

RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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We are the Champions.... A group of eight soccer players from East Hampton helped Sporting CT win the U16 Super Group Championship at Hampton Road Sporting Complex in Virginia Beach. The East Hampton players from left are Abigail Hambidge, Hadley Galovich, Ava Ploszay, Quinn Rurka, Addison Perkins (captain), Giuliana DonAroma (captain), Alexis Bailey, and goalie Cassandra Owocki. Hambidge was named the Player of the Game as Sporting CT took down FC Dutchmen Surf of New York in the championship match.

Cuts Bring Pain To Belltown Parents

By Anne Lilburn

A beloved preschool program, middle school sports, a special education interventionist and paraeducator, a third-grade teacher, and a high school language arts teacher.

These are some, but not all, of the cuts that would be made to East Hampton's education budget in order to meet a new budget number set by the town's Board of Finance this past Monday.

The new budget that the Board of Finance passed, and that the Town Council approved one day later, came in \$600,000 less than the Board of Education's original proposed budget that failed at referendum in June, and \$350,000 less than the second version of the budget, which failed at a more recent referendum on July 14. The new proposed education budget now stands at \$39,550,937 and will be voted on at a referendum on Aug. 5. (See related story on page 23.)

Superintendent of Schools Timothy Van Tasel provided an update to the community via both the district's public Facebook page and via its Parent Square community mailing list, which community members are welcome to sign up for, on July 21.

"Following the two failed budget votes, the Board of Education and administration are required to make reductions to programs and services that we believe have made the East Hampton Public Schools an outstanding and competitive public school option for the community and its residents," wrote Van Tasel.

The complete list of cuts totals \$600,000 and would affect all of the town's schools. At Memorial School, it includes the elimination of the Smart Start preschool program, the loss of a STARS program special education paraeducator position, the loss of a third-grade teaching position and the reduction of the assistant principal position from a 12-month position to a 10-month position. At Center School, there would be the reduction of an art teacher position from full-time to part-time.

At East Hampton Middle School the elimination of athletics programs and a partial reduction in after-school clubs; and at East Hampton High School, the loss of an English/Language Arts teaching position, the loss of the Family and Consumer Science course, and a partial reduction in afterschool clubs. Also among the cuts was a reduction in bussing services to Vinal and Voag technical schools, with one bus now planned with centralized pickup locations.

At a Board of Education meeting just after the referendum vote, as well as Board of Finance and Town Council meetings this week, residents turned out to plead in support of programs that have been on the cutting block. At the Board of Finance meeting, the tone was one of sadness, with many speaking through shaking voices.

While some lamented the loss of middle school sports or expressed concern about loss of high school course opportunities, the greatest and most emotional outcry concerned the town's Smart Start preschool program, which provided free full-day preschool to area children.

See Cuts Bring Pain, page 27

Colchester Budget Vote Next Week

By Toriana Williams

Colchester voters took another step toward approving the town's fiscal year 2026-27 budget during a special budget meeting on Wednesday, July 15. In less than a half hour, residents voted by a wide margin to send both the town and Board of Education budgets to referendum on Tuesday, July 28. Two people voted against the motions.

The revised budget totals \$68.72 million, nearly \$1.66 million less than the original proposal that voters rejected earlier this year. In last week's issue, an article recapping the budget used the projected budget figures for the 2025-26 fiscal year which included supplemental funds after the budget was adopted.

Using the adopted budget figures, this equates to a 5.1% increase over last year's budget. This year's proposed budget includes \$49.36 million for the BOE, a 4.4% increase, and \$19.35 million for town government, a 7% increase.

If approved, the budget would increase the

mill rate to 30.97 mills, a 3.5% increase over the current rate. Residents will cast their votes at Town Hall from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on July 28.

Special Budget Meeting

Unlike the previous meeting held in early May, which lasted several hours and drew a large crowd, this meeting moved quickly. There was no debate before the votes. Town officials later said they believed many of the community's questions had already been answered during the earlier meeting, and that the revised budget reflected the message voters sent when they rejected the first proposal.

Following the meeting, several town leaders spoke about what happened, what they expect at the referendum and what could happen if voters reject the budget again.

BOE Chair Stefanie Tracey-Calash, a Democrat, said the short meeting did not surprise her. "It's summer," she explained. "People are enjoying their summertime and not as sort of

tapped into what's happening in town."

She also noted that lengthy special budget meetings are unusual.

"Typically, our town meetings are a bit quicker," said Tracey-Calash. "I've attended at least a handful, and all of them have been relatively quick, with an exception of just a couple."

She admitted she had prepared for another long night. "There were a lot of questions [at the previous meeting]. I was prepared, had all my answers, I was literally waiting," she laughed. "I was very ready."

Even though there were no questions during the meeting, Tracey-Calash encouraged residents to stay involved.

"If anyone does have questions," she said, "they can always reach out to our BOE@colchesterct.org email, and we'll certainly give them the information that they're interested in."

When asked whether turnout at the July 28 referendum would be high, she said, "I hope so."

See Colchester Budget, page 16

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¡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.

Concert at the Gazebo

The Frets will play a Concert at the Gazebo on Friday, July 24, from 7-9 p.m. There will be hot dogs, hamburgers chips and water. This is a free event sponsored by the Recreation Commission.

Bring your lawn chairs or feel free to sit at picnic tables.

‘History to Legend to Myth’

All are invited to Andover Public Library on Wednesday, July 29, at 6:30 p.m., as Connecticut historian and educator Richard Franklin Donohue presents “History to Legend to Myth: Remembering the Revolution in Connecticut.”

Using the state’s memorials, statues and landmarks as touchstones, Donohue will explore the ways in which the people of Connecticut participated in the movement towards independence

and how these events have been remembered for 250 years. This 40-minute program includes a lecture and PowerPoint presentation.

This program is the third of four the library has scheduled for this summer to celebrate America250. Admission is free, and RSVP is requested for planning purposes.

For more information, call the library at 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.

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

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

Special Upcoming Events: Shopping: Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. Shop in Willimantic 7/28, 8/11

and 8/25, and shop in Manchester 8/4 and 8/18. Also, on Thursday, 8/20, at 8:30 a.m., shop Trader Joe’s and Michael’s.

