

RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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

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July 17, 2026

East Hampton Loves a Parade

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton's annual Old Home Days returned once again this past weekend, with a patriotic nod to the nation's 250th birthday and a theme of "Bells, Boats and the Birth of Our Nation."

The event took place from July 9-11, and as usual, included a carnival, live music, a 5K road race and a Saturday parade.

The annual Old Home Days Parade took place on July 11, and featured nearly two hours' worth of entertainment from a wide range of groups. There were enough firetrucks to make their own parade, a monster truck, several floats from local businesses and organizations, draft horses from Connecticut Draft Horse Rescue, and musical groups that included marching bands, fife and drum groups and bagpipers.

Parade marchers and participants on floats tossed candy and trinkets for children to chase down as they passed by, but perhaps none were as valuable as the cold ice pops on the hot sunny day.

On the hill in front of the congregational church, parade-goers gathered in the shade under the large tree, not far from the gazebo where Old Home Days President John Tuttle announced the approaching parade entries.

Patty Wick, who said she has lived in East Hampton for almost 49 years and has attended many of these parades, knew exactly what to do to get the best spot under the tree: she said she came by to set up her chair at 9 a.m., two hours before the start of the parade.

She said her husband had been involved with setting up the Senior Center's impressive float and would be riding on it that day, but she didn't



Members of the Ancient Mariner Fife & Drum Corps were among the many marchers at last weekend's Old Home Days Parade. See additional photos on pages 30 and 31.

want to this year, so she set up her folding chair, went for a three mile walk on the Air Line Trail, and came back to watch the parade. She described it as an ideal morning.

Hannah Hughes-Waage and her mother, Cynthia Masters-Waage, were visiting from England with Hughes-Waage's two children, aged 2 and "almost 4." The mother and daughter said they have family in East Hampton and visit every year, but had never been here for the parade,

"We've been coming to Connecticut since I

was a kid every summer," said Hughes-Waage, but "right now, the schools aren't out in the U.K., so we've never been to the parade because it's always been school time."

They said they enjoyed the American-style parade, noting that parades like this were a bit less common in England. For the kids, especially Hughes-Waage's son Otto, the fire trucks were the main attraction, even if they were a bit loud.

One of the new attractions for this year was the red, white and blue car parade that served as the opening act. Dozens of cars, ranging from

sports cars to pickups to one vehicle that was a dead ringer for "Little Blue Truck" from the famous children's book, drove along the parade route, with cars in small groups of red, white and blue. Tuttle said there were at least 60 cars at the parade.

Also part of the parade event was a helicopter flyover over the main viewing area, which was something Tuttle had said was a grassroots effort, with local pilots agreeing to participate using their own aircraft.

Elected officials also attended and marched, including members of the Town Council, and Senator Richard Blumenthal, who regularly attends East Hampton's Old Home Days. Events like this, said Blumenthal, highlight a community's strengths.

"This kind of great parade doesn't happen by magic," he said. "It takes a lot of hard work."

Tuttle said he was proud of this year's Old Home Days event, which he said would be his last as president of the committee, as he and his wife prioritize making time for family outside the state. This year, with the 250th celebration, was a great way to finish on a high note, he said.

"It was great to see so much red, white and blue in the parade," he said. "The parade was fantastic and we did our best to decorate the grounds as well to help celebrate America's birthday."

"The event really brings together so many different departments within our town," Tuttle said, "from public works, and all the EMS and police, and, and the school system, and it touches so many departments and so many parts of our community, and it's a great unifying event, which is what it's supposed to be."

CCT Helps Young Stars Dare to Dream

By Toriana Williams

For the past two weeks, Colchester Community Theatre (CCT) has been helping local youth "dare to dream." And on Saturday, those musical dreams will on be on display for all to see.

CCT's 2026 Summer Children's Theater Workshop will present Disney's *Dare to Dream Jr.* on Saturday, July 18, at 2 p.m. in the Bacon Academy Auditorium, 611 Norwich Ave. Tickets are \$8 and can be purchased at colchester.ludus.com/select.php.

For two busy weeks, the halls of Bacon Academy are filled with music, dancing and the sound of young performers hopefully discovering their love for the arts. This year's workshop marks the 26th year of CCT's popular summer program, which brought 56 children ranging from students entering second grade to experienced teenage performers.

Some have never stepped onto a stage before, and others are already mentoring younger cast members.

Together, though, they are preparing Disney's *Dare to Dream Jr.*, a musical revue built around beloved Disney songs and an uplifting message

about believing in yourself. Director Wallis Johnson, one of the founders of CCT, said the workshop is about much more than putting on a show.

"This is a workshop show," she said. "We're using the show to teach kids about theater."

The story follows a group of young "imagineers" who learn that dreams become possible when people work together.

"This play is based on a group of Imagineers who are working to make their dreams come true by working together as a team," said Johnson. "The story is told through the use of Disney songs from famous Disney movies."

Audience members can expect familiar songs from classics such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King*, *Mary Poppins* and *Aladdin* – as well as songs from newer Disney hits as well.

"We have a lot of songs that are new for this show," said Johnson. "I think [the audience] is going to love them."

While the audience only watches an hour of their performance, the young cast spends countless hours learning music, choreography, acting and stage presence in the short span of

just two weeks.

"The kids work really hard. They're wonderful campers," said Johnson. "Some magic happens, and it's a beautiful show."

Music Director Diane Ozmun said every summer workshop has a lesson woven into the production. This year, that lesson is about never giving up on your dreams.

"The nice thing about [the workshop] is that there's always a theme incorporated," said Ozmun. "It's about having your dreams, working toward your dreams and understanding that sometimes things go really well and sometimes they don't – but you've got to keep going."

The workshop does not only teach singing and acting. Students begin with auditions for the sake of the experience, then rotate through music rehearsals, choreography, acting exercises and craft projects connected to the show's theme. Guest speakers also visit throughout the program to encourage children to chase their own dreams.

"We're really trying to get kids to learn about what it means to be part of musical theater," said
See Dare to Dream, page 16

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Summer Programs for Kids at Library

Listed below are some of the upcoming summer programs being offered for kids at Andover Public Library. All programs are held at the library this summer. Call the library to sign up or with any questions, 860-742-7428. You can find the complete summer program flyer posted on Andover Public Library’s Facebook page.

¡Amigos!: Saturday, July 18, 1 p.m. Explore, Relate, Celebrate! ¡Explorar, Relacionar, Celebrar! As part of the Early Roots Collaborative, parent ambassador Doris Maldonado Méndez and Andover Elementary School student Marie will lead another bilingual summer series at the Andover Library, sharing stories that help young children explore big feelings, relate to peers, and celebrate the strength of community. There will be a special “Navidad en Julio” session of ¡Amigos! on Saturday, July 25, at 10:30 a.m., with Mrs. Merry Claus as special guest.

Butterflies with Julie!: Tuesday, July 21, 6 p.m. Retired state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection wildlife biologist (and Andover resident) Julie Victoria invites children to learn why butterflies are important, and about the life cycles and how to help them.

Fun with Bubbles!: Wednesday, July 22, 4 p.m. Kids will learn how to create their own bubble wands, and then go outside and blow some bubbles. There is space for 12 children.

Pet Care 101 for Kids: Thursday, July 23, 4 p.m. Throughout this interactive Connecticut Humane Society program, children will learn the ins and outs of pet ownership, reviewing what they already know about pets and building upon their knowledge to better understand what pets need to thrive.



Fun at the Farm... Andover seniors enjoyed the sunshine and the calming scent and beauty of blooming lavender at Lavendar Ridge Farms (LRF) in Coventry. Participants gathered fresh cuttings, savored cookies and tea, and soaked in the peaceful atmosphere of the farm. Pictured from left are Ashley Roberts, host Greg Doane, Janice Bazzanni, Kaline Zieba, Julia Haverl, Carol Bowen, host Chelsea Doane, and an LRF assistant.

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They'll Be Walking in Memphis... Cliff Taylor & The Undertakers Band (a.k.a. Brandt Taylor Band) won the 2026 Connecticut Blues Society Band Challenge, held recently at Black-Eyed Sally's in Hartford. The band – which features an Andover resident – will travel to Memphis, Tenn., next January to represent Connecticut in the International Blues Challenge. Band members from left are Andover resident Jeff Bousfield on keyboards, Canterbury resident Brandt (Cliff) Taylor on vocals and lead guitar, Brooklyn resident Jay Wiggin on bass and vocals, and Jewett City resident Mike Aubin on drums. For more on the band, visit www.clifftaylorandtheundertakers.com.

Summer Basketapalooza at Library

The Andover Friends of the Library is presenting the Summer Basketpalooza fundraiser, featuring eight gift baskets. Baskets include: \$170 worth of gift cards on one banner; various vintage and new Boston Red Sox items, including a signed baseball by pitcher Garrett Whitlock, as well as game tickets donated by both the Portland Sea Dogs (AA) and Worcester Red Sox (AAA); homemade jams & jellies made by Andover's Janet Platz; bottles of wine; Christmas in July; a basket for kids; and two special baskets filled with goodies relating to both owls and mermaids. A sheet of 26 tickets is available for a \$10 donation. Tickets are available through Aug. 1 during the library's open hours: Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The drawings will be held Monday, Aug. 3, at 5 p.m.

¡Feliz Navidad en Julio!

All are invited to join Early Roots Collaborative Parent Ambassador Doris Maldonado Méndez and Andover Elementary student Marie at Andover Public Library on Saturday, July 25, at 10:30 a.m., for a special bilingual story time celebrating Christmas in July. The story time will feature *From Boriquén to Bethlehem: A Coquí and the Three Wise Men*. In this joyful tale, the Magi arrive thanks to helpful Amigos, travel across the world and may even decide to adopt a curious little Coquí along the way. Following the bilingual reading, families will enjoy a visit from Mrs. Merry Claus, who will share the delightful summer adventure *Mrs. Claus Takes a Vacation*. This activity is part of the ¡Amigos! Summer Bilingual Series at Andover Public Library. Holiday-themed crafts and treats will be provided. For more information, call 860-742-7428.

Community & Senior Center Happenings

The Andover Community and Senior Center (ACSC), located at 25 School Rd., is open Monday-Thursday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m.-noon. All are welcome. For more information, call director Tess Grous at 860-742-7305 ext. 4510 or at 860-798-6862. The center's monthly newsletter is available online at www.andoverconnecticut.org. Copies are also available at the center, Town Hall, and Andover Public Library. To receive the newsletter by email each month or to reserve space, call 860-742-7305. Also call the center if **interested in volunteering**. Evening hours are available. Call or stop by the center if interested. **Special Upcoming Events: Shopping:** Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. Shop in Willimantic 7/28, and in Manchester on 7/21. **Coffee & Tour of the Center:** Monday, 7/27, 11 a.m. All are invited for a cup of hot coffee and a tour of the center. Meet the director, explore the facility, and learn about the programs, activities, and services offered.

History Museum Open Saturday

The Andover Historical Society will open its Museum of Andover History Saturday, July 18, from 4-6 P.M. New items are continuously being added to the display. The museum is located in the Old Town Hall on Monument Lane.

Kids Art Class

The Andover Community and Senior Center is offering a Kids Art Class on Wednesdays from 3-4 p.m. this month, for kids in grades 4-8. All skill levels are welcome. Class is led by local artist Kim Desrosiers. The remaining weekly themes are: July 22, Decoupage Seashell Trinket Dishes: transform ordinary seashells into useful dishes; and July 29, Mermaid Rocks: create colorful metallic mermaid scales on painted rocks. Fee is \$18 for one class or \$34 for two classes. Discount available for siblings. Space is limited. Supplies are provided. To register, call the center at 860-742-7305 ext. 4510.

Congregational Church News

Andover Congregational Church, UCC, located at 359 Route 6, invites all to worship, held Sundays at 10 a.m. All are welcome. The service also streams live on the church's Facebook page (First Congregational Church, Andover, CT). For more information, call the church office at 860-742-7696, email andoverctchurch@gmail.com or visit www.andoverctchurch.org. **Children's Church:** Is provided. **Choir:** At 9 a.m. Sundays in the sanctuary. **Food Pantry:** Mondays from 5-7 p.m. Bring your own bags. The **Foodshare Van** comes to the church every other Wednesday from 8:30-10 a.m.; **Senior Pantry** is on the opposite Wednesdays. **AA Meetings:** Saturdays and Mondays, 7 p.m. **Sonshine Stampers:** Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m.

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From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

The Fourth of July has come and gone, but if you think you’ve missed your chance to celebrate America’s 250th birthday, think again. There will continue to be events throughout the year in honor of the U.S. semiquincennial – and a very interesting-sounding one is coming up in Middletown next weekend.

WIHS 104.9 FM will host “Saints & Patriots,” a patriotic outdoor celebration of America 250 and Connecticut’s Christian heritage, on Saturday, July 25 from 5-7 p.m., at the WIHS Amphitheater, located at 1933 South Main St. (Route 17) in Middletown. The rain date is Sunday, July 26. Admission is free and open to the public. Dress is casual. Guests are encouraged to bring folding chairs, blankets and snacks.

Saints & Patriots will be emceed by Connecticut on-air radio personality Allison Demers, with opening prayer by WIHS general manager Matt Harper. Jerilyn Boudreau, a singer from Windsor Locks, will sing the national anthem, followed by patriotic music by the Mystic River Brass Ensemble (Salvation Army) from Mystic.

There will also be a message on Connecticut’s Christian heritage by Tom and Debbie Berrill from the Institute of Connecticut History in Bristol; inspirational immigrant testimonies by the Rev. Abraham Chan and Stella Tse with the Golden Lampstand Association in South Windsor; celebratory praise and worship music by the McGrail Band from central Massachusetts; a Gospel message and invitation by WIHS Board President Drew

Crandall from Ellington; more music by the Mystic River Brass Ensemble; and, lastly, a singing of God Bless America led by Jerilyn Boudreau and closing prayer by WIHS *Morning Cheer* host Gerry Williams of New Britain. For more information, contact WIHS at 860-346-1049 or office@wihsradio.org, or visit wihsradio.org.

There are of course still fireworks opportunities too. While it’s true the bulk have already taken place, there are three shows coming up tomorrow, Saturday, July 18.

In Bristol, there will be Fireworks Over the Lake at Lake Compounce, starting at 9 p.m.

Fireworks will come at the end of a pair of day-long events happening tomorrow. In Newington, the “Life. Be in it. Extravaganza” will take place at Mill Pond Park. The carnival opens at 10 a.m., and fireworks blast off at 9:30 p.m.

Meanwhile, there’s “Celebrate East Lyme,” taking place along Main Street in Niantic. The event starts at 1 p.m., and there will be fireworks at 9 p.m.

I still haven’t seen any fireworks shows this year – I wound up watching the Argentina World Cup game last Saturday night instead of seeing the Manchester fireworks – so you may just spot me at one of the shows tomorrow. Once again, I’ll probably be the only schlub brave enough to be seen in a Mets shirt.

Editor’s Desk continued on page 6

Bulletin Board

I ran into an old schoolmate recently who has kept busy in retirement by devoting himself to a wide variety of volunteer work. Between soup kitchens and bike rides on behalf of cancer research, rallies to house the unhoused and picking up roadside litter on his daily walks, he is the personification of community service and good will.

“So,” he said finally. “What have you been up to?”

“I don’t really know,” I admitted. “I cut the grass when it needs it. I brood a lot. I can spend a whole afternoon wondering if dinner that day will feature something with gravy. I really like gravy.”

He made an effort to look understanding, but I realized afterward that I needed more purpose in my life. I needed a plan.

Some people choose to spend their twilight years traveling, perhaps touring Europe or sailing around the world. Others, such as my former schoolmate, prefer to devote themselves to community service, perhaps delivering meals to the homebound or emptying bedpans in local hospitals. Yet others devote themselves to political activism.

While I commend these people, none of that is for me. I have chosen a different path toward personal fulfillment. After much consideration, I have decided to devote my twilight years to being an outstanding curmudgeon. (That’s Plan A. Plan B is to live until Social Security goes broke.)

I will admit, this was a difficult decision. I was frankly torn between striving to be an outstanding curmudgeon or devoting my efforts toward being a burden to my children. To my great joy, after much contemplation, it occurred to me that the two are not mutually exclusive.

My plan now is to model myself on the famed Mr. Rogers of kiddie TV’s “Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood.” Except my “neighborhood” will feature a cranky, venomous approach to the world, instead of that all-embracing good-naturedness that made Mr. Rogers such a beloved figure.

Instead of a gentle, “Good morning, children. Welcome to the neighborhood,” I intend to lurk outside in the yard, waving my garden hose in a threatening manner, shouting, “Get off my grass you little bastards” at trespassing children, periodically breaking the routine by staggering in aimless circles with my fly down. The fact that I’ve lost most of my hair and now look a lot like a cantankerous snapping turtle, will only add to my mystique.

But this is only a part of the new me. Beyond tormenting children, I have compiled a brief list of wider curmudgeonly goals that will secure my place in the minds, if not the hearts, my fellow citizens.

– I will proclaim my failing internal thermostat to the world by wearing sweaters in August and exposing my flabby upper body with sleeveless muscle shirts in January.

– I will never give up my driver’s license, even if I shrink to the point that I have to pile up old Playboy magazines on the car seat in order to see over the steering wheel.

– I will drive everywhere (including interstate highways) at only one speed (20mph) and if the traffic behind me extends farther than I can see in the rearview mirror, I will, in the name of safety, slow down to 15mph.

– I’ll save money on meals by going to the post-funeral receptions of total strangers to take advantage of the buffet, and if anyone challenges me, I will fart and say I am an old school chum of the deceased.

– When investment brokers, solar panel salesmen and similar nuisances call me, I will tell them I’m not allowed to handle my own money and give them the phone number of whichever one of my sons last annoyed me.

– Similarly, when I am approached by charitable organizations and piously told I can support an entire Third World village for the price of a mere cup of coffee a day, I will retort that I’d rather have the coffee.

– I’ll gradually spend my life’s savings on TV shopping network stuff, so when I die my kids will find an empty bank account and a basement full of miracle omelet makers, collapsible pocket fishing poles and cunning devices that transform ordinary radishes into decorative chrysanthemums.

That’s it for now, but I do feel so much better for having something to look forward to besides gravy.

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.



Tie a Yellow Ribbon... Members of Fowler-Dix-Park VFW Auxiliary 5095 decorated the town’s “Yellow Ribbon Tree” with photos and brief biographies of the country’s Founding Fathers, for East Hampton’s recent Old Home Days, which also celebrated America’s 250th Anniversary. From left are Judy Barnes, Corinne Turcotte, Jason Prince and Kelly Ezold.

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America 250 Thank You

To the Editor:

On behalf of East Hampton’s America 250 Committee, I would like to thank Kevin Burnham who created and oversaw the construction of the float that the America 250 Committee provided for the annual Old Home Day parade. Special thank you to Jason Gagne, Mark Pekar and Ted Hintz who assisted with the construction. I would also like to thank the East Hampton Fire Department with assistance from James Burke and Shawn Webster who towed the float in the parade.

Using pictures and postcards provided by the Chatham Historical Society, Kevin Burnham created a float that offered those viewing it an opportunity to go back in time and appreciate what East Hampton was like in the early 1900s. It was very apparent from those viewing the parade that the float was very well received and appreciated.

The construction of the float would not have been possible without generous support from Paul’s and Sandy’s, Belltown Auto, Bevin Bell and the Chatham Historical Society. Plans are being made to have the float entered in the Middlesex County 250 Parade scheduled for this Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 7.

**Kevin Reich and Jack Solomon,
Co-Chairs of East Hampton’s
America 250 Committee**

Lake Water Quality Status

To the Editor:

East Hampton’s Lake Pocotopaug is following a fairly typical spring to early summer water quality pattern, with respect to water clarity, algae types, and nutrient content. Water clarity has declined from 6+ feet in April down to 3 to 3-½ feet in June and has stabilized going into July. Measurements of algae initially had a favorable mix of mostly diatoms relative to problematic blue-green algae, indicating reasonable lake health, but blue-green has increased in June and now dominates. Total algal content has increased to a moderate, though not excessive, level.

Nutrients, which feed and can promote algae growth are rising and currently between reasonable and moderately problematic levels. The sources of increasing nutrients are typically from: 1) Rainwater and fertilizer runoff inflow from the lake watershed, including via storm drains, and, 2) Lake bottom sediments releasing nutrients.

To help support lake health we have two, continuous, ongoing lake in-water treatments: 1) The lake aeration system of 56 aerator diffusers fed by two onshore air compressors via hoses run along the lake bottom, and, 2) Continuous injection of a biological treatment to reduce algae growth and improve water health. The aeration system mixes water at the deepest

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

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★ *Letters, cont. from page 5*

ing new positions and approving pay increases of up to 26% raises legitimate questions about whether taxpayer dollars are being prioritized effectively.

This is not about cutting schools, ignoring building maintenance, or reducing essential services. It is about responsible planning, setting priorities, and making sure every tax dollar is spent where it is needed most.

One example of why this matter is the town's health insurance reserve fund. According to the forensic audit, FS Dennler was aware of concerns regarding the reserve fund as early as April 2025. However, those concerns were not brought before the Board of Selectmen or openly discussed with residents. By the time the issue became public, it had developed into a full-blown financial crisis, leaving taxpayers to bear the cost of restoring the reserve fund.

This issue will not disappear with this year's budget. Restoring the reserve fund will require

millions of additional taxpayer dollars in the years ahead – funds that could have been used for other important town needs.

Investing in Colchester is not about spending more; it is about spending wisely. We all want strong schools and reliable town services, but those goals require responsible budgeting, clear priorities, and respect for the taxpayers who fund them.

Voting 'no' on this budget is not a vote against Colchester, our schools, or the services our community depends on. It is a vote for a budget that better reflects residents' needs, keeps spending under control, and respects the taxpayers who make it possible.

Colchester taxpayers deserve elected officials who remember one simple fact: every dollar spent by government comes from a taxpayer who earned it!

**Colchester deserves better,
Cyndee Larabee – Colchester**

A Huge Thank You

To the Editor:

The staff and members of the East Hampton Senior Center send a huge thank you to all the individuals who helped make our annual Old Home Day float possible. What a wonderful collaborative effort this tradition continues to be! Thank you Paul & Sandy's Too for providing the vehicle for the float and delivering it to the decoration location. Thank you Belltown Motors for transporting the float to and from the parade route and for providing a driver to pull the float and all its precious cargo (senior center members and staff) during the parade. Thank you center member Cheryl Tyler for providing the float decorating location, along with food, beverages and encouragement while we worked – and to all who helped plan and decorate, including the Senior Center Design & Create class members; Dave Rogers for your excellent carpentry and installation skills; Karen Wanat for making the bell-shaped float props; and Dianne Daley for costumes and patriotic bunting.

**With sincere gratitude,
Senior Center Director Holly Marrero
and members of the East Hampton
Senior Center Staff**

Declaration Thank You

To the Editor:

I would like to thank everyone who attended and participated in the reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 8. We were part of a national (and international) event to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the first public reading of this founding document of the United States. The Declaration of Independence, with its 27 colonial grievances, explains why the original thirteen colonies considered themselves independent sovereign states no longer subject to British rule.

To a small audience, 13 of our Andover citizens took turns and read a portion of the Declaration. They were: Anne Creme, Jack Dougherty, Celine Maurais, Patrick Dougherty, Sue Schmidt, Doris and Marie Maldonado, Richard Swartwout, Shannon Loudon, Scott Sauyet, Jackalyn Lanagan, Elizabeth Smith-Fried, and First Selectman Jeff Maguire.

As we continue to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, I encourage you to take the time to review our founding documents: the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and even some of the history of the issues and conflicts that led to the American Revolution. The 250th anniversary is a time to reflect on where we started, how far we have come, and how much farther we must go as a nation until America truly lives up to what Abraham Lincoln considered the "moral standard" to which the United States should strive (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence).

That moral standard is the Declaration's second sentence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness".

**Susan Camoroda
Veterans Municipal Representative
Andover**

Editor's Desk continued from page 4

Lastly, if you know of a particularly civic-minded resident of Portland or East Hampton, you might want to nominate them for the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce's 2026 Distinguished Citizen Award.

Each year, the Chamber presents the Distinguished Citizen Award to one or more individuals who have served as an inspiration to others and are recognized throughout the Middlesex County community for selflessly giving their time and talents to create a lasting and positive impact on the region.

Middlesex County covers 14 communities – including the *Rivereast* towns of East Hampton and Portland.

The Distinguished Citizen Award honors individuals whose contributions extend beyond the normal responsibilities of their profession or employment. Special consideration is given to volunteerism, civic engagement, charitable work, mentorship, leadership, and other meaningful acts of service that have benefited the community.

To be eligible for nomination, candidates must: Be at least 21 years of age; live or work in Middlesex County; be widely recognized as, in the Chamber's words, "having unselfishly given their time and talent to produce a lasting benefit to the area"; demonstrate community service and contributions that go

beyond the normal duties of their profession or employment; and lastly, they can't have previously received the Distinguished Citizen Award.

"Each year, we are inspired by the remarkable individuals who dedicate themselves to making Middlesex County a better place to live, work, and thrive," said Johanna Bond, president of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce. "We encourage community members to nominate those who exemplify service, leadership, and a commitment to helping others. Their contributions deserve to be recognized and celebrated."

The recipient(s) of the 2026 Distinguished Citizen Award will be honored at the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce's Annual Awards Dinner on Wednesday, Sept. 23, from 5-8 p.m., at The Riverhouse at Goodspeed Station in Haddam.

But while the dinner isn't until September, the deadline for nominations is coming up fast. Nominations must be submitted in writing no later than July 27.

To submit a nomination or learn more, visit www.middlesexchamber.com/awards-and-scholarships.

* * *

See you next week.

Hoping for Karma

To the Editor:

Recently in Hebron a whole family of geese were killed by a motor vehicle, allegedly on purpose. Hundreds of people commented and reacted to the Facebook post in Let's Talk East Hampton with shock, anger and sadness. Many wanted a terrible punishment for the killer, and others hoped for karma to do its thing. Imagine purposely killing innocent animals unnecessarily! "Disgusting" and "disgraceful" were mentioned numerous times.

But wait... isn't hunting purposely killing innocent animals unnecessarily? Isn't fishing purposely killing innocent animals unnecessarily? Isn't buying dead animals at the grocery store purposely killing innocent animals unnecessarily? Just because some poor slaughterhouse worker does the killing for you doesn't make it okay. Since we don't need meat to survive, and we can get all of our nutrients from plants and plant-based foods, killing and eating animals is unnecessary.

So, the next time you react with anger, sadness and disgust for the unnecessary killing of animals, ask yourself if you are contributing to that with every meal you eat.

Wendy Shaffer – East Hampton

Hebron DPW Action Monday

To the Editor:

Appropriately named, Hebron's Department of Public Works Action Committee is full of action and activity with a truck load of new information at every meeting. The creation of a new Public Works facility in Hebron has been the focus of a long line of studies and recommendations. A Town of Hebron Municipal Facilities Study from 2010 reported, "The public works facility is in desperate need of additional space and more efficient working conditions." This was followed in 2013 by a report by the firm CME Associates which noted "the existing Department of Public Works facility... provides inadequate space for normal operations and protection of equipment... An investment in improved and expanded DPW facilities... will be a cost saving measure in the long term..." Then in 2017 a report by BL Companies found "the existing buildings had reached the end of their useful life, and were in need of replacement."

Despite the clearly identified need going back over 16 years, the town has made more progress over the last three years under the DPWAC than ever before. Complex schematics and architectural design plans have been created with input from the dedicated and knowledgeable members of the DPWAC, the Public Works Director Paul Forrest and his staff and the guidance of the award winning engineering firm of Silver / Petrucelli + Associates. Not only have this notable list of professionals provided significant input, the DPWAC has acted to embrace suggestions provided by the public at large.

Residents and officials will have another opportunity for a close up look at Hebron's Department of Public Works project this Monday, July 20th. The DPW Action Committee is holding their regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall and online at meet.goto.com/267551333, or you can dial in using your phone, Access Code: 267-551-333.

On the agenda are two notable items initiated by input from the public and the Town Council.

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◆ Happenings ◆

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At a cost of \$10,000, Silver / Petrucelli has created plans that provide an option to leave the Transfer Station intact and only reconstruct the DPW facility, including the offices, garage, and salt shed. “Other Related Topics” include the efforts of the DPWAC to provide trash and recycling options during construction, namely a strategic arrangement with the transfer station in Colchester. This would represent huge savings and is a testament to the DPWAC’s diligence and earnest efforts to provide a fiscally responsible plan.

Sincerely,
Kevin J. Tulimieri – Amston

Weir Listens and Answers

To the Editor:
The political silly season is here, and it wouldn’t be politics without partisan, out-of-context criticism. If we’re going to have a conversation about Steve’s performance, let’s make it an honest one. You can count on Steve for an honest conversation.

I’ll again be supporting our state Rep. Steve Weir for reelection. In my observation, he has lived up to the promises he made along the campaign trail over the past four years.
I’m thankful that Steve reads the bills, is well-informed, and votes not with the majority or the minority, but rather based on how he interprets a piece of legislation will affect the 55th District. I appreciate Steve’s discretion and judgment more than a party-line vote. We didn’t put Steve in office to vote robotically on a party line.

On occasion, I’ve called him on his cell phone, texted him or emailed with legislative questions, including about his votes. And that’s the thing about Steve – he responds.

He’s active both in the district and at the Capitol to understand the impact of proposed legislation. He shows up at events. He volunteers. He donates and supports local organizations. He listens to all sides of an argument. He publishes a regular e-newsletter that anyone can sign up to receive. In that newsletter, readers are informed not just about district events and legislation that has passed, but also legislation that is up for consideration.

Bob Clarke – Marlborough

Dirty Tricks

To the Editor:
As America celebrated its 250th anniversary, Colchester residents received their tax bills in the mail.

Death and taxes, as they say. But this bill comes with a dirty trick: it may not be the only tax bill you receive. You see, the bill that just arrived is based on last year’s budget. If the proposed budget passes, taxpayers will receive a supplemental tax bill later.

Colchester’s next budget referendum is July 28. Town officials are asking for another roughly 5% spending increase, and another reach into your wallet. Other *Rivereast* towns are rejecting increases closer to 3%, but Colchester officials apparently have bigger plans for your money.

Consider the former superintendent who “resigned” in April. At the end of June, more than two months after his departure, he received a vacation payout of roughly \$26k on top of his regular salary payment. With a payday like that arriving just before the holiday, at least someone had the budget for a spectacular Fourth of July celebration. Colchester taxpayers will continue paying him approximately \$9k twice a month

through October 2027.
Most Colchester taxpayers can only dream of leaving a job with a deal like that. But he is not the only one receiving a generous helping of your money. First Selectman Bernie Dennler received a \$21k salary increase. I’m sure he would also like you to vote yes.

This is crazy, folks.
Our leaders should be focused on affordability, not calculating how large an additional tax bill they can send on top of the one residents already received.

I am standing with my neighbors and voting ‘no’ on July 28.

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

BOE Still Not Taking Action

To the Editor:
Many writers to the *Rivereast* from East Hampton who have advocated and supported a ‘no’ vote have repeatedly asked for the BOE to address the administrative costs, office operations, and specialized programs that contribute to the demands for a \$39 million budget. Writers have asked that the BOE undertake a serious look at their waste in their operating budget, not just focusing on cutting teachers and programs. Mr. Hintz correctly pointed out since “it represents over two-thirds of the overall budget, it should bear a larger share of any necessary cuts.” To the rational person, this makes perfect sense.

Sadly, last week’s *Rivereast* letters contained more comments from the superintendent and the BOE chair stating “it would be hard to find ways to achieve the desired cuts without cutting into programs or teaching positions.” No mention of alternatives. The BOE continues to not listen, or make any serious effort to get beyond cutting teachers or programs. They will stick to the strategy to take no substantive action, make dire threats of educational weaknesses, provide meaningless platitudes, and wait for the voters to give up.

They also said “the board would make its decisions on cuts once the budget passed referendum.” What?? What cuts are they referring to? The paltry \$250,000 they so gratuitously shifted to the town budget? Once the budget is approved, no cuts will be necessary! Line-item cuts should be made prior to referendum, not after. The chairman of the East Hampton TC apparently believes that because the voters said ‘no,’ they are stupid, since “people didn’t understand.” I believe the voters understand perfectly;

the budget is too high and needs to be trimmed. He is likely correct in his observation about the budget being lean, but one can only assume that he is referring to the town operations, certainly not the \$39 million un-lean BOE budget. He also compares our budget to other communities, but as the readers will remember, while other communities increased budgets, others decreased as well. So why don’t we talk about them?
Remember the definition of insanity: “Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result” points to the futility of making the same mistake over and over again, which our town leaders seem to do.

Regards,
Bob Yenknerr – East Hampton

A Trail of Bread Crumbs

To the Editor:
Just a few short years ago, the budgets in town passed on but a single referendum. So, what has changed, what has happened to create such a divide and distaste in town? Well, we still have the same 5-2 Democratic majority on the Town Council and the chairperson is also the same individual. Well, last year’s budget season brought forward a strong push from the RTC for a narrative of overspending and malfeasance from our local government and officials. Golly, in fact, last year the RTC had an award night at the Dublin, in which Ted Hintz, Bryon Turner and Bridgett McClellenn were awarded for “helping” with the budget season, although I’d call it sabotaging the budget; they even shared a photo op of them in this very paper. The RTC drove this narrative in an attempt to discredit the majority party and set up for an election year win.

Well, how bigly did this strategy backfire!! Losing all three boards! You see, these people either completely lost or came in last place, a participation trophy if you will. They are sore losers and are not trying to help the town of East Hampton. Quite the contrary, they plan, cause chaos, disruption and ruin good things in this town so the blame can be placed and then they can parlay into another run at office to take back the “power.” However, there is a reason these folks got knocked out of office; we’ve seen these same names, year after year, rotated through every possible position like a slot machine in a casino. The only difference is there is no chance of winning. We’ve seen their playbook; it hasn’t changed since Y2K. Cancel, reduce and blame someone else.

Don’t let them sell you their “cure” for they are the ones who have brought forth the prob-

lems we are desperately trying to fix. East Hampton needs strong leadership, and that is why we have our Democratic leaders righting our ship. Fixing our roads, paying down our debts, providing sound education, offering solid senior services and keeping everyone safe with our fire and police departments staffed and well equipped. Let’s keep East Hampton moving forward, progress and prosperity.

Rick Wanat – East Hampton

Weir is Working for All

To the Editor:
I wanted to take a moment to share my thoughts about Steve Weir as he seeks reelection as state representative for Connecticut’s 55th District. We’re both longtime Hebron residents, and I’ve known Steve and his family for years and have always been impressed by his intelligence, integrity, and work ethic. Steve and his wife, Allegra, have volunteered quite a bit around the community, including helping the Lions at the annual Harvest Fair for the past few years. As a successful business owner, he understands the challenges facing working families and small businesses, and he brings practical, real-world experience to Hartford.

Steve is thoughtful and thorough. He doesn’t make decisions based on political pressure or catchy headlines. He takes the time to understand the details of every issue and carefully considers the long-term impact of the legislation before him. Whether you agree with every vote or not, you can trust that Steve has done his homework.

I’ve read several recent letters criticizing Steve’s record. While everyone is entitled to their opinion, many seemed to repeat partisan talking points rather than acknowledge the thoughtful approach Steve brings to public service. Legislators don’t vote on bill titles – they vote on the entire bill. Sometimes that means opposing legislation because of provisions unrelated to its stated purpose, including unnecessary government spending or other concerns that deserve careful scrutiny. As one of the few Republican voices in a legislature with a Democratic supermajority, Steve plays an important role by asking tough questions, offering a different perspective, and ensuring that legislation receives the careful review it deserves.

Whether Republican, Democrat, or Independent, we all benefit when our elected officials think independently rather than simply follow the crowd. Steve is honest, approachable, and deeply committed to serving the people of the

See Letters, page 10

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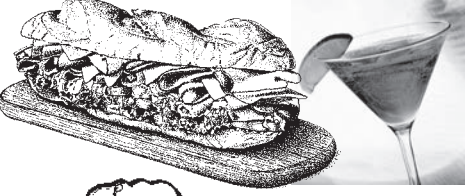
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Marlborough Resident Celebrates Debut Novel

By Toriana Williams

Marlborough resident Jordan Whipple never really planned to write a novel. But one day, during a few quiet hours while her daughter napped, a spark ignited.

Now, just over two years later, Whipple has published her first-ever novel. *The Way Back to You* was released June 16, written under her pen name Hayden Fox. Readers can purchase her work on Amazon or Kindle Unlimited.

The emotional romance follows childhood friends Kendall and Kai as they try to rebuild a relationship broken by heartbreak, secrets and years apart. While the novel features romance, Whipple said the story is just as much about healing, forgiveness and finding hope after life's hardest moments.

For someone publishing her very first book, Whipple shared that the journey has been both exciting and surprising.

"I've always enjoyed reading. I've always enjoyed writing. Even in college and in high school, when we were assigned papers, that was one of my favorite things to do," said Whipple. "I always thought maybe I would write a book. I just didn't exactly know when or what it would be about."

Before becoming an author, Whipple spent six years teaching special education in East Hartford. After becoming a stay-at-home mom nearly three years ago, she found herself with small pockets of quiet time while her daughter slept.

Instead of scrolling on her phone, picking up another hobby or even napping herself, she started writing.

"Honestly, at first, I just needed to write as an outlet," she said. "I would do it during my daughter's nap time. At first it was just, 'Okay, I'm going to write and kind of see where it takes me.'"

Little by little, the story grew. "I started making an outline, and maybe six to eight months in, I was like, 'Oh, okay, there's a story forming here. I think I'm going to try and finish writing this,'" she said.

When she finally told her husband she intended to complete the manuscript, his response was incredibly supportive. "He said, 'Okay, let's do it. Let's start a business. Let's form an LLC and let's publish it,'" Whipple recalled with a laugh.

The entire process – from first draft to publication – took just over two years.

The finished novel tells the story of Kendall

and Kai, childhood best friends who fall deeply in love before tragedy and painful secrets pull them apart. Years later, they are forced to confront the past, and each other, and decide whether their love deserves a second chance.

"*The Way Back to You* is a slow burn, second chance, interracial hockey romance. It's about two friends that grew up together," Whipple explained. "They fell in love. They loved each other deeply. They lost each other painfully."

Whipple added, "Really, the book is them figuring out if they can overcome all of this trauma and heartache and secrets that they've held onto over the past couple of years."

Although hockey sets the scene, Whipple said readers shouldn't expect pages filled with game action.

"There is hockey in the book, but it's not the main focus," she said. "I wanted hockey in the background."

Instead, she said she hopes readers connect with the characters and their emotional journey.

"I think the biggest theme in this book would probably be healing and forgiveness," she said. "There is a lot of mental health representation in the book, and I did that intentionally."

Scenes involving therapists and couples counseling are woven throughout the novel, in what Whipple said is an attempt to normalize the idea that healing often requires honesty and hard work.

Whipple also admitted that writing some characters came easier than others. Kendall shares many of her own personality traits, while Kai required a little extra help.

"There were a few times where I'd be like to my husband, 'Does this sound like something a guy would say?'" she said with a laugh. "Sometimes he'd say, 'Yeah,' and sometimes he'd be like, 'No, let's change it.'"

The most interesting part about *The Way Back to You* is that it almost became a completely different novel. Whipple originally began to write a young adult story that focused entirely on Kendall and Kai during their senior year of high school. Halfway through, however, she realized the real story came after graduation.

"I was like, 'Wait a second. Is this really where the story is?'" she questioned.

She decided to start over from scratch, moving the timeline forward several years and turning much of what she had already written into flashbacks.

"I was like, 'What if she has a baby? What if

it threatens his career? What if they're separated for three years and then they come back together? That's where the real story is,'" she said. "I took everything I had written and started from scratch."

While writing the novel required dedication, Whipple shared that publishing proved even more demanding.

"Writing a book is really, really, really hard," she emphasized. "But everything that comes after it is kind of where the real push and challenge is."

As a self-published author, she suddenly found herself wearing several more hats than she expected.

"I had to find an editor. I had to find someone to create a book cover. I had to do marketing. I had to learn social media marketing. I had to become a networker," she said. "For me, it was a lot of building the plane as I flew it."

Still, the hard work has already brought some unforgettable rewards.

One of the most meaningful moments for Whipple came when readers thanked her for featuring an interracial couple in the story.

"The main character is Black, and I myself am half Black and half white," she said. "There's a lot of me and our experiences in there."

She also loved hearing from readers who couldn't stop reading.

"When somebody says, 'I stayed up all night reading it. I couldn't put it down,' that's just such a cool thing to hear because I'm a huge reader myself," Whipple said.

Family support has also played a huge role throughout the process. Her husband helped launch Fox Cabin Publishing, while her mother became her very first reader.

"My mom was my first reader and the first person to give me feedback," said Whipple. "That was really special!"

Readers will also have opportunities to meet Whipple at upcoming author events, including appearances at the Rule of Three Brewing in East Hampton this Saturday, July 18, from noon-4 p.m.; Dudleytown Brewing in Windsor on Sunday, Aug. 9; and a personal book-signing



Jordan Whipple – under her pen name, Hayden Fox – has released her debut novel, *The Way Back to You*.

at Folklore & Fable in Colchester on Aug. 16 at noon.

As for the future, Whipple is already working on her second novel, which she hopes to publish in the fall of 2027.

Looking back on everything she has accomplished, Whipple hopes readers walk away with something deeper than a love story, second chance or not.

"I hope readers have a sense of hope," she said. "Healing is possible even after really difficult life circumstances."

She also believes her novel offers something different from many other romances.

"I've heard from multiple readers that this book is very real and honest and raw," said Whipple. "It's not an escape. I think it's more like a mirror. I hope readers see a lot of themselves in Kendall and Kai and their challenges. I just want readers to feel seen."

Art Display at Town Hall

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

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

woodlands, as well as intimate views of flowers, animals and birds.

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

Bluegrass Band at Arts Center

The Sperry Creek Bluegrass Band will perform July 24 at the 4th Friday evening @ the Arts Café, hosted by the Marlborough Arts Center. The center is located at 231 North Main St.

Sperry Creek is a five-piece acoustic bluegrass band based in central Connecticut that formed

Marlborough Farmers Market

Zina's Cucina is hosting the Marlborough Farmers Market every Wednesday until Oct. 14, from 4-7 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.

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.marlconchurch.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 and bulletins with word games, mazes, and picture finds for Sunday school-age children.

July 19: The service will be led by Seaver with her sermon titled "The 11th Commandment," based on selected Exodus 20 scripture verses. The service will also include the welcoming of a new church member. 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 Sept. 27.

Second Blessings Thrift Shop is closed in July and August and will reopen in September. 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@marlconchurch.org, or contact the church office at office@marlconchurch.org.

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Marlborough Visits Independence Hall 50 Years Later

By Toriana Williams

The Marlborough Jr. Ancient Fife and Drum Corps carried nearly 62 years of tradition, pride in their hometown and their instruments too throughout their recent eight-day tour through Pennsylvania. During the trip, the young musicians performed seven shows at historic locations, visited famous landmarks and learned valuable lessons about teamwork, flexibility and perseverance.

The tour, which ran from June 27 through July 4 for most members, marked a special and long-awaited return to Pennsylvania. The Marlborough Jr. Ancient Fife and Drum Corps first marched in front of Independence Hall during the nation's Bicentennial celebration in 1976. This year's tour celebrated the 250th anniversary, which made the event all the more special.

Wayne Seidel, the business manager who helped organize the trip, said the timing was on purpose.

"The last time they did this particular trip, or marched in front of Independence Hall, was at the Bicentennial in 1976," said Seidel. "We thought when we were invited again to do it, we thought, 'You know what, we'll go on the 50-year anniversary from the last time we went.'"

The Marlborough corps traveled alongside the Colchester Continentals, an adult fife and drum corps. Together, the combined group of around 40 performers put on a one-hour long show that featured music, marching and history. The group will perform the same show on the Colchester Green on July 30.

"We did some separate performances. We did some combined performances, including a one-hour show," said Seidel. "It's a one-hour narrated presentation of music and history and marching and solos, and there's a lot of really interesting dynamics to the show itself."

The tour included performances in Litchfield, Valley Forge, Gettysburg, New Holland, Independence Hall, the Betsy Ross House and the Old Meeting House. The group also spent a fun-filled day at Hershey Park, which offered the students a chance to relax after long days of rehearsing and performing.

Amy Limmer, director of the Marlborough Corps, said the students worked hard before leaving Connecticut.

"We did a lot of work on the one-hour show

that's with Colchester Continentals. Practicing together, playing together," said Limmer. "We always do parades, so the parades were kind of easy and ready. We had a couple new tunes. We learned to make sure we had them for this trip."

While the performances were important, Limmer said the educational experiences were just as valuable.

"It's an incredible thing to play in different places. They get to see historical places, so they get to get a lot of education too," she said. "Valley Forge was huge for them. They got to walk around, they got to go into the museum. Gettysburg, again, they got to see a lot of different history."

One of the most impressive performances came in Philadelphia.

"They had the incredible experience of performing in front of Independence Hall. Which is not something that everybody gets to do," said Limmer. "They had a huge crowd watching them, and it was really exciting for them."

Limmer shared that the performance in front of the hall became the highlight of the entire trip for her.

"I absolutely loved watching them play in front of Independence Hall," she said. "That was just, like, it wasn't in our expectations. So it was really cool to actually see them and get to do that."

The tour, of course, was not without its challenges. Temperatures topped 100 on several days of their visit, which forced leaders to make hydration a top priority.

"The kids did great. They all listened amazingly about drinking plenty of water," said Limmer. "We were working really hard to make sure ... water was around. We were cooling people off. Nobody passed out."

With a smile, she added, "I am so proud of them. It was ridiculously hot ... but they all did amazing with it."

The success of the trip was in large part due to the support of the families, said Limmer.

"We have such an incredible group of parents. I ask for anything, and I get volunteers all the time," said Limmer. "They're helping us give the kids water, and we couldn't do it and keep the kids all safe without them."

For the kids, the memories were far beyond the performances, and the days were just as fun as they were hot.



The last time the Marlborough Jr. Ancient Fife and Drum Corps performed in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pa., was in 1976. The group recently returned to the City of Brotherly Love to perform there again, to celebrate America's 250th anniversary.

Ryan Weber, who serves as the color sergeant, said one performance stood out above the rest.

"We got to play the national anthem in front of Independence Hall," said Weber. "Again, that's a big deal. But we did it, and we played it very well in front of Independence Hall."

He also enjoyed exploring the historic sites and collecting souvenirs along the way.

"One of my favorite memories was ... I collected at least, like, six magnets," Weber said. "I got magnets from Hershey Park. I got one from Gettysburg ... and I think I have about two Valley Forge magnets."

His family members are big magnet collectors, he shared with a grin.

Another corps member, Erica Motes who plays the fife, said that friendships made the trip even more meaningful.

"It was a lot of fun, 'cause I had, like, a bunch of friends, a bunch of family members," said Motes. "We were all joining together, and being a part of this group and hanging out together

and having fun."

Motes also appreciated the opportunity to explore Gettysburg beyond the performances.

"We got to see some really cool monuments," she said, adding that her family toured Gettysburg National Cemetery while other members explored different parts of the historic town.

Seidel said experiences like these are exactly why the corps continues to travel.

"These kids earn it all," he said. "Every year, when they march parades, they collect fees. The fees help pay for things like a trip like this. The idea is to give them experiences that they wouldn't necessarily get in other places."

In the end, Seidel said he believes the biggest lesson isn't just about the music.

"The most important thing is that not only do they have fun and visit really cool places, but they learn to work together as a team to pull off something really amazing," shared Seidel. "And they do it. They do a great job doing it."

Japanese Sumi-E Painting Workshop

Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., will offer a half-day workshop in the Japanese art form Sumi-E. on Saturday morning July 25.

Makers of any ability level will be guided through an art experience that embraces zen, simplicity, and imperfections. Instructor Christine Allison will teach three brush strokes with practice exercises. You will create your own Sum-E paintings with bamboo, leaves, florals and landscapes.

Allison is an art educator and artist from Connecticut. She is the art teacher at Marlbor-

ough Elementary School and was honored to be the 2024 Connecticut Art Education Association Teacher of the year.

This class is ideal for teens and adults. Children 8 and up must be accompanied by an adult. It is being held in the lower-level classroom of the arts center.

Cost of the class is \$65, plus \$10 for the brush, which you keep. All materials are provided. To register, go to Marlborougharts.org and click on the class link.

For more information, call 860-467 6353.

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A Winning Rescue... The winner of the Marlborough #1 dog raffle is Jade Field. This lovable rescue dog is a “foster fail.” Kelly Field ended up adopting Jade after starting out as her foster mom. “Jade chose *me*,” Kelly said, “and she will wear her #1 dog tag proudly!” The town clerk’s office said it is thankful for the many wonderful donations they received for the Marlborough Food Bank during this raffle, which is held every year during dog license season.

Senior Center News and Notes

Marlborough Senior Center, 17 School Drive, is open for activities. For more information about any senior center program, or to register, call 860-295-6209 or email socialservices@marlboroughct.gov. Also contact the senior center for a list of regularly occurring weekly and monthly programs, such as billiards, Mah-jongg, 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: Birthday Club: July birthdays will be celebrated July 28 from 1-2 p.m. with cake. Open to all friends and family. It doesn’t have to be your birthday month to celebrate, but if it is, RSVP.

Chair Yoga: Next session 8/4, 8/11, 8/18, 8/25. Cost is \$35/residents, \$40/non-residents. RSVP by 7/31.

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.

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.marlboroughct.gov for the complete transportation policy.

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

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.

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

★ *Letters, cont. from page 7*

55th District. I encourage my fellow residents to look beyond the political rhetoric, consider Steve’s record, and support his reelection.

Sincerely,
Michael Beaulieu – Hebron

Note: Beaulieu is a member of the RHAM Board of Education but is speaking as an individual.

Officials May Argue; Offices Should Not

To the Editor:

I write as an Andover resident, about Andover’s charter, though the question is one any town in the area might recognize.

When a town budget, a bond, or any other question reaches the ballot, the decision belongs to the voters. Our elected officials are free to argue their side, and we are better off hearing them. What should not happen is for the weight of an office, rather than the force of an argument, to land on one side of a question the public has reserved for itself. A selectman may oppose a budget. The Board of Selectmen should not.

Chapter II of Andover’s charter governs elections, and runs through Section 209. I would offer this for a future charter revision as a new Section 210, written to be read by anyone and

not only by lawyers:

Section 210. Official Neutrality on Questions Before the Voters

A. Once a question has been placed before the electors of Andover, no board established or governed under this Charter, and no member acting in an official capacity, shall invoke the name, title, or authority of that board to urge a vote for or against the question.

B. Nothing in this section limits any official from speaking as a private citizen, provided the official makes clear that the view is personal and is not the position of the board on which they serve.

C. Town funds, staff, equipment, and official communication channels shall not be used to advocate for or against any such question. Nothing in this section prevents a board or official from encouraging residents to vote, or from publishing impartial factual information about the question and about how and when to vote.

This takes no one’s voice away. It asks only that a public office stay neutral on a decision the public has kept for itself, whoever holds the office and whichever side they favor.

Sincerely,
Scott Sauyet – Andover

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

Parks and Rec. Programs

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

Youth Programs: Netto Summer Day Camp: For grades K-7. Weekly through 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: All lesson levels are offered. All lessons are held at Blish Park. Fee per week is \$65/resident, \$70/non-resident.

Skyhawks Sand Volleyball Camp: For ages 10-14. July 20-24, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at Blish Park. This program is designed for the beginning and intermediate player. Boys and girls will develop skills through game-speed drills and daily scrimmages. Fee: \$165/resident, \$170/non-resident.

Family Beach Yoga Night: Tuesday, July 21,

5:30 p.m., at Blish Park. 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.

Skyhawks Mini-Hawk Camp (Soccer, Baseball and Basketball): For ages 4-6. July 27-31, 9 a.m.-noon, at MES. This multi-sport program teaches children the essentials of each sport. Fee is \$150/resident, \$155/non-resident.

Horseback Riding Lessons: Ages 5 and up. Lesson days and times are flexible. Fee is four lessons for \$175/residents, \$180/non-residents.

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

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.

Info on Upcoming Primary Election

A Primary Election is coming up this August. The Democratic Party will hold a primary for Governor, and the Republican Party will hold a primary for state senate.

To participate in the primary, you must be registered in one of the two major parties. If you’re currently unaffiliated, you can change your registration up until noon on Monday, Aug. 10, either online at voterregistration.ct.gov or in person at Town Hall by requesting a form from the town clerk or registrars of voters. Forms must be received by noon Aug. 10 to be eligible to vote the next day.

If you switch parties during Early Voting (hours below), you must do so in person by completing a new registration form at the office; you may then vote the following day.

Unaffiliated voters who switch parties to participate in the primary, can switch back by simply filling out a new voter registration card.

You are eligible to vote in the primary if you

will be 18 by Nov. 3, 2026, and are registered in either the Republican or Democratic party.

The registrars of voters will be available to help with in-person registration on the following dates: Friday, July 24, 5–7 p.m., or Monday, Aug. 10, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Other dates may be available; call to schedule a time.

If you have mobility issues, curbside voting is available during Early Voting and on Election Day. Call our office on 860-295-6166 to arrange it.

Early Voting will take place at Town Hall (Conference Room) between Aug. 3 and 9. Hours are: Monday, Aug. 3, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Tuesday, Aug. 4, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Wednesday, Aug. 5, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursday, Aug. 6, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday, Aug. 7, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, Aug. 8, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday, Aug. 9, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

On Primary Election Day, Aug. 11, the polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., at Marlborough Elementary School.

St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

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

Liturgical Celebrations: Weekend Masses: 4 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday.

Weekday Masses: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 8:30 a.m. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Mondays at 9 a.m.

Weekly Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturdays, 3-3:30 p.m., or by appointment.

Faith Formation Programs: Vacation Bible School will be Aug. 10-14, 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.

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. In July, the church collects for its backpack and school supplies drive. Monetary donations are accepted supporting the students and families at Marlborough Elementary School. 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.

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.

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

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KinderRHAMa Summer Camp

KinderRHAMa Preschool Summer Camp is open for all towns – and some weeks still have openings.

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

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

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.



Where? In Delaware!... Jerry and Tracey Crowley along with son Randy went to Delaware for daughter Jerlyn’s wedding on June 6 to Rich Conant, and they brought along the *Rivereast* with them.

Where in the World is the *Rivereast*?

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



Rivereast Takes a Hike... Cliff & Marilyn Hammond of East Hampton, along with Ryan Hammond and Julie Shea of Massachusetts, recently enjoyed scenic Glacier Point (Half Dome) and hiking at California’s Yosemite National Park.



Rivereast at the Wall... After visiting friends in Dortmund to watch Fußball, Ken, Karen and Evan Yacono from East Hampton spent time sightseeing in Berlin Germany, visiting the Berlin Wall memorial and “Checkpoint Charlie.”



Rollin’ on the River.... Kayleigh Kinsella recently took the *Rivereast* out on a cruise along the Mekong River in Luang Prabang, a UNESCO World Heritage city in Northern Laos.

Where in the World?

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

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

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Local Teen Donates One Ton of Food

By Toriana Williams

When Colchester teen Anthony DePaola began his Eagle Scout service project, he decided in the beginning his goal was to collect a literal ton of food for families facing hunger in eastern Connecticut.

In general, 2,000 pounds of food sounds impossible for any one person to collect. But DePaola, a 17-year-old member of Boy Scout Troop 13, believed it could be done. By the time the project ended, he had not only reached his goal, but he had far exceeded it.

Thanks to the generosity of friends, neighbors, churches and local supporters, DePaola collected an incredible amount of over 2,600 pounds of non-perishable food for Catholic Charities of Norwich.

“I was very grateful. I think it primarily shows the effort of the community,” said DePaola. “I think it shows that people are really generous, but people just need an outlet of how to give. I think a lot of people want to give; they just need to find the right place for it.”

DePaola said he chose to organize a food drive because it matched both his experience and his desire to help others.

“I’ve had experience with doing food drives before, so it’s something I’m pretty comfortable with,” he explained. “I just feel like a service project would be better for the community. I really value that a lot.”

His connection to Catholic Charities also made the decision easy. DePaola is a parishioner at St. Andrew Church in Colchester, where his relationship with Catholic Charities first began. Through his parish, he participated in an earlier food collection that introduced him to the organization’s mission of serving families in need across eastern Connecticut.

“I respect Catholic Charities because in the past I’ve done a food collection for them before, and I think they’re a great organization,” he said.

DePaola shared that his goal of collecting one ton of food was not based on anything too complicated. “I figured one ton would be a pretty solid amount,” he said. “I don’t think it’s too much, I don’t think it’s too little.”

He added with a laugh, “And it sounds good on paper.”

What surprised him, however, was not actually meeting his goal, or even surpassing it. Instead, it was the overwhelming response from the community.

“I was surprised. I probably only told people once or twice, maybe, just through social media and just speaking in person,” he admitted. “It wasn’t heavily advertised as other things might be. People really cared a lot.”

Colchester Federated Church News

Colchester Federated Church is located at 60 Main St. 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

Even with all the support, that does not mean the project was easy by any means. Behind the scenes, the goal required some serious planning.

“The biggest challenge was probably the planning part. There’s a lot to go into it, especially initiating from just one person,” said DePaola. “It takes a lot of leverage and a lot of initiation to put that in motion.”

He also discovered how important communication can be when leading a large community effort.

“I learned there’s a lot of communication that goes behind it. You have to communicate constantly to a lot of people,” he explained. “There’s a lot of planning behind contingencies and planning around all those ‘what-ifs.’ There’s a lot of behind-the-scenes work that goes into it.”

DePaola made it clear that a lot of that work wouldn’t have been possible without several people helping him bring the project to fruition.

“Probably my dad, my scoutmaster, my parish priest and the beneficiary were the top people,” he said. “They helped work with me closely with planning and availability and space to store food.”

Once the donations arrived at Catholic Charities, they immediately began making a difference.

Jack Babbit, chief operating officer of Catholic Charities, said the organization operates four food pantries that serve 63 towns throughout eastern Connecticut. Last year alone, Catholic Charities distributed more than 70,000 pounds of food, serving about 5,000 people and providing more than 48,000 meals.

Babbit shared that DePaola’s donation came at exactly the right time.

“Anthony was a godsend to us because we were running low,” Babbit said. “Him bringing the food that he did just allowed us to really restock and refill and get ready for the summer rush that we knew we’d have with the kids going off on summer vacation.”

Babbit said the need for food assistance continues to grow as many families struggle with rising costs and reductions in government benefits.

“Some people have lost SNAP benefits,” he explained. “They’re coming more and more to food pantries looking for additional help to supplement their nutrition program.”

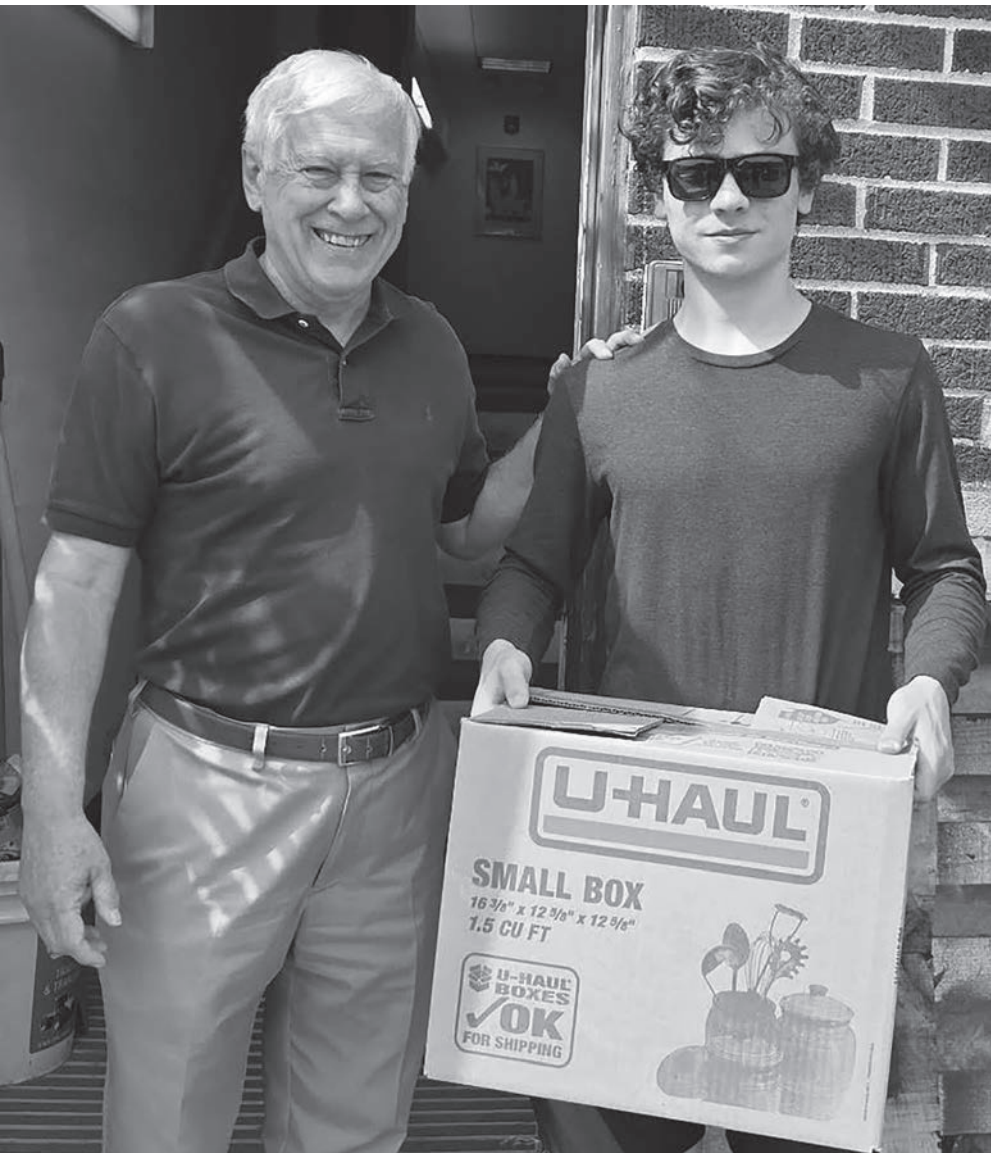
Because of that, DePaola’s donation was all the more valuable.

“The fact that a lot of these are families making sure that the children get the nutrition that they need is very, very important,” said Babbit.

One of the things that impressed Babbit the most was DePaola’s leadership.

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.



For his Eagle Scout service project, Colchester teen Anthony DePaola, right, donated more than a whopping 2,600 pounds of food to Catholic Charities – with the support of his family, community, and Catholic Charities Chief Operating Officer Jack Babbit, left.

“We don’t have a lot of youth stepping up as much as we’d like,” he said. “Anthony stepped up to the point that he ran the whole thing for us, to the deliveries into the building and everything else. He really did a great job.”

DePaola also learned more about the growing problem of food insecurity while working on the project.

“It did change my perspective,” shared DePaola. “Catholic Charities has had like a 91% increase in demand according to the beneficiary, which shows a lot. It’s crazy to hear stuff like that happens not too far away.”

The project eventually attracted national attention after being featured by CatholicVote’s *The Loop and Zeal News*. DePaola said he was excited to see the story spread beyond Connecticut.

“I think it was great advertisement. I think it’s

a good example to other people,” he said. “We even had someone who saw the article who actually donated food, so I’m just happy that the word gets across anyway.”

DePaola said scouting has been preparing him for leadership all his life.

“Eagle Scout is the final rank in Boy Scouts,” he explained. “It’s primarily identified with a lot of leadership and leading people and using your skills for other people.”

Along the way, DePaola said he learned lessons that extend far beyond camping trips. “I learned a lot of skills,” he said. “I learned a lot of helpful life skills, a lot of helpful habits of thinking for everyday life.”

When asked what advice he would give another Scout preparing an Eagle project, he laughed when delivering his answer: “Don’t procrastinate. It’s a lot of work.”

Town-Wide Tag Sale Returns

All are invited to explore the annual Colchester Town-Wide Tag Sale on Saturday, Aug. 1 – and residents are also invited to sign up to participate.

Hosted by the Colchester Parks & Recreation Department, the Town-Wide Tag Sale offers shoppers the opportunity to discover everything from household goods and furniture to antiques, children’s items, books, sporting equipment, home décor, collectibles and more – all while exploring neighborhoods throughout Colchester.

Residents who wish to participate should register their sale before July 22, to be sure they are included in the free tag sale map. Registered addresses will be included on the official Town-Wide Tag Sale map, making it easy for shoppers to plan their route and visit participating homes throughout the day.

For registration information, participant deadlines, and to obtain the official Town-Wide Tag Sale map, visit colchesterct.gov/recreation-department or call 860-537-7297.

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Colchester Goes to Referendum July 28

By Toriana Williams

Following more than \$1.5 million in reductions, the proposed town and school 2026-27 budgets will go back before the voters on July 28.

The spending proposals – which total \$68.72 million, or a 4.4% increase from last year’s budgets – will go to referendum on Tuesday, July 28, at Town Hall from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. after the town was to hold a public budget meeting Wednesday, July 15, after press time.

The revised budget totals \$68.72 million, a 4.4% increase from last year’s \$65.76 million. The Board of Education portion is \$49.37 million, a 4.3% increase, and the town’s budget is \$19.35, a 4.7% increase. The proposed budget offers a 30.97 mill rate, a 3.5% increase over last year.

The new proposal came after voters overwhelmingly rejected the first budget on May 20. The previous proposal would have increased the mill rate to 32.01, but residents made it loud and clear that they believed both the town and especially the school budgets were too high.

To respond to those concerns, the Board of Finance approved \$1.5 million in cuts to the

BOE’s budget and another \$167,890 in reductions to town departments and operations.

A Closer Look at the Cuts

The largest reductions fall on the school district. The current proposed budget eliminates the assistant principal position at Bacon Academy, has Colchester Elementary School and Jackacker Intermediate School share a principal and includes teacher furloughs, staffing reductions and cuts to capital spending.

Acting Superintendent of Schools Judy O’Meara, during a June joint meeting of the town boards of selectmen, finance and education, said the school district already made major cuts before the latest round of reductions.

“These reductions result in more than \$1 million in cuts to operational spending when compared to the fiscal year 2025-2026 budget,” she said. “These reductions affect staffing, programs, services and resources that directly support students and schools.”

District leaders said they had already found more than \$2 million in savings through retirements, vacant positions and restructuring. Even so, the newest reductions eliminate positions

including a library media specialist, paraeducator, therapist and math teacher while reducing spending on professional development, books, classroom supplies, technology upgrades and maintenance projects.

O’Meara acknowledged that the schools can still function under the revised budget, but she warned there will still be consequences.

“At the \$1.5 million level, students continue to receive a comprehensive educational program, but schools operate with fewer resources, fewer support systems and less flexibility to respond to students’ needs,” she said.

Town departments are also facing reductions. First Selectman Bernie Dennler said road maintenance, tree removal and grounds work will be scaled back. In response to the cuts, Dennler said, “Our crews will do their best to keep to their schedules but response time for unexpected issues might be slower.”

One seasonal grounds position will be eliminated, and elected officials, department heads and administrators have agreed to unpaid furlough days to help save money. Those steps, he said, will protect important services like the library, senior center, transfer station and public

safety.

Residents’ Concerns

During the recent tri-board meeting, teachers described the uncertainty surrounding possible job losses. Math teacher Jennifer Emery said many employees are worried about their future.

“Today was a really hard day at work,” Emery said at the June 15 meeting. “I sat with colleagues of mine with tears in their eyes because they were told that there’s a possibility that they are not going to be employed come August.”

Emery also warned that “every day that passes without a resolution, we’re increasing the likelihood of losing some of the best teachers that I know.”

Still, residents have continued pushing for lower spending. Also at that June 15 meeting, resident Jeff Mattson reminded officials that voters had already spoken – by rejecting the proposed budgets in May.

“I think you need to do the right thing and get us a budget that’s no more than a 3% increase,” he said.

It remains to be seen whether coming in not at 3% but rather at 4.4% will be enough for voters – but on July 28, town officials will find out.

Mentoring, Internships, Add Up to Success

In keeping with his role as a goalkeeper for Stonehill College’s NCAA Division I soccer team, Ryan Claffey of Colchester, a member of the Class of 2026, didn’t let many experiences get by him during his four years at the Easton, Mass., college.

From leadership experiences and mentorship opportunities to studying in Florence, Italy, and an internship that led to a job offer, he managed to snag every opportunity that came his way.

An actuarial mathematics major and economics minor, Claffey will soon join the team at Travelers, one of the nation’s largest and most successful underwriters, as a participant in the company’s Actuarial Leadership Development Program.

“Serving as the president of the Financial Management Association enhanced my public speaking as well as my organizational skills,” said

the Bacon Academy graduate. “It also helped me expand my knowledge beyond what I could have learned from coursework alone.”

In addition to the knowledge gained in his program and the experiences gained through his internship, the soccer program and the Financial Management Association, Claffey also credited his success to the mentorship received from actuarial mathematics professor Heiko Todt and finance professor Michael Mullen, whom he credits with helping him develop some essential leadership and communication skills.

“My advisor, Heiko Todt, has been incredibly influential to my academic development at Stonehill,” he said. “He has guided me through multiple actuarial exams, which are critical for securing an internship and ultimately a full-time position, and pushed me to develop an appreciation for sophisticated mathematical theory.”

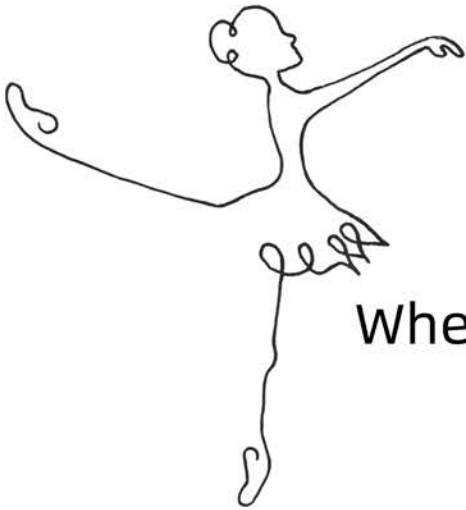
Land Trust Upcoming Events

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

Fairy House Builders Wanted! The second annual Fairy House Trail is coming to Colchester – but CLT needs help to make the magic happen. Want to build a fairy house for the trail? All ages and skill levels welcome! Groups, individuals, and businesses welcome. There will be a Popular Vote for favorite houses. Had a house in last year’s trail? Bring it again! Email/call/text lizasivek@gmail.com or 203-278-5492 with questions. Adding your fairy house to the trail is free; however, there are a few rules to keep the fairies, nature, and wildlife safe. Please read the guidelines online. Sign up at colchesterlandtrust.org.

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

CLT at Farmers 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.



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Scott Rosen – pictured here with his family – is the new pastor at Colchester Bible Baptist Church.

New Pastor at Bible Baptist Church

Colchester Bible Baptist Church has a new pastor: Scott Rosen, as of June 1. All are invited for fellowship and to meet him.

Sunday School is held at 9:30 a.m. Sunday morning worship service is at 10:30 a.m., and there is also a Sunday evening service at 6 p.m.

There is a Wednesday Evening Prayer Service at 7 p.m.

The church is located at 38 Chestnut Hill Rd., and can be reached at 860-537-1050. The pastor’s email is pastor@colchesterbible.org, and the church website is www.colchesterbible.org.

History Museum Open Sundays

The Colchester History Museum is open Sundays from 11 a.m. to 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.

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Concerts on the Town Green Return

The Parks & Recreation Department invites residents and visitors to the annual Summer Concert Series, featuring free live performances in the heart of downtown.

The concert series brings the community together each week to enjoy a variety of musical styles performed by talented local and regional musicians. From classic rock and country to pop, jazz, and patriotic favorites, there is something for every music lover.

Concerts are held on the Town Green. Guests are encouraged to arrive early to find a spot and enjoy dinner from food trucks.

This year’s lineup includes the U.S. Coast Guard Band, on Thursday, July 23 and Colchester Continentals Fife and Drum corps on Thursday, July 30. All concerts are held from 6-8 p.m.

For the complete concert schedule and event updates, visit the Parks & Recreation event calendar at colchesterct.gov/recreation-department or call the office at 860-537-7297.

Dare to Dream Jr.

The Colchester Community Theatre Summer Children’s Theatre Workshop will present Disney’s *Dare to Dream Jr.* on Saturday, July 18, at 2 p.m., in the Bacon Academy auditorium.

This is a musical revue that follows an eager group of trainees on their first day at a fictional Walt Disney Imagineering Studio. As the group sets out to help each other discover their dreams, they work together to explore the power of dreams to unite, inspire and make anything possible. Drawing from a century of Disney films, *Dare to Dream Jr.* features songs appearing for a first time ever in a Disney stage musical, including fan-favorites from *The Princess and the Frog*, *Coco*, *Encanto* and *Frozen II*. This musical revue is a mix of contemporary songs, classics, and brand-new medleys.

Tickets for this production are \$8 each (adults & children) and may be purchased online with assigned seating at www.colchestercommunitytheatre.com. Tickets will also be available at the door on the day of the performance if not sold out prior.

Call Diane Ozmun at 860-908-9286 or email info@colchestercommunitytheatre.com for additional information.

Musicians, Singers Sought for America250 Concert

Community members throughout Colchester and surrounding towns are invited to take part in a special patriotic community concert celebrating America250 and the nation’s 250th anniversary.

The community-wide musical collaboration will bring together singers and instrumentalists for a fall performance featuring patriotic and Americana-inspired music. Musicians of all experience levels are encouraged to participate, including members of local choirs, bands, orchestras, high school music programs, churches, and community organizations, as well as individuals who simply enjoy performing music.

This America250 celebration aims to unite the community through music while honoring the history, spirit, and traditions of the United States.

Rehearsals will be held on Monday evenings beginning July 27 and will continue throughout the fall in preparation for the concert. The performance date is expected to be a Sunday afternoon in October.

Registration is required; however, there is no fee to participate. Register at colchesterctrec.recdesk.com/Community/Home.

For more information community members are encouraged to contact Colchester Parks and Recreation at 860-537-7297 or parksandrec@colchesterct.gov.

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, July 20: 9 a.m., Making Memories; no Exercise w/ Anne today; 9:30 a.m., Movie Time – *Forrest Gump*; no Sittercize today; 10 a.m., Mystery Art Adventures; 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Haircuts; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 12:30 p.m., Mah Jongg, Bridge, Setback.

Tuesday, July 21: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10 a.m., Mixed Media Art – Landscapes; 10:30 a.m., Pinochle; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 3:30 p.m., AARP Smart Driver Safety Course with Harry; 6 p.m., Painted Mandala Suncatcher.

Wednesday, July 22: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Walking Group; 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Reflexology; 9:30 p.m., Live Well; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Hand and Foot Card Game, Sit & Be Fit Video; 1 p.m., Sew-cial Time; 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., Cardio Drumming.

Thursday, July 23: no Exercise w/ Anne today; no Sittercize today; 10 a.m., 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., Ping-Pong.

Friday, July 24: 9 a.m., Social Service Hours, Open Art Studio; 10 a.m., Sit & Be Fit; 10:30 a.m., Choral Group, Americana Show & Tell; 11 a.m., Yoga; 1-3:30 p.m., Open Ping Pong; 1:15 p.m., Bingo.

Healthy Food Series – How to Read Food Labels: Monday, July 27, 10:30 a.m. Take a deeper dive into the labels and compare various brands. This is a free program.

Aromatherapy Workshop: Thursday, July 30, 1 p.m. Susette Christiansen, the center’s own reflexologist, will share the basics of aromatherapy, an introduction to several commonly used essential oils, and how aromatherapy can be used to promote physical, mental and emotional wellness. All participants will create their own essential oil blend spray to take home. Cost is \$15 per person. Space is limited.

Ultimate Bingo: Tuesday, July 30, 6 p.m. Space is limited. Cost is \$10.

Ahavath Achim Chicken Barbecue

Congregation Ahavath Achim will hold a takeout-only chicken barbecue Sunday, Aug. 9, from 3:30-6 p.m.

Cost is \$20 for a full dinner, which includes half a kosher chicken, baked potato, coleslaw, dinner roll and cookies.

Orders can be taken over the phone – including on the day of the event – at 860-537-2809.

Colchester Cares Meets July 29

Colchester Cares, a giving group that supports various causes in Colchester, will hold its next quarterly meeting Wednesday, July 29, at 7 p.m., at the Carl Guild Community Room, 392 South Main St.

Colchester Cares members, who commit to donating \$100 a quarter, present current needs in town and then vote on where to send the group’s collective donations.

Colchester Cares always welcomes new members. You can be a member without having to attend meetings. Suggesting worthy causes, voting, and donating can all be done online.

For more information, visit www.colchester-cares.org or follow the group on Facebook.

Chicken Barbecue July 18

Westchester Congregational Church will host a takeout Chicken Barbecue dinner Saturday, July 18, from 4-6 p.m. The church is located at 98 Cemetery Rd. in the Westchester section of Colchester.

Drive up and for \$17 each, you will receive a barbecued half chicken, baked potato, coleslaw, roll and butter, and dessert. The meals are takeout-only, with no ordering ahead.

For more information, email westcongchurch@gmail.com.

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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.

Christian Life Chapel News

Christian Life Chapel is located at 392 S. Main St. For more information, call 860-398-9119 or email chapel.colchester@yahoo.com. The Rev. Don Rivers is pastor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Senior Center 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, departure time TBD. Spend three nights directly on the beach. Cost is \$949/person (double or triple occupancy).

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

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

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

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.

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.

Resident Graduates

Colchester resident Michael Whipple recently graduated from Quinnipiac University, with a Bachelor of Science degree in human resource management.

Dean's List

Sammi D'atri of Colchester made the spring 2026 Dean's List at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta.



On the Boardwalk... Colchester Scout Troop 13 recently held its end-of-the-year trip. This year, the scouts camped in Avalon, N.J., on the Jersey Shore. They spent five days swimming and playing games. They also went to the zoo, mini golfing, the boardwalk and an amusement park. The troop also discussed and planned for their week of Summer Camp in July, as well as an upcoming campout with a 15-mile bike ride. Troop 13 has scouts in grade six through grade 12, with older scouts leading and directing younger scouts. The troop meets 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@comscast.net or 860-917-5896.

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.westchesterconchurch.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 westchesterconchurch.org, email westconchurch@gmail.com or call the church at 860-267-6711. Pastor Ron Lake can be reached at 860-428-3460.



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From the State Senator’s Desk

Friends, I hope you’re staying cool and dry in this summer’s heat and rain.

I’m very encouraged to share new information with you this month from the State Comptroller’s office. As the 2025-26 fiscal year draws to a close with a final budget surplus valued at around \$411 million, with that money to be invested in the state’s Early Childhood Education Endowment, Connecticut has now completed eight straight fiscal years under Governor Lamont with budget surpluses.

Since 2019, the state has been able to spend more than \$10 billion to pay down outstanding and owed debt as a result of these surpluses and state investments.

On top of ensuring that hardworking Connecticut workers will be able to retire with pensions and benefits promised to them, these investments are working to reduce future owed debt payments by hundreds of millions of dollars per year. As an example, in the 2025-26 fiscal year, had the state not made those paydowns, its minimum required debt payment would be \$857 million higher than it is, adding flexibility in future state spending.

A secondary result of this has further supported the state’s economy, as Connecticut saw several credit rating upgrades in the early 2020s. That means borrowing costs for needed work like school construction and transportation efforts are lower, saving even more money.

If we can remain on our current spending path, current projections for the 2026-27 fiscal year, though it’s early, hold more promise. At the end of next year, if the state can make its expected \$1.53 billion pension paydown, mandatory debt contributions would fall by another \$200 million each year.

Even more impressive – during this time, the state has been well prepared for potential emergencies. The state’s Rainy Day Fund, which was empty about a decade ago, will reach a new cap of \$4.46 billion by the end of the 2026-27 fiscal year, representing 5% of the total state budget.

Thanks to a volatility cap imposed by legislators in 2017, income and business tax revenue collected that exceeds a certain threshold will be transferred into the reserve, preserving its value and making sure it will be ready for a potential “rainy day” such as a significant emergency or financial downturn.

A marker of this level of financial success comes from the Federal Cuts Response Fund created by legislators in late 2025 following the Trump administration cutting billions of dollars for state programs. The state’s investments continued without issue even with this \$500 million investment, reinforcing the state’s strong financial position.

Despite all of this, the work’s not done yet. Connecticut still faces tens of billions in debt, but year by year, strong fiscal stability is benefitting our state and will continue to do so. I’m encouraged to see the future continue to deliver on this progress.

State Sen. Norm Needleman
D-33rd District

Note: The 12-town 33rd Senate District includes the Rivereast towns of Colchester, East Hampton and Portland.



Needleman

Area ECSU Graduates

The following area residents recently graduated from Eastern Connecticut State University:

Amston: Colleen Garrity, who graduated with a Master of Science degree in elementary education; Nicholas Kelley, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in social work; Tyler Piascik, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in art; Brigid Utz, who graduated with a Master of Science degree in special education.

Andover: Pawel Dabek, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in health sciences; Kevin McCarthy, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics; Amanda Moore, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology; Ashley Moore, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting; Chase Nelson, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science; Arianna Vernola, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in art.

Colchester: Taryn Beisel, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English; Sandra Geis, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in social work; Zachary Manville, who graduated with a Master of Science degree in applied data science; Vincent May, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in communication; Catheryn Neudecker, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology; Sydney Soja-Roach, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology; Christopher Stephenson, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in data science; Leslie Vazquez-Lopez, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration; Paula Yanez, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in biochemistry; Aidan Zimmitti, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration and a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting.

East Hampton: Ceana DeStasio, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in art; Logan Lefebvre, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting; Bailey Lombardi, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology; Andrew Rinaldi, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in finance; Melissa Snow, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in criminology; Jennifer Tripp, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science; Madison Yorker, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education.

Hebron: Anna Beard, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration; Alexandria Marques, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology; Ingrid Taute, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in finance; Jeremy Velez, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish; Timothy Wilson, who graduated with a Master of Science degree in accounting.

Marlborough: Fenna Lacourciere, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in art; Kaitlin Nicol, who graduated with a Master of Science degree in educational studies; Chase Soulagnet, who graduated with a Master of Science degree in applied data science.

Portland: Sydney Carlson, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology; Zachary Doncet, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration; Eli Evison, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education; Matthew Fitzsimons, who graduated with a Master of Science degree in applied data science; Lindsey King, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration; Michael LaMalfa, who graduated with a Master of Science degree in accounting; Kayla LaMalfa, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in health sciences; Jodie Pickel, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in art; Caitlynn Robertson, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics; Jake Thompson, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration; Sydney Wallengren, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting.

Police Cadets Seek Members

Teens considering a job in law enforcement or the military, or just want to serve the community, are invited to join the Connecticut State Police Cadet program.

The program meets twice a month on Wednesdays from 6:30-8 p.m. at the State Police barracks in Colchester, and males and females ages 13-20 are invited to join. The Cadet program focuses on building confidence, improving physical fitness and leadership training.

If interested in attending a meeting or for more information, call 860-465-5468 or email troopkcadets028@gmail.com.

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



Lilah Martz, left, and Juliana Aresco, right, stand center stage as they prepare with more than 50 other children to perform Disney’s Dare to Dream Jr. on Saturday, July 18.

★ Dare to Dream, cont. from page 1

Ozmun.

Those lessons also continue after rehearsal ends each day.

“They can’t just do it here. When they go home, they have to practice,” she said. “That’s what actors do. Those are skills that apply to everything in life.”

For choreographer Cecilia Stallone, helping children grow is just as rewarding as creating dance numbers.

“I love choreographing it,” said Stallone. “It’s just such an awesome program and outlet for children in our community to learn about the arts.”

Because the workshop welcomes children with every level of experience, starting at none, Stallone designs dances that challenge advanced performers while helping beginners feel comfortable.

“We have kids who have never been on stage before, up to kids who are competitive dancers,” she said. “I try to design movement so children are able to stretch themselves but still feel comfortable.”

Stallone shared that the workshop theme and the show’s message resonated with her deeply.

“You’re never too old to stop dreaming,” she said. “There could be 5-year-olds in the audience or 65-year-olds that can still pursue their dreams.”

Older cast members are also embracing leadership roles.

Juliana Aresco plays one of the lead Imagineers guiding younger characters through the story.

“I’m one of the leaders of the play,” said Aresco. “I’m helping them become a full-fledged Imagineer.”

After years in the workshop herself, she enjoys seeing newer performers gain confidence. Her most favorite part, however, is the fact the show is a musical itself.

“I love singing,” she said. “That’s my favorite part of the play. I kind of love just being there and expressing the character.” She also appreciates that the musical gives many children opportunities to shine in the spotlight.

“It gives a lot of people opportunities to get a part,” said Aresco. “A lot of people who were ensemble before have a part this year, and they’re getting to show off their talent.”

Lilah Martz, another Imagineer helping guide those younger than her, enjoys playing the part of a mentor for younger characters while also encouraging the audience to dream big.

“My character wants to teach people how to dream, how to fulfill their goals in life and how to make themselves happy,” said Martz. “It feels meaningful.”

Martz shared that she believes the show’s message is especially important today.

“I really love the theme,” she said. “People really need to learn how to figure out what would actually make them happy.”

In the end, she hopes everyone leaves the theater inspired.

“I want to tell kids – or really anyone – that they should just do what makes them happy in life,” said Martz. “Don’t forget those who make you happy, too.”

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Hot Show... It was hot on the Fourth of July but got even hotter when Tony Rome took the stage with The Peacemakers band for a local show. Considering the extreme heat and humidity it was an exceptional turnout, Rome said. He said numerous people were in the shade, as well as about 50 cars beeping the horn after every song. Rome said it was a total success, and noted his next engagement is the Portland Fair on Oct. 4 at 11:30 a.m., and then on Oct. 31, Rome will finish off his 2026 Sons of Liberty tour.

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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 identification badges and will have signed authori-

zation 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.

Portland Fair Planning Underway

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

Crafts and Community Tent: This year, the Crafts and Community Tent continues its theme of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle while leaning into celebrating America's 250th birthday. The popular Trashion Show will return on Friday night. Another retuning event is the Triple Crown of Baking held in partnership with the Guilford

and Durham fairs. Melissa Kelley, chairperson for the tent, is seeking donations of leftover scrap fabrics for a community weaving project which will culminate in a banner for the tent.

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

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.

Children's Programs: 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.

Tasty Tales: Mondays at 10:30 a.m. July 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.

Flying High Disc Dogs: Wednesday, July 22, 6:30 p.m., on the Town Gree. Witness backflips, tricks, and extreme distance catches in this family-friendly show. Rain date is Thursday, Aug. 6, at 6:30 p.m.

Family Movie: Wednesday Aug. 12. *Hoppers* (2026; rated PG) will be shown at 1 p.m. and again at 5:30 p.m. Run time is 105 minutes. Registration not required.

Chalk the Walks: Wednesday, Aug. 19, 10:30 a.m. Come decorate the library sidewalks with images and messages of kindness. Chalk and pop-sicles will be supplied. Registration not required.

School Supply Bingo: Tuesday, Aug. 18, 10:30 a.m. Play some bingo and win some school supplies! Registration opens on Monday, July 27 at 10:00 a.m.

Adult Programs: Photo Exhibit Reception: Saturday, July 25, 1 p.m. "We the People" by John Bula will be on exhibit at the library through Aug. 8. Bula's "free-form puzzles" are his tribute to and illustration of American history. He has been assembling these collages of American Flags from cutouts from magazines, newspapers and advertisements for 28 years, with the average flag taking him three months to complete.

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, register for summer reading and start logging the pages you read. For every adult who joins the reading program and reads at least one book this summer (including audiobooks and graphic novels) the Friends of Portland Library will donate \$3 towards two musical instrument rental scholarships for the 2026-27 school year for two students at Brownstone Intermediate School.

Colonial Cooking from the Revolutionary Era: Monday, July 27, 6 p.m. Join Matt Yanarella for an adult and teen event that celebrates classic New England cooking from the Revolutionary era. Yanarella will also discuss popular Revolutionary War history. Space is limited. This project is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by Connecticut State Library.

Pen-Turning Workshop: Saturday, Aug. 8, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Learn to turn your own pen using a lathe with the Central Connecticut Woodturners. No registration required. Drop in any time between 10 and 2. Creating your pen takes approximately 20-30 minutes, and you'll take home your own handcrafted wooden pen. While waiting, see demonstrations by wood carvers from Connecticut Woodcarvers and scrollsaw work by the Southern New England Scrollsawers. This program is open to adults and children age 10 and older.

250th Anniversary of American Beer: Monday, Aug. 17, 6 p.m. To mark America's 250th Anniversary, illustrator, author and Advanced Cicerone Em Sauter will give an illustrated presentation discussing the role of beer and brewing in American history. Registration opens Monday, July 27 at 10 a.m.

Weekly Knifty Knitters Group: Every Saturday, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Adults of all experience levels are welcome to drop in, share ideas, get helpful knitting tips and chat with others who enjoy knitting and crocheting.

Resident Receives Professional Certificate

Amelia Bernardi of Portland was recently awarded a professional certificate in paralegal studies from the University of Hartford.

Dean's List

Portland resident Colin Wallace made the spring 2026 Dean's List at Fairfield University.



The Swedish Cemetery, located at 184 William St., now offers a columbarium.

Outdoor Columbarium at Swedish Cemetery

The Swedish Cemetery, founded in 1889, now offers a columbarium.

Located at 184 William St., the cemetery is managed by a Board of Directors, some of whom are descendants of the original founders. Although established by members of Zion Lutheran Church, the cemetery is now a separate entity and available to people of all ethnicities and beliefs.

The nonprofit cemetery offers traditional burials in single, double or family plots. Options for cremated remains include interment in one of these plots or within a columbarium, an option for the permanent housing of urns containing cremated remains. The above-ground 48-niche granite structure adds a modern addition for interment at the cemetery and can house the cremains of up to 96 people. Each niche holds the cremains of two people, so family members or friends can be together.

The cemetery said this is the first columbarium in the community. Built from granite, the outdoor unit expands the cemetery's capabilities. It provides local families with a modern, dignified option for cremation memorialization while preserving the historic grounds' natural

beauty and saving land space for additional burials. Nestled within a landscaped section of the property, the open-air sanctuary is surrounded by four granite benches and offers an intimate space for reflection, solace, and quiet prayer. It serves as a permanent secure resting place and provides a lasting tribute for generations to come.

According to the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) 2025 Cremation and Burial Report, the cremation rate in the United States has increased to 63.4%, more than double the traditional burial rate of 31.6%. The NFDA tracks these trends and predicts that cremation will rise to 82.3% by 2045, while burials will drop to around 13%.

The eco-friendly columbarium addresses the growing preference for cremation. It provides a low-maintenance alternative to traditional in-ground burial and the interment is less expensive than the traditional burial of an urn.

For information on the burial options at the cemetery, contact the Swedish Cemetery at 860-365-9589 or email your inquiry to caretaker@swedishcemeteryportlandct.org.

Chicken Barbecue July 18

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

Adult meals cost \$30 each and will consist of half a barbecued chicken with an ear of corn and French fries. A child's meal, for children under 12, will cost \$10 and consist

of chicken tenders, an ear of corn and French fries. Soda and water will be available for purchase. Meals can either be eaten onsite or take them to go. Entertainment will be provided by Paul Christopher and Round 3. Also, the raffle will be held once again.

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

Deposit Due Date Extended for Trip

Zion Lutheran Church is sponsoring a five-day/four-night trip to Lancaster, Pa., Oct. 26-30 – and the due date for the trip deposit has been extended.

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

a visit to the charming Kitchen Kettle Village.

The trip includes travel on a deluxe video-equipped motorcoach with restroom, four dinners, four breakfasts, and four nights lodging in a single hotel. Cost of this trip is \$765 per person double occupancy (\$934 pp single or \$745 pp triple occupancy). A \$75 deposit is due by Aug. 3; with the balance due by Sept. 9.

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

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Absentee Ballots for August Primary

Absentee ballots become available next Tuesday, July 21, for the Democratic primary for the party’s gubernatorial candidate and U.S. Congress candidate. The primary is being held on Tuesday, Aug. 11, with early voting from Monday, Aug. 3, to Sunday, Aug. 9. Early voting will be at Town Hall, 33 East Main St., while Primary Day voting will be at the Portland Middle School, 93 High St. Registered members of the Democratic Party can obtain an absentee ballot application in person at the town clerk’s office, by calling 860-342-6743, or visiting the town clerk page of the town’s website for additional options. Any application or completed absentee ballot should be returned to the town clerk, mailed back to the town clerk’s office at: P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480 or left in the election drop box, located by the rear entrance of the Town Hall. A recent state law updated the absentee ballot envelope process. Voters using this method are advised to pay close attention to the new instructions to ensure their ballot is received in good order, the town clerk’s office said.

Vocal Chords Seek New Members

The Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords (MHVC), directed by Samuel Tucker and accompanied by Alan Dougherty’s 10-piece orchestra, are searching for men and women to join the chorus. MHVC said it is especially interested in expanding alto, tenor and bass sections. No auditions or prior experience are required. Rehearsals start Tuesday, Aug. 25, from 6:45-9 p.m., at St. Francis Church’s Msgr. Fox Parish Hall, 10 Elm St., Middletown, as MHVC prepares for its holiday concert on Sunday, Dec. 6, at 2 p.m., at Portland High School. New members may join until Sept. 8. For 36 years, this community-focused group has offered concerts featuring a wide range of musical styles. Its repertoire includes hits from past and present, along with classical and patriotic selections. The group’s 90 current members come from central and southern Connecticut and represent diverse backgrounds. You do not need any affiliation with Middlesex Health to become a member. Concert proceeds and funds from MHVC’s annual Patron Drive go back to the community through scholarships awarded to Middlesex County seniors who plan to study nursing or music. So far, the Vocal Chords have contributed \$94,000 to local students, thanks to our dedicated supporters and members. For more information, visit vocalchords20.org or call 860-342-3120. You can also find the Vocal Chords on YouTube and Facebook.



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ten as Possible.” There is also a **Weekly Podcast** during which Hardaway discusses biblical topics. This week’s topic: Romans 8. 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.** Camp is held weekly, and runs through the week of Aug. 10-14. For more information, call director Jennifer Johnson at 860-228-5134. Application forms are at www.clecchebron.org.

Parks and Rec News & Notes

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

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

Recess and Playground Adventure Camp: Aug. 10-14, 9:30-11:45 a.m., at Veterans Memorial Park. Kids will play classic playground games such as freeze tag and hide and seek, and will also engage in some competitions such as chalk drawing, hula hooping, and sports games. For grades 1-4.

Tuesday Night 30+ Adult Pick-Up Basketball: Tuesdays, 7-9 p.m., at the Hebron Elementary School main gym. Participants are required to register/pay online and check in with staff upon arrival. Runs through July 25.

Tai Chi: Thursdays, 6:15-7:15 p.m., from Sept. 3-Oct. 15, at Gilead Hill School. This is a low-impact form of exercise focusing on a series of slow, graceful, and continuous movements.

Take Great Photos with Your Smartphone: Wednesday, Sept. 9, 6-9 p.m., at the Parks and Recreation Office. For both iPhones and Androids.

Resident Earns MBA... Sydney Kathy Weimer of Amston earned her Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from the Quinipiac University School of Business on May 10. Congratulations, Sydney!

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The Town Center Project (TTCP) announces the return of the Hebron Summer Concert Series. Concerts will take place Friday nights through August, on the side lawn of 17 Main St., Century 21. Picnics welcome.

The remaining lineup is: July 24: The Bart Bryant Band – he's performed original music on this stage and at Hebron Maple Fest in the past; July 31: Bonnie Jacobson and Friends –

The Worship Center News & Notes

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

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

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

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

Baptism Class: After service Sunday, July 12,
from 11:30 a.m.-noon.

Youth Ministry: Grades 6-12 are invited every first and third Friday of the month from 6:30-9:30 p.m. for activities, games, Bible lessons, dinner, dessert, and community. Upcoming: July 17.

Annual Church Picnic: Sunday, July 19, noon-3 p.m., at Blish Park in Marlborough. All are invited.

Virtual Prayer Night: Tuesdays, 7-8 p.m., via

Zoom. Contact the church office or website for a link and meeting ID.

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

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

Residents Graduate

The following local students recently received degrees from Quinnipiac University:

Amston: Christina Leshak, who received a Bachelor of Science degree in health science/DPT; Calvin Pancavage, who received a Bachelor of Science degree in software engineering; Sydney Weimer, who received a Master of Business Administration degree in management science.

Hebron: Olivia Chomick, who received a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing; Ethan Munroe, who received a Master of Science degree in applied AI and business analytics; Michael Poncini, who received a Bachelor of Science degree in applied business.



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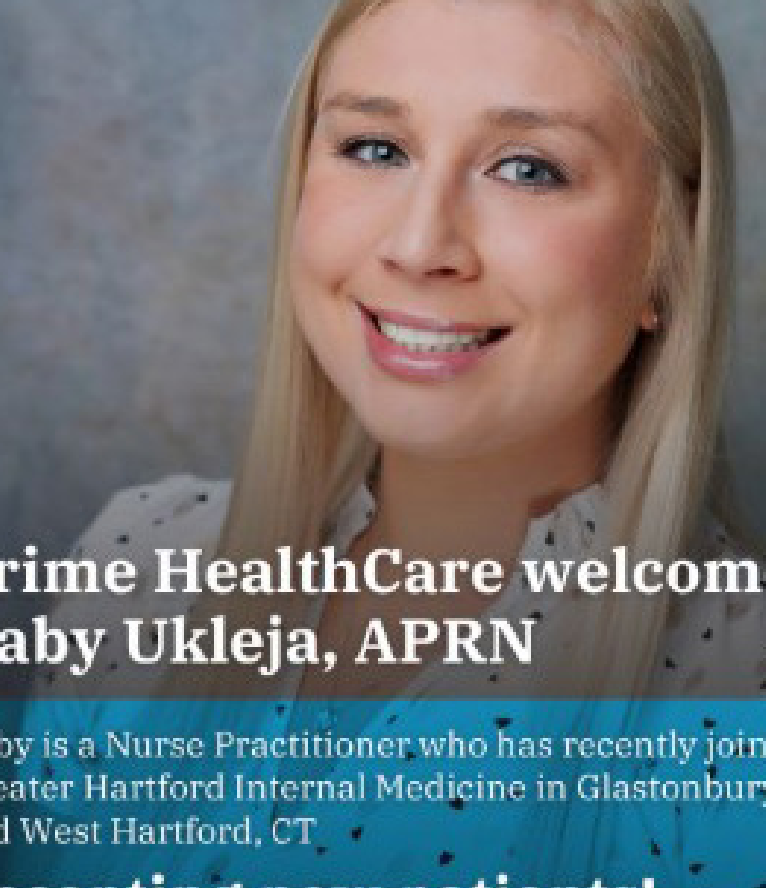


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Personal Property Tax Bills to Be Mailed

The town's acting revenue collector reminds taxpayers personal property bills were mailed July 15, are due Aug. 1, and may be paid without penalty by Sept. 1. The bills are for taxes levied on the Grand List of Oct. 1, 2025.

Personal property bills shall be due in a single installment on Aug. 1. The personal property bills will be based on the mill rate of 36.96, as approved by the Board of Finance on June 23.

This August collection for personal property bills is not to be confused with the real estate (first installment) and motor vehicle tax bills that were due July 1 and delinquent after Aug. 3.

If you feel you should have received a bill and have not received it by July 22, contact the acting revenue collector's office at 860-228-5971 to obtain a copy. State statutes dictate that failure to receive a bill does not invalidate the amount due or when it will be considered delinquent.

Personal property tax bills may be paid through Sept. 1 without penalty. Payments received/postmarked Sept. 2 or later will be subject to interest retroactively to the Aug. 1 due date in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes. Initial interest starting Sept. 2 is 3% of the principle due, with a minimum of \$2 per tax account.

Checks are made payable to: Town of Hebron. Payments may be mailed to our lockbox collection service: Town of Hebron CT Tax, P.O. Box 843137, Boston, MA 02284-3137. A drop-off box is located on the lower level, south side of the Hebron Town Hall building (15 Gilead St, Hebron) for payments. See www.hebronct.com for online payment options and instructions and note that credit/debit card and e-check transactions must be made online and cannot be processed at Town Hall. Town Hall payments can only be accepted as cash, check, bank check or money order.

The collector's office is located in the lower level of the Town Hall at 15 Gilead St. Hours are Monday to Wednesday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Thursday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.; and Friday 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Additionally, the tax and assessor's offices are closed for lunch Monday through Thursday from 12:30-1:15 p.m.

St. Peter's News & Notes

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

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

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

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

Weekly Meetings: Contact the church for more information on the following: Balance Class: Mondays, 10:30-11 a.m., \$5; Connect: Mondays at 2 p.m.; Weekly Weeders/Garden Group: Mondays at 4 p.m.

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

Douglas Library News & Notes

Douglas Library, located at 22 Main St., has announced the following. For a full listing of weekly events and more information, call the library at 860-228-9312 or visit douglaslibrary.org.

Adult Programs: Friday Films: Fridays at 1 p.m. On July 17, *The Crossing* (not rated) will be shown, and on July 24, *Glory* (rated R) will be shown. Free popcorn and water will be served.

Hartford Circus Fire: Wednesday, July 22, 6:30 p.m. In 1944, one of the worst fire disasters in American history occurred in Hartford. In this presentation by the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History, photos and artifacts from the museum's collection will help tell the stories of that day.

Summer Reading: Each time you check out an item you will receive a ticket to enter the raffle.

Children's Programs: Summer Reading: Stop in and pick up your summer reading sheets to track your reading and receive tickets towards a prize.

Kid's Craft: Monday, July 20, 1-2 p.m. Get creative using foam sheets, stickers and other items.

Doll Tea Party: Tuesday, July 21, 4-5 p.m. Come with your favorite doll to enjoy tea and snacks. Please register.

Family Movie: Thursday, July 23, 1 p.m. *Moana 2* (2024; rated PG) will be shown.

Amazing Owl Program: Thursday, July 23, 6 p.m. Meet DPNC's ambassador owls and discover the adaptations that help native owl species thrive as nighttime hunters. Get hands-on with real owl artifacts then create your own owl craft to take home. Registration required.

Gilead Congregational Church News

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

Worship – Summer Hours Now in Effect: Sunday worship is at 9:30 a.m., followed by Coffee Hour at 10:30 a.m. Services can also be viewed online at YouTube at www.bit.ly/GileadChurchUCC and on Facebook at tinyurl.com/GileadChurchUCC.

This Week's Scheduled Events and Meetings: Saturday, 7/18: Wise Warrior Yoga, 9:30 a.m., Garden, weather dependent; Saturday, 7/18: Dan Mixer Celebration of Life and Reception at 11 a.m., Gilead Church's Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall; Monday, 7/20: Bible Study via Zoom, 9:30 a.m.; Tuesday, 7/21: AA Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall; Wednesday, 7/22: Wise Warrior Yoga, 9:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall or Garden, weather dependent; Wednesday, 7/22: Book Group, 10:45 a.m., Fellowship Hall; Wednesday, 7/22: Potluck and Prayer Gathering, 6 p.m., Patio.

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

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

Good Shepherd Parish News

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

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

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

Praise Band and Choir Rehearsals: Both groups are on hiatus for the summer months. Rehearsals will resume in mid-September.

Cereal & Meatloaves for CSK: The Community Outreach Committee collects breakfast cereal each month for Covenant Soup Kitchen (CSK) in Willimantic; the next date is Aug. 9. Cereal donations are also welcome any time; place bagged donations in the oak collection box near the CHF Robing Room. The parish also provides meatloaves to CSK each month. Parishioners can deliver a cooked meatloaf to the freezer in the garage (use side entrance) closest to the CHF Parish House or the freezer in the STC church hall by the 4th Tuesday of the month. Meatloaves are delivered the next day. The next due date is July 28. Contact Diane (860-508-9959) for more information.

Flowers for Statue of Blessed Mother: During the summer months, parishioners are invited to donate fresh-cut flowers from their gardens or a store to place at CHF's statue of Mary.

Email parishhands@goodshepherdct.org for details if you wish to donate.

Faith Formation: Teachers are needed for the 2026-27 faith formation classes. Classes meet on Sunday mornings at CHF. Call Nina Romero-Caron at 860-228-3727 ext. 108 or email her at parishdre@goodshepherdct.org to sign up or for more information.

Bicycle Drive for Windham Area Interfaith Ministry (WAIM): The Community Outreach Committee is supporting WAIM's drive for rideable adult bicycles and working bicycle equipment (Ulocks, tire tubes, pumps, chains, helmets, etc.) for adult transportation. Donors can drop off bicycle and/or equipment donations at the CHF garage (use the left side garage door). Donations can also be brought to the WAIM loading dock on Riverside Drive in Willimantic on Tuesdays through Saturdays, 9 a.m. to noon. The drive will continue through September.

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

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

Collection for Project HOPE, Inc. (Homeless Shelter): The parish supports the shelter by providing much-needed items. Greatest needs: All types of household cleaning products (critical need); TP, paper towels, dish soap, laundry pods & dryer sheets; new combs & hair brushes; toiletries; men's crew neck T-shirts & boxer briefs (M,L,XL,2XL) & women's briefs (sizes 6-10); lightweight twin blankets; and 8x10 tarps (green or brown, no blue) for the Outreach Program. Place bagged donations in the oak col-

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East Hampton Budgets Fail Again

By Anne Lilburn

Once again, East Hampton voters rejected both the town's general town budget and its education budget at a townwide referendum held on Tuesday.

For the \$19,699,909 general government budget, 1,194 residents voted 'yes,' while 1,496 voted 'no,' according to the town's still-unofficial vote tally. On the education side, 1,585 voted no and 1,109 voted yes for the \$39,900,937 budget. The turnout was 29%, according to Registrar of Voters Rosemarie Hecht.

The overall proposed budget increase over last year was 1.78%, an increase that Democrats have said is small considering that it comes at a time when the 12-month inflation rate in the country is 3.5%. Also pushing the budgets higher were increased costs for employee benefits, particularly health insurance premiums, which have risen sharply in the past year and have affected municipalities both state-wide and at the national level.

The budget votes also took place at a time when many residents are still reeling from East Hampton's recent property revaluation, which left many voters with higher property assessments and larger tax bills as a result. Particularly

hard hit in the revaluation process were smaller homes, a portion of which may be occupied by seniors on fixed incomes.

This is the second time voters have taken to the polls to weigh in on the 2026-27 budget, and the second time voters have rejected the proposed budgets. This second iteration came in \$600,000 lower on the town side and \$250,000 lower on the education side, as compared to the initially proposed budget.

Town Manager Dave Cox said the next budget revision would involve taking a hard look at the budget and considering what could be cut. He said the next steps would almost definitely involve positions and services being cut.

"With the failure of both budgets again, I think the town and the Board of Education need to just continue to find ways to reduce costs, unfortunately," he said. "I think that, by and large, that means reductions in certain services, or availability of services, and I think that's what we're going to end up having to do."

"I don't know whether that's really what the community wants," he added, "but certainly when the majority of people are coming out and saying it's still too high, I don't know many op-

tions that we have."

He added that the town's budget was already fairly lean, noting that, after the recent decision to use existing revenues to offset capital expenses, the town's general government portion of the budget was "actually a reduction" from the 2025-26 fiscal year. He said he had had talks with Superintendent of Schools Timothy Van Tassel about trying to consolidate administrative positions when possible, but he acknowledged that the Board of Education was likely facing the loss of some programs and possibly the loss of teaching positions in its next upcoming revision.

As for the hypothetical "flat budget," with a 0% increase from last year, that some have pushed for, Cox said it wasn't impossible, but it would not come free.

"It's theoretically possible," he said, "but the question is, what are we willing to go without in that scenario?"

He also noted that inflation and rising costs for things like electricity would likely put more and more pressure on future budgets as well.

"Just as we would have to do at home, if we were going to spend exactly the same next year as we spent at our homes this year, [we would have to ask] what are we going to go without, because [prices] over which we have no control will go up," he said.

Cox noted that the property revaluation had made things hard for those working on the budget this year. Even with a so-called "flat budget," he said, some homeowners would see tax increases. He noted that his own property taxes had gone up this year.

Still, he worried about the loss of services to the town – particularly services often considered essential.

"The common mantra is that there's waste in government," Cox said, "and I personally don't see that in East Hampton, but people are welcome to dive into it and come and learn."

He encouraged residents to stay involved and complimented Van Tassel on the work he has done to try to communicate with community members about the education budget.

Taxes Due

Taxes for real estate, personal property and motor vehicles levied on the Oct. 1, 2025 Grand List were due and payable July 1, and the final day to pay without penalty is Monday, Aug. 3. Real estate and personal property taxes totaling more than \$100, as well as motor vehicle taxes totaling more than \$500, may be paid in two equal installments.

Property owners are responsible for ensuring that all taxes are paid when due. Failure to receive a tax bill does not relieve the taxpayer of the responsibility to pay taxes owed, including any applicable interest charges for delinquent payments. If you did not receive your tax bill, please contact the Collector of Revenue at tax-collector@easthamptonct.gov.

Late payments accrue interest at a rate of

1.5% per month (18% annually) with a \$2 minimum interest charge, as required by state law. Payments legibly postmarked by the USPS on or before Aug. 3 are considered on time regardless of when they are received by the tax office.

Checks should be made payable to Town of East Hampton. Payments may be mailed to: Collector of Revenue, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424. Payments may also be made online at www.easthamptonct.gov. Credit card payments are subject to a 3.25% convenience fee. There is no fee for ACH/EFT payments.

Hours of collection: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Tuesday: 8 a.m.-6:30 p.m.; Friday: 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Middlesex County Distinguished Citizen Award

The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce has announced that the chamber is now accepting nominations for the 2026 Distinguished Citizen Award – and East Hampton residents are eligible.

The Distinguished Citizen Award honors individuals whose contributions extend beyond the normal responsibilities of their profession or employment. Special consideration is given to volunteerism, civic engagement, charitable work, mentorship, leadership, and other meaningful acts of service that have benefited the community.

To be eligible for nomination, candidates must: Be at least 21 years of age; Live or work in one of 14 Middlesex County communities – including East Hampton; be widely recognized as, the Chamber said, "having unselfishly given their time and talent to produce a lasting benefit

to the area"; demonstrate community service and contributions that go beyond the normal duties of their profession or employment; and not have previously received the Distinguished Citizen Award.

The recipient(s) of the 2026 Distinguished Citizen Award will be honored at the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce's Annual Awards Dinner on Wednesday, Sept. 23, from 5-8 p.m., at The Riverhouse at Goodspeed Station in Haddam.

Nominations must be submitted in writing no later than Monday, July 27. The Distinguished Citizen Award Committee will review all nominations and select this year's recipient.

To submit a nomination or learn more, visit www.middlesexchamber.com/awards-and-scholarships.



Sizzlin' Seniors... The Tuesday Morning Senior Golf League held its 2026 Summer Sizzler Senior Scramble Golf Tournament golfers on June 30.

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East Hampton Man Dies in Jet Skiing Accident

By Anne Lilburn

A lifelong East Hampton resident lost his life in a jet ski accident on the Connecticut River in Lyme last weekend. Preston Davis Roane, 39, was operating a jet ski near Selden Neck State Park on the afternoon of Friday, July 10, when he hit a wake and was ejected from the watercraft, according to the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

According to DEEP, a boater flagged down Environmental Conservation (EnCon) Police officers to alert them to the emergency around 2 p.m. Roane was pulled from the water and transported to the hospital, but later died from his injuries.

In his obituary, his family remembered Roane as someone who took pride in both work and play. After graduating from East Hampton High School, Roane had worked his way up to a foreman position at R&R Broadband in Moodus, and had married “the love of his life,” Amber Dawn Post, in 2022.

“They enjoyed their time together in their home making TikToks, pulling pranks on each other and just spending quality time watching sunsets on their lake,” the obituary read. “Preston loved all types of outdoor sports, especially quad riding and jet skiing. He also loved a good bonfire and epic fireworks. His dogs were pampered pets, and he would often take them



Preston Davis Roane

swimming in the lake. His late dog Zeus was a favorite beloved pet to him. Preston will be remembered as a man who lived life to the fullest, loved his family and his work fiercely, and will always be remembered with love by all who knew him.”

Roane will be remembered at a funeral and memorial service on Sunday, July 26 at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester.

Roane’s obituary appears this week on page 32.

Yarners at Senior Center

For the summer, the East Hampton Yarners knitting club from East Hampton Congregational Church will meeting at East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., on Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

Light Up the Lake

The Friends of Lake Pocotopaug invites boat owners to decorate their boats with lights and gather for the annual Light Up the Lake on Saturday, Aug. 8, at 8:30 p.m., in the waters in front of CVS/bow & arrow sign.

Then slowly cruise around the lake, when you hear the four blasts of an air horn, passing by Sears Park first, and continue cruising around the lake past many lake and beach associations and bays. Boaters are asked to cruise at no-wake speed.

Attention East Hampton Residents

Residents who currently reside in the Middle Haddam or Cobalt areas of East Hampton are reminded to ensure that both their P.O. Box number and street address are listed on all motor vehicle registrations. This information can be updated by visiting the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles website at <https://dmv.service.ct.gov>.

Additionally, please update your mailing address information with the town for all real estate and personal property accounts to include both your street address and PO Box number.

The East Hampton Post Office will no longer

This is not an organized boat parade. You do not need to fill out an entry form; just feel free to join in. Participate at your own risk. The Friends group said it cannot guarantee that boats will go around the whole lake or pass by at any particular time. Sears Park will be open past dusk for people to park and watch the boats going by.

Property owners, businesses, and lake associations are encouraged to put lights up too!

For more information, call Cap Egan at 860-395-7844.

Fundraiser Sunday for Motorcycle Challenge

On Aug. 2, East Hampton resident Mark Niosi will embark on the 2026 Hoka Hey Motorcycle Challenge, which spans more than 11,000 miles under 11 days on backroads across North America. This Sunday, there will be a community event supporting the upcoming ride.

In the motorcycle challenge, riders follow a predetermined route revealed in stages at the start and at designated checkpoints. No GPS is allowed – only turn-by-turn paper directions. Sleeping must be done beside the motorcycle in all weather conditions; no hotels allowed.

Niosi will be one of 100 riders, and is dedicating his journey to supporting children and

families affected by Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) through Mile Monsters Inc., a nonprofit focused on creating memories and providing assistance for kids facing life’s toughest challenges.

Everyone is invited to stop by, learn more about the journey, sign the bike, and help fuel the miles at a community event hosted by 9 Lives Barbershop, 82 Main St. in East Hampton, on Sunday, July 19, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. The event will feature live music, food, raffles, vendors, and family fun.

Visit www.MarkyMarkHokaHey2026.com to make a donation online.

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 Art for July: Historic photos and memorabilia from Middle Haddam’s past, along with nautical artwork and maritime related items of interest, are featured in a special exhibit.

Open Mic Night: Friday, July 17, 6-8 p.m. This event might be held outdoors on the lawn, weather permitting, so plan to bring your lawn chairs. Come and share your talent or just listen and enjoy. Performers, call the library to sign up at 860-267-9093.

An Afternoon of Blues, Jazz and Poetry:

All are invited to a performance with musicians Lynn Tracey and Hannah Ardenski on Sunday, July 19, at 5 p.m. Original poetry selections will be provided by Sympetalous – a.k.a. Stan Lindh.

Painted Ships on Painted Oceans: Saturday, July 25, 6 p.m. All are invited as William Faber will speak on the stories of maritime history and art, and offer helpful tips on affordably building your own art collection. Refreshments will be served.

Save the Date: All are invited to the library’s celebration of the nation’s 250th year on Sunday, Sept. 13. The Dirty Blue Shirts, a Living History Collective, will offer a variety of maritime-related demonstrations, talks and exhibits. Refreshments will be served on the library’s new porch.

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.

Police News

7/8: Nathaniel Trombley, 22, of Marlborough, was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, East Hampton Police said.

7/11: William Potter, 18, of East Hampton, was arrested and charged with traveling unreasonably fast and driving under the influence, police said.

From June 29-July 12, officers responded to 42 medical calls, 10 motor vehicle crashes and 18 alarms, and made 31 traffic stops, police said.

Early Bird Tickets for Haddam Neck Fair

Early Bird tickets for the 2026 Haddam Neck Fair are on sale all this month.

Celebrating its 114th year, the Haddam Neck Fair will return Sept. 4-7. For a limited time, Early Bird tickets will be available at a discounted rate, giving attendees the opportunity to experience everything the fair has to offer while saving money and avoiding lines at the gate.

The four-day fair features classic fair foods, agricultural exhibits, live entertainment, competitions, family-friendly activities, and more.

Early Bird tickets will be available until July 31, and can be purchased at bit.ly/HNFTickets26.

For more information about the Haddam Neck Fair, including event details and updates, visit www.haddamneckfair.com.



Scholarship Awarded... Abigail Kiernan, a 2026 graduate of East Hampton High School, was awarded a scholarship from the East Hampton Ambulance Association. Kiernan will attend Baylor University in Waco, Texas, this fall and she will be pursuing a career in nursing. The East Hampton Ambulance Association Scholarship is made possible because of donations from supporters.

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by George M. Mantikas, DMD

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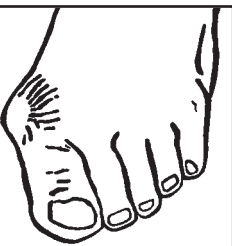
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Summer Events to Mark America 250

East Hampton will join communities across the country in commemorating America 250 with a series of patriotic events celebrating the birth of the United States, local history, community spirit, and the traditions that bring residents together.

Events coming up in August are:

Saturday, Aug. 8 – Lions Club Townwide Picnic from 5-8 p.m.: The East Hampton Lions Club will host a townwide picnic at Sears Park, welcoming residents and families for an evening of community celebration.

Saturday, Aug. 8 – Light Up the Lake at 8 p.m.: Lake Pocotopaug will shine in red, white, and blue as residents are encouraged to “Light Up the Lake” in celebration of America 250.

Additional details, times, locations, and participation information will be announced as event plans are finalized.

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.

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.

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: Glass bottles and aluminum cans should be separated prior to drop-off.

Food4Lives Warm Weather Clothing Drive: Patty Kloof is collecting warm weather new or nearly new clothing for un-housed persons in Middletown. Needed are T-shirts, shorts, pants, light sweaters, hoodies, sweatshirts, sandals/sneakers and underwear in adult sizes small to

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, Linefit 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.

Simply Social Women Open House: Monday, July 20, 10 a.m. Come see what this social group is all about, meet the members and help plan future activities and discussion topics.

Chatham Health Chat: Monday, July 20, 11:30 a.m. Chatham Health will discuss “Gut Health.”

Blood Pressure Checks: Monday, July 20, 12:30 p.m., with Chatham Health.

Masterpieces & Mocktails: Thursday, July 23, 1 p.m. This program blends painting, socializing, and refreshing mocktails in a relaxed, creative setting. Follow along to create your own vibrant artwork while enjoying a “NoJito” – an alcohol-free twist on a classic favorite. No experience needed; materials provided.

Honoring the Journey: Thursday, July 23, 1 p.m. This group helps participants to navigating grief and prioritize safety, validation, and the transition from pain to integrated memory. All are welcome.

Bike Rides for Seniors: Friday, July 24, 10 a.m. Ride at the Air Line Trail, 508 Church St., Amston. For riders age 55 and older. Bring your bike, helmet and water bottle. Call 860-267-4426 for ride information and to register.

Trip: A Day at Harkness Park: Wednesday, July 22, departure at 11 a.m. Spend the day at this lovely state park in Waterford. Bring lunch, water, sunblock and a chair, stroll the grounds and gardens, take a swim. Donation of \$4 for bus transportation suggested.

Teen Dies in Paddleboarding Accident

By Anne Lilburn

Cassandra “Cassie” Munson, 15, of East Hampton, lost her life in a paddleboarding accident Sunday, July 12, at Crystal Pond in Eastford.

The state’s Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) said that witnesses reported Munson had a medical emergency before she fell into the water. She was pulled from the water by a good Samaritan, who went into the pond to assist. DEEP’s EnCon police said they responded to a report of a person missing from a paddleboard at 12:15 p.m. After receiving treatment on shore, Munson was transported to Day Kimball Hospital, where she was pronounced dead.

Munson had been spending time with family and friends at the pond, according to a statement from East Hampton Superintendent of Schools Timothy Van Tassel. Munson had been a student at East Hampton High School.

“On behalf of the district,” Van Tassel wrote, “we offer our deepest condolences and extend our prayers to Cassie’s family, as well as, the many people whose lives were touched by her friendly and uplifting presence.”

Online, Munson’s family launched a GoFundMe page to support the family and cover funeral expenses. Munson’s aunt, Lisa Richards, posted Monday on behalf of the family.

“Yesterday, our family experienced the absolute unimaginable. We lost our beautiful, sweet, vibrant and charismatic Cassandra at just 15 years old. As anyone can understand, our hearts are completely shattered and our lives will never be the same,” Richards wrote.

She noted that Munson’s 11-year-old sister would be grieving her loss, calling her a “mentor” to her younger sibling. She thanked donors for their support, and said that the donations, in addition to helping with funeral expenses, would help support Munson’s mother as she took time off work to grieve and provide support for her younger daughter.

“From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your kindness, compassion, and generosity during the most difficult time our family has faced,” she wrote. “We will forever cherish the memories of Cassandra’s life. She was deeply loved, she



East Hampton teen Cassandra “Cassie” Munson died in a paddleboarding accident Sunday in Eastford. Photo via GoFundMe.

always loved deeply in return, and there will be a void in our hearts that will never heal.”

As of press time Wednesday, the GoFundMe had raised more than \$51,000. To donate, go to www.gofundme.com/f/support-for-cassies-funeral-and-her-grieving-family.

Van Tassel said that the district would be providing grief counseling services to students who needed it, and said that families could reach out to the high school if they believed their student was in need. He urged family members to “closely monitor [students], provide them with opportunities to express and discuss their feelings, and to reach out to the school district if we can be of assistance to you.”

Recreation News

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

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

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.

Camp Scholarships: The Belltown Garden Club is offering three camp scholarships to encourage children to explore the outdoors, connect with nature, and learn about gardening and the environment. Scholarships are available for one-week East Hampton Recreation programs, including Farm to Table, Nature Ex-

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EHHS Class of ‘67 Reunion

Members of the East Hampton High School Class of 1967, take note! The ‘67 Bellringers will get together Saturday, Sept. 12, from 2-5 p.m., at the Dublin. As usual, order off the menu and pay as you go. Call or text 860-682-2067 to reserve your spot.

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Frozen to Take Stage for YPCCA’s Summer Musical

By Anne Lilburn

If you’ve never heard “Let It Go” live on stage, you’ll have a chance next week, when East Hampton’s Young People’s Center for Creative Arts (YPCCA) presents its summer production of *Frozen* from July 23-26.

The musical production is the culmination of four weeks of YPCCA’s senior summer camp program, where students in grades 6-12 (and graduating seniors) rehearse for the musical, participate in performance workshops and meet and socialize with other teens and pre-teens from East Hampton and neighboring towns.

For counselor Lily Cordeiro, YPCCA has been a part of her life for nearly as long as she can remember, having started in the theater group’s “junior” program at the age of six before progressing to the senior camp, and later her role as a counselor. In fact, YPCCA is somewhat of a family tradition, she said, with her mom having participated in the program in its first performance over 40 years ago.

“I am actually a legacy of YPCCA, as we call it,” said Cordeiro, who is now a third grade teacher at East Hampton’s Memorial School. “My entire family, my brother, my sister and me, we all went through the program, and we absolutely loved it and our time there, so it’s amazing to be able to come back.”

YPCCA’s senior program had 75 campers this year, Cordeiro said. She said the camp is special because it offers kids a place to be themselves in a supportive community where they can learn, socialize and explore who they are.

“People continuously come back and they tell us it’s a safe space to be who they are and I think that’s what makes YPCCA so special,” she said, “because in our shows we always try to highlight everybody and make everybody feel included because it’s so important for everybody to have a voice.”

“I think it’s just a really special place because it’s a place where people from all different backgrounds can come together and celebrate something that they love and care about,” she said.

The senior camp at YPCCA may end with the final musical theatre performance, but campers also spend time learning and performing in workshops, which have included a cappella singing, show choir, dance, a stomp performance and improv comedy. The week before the big musical, the campers get to show off what they’ve learned in those workshops in a show called “The Event.” That gives those who might

not have featureS or larger roles in the main show a chance to shine and show off their skills, said Cordeiro.

The choice of *Frozen* for this year’s musical was a popular one, she said. She said the camp directors had wanted to pick a show that young kids, as well as older campers, would all enjoy. Based on the response from the cast, they picked right.

“Ever since I was really little, I’ve always loved frozen,” said Taylor Dudek, 16, a rising junior at East Hampton High School who plays Elsa. “It was actually the first movie my parents took me to see in a movie theatre. I think I was two, and I had always been in awe of Elsa particularly, because I always thought her ice powers were so cool. She’s just like a powerhouse, her voice is so incredible. She is just an inspiration to girls all over the world.”

Josie Wilson, 16 and a rising senior at EHHS who plays Olaf the snowman, was similarly excited with the musical choice.

“I’ve known these songs since I was very small,” she said. “*Frozen* used to be a massive phase for me, so it’s awesome to be able to recreate that.”

Olaf, she said, was the perfect part for her.

“It’s not a serious role at all and I think that’s awesome,” she said, “because I’m not a serious person. Being Olaf is basically just being myself on stage, and being able to sing his fun little songs and make his jokes is, I think, just going to be a lot of fun and I’m looking forward to it a lot.”

To play Olaf, Wilson will have an added level of difficulty, learning to control a snowman puppet for the performance. The puppet arrived earlier this week – giving Wilson just about 10 days to figure it out before showtime.

“It’s going to be interesting,” she said.

It’s a challenge she said she’s looking forward to, and one that Cordeiro said is a good example of the hard work that all the campers put into their performances.

“When they go home, they aren’t just relaxing and chilling by the pool,” she said. “Especially those principal characters, they’re going home, they’re practicing.”

Nadia France, 18, who is UConn-bound after graduating from EHHS this year, plays Anna in the performance. She has been participating in YPCCA since she was 7 years old, when she first appeared as Gretl in *The Sound of Music*, and said she knew she wanted the part of Anna the



YPCCA will present *Frozen* at East Hampton High School’s auditorium from July 23-26. From left are Josie Wilson, 16, as Olaf; Evan Piascik, 16, as Kristoff; Nadia France, 18, as Anna; and Taylor Dudek, 16, as Elsa.

moment *Frozen* was announced as the musical.

“I was definitely really trying for this role,” she said. “I have loved Frozen ever since it came out. I remember seeing it in theaters and it was, like, my entire childhood, so I was so excited when [camp director] Rachel [Mansfield] said we were doing this for our show.

“Me and my cousin growing up would perform *Frozen* for our parents,” she said, noting that she knew every song by heart. “I was so locked in.”

Anna was the role she said she was meant to play.

“For Anna, she is just so bubbly and I really enjoy doing that because I feel like that’s how I am sometimes — bubbly and upbeat — and I’m really happy that I get to embrace that side of myself in a character while also still having that sass and funny comedic aspect.”

Evan Piascik, 16, a rising senior at Portland High School who plays Kristoff, and Dash Palmer, 14, a rising sophomore at EHHS who plays Hans, were similarly excited to revisit a childhood favorite.

“We’ve known these characters so long,” said Piascik, who has been performing with YPCCA since he was five years old, “and the fact that we get to play them in musical theatre is honestly so cool.”

Palmer said he was having fun with his role.

“I get to play Hans, which is crazy to me, because I’ve seen this show growing up, and now I’m playing that, which is cool because he’s evil and that’s fun to play.”

Both said they enjoyed getting to work with other campers and in their workshops, and both said they had fun sharing scenes with France, who plays Anna.

Palmer said he enjoyed getting to do all the “fun stuff” from school without the school work, and Piascik agreed.

“Only having to do theatre for a month straight is awesome,” he said.

Cordeiro described this year’s show as a “big” performance, with a big cast, big sets and special effects. She credited director Mansfield, as well as technical director Chris Briggs, stage manager Kendra Dickinson and musical director Michael Zappala, for pulling the whole thing together, along with hard work from all the cast members.

“I think that is what makes this so special is how we all care and have the same goal. We want to accomplish the same thing, which is put on an amazing show, and we are on track for that,” said Cordeiro.

France said she was looking forward to the performances, her final ones as a camper at YPCCA.

“It’s such a fun show,” she said. “I’m so excited for all the little kids who are going to come, and even for people my age who, this was their childhood, to come and experience it. I think it’s every Gen Z’s childhood.”

Frozen will run from July 23-25 at 6 p.m., and July 26 at 1 p.m. at East Hampton High School’s auditorium.

Belltown Vintage Motorcar Meet

The Belltown Antique Car Club will present the 59th annual Belltown Vintage Motorcar Meet Sunday, Aug. 2, at the Haddam Neck Fair Grounds, Haddam Neck. Gates open at 8 a.m., show car registration closes at 11:30 a.m., judging begins at noon, and the show ends at 3 p.m.

Fee is \$10 for show cars (includes driver and passengers), and fee for spectators is \$5 (children under 12 are free with an accompanying adult).

This event is a celebration of stock, unmodified antique cars and trucks, domestic and im-

ported, 40 years old or older (through 1986). This year’s Featured Marque (which allows for free admission) is a Pontiac (1926-1986).

The event is rain or shine, field conditions permitting. Refreshments and food will be available to purchase. Please, no bicycles or pets or unaccompanied children.

For more information, including directions and show classes, visit www.belltownantiqueclub.org, call Peter Christianson at 860-510-3340 or email belltowncarclub@gmail.com.

East Hampton Library News & Notes

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

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

Adult Programs: **Goodwill Hunting: Thrift-ing 101:** Wednesday, July 22, 6:30 p.m. All are invited to this introduction to the world of secondhand shopping and hidden treasures. Learn tips for finding unique items, spotting good deals, and shopping sustainably.

Teen Programs: **STEMtastic: Battle Bots!** **Grades 6-8:** Monday, July 20, 2:30-3:30 p.m. Work in teams of 2 to customize RC cars with shields and balloon-popping attachments. Registration required; check the website for time slots for grades 1-5.

Teen Advisory Board: Tuesday, July 21, 6 p.m. Help plan programs, improve the Teen Space, and make a real impact. For grades 8-12.

Congregational Church News

The Congregational Church of East Hampton, 59 Main St., welcomes all to Sunday worship at 10 a.m., with the Rev. Robin Bloundon providing the sermon.

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

Lunch Bunch Book Club: Grades 6-8: Wednesday, July 22, 1-2 p.m. Students entering grades 6-8 are invited. Bring your lunch and the book you’re currently reading. Chat about books, play games, do crafts, and eat lunch together.

Trashion Show! Grades 6-12: Friday, July 24, 2-4 p.m. Create a fashion look using recycled and upcycled materials, then show off your masterpiece in a runway show.

Lunch Bunch – The Next Chapter (Freshmen Only!): Wednesday, July 29, 1-2 p.m. This is a freshmen-only version of the lunchtime book club. Bring your lunch and the book you are currently reading.

STEMtastic: Battle Bots! Grades 6-8: Monday, July 20, 2:30-3:30 p.m. Work in teams of two to customize RC cars with shields and balloon-popping attachments. Registration required.

Crochet (and more!) with Keri: Grades 6-12: Tuesday, July 28, 6 p.m. Meet in the teen space for a casual evening of crochet and other crafts with the teen librarian.

Children’s Programs: Teacher Read-Alouds!: Wednesday, July 22, 4:30 p.m., in the Children’s Room. Come enjoy stories shared by Memorial School teachers and staff at the library. No registration required; just drop in.

I Survived... at the Library! For Grades 2-5: Monday, July 27, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Enter the world of the *I Survived* books and explore three different periods of history. Registration required.

www.creators.com

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Past President Kyle Chmielecki smiles with Rotarian of the Year Cap Egan at the East Hampton Rotary’s recent Installation of Officers.

Rotary Installs Officers, Celebrates New Year of Service

The East Hampton Rotary Club officially welcomed its 2026–27 leadership team during its annual Installation of Officers, held June 24 at The 1851 in Cromwell, a venue proudly owned by an East Hampton native.

The evening brought together Rotarians, family, and friends to celebrate the accomplishments of the past year while looking ahead to another year of service to the East Hampton and Marlborough communities.

Ashley Wolf was officially installed as the club’s president for the 2026–2027 Rotary year. Joining her on the leadership team are President-Elect Cap Egan, Vice President Nicole McKenzie, Secretary David Quast, Treasurer Kevin St. John, Director Bob Drewry, Sergeant-at-Arms Alan Gardner, and Immediate Past President Kyle Chmielecki.

The installation ceremony recognized the dedication and leadership of outgoing president Chmielecki, who was thanked for his commitment and service throughout the 2025–2026 Rotary year.

During the evening, the club also recognized several members for their outstanding contributions. The Rotarian of the Year Award was presented to Cap Egan in recognition of her exceptional dedication, leadership, and countless hours of volunteer service.

The club also presented Paul Harris Fellow

St. Patrick Church News & Notes

St. Patrick Church, 47 West High St., is a member of St. John Paul II Parish, along with St. Bridget Church in Moodus.

Masses are celebrated Saturdays at 4 p.m. at St. Patrick and 5:30 p.m. at St. Bridget, and on Sundays at 7 and 11 a.m. at St. Bridget and 9 a.m. at St. Patrick.

During the week, Masses are celebrated at 8 a.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays at St. Patrick, and at 8 a.m. on Fridays at St. Bridget.

Confessions are Saturdays at 3 p.m. at St. Patrick and 6:30 p.m. at St. Bridget.

The parish website is www.sjpaii.org.

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. through Aug. 6. Concerts will feature a different local talent each week.

Donations, which are tax-deductible, help pay for the bands and promotional materials. Checks made out to Joseph N. Goff House Inc. can be mailed to P.O. Box 337, East Hampton, CT 06424. Any amount is appreciated, or donate by level:

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

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

Dean’s List

East Hampton residents Abigail Daley and Sierra LaRose made the spring 2026 Dean’s List at Salve Regina University in Newport, R.I.

Awards to Peter Strickland and Karen Terry. Named after Rotary founder Paul Harris, the Paul Harris Fellow is one of Rotary’s highest honors and recognizes individuals who exemplify Rotary’s motto of Service Above Self through their generosity, leadership, and commitment to improving their communities.

As she begins her year as president, Wolf shared her excitement about building upon the club’s strong foundation while continuing to expand Rotary’s impact throughout East Hampton and Marlborough. Her vision for the coming year includes strengthening community partnerships, supporting youth initiatives, and fostering fellowship among members while continuing the club’s tradition of service.

“The East Hampton Rotary Club has an incredible history of making a difference in our communities,” said Wolf. “I am honored to serve alongside such a dedicated group of volunteers and look forward to another year of service, friendship, and creating meaningful opportunities to give back.”

The East Hampton Rotary Club meets every Wednesday and welcomes individuals who are passionate about giving back to their communities through fellowship and service. Those interested in learning more about Rotary or becoming a member are encouraged to visit the club online for additional information, at www.easthamptonrotary.org.

Where’s Bell?

The Friends of East Hampton Public Library, in partnership with businesses in East Hampton, is holding the third annual “Where’s Bell?” contest through July 31.

Pick up a game sheet for free at the East Hampton Public Library, then during the month of July stop by as many participating businesses as possible and find the Bell mascot hidden within.

Those that return their game sheets to the library by Aug. 7 will be entered into prize raffles based on how many businesses they were able to check off the list; attached receipts from participating businesses earn you additional chances to win. This year’s prizes are sponsored by Carl Guild & Associates.

For more information, email friendsofhepl@gmail.com.

Democratic Primary Enrollment Sessions

The East Hampton registrars of voters office will be open Tuesday, July 28, from noon to 2 p.m., for those wishing to register to vote in person for the upcoming Democratic primary or to change their party affiliation.

There will also be registration and enrollment session (cut-off) on Monday, Aug. 10, from 9 a.m.-noon. You must appear in person.

There is no “same day registration” during early voting for a primary or on Primary Election Day.

Contact the registrars of voters at 860-267-6720 for more information. Regular office hours are Tuesdays from 11 a.m.-4 p.m.



When you see her, say Happy Birthday!!!

Epoch Arts Accepting Tag Sale Donations

Epoch Arts is accepting donations for its annual September Two-Weekend Tag Sale.

A small group of volunteers will sort, clean and price the donations. Items not accepted: recliners, couches, headboards, mattresses, bedframes, high chairs, cribs, car seats, computers, printers, keyboards, TVs, VCRs, exercise machines, textbooks, encyclopedias, old-style phones, large toys, doors, ironing boards, strollers, single chairs, paint and cleaners, file cabinets,

office chairs, large dog beds, lighting that can’t be plugged in, medicine, animal diapers and fish tank pumps.

Drop-off times are 8 a.m.-2 p.m. on July 25, Aug. 1 and Aug. 8. Drop-off is located at the lower end of the building in the garage area by Helping Hands, 27 Skinner St. Please do not drop off your donations at the main entrance to the building or on any other drop off days.

Tag Sale 2026 is Sept. 11 and 18, noon-5 p.m., and Sept. 12, 13, 19 and 20 from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

For more information, visit www.epocharts.org.

Lions Club Scholarship Raffle

The East Hampton Lions Club is conducting a raffle to support its annual scholarship program. The club each year offers four \$1,500 awards to East Hampton graduating students.

The raffle offers a \$2,026 grand prize this year. First prize is \$226, with two winners, second prize is \$156 with two winners, and third prize is \$56 with two winners. Winners of the first, second and third prizes are reentered for the grand prize drawing. Seven hundred total tickets will be sold.

The drawing will take place Saturday, Oct. 24, at 2:26 p.m., at the Lions Picnic Pavillion, 62 N. Main St. Winners need not be present.

For more information or tickets, call Lion Tom Denman at 860-519-4951.

HOF Association Accepting Nominations

The East Hampton Athletic Hall of Fame Association is accepting nominations through Aug. 26. If you know of who you feel is a worthy candidate – which could be an athlete, coach, team, or contributor – email seidlt@sbcglobal.net for a nomination packet or go to the Hall of Fame website at ehahof.wixsite.com/bellringer for information.

The induction ceremony will be Friday, Oct. 30, at 6 p.m., at Blackledge Country Club.

The Hall of Fame’s objective is to recognize exceptional local athletes and achievements.

Also, the association’s membership and committee are very small and new members are sought, preferably those who have a knowledge of history of sports in East Hampton to join our team. Email seidlt@sbcglobal.net if interested.

Dean’s List

East Hampton residents Leah Kohler and Phineas Scott made the spring 2026 Dean’s List at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Va.

Residents Graduate

The following East Hampton residents recently graduated from Quinnipiac University:

Benjamin Delton, who received a Bachelor of Science degree in data science; Carys Dinunzio, who received a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing; Christopher Guay, who received a Master of Science degree in cyber security; Sarah Myjak, who received a Master of Science degree in molecular cell biology; Kelsey Smith, who received a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology.

Bingo at VFW Post

All are invited to bingo every Thursday at VFW Cobra Post 5095, located at 20 North Maple St. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Early Bird Bonanza will be at 6:20 p.m., with regular game play starting at 6:30 p.m. There will be a progressive jackpot and cash prizes.

The café will be open before games and during intermission, offering hot snacks.

Democratic Primary Aug. 11

Absentee ballots become available next Tuesday, July 21, for the Democratic primary for the party’s governor candidate.

The primary is being held on Tuesday, Aug. 11, with early voting from Monday, Aug. 3, to Sunday, Aug. 9. Early voting will be at the East Hampton Town Hall, 1 Community Drive, and Primary Day voting will be at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

This primary is only open to registered members of the Democratic Party.

Dean’s List

East Hampton residents Madi Gay and Alex Gordon made the spring 2026 Dean’s List at the University of Rhode Island.

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

Belldtown on Parade... Below and on the facing page are scenes from last weekend's Old Home Days Parade. The parade featured a little bit of everything – including a senior center float, classic cars, an Epoch Arts float, local and state officials, and East Hampton Rotarian of the Year Cap Egan. *Photos by Anne Lilburn and via Facebook.*



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



Obituaries

Lebanon

Alicia Lathrop Watson

Alicia Lathrop Watson, of Beaufort, S.C., formerly of Lebanon, passed away at home on Saturday, July 11, with her husband attentively by her side. She was 81 years old.

Alicia was born in Neptune, N.J., on June 13, 1945, to the late C. Leonard and Alyce (Conway) Lathrop, Jr. She married Clement “Butch” Watson on Sept. 14, 2003. They resided in Lebanon and were members of the Historic Goshen Congregational Church, where Alicia was a former treasurer for the church. Alicia was also a former treasurer for the Fellowship of Connecticut Congregational Churches.

After Alicia’s retirement as code enforcement officer for the town of Colchester, the couple lived in several southern towns including, Belvidere, Tenn., New Port Richey, Fla., and finally, Beaufort, S.C.

Alicia will be remembered as a kind, helpful, and generous person, giving to others selflessly. In addition to her husband, Butch, she leaves a brother, Charles Lathrop III; a sister, Anne Lathrop; grandchildren, Eric and Brianna Watson; and many extended family members and friends.

Funeral services will be held privately, according to her wishes.

For online condolences or to share a story of Alicia, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Hebron

Richard Sherman Twombly

Richard Sherman Twombly, 71, of Moodus, went home to be with Jesus, his Lord and Savior, on Tuesday, July 7.

Richard was born in Milford on May 16, 1955, the son of the late Leon C. and Mary (Baldwin) Twombly. He attended Manchester High School and, at the age of 17, enlisted in the United States Navy. During his service, Richard traveled the world aboard the USS Hawkins and was awarded the National Defense Service Medal. He was honorably discharged after proudly serving his country.

Richard later spent 30 years working for Hartford Distributors before his retirement and was a proud member of the New England Teamsters. He raised his family in Hebron with his late wife, Gail, where they built a life filled with family, friends, and many cherished memories.

Rich was known above all for his strong faith and his desire to bring others closer to God. He was a kind and gentle soul, a devoted family man, and a loyal friend to all who knew him. A natural storyteller, Rich loved making people laugh and sharing stories from his years at Hartford Distributors, his adventures in the Navy, and the many experiences he collected throughout his life.

Rich had a curiosity and enthusiasm for the things he loved. He enjoyed flea markets, antiquing, and collecting, and he was especially proud of his collection of Budweiser trucks and cars. He loved the beach, gardening, cooking, music of all kinds, and animals. He could talk about food for hours and found great joy in sharing meals and conversations with the people he loved. He also enjoyed riding his Harley-Davidson, affectionately named “Grace,” and treasured the freedom and memories that came with his years on the road.

Richard is survived by his beloved wife, Margaret “Meg” Stetson Twombly; his son, Sean C.H. Twombly, his wife, Elsa Languasco, and their daughter, Emilia Gail, of Ave Maria, Fla.; and his daughter, Michelle Courtroul, her husband, Jaime, and their child, Kaya, of Aptos, Calif.

He is also survived by his siblings, Leon C. Twombly and his wife, Mary; John W. Twombly and his wife, Susan; and Elizabeth Wilson and her husband Art Thornton; as well as his stepsons, Charles D. DeLeo and Samuel B. DeLeo.

Richard also leaves behind many beloved members of the Ainslie and Stetson families, including Linda Tuller; Larry and Barb Ainslie; Bill and Dorothy Stetson; Dan Stetson; MaryBeth Stetson-Welch; and Cathy and Jamie DeRienzo, along with many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews. He will also be deeply missed by his furry friends, Leon and PeteyGene.

In addition to his parents, Richard was predeceased by his sister, Linda Chase; his brother-in-

law, John Tuller; his sister-in-law, Jan Twombly; and his brother-in-law, Lee Welch.

In recognition of Richard’s service to his country, a military send-off with honors will take place on Friday, July 17, at 3 p.m., at the D’Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield. Following the military honors, the family will receive relatives and friends at the funeral chapel from 3:30 to 7 p.m.

A celebration of Richard’s life will be held on Saturday, July 18, at noon, at Valley Bible Church, 220 Turkey Hill Rd., Haddam. Burial will take place in Hartwick, N.Y., at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Richard’s memory to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

For online expressions of condolence to the family, please visit www.desopofuneralchapel.com.

Hebron

Donna DeGutis Steffen

Donna DeGutis Steffen, 83, of Glastonbury and Hebron, formerly of East Hartford, passed away peacefully Monday, July 6. Born in Hartford, she was the beloved daughter of Phyllis Hamilton DeGutis and Stanley Benedict DeGutis.



Donna is survived by her sisters, Denise Jernigan of South Glastonbury and Dorothea DeGutis and her husband Lloyd of Brattleboro, Vt. She was predeceased by her brother, Stanley H. DeGutis, who passed away in 1949 at the age of three.

She leaves her daughter, Joanne Steffen Thomann, Joanne’s fiancé Chad Henninger, and her cherished grandson Christian S. Thomann, all of Hebron. She is also survived by her nephew, Matthew Graf, and niece, Katharine Graf, of Brattleboro, Vt.

Donna graduated from East Hartford High School in 1961 and the UConn School of Nursing in 1965. She dedicated her life to caring for others, beginning her nursing career at Manchester Memorial Hospital (1965–1968), followed by UConn Health Center–McCook Hospital (1968–1971). She then served the City of Hartford Health Department, Family Planning Division, for 27 years (1972–1999), and continued her work at Planned Parenthood of Connecticut until her retirement in 2010. Donna was deeply committed to her patients and carried genuine love for the people she served throughout her career.

Outside of nursing, Donna embraced life with enthusiasm and curiosity. She was an avid reader, a passionate supporter of greyhound adoption, and a lifelong hockey fan. She proudly held season tickets for the Hartford Whalers, was a dedicated Booster Club member, and traveled across the United States and Canada to cheer them on. She also supported the Springfield Indians/Falcons, and followed the Chicago Blackhawks, Las Vegas Golden Knights, NASCAR, and UConn Basketball with equal devotion.

A funeral service celebrating Donna’s life was held Friday, July 10, at the D’Esopo East Hartford Memorial Chapel, 30 Carter St., East Hartford. Burial followed at Mount Saint Benedict Cemetery, (Section M), Cottage Grove Road, Bloomfield.

In lieu of flowers, Donna asked that donations be made to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 or to the Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758517, Topeka, KS 66675.

For online expressions of sympathy to the family, please visit www.desopoeh.com.

MAKE SURE
CUTIE PIE IS IN
THE RIGHT SEAT.

NHTSA.gov/TheRightSeat



Lebanon

Malvina Monica Medeiros

Malvina Monica Medeiros, of Lebanon, passed to the arms of Jesus on Friday, July 10, with her family attentively by her side. She was 91 years old. Malvina was born June 10, 1935, in St. Michael’s, Azores, Portugal. She was the daughter of the late Silvino Nunes and Mary Elizabeth (Ferreira) Oliveira.



On Sept. 3, 1953, she married the love of her life and best friend, Raymond J. Medeiros. The couple settled in Lebanon, where they made their home and raised their children. Malvina was self-employed, working with her daughter, Jeanne at their shop on Main Street in Wilimantic known as Rajeans. Malvina became involved and volunteered with the Soroptomist International of Willimantic where she also served as past president.

Malvina was a devout Catholic and communicant of St. Francis of Assisi Church in Lebanon, where she also was an active member of

the Ladies Guild. She will be remembered for her kind, loving nature, and the fiercely devoted way she loved her family, God, and community.

She will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by her husband of 72 years, Ray; her children and their spouses, Jeanne Marie (James) Mather of Lebanon; Raymond (Michele) Medeiros of Lebanon; a sister, Laudalina Sousa of Fall River, Mass.; grandchildren, Jessica (Thomas) Sawyer, Annie (Scott) Pinyard; great-grandchildren, Edith, Murray and Jane Pinyard, James Sawyer; and many extended family members and friends.

Funeral services will be held privately, according to her wishes.

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

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A MAN OF
MY WORD.

Jim Harrington,
BROKER

HARRINGTON REAL ESTATE

CARLGUILD
& ASSOCIATES
THE FUTURE OF REAL ESTATE

JIM HARRINGTON
860-966-9966
JIM@HARRS.COM

PROFESSIONAL

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CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Neil Manausa

ACROSS

1 Kind of park
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11 Siding with
14 Enjoy to the max
15 Site of the ND State Fair
16 Shirt past wearing
17 Want ad heading
19 Shale yield
20 “Michael Collins” player
21 Soc. security increase
22 Intermix
24 Jodie Foster film of 1994
25 Break off
26 “Seinfeld” character
29 Come before
32 Boules, Italian-style
33 Jimmy ____, of “NYPD Blue”
34 Part of every wk.
35 No more
36 Snowy
37 During
38 Classic or natal prefix
39 Lake Indians

40 Commemorative pillar
41 Buddy, Phil, Ringo, et al.
43 Got 100%
44 Cacophony
45 Friable soil
46 Effective
48 Batter
49 Guitarist Paul
52 Mrs. Perón
53 Want ad heading
56 Sportscaster Berman
57 Chutzpah
58 Want ad heading
59 Explosive initials
60 Get ready
61 Irritate

DOWN

1 Sign of sorrow
2 Hound’s prey
3 Blues singer James
4 Slinger’s supply
5 Effeminate
6 Odor
7 Printer’s measurement
8 Unwanted carpenter
9 Cruise quarters

10 Goes for it
11 Want ad heading
12 Symbol of thinness
13 Act coquettish
18 Actor’s goal
23 Australian bushranger Kelly
24 Considerate
25 Foul moods
26 Saver’s purchase
27 Asocial type
28 Want ad heading
29 Brest friends
30 Linen fabric
31 Shut off
33 Lincoln or Devon add-on
36 Greco-Roman ____
37 First split in 1932
39 Famous
40 Going up
42 A Stooge
43 Sweet counterpart
45 Approach midnight
46 Throw stones
47 Heating chamber
48 CLVIII x VII
49 Bologna bread, once
50 Right of north
51 Snick’s partner
54 Time to remember
55 Junkyard dog, often

TOWN OF PORTLAND
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
LEGAL NOTICE OF DECISION

At the July 2, 2026 meeting, the following actions were taken:
Approved Application #25-21: Proposed Amendment to the Portland Zoning Regulations. Changes to sections 7.5, 8.2, 9.1.3.H. These changes are being made in response and to comply with Public Act 25-1. Application of the Town of Portland.
Dated at Portland, CT this 14th day of July 2026
Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission

1TB 7/17

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
TOWN OF ANDOVER
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

The Andover Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a hybrid in person and online Public Hearing Tuesday, July 21, 2026 to hear the following application and receive public comments:
Application 26-7SP: Special Permit application for a market rate accessory apartment per section 4.11.3 of the Andover Zoning Regulations. 12 Center Street, Nahin Puerto. Assessors Map 33 Block 29 Lot 3.
Comments, questions or concerns may be presented at the public hearing or submitted in writing to the Andover Building and Land Use Office, 17 School Road, Andover, CT 06232.
Applications are on file in the Building and Land Use Department for public inspection or online on the Town of Andover's website. Instructions for joining the public hearing via Zoom are posted on the town's website in the Calendar.
Wayne Kasacek
Zoning Agent

2TB 7/10, 7/17

MARLBOROUGH ZONING BOARD
OF APPEALS COMMISSION
NOTICE OF ACTION

The Marlborough ZBA Commission, at its Public Hearing on July 8, 2026, took the following action:
APPLICATION APPROVED:
APPLICATION #ZBA-03-25 – Diane Prentice (Applicant/ Property Owner) 33 Myrna Drive - is seeking variance of Article Three A.1, Minimum Requirements, Article Three A.3 Conformity of Buildings & Land, Article Three A.5 Reduction of Lot Areas or Minimum Required Yards, Article Three A.9 Minimum Required Yards, Article Six D. 2 b Side Yard Setback, in order to construct a garage with a Side Yard Setback of 7.1 feet where 15 feet is required.
APPLICATION DENIED:
APPLICATION #ZBA-04-25 – Heather Burgess (Applicant/ Property Owner) 85 North Main Street - is seeking variance of Article Three A.1, Minimum Requirements, Article Three A.3 Conformity of Buildings & Land, Article Three A.5 Reduction of Lot Areas or Minimum Required Yards, Article Three A.9 Minimum Required Yards, Article Six D. 2 a Front Yard Setback, & Article Six D.4 Building Coverage, in order to construct a deck with a Front Yard Setback of 26.7 feet where 40 feet is required and building coverage of 13.5% where 10% is allowed..
MATT WILSON, ZBA COMMISSION CHAIR

1TB 7/17

LEGAL NOTICE
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
HEBRON, CONNECTICUT

The Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing at a meeting scheduled for Wednesday, July 29, 2026 at 7:00 P.M., to be held virtually through the GoTo-Meeting Platform, on the following:
I. Petition 2026-08: Petition of Friends of RHAM High School Football, Inc. for Special Permit approval to install temporary outdoor lighting at RHAM High School athletic competition field between September 8th and October 6th, 2026, per Section 5.F.3.3 and 5.F.3.5 of the Hebron Zoning Regulations, 85 Wall Street, Residence-1 District.
**Planning and Zoning Commission
Jul 29, 2026, 7:00 – 7:30 PM (America/New_York)**
Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://meet.goto.com/462516901>
You can also dial in using your phone.
Access Code: 462-516-901
United States: +1 (646) 749-3122
Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:
<https://meet.goto.com/install>
Dated at Hebron, Connecticut, this 15th day of July 2026.
Frank Zitkus, Chair

2TB 7/17, 7/24

PUBLIC HEARING
LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF HEBRON
TOWN COUNCIL

The Hebron Town Council has scheduled a Public Hearing for Thursday, July 23, 2026, at 6:45 p.m. in the Lower Level Meeting Room at the Hebron Town Office Building, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, Connecticut, to consider the historic designation of the United Brethren of Hebron Synagogue located at 10 Church Street, Hebron, Connecticut.
The virtual option for attending the meeting:
**Town Council Regular Meeting
Jul 23, 2026 at 6:45 PM (America/New_York)**
Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://meet.goto.com/643808349>
You can also dial in using your phone.
Access Code: 643-808-349
United States: +1 (872) 240-3412
Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:
<https://meet.goto.com/install>
This ordinance may be amended at a future date by the Hebron Town Council under the provisions of Chapter 224 of the Town of Hebron Code of Ordinances and under Section 7-147q of the Connecticut General Statutes.
Residents are encouraged to attend this Public Hearing and express their opinions.
Donna Lanza
Interim Town Manager

1TB 7/17

PUBLIC HEARING
LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF HEBRON
TOWN COUNCIL

The Hebron Town Council has scheduled a Public Hearing for Thursday, July 30, 2026 at 6:45 p.m. at the Town Office Building, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, regarding the following:
Acquisition of 9 Pendleton Drive, Hebron, Connecticut in the amount of \$153,500, with funding to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance as approved by the Hebron Board of Finance at their meeting on May 26, 2026.
The virtual option for attending this meeting:
**Public Hearing - Acquisition of 9 Pendleton Drive
Jul 30, 2026, 6:45 PM (America/New_York)**
Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://meet.goto.com/828332413>
You can also dial in using your phone.
Access Code: 828-332-413
United States: +1 (312) 757-3121
Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:
<https://meet.goto.com/install>
The Hebron Town Council at a meeting on July 9, 2026, also approved moving the acquisition of 9 Pendleton Drive, Hebron, Connecticut to a Special Town Meeting at a future date for voter approval. The Public Hearing will be held to provide the public with an overview of the property purchase, respond to questions and receive public comment.
Residents are encouraged to attend this Public Hearing and express their opinions.
Donna Lanza
Interim Town Manager

1TB 7/17

LEGAL NOTICE OF ACTIONS
HEBRON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
15 GILEAD STREET, HEBRON CT

At its July 9, 2026 meeting, the Hebron Conservation Commission took the following actions:
Petition 2026-06: Parcel 35-7, East Street, Antonio Modugno. Construction of a Single-Family Residence and Appurtenances with a Portion of the Driveway in the Upland Review Area – **Approved**, with the following conditions:
1. Wetland Agent to be notified after installation of erosion and sedimentation controls prior to construction.
2. Cleared debris, stumps, and excavated soils to be managed outside of the 100-foot Upland Review Area.
3. Slopes to be seeded or temporarily seeded and mulched as soon as practical after completion of construction.
Petition 2026-07: Notification of Timber Harvest, West Main Street / Papermill Road, Parcels 41-6, 52-1-TM, 52-1-PT and 53-8-TM. Thomas and Matthew Holcombe, c/o John Clarke, Grossi Forest, Shelterwood Timber Harvest Using Existing Logging Roads and Skid Trails to Promote Oak and Pine Regeneration and Using Temporary Stream and Wetlands Crossings – **Approved**, with the following recommendation:
1. That consideration of the possible presence of faunal species of special concern be given and reported to CT DEEP, if observed.
James P. Cordier, Conservation and Inland Wetlands Agent
For: Thomas Loto, Chairman, Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commission
A video recording of the Conservation Commission Meeting can be seen using the following link:
<https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#/s/841cd8f479e23d69fb6ad9de87f88d02af3b32ca3b6b4c102c46aa53b932d296>

1TB 7/17

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WANTED TO BUY

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FREE REVIEW:** Comic Books, Vintage Toys, Sports Cards, Adv Signs/ Cans (Soda, Beer, Gas Station), Zippos, License Plates, Jewelry, Postcards, Etc. Call/Text 860-817-4350

WANTED GRANITE STONES:

mill stones, tether stones, entry steps, fence posts, feeding troughs, well covers, sinks, posts, curbing, stone boot scrapers, and carriage steps. 860-216-8144.

WANTED TO BUY:

your sterling silverware, tea set, or any item made of sterling. Top cash price paid on the spot. I can come to your home or meet you at a place of your choosing. Call/ text Dominic at 860-836-5013 or email dmbapraisal@sbcglobal.net.

WANTED TO BUY:

antiques; toys, military, watches, advertising, jewelry, coins, clocks, signs, all musical instruments, guitars, saxophones, keyboards, trumpets, amplifiers, accordions, vintage electronics, hi-fi stereo, amplifiers, pro-audio, radios, ham equipment, tube type equipment, plus more. 1 item or entire estate. Call 860-707-9350.

CASH PAID for any Toyota

Other makes, running or not, crashed ok. Will take other makes and models.
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PETS

BILL THE POOPER SCOOPER: I'll clean your yard of dog poo. Dog walking available. Free estimates. Call 860-861-9027.

DOG OBEDIENCE CLASSES: starting soon. Offering Puppy Kindergarten, Basic Manners/What Rescue Dogs Need and Want; CGC/Therapy; Agility. Over 25 years experience. Michelle Larson, Paws-N-Heel DTC, 860-267-6040. paws-n-heel-dogtraining.com.

Having a Tag Sale?

Reach more than 75,000 Homes For Just \$19 A Week

Includes 25 words; .20 cents each additional word (Now through August 15, 2026) A \$45 Value

Your Tag Sale ad will appear in:

-Rare Reminder, mailed Thursdays to 40,500 homes in Newington, Wethersfield & Rocky Hill/Cromwell

-Glastonbury Citizen, mailed Thursdays to 5700 paid subscribers in Glastonbury

-Rivereast News Bulletin, mailed Fridays to 27,500 homes in Portland, East Hampton/ Cobalt/Middle Haddam, Marlborough, Hebron/Amston, Andover and Colchester.

Just e-mail us at classifieds@rarereminder.com or call 860-563-9386.

Deadline is every Tuesday at 10am for that week's papers.

070226

REAL ESTATE

RENTALS

GLASTONBURY OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT: Individual offices or space up to 1,000-1,400 square feet suites. Use of conference room included. Call 860-633-3545.

CANDLELIGHT APARTMENTS, GLASTONBURY: RENT NOW, one bedroom available, renovated, first floor. Rent is currently \$1,750 per month. Includes heat/ hot water, trash, sewer. Onsite storage and assigned parking available. Property is a SMOKE FREE Complex. Please call via text or cell 860-913-6723, Office 860-529-1725.

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IS ILLEGAL For Help Call 888-247-4401

If anyone refused to rent to you because of your source of income, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, religion, marital status, age, disability or because you have children, you may have been the victim of illegal housing discrimination. Contact the Connecticut Fair Housing Center.

Century 21 Allpoints Realty



Whether you're considering selling your home, or beginning the quest to find your first/next home, let me partner with you to accomplish your goals! As a team member of Century 21 Allpoints, we have the experience, resources, relationships and proven track record to guide you through this volatile Market.

Mark Kehrhaan, for all Your real estate needs!

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Markk.realestate@gmail.com

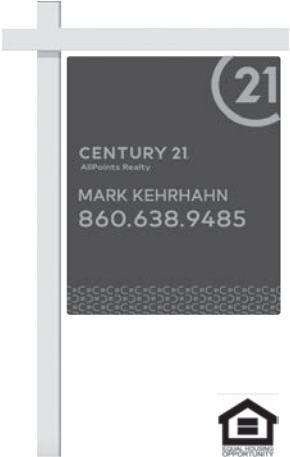
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We have been Family Owned & Operated since opening in 1989.

With 11 offices in CT.

Awarded the prestigious Centurion Award







EMPLOYMENT

GLASTONBURY HILLS COUNTRY CLUB: is accepting applications for a part-time Locker Room Attendant. Call Frank at 860-633-5253.

PART-TIME BAKER NEEDED, GLASTONBURY: Will train. Early morning hours. Call for more info. 860-657-4400.

POSITION WANTED

PERSONAL CHEF: Japanese personal chef specializing in Asian and American cuisine. In-home chef services and meal prep. Call 860-983-0330.

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Fill out the fields and submit payment via PayPal.

JOB POSTING – 07/13/2026



Haddam
CONNECTICUT

Town of Haddam
Public Works/Maintainer – Full Time

The Town of Haddam Public Works Department is seeking applications for the position of Maintainer. This is a 40 hour/ week position. Hourly rate: \$30.56

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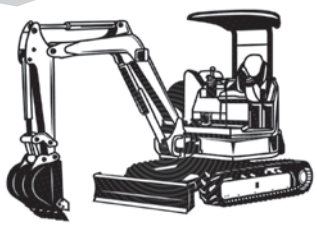
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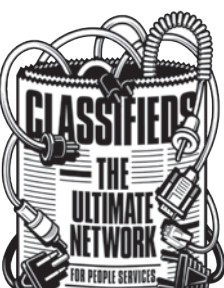
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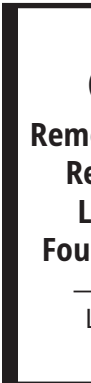
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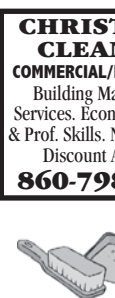


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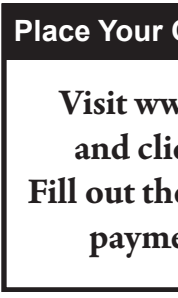
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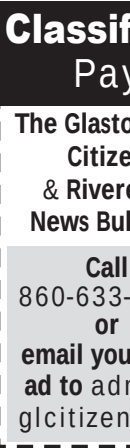
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