have a solid plan to keep services while also lowering the projected mill rate.

Rick Wanat – East Hampton

Believing

To the Editor:

We all believe what we want to believe. I am struck by recent letters to the editor regarding the health insurance debacle, how each side entreats us to read the full audit report. Quotes are referenced asserting that they prove the contentions of the writer (proponent and opponent). Realistically, they both can't be right! Further, although I am a relatively conscientious and engaged citizen, I will not spend my time reading the audit report. Why not? Because I would read it and come away with what I believe to be the truth, supporting my existing opinion(s). I would interpret the report. That is how humans work.

I am not suggesting that either side is prevaricating or obfuscating; only that the waters are muddied by our preconceived notions. If you don't like a budget, anything that argues against it will be deemed accurate and valid. If you agree with a budget, you believe that the authors of that budget are honest, well-intentioned citizens doing the best they can with the resources at hand. None of us can be truly objective. It is not human nature.

Further, not only can't we be objective, most of us can't even apply our subjective criteria consistently! Case in point: if one thinks that local politicians are conniving and crooked, then one should also see regional and national politicians in the same light. Call out transgressions consistently!

John Barnowski – Colchester

Note: Barnowski is a member of the Colchester Democratic Town Committee but said he is writing as a private citizen.

Forensic Audit

To the Editor:

It appears this story was told to *Rivereast* by the same people involved in this cover up. If we are to believe what they say, they were nothing but pawns in this fiasco, even though they knew about it over a year ago and said nothing. So now they are covering their butts by deflecting it on Sullivan and Linkkila and of course they are unable to defend themselves as of now.

All those in office at the time this took place should be asked to resign and if they won't, remember this at election time, for those in an elected office.

I read an article in the *East Haddam News*. There is a proposal for a new firehouse at the cost of \$15 million; this includes a 14,500-sq.-ft. facility fitting 8-10 pieces of equipment, bunk rooms, storage rooms and decontamination with holding tanks and laundry facilities. We in Colchester get artificial grass and a couple of dugouts costing \$20 million. Go figure.

Frank Grande – Colchester

Uncertainty Is Not a Plan

To the Editor:

Monday night's tri-board budget meeting in Colchester was exactly the kind of meeting that makes residents lose faith in local government.

Colchester voters rejected both the town and Board of Education budgets on May 20. Nearly a month later, instead of a revised budget and a new referendum date, residents got another meeting. More talk. More delay. More hand-wringing.

Other towns in the *Rivereast* area have already moved on to second or third referendums. Colchester seems stuck waiting for the "right" group of residents to show up and say what officials want to hear: please do not cut anything.

But the voters already spoke.

The budgets failed. That means cut the budgets and put them back before the people. It does not mean stall until July. It does not mean search for political cover. It does not mean hold endless meetings while taxpayers are ignored and employees are left in limbo.

The first selectman, whose proposed town budget would increase roughly 25% over three years, offered little in the way of meaningful reductions. That is not leadership. That is refusing to listen.

A teacher also spoke about staff, crying be-
See Letters, page 6

that particular school that's dismissing early and you need to figure out if you can leave work early to let them into the house, why do you care? Really, what concern is it of yours? Let kids be comfortable.

See you next week – and again, congratulations to all of the high school graduates.

Editor's Desk continued from page 4

To toughen them up? To prepare them for air-conditioned worlds of college and/or office cubicles?

Moreover, things change from when you were a kid. Did I get early dismissals on overly hot days? No. But I also didn't have active shooter drills either. Not every change is for the better.

Plus, unless you have a son or daughter in

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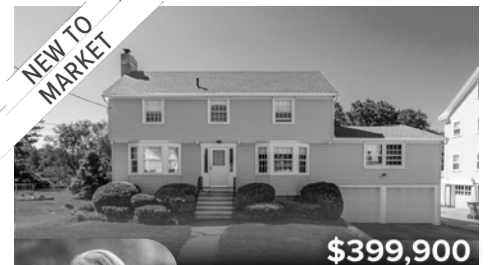
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★ Letters, cont. from page 5

cause they have been told their jobs may be at risk. That should tell residents everything they need to know about the administration's priorities. When pressure comes, the first people put in fear are the classroom teachers, not the administrators or central office positions farthest from students. Instead of taking responsibility for years of rising costs, the administration appears ready to make teachers the public face of the cuts and students the emotional shield for administrative spending. That is not leadership. It is manipulation.

Dragging this out does not protect staff, students, or taxpayers. It only protects elected officials from having to take responsibility.

People are hurting. Taxes are too high. Voters rejected the budgets. The message was not complicated.

Colchester does not need more meetings designed to soften the result of the vote. It needs meaningful reductions, clear direction, and a prompt referendum.

The voters are not subjects waiting for instructions. They already gave their instructions on May 20. It is time for Colchester officials to follow them.

Michael Dubreuil – Colchester

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

DPWAC Update

To the Editor:

We had our regular DPWAC meeting this past Monday. Things were pretty quiet, no public comments and only one attendee online; no one in attendance in person. Our full committee along with Public Works Director Paul Forrest and architect Chris Nardi were there.

We discussed some different types of roofing for the bulky waste area, as this was a question brought to us from a resident. We also discussed engineered steel buildings vs masonry construction, again another resident question. The architects and engineers have investigated the splitting of the project in multiple parts. With and without the transfer station rebuild. With and without the new dog kennel, different types of roofing and structures. All of the above-mentioned items have pros, and cons. Different insulation requirements, building lifespan, with steel vs masonry. Ultimately, I believe that we will be able to have "a la carte" type pricing from the architect for us to present to the Town Council.

The permitting process is moving along! We had a June P&Z presentation and have approval with some minor conditions the P&Z requested. Still pending is septic approval from Chatham Health and CT DEEP for storm water, industrial General and Miscellaneous Industrial User permits. The existing well at the Old Colchester Road site has been tested and is up to the task

of supplying plenty of water for the new facility.

I'm sure that this project will be front and center after the budget has been settled. As always, please email us at DPWAC@hebronct.gov with any questions or concerns. We as a committee strive to get the best possible outcome for our town. We are all residents and taxpayers too!

Sincerely,

Todd Habicht, Vice Chairman
Hebron DPWAC

No COC for Marlborough

To the Editor:

It has been said that "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." So is the case for those who suggest that Marlborough would benefit from sharing a common superintendent with Hebron, Andover and RHAM. Been there, done that.

Thirty years ago, the three towns and RHAM were members of the "Central Office Compact" (COC), which shared a common Superintendent and administrative structure. In 1998, Marlborough and Andover withdrew from the COC. Why? Well, Marlborough Elementary School's building was falling apart, our curriculum was outdated and the school's policy manual dated from the 1970s. The Superintendent was simply stretched too thin and our school lacked the attention needed to successfully manage it.

You might ask if it was more expensive to

get our own Superintendent? Nope. It actually saved money. And in the following years we renovated our school, brought curriculum up to date and updated the policy manual, which took a year and a half to accomplish.

The result is the building you see today and academic scores that are among the highest of comparable school systems, all while keeping per student costs among the lowest.

As a member of the Marlborough Board of Education from 1998 to 2003, I remember those years. I remember the hard work required to accomplish all that which was necessary to undo years of neglect.

So, when I hear people suggest that we return to a Central Office, I cringe. It may sound like a good idea, but it was proven not to benefit our school nor our town.

Simply look at what is going on at RHAM from the aspect of fiscal management and it is obvious that we can do better with local control. Yep, been there, done that.

Ken Hjulstrom – Marlborough

Note: Hjulstrom is a member of the Marlborough Board of Finance, but said he is speaking as an individual.

Affordability Matters

To the Editor:

As Colchester heads toward a second budget referendum, residents will once again be asked to vote on a plan that would raise taxes at a time when many households are already feeling financially stretched. At meeting after meeting, residents have shared a consistent message: things are getting harder to afford. People are talking about cutting back on everyday needs and, in some cases, relying on credit cards just

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to keep up with basic expenses.

Despite those concerns shared with elected officials before the first vote, town leaders sent a budget with more than \$5 million in additional spending – an 8% tax increase – to referendum. Voters overwhelmingly rejected it by nearly a 2-to-1 margin. It was a clear signal that elected officials were not fully responding to residents who had been speaking out, and it also showed that affordability is a real issue for the community. Since taking office, First Selectman Dennler's budgets have increasingly relied on fund balance and other one-time revenues to cover ongoing costs. While that may provide short-term relief, it does not solve the underlying issue. It delays the pressure and pushes it into future budgets, where it shows up again, burdening taxpayers.

The bigger question now is whether elected officials have actually listened to the message from voters. When residents speak that clearly at the ballot box, they expect meaningful adjustments—not small changes.

Some have argued that voters should simply approve the budget to avoid dragging things out. But that is not what a referendum is for. It is not about convenience or simply moving on. It is about whether families can look at their own budgets and honestly say they can afford another increase in taxes.

At this point, the issue is not just the size of the budget. It is whether voter concerns are being fully heard and reflected in the outcome. Government exists to serve the people, not the other way around. Public officials are accountable to the communities they represent, not above them. Decisions should be, responsive, and made in the public's best interest. When that balance is lost, trust erodes and confidence in the process breaks down.

Until they listen, voters are left with only one option: to continue voting 'no.'

Colchester deserves better.

Cyndee Larabee – Colchester

Political Theater and Posturing

To the Editor:

At Monday's Tri-Board meeting, held June 15 in the WJMS Black Box Theater, residents should be asking a simple question: Are these meetings intended to listen to voters, or to wear down the 'vote no' movement and dismiss the more than 2,000 voters who rejected the budget by a nearly 2-to-1 margin?

The message from the electorate was clear. Voters rejected the budget and called for a significantly lower increase. Yet the response from many on these Democratic-controlled boards appears to be, "We know better than you." That is not representation; it is a failure to respect the will of the voters.

One issue raised Monday night was the possibility of eliminating the district's band program. Many residents strongly opposed that idea. The band program has been successful for years and should not be placed on the chopping block. Its inclusion in budget discussions appears to be more about generating an emotional reaction than identifying responsible savings.

Residents are growing tired of political posturing, excuses, and endless talking points. Public office is not a crown to be worn; it is a position of service. Elected officials work for the people, not the other way around. Where is the respect for the voters who sent a clear message at the ballot box?

What reductions are the BOF willing to support? Taxpayers deserve clear answers, not vague statements and delays.

The same themes continue to emerge from board leadership: fear, frustration, and lowered expectations. Residents are repeatedly told what cannot be done rather than being shown what can be done. No one is arguing against quality schools, essential town services, dedicated employees, or a strong community. Those priorities matter to all of us.

What residents are saying is that affordability matters, too.

Families and seniors are making difficult decisions every day. They are deciding whether they can afford medications, whether certain groceries must be left off the shopping list, and whether they need to limit driving because of rising costs. While town leaders debate budgets, residents are dealing with real financial pressures.

No resident should be pressured into supporting a budget out of fear that students, seniors, or vulnerable populations will suffer. Responsible budgeting requires balancing community needs with taxpayers' ability to pay. Those goals are not mutually exclusive.

The voters have spoken. The question now is whether Town Leadership is Willing to Listen.

Lance Lusignan – Colchester

Please Slow Down

To the Editor:

I'm writing on behalf of the residents living on Grayville, Reidy Hill and Northam roads in Amston with a request for drivers to please slow down on these streets. The posted speed limits of 25-30 are greatly exceeded by most of the people driving in this residential area. Traffic and speeds have increased since the bridge work commenced on Old Colchester Road.

Both volume and velocity even more noticeably amplify during what my wife and I cheekily refer to as "dump days" (when the Hebron transfer station is open). Drivers of sizable vehicles – clattering trailers in tow – rocket along the residential roads to make it to the transfer station before closing time, followed by a leisurely return along those same roads once their detritus has been successfully removed from their lives.

Somebody is going to get hurt.

There are several possible steps to ameliorating this problem. Installing speed bumps at strategic points along these raceways would be effective, but I can imagine comments regarding the expense and how these would "interrupt traffic flow." An old friend of mine (he's in his 90s) devised a more surgical solution by purposely driving his neighborhood streets exactly two miles over the speed limit. He's not popular with those driving behind him trying to bolt down the roads he's on, but his neighbors applaud him.

Signs often help, although reading them while driving requires lifting one's eyes up from one's phone. Prominent ones include "This is a neighborhood, not a racetrack" and "Drive like your kids live here." My friend in the UK (where

people are more blunt than we are) posted "Kill Your Speed, Not a Child." That one says it all.

I'm aware people who willfully flout the law and disregard other's safety are in the minority. Sometimes we're all behind schedule, just had a fight with a loved one, or are momentarily distracted, so our driving is less than exemplary. Keeping in mind the adage "It's best to arrive to your destination a few minutes late in this world than a few years early in the next," all I can do is ask that everyone please consider driving more mindfully in order to help ensure safety on our roads. In fact, why limit this respect to the roads I list herein? Why not do it everywhere?

Jeff Barnhart – Amston

Colchester Schools are Relative Bargain

To the Editor:

Colchester schools are not unusually expensive. Compared with many similar districts, they're a bargain.

Colchester spends about \$22,187 in net current expenditures per pupil – below Connecticut's statewide average of \$22,721. We're not overspending; we're getting a great deal. I grew up in Medina, N.Y., a blue-collar town near Buffalo -- a smaller district that spends more per student than Colchester. What differs is who pays: in Medina, about 76% of school revenue comes from state and federal governments; in Colchester, it's 33.5%. But this isn't a Colchester problem – it's a Connecticut problem. The state covers only about 36% of K-12 costs statewide,

one of the lowest shares in the country and below every neighboring state, where the figure runs 41% to 45%. The rest falls to local property taxpayers, town by town.

That matters because the money comes from somewhere – right now, disproportionately from your property tax bill. It matters even more because Connecticut is not broke: the state has posted surpluses for years. We're choosing to keep one of the country's heaviest local funding burdens in place even as the surplus grows.

None of that changes what we owe our own kids now. This town needs to fund its schools. Whatever our concerns about the state's model, withholding support won't fix them – it only hurts our children. A strong school system benefits everyone. Even the larger increase that failed at the referendum would have cost the average family about \$520-\$624 a year, or \$10-\$12 a week. Any revised proposal will cost less, making the decision easier. Having grown up below the poverty line, I know what a solid school system is worth – my education in Medina launched my career as a pilot.

Children don't choose where they live or who their parents are. A state as wealthy as Connecticut should fully invest in them and close the gap between rich and struggling communities.

I have two requests. First, pass the school budget and protect our schools. Second, if you care about both your schools and your tax bill, call our legislators – state Sen. Norm Needleman and state Rep. Mark DeCaprio – and urge them to fight for a larger state share.

See Letters, page 8

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★ **Letters, cont. from page 7**

Every child in Connecticut deserves a high-quality education, regardless of ZIP code. Getting there means voting 'yes' on our schools in the next referendum – and fighting for a fairer partnership with the state afterward.

Jeremy M. McKenzie – Colchester

Voters Don't Want Shell Games

To the Editor:

The voters sent a clear message to East Hampton town officials in the recent budget referendum: they want less spending and lower taxes.

But at the recent Tri-Board meeting and the later Board of Finance meeting, board members who suggested actual cuts to spending were shut down and belittled by the majority. The majority then went on to discuss taking money earmarked for our horrible roads, roads that every taxpayer depends on, and shutting down or significantly reducing the availability of the town's transfer station, which is open to every taxpayer, to maintain spending levels elsewhere.

They also want to take surplus funds and use them to fund the same budget increase the town voted no on. Despite what the majority seems to believe, moving dollars from one pot to the other is not savings for the taxpayers. It is a Band-Aid, not a solution, designed to give the voter the false impression they were heard and taken seriously.

Instead of listening to voters, they are looking to play a shell game by cutting from areas that serve all taxpayers, to mask big spending elsewhere. The majority do not represent the will of the voters; they represent the maintenance of big spending and big government, at your expense.

I do not envy their job, cutting spending in areas that provide important services is a thankless job. I understand their desire to maintain spending, but hard choices need to be made, rather than shell games that rob Peter to pay Paul. If the job of listening to and acting in support of the will of the people is too hard for them, then perhaps they should step down.

There is no shame in that; we are asking them to do something difficult that they may not be cut out to do.

I hope East Hampton voters remember this when we have our next municipal election. The taxpayers keep putting people into power that ignore us when we vote. On one hand, the voters put them into power, and on the other they wonder why big spending and high taxes are pushed on us every budget cycle. We must break the cycle and vote them out of office the next chance we get.

Bryon Turner – East Hampton

Replay

To the Editor:

If you are curious about the ongoings with Hebron's new Public Works facility, to be located at 550 Old Colchester Rd., tune in to related town meetings, including the most recent Planning and Zoning meeting held June 10th. Visit HebronCT.com for links. At the most recent PZC meeting we heard, and saw, great ideas for this long-overdue, new facility.

First and foremost, as you can well imagine, households on the Raymond Brook Watershed and beyond, are greatly relieved to see the facility staying on Old Colchester Road and off the watershed's high water table. We are grateful for the residents of Old Colchester Road, and nearby streets, that have openly supported keeping the facility in their neighborhoods. Several people, from these neighborhoods, said they like having their roads plowed first while others felt it would be a shame to develop the watershed. Equally important is that our PW employees receive updated and safer working conditions. The State of CT has stringent new guidelines that benefit not only our employees, groundwater supplies and the public, but the dog kennel as well. The new plans, shared at the PZC meeting, show beautiful PW facilities, a new transfer station and a terrific looking dog and cat kennel.

Hebron's Department of PW Action Committee has worked diligently to keep the ball rolling. They police social media correcting any misinformation. They submit regular letters, to

this paper, which keep us updated about their meetings. They include the architects from Silver Petrucelli and Associates at their meetings. SPA has been a great addition to the DPWAC and PZC meetings. They are enthusiastic about 550 OCR and gladly took on the challenge of updating our facility at this interesting location. They said the views from the new office spaces will be lovely. They were also inspired by the large amount of sunlight the location provides and more. SPA and the DPWAC have dotted every I and crossed every T with a sharpened pencil.

So again, if Hebron's new PW facility interests you, be sure to watch the replay of the PZC June 10th meeting at HebronCT.com. Computer-drawn images of the new facilities were included in the presentation and they show a really nice, understated, sleek, modern, design that is sure to please. #save17

Jean Tulimieri – Amston

Healthy Aging Through Lifelong Learning

To the Editor:

Healthy aging is about more than staying physically active, it is about continuing to learn, building social connections, and remaining engaged with the world around us.

This summer, the Portland Senior Center is excited to offer opportunities for older adults to attend Elder School programs at beautiful Camp Bethel in Haddam. Participants will enjoy engaging educational topics, including the history of folk music and the Goodspeed Opera House, while spending time in a welcoming and inspiring environment along the Connecticut River.

Research shows that lifelong learning supports cognitive health, promotes a sense of purpose, and encourages social connection. Programs like Elder School help reduce isolation, foster new friendships, and provide meaningful opportunities for personal growth.

Camp Bethel's ADA-accessible campus ensures that individuals of varying abilities can participate comfortably, reinforcing the importance of inclusion and accessibility for all. Participants will also enjoy the benefits of spending time in nature, which has been shown to improve mood, reduce stress, and support overall well-being.

Adding to the experience is a picnic lunch overlooking the beautiful Connecticut River, offering time to relax, connect, and enjoy good company.

At the Portland Senior Center, we believe that learning, friendship, and new experiences should continue throughout every stage of life.

Elder School at Camp Bethel is a wonderful example of how education, nature, and community come together to support healthy aging.

Thanks to grant funding, this enriching experience is being offered free of charge. Those interested in participating are encouraged to contact the Portland Senior Center at 860-342-6761 or register through MyActiveCenter.com, as space is limited.

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

Belltown, Talk to RHAM

To the Editor:

The East Hampton TC, BOF, and the BOE should go talk to the Hebron, Andover, Marlborough (RHAM) officials about how to trim the budget. According to the 6/12 *Rivereast* article, after two failed referendums, the RHAM officials were offering a total budget of a 0.13% decrease over the current year budget. This was achieved in part by the RHAM BOE board directing the administrators to identify reductions to achieve a zero percent increase or lower, and they did! Wouldn't it be grand to have our BOE show the same commitment to the EH taxpayers? Perhaps the RHAM folks would be happy to share their approach, because it apparently works.

Former BOF member Ms. Coshow in 2025 chastised the EH BOE to "focus on something other than themselves for once" and here we are, facing the same tired arguments. The BOE immediately goes to cutting staff as the only option for a smaller budget. There are a whole host of realistic cost-cutting options (as letters to the editor demonstrate) and ways to generate funds to support the town and the schools, yet there continues to be push back or no apparent desire to seriously explore alternatives, backed by dire threats of "harm to the students" and calling the 'no' voters "anti-education" and "Republicans." The concerned taxpayers in EH are not anti-education or anti-town services, but are just trying to keep some of their scarce money in their own pockets to pay for little things like a 25% revaluation increase, 31.1% gas price increase, and a pending 11% electric increase. Increasing taxes (and no increase in benefits) without serious effort to reduce expenses can only end up driving taxpayers away, at some point overwhelming the "good schools attract residents" argument.

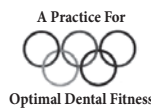
To the members of the East Hampton TC, BOE, BOF: listen to the voters and get it right. Because we can still vote 'no' until you do.

**Regards,
Bob Yenker – East Hampton**

HEALTHCARE SERVICES



Better Dental HEALTH



by George M. Mantikas, DMD

DENTAL EMERGENCIES

When does a dental problem become an emergency? Some issues need immediate attention, while others can wait until your next dental checkup. A dental emergency is any problem that requires immediate attention, like severe pain, bleeding that won't stop, the risk of losing a tooth, or an infection. Other examples are a sudden or severely painful toothache, sudden swelling in the mouth or jaw, exposed nerves, knocked out or fractured teeth, abscesses, and objects lodged in the teeth or gums. Missing fillings and crowns can also be considered dental emergencies, due to the risk of further damage and infection. If you're not sure if your issue requires an emergency visit, call your dentist to discuss your symptoms.

It's so much easier to prevent a dental tragedy than have to treat it when it turns serious. Place your oral health in our capable hands. We'll work together as a team with you to achieve the long-term benefits that quality dentistry affords. You can trust us to help you keep on top of a healthy dental profile that will serve you well into your future. For routine dental maintenance visits to late-breaking emergencies, please call for an appointment. We can make financial arrangements for extensive treatment plans.

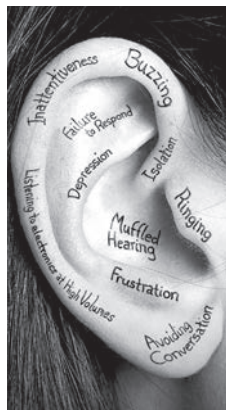
P.S. If you are experiencing a dental emergency, you can request an emergency appointment with a dentist, but it may require a trip to the emergency room if no immediate appointment is available.

George M. Mantikas, DMD, PC

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REG-19-26



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Dog Licensing is Underway

It's time for dog owners to renew their dogs' licenses. Current licenses expire June 30. All dogs six months of age and older must be licensed.

Licenses may be renewed or obtain by mail by sending a current rabies certificate (for renewals, only if the certificate on file has expired), proof of spay/neuter for new licenses, a self-

addressed stamped envelope for return of the license and a check payable to the Town of Andover - \$8 for spayed or neutered dogs and \$19 for unaltered dogs.

Residents may also renew or obtain licenses in person at the Town Clerk's Office, 17 School Rd. For more information, contact the Town Clerk's office at 860-742-0188, ext. 218.

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.

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 andoverchurch@gmail.com or visit www.andoverchurch.org.

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

Food Pantry: Mondays from 5-7 p.m. Bring your own bags. The **Foodshare Van** comes to the church every other Wednesday from 8:30-10 a.m.; **Senior Pantry** is on the opposite Wednesdays.

AA Meetings: Saturdays and Mondays, 7 p.m.
Sonshine Stamps: Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m.

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.

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.

Stuart L. Jablon, D.P.M.

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REG-26-20

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Highlander Graduates March to the Future

By Toriana Williams

Under bright blue skies and a warm June breeze, Portland High School's Class of 2026 celebrated graduation Monday, June 15, in a ceremony filled with laughter, reflection and pride.

As the familiar sounds of bagpipes echoed across the lot, seniors dressed in black gowns trimmed with red walked proudly into the stands festively decorated with balloons swaying wildly in the wind. Families cheered from the packed rows of seats, and every few minutes another balloon popped loudly, causing suppressed laughter throughout the crowds and adding even more energy to the joyful evening.

Parents proudly wore T-shirts covered in photos of their graduates while younger siblings waved handmade signs from the stands. Cameras flashed constantly as students smiled, hugged friends and prepared for one final night together as classmates.

The evening honored years of hard work, friendships, challenges and unforgettable memories that shaped the Class of 2026 into the people they are today.

Student Senate President Eunice Ngunjiri opened the ceremony as master of ceremonies and immediately captured the audience with a heartfelt speech about belonging, growth and family.

"The individuals standing next to me today are incredible," she said. "Whether they are athletes, scholars or musicians, every single one of them has worked extremely hard, and I am proud to be a part of the Class of 2026."

Ngunjiri shared the story of her mother immigrating to America from Kenya while pregnant and pursuing her master's degree alone. Her emotional reflection connected deeply with the crowd.

"She was alone, and I'm sure she felt like an outsider at times," Ngunjiri said. "Nonetheless, she excelled at school while raising a very hyper toddler."

She described arriving in Portland schools as a nervous fifth grader who struggled to fit in. "Everyone seemed to have their groups of friends," she said. "I struggled to find where I belonged."

As she reflected on middle and high school, Ngunjiri explained how she slowly found confidence, friendships and a sense of home. "This was my year of belonging," she said about senior year. "I found a group of people who were kind and liked me for me."

Her speech ended with an emotional thank you to her mother. "Mom, thank you for staying up late to help with my homework, watching my games and concerts and for being a shoulder to cry on," she said through tears. "I share this diploma with you, because without your love and support, I wouldn't be where I am today."

Valedictorian Lillian Gaetani followed with a speech filled with humor, honesty and nostalgia while reflecting on the memories that shaped the graduating class.

"When I was 4 years old," Gaetani joked, "my one big dream of the future was to work at Subway." The audience laughed as she explained that life – and six years of being gluten-free – eventually changed those plans.

Gaetani spoke about the pressures many students feel when constantly asked what they want to become in the future. She admitted that, like many others, she often worried about having everything figured out.

During her address, she described reading a poem that asked the questions: "Who are you when you are no longer known?" At first, she said, the thought frightened her because gradu-



Portland High School Student Senate President Eunice Ngunjiri shared a loving hug with class valedictorian Lillian Gaetani as Gaetani approached the podium to address the Class of 2026 and ceremony attendees at Monday's graduation.

ation meant leaving behind familiar teachers, hallways and routines. But eventually, she realized those memories would always be part of who they are.

"We are not who we are despite the people and experiences that shaped us," Gaetani said. "We are who we are because of them."

She then celebrated the unique memories shared by the class, drawing loud giggles and cheers from students. "We are victims of the Great Sewage Explosion of 2025," "We are the chipped teeth from the dangerous cafeteria French fries," and more.

Gaetani also reflected on the teachers, family members and classmates who supported the graduates throughout their journey. "Every accomplishment we celebrate here tonight has fingerprints on it that do not belong to us alone," she said.

Before closing her remarks, Gaetani added that she plans to attend University of Connecticut to study music education. However, she added, "if things don't work out and you happen to see me working at Subway someday, just know that it was always a lifelong dream."

Salutatorian Allison Tine continued the evening with a deeply personal speech about perfection, failure and self-acceptance.

"I've strived for perfection throughout my entire life," Tine admitted. "But have never quite been able to achieve what I deem as perfect." She explained that over time, she realized success does not come from being flawless.

"I haven't made it here because I was the perfect student," she said, "but instead because I realized that I'm not."

Tine's honesty was warming as she reflected on late-night homework sessions, difficult

choices and learning from mistakes.

"I wouldn't be standing here today without all the times I've failed," she said. Her message encouraged graduates to stop focusing only on flaws and instead appreciate the strengths and lessons gained through challenges.

"We are all perfectly imperfect," Tine said. "Our imperfections are what make us who we are."

Senior Class President Gerry Hall brought energy and inspiration to the ceremony with a speech centered around perseverance and resilience.

Before beginning, Hall recognized members of Portland High School's Class of 1976, who attended the ceremony celebrating their 50th reunion. The audience applauded as former graduates stood proudly together.

Hall also presented the senior class gift: two picnic tables that will be placed outside the school for future students to enjoy.

Reflecting on his years at Portland, Hall spoke openly about setbacks and failure, comparing life to baseball. "Baseball is a game of failures," he said. "But the good players never have a bad season." Even after strikeouts or mistakes, Hall explained, players continue to step back on the mound.

"It will never be perfect," he said. "But that's okay."

Hall encouraged classmates to remain resilient through future struggles. "There are going to be many days in the future when it feels easiest to give up," he shared. "But I promise you things will improve."

"In the face of challenges and failure," Hall said, "we will step back on the mound, step back up to the plate and play our hearts out."

Town-Wide Revaluation

In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes, the Town of Portland is conducting its statistical five-year revaluation of all real estate properties for the Oct. 1, 2026 Grand List.

The town has contracted Tyler Technologies, Inc. to perform market analysis, sales validation inspections, and field reviews as part of the mass appraisal process, which the assessments will represent 70% of fair market value, in collaboration with the assessor's office.

Tyler Technologies, Inc. field personnel will carry official, town approved company identifi-

cation badges and will have signed authorization letters that include contact information for town officials, including the Portland Police Department.

Property owners are encouraged to review their property record cards available through the online assessment database and report any discrepancies, omissions, or property changes to the assessor's office to ensure accurate, fair, and equitable assessments: www.portlandct.org/assessor.

Revaluation assessment notices will be mailed to taxpayers in December.

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Free Show Coming

Tony Rome and The Peacemakers will be stop at Portland Saturday, July 4, for a free show at Adams Plaza, Route 66 in Portland. This year's tour is called the Sons of Liberty tour. All are welcome. This show runs one hour, and starts at 2 p.m. Rain date is July 5. Bring a lawn chair. Pictured is the band at last year's Halloween show. The group will have another Halloween show this year, on Oct. 31 at Concentric Brewing. The band will also play the Portland Fair on Sunday, Oct. 4.

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.

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. Fellowship Hour will follow for a time of refreshments and conversations.

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

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River Access Is Finally a Reality

By Anne Lilburn

Portland opened public access to its Riverbend Landing river access project on Saturday, June 6, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony that was attended by town selectmen, state Sen. Norm Needleman (D-33), state Rep. Christie Carpino (R-32), and Wangunk Elder Gary O'Neil.

The new riverfront park provides an access point for the public to launch non-motorized boats into the Connecticut River, and is the first public access point to the river in Portland in decades.

Riverfront Access Committee Co-Chair Lou Pear was the first to address the nearly 70 people who showed up for the event.

"We're calling it Riverbend Landing because the native Americans who lived here were Wangunk and Wangunk means 'bend in the river,'" said Pear.

Pear credited Needleman with helping the town to secure state funding for the access road and parking area.

"This all started with a vision," said Needleman. "Christie and I were able to help secure some funding for it, but it was town leadership that actually had a vision for this. ... The town always hoped they would have an access point to the river. This is perfect, it's beautiful. I can't say enough about what happens when people work together across party lines, [and] across interest lines."

"We actually – something you don't hear often in a day like now – Democrats and Republicans still in some cases really like each other," he said to applause and chuckles, "and I enjoy working with [Christie] because we're always focused on you: on our towns, our constituents and elected officials stay focused on that, we make all the difference in the world, because we can get more done together than we can get done by fighting each other all the time."

"To all the folks that envisioned this: brilliant, beautiful, terrific," concluded Needleman. "I'm just grateful to have been a small part of it."

First Selectman Mike Pelton noted the love that the Portland community had for the river. He jokingly described himself as only the "last line in a process that's been going on for hundreds of years," before noting the important role that former first selectwoman Susan Bransfield had played in getting the project started, as well as the work that former first selectman Ryan Curley played in furthering the project prior to Pelton's time in office.

"In the last couple weeks, I've been down here taking pictures pretty much every day," said Pelton, "because I wanted to share the joy that I felt about this, and every single time, there's at least people on the river fishing, or there's people in their cars drinking their lattes, enjoying some peace and quiet down here with the birds."

Riverfront Access Committee co-chair Rick Sharr celebrated the end of what he said had been a long road to get the project finished, with challenges ranging from finding an ideal site, to jumping through environmental and bureaucratic loopholes, to finding funding to finish the project.

"If you're not aware, Portland has the longest coastline on the Connecticut River in the state," said Sharr, "and a long history of interacting with the Connecticut River — from the Wangunk natives, to the shipbuilding in the Gildersleeve section, to the Brownstone Quarries, and then in the industrial revolution the oil terminals, and finally the Arrigoni Bridge — but through all of that, we never had public access to the river."

Pear echoed Sharr's sentiments about the hard work that it took to make the riverfront access a reality.

"It takes a village to do things," he told the crowd, "but in this case, it took the state, it took DEEP, it took the Connecticut River Conservancy, three first selectmen. It took people like you that are here today that are here to celebrate what we are doing."

Carpino described her first visit to the site to "see the vision" of this project with a group of



A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held earlier this month at the new Riverbend Landing. The new park provides an access point for the public to launch non-motorized boats into the Connecticut River, and is the first public access point to the river in Portland in decades.

town leaders before the road was built.

"They promised if I kept hiking through the woods and down the not very gentle slope to get to the river," she joked, "that someday we would have access, and we're here."

"It's because of everyone who contributed," added Carpino, mentioning the committee members, as well as former First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield and "everybody who served in her seat behind her."

"It is the power of Portland when people really get together," she said.

Carpino said she hoped to be able to bring her own kayaks to the river here in the future, and encouraged people to use the area and spread the word about it.

"Be safe, wear sunblock, bring bug spray, wear life preservers, bring a whistle," she said, "but seriously, please enjoy, and congratulations to everybody who had a part."

Perhaps the most heartfelt speech of the day was given by Wangunk Tribe Elder Gary Red Oak O'Neil.

O'Neil said he wanted to thank Portland for

the community's support in sharing the Wangunk history and culture, from Portland Library events to including Wangunk history in the public school curriculum. He said that the river and the waterfront area was important to him and to the Wangunk people, and described Portland as an important place.

"During the last thousands of years, the waterfront is where we gathered to go downstream or upstream. We did a lot of trading with the Nehantic natives and also the Tunxis," he said. "It was the shoreline of Portland that made it happen."

O'Neil delivered a final blessing before the ribbon was cut and residents walked down to the waterfront, as kayakers and paddle boarders eagerly took to the river.

"May the warm wind of heavens blow upon your house," said O'Neil as the breeze rustled the trees auspiciously around him. "May the great spirit bless all that enter there. May your moccasins make tracks in many snows, and may rainbows always touch your shoulders."

Car Show Returns Next Friday

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.

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.

Portland's Main Street 1995 to 2025

The Portland Historical Society will host a program presented by resident Bob McDougall on Thursday, June 25 at 7 p.m., in the Mary Flood Room of the Portland Library. And it's a program that's decades in the making.

In the 1960s a group of townspeople would often gather at the local library, then known as the Buck Library, on Friday evenings and share stories from Portland's past. In the early 1970s these same folks were the founders of the Portland Historical Society. Their mission was simply to collect and share Portland's history. From the society's early days, charter member and then-sixth grader Bob McDougall had an idea — to record Portland's Main Street in photographs so that future generations would have images to help them envision Portland's past.

McDougall, now museum director for the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History, has prepared an exhibit of photographs of Portland's Main Street from the Arrigoni Bridge to Indian Hill Avenue for the fourth time. Titled "Three Decades of Change on

Main Street 1995-2005-2015-2025," the exhibit features four panoramic series of photographs, each 96 feet long, that include 2,400 snapshots of Main Street. The photo mural also includes many historic images of Main Street buildings from the society's collection.

At the June 25 presentation, McDougall, with his photo mural as a backdrop, will share some of the stories hidden on Portland's Main Street, pointing out connections to Portland's past and exploring this evolving thoroughfare at the heart of our community. As part of Portland's America 250 Celebration, new residents are invited to come learn about our town, and longtime residents are encouraged to come and reminisce with their own Main Street stories.

The program is open to the public free of charge. If you own a home on Main Street or have a business on Main Street, and have been curious about what Portland's Main Street looked like even 30 years ago, this program may give you some insight.

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Time to Vote for Favorite Street Garden

Portland's 2026 Street Garden Project is blossoming.

The Portland Economic Development Commission and the Portland River-Valley Garden Club have once again encouraged businesses throughout town to add some blooms and beauty to the community. The plants have been planted, the flowers are blossoming, and Portland is blooming.

During the week of June 22-28, voting for the Portland's Choice Award will be available. There are two ways to vote, beginning June 22: through a link on the Portland Community Facebook Group or with a paper ballot at the Portland Library or The Waverly Center in the designated ballot box. Please only one vote per person. Voting concludes June 28.

This year's gardens include: Magic Mirror Unisex Salon, 248 Main St.; Savvy Swap Consignment and Highland Sol Flower Farm, 275 Main

St.; Sarah's on Main, 246 Main St.; Connecticut Valley School of Music and Dance, 226 Main St.; Fabian's Pizza, 279 Main St.; Bud's Café, 158 Main St.; The Green Room, 260 Main St.; PegArch Architecture and Design and Tropical CT, 236 Main St.; Siltec, 283 Main St.;

Precise Grading and Earthworks, 218 Main St.; Scissor Happy, 864 Portland Cobalt Rd.; Your Health Solutions, 862 Portland Cobalt Rd.; The Wedding Dress, 162 Main St.; Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St.; Portland Parks and Recreation, 265 Main St.; Portland Ale House, 188 Main St.; Mirabito Energy Products, 276 Main St.; Winchester Café, 1374 Portland Cobalt Rd.; Dog Tales, 283 Main St.; Tommy's Pizza, 330 Marlborough St.; BeStronger Personal Training, Dance with Miss Alicia and Inner Circle Martial Arts, 332 Marlborough St.

Results will be announced in the *Rivereast* in a few weeks after all of the ballots have been tallied.

Local Woman Arrested in Fatal Bridge Crash

By Anne Lilburn

Following a months-long investigation, Portland Police on Tuesday arrested a local woman who was involved in a collision on the Arrigoni Bridge last year that resulted in the death of a Middletown man, Jozef Baran, 70.

Angela Grammatico, 32, of 596 Main St., Apt. 2, turned herself in to police and was charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol/drugs, reckless driving, second-degree manslaughter, first-degree reckless endangerment, possession of controlled substance (first offense) and second-degree manslaughter with a motor vehicle, police said.

On Nov. 11 of last year, at approximately 8:45 p.m., Grammatico was driving a Ford Escape

and traveling eastbound over the bridge when she collided with a red Subaru driven by Baran, police said.

According to reporting from WTNH that referenced her arrest warrant, Grammatico was driving back from a bar, the K-Club in Middlefield, and was driving 76 mph in a 35-mph zone just prior to the crash. WTNH reported that a search warrant of her car led to the finding of large amounts of unopened alcohol, prescription pills, a cylinder of strawberry watermelon nitrous oxide, and two small plastic bags of cocaine.

She was reported to have consumed two double vodkas with soda and three lemon drop shots before leaving the bar, and appeared visibly intoxicated just after the incident, with glossy eyes and slurred speech, according to WTNH.

Portland Police could not be reached by the *Rivereast* for comment.

Grammatico had not entered a plea as of press time. According to the state judicial website, she was released on a \$75,000 bond and is next due in court on July 21.

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

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.

Dean's List

Ashley Amendola of Portland made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Assumption University in Worcester, Mass.



FATHERS are VITAL to the Family, Church, Nation.

“The glory of children are their FATHERS”
(Proverbs 17:6)

“Honor thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee that thy days may be prolonged...” (*Exodus 20:12; Deut. 5:16*). God's order for the family requires **fathers and mothers** which honor God's creative purpose and makes for **God's blessings**. **GOD AND HIS BLESSING ARE TO BE FOUND BY THE BELIEVING HEART.** “**BLESSED** are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. **BLESSED IS THE MAN** to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (*Rom. 4:7-8*). “**BUT WITHOUT FAITH** it is **IMPOSSIBLE** to PLEASE HIM: for he that cometh to God **MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS**, and that He is a rewarder of them that **DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM**” (*Hebrews 11:6*).

FAITH KNOWS AND SHOWS THAT GOD IS. God has spoken and “we have heard and known, and **OUR FATHERS** have told us. We will not hide them [even the message of God's mercy and grace] from their children [sons], showing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He hath done” (*Psalms 78:3-4*). “Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare **WHAT HE HATH DONE** for my soul” (*Psalms 66:16*). “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (*John 5:24*).

GOD DESIRES HIS WORD TO BE KNOWN. “For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded **OUR FATHERS**, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, **EVEN THE CHILDREN** which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children” (*Psalms 78:5-6*).

GOD'S PURPOSE IS A HOPE-FILLED RELATIONSHIP. “That they might **SET THEIR HOPE IN GOD**, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (*Psalms 78:7*). “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him” (*Psalms 62:5*).

THE PERSON WHO BELIEVES ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (Acts 16:31) will know God's **SAVING GRACE** in his **HEART** and for his **HOME**. The heart that knows God's **SAVING GRACE** will seek to exercise God's gracious management in one's **HEART**, in one's **HOME** and thus rightly influence one's **SOCIETY**. God said of **ABRAHAM**, “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment” (*Genesis 18:19*).

THE NATIONS BENEFIT as God-honoring persons encourage God-honoring families. Such an influence leads to or makes for a God-blessed nation. “Blessed is the **NATION** whose God is the LORD” (*Psalms 33:12*). “There is no God else beside Me. **LOOK UNTO ME**, and be ye **SAVED**, all the ends of the earth: for I **AM GOD**, and there is none else” (*Isaiah 45:21-22*).

What is your relationship to the living God? Are you in need of God's saving grace as provided in the Lord Jesus Christ? Will you receive Him as your personal Saviour today? Come and worship with us this Sunday!

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6:30 pm Evening Worship

WEDNESDAY:

7:30 pm
Prayer Meeting and Bible Study

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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.

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, June 19, for Juneteenth, and will also be closed Friday, July 3, and Saturday, July 4, for Independence Day.

Children's Programs: Coming Soon! Cook Up an Adventure Summer Reading Program: 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. 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 Tie-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, then decorate your

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.

own tie-dyed cupcakes. All materials will be supplied. Space is limited.

Juggler Ned Gelfars: Wednesday, July 8, 6:30 p.m. *The Ned Show* features comedy, juggling, unicycling and fire-eating, plus audience participation. This show will be held on the Town Green and move into the library's Mary Flood Room in case of inclement weather. Registration opens Monday, June 29, at 10 a.m.

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.

Adult Summer Reading Program: Cook Up an Adventure: When you sign up, 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. Then, 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.

Portland Middle School Track Makes History



Portland Middle School's boys track and field team placed second overall at the state championships, marking the best finish in the history of the program.

By Josh Howard

The boys track and field team at Portland Middle School had a banner season this spring, placing second overall at the 18th annual Middle School Track and Field Championships that were held at Manchester High School last month.

It was the team's highest finish in program history.

Head coach Deb Rooth said it was a mix of standout performances and depth that led the way this year.

"We had a strong team," added Rooth, who coached the team with Marc Lapidus and Chris Brown. "Most of the kids came along very nicely and improved, especially the distance runners."

With over 90 programs competing at the championships at the Barry "Mitch" Mitchell Athletic Complex in Manchester, Portland scored 33 team points to place behind only Timothy Edwards (37.86) from South Windsor.

Making the feat even more impressive is that Portland is composed of 7th and 8th grade athletes from the under 250 total students at the middle school, while the champs from Timothy Edwards have athletes across sixth, seventh and eighth grades, with well over 1,000 kids total in the school.

Powering Portland to the runner-up finish was a group of gifted sprinters and distance runners. Zayden Dullary, an eighth grader, won both the 100 meters and 200 meters. Dullary ran 11.54 in the 100m and 24.16 in the 200m to take gold in both events.

Heithor Silva, a 7th grader, placed second in the 200 meters with a time of 25.23

Portland's 4x800 relay team of Patrick Reilly,

Parker Anderson, Jameson St. Pierre, and Zach Barr placed fourth with a time of 11:43.9. Reilly also placed 10th individually in the 800 meters.

Also placing 10th was Portland's 4x400 relay team of St. Pierre, Barr, Sebastian Robotin, and Jacob Phelps.

Rooth, who started coaching at the middle school in 2006, said the annual championships held in Manchester are conducted like a "professional meet", adding "it runs very smoothly."

Following the competition, Rooth's team received a second-place trophy and all competitors that finished top eight in events received medals.

It marked the end of a historic year for the team, which won all of their regular season league meets and took first place at the Running Rams Middle School Invitational in Old Saybrook on May 15.

Like the state championships, Dullary won both the 100 and 200 meters. Silva finished second and third in the events, respectively.

Robotin won the 55 meters hurdles, while St. Pierre (400 meters) and Reilly (800 meters) each placed second in their respective events as Portland pulled away from the competition, scoring 85 points to finish well ahead of runner-up Lyme-Old Lyme (67) and the rest of the field.

Between the boys and girls squads this season, over 70 athletes signed up for track and field at the local middle school and Rooth hopes the trend continues in years to come.

"We have notoriously high numbers because we're a no cut sport," explained Rooth. "We want to make this a program that everybody can participate in."

From the Committee on Solidarity

Building a Community Where Everyone Belongs

Members of Portland's Committee on Solidarity joined thousands of participants and supporters at the recent PrideFEST in Middletown. Marching behind the Portland Pride banner, participants were met with enthusiastic cheers and encouragement from parade-goers lining the streets.

For many, the event was a meaningful reminder of the importance of visibility, acceptance, and belonging. Pride is also a reminder of the values upon which our nation was founded. The promise of liberty, equality, and the pursuit of happiness has inspired generations to work toward a more just and inclusive society. LGBTQ+ individuals, like all Americans, seek the freedom to contribute to their communities and live authentically.

Glenn Eason, a member of the Committee on Solidarity of the Town of Portland, reflected on the significance of the event.

"One of the most meaningful parts of my work has been helping ensure that the LGBTQ+ community in Portland feels seen, represented, and supported. Walking together as a town in the Middletown Pride Parade is more than just participation in an event; it is a public statement that everyone deserves to live openly, truthfully, and with pride. It allows LGBTQ+ residents to see themselves reflected in their community and to know that they are loved, welcomed, and not alone. It also shows that there are people in Portland who will continue to stand with them and fight for their right to live lives filled with truth, dignity, and prosperity. For me, this work is about building a town where every person knows they belong."

Another participant shared similar feelings about the day.

"It's always very powerful to be part of something larger than yourself," one marcher said. "At Pride, we are part of a strong, joyful community of people who believe that everyone deserves to be happy, everyone deserves the same rights, and everyone should be loved and celebrated for who they are. Pride has become increasingly important at a time when many members of the LGBTQ+ community, particularly transgender individuals and youth, face growing challenges. It's important to let people know that Portland is a safe space for the LGBTQ+ community. Like any town, we're not perfect, but participating in this celebration is a step in the right direction."

The day was marked by a spirit of joy, inclusion, and solidarity. Speakers highlighted the connections between LGBTQ+ rights, mental health, disability advocacy, and racial justice, while several young speakers shared thoughtful perspectives that inspired many in attendance.

The Committee on Solidarity also invites residents to attend Portland's 8th Annual Juneteenth Celebration on Saturday, June 20, from noon to 5 p.m. at Portland Middle School. Juneteenth commemorates the end of slavery and celebrates freedom, resilience, and the continuing pursuit of equality.

The celebration will begin at noon with a special opening program featuring local speakers sharing reflections on Juneteenth, Portland history, and community. Educational exhibits, community organizations, vendors, family activities, food available for purchase, and free ice cream from Ice Cream Emergency will be offered throughout the afternoon. Admission is free, and all are encouraged to attend.

By supporting events that celebrate diversity and inclusion, we send a powerful message about the kind of community we aspire to be. Gatherings like Pride and Juneteenth help build bridges of understanding, create new friendships, and remind us of our shared humanity. They demonstrate that every resident matters, that every voice has value, and that everyone deserves to be treated with respect. In doing so, we strengthen the connections that make Portland a welcoming and vibrant place to call home.

We welcome the public to join us for our monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. You can join us either in person at the Waverly Senior Center or online at www.portlandct.org/zoom, Zoom B (ID: 352 700 8408, password: 113ct). Agendas, minutes, and general information can be found at portlandct.org/solidarity-task-force. If you are interested in the committee, you do not have to be a member to participate! To learn more about the committee and its workgroups, email portlandctsolidarity@gmail.com.

Portland Committee on Solidarity

First Congregational Church News

All are welcome to First Congregational Church, 554 Main St., for worship each Sunday at 10 a.m. Pastor is the Rev. Judith Cooke. This Sunday, June 21, Cooke will preach on the topic "Fearless Faith."

Also, starting June 21 Sunday morning Church School will transform into a camping adventure in Fellowship Hall. Children will explore God's world through hands-on activi-

ties, games, crafts and stories. Each week will feature a different camp-themed experience designed to spark curiosity and wonder. Children will create a garden, build birdhouses, learn about animals, enjoy water activities, share stories, create arts and crafts, and more.

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

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 29.

Weekly Programs: Unless noted, all programs are free. **Monday, 6/22:** Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, 6/23: 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: grilled chicken, rice pilaf, mixed veggies, dinner roll and butter, string cheese, orange cup; **Coupons for Troops**, 1-4 p.m.; **Setback**, 1 p.m.; **Synco-**

Cize II, 5-6 p.m. - fee is donation to instructor. **Wednesday, 6/24:** Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; **Chair Yoga with Gia**, 10:30-11:15 a.m. - fee is a \$5 donation to instructor; **Bridge**, 12:30-4 p.m.

Thursday, 6/25: **Stretch & Tone**, 9:30 a.m.; **Knit & Stitch**, 10 a.m.; **Congregate Meal**, noon - \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: Hummel Bros. Hot dog on a bun, Italian pasta salad, fruit cup, milk; Mah Jongg, 12:30 p.m.; **Scrabble**, 1 p.m.

Friday, 6/26: **Light Aerobics**, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; **Chair Yoga with Gia**, 10:30-11:15 a.m. - cost is a \$5 donation to instructor.

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

Bingo Canceled: Bingo with Sean, scheduled for July 8, has been canceled.

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.

Marlborough • Marlborough • Marlborough • Marlborough • Marlborough • Marlborough • Marlborough • Marlborough • Marlborough • Marlborough • Marlborough



The Marlborough Lions Club's annual Donald Lack Scholarship was awarded this year to Ella Hatzikostas of Marlborough. Pictured from left are Emanuel, Erin and Ella Hatzikostas, Jean Paul Bolduc and Tom Reiser.

Ella Hatzikostas Receives Lions Scholarship

The Marlborough Lions Club's 2026 annual Donald Lack Scholarship was awarded this year to Ella Hatzikostas of Marlborough, daughter of Erin and Emanuel Hatzikostas, who graduated this year from RHAM High School.

Marlborough Lions Club President Jean Paul Bolduc and Lions Club Treasurer Tom Reiser presented the \$1,000 scholarship check to Hatzikostas and wished her well on his future endeavors. Hatzikostas will attend the University of Maryland in the fall and will study psychology/criminology (pre-law).

During her time at RHAM, Hatzikostas excelled both academically and in athletics. She achieved a 3.85 (4.8 weighted) GPA and was inducted as a member of the National Honor Society in 2024. She was also Class Vice President from her freshman to senior years and School Spirit Leader during her senior year. In athletics, she was a member of the varsity cross country team during her sophomore through senior years and captain during her senior year, played varsity basketball from her freshman to senior years, and played varsity softball during

her freshman and sophomore years.

Hatzikostas also volunteered to serve as a 4H Camp Counselor, coached "Summer of Swish Basketball Camp" and "Shots for Tots Basketball Camp" and volunteered with the Hebron Maple Fest, Glastonbury Apple Fest and Hebron Lions Pancake Breakfast. Based on these impressive accomplishments, Hatzikostas was selected as this year's Marlborough Lions Club scholarship recipient.

The Marlborough Lions Club's primary goal is to provide services for those with vision impairment; however, the Lions also serve their community by supporting local social services such as the Marlborough Food Bank and annual vision screening for our children at Marlborough's elementary school.

The Marlborough Lions have recently welcomed new members to the club and encourage those who would like to learn more about joining to reach out to club president Jean Paul Bolduc at 860-798-2054 or club secretary Ken Hjulstrom at 860-490-9116.

Parks and Rec. Programs

Marlborough Parks & Recreation has announced the following. For full program descriptions or to register, visit www.marlbroughct.gov. For more information, call 860-295-6203.

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.

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

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

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 Marlborough Elementary School. For boys and girls ages 7-12. Fee is \$185/resident, \$190/non-resident.

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.

Making Life Easier for Those Left Behind

Marlborough Congregational Church, located at 35 South Main St., is hosting a presentation, "You're Dead: How to Make Life Easier for Those Left Behind," on Wednesday, June 24, from 6:30-8 p.m., upstairs in the Thienes Lounge.

When Beth Alves' husband unexpectedly died of a heart attack in 2022, she came face-to-face with a lot more than shock and grief. She suddenly found herself wading through the unfamiliar world of wills, trusts, probate, house-

related issues and more.

What she learned prompted Alves, a professor at CT State Community College Quinebaug Valley, to create a list of tips designed to help those who are faced with the many tasks that must be dealt with after the death of a loved one.

Alves will also talk about the importance of creating an "If I Am Dead" file that is designed to make life easier for loved ones.

The presentation is free and is open to the public.

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.

Congregational Church News & Notes

Sunday Worship at Marlborough Congregational Church, located at 35 South Main St., is held at 10 a.m. The service is also broadcast live every Sunday at mcc.marlbroughchurch.org and recorded for later viewing. Church pastor is the Rev. Valerie Seaver. Childcare for infants and toddlers is provided downstairs in the nursery, but children are always welcome at the worship service. The Christian Education team has provided quiet, activity bags, found in the narthex, for the youngest children to borrow and enjoy at summer services. Sunday School and youth group will resume in September.

June 21 is a Bluegrass Sunday and Father's Day. All are invited for hand-clapping music led by the Joyful Blue, the church bluegrass band. The service will be led by Seaver. Her sermon title is "Here I Come Running," based on Luke 15:11-24. After worship all are invited to Coffee Hour in the Thienes Lounge for snacks and refreshments.

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 free-will giving boxes are found by the doors in the sanctuary. Donations can also be made through the church website, or mailed to the church at P.O. Box 57, Marlborough, CT 06447. For more information on the church or its programs, call Seaver's direct line at 860-295-0432, email her at pastorval@marlbroughchurch.org, or contact the church office at office@marlbroughchurch.org.

Senior Center News and Notes

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

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

Events: Free Art Classes: 6/24 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.

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 appoint-

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

Social Services: Food Bank: Located at 3 Wilhenger Drive, and can be reached at 860-295-6008. There is an open house Tuesdays from 10 a.m.-noon and 4-6 p.m. The food bank is open to qualified residents in need.

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program: Electronic benefit card, preloaded with \$40. For use at participating farmers markets to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, honey, and fresh cut herbs. Use at the Marlborough Farmers Market 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.

Dean's List

Sarah West of Marlborough made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Western New England University in Springfield, Mass.

Scholarships Awarded

The Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department Woman's Auxiliary recently presented Marlborough seniors Kamden Bevans, Brenna D'Amico and Reese Montstream with the auxiliary's 10th annual scholarship award.

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.

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.

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 Tuesday/Thursday, 9-11 a.m., at Blish Park. Open to all levels of play. Registration is free.

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Twelve dogs and their owners competed in Marlborough's Top Dog competition on June 7. Prizes were given to the winner in each group. In the photo at right are, from left, the three winners (and their owners): Canyon, the Top Dog, and his owners Allie Thomas and husband; the winner of the Liberty Look-Alike contest, Bean, and his owners the Jarmanis; and winner of the Declaration of Independence Tricks and Commands category, Duke, owned by Larissa Vilcinskas.

Winners Announced for Top Dog Competition

On Sunday, June 7, 12 dogs competed in three categories at the Marlborough Top Dog competition, sponsored by Marlborough's 250 America Committee.

The three categories were Liberty Look-Alike (dog and owners looking alike in many ways), Declaration of Independence for Unique Talent (tricks and commands), and overall Top Dog, Founders Best Friend. From 6 months old to 14 years, these dogs showed what made them spe-

cial, the committee said. Each winner received a doggie gift basket, and the Top Dog received a Yeti engraved bowl as well.

The committee said judges had a difficult time coming up with the winners, but eventually the winner in each category was announced. For the Liberty Look-Alike category, dressed in matching tie-dye shirts was Bean, a boxer doodle owned by Ciara Jarman. For the category "Declaration of Independence," featuring tricks

and commands, the winner was Duke, a lab mix owned by Larissa Vilcinskas, who showed off several tricks and obeyed several commands.

Finally, the Grand Prize - Marlborough's Top Dog - was awarded to Canyon, a mini bernedoodle owned by Allie Thomas. This sweet dog charmed the judges and the committee said the speech given as to why he should be Top Dog was quite convincing!

Marlborough's 250 Committee has worked on

planning activities for the community since last summer. With support from donations by several local businesses and some individuals the committee is able to provide a variety of activities without cost to any participant. The committee's activities began in February and will continue throughout the remainder of the year. For more information, go to the Marlborough Preservation Society website at marlborough-history.org.

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.

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.stjfisher.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.

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

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.

Dean's List

Evan St. Amand of Marlborough made the Dean's List at the University of Hartford.

Dean's List

Katherine Granatini of Marlborough made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Marist University in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

She is currently a sophomore, majoring in business administration.

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Bus Driver, Students are First to Find Hidden Bell

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton school bus driver Verna Killian always goes out of her way to keep her elementary students engaged. The East Hampton resident decorates her bus, holds art contests, and plays games like “20 Questions” with the students she drives.

So when Killian’s mom told her that Bevin Bells had hidden 13 “America 250” bells, labeled one through 13, around town for residents to find, Killian decided she’d have the kids keep an eye out for them.

She told the elementary school students about it in the morning on the first day of the scavenger hunt, June 1, and the kids spent the afternoon ride with their faces “plastered to the windows,” she said, looking for any sign of a bell. There were four spots, she said, where they thought they might have seen one, and one location that they were pretty sure about.

Killian couldn’t step out to check or retrieve any found bells quite yet — she couldn’t leave the kids unattended in the bus, and she had to get them home — so she dropped them off, then returned in her own car. At that first spot, there it was, right by the flagpole near the lake.

Killian drives Bus 1, and when she saw that it was bell number one, she said, she felt it was meant to be. “The fact that it was bell number one and we’re in bus one,” she said. “There’s so many synchronicities.”

Killian called Bevin Bells to report her find and leave a message, but the kids didn’t find out until the next day. When they did, she said, it was pandemonium.

“Everybody was standing up, everybody was screaming, it was a great time,” she said. “Everybody got to hold it in the bag. They passed it around and they were having a blast with it. It

was so cute.”

“You were the first ones to find a bell,” Cici Bevin, president of Bevin Bells, told Killian this past week. “Bell number one on bus one on the first day.”

Bevin said that the idea for the bell scavenger hunt came from Cap Egan, Bevin Bells’ office manager.

“As part of the town’s America 250 celebration, we just thought it’d be fun to do something with bells,” said Egan, “so I came up with the idea for 13 bells, for the 13 colonies.” She said she saw the hunt as a “kind of a take on the orbs that they hide on Block Island,” referencing the island’s hidden glass orbs that have become an annual tradition.

“We’re just thrilled that the kids found number one,” she added.

As of press time, Bevin said that bells had so far been found at several locations, including the Senior Center, the VFW and the Chatham Historical Society. Five were still remaining to be found.

Bevin, a sixth-generation member of the company’s founding family, said it’s been exciting to see how excited even grown adults have been at finding the bell.

“People have come into the factory holding their bell, like ‘I found it!’ People that we know, people that we don’t know,” she said.

Bevin said that the company was proud of the role it played in the town and the nation’s history. That’s why it was important to do something for the 250th anniversary, she said.

“Bevin Bells was founded in 1832, and Belltown, which is East Hampton, was the center of bell making in the United States, that’s how the name came to be,” she said. “We’re the only remaining bell company in town, there used to

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*.

YPPCA Taking Registrations for Summer Theater Camp

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

Fee is \$775 per child; additional children in

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.

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 will be provided by Symptalous — a.k.a. 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.

Troop 57 Bottle Drive

Troop 57 will have its next bottle drive Saturday, June 20, from 9 a.m.-noon. Bring clean cans, plastics and glass to the American Distilling Parking lot, 31 East High St.

Since Connecticut charges 10 cent on soda, beer, water, tea, kombucha, and juice, all of these clean containers can be dropped off. It may not specifically say Connecticut will pay the 10 cents, but if you paid a deposit, the scouts can take it. However, Connecticut doesn’t pay for milk containers, dairy products, wine and hard liquor, so they will not be accepted.

For more information, call Annette Kowalczyk at 860-267-2962.



East Hampton school bus driver Verna Killian and her students were the first residents to find one of 13 Bevin Bells the company had hidden around town to mark America 250.

be 20 or more. We just feel a real kinship to the history of this town and celebrating it and being a real part of the community is important to us.”

The bells that are hidden are the same ones that are being sold in stores, Bevin said, including on military bases worldwide. They are being sold locally at both Paul’s and Sandy’s and at Ace Hardware in town.

Memorial School Assistant Principal Andrea Montovani said the kids had been very excited when they found the bell, and she added the school had also found another bell in its garden. Montovani said Memorial School students had been learning both about the founding of the United States and about East Hampton history, so the 13 bells were a nice tie in with that. Moreover, she said, it was just a fun and exciting treat for the end of the school year.

Bevin Bells typically lets the finder of the hidden bell keep it, and then gives them a second bell as a reward once they report it, but in this

case, since there were about 37 young finders (along with one proud bus driver) the company got creative. They awarded Killian the bell and the bonus bell, but on Tuesday, June 16, when the students were dropped off at Memorial School, the company also gave each student on the bus a small bell.

Killian, who is in her fourth year driving a bus for M&J Bus Services, which operates buses for East Hampton Public Schools, said this experience has been the highlight of her bus driving career. She said she loves all the students she sees every day, and that this was a chance for everyone to come together.

“Nothing can beat this,” she said. “Absolutely, because every kid got to smile.”

Moreover, on the day that they all got their reward bells, she said, “we all actually got to get out of the bus, together, as a group, which is something we never do.”

“It was so nice to be together,” she said.

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:

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, Yarn Yogis, 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.

Mighty Magnificent Men’s Group: Meets every second and fourth Monday at 10 a.m. All men are invited for a social hour of facts, activities and snacks.

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

Ready to Respond – How to Help in Choking Situations: Tuesday, June 23, 10:30 a.m. Members of the East Hampton Ambulance Association will provide a hands-on demonstration on how to respond during a choking emergency. Participants will learn the signs of

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 donnaadubehryb@gmail.com for more information.

choking, when to act, and the proper steps for performing the frontal thrust maneuver safely.

Café Conversations with the Coordinator: Tuesday, June 23, 12:15 p.m. Share ideas, concerns and feedback with center director Holly Marrero.

Wednesday Film Fun: Wednesday, June 24, 1 p.m. *A Real Pain* (2024; rated R) will be shown. The movie stars Kieran Culkin and Jesse Eisenberg as two mismatched cousins traveling through Poland to honor their late grandmother.

Honoring the Journey: Thursday, June 25, 11 a.m. This group can help participants to navigating loss and prioritize safety, validation, and the transition from acute pain to integrated memory.

The Script Society: Thursday, June 25, 2 p.m. In this monthly interactive program with actress and director Val Bozzi, participants bring stories to life by reading and exploring a variety of engaging scripts together. No experience needed.

Bike Rides for Seniors: Friday, June 26, 10 a.m. Ride at Harlem Valley Trail, 13 Main St., Millerton, NY. For riders 55 and older. Bring your bike, helmet and water bottle. Call 860-267-4426 for ride information and to register.

Trips: Thimble Island Cruise: Thursday, July 9, departing the senior center at 9:45 a.m. Sail aboard the Volsunga IV for a narrated tour of the Thimble Islands. Depart the center at 9:30 a.m. for a 11 a.m. tour. Bring your own lunch – drink and dessert provided. Cost is \$20 with bus transportation.

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.

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Officials Go Back to the Drawing Board

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton's Board of Finance, Board of Education and Town Council got to work in the past week to take on the challenge of figuring out how to get a potentially passable budget before voters as quickly as possible.

The boards were back at it due to the failure of the town and education budgets at the June 2 referendum vote. With inflation, rising health-care costs, and a recent townwide property revaluation putting strains on both municipal and taxpayer budgets, they had their work cut out for them.

At a tri-board meeting involving all three bodies on June 11, as well as at a recent Board of Finance meeting on June 15, board and council members sought to figure out what might be able to be cut, and sought to figure out what they most wanted to try to keep.

The debate at times turned philosophical, with Board of Finance Vice Chair Dan Finn, a Democrat, and Board of Finance member Jim Radavich, a Republican, offering up starkly different views of priorities and what the community should look like. At the tri-board meeting, Radavich suggested at one point that, if school cuts led to the public schools being less desirable to young families, that he would be OK with those families leaving town or deciding not to move here.

"If the town has to trim back the school services, or whatever the case may be, I don't think that's a bad thing," he said. "If the people speak and you adjust and people want to leave or move out, it's not a bad thing. It's just how the town evolves and changes."

Finn countered by offering an example of what he saw as a vibrant, healthy community, using the example of a church on Sunday morning.

"[You go to church] on a Sunday morning, and you hear the church is full of babies and kids making noise, right? You think to yourself, is this church an alive church that's growing, that's healthy? You think yeah, right?" he asked.

"But if you go to a service and it's like, there's no sound, and it's just quiet and it's a lot of people with hair the same color as yours and mine," he said, referencing his own graying hair, "you think, 'This church doesn't really feel like it's thriving. Feels like it's maybe dying.' I think that same thing is true about towns. If we have a town where people want to come and raise a family here, they want to come and be a part of this community and be engaged, I think you've got a town that's got a future."

Many board and council members noted the concern in the community about the potential loss of both the Smart Start and Beginner Bellringers preschool programs, and pointed out that many residents had expressed, both in public comment and in other communications, that they did not want to see those programs go. At the same time, everyone knew that, to get a budget to pass, there would need to be cuts on the education side of the budget.

At the Board of Finance meeting, chair AJ Spagnoletti, a Democrat, said that part of the challenge, in his view, was that, while voters had voted down the budgets and were struggling with possibility of higher taxes, his general sense was that voters also did not want to lose programs

and services. Both he and Finn pointed out that, because the budget was already trimmed so tightly in previous discussions, there were not a lot of excess costs that could easily be cut, meaning any significant cuts would likely mean that residents would see services, staff or programs go away.

One potential solution, championed by Finn, that would allow the town to decrease its overall costs, involved using some of the approximate \$600,000 projected surplus that the town currently has on one-time capital costs ("spending money that we already have," he said), to offset those budgetary items. Town Manager Dave Cox said that this was a solution that could help, but he advised limiting using those funds towards one-time costs, as opposed to more fixed costs, because those funds may not be there the following year.

While many seemed on board with this idea, at the Board of Finance meeting, Radavich said he still wanted more cuts. He said that he believed that cuts, and not just tax relief, was what voters wanted, adding that he wanted to see the town "do more with less," though he did not offer suggestions for specific cuts.

At that meeting, there was some debate among the board about the idea of "essential" services that everyone used. While all seemed to agree on the importance of police and emergency services, some board members, like David Caterisano, a Democrat, said he rejected the idea of an "a la carte budget" where residents wanted to fund only the specific services that they directly used.

"That's not how towns work," he said, adding the town needed to consider what was for their community, not just themselves as individuals.

Another idea, which was initially proposed at the tri-board meeting, involved reducing the town's transfer station operating hours so that it would only be open once a month instead of once a week. That idea was later pushed aside at the Board of Finance meeting after Cox reported that the station frequently filled its containers on those service days. If the station filled quickly on limited days, it would have to close

early, and many worried that fewer hours would result in large refuse items being dumped on roads, among other challenges.

There was also plenty of conversation about the Board of Education budget. Superintendent of Schools Timothy Van Tassel, and Board of Education Chair Nancy Kohler both said that education cuts were a struggle. She said that board members tried to make decisions "with the best interests of the children" in mind, and that none of them believed cuts were in their best interest.

"We have nothing less to reduce other than things that we feel are vitally important," she said, "and that's a heartbreaking decision to make."

Van Tassel told the public and the boards that, "You have something very special in this school system," and said they would do their best to try to make cuts without losing that, saying that he understood the financial challenges that many in town faced.

At the end of the Board of Finance meeting on Monday night, the board agreed to look at the budget in order to target specific areas and potential cuts, and return with suggestions for possible cuts the following Monday, with the goal of being able to present a proposed budget to the town council for them to vote on putting to referendum the following day.

One continued issue, as always, was that of voter turnout. At the previous week's tri-board meeting, Town Council member Joelyn Leon, a Democrat, lamented the turnout again.

"People did not come out and vote," she said, and when Board of Finance member Alison Walck, a Republican, pointed out that the turnout was "considered a very good turnout," speaking historically, Leon countered, "that's still sad."

Leon said she knew it was hard for people find the time to get involved or to make the time to vote, but that she hoped they could find ways to make it to the polls.

If the Town Council were to approve sending a revised budget to referendum, it could be voted on as early as July 14.

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, as there is limited parking at the factory. The open house will give visitors a behind-the-scenes look at the craftsmanship, equipment, and people behind Bevin's American-made bells. Guests will have the opportunity to tour the factory floor, learn about the bell-making process, and meet members of the Bevin team. Admission is free.

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.

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.

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 next drive-thru Chicken Barbecue will be held Saturday, Aug. 8, from noon to 5 p.m., at the Church field.

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., though it's on hiatus for the summer. The next study will resume in the fall.

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

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On a Hot Day, Bellringers Graduate Into Bright Futures

By Anne Lilburn

On Friday, June 12, 116 East Hampton High School seniors filed onto the school field for their graduation ceremony, and less than an hour later, they had switched their tassels, thrown their caps, and were lining up to ring a ceremonial bell, as if signifying their arrival to the wider world.

The Class of 2026 graduated on an especially warm night, with temperatures reaching into the low 90s that day. Families sat patiently in chairs on the lawn, with some scattered among the bleachers as well.

Class Essayist Ashley Johnson referenced bells in her speech to the graduating Bellringers: "For years," she said, "bells have run our lives": from alarm bells, to the bells letting them know to change classes, to the ones letting them know it was time to go home. She remembered trying to imitate the school bells, and trying to figure out the exact pitch of the bell in band and choir. An A, at 440 Hz, she said they had settled on.

"Somewhere along the way, the bell stopped being just noise. It became structure. It became routine. It became the rhythm of our days," she said. She said she had come to appreciate those rhythms, with the "small moments we didn't think twice about at the time because we assumed they would always be there."

In high school, she told the audience, "we became Bellringers. Not just people who hear the bell. But people who understand rhythm. People who know how to move with time instead

of just reacting to it. People who can start again, reset, shift, and keep going because we've been practicing it every single day without realizing."

Salutatorian Sofia Aresco remembered walking around the high school with a map on her first day of high school, which she said had been delayed for her by a case of Covid had kept her home for the first week.

"I make fun of 14-year-old me," she said, "walking around with a somewhat useless map and trying to figure out where you belong is what high school is for. There is no way to plan or map out your whole high school experience. Sure, we have goals, but the best parts of high school take place in uncharted territory. Whether it's finally making friends with someone new in your X-block after four years, trying out a brand-new sport, taking an elective you never expected to enjoy, or any other activity or any other spontaneous decision you make in high school, these are the moments that allow us to really grow and learn who we are."

She gave advice to her little sister Juliana, who is about to start high school herself next year, telling her, "You may feel lost, even with a map. But eventually, you'll find your people, your passions, and most importantly, yourself."

"Although none of us know exactly where life will take us next, I think we're leaving EHHS a little less lost than when we first walked in," she concluded.

Valedictorian Madelyn Daniels also referenced her family, talking about her great grandmother,

who was herself valedictorian of her graduating class. She remembered meeting her great-grandmother when she was very young, not knowing that she had been valedictorian – because while being valedictorian was important, she said, much like her classmates' achievements in other areas had been important, these achievements were "not what we will be remembered by."

Daniels said she hoped that someday she and her classmates would be remembered for qualities beyond their accomplishments on paper, she hoped they will be remembered instead for "being kind of funny or special." She referenced a quote often attributed to Maya Angelou, which reads, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Principal Eric Verner shared his thoughts on the graduating class with the audience, describing them as "scholars, artists and athletes," and noting their work with service organizations, including Interact, fire explorers and the Special Olympics, among other groups.

He said he appreciated their fondness for '70s music and thrifting, and said that while he knew the class "likes to spend a lot of time at the beach," he thought they needed to use more sunscreen.

Verner said that, more than anything, the Class of 2026 had cared deeply about their school. Now, he said, they faced their future, with all its choices. He quoted Robert Frost's famous poem, "The Road Not Taken," in which "two roads diverged in a wood," and also Led



One East Hampton High School graduate outfitted her cap in the fashion of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* – reminding her fellow students to stay motivated.

Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven":

"Yes, there are two paths you can go by, but in the long run," read the lyrics, "there's still time to change the road you're on."

"Your paths started in East Hampton," he told the graduates, "and you can always come home." "You'll always be Bellringers," Verner said.

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.)

Family Trivia Night: A Journey Through Time: Monday, June 29, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Adult Programs: 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 lake-

side 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.

Wolf Conservation Center Presents: North American Wolves: Tuesday, June 29, 6 p.m. Meet a Wolf Conservation Center expert to learn more about wolves, their habitats, and the work WCC is doing to protect the endangered Red Wolf and Mexican Gray Wolf.

Lunch Bunch - The Next Chapter (Freshmen Only!): Wednesday, July 1, 1-2 p.m. Bring your lunch and the book you are currently reading.

Teen TCG Club (Grades 8-12): Friday, July 3, 1-3 p.m. Come play your favorite trading card games alongside fellow fans or learn a new one. **Players of Magic: The Gathering, Pokemon, Yu-Gi-Oh!**, and more are invited to this afternoon of friendly competition. **Magic: The Gathering decks** will be available for new players to use.

Children's Programs: 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.

Police Activity Recap

East Hampton Police report that, from June 1-14, officers responded to 35 medical calls, four motor vehicle crashes and 13 alarms, and made 72 traffic stops.



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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 Rescheduled: The tournament will now be Thursday, Sept. 3, at Blackledge Country Club in Hebron. 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.

Strawberry Shortcake & Tag Sale

On Saturday, June 20, the Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam will sell strawberry shortcakes from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Cost is \$14. While the sale is first-come, first-served, you can also reserve by calling 860-682-2067.

The strawberry shortcake sale is in conjunction with Second Congregational's annual church fair, which runs 9 a.m.-2 p.m. and will feature crafts, tag sale items and Rada cutlery.

Education Records to be Discarded

The guidance department of East Hampton High School will destroy any and all education cumulative files of students who graduated or would have graduated with the classes of 1969-1976.

These records will be destroyed on July 17. If any student, as described above, would like their education cumulative file, they must submit a written request for a copy of the records no later than July 3. Send all requests to Roseann Bullett, Guidance Administrative Assistant, East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

Tennis Program for Adults

The East Hampton Recreation tennis program for adults is held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8-11 a.m., at the East Hampton High School courts.

Players from all *Rivereast* towns are welcome. This mixed-doubles program is free, requires no partners and is open to all levels of adult play, except beginner. Pre-registration is not required; just show up.

For more information, call or text Natalie Hurt at 860-227-8538.

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Dean's List

East Hampton residents Abigail Flynn and Michaela Healy, and Middle Haddam resident Bridget Keilbach, made the spring 2026 Dean's List at the University of New England.

Dean's List

East Hampton residents Brennan Johnson and Benjamin Maynard made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Western New England University in Springfield, Mass.

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Win a 2026 Chevy Colorado Pick-Up Truck

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

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

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

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

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



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Re-enactors take you through key people and events in Marlborough's history. This tour is mostly outdoors and will walk from the church to the library & cemetery.
Marlborough Congregational Church

Marlborough's Top Dog Competition 6/7, 1pm
Register by May 30. Awards include Top Dog/Founder's Best Friend for best behavior, Most Unique Talent/Declaration of Independence, & Liberty Look-Alike (owner/dog dress-up).
Richmond Memorial Library

Patriotic Displays on the Town Green June 26-28
Create a patriotic display to decorate the Town Green! Entry is \$10 per family, business, or group. Win prizes! Register at the library or online.

July 4th Party at the Park and Lake Parades 7/4, 10am-dark
Patriotic boat parades at 10am & 1pm, music under the Pavilion, a bonfire, and more! Gather with neighbors, bring hot dogs and s'mores, and watch the skies as the evening ends.
Blish Park

Money in the US Colonial and Confederation Period 7/19, 1pm
Discover how money worked in early America—from colonial trade to the first U.S. coins.
Marlborough Arts Center

Framing American Democracy- Radical Roots 8/1, 2pm
Take a virtual tour of the Wadsworth's exhibit and explore CT's role in America's story through art. Led by docent Christi Moraga.
Marlborough Senior Center

Marlborough Day 8/23, 10am-4pm
Marlborough Pride! Join neighbors for a day of activities, food trucks, train rides, and more.
Blish Park

Marlborough Jr. Ancient Fife & Drum Corps Parade & Muster 9/19, 11am
Fifes & Drums from across New England will march down N Main, led by Marlborough's own. Parade route covers Pettingill/N Main St. to Blish Park

250th Anniversary of American Beer 9/24, 6:30pm
Join illustrator & author Em Sauter for a lively look from Plymouth Rock to modern craft brews.
Richmond Memorial Library

Gathering on the Green 12/5, sunset
Marlborough's annual Holiday tradition! See the decorated fire truck parade, visit with Santa, and watch the fireworks.
Town Green



Celebrating Community, Then and Now

RE5-22-26

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Goff House Donations Welcome

Donations to the 2026 Joseph N Goff House Gazebo Concert Series are still being accepted. All concerts are held in the East Hampton Village Center Gazebo on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m., starting June 18 and running through Aug. 6 (except for Old Home Days week). Concerts will feature a different local talent each week. Donations, which are tax-deductible, help pay for the bands and promotional materials.

Checks made out to Joseph N. Goff House Inc. can be mailed to P.O. Box 337, East Hampton, CT 06424. Any amount is appreciated, or donate by level: Special Grants or Awards, Over \$250; Maestro, \$250; Soprano, \$150; Alto, \$100; Tenor, \$50; Bass, \$25. For further information, call Melissa Pinonzo at 860-993-5311.

Old Home Days 5K

The 2026 Old Home Days Rails-to-Trails 5K Run will be at 7 p.m. Friday, July 10. This is a point-to-point 5K race that will start at Connecticut Draft Horse Rescue. Shuttle buses will be provided starting at 6 p.m., departing from Center School. There will be no parking at the start. New for 2026, the last shuttle bus departs Center School at 6:35 p.m. The race starts promptly at 7 p.m. The first mile of the race leads you down Chestnut Hill Road to Route 16, crossing over Route 16 to Alden's Crossing and taking a right onto the Air Line Trail. You will continue approximately two miles down the shade covered Air Line Trail, crossing Forest Street, exiting at the Company One Firehouse on Barton Hill, left onto Main Street and right into the Center

school driveway to the finish line at the Old Home Days fairground. Entry fee is \$25. If you pre-register before June 22, all participants that preregister will get a free 2026 race T-shirt. Last-minute registration and bib pickup will be at Center School gym Thursday, 5:30-7:30 p.m. and Friday, 4:30-6:30 p.m. There will be no bib pick-up at the starting line. Register at www.EHOHD.org. For more information, contact Elisha Milton at 860-655-2743 or OHDrailstotrails@gmail.com.

Dean's List

Audrey Cooke of East Hampton made the spring 2026 Dean's List at the College of Charleston in Charleston, S.C.

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Time to License Your Dog

Hebron dog owners are reminded this is the month to license 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.

Dean's, President's List

The following local students made the Dean's List and President's List at the University of Hartford:

Amston

Dean's List and President's List: Hannah La Croix, Lily Mota.

Hebron

Dean's List: Abby Billings, Kiera Braunwart, Lauren Heffernan, Nina Jobes, Madison Pinto.

Dean's List

Amston resident Amy Forrest made the spring 2026 Dean's List at the University of New England.

Dean's List

Hebron residents Maggie Walker and Joelle Goralnik made the spring 2026 Dean's List at the College of Charleston in Charleston, S.C.

Dean's List

Hebron residents Edward Lavoie and Caitlin McClaine made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Springfield College in Springfield, Mass.

Lavoie is majoring in physical education and health/FCS, and McClaine is majoring in health science/pre-PA.

Dean's List

Amston residents Anna Lavenburg and Payten Wawruck, and Hebron resident Grace Nieszczyzewski, made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Fairfield University.

President's List

Amston residents Andrew Macca and Charlotte Atwood made the spring 2026 President's List at Western New England University in Springfield, Mass.

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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Trike-a-Thon!... Preschool children at CASTLE participated in a Trike-a-Thon on May 20 to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Children participated in lessons about bike safety and raised money to benefit the children of St. Jude's. This year, CASTLE Preschoolers raised \$837! CASTLE is a nonprofit preschool and before and after school program that has been part of the Colchester community for 35 years. There are still openings for preschool for summer and fall. Call 860-537-0214 for more information.

Westchester Church News

Westchester Congregational Church, located at 98 Cemetery Rd., holds worship Sundays at 10 a.m. All are welcome to attend. The church choir always welcomes new members. Services are also available on Zoom; visit www.westchestercongchurch.org for login information. Sunday School for children meets during the worship service.

Twelve-Step Meetings: Al-Anon meets in Canney Hall Wednesdays at 7 p.m. AA meets in Canney Hall Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

Scouts: The church sponsors Scouting America Troop 109. During the school year, Troop 109 meets on Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

Outreach and Other Opportunities: Knitting Group meets Thursdays at 10 a.m. Many

knitted, crocheted, and quilted items have been sent to Native American reservations, hospitals for babies, and other places to help those in need. The Blessings Box is at the end of the church parking lot and contains donations of non-perishable food, personal care, and other items for those in need. Take what you need; donate what you can. Also, the church sponsors the Wounded Warrior Project, a donation opportunity to help veterans.

For more information, visit westchestercongchurch.org, email westcongchurch@gmail.com or call the church at 860-267-6711. Pastor Ron Lake can be reached at 860-428-3460.

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.

Colchester Federated Church News

Colchester Federated Church is located at 60 Main St., and pastor is the Rev. Lauren Ostrout. The church office is open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., and can be reached at 860-537-5189 or cfc06415@gmail.com.

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

Twelve-Step Meetings: AA meets in the church library Monday-Wednesday and Friday at noon and Thursday at 10 a.m., and at 7:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. On Saturdays at 9:30 a.m., Al-Anon meets in the Jerusalem Room and AA meets in the Stage Room.

Boy Scout Troop 72: Meetings are held in the Stage Room every Monday at 7 p.m. through June.

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.

Ukrainian Catholic Church News

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

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

Dean's List

Reina Spearin of Colchester made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Lasell University in Newton, Mass.

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.

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 Sunday, June 21 from 9:45 a.m. to noon.



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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 six 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-addressed 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.

Parks and Rec. Seeks New Programs

Colchester Parks & Recreation is interested in expanding its community programs – and is looking for new ideas!

The department is currently seeking instructors to lead a wide variety of recreational, educational, and enrichment programs for residents of all ages. Opportunities are available in areas such as youth and adult fitness, arts and crafts, dance, outdoor recreation, sports, STEM

activities, wellness, and specialty hobby classes.

Individuals interested in offering a new program can submit a program proposal or request more information by contacting Colchester Parks & Recreation at 860-537-7297 or park-sandrec@colchesterct.gov.

More information is also available at www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department.

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 colchesterland-trust.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: kevybryne@gmail.com. Trail crew work parties are held the third Sunday of every month usually from 1 p.m. until no later than 3 p.m. (Volunteers can stay for all or part of the hours.) Details of each month's plan will be emailed to you. Sign up at colchesterlandtrust.org.

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

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 22: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Inspired by Art Part 2; 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 23: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Men's Breakfast; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 12:30 p.m., Tech Time with Harry, Pinochle; 1 p.m., Corn-hole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 4 p.m., Tech Help with Harry; 6 p.m., Journey with Joni.

Wednesday, June 24: 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; 11:30 a.m., AARP Driver Training; 1 p.m., Sew-cial Time; 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming.

Dean's, President's List

The following Colchester students made the Dean's List and President's List at the University of Hartford:

Dean's List and President's List: Austin Din-smoor, Taylor Gerst, Caitryn Holt, Lexi Magrey, Kaylie Marvin, Arie Nair, Sokheta Nguon, Garrett Schuth.

Dean's List: Katie Graham, Matthew Guerriere, Eddie Hageman.

Thursday, June 25: 9 a.m., Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling; 11 a.m., Yoga; noon, Sr. Benefits Counseling; 12:05 p.m., Chair Massage; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes, Needlework Club; 6 p.m., Oil Painting with Brianna.

Friday, June 26: 9 a.m., Social Service Hours, Open Art Studio; 10 a.m., Sit & Be Fit; 10:30 a.m., Choral Group; 11 a.m., Yoga; 1-3:30 p.m., Open Ping Pong; 1:15 p.m., Bingo.

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.

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.

History Museum Open Sundays

The Colchester History Museum is open Sundays from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. through the end of December.

This spring you can view the museum's newest exhibit: "Every Possible Means: Colchester's Role in the Revolutionary War." You can also experience histories of people and places in the "ABCs of Colchester History" exhibit.

The Colchester History Museum, located at 24 Linwood Ave., is free and offers both permanent and special exhibits all highlighting the people and events in Colchester's history. Guided and self-guided tours are available.

For more information, contact the Colchester Historical Society at mail@colchesterhistory.org or 860-537-3240.



Scholarships Awarded... On May 19 at Bacon Academy, two seniors were presented with scholarships from Honor Rotary! A Foundation for Colchester, Inc. Pictured from left are Emma Cote, Rotary President Deb Martin, and Deyaneira Ruiz.

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Author Appearance at Bookstore

Songwriter and literary fiction novelist John Lang will give a reading from his new book "All the Darkness Holds" at Folklore & Fable, Colchester's local bookstore, on Saturday, June 27, at 6 p.m.

All the Darkness Holds is the story of a young biracial girl whose self-willed journey through darkness and adversity leads her to a life she can call her own.

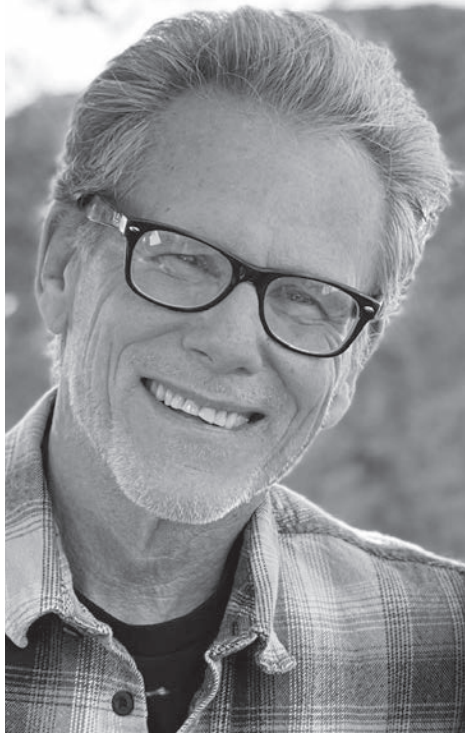
"I could not have written this story about myself," Lang said. "I knew I needed a protagonist whom I could have great compassion for and who could take me by the hand and guide me through her own relentless commitment and determination to get free."

The Kirkus Review calls "All the Darkness Holds" "a profound, sometimes grim story with a troubled but remarkable young hero."

Lang won the Faulkner Literary Competition in 2018 with his short story "Bent Spoon," and his novel All the Darkness Holds was a semi-finalist in the 2024 Faulkner-Wisdom Creative Writing Competition.

In his former life, Lang was a pop songwriter, having written for artists such as Mr. Mister, Celine Dion and Tupac Shakur. His songs "Broken Wings" and "Kyrie," along with many others, are still played across radio and online media, as well as other public spaces.

Lang, considered the fifth member of Mr. Mister, was recently interviewed by lead singer and co-writer Richard Page on his transi-



John Lang

tion from pop songwriter to literary fiction novelist, and you can see the interview at tinyurl.com/2pey4cjh.



Court of Honor... Colchester Scout Troop 13 recently held its spring Court of Honor to recognize scouts who earned rank advancement, merit badges, and other awards. The troop also discussed and planned for its upcoming June five-day year-end camping trip to the New Jersey shore, a week of July summer camp, and an upcoming campout with a 15-mile bike ride. Troop 13 has scouts of all ages, grade 6 up to grade 12, with the older scouts leading and directing the younger scouts. The troop meets on most Mondays at 7 p.m. at the St. Andrew Church hall in Colchester. Boys ages 11 through 17 are welcome to join. Stop by at any meeting or contact scoutmaster Brian Marburger at brian.marburger@comcast.net or 860-917-5896.

Resident Graduates

Colchester resident Aidan McLoughlin, who majored in architectural engineering, recently graduated with a bachelor's degree from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Mass.

Ahavath Achim Schedule

Congregation Ahavath Achim, 84 Lebanon Ave., has announced the following schedule:

Services: Fridays at 6:30 p.m., live and on Zoom; Saturdays at 10 a.m., live and on Zoom.

Classes on Tuesdays: Folklore of the Talmud at 6 p.m., followed by Talmud at 6:30 p.m., and Kabbalah at 8 p.m.

For more information, or Zoom links, call 860-537-2809. Office hours are Wednesday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Troop 72 Recycling Project

Boy Scout Troop 72 continues to accept recyclable containers from residents or businesses at the Colchester Transfer Station or St. Joseph's Polish Club.

You can drop bags of recyclable containers in the scout shed at the transfer station or on the lefthand side of the pavilion at the Polish Club at 395 South Main St.

If you wish to schedule a pick-up, email letendrej@sbcglobal.net or text or call 860-917-8391.

Your donations will help scouts go to summer camp and experience trips and other camping activities they might otherwise have to miss due to a family's ability to afford the event.

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.

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*.

Craft Fair at Lake Hayward

A craft fair will be held Saturday, July 11, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at Lake Hayward Pavilion, at first beach. The craft fair will have 15-20 vendors, with assorted crafts such as jewelry, knitting, painted shells, shadow boxes, etc.

The fair will take place rain or shine.

Ladies Guild Offering Trip to See Joshua

The St. Andrew Ladies Guild is sponsoring a trip from Sept. 16-18 to Lancaster, Pa., to see Joshua.

In addition, the Ladies Guild will have dinner with an Amish family, travel through the Amish countryside, visit Kitchen Kettle Village, and visit the Seltzer's Smokehouse.

Trip cost is \$699 for a double room, or \$849 for a single. Transportation will be on a deluxe motorcoach. For more information, contact Barbara Gozzo at 860-208-4121 or barbgozzo@gmail.com.

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.

Resident Named Outstanding Student

Colchester resident Abigail Belding was awarded Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Ellen Knott Outstanding Student Award during its recent Student Recognition Awards ceremony.

Belding is a member of the Class of 2028, majoring in biomedical engineering.

The Ellen Knott Outstanding Student Award recognizes students for their academic excellence, professional goals, and contributions to the WPI community.

Abundant Life to Celebrate America 250

Abundant Life Church invites all to celebrate America's 250th anniversary outside on the church lawn, near the street sign, on Saturday, July 4, from 9-10 a.m. The church is located at 85 Skinner Rd.

All are invited for prayer, praise and worship to celebrate the nation's birthday.

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.

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, depar-

ture 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 home-made Oktoberfest luncheon at the Inn at East Hill Farm, live German music, and more. Cost is \$158/person and includes transportation and lunch.

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

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

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A Photo at the Fountain... Roy and Laurie Ivers from Portland are shown enjoying a trip to Charleston, S.C., in front of the pineapple fountain.

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!



A Maine Moment... Ronnie and Jane Muskatullo, of Portland, stopped in Lincoln, Maine, during a family outing over the Memorial Day weekend.



Absorbing Amsterdam... Kathy, Skyler and Alex York from East Hampton and Belgium are pictured with the *Rivereast* at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, absorbing all beauty of Rembrandt and his artwork.



Bachelorette Party... Donna Bartolotta from Moodus brought the *Rivereast* on her daughter's bachelorette weekend at Epcot Center!

Where in the World?

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Obituaries

Colchester

Steven G. Zajac Jr.

Steven G. Zajac Jr., of Colchester, passed away Thursday, June 4, after a yearlong illness. He was 52 years old. Steve was born in New Britain on Oct. 17, 1973. Steve grew up in Southington. He was the son of the late Steven and Elisa Zajac of Southington.



Steve was an electrician for IBEW Local 35 for the last 27 years before becoming too ill to work. He loved his kids and would do anything for them. He enjoyed watching their soccer, basketball and baseball/softball games. He was a huge Boston Red Sox, Chicago Bears and Florida State fan. He was able to attend a handful of both Red Sox and Bears games.

He is survived by his wife, Tina Zajac and their three children: Tyler, Alyssa and Cody Zajac; his sister, Paula Zajac of Southington; his aunts; Cheryl Cammarota of Middlefield, Lavinia Cammarota of Wethersfield, and Roseann Kozlowski and her husband Robert of Florida; his cousins; and numerous extended family and friends. He was predeceased by his uncles, Patrick and Frank Cammarota.

A visitation was held Wednesday, June 17, at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road, Colchester. A graveside service was held at the New St. Andrew Cemetery, Gillettes Lane, Thursday, June 18, at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Steve's memory may be made to benefit his children's future. Contributions can be made to the 'Zajac Children's Memorial Fund' and sent to Liberty Bank, 219 South Main St., Colchester, CT 06415.

The Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home has been entrusted with care of arrangements. For online condolences or to share a story, please visit: www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Patricia Jagoda

Patricia (Cote) Jagoda, 81, of Portland, passed away peacefully Tuesday, June 9, one day after celebrating her 81st birthday. Born June 8, 1945, in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Wilfrid and Louise (Brousseau) Cote.



Patricia was predeceased by her beloved husband, Joseph D. Jagoda. She was also predeceased by their infant twin sons.

Patricia leaves behind her loving family: her daughter, Stephanie Jagoda of Jacksonville, N.C.; her sons, Jeffrey Jagoda and Ryon Jagoda and his wife, Michele, all of Portland; her cherished grandchildren, Jason (J.T.), Amber, and Brianna; and three great-grandchildren.

Patricia embraced life with enthusiasm and a joyful spirit. She loved spending time with family and friends, enjoyed trips to the casino, and never passed up an opportunity to have fun. Many will remember her at the Winchester Cafe, microphone in hand, singing her favorite songs and filling the room with laughter, music, and smiles.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to all those who offered Patricia love, friendship, and support, throughout her life. Your companionship meant so much to her and to her family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Portland Food Bank in Patricia's honor.

East Hampton

Annabett Latronica

Annabett (D'Amico) Latronica of Weirton, West Virginia, passed away peacefully Wednesday, June 10, at the WVU-Weirton Medical Center. Born March 21, 1950, in New Haven, she was a daughter of Raymond and Daisy (Driggers) D'Amico.



Annabett attended East Hampton High School and dedicated many years of her life to serving her community as a food preparer at McDonald's Restaurant. Her joyful spirit brought light to those around her, and she will be dearly missed. Annabett enjoyed life's simple pleasures, finding happiness in spending time with her family, and loved ones.

In addition to her parents, Annabett was preceded in death by her husband, Alfred Latronica, and her sons, Perry and Scott Root.

Left to cherish her memory are her children, Clifford Root of Moodus; daughters, Annabett (Nick) Loprete of Weirton, West Virginia, Lesley (Michael) Gibbs of Brooklyn, Conn.; brothers, Wallace and Darrell D'Amico, and sister, Daisy (Edward) Goodrich; and grandchildren Elizabeth Rachel, Ricky Jr., Jeremiah, Alycia, Zachary, Aubrey, Isaac, James, Leora, Blake and Matthew; and six great-grandchildren.

Though Annabett has left this world, her love and laughter will forever echo in our hearts. Rest in peace, dear Annabett. Your light will

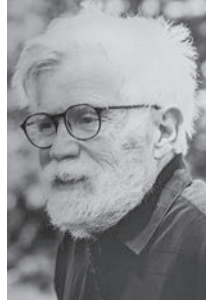
continue to shine through the lives you touched.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, June 27, at 11 a.m., at Abundant Life Church, 85 Skinner Rd., Colchester.

Hebron

Rev. Edmund J. Meincke

After a long illness, Edmund J. Meincke of Hebron left us Saturday, June 6.



He was a kind, compassionate, caring man who always felt called to be of service. More than any award or honor, what mattered most to him was that those around him felt heard, seen, and loved.

Born in Akron, Ohio, to Louise and Russ Meincke, Ed came to Boston with his guitar, banjo and sax to attend Andover Newton Theological Seminary, and upon graduation settled in Connecticut.

Ed eventually landed at Glastonbury Youth Services, where he served as its director for 34 years. Known as the "Grandfather of Youth Services" in Connecticut, he helped create the CT Youth Services Association in 1972, where he served as the first president, and spent his career helping the field grow across the state.

Also known to many as Pastor Ed, he served part-time positions as an ordained interim minister for many Connecticut United Church of Christ churches. After retiring from Glastonbury, he completed his ministry with a full time position at Talcottville Congregational Church (UCC) in Vernon. He felt it a privilege and an honor to serve his congregations through times of change, and was blessed to serve at baptisms, funerals and weddings.

Pop Pop to his granddaughters, Ed leaves his beloved Riley and Freya to remember him for his kind spirit and good heart. Also mourning his passing are his wife of 45 years, Deborah; and their children David (Bri) and Katie (Chris). Ed also leaves behind his sister Eleanor (Tony) and cousin Carl (Judy), many in-laws, nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews.

Ed was predeceased by his brother Jim, and his parents Russ and Louise.

Ed touched many lives throughout his years of service; whether through his friendship, mentorship, music, stories, or prayers. He was an advocate for the underdog, and he saw the good in everyone. Alzheimer's disease robbed him of his memories, but never his loving spirit.

Our family would like to recognize the wonderful care Ed received from Buckingham Heights Memory Care in Glastonbury, and the assistance of the Alzheimer's Association of Connecticut.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Gilead Congregational Church in Hebron on Saturday, July 11, at 11 a.m., with reception to follow. All are welcome. Ed would be happy to have you dress comfortably.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a donation to the charity of your choice in Ed's memory.

For online condolences, please visit www.mulryanfh.com.

Andover

Lucille K. Anderson

Lucille K. Anderson, 81, of Andover, beloved wife, mother, grandmother and friend, passed away, peacefully Wednesday, June 3. Born in Greenfield, Mass., on April 4, 1945, she was the daughter of the late Lawrence Billiel and Catherine Sears.



She is survived by her three children: Pamela Anderson (Paul Rainville Jr.) of South Windham; Marc Anderson (Donna Baez) of Monterey, Tenn.; and Shane Anderson (Tara) of Bolton. She will also be deeply missed by her seven grandchildren - Patrick, Griffin, Gavin, Gabrielle, Luke, Matthew and Christian - all of whom brought her immense pride and joy.

Lucille began her professional life at Pratt & Whitney, later dedicated herself to running an in-home daycare, and went on to work at Savings Bank of Manchester.

Family was the center of her world. She was deeply devoted to those she loved and took great joy in bringing people together and caring for them. She was the heart of family gatherings and the person who shaped many of the holidays and traditions that brought everyone together. Christmas held a special place in her heart. The joke was that she was Santa's helper, but in truth, it often felt more like Santa was her helper.

She found joy in giving to others. Shopping for gifts, wrapping presents, and making people feel remembered and celebrated was one of her greatest pleasures. Her care for others extended far beyond holidays. She expressed love through acts of service, always willing to lend a hand, create something meaningful, fix what was broken, help someone prepare for an important moment, or simply make life a little easier and more beautiful for those around her. She gave her time, talents, and energy freely.

She also loved creating a home that felt warm, welcoming, and full of life. She delighted in decorating, preparing for gatherings, sharing food, playing games, doing puzzles, and bringing people together. Whether surrounded by a house full of family and friends or sitting quietly at the kitchen table over conversation and a cup of tea, she treasured connection. She found joy in simple routines—making lists, planning, sharing ideas, and finding little ways to care for the people she loved. She had a gift for making ordinary moments feel special.

Lucille also treasured time spent at the family's home on Cape Cod. Some of her happiest moments were the ones she shared there with her late husband, Eric, and friends, driving out to Race Point, relaxing on the beach, enjoying the ocean air, and spending time reading *House & Garden* magazines.

Her seven grandchildren were a deep and constant source of joy in her life, and she treasured every moment with them.

Her legacy lives on in the traditions she created, the care she gave, and the countless people who felt loved because of her. She will be remembered for the warmth she brought into every room and for showing, again and again, that love is often found in the thoughtful things we do for one another.

She will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered.

Per Lucille's wishes, there will be no calling hours. A burial service will be held at Townsend Cemetery in Andover at 10 a.m. Friday, June 19.

In lieu of flower arrangements, please consider making a donation to the Andover Fire Department, on behalf of Lucille, for all the help they provided her over the past couple of years.

For online condolences, please visit www.tierneyfuneralhome.com.

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Obituaries cont.

Hebron

Dorothy A. Paquette

Dorothy A. Paquette, of Hebron, passed away peacefully at home early Saturday morning, June 13, with her beloved family attentively by her side. She was 86 years old.



Dorothy was born May 12, 1940, in Hartford. She was the daughter of the late Roland and Pauline (Boutin) Lefebvre. She grew up in Bristol, and graduated from St. Marie High School in Manchester, N.H. On Oct. 22, 1960, in Hooksett, N.H., she married the love of her life, Raymond Paquette. The couple settled in Wethersfield, where they made their home and raised their family. They had 63 years together, enjoying family life and traveling. Raymond predeceased her on April 2, 2024.

Dorothy retired after a fulfilling career working as a nurse at Danbury Hospital, Hartford Hospital and Jefferson House in Newington. In her free time, she enjoyed sewing and making quilts which many of her family received and treasured. She also volunteered for years with Meals on Wheels in Wethersfield. Most importantly, she will be remembered fondly as a loving and devoted wife, mother, and adoring m  re to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren who always put her family first.

She will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by her children and their spouses, Karen Paquette of Richmond, Va., Joanne (Albert) Rosevear of Gibsonia, Pa., Thomas Paquette of Columbia, Anthony Paquette (Lauren Astorino) of Colchester; siblings, Paulette Lefebvre of Concord, N.H., Rita (Ronald) Boisvert of Montgomery Village, Md., Elizabeth Rosevear (Daniel Prince) of Pittsburgh, Pa., Hannah Paquette of Lebanon, Daniel Paquette of East Hampton, Nathan and Molly Paquette of Columbia, Alexis, Dustin, and Evan Paquette of Colchester, Bryanna Paquette of Guilford, Gabrielle Johnson of Bethesda, Md.; three great-grandchildren, Sy and Casey Tarlow-Squire, Rosalie Prince; and many extended family members and friends.

In addition to her husband and parents, she was predeceased by a sister, Loretta Loveday.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated Wednesday, June 24, at 11 a.m., directly at Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St., Amston. The burial will be held privately.

Donations in Dorothy's memory may be made to the CT Meals on Wheels, www.crtct.org.

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

Hebron

James and Jill Rebillard



In loving memory of James Rebillard, born Jan. 25, 1947, in Manchester, and Jill Rebillard, born Feb. 8, 1949 in Norwich. James passed away peacefully, surrounded by loved ones, on May 16, 2026. Jill passed away peacefully at home on Sept. 20, 2021.

They are survived by their two daughters, Michelle and Jane, son Jamie, and two grandchildren, Hailey and Jackson.

Both James and Jill grew up in Hebron with many friends and family, graduating from RHAM High School where they were high school sweethearts. They married in 1966 and spent 55 wonderful years together where they raised three children in Alaska after chasing the oil boom of the early '80s.

Both obtained their college degrees while in Alaska, with James becoming a geologist going on to work with private and state organizations to prevent and process contamination from hazardous materials. Jill earned her bachelor's

in agriculture, becoming a successful organic farmer. She started the business Nature Nurturing Naturally which worked closely with other farmers, organizations, and the state to create comprehensive standards for organic farming.

After many adventurous years in Alaska, they settled back east in Vermont to be closer to family, where they continued to love and protect the land until retirement allowed for more travel.

Travel was their true love, as both journeys to and from Alaska were driven, tackling the Alcan both ways as well as many other challenges brought by the great white north.

In addition to their occupations and time spent traveling, somehow there was always room for hobbies. Jill was skilled at spinning and weaving, often making much cherished handmade gifts. James was a master carpenter and along with building or restoring every house they lived in, he always made time to construct another chicken coup or fix the barn door.

While they have passed on their wealth of knowledge and skills to their friends and family, they will be greatly missed.

Graveside services will be observed at 10 a.m. Tuesday, June 23, directly at the Gilead Cemetery, Route 85, Hebron.

In lieu of flowers, the family is asking that any donations go to Simply Cats in Boise, Idaho.

Portland

Louise Feldman

Louise Feldman, formerly Louise Hertzberg, passed away Saturday, June 13, surrounded by the love of the family she cherished throughout her life. She was 87 years old.



Born March 28, 1939, in Bridgeport, Louise was the beloved daughter of Herman Hertzberg and Faye Hertzberg. She was raised in Middletown and shared a close bond with her sister, Rosalie Shapiro, who also predeceased her, and her brother-in-law, Melvyn. After marrying the love of her life, Howard Feldman, on June 28, 1959, she moved to the Gildersleeve section of Portland, where she spent the rest of her life.

Louise graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in 1957. She attended Boston University before earning her degree cum laude in 1976 from Central Connecticut State University. Education remained important to her throughout her life, reflecting the determination and resilience that defined her character. While raising her children she worked as a substitute teacher in the Portland schools.

Howard and Louise built a home and raised a family rooted in love, faith, and devotion. After only 25 years of marriage Howard preceded her in death in 1985. Following his passing, Louise demonstrated extraordinary strength as she continued to provide for her family while building a distinguished career as an administrator with the Social Services Department of the State of Connecticut, where she served for more than twenty years. She also spent countless hours rooting for her beloved UConn Husky men's and women's basketball teams.

Louise was well-known in Portland where for nearly four decades she became a familiar presence in the community, faithfully walking daily from her home along Main Street into town and back each day. Friends and neighbors came to know her by sight, and those daily walks reflected her independence, discipline, and enduring connection to the town she loved.

She was a lifelong member of Congregation Adath Israel and devoted countless hours volunteering with various organizations in Portland. Her faith, generosity, and commitment to serving others enriched the lives of many.

Above all else, Louise was devoted to her family. She is survived by her three children: Deborah Shafferman and her husband Joel of New York City; Matthew Feldman and his wife Theanne of Westport; and Sharon Ferrari and her husband Michael of South Glastonbury.

She was the proud and loving grandmother of eight grandchildren: Hannah Shafferman, Cassandra Feldman, Harrison Feldman, Sophia Feldman, Alexa Feldman, Kara Ferrari, Noah Ferrari, and Benjamin Ferrari. Each brought her immense joy and pride, and she treasured every opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments and share in their lives. She will be deeply missed by all of them who always appreciated her wicked sense of humor and her unvarnished honesty.

Louise will be remembered for her unwaver-

ing devotion to family, her steadfast faith, her resilience in the face of adversity, and the kindness she extended to all who knew her. Her life was one of quiet strength and honest opinions. The lessons she imparted through her example – perseverance, compassion, and dedication to others – will continue to guide those she leaves behind. Her only regret was her failure to outlive Donald Trump, who she saw clearly has a modern-day circus barker akin to PT Barnum.

May her memory be a blessing to her family, friends, and all whose lives she touched.

A graveside memorial service was on Wednesday, June 17, at the Congregation Adath Israel Cemetery at 714 Pine St., Middletown. Shiva and a luncheon followed the service at Louise's home at 8 Robert St. in Portland.

Donations may be made to the Howard Feldman Beautification Fund at Congregation Adath Israel, 8 Broad St., Middletown, CT 06457.

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

Colchester

Raymundo Bigalbal

Raymundo Vasquez Bigalbal, fondly known as Ray, passed away Sunday, June 14, at the CT Hospice in Branford, after a long and debilitating illness. He was 91 years old.



Ray was born in Timalan, Naic, Cavite, Philippines on March 17, 1935. He was a son of the late Alfredo Lomat and Emilia Ocampo (Vasquez) Bigalbal. In 1960, Ray joined the U.S. Navy at the age of 18 and proudly served for 23 years. His service included Navy career counselor and recruiter of which he took particular pride in.

Ray married the love of his life, Agnes Elizabeth Reed "Betty" on March 28, 1959. The couple traveled extensively in their early years

See Obituaries, page 32

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CREATORS NEWS SERVICE By Neil Manausa

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- 25 Gift ___: verbal mastery
- 26 ___ Apso
- 27 Wyatt, Morgan and Virgil
- 29 Clear the slate
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- 33 Disdainful look
- 35 Balloon filler
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- 39 Gaining lost ground
- 44 Pillager's partner
- 45 Alaskan national park
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- 50 Insult
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- 52 Half of CCCIV
- 53 Kind of strip or race
- 54 Tibetan snowman
- 55 Flutter eyelashes
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DOWN

- 1 Speck on the hearth
- 2 Kitchen master
- 3 Kind of tale
- 4 Divides into portions
- 5 Harriet Beecher
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- 7 Metrical foot
- 8 New ones sweep clean
- 9 Mountain material?
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Rivereast Standout Athletes of the Week



Elizabeth Barr and Allison Tine were honored as Portland High School's 2025-2026 CIAC Scholar-Athletes.

By Josh Howard

Allison Tine and Elizabeth Barr – Portland High School: Tine and Barr were selected as the school's top Scholar Athletes for the 2025-26 school year, honoring their dedication to athletics, the classroom, and the community. Tine was a standout thrower for the Highlanders track and field teams and will be attending the University of Connecticut to major in biomedical engineering. Barr, a distance runner and basketball player for the Highlanders, will be attending the University of Rhode Island and majoring in psychology. 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. Tine and Barr were honored at the annual CIAC Scholar-Athletes banquet held at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville last month.

Aiden Niderno – East Hampton High School (Track & Field): Niderno placed third

overall in the Decathlon at the end of the school-year CIAC sponsored event at Willow Brook Park in New Britain. Niderno scored 5,603 points during the ten-event challenge, placing top-five a handful of events. He placed second in the long jump, second in the javelin, third in the shot put, fourth in the high jump, and fifth in the 110-meter hurdles. Earlier this season, Niderno won a Shoreline Conference (SLC) championship in the javelin and high

jump, along with placing fourth overall in the 110-meter hurdles at the Class S state championships.

Conor Sullivan – RHAM High School (Golf): Sullivan, a senior, closed out his high school career with a pair of standout post-season performances, while competing against the best golfers in Connecticut. On June 9, Sullivan shot a 74 to tie for sixth overall at the Division II state championship at Goodwin Ridge Golf Course in Hartford. He then shot a 77 to tie for 13th overall at the State Open, which took place at Mohegan Sun Golf Club on June 12. Sullivan's efforts helped the Raptors place fifth overall at the Divisional championship and helped them earn a third place showing at the Central Connecticut Conference (CCC) championships at Stanley Golf Course in New Britain on June 4.

Liam Sweeney – Bacon Academy (Track

& Field): Sweeney won a State Open championship in the shot put with a toss of 57' 8" to defeat second-place finisher Khile Francis (55' 8.5") and 25 of the state's best throwers. It completed a clean sweep in the event for Sweeney, who also previously won the shot put at the Class M state championships and the Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) championships. Sweeney, a senior, also finished as the runner-up in the discus at the State Open with a toss of 162', placing behind only Bristol Central's Jonathan Scott (162' 04"). Following his graduation from Bacon Academy, Sweeney will compete with the track and field program at Bucknell University.

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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TAG SALE EAST HAMPTON: 124 Wopowog Road, Saturday, 6/20, 8am-2pm. Paddle boards, Keurig, sofa table, VHS player & tapes, steam cleaner, household items, and more. Good Condition. No Early Birds.

TAG SALE SATURDAY, 6/20, 8AM-2PM: 60 Main Street, East Hampton. Tools, clothing, Waterford crystal, Avon dishes, Hess trucks, NASCAR, household goods, collectables, and free stuff (while it lasts). Everything must go, last year we will do this. Tons of items for Father's Day gifts.

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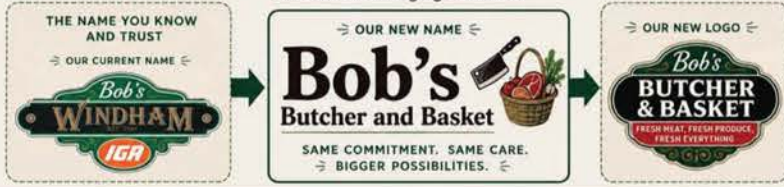
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