Andover Bingo: Runs through 7/31. Capture a photo to score a bingo! Your bingo card is in the monthly “Community Connections” newsletter. Complete a bingo, then bring your card to the center to claim your bingo prize. One prize per household. See the newsletter for full details.

Monthly Veterans Coffee Hour: Monday, 8/3, 9:30 a.m. Free for all veterans.

Stretch & Strengthen Fitness Class: Tuesday/Thursday, 8/4, 8/6, 8/11, 8/13, 8/18, 8/20, 8/25, 8/27, at 8:30 a.m. each day. Class is free.

Fun with Fondue: Wednesdays, Aug. 12-26, 3 p.m. each week. Themes: 8/12, Chocolate with Fruit; 8/19, Cheese and Crackers; 8/26, Chocolate with Marshmallows and Toppings. Fee is \$3 per class.

Thrift Shopping: Thursday, 8/13, 9 a.m. Explore local thrift stores.

Disappearing 4-Patch Quilting Workshop: Mondays, 8/10, 8/17, 8/24, 8/31, from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Fee is \$10 per class. In this sewing workshop, students learn the technique to make a disappearing 4-patch quilt, 64”x 80”. First session is required. Bring your sewing supplies. Fabric requirement provided at time of sign-up. Call the center to join.

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Andover Fills Selectmen Vacancies

By Toriana Williams

The Andover Board of Selectmen filled two vacant seats on the board during its July 13 meeting. After interviewing five candidates, David Gostanian and Christine Randazzo were appointed unanimously.

The board also received updates on several major infrastructure projects, reviewed plans for improving the town's permitting process and announced the hiring of an assistant director for the Community and Senior Center.

Republican Seats Filled

The meeting's main discussion focused on filling two vacancies left when Republican members Jeffrey Murray and Carol Lee recently resigned.

Among the applicants, Gostanian highlighted more than three decades of community service, including his work with the Andover Volunteer Fire Department, the Board of Finance and the RHAM Board of Education.

"I've lived in Andover for about 32 years," said Gostanian. "I love the community."

He explained that his long career in information technology and his upcoming retirement would allow him to devote more time to town government.

"I do believe my family, ... extended family and local family have always believed in bringing back to the community and adding to the community," he said. "I think some of the skills that I have would be a good fit within the Board of Selectmen."

When First Selectman Jeff Maguire, a Democrat, asked where Gostanian would like to see the town head in the future, Gostanian emphasized a direction of careful growth.

"I think responsible growth, a way to grow the tax base and not lose the character of Andover," he said. "I would work with the community and the Board of Selectmen to help with that."

When BOS member Anne Cremé, a Democrat, asked what accomplishment meant the most to him, Gostanian pointed to his decades in the fire department.

"I find that the most rewarding," he shared. "Getting up at two in the morning when some-

body needs help is a challenge. ... I think I've made a difference there."

Randazzo also outlined decades of experience that she believes would benefit the town.

"I have been a resident in Andover for 28 years," she said.

She described her work as owner of Randazzo Design and Associates, her experience as a civil engineer and her background working for state government, municipalities and private consulting firms.

"I do think I have a lot to offer this town," said Randazzo. "I do understand how towns are run."

She said her goal is bringing residents together while preserving Andover's character.

"I really want to ensure that our resources align with the residents' needs," she said. "I think the world is so divided today. ... We're stronger in numbers and if we come together and unite, we can do ... so much more."

Randazzo also highlighted her work on the recently completed Veterans Field improvement project, including the new playgrounds, pickleball courts and pavilion.

"I think it's a great asset for the town," she said. "We need things like that to support our town, to keep people here and to attract people that want to come here."

When asked about her vision for Andover, Randazzo echoed Gostanian's focus on balancing growth with preservation.

"I would like to attract businesses that can help the tax base in the town while maintaining its rural charm," she said.

Following an executive session, the board unanimously appointed Gostanian and Randazzo.

Before making the decision, Maguire thanked all five applicants. "It was a very difficult decision. I want to stress to everybody that we need everyone to be engaged in town," he said. "The more people that we have that are interested in serving the town ... it does help the town."

Bridge, Road Projects Moving Forward

Several infrastructure projects were updated throughout the meeting.

Town administrator Matt Streeter reported that the Long Hill Bridge replacement remains on schedule despite utility work that still needs to be completed. "The big news is the project is on schedule," he said.

Board member Scott Person, a Democrat, added that demolition work has progressed as well. "They finally have broken out the last abutment on the west side of the bridge," Person said. "They're on target."

The board also discussed the upcoming Bausola Road and Lake Road culvert project. Streeter said the next step will be obtaining easements from affected property owners before the project goes out to bid later this year.

Maguire encouraged proactive communica-

tion. "What we need to do ... is have a group meeting with all of the residents that are impacted," he suggested.

Streeter said individual meetings may work better because compensation and restoration needs could differ from property to property.

The board agreed that newly appointed Selectwoman Randazzo's engineering and landscaping background could prove valuable during those discussions.

New Permitting Procedures Considered

Board members reviewed proposed changes aimed at giving town officials more notice before community events requiring permits. Maguire said organizations that plan ahead make it much easier for the town to coordinate services.

"We've always tried to accommodate everybody," he said. "But it does become problematic," he expressed, when organizations request

for permits at the last second.

He suggested the town may eventually charge fees when last-minute permit requests require significant staff time. "I think that this is something that we desperately need," Maguire said.

Other Business

Earlier in the meeting, resident Stephen King thanked the town for donating a commemorative bench during the Andover Sportsman's Club's recent 250th anniversary celebration.

"We've got that displayed at our upper clubhouse," King said. "It was a good day overall with some great turnout."

Streeter also announced the hiring of Kate McCarthy-Cox as the new assistant director at the Community and Senior Center.

"She has a lot of experience, brings some energy and I think she'll be very valuable," said Streeter.

School Bathroom Project on Schedule

By Toriana Williams

The bathroom renovation project at Andover Elementary School remains on schedule despite the unexpected finding of asbestos and construction issues that increase the project's cost by more than \$36,000.

According to Board of Education Chair Caitlin Greenhouse, construction has continued to progress and that crews are still expected to finish before the start of the school year.

"There are four weeks left on the timeline," Greenhouse told the *Rivereast*. She added that the project is "currently on track" to be completed on time with "no expected additional cost over what was already identified."

According to Greenhouse, all of the plumbing rough-in work has been completed, including drains and connections for the toilets. The plumbing inspection has also been suc-

cessfully completed.

Crews have poured the new concrete floor and have begun framing the new walls and installing sheetrock. During the coming week, workers are expected to finish the remaining concrete work before beginning wall tile installation and applying the epoxy flooring.

Greenhouse's latest update shows that the additional expenses have remained close to earlier estimates. She reported that asbestos removal and required safety inspections have cost about \$30,000, while other necessary change orders have added roughly \$6,000.

The total additional costs now stand at \$36,761, bringing the contractor's total project cost to \$246,947. The funds for the project are coming from the elementary school's capital account, Greenhouse said.

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 final class will be Mermaid Rocks on July 29. Create colorful metallic mermaid scales on painted rocks.

Fee is \$18. Discount available for siblings. Space is limited. Supplies are provided.

To register, call the center at 860-742-7305 ext. 4510.

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 and 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.



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From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

Well, it finally happened. I finally got interested in soccer. Previous World Cups have tried, and failed, to get me into the world’s most popular sport. I always resisted; they struck me as boring, low-scoring affairs consisted largely of people just kicking a ball back and forth to each other.

But this year, they finally got me. I found myself gathering at local watering holes, cheering on different teams, jeering the refs when they’d make bad calls or simply miss calls altogether.

After the U.S. got eliminated, I was pulling for England to go all the way. And they very nearly did – but alas, the final wound up being Spain vs. Argentina. Still, in that matchup I was rooting for Spain, so I was happy when they pulled away with a 1-0 victory on Sunday.

It’s all over now, and as far as sports go I’m back to watching the Mets trying to eke some positives out of an otherwise-lost season. But I’ve come away with a newfound interest in soccer. I’m not sure if this will translate into season tickets for the Hartford Athletic, but I know for sure I won’t wait another four years before watching another game.

A very interesting-sounding event is coming up in Glastonbury next month. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) of Connecticut will hold the Hare Krishna Chariot Festival Saturday, Aug. 15, from 11:45 a.m.-5 p.m., at Riverfront Park in Glastonbury. There’s no charge for the rain-or-shine event, and all are welcome.

The festival begins at 11:45 p.m. with Ratha Yatra, a colorful chariot parade accompanied by lively singing and dancing. The parade route begins at the Hare Krishna Temple, 40 Naubuc Ave., in downtown Glastonbury, and then proceeds along Naubuc Avenue to Riverfront Park at 300 Welles St. All are encouraged to participate in this festive parade. Free parking is available at the park.

Following the parade, festivities in the park begin with a free vegetarian meal of delicious Indian cuisine and drinks. Be entertained by stage performances of traditional Indian music, dance, and drama, and participate with us in lively kirtan or devotional chanting. There’s also fun activities, games, and face painting for the children, and stylish henna body art for all ages. Many Indian-style goods will be available for purchase from vendors, featuring books, music, clothing, jewelry, drinks, vegetarian snacks, and more.

This is the 18th annual Hare Krishna Chariot Festival presented by ISKCON of Connecticut – and the seventh one held in Glastonbury. Attending this outdoor event provides an opportunity to sample the rich cultural heritage of India firsthand, organizers said. Over 1,500 visitors from Connecticut, western Massachusetts and beyond attended.

Editor’s Desk continued on page 10

Bulletin Board

I saw on the news last week where Congress was interrogating some bozo who wants to be U.S. Attorney General. I no longer follow these hearings in any detail as it seems to me that they consist mainly of blowhards grandstanding for the cameras on the one side, and evasive toadies on the other. Some folks may find it entertaining. I find it tedious.

However, I do think, given the opportunity, that I could be an outstanding evasive toady. Were I on the hotseat, I think it might go something like this:

Senator: Mr. Hallas, it says here that you were a Boy Scout during the Vietnam War, maintained a C- average in high school, make occasional insignificant donations to St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital and the Salvation Army, prefer dogs over most people and own a cell phone that’s out of date it belongs in the Smithsonian.

Me: In all modesty, that would be me, your munificence. Or I. Me. I think the proper usage is me. Isn’t it?

Senator (responding with a steely glare). So, let me ask you something.

Me: I’m pretty sure it’s me.

Senator (preening): Let’s cut to the chase, shall we? Are you gay?

Me: No, sir. I’ve lived in New England practically my whole life. So I’m a Red Sox fan. I mean, unless you don’t like the Red Sox, in which case I prefer your team. Unless it’s the Yankees. I mean, I want this job, but I’m not going to suffer eternal damnation for it.

Senator: I asked if you are gay. G-A-Y.

Me: Oh, I thought you said, “Are you from LA?” Am I gay? Not at the moment, your munificence. If I seem a little giddy, it’s because I’m kind of nervous. I’m not sad or anything, but I wouldn’t say I’m gay, exactly. I mean, considering the solemnity of these proceedings, I think it would be inappropriate to cavort joyfully in the aisles singing “If I Were a Rich Man,” despite my hopes of obtaining top tier health insurance and unlimited travel, all at taxpayer expense. If that happens, you can be sure I’ll be pretty gay. My whole family will be.

Senator (giving it up): You mention riches. Are you a rich man, Mr. Hallas?

Me: I’m rich in friends. I’m rich in being married to the most wonderful person in the world and having two adoring sons who moved out of state so they wouldn’t have to shovel my driveway in the winter. I guess I wouldn’t change anything, except maybe I’d buy a better snowblower.

Senator: No. I mean do you have a lot of money?

Me: Oh. Well, I have enough money to live modestly, your munificence, but not enough to feel especially gay about the economic situation in this country. Maybe it would be different if I’d gone directly into politics without having a real job. That seems to be the road to success these days. You know, you start off in a log cabin or the projects and after about six months in political office you own a townhouse in Washington and a place on Martha’s Vineyard. But sadly, I’ve never had the opportunity to squander other people’s money.

Senator: You do not have a law degree.

Me: No, sir. But I’ve been sued so many times, I’ve got more court time than most attorneys. This may come as a surprise to you, but not everyone finds me particularly amusing. So, I am not entirely unacquainted with the vagaries of the judicial system.

Senator: And if this eminent body were to confirm you, would you affirm a woman’s right to choose?

Me: Well, your munificence, it’s been my experience that women pretty much choose to do whatever they want anyway. They certainly don’t seem to feel they need my approval. I remember once my wife asked me if I wanted to put the sofa...

Senator: No. I mean would you support a return to the rights once guaranteed by Roe vs. Wade?

Me: Would that be shad roe or Skid Row, sir?

Senator: I mean abortion, you idiot.

Me: Oh. I see. Well, sir, after spending the last several years watching the characters involved in this clown show you call a government, it’s awfully hard not to be pro-abortion. So, I’d have to say I’m for it. If you guys keep rejecting term limits, I’m thinking legalizing euthanasia might not be a bad idea, either.

And, I guess that would be the end of that.

Maybe I’m not cut out for politics after all.

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.



Serving Up More Than Meals!... Earlier this year, congregants of Gilead Congregational Church launched “Gilead to Go Meals,” a partnership with Hebron Interfaith Human Services (HIHS). Since March, 197 homemade meals have been provided! Pictured are some of the 27 volunteers from Gilead who have come together to prepare meals. From left are Dale Bland, Alice Marien, Jan Andrews, Carol Geyer, Laurie Larson, Jeanette Bare, Margaret Gibbs and Teresa Olivo. The program is taking a summer break during July and August before returning to Gilead Church this fall. If you’d like to get involved, contact the church office at gcc@gileadchurch.net or 860-228-3077.

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

Correction

In the story in last week’s *Rivereast* on the Colchester budget, the amounts listed for the 2025-26 adopted budget were incorrect. The projected expenditures were reported instead.

The actual adopted budget for 2025-26 totaled \$65.38 million, not \$65.76 million as reported. The adopted town operations budget was \$18.09 million and the adopted school board budget was \$47.30 million. Therefore, the proposed \$68.72 million 2026-27 budget is a 5.1% increase over last year’s budget. The town operations proposal is a 7% increase over last year, and the Board of Education’s proposal is 4.4% over last year.

The *Rivereast* regrets the error.

Best Old Home Day Ever!

To the Editor:

Without question, the best Old Home Day ever! The parade was hysterical – everybody did a marvelous job! Perfection: EHPA, EHAA, EHFD, OHD organizers, civic groups, even good food. Total organization – no problems, everybody safe, great entertainment, great weather.

All the li’l chickies tries to outdo each other. Moms and Dads, we are hipper than hip. Especially our cops, first responders – all the best. Everybody had a great time!

Chris Burt
Lake Pocotopaug, East Hampton

Vote Yes for Both Budgets

To the Editor:

Please vote ‘yes’ for both the Colchester budgets on Tuesday, July 28, at the Colchester Town Hall, from 6 a.m. – 8 p.m.

A combined total of \$1.66 million has been cut from the budgets with \$1.5 million coming from the BOE budget.

There have been significant school administrator cuts. The elected officials, school administrators and teachers are taking unpaid furlough days. School administrators are taking a pay freeze. There are reductions or changes to some school programs, including the elimination of academic coaches.

Under some reorganization, the school and town finance offices are to share staff, reducing staffing overhead and increasing oversight. The public works department will see cuts in maintenance positions and capital improvements.

The following have not been cut in this phase of reductions: school music and sports programs, library hours, and public safety.

Colchester is your town, show your support for maintaining our quality of life here by voting ‘yes’ on the town budget on Tuesday. The children are yours and the nation’s future; support them by voting ‘yes’ to the school budget.

If you need an absentee ballot, they are available at the town clerk’s office.

Nancy Nelson – Colchester

Note: Nelson is a member of the Colchester Board of Education but said she is writing as an individual.

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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News copy deadline for *The Rivereast News Bulletin* is Tuesday at noon. Please address all letters & news articles to: *Rivereast News Bulletin*, P.O. Box 373, Glastonbury, CT 06033

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*

Our dedicated teachers and town staff, including the first selectman, are willing to sacrifice by taking unpaid furlough days. Some school programming will change and town maintenance/capital improvements will be reduced, but overall, the new proposed budget does not significantly hurt us; band, sports, and services to the public remain untouched in this proposal. But they are at risk if these budgets fail. Good news is that the move to re-combine the town and BOE finance offices will actually help us save money and increase oversight.

The sooner we move on from this budget season, the better, so we can feel secure and know what the next fiscal and school years hold. Unfortunately, we cannot control inflation and it affects the costs to run our town, but at least now, the new tax rate proposal, at a 3.5% increase, is in line with it. August is the time to get excited about Colchester's new school year and settle into fall, not worry about how the next round of budget cuts is going to make life less comfortable or predictable.

Please join me in voting 'yes' to both budgets on Tuesday, July 28, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at Town Hall, or by absentee beforehand in the Town Clerk's office so that together we can keep our little town of Colchester a great place to live.

Sincerely,
Monica Swyden – Colchester
Note: Swyden is chair of the Colchester Democratic Town Committee.

Duty to People

To the Editor:

When I think of strong leadership, ability to stand up to adversity comes to mind. Being able to show compassion, empathy, and most importantly, have courage. When I watched the Board of Finance meeting on Monday, I witnessed all of these characteristics. I applaud Dan Finn for his strong words at the end of the meeting for the town to look into the homestead exemption for families struggling with the recent revaluation process. He showed great compassion for the community fighting to stay within their homes, and the courage to make a statement with conviction that this process must go forward.

And then, I witnessed the complete opposite. Alison Walck asked where the balance would come from. Commercial, second homes, income properties, were the answer. The very properties that just received a windfall of a tax cut. She asked if Dan had spoken to the business community about this. And with confidence and conviction he replied he has spoken to the

people who are struggling! How completely out of touch can one person be? To suggest that for-profit organizations need more handouts, to imply that commercial entities are more important than people struggling, people who can't just pass the buck.

Lastly, it was also encouraging to see Dave Caterisano and Ted Turner ask of their Republican counterparts to give actual answers and not just the typical buzzwords of lower or cuts. Dave said it very well: they are a board of seven, and should come to their decisions on somewhat of a bipartisan basis. I hope, moving forward, the community can come together and find the budget satisfactory.

Rick Wanat – East Hampton

Rural Characters

To the Editor:

Freund's Farm (East Caanan, CT) has been at the forefront of innovative manure management for over two decades. They utilize composted cow manure from Canaan View Dairy to produce nursery pots, which are biodegradable planting pots for gardens. This sustainable product has earned national recognition, including features on TV shows like Dirty Jobs and Shark Tank (tinyurl.com/ValueofCTDairySources). Pots like these add nutrients and organic matter to our soils while reducing the amount of plastic found in landfills.

Generations of farmers and fishermen listen closely to the Mother of all mothers. Most respect land and sea. However, many now find themselves forced to share vital ecosystems. Sharing vital ecosystems with uninformed populations often means unwanted disruptions in the food chain including loss of land. The USA has become a nation who wants it all, and wants it now, no matter the cost to fishermen, farmers or the planet. We have increasingly become a people who do not tread lightly even on our own soils.

In the past five years I've had the distinct pleasure of meeting farmers from surrounding towns. We've had interesting conversations. One tough old coot laughed and said, "Ask most people where their food comes from. They'll tell yah.... the supermarket!" They laughed so hard I thought their sides would split. Politics, soil types, drainage, nutrition, education, sustainability, land preservation, eco systems, business, town planning and more, these rural characters understand all the connections. They are, in fact, quite similar to John and Abigail Adams and Thomas Jefferson, intelligent hard working people with a vision for their country and their

farms. It's been an honor, but its also been a battle protecting the water and historic acres on the Raymond Brook Watershed here in Amston. A watershed local farmers know more about than almost any political figure or developer I've heard of or heard from.

Its no wonder We the People have such an outstanding Declaration of Independence. It was drawn up by Renaissance people who, like many farmers today, knew how to make their own compost, build barns, raise livestock, grow food, read, write and think. Their passion was contagious. "Since 1776, there have been approximately 120 declarations of independence made by different countries and different peoples." www.monticello.org. These brilliant rural characters, from generations ago, were onto something good and that goodness starts right under your own feet. #save17

Jean Tulimieri – Amston

Vote 'Yes' in Colchester

To the Editor:

I am writing to support our town and school budgets. I care about the kind of community we live in. I don't have kids but I did graduate from Bacon Academy. Students today deserve the same opportunities I had then. If this budget passes, the BOE will have to absorb \$1.5 million in cuts since the last referendum. That's on top of the cuts made from before the referendum.

It's easy to forget that over \$1.3 million had already been cut before that first referendum. The BOE cut hundreds of thousands of dollars from the superintendent's original proposal. It's the first time I've ever seen a Colchester BOE cut a superintendent budget by that much. Then the Board of Finance cut the school proposal by another million dollars in April. That means the school budget we are voting on Tuesday is almost \$2.9 million less than what was first presented in February.

That's a huge change.

In my opinion, the schools have done a pretty good job under the new superintendent reacting to all of this. The cuts they are planning manage to preserve most programs and cut back on admin costs. There is only so much runway on that before they start cutting staff or programs that will have a big impact on kids.

When it comes to the town, the argument is even easier. Colchester's town budget is comparatively small. Cuts always end up hitting maintenance and we pay for it later.

The tax rate is less than inflation. I'll be voting 'yes' for both the town and school.

John Dwyer – Colchester

Proud of Colchester

Dear Neighbors and Friends:

This budget cycle has not been easy. It is no secret that many people are feeling the strain of today's economy, and the budget being presented in this referendum reflects that reality.

On the Board of Education side, the proposal includes approximately \$1.5 million in cuts, including reductions to school administration, the elimination of a principal and an assistant principal position, additional staff reductions, and a shared principal model between CES and JJIS.

On the town side, the budget includes unpaid furlough days for elected officials and administrators, reductions to seasonal and part-time staff, and cuts to road maintenance and tree removal.

The reality is that there is very little left to cut without significantly affecting either the education of Colchester's children or the services our residents rely on.

The Town of Colchester provided my now-adult children with an excellent education and a community they are proud to call home. I want today's children and future generations to have that same opportunity.

Please vote 'yes' on July 28 to support a responsible budget that preserves the quality of our schools and the essential services that make Colchester such a special place to live.

Jo-Ann Holmes – Colchester

Defund Colchester

To the Editor:

Every spring Colchester does the same exercise. We build a budget, then we take it apart. Line by line, meeting after meeting. We debate \$200 in printing paper inside a \$50 million budget. We cut, we trim, then we cut some more.

This year education took the biggest hit. Real cuts, not accounting tricks. At this point there is nothing left to remove except services people actually use.

And still, some folks want massive reductions. Here's the tell. Our most dedicated budget critics do their homework. They request every document. They speak at every meeting. They know the numbers cold.

And after all that digging, not one of them has named a single cut. Not a line. Not a dollar. Just "cut more."

If the people who read every page can't find the non-essentials, maybe that's because there aren't any.

So let's call the demand what it is. "Cut more" with nothing to cut isn't fiscal responsibility. It's a plan to defund Colchester. The schools, the services, the town itself.

The budget on the ballot is already the cut budget. Vote yes on July 28. Don't defund Colchester.

John Farrell – Colchester

Support Both Budgets

Dear Colchester Neighbors:

On Tuesday, July 28, I ask you to join me in supporting both the town and Board of Education budgets. As first selectman, it should come as no surprise that I support our Town budget that covers departments I oversee such as public works, fire/EMS, police, Cragin Library, and youth, social, and senior services. I believe the reductions we made, including unpaid furlough days for elected officials like myself and department heads, are prudent responses to the economic environment while preserving services residents rely on.

As a fellow resident, I want you to know that I also support the latest proposal from the BOE to fund Colchester Public Schools next year. In May, residents voted down the BOE budget two-to-one. After that vote, I heard many residents express three main concerns: 1. The tax impact was too high...2. Administration was too top-heavy...3. General concern over financial oversight.

I believe each of these concerns has been addressed, and the latest proposal deserves our support.

On taxes: The new proposed mill rate increase is below inflation at 3.5%. The Board of Finance made the largest cut to the combined budgets in at least the last 15 years. Since 2010, the average amount cut after a failed referendum the average total of cuts across multiple failed referendums has been about \$485,000. These cuts are three times larger than that at a combined \$1.6 million.

On reducing administration, the Board of Education has approached their \$1.5 million in cuts with a focus on minimizing impacts to students. They are listening to resident feedback by cutting an assistant principal at Bacon Academy. JJIS and CES will share one principal. This is on top of administration pay freezes.

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Art Display at Town Hall

Marlborough Arts Center announces Linda Gotta's solo art exhibit at the Marlborough Town Hall. The exhibit runs 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 wood-

lands, 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.

Taxes Due Aug. 3

The first installment of taxes for the Oct. 1, 2025 Grand List for real estate, motor vehicles and personal property were due and payable on July 1, and will become delinquent on Monday, Aug. 3.

Failure to pay on time will be subject to interest of one and one-half percent per month reverting to the due date or 18% per year. If you do not receive a bill, check online at www.marlboroughct.gov bill lookup or contact the Tax Office.

Tax payments can be mailed to Tax Collector, Town of Marlborough, P.O. Box 29, Marlborough, CT 06447, placed in the dropbox outside of Town Hall (no cash), or in person at 26 North Main St. via cash or check only. (Note: credit card payments cannot be accepted in person). You may also pay online www.marlboroughct.gov with Mastercard, Visa or ACH.

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

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.

Family Beach Yoga Night: For ages 3-10. Wednesday, Aug. 12, 5:30 p.m., at Blish Park. Enjoy family-friendly yoga games/crafts, followed by a post-class sweet treat. 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 are welcome. Registration fee is \$25/resident, \$30/non-residents.

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.

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 Tuesday, 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.

FABBS Exercise: The August session of the Flexibility, Agility, Better Balance and Strength workout class runs Mondays, Aug. 10-31, from 10:45-11:45 a.m. each week. Movement and exercises are drawn from body building, yoga, ballet and more. Instructor Hilary Celentano. Cost is \$35/residents, \$40/non-residents. RSVP by Aug. 7.

Celebration of Mint: Friday, July 31. Explore various varieties of mint, learn how to use mint in several different ways, and create a mint simple syrup to add to shaved ice to enjoy as a summer treat. Cost is \$10/resident, \$12/non-resident.

Encore Club: Wednesday, Aug. 5 12:30-2 p.m. This special Encore club features Albert Ruggiero and his heartfelt presentation, "Pearls from Carol" – a collection of essays, stories, and poems written by his late wife, Carol. Albert will share selections from the book and discuss the journey of preserving and celebrating Carol's legacy through her words. Afterwards, he will perform on his saxophone. Light refreshments will be served. The event is free.

Mindfulness with Mary: Thursday, Aug. 6, 10-11:30 a.m. Start your morning with a mindful meditation session. Mary Klatt is a senior living advisor for Oasis Senior Advisors Central Connecticut. This program is free.

Caregiver Support: Monday, Aug. 10, 4-5 p.m. All are invited to this presentation about family caregivers and the support available to family caregivers in Connecticut. Learn what services eligible caregivers may receive. Light refreshments served.

Exploration Station: Sensory Play: Tuesday, Aug. 11, 10-11:30 a.m. Marlborough Senior Center and Richmond Memorial Library are teaming up for a special drop-in program filled with sensory activities and play for you and your grandchildren.

Friendship Tours: GermanFest at the East Hill Farm in New Hampshire: Oct. 8. Enjoy a homemade Oktoberfest Luncheon, then listen to live German music by Al Brogdon's four-piece Oompah Band. Stop at Yankee Candle's flagship store in South Deerfield, Mass. Cost is \$158/person. More information available at senior center.

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

Social Services: Food Bank: Located at 3 Willhenger 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.

Eversource: There are low-income discount rates available for electric bills. Proof required; by appointment only.

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.

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 in the summer of 2020. The band features musicians who all share a passion for bluegrass and alternate on lead and three-part vocal harmonies.

Doors open at 7 p.m. and the concert begins at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$15 per person. BYOW and nibbles to dine on. Other non-alcoholic beverages are available. There is on-site parking, and Marlborough Arts Center is fully accessible.

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

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.

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.stjfchurch.org.

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

Weekday Masses: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 8:30 a.m. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Mondays at 9 a.m. **Weekly Sacrament of Reconciliation:** Saturdays, 3-3:30 p.m., or by appointment.

Faith Formation Programs: Vacation Bible School will be Aug. 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.

North Main Street Closure

North Main Street will be closed to traffic on Wednesday July 29th from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. between Chapman Road and Hodge Road. The Detour Route is Chapman Road to Edstrom Road to Hodge Road.

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Bakery Marks One Year Under New Ownership

By **Toriana Williams**

One year ago, Chef Sandy Squillante took a leap of faith.

After spending decades in the restaurant business, she traded late nights behind a restaurant stove for early mornings surrounded by fresh bread, doughnuts and espresso. On July 18, 2025, she officially took over Marlborough Bakery & Café with a plan to transform it from just a bakery into a place where people felt at home.

As the bakery celebrates its first anniversary under her ownership, Squillante sat down with the *Rivereast* and took a look back on a year full of long days, unexpected challenges, plenty of laughter and a community that embraced her from the very beginning.

“For the most part, it’s been good,” said Squillante. “Every business is a roller coaster, and in this business, it’s peaks and valleys.”

She admitted the first year wasn’t always easy – with the wintertime in particular being tougher than anticipated.

“I’ve been in [the food industry] my whole life ... so it’s been a learning curve for myself and the team that came here with me,” she said. “We always expected January or February to drop ... but because of the weather on top of everything else, it was something else. Now, it’s catch-up time.”

Despite those challenges, she smiled as she looked around the café.

“On the whole, the place is busy,” she said. “The numbers have been wonderful, catering is really picking up. It’s been good.”

That optimism is classic Squillante. With her unmistakable New York accent, quick wit and colorful personality, she fills the bakery with as much energy as the espresso serves. During conversation, she jumps easily from talking about new menu items to cracking jokes to checking on customers.

That enthusiasm has definitely helped shape the bakery into exactly what she hoped it would become.

“We didn’t just want to be a bakery,” she said. “We wanted to be seen as a café. We wanted our lunches to soar.”

When Squillante first arrived, the bakery sold only a handful of lunches each day. Since then, she has expanded the menu, added grab-and-go meals she calls “From Our Kitchen to Yours,” grown the catering business and started selling

baked goods wholesale to other businesses. “We wanted that to build up,” she said. “That’s happening quickly.”

While Squillante has spent a lifetime in kitchens, owning a bakery has been an entirely new experience for her.

“There’s so much to learn,” she said. “Baking times, recipes. ... It’s a whole different thing. This is math.”

Squillante shared that restaurant style cooking can be much more forgiving.

“My type of food, you can go by your taste, as long as the customer likes it.”

Fortunately, she said she has never been alone.

“I have a great team,” she smiled. “People love our counter staff. They’re all young, they’re vibrant. They have fun with people. I turn up the music, so we’re all rockin’.”

Squillante believes the bakery’s success belongs to everyone who works there. “This isn’t my business – it’s theirs,” said Squillante. “The more success that comes to me, the more success comes to them.”

The first year also came with financial surprises. “We had to spend a lot more than what we anticipated when we came through the doors,” she shared.

Still, she refuses to dwell on setbacks. “I’ve been blessed,” she said. “We’ve overcome 90% of everything.”

More than anything else, Squillante credited Marlborough residents with helping the bakery succeed.

“This community is phenomenal,” she said. “They have welcomed us with open arms and been a huge support” That support has meant more than strong sales.

“What makes me happier than anything is all the comments, all of the reviews,” she said. “We’ve made great friends.”

Building relationships has always been one of Squillante’s biggest priorities. When the *Rivereast* first visited shortly after she purchased the bakery, she said she wanted customers to feel like they were walking into her home instead of simply buying breakfast. One year later, she believes that vision has become reality.

“[Customers] tell me it’s very welcoming, very comfortable,” she said. “I come out to almost every table if I’m not tied to the stove. It’s very important to make everybody feel like they’re important, because they are important.”



Marlborough Bakery & Café Chef Sandy Squillante and Pastry Chef Sebastian, shown here, have been embracing social media, as a way to help grow the restaurant. They went viral in a video where they reenacted the vibes of the *Godfather*, pretending to puff on a cannoli while snow flurried down. The video, to date, has received over 17,000 views on Instagram and Facebook.

That philosophy goes beyond the bakery walls, too.

“We’re there for schools,” said Squillante. “If the town needs anything, we’re right there.”

She has also embraced social media, where hilarious videos featuring Squillante’s larger-than-life personality and close relationship with her employees have become favorites among their followers.

“My daughter told me, ‘You have no idea – social media will make you or break you,’” said Squillante. “And it’s true. Social media works for us.”

The bakery’s online presence has helped introduce new customers to its food, but anyone who walks through the doors will quickly discover that Squillante herself is the biggest attraction.

She jokes with customers, laughs with employees and somehow keeps dozens of ideas moving at once.

Among those ideas are a new menu, expanded catering services, Friday night live cooking shows on the bakery’s YouTube channel, and a smoker that will bring new barbecue items to the menu. Even with so much, she said she’s still learning.

Dean’s List

Marlborough residents Summer Acabchuk and Ethan Demosthenous made the spring 2026 Dean’s List at the University of Tampa in Tampa, Fla.

Acabchuk is a member of the Class of 2026, majoring in finance. Demosthenous is also a member of the Class of 2026, majoring in accounting.

Residents Graduate

The following Marlborough residents recently graduated from Quinnipiac University:

Taylor Bartoski, who received a Master of Science degree in public relations; Kaden Hutchins, Bachelor of Science degree in health science studies; Ethan Meyer, who received a Master Business Administration degree in management science.

“It’s all a guessing game the first year,” said Squillante.

Looking back, there is only one piece of advice she would give herself on her first day as owner.

“Take a deep breath. Pull back and watch for a little while,” she began. “And just know that, no matter what, you’re going to make this work.”

As Marlborough Bakery & Café enters its second year, Squillante isn’t slowing down. Instead, she’s just gearing up for bigger and better things. The bakery will celebrate its anniversary during the second week of August with giveaways, contests and special events for customers, all announced on their Facebook page.

For Squillante, though, the biggest celebration is the people who made it possible.

“I am so grateful to each and every one,” she said. “Although I can’t thank each and every one personally, I am so grateful.”

As Squillante likes to remind customers every day, “there’s always room for one or two more” at her table – and after a successful first year, Marlborough seems happy to pull up a chair.

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. here is no nursery care or Sunday School in July and August and resumes in mid-September. 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 26: The service will be led by Seaver. Her sermon title is “Nothing?” based on Romans 8:26-39. 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-perish-

able 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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★ *Letters, cont. from page 7*

have property tax bills sitting on my refrigerator that I am struggling to pay. But as precious as those dollars are, I know they have far more purchasing power when pooled together for the common good than they do in my pocket alone.

We must honor our social contract. If we refuse to invest in ourselves, East Hampton will shrivel like every other community that chose individual hoarding over collective prosperity. We can, and must, do better.

Jordan Werme – East Hampton

A Vote Worth Missing

To the Editor:

State Rep. Steve Weir shared some news on Facebook this month: in his four years at the Capitol, he has never missed a vote. All 650 recorded votes of the term, and he was present for every one. That is true, and it deserves credit. It is also true of Speaker Ritter, of our neighbor Rep. Tim Ackert, and of 35 other members of the House, none of whom made a graphic about it. Showing up is the job, and roughly a quarter of the chamber does it perfectly. But grant him this: he shows up.

Which is just the trouble with a perfect attendance record. It means every vote is a choice. No gaps, no sick days, no “I missed that one.” When our representative tells us he has never missed a vote, he is telling us that everything on his roll call was done on purpose.

Including June of 2023.

That month the House took up House Bill 6569, raising Connecticut’s minimum marriage age to 18, with no exceptions. It ended child marriage in this state and made us the ninth state in the nation to do so. The Senate had passed it unanimously: every Democrat, every Republican, not a single dissent. The House passed it 98 to 45, and the governor signed it into law.

Steve Weir voted ‘no.’

The bill did one thing. It said that children cannot marry in Connecticut. Senators of both parties found it an easy yes, all of them. Our representative read the same page and found his way to ‘no,’ and thanks to his diligence we know it was not an accident. He was there. He heard

the debate. He chose.

Perfect attendance is an honor we mostly give to schoolchildren. Protecting them would have been the better one to claim.

Sincerely,
Scott Sauyet – Andover

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

Old Home Days

To the Editor:

Another successful Old Home Days weekend is in the books!

On behalf of the Old Home Days Committee, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our dedicated committee members, who work year-round to make this event happen. Their countless hours of planning and hard work ensure that everything comes together seamlessly.

We are also deeply grateful to the many individuals, organizations, and businesses whose generosity and support make Old Home Days possible. We especially thank our sponsors, who were recognized in last week’s RiverEast. Your continued support is the foundation of this community tradition.

I would also like to recognize the East Hampton Public Works Department for preparing the grounds and parade route; our Police Department, Fire Department, and Ambulance personnel for their on-site presence and support throughout the weekend; the Center School custodial staff; the Flannery family businesses, whose contributions extend far beyond their generous sponsorships; M&J Bus, DATTCO Bus, Mike Scranton, Peter Freund, All Truck RV, and the Connecticut Draft Horse Rescue. Your willingness to lend your time, equipment, and expertise is greatly appreciated.

Old Home Days truly is an all-hands-on-deck community event, and its success is a direct reflection of the incredible people who come together to make it happen.

After four years as committee president, I have decided to step back from a leadership role and instead support the committee in a different capacity. It has been an honor to help bring

Old Home Days back following the two-year COVID hiatus and after the loss of our iconic leader and dear friend, Red McKinney. I am proud that the committee is financially strong, energized, and well-positioned to ensure this cherished tradition continues to thrive for many years to come.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year’s Old Home Days another memorable success. I look forward to supporting this wonderful event for years to come.

Sincerely,
John Tuttle, President
Old Home Days Committee

Time to Pay Your Fair Share

To the Editor:

I have followed the recent budget process in East Hampton closely, including the vigorous debate over proposed property tax increases. Residents have heard strong arguments from those urging a ‘yes’ vote for additional spending and those encouraging a ‘no’ vote to hold the line on taxes.

One vocal advocate for increased spending and a “yes” vote has been Meghan Rosenfeld, the Democratic candidate for state representative. While she has correctly acknowledged on social media that rising property tax bills are real and the resulting frustration among residents is justified, questions remain about her own contributions.

Public records show that since moving to East Hampton in 2023, Rosenfeld has not paid any motor vehicle taxes to the town — not in 2023, 2024, or 2025. Are her vehicles still registered in Pennsylvania, which does not impose a comparable motor vehicle property tax? Will her vehicles finally appear on the October supplemental grand list so she begins paying her fair share? Connecticut law requires new residents to register their vehicles with the DMV within 60 to 90 days of establishing residency. When will that requirement be met?

Further review of tax records reveals that Rosenfeld’s own real estate property taxes have actually decreased during this period, even as most East Hampton residents saw increases.

Town residents’ frustration is understandable, as Rosenfeld herself has noted. That frustration turns to a bit more bitter, however, when those urging others to pay more appear to be paying less — or, in some cases, nothing at all.

David Balthazar – East Hampton

Working Together for Colchester

To the Editor:

Over the years, Colchester residents of all ages have worked together to address the needs of our town, always considering the financial impact. Working together, we’ve addressed the renovation and expansion of William J. Johnston Middle School (WJJMS) and built a new senior center. We’re renovating our athletic fields and Rec Plex currently.

The staff that serve Colchester has committed to sacrifices that will help us weather this difficult budget season. Town-elected officials, town department heads, and our dedicated teachers are all taking unpaid furlough days. Board of Education (BOE) administration is taking pay freezes.

The Board of Finance (BOF) has cut an additional \$1,667,890 (\$1.5M from BOE on top of the \$2M that had been reduced from BOE). The BOE has eliminated 2 principal positions and isn’t filling teacher and support personnel posi-

tions. Programming cuts will impact our educational system for years to come.

The town cuts to public works eliminate part-time maintenance positions and reduce capital improvements. Sharing finance office staff with the BOE again will reduce staffing overhead and increase oversight.

Without an approved budget, the BOE will have difficulty starting school. Teachers are in limbo, wondering if their positions or programs face elimination. Parents worry about what will happen to band or sports if there are more cuts. The town side faces similar staff and programming challenges.

We’re asking you to support an average residential increase of \$18/month or 3.5% – less than inflation, to protect our quality of life.

Let’s come together again, focusing on the needs of our town and schools, and pass our budgets on July 28th from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Town Hall. Let’s keep Colchester moving forward.

Sincerely,
Rosemary Coyle – Colchester

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

Dementia Talks No. 66

To the Editor:

Previously I shared that we brought Mom home from memory care for a “Mom vacation.”

In this moment there is talk about bringing Mom home for this stage of our Alzheimer’s adventure (thank you JP for the new describer).

I have been asked “Why would you bring her home? Isn’t the community working out?”

Each phase of Alzheimer’s disease is different for each person. The person living with the disease goes through changes during each phase. We, as families, go through changes, too. The location where our loved one resides needs to match up to where they are in the journey, what they can do and not do, how safe they are, how independent they can be, the list goes on.

Think of someone going to college. The person may be suited to live on their own in their own apartment, or in a house with a bunch of roommates, or in a dorm. The student may have aspirations of what they want, but the family will have a say based on what the student can handle. You need to match the person to the living situation based on factors. This analogy is to give perspective.

Back in July 2022, an apartment in an assisted living community was the right match for Mom; the first memory care community was the right match for Mom; the second memory care community was the right match for Mom. These moves were based on the need to provide a safe and engaging (among other factors) environment for her and peace of mind for us.

We are at the point where one-to-one care might be the better move; this isn’t something that can happen in an assisted living or memory care community unless you have extremely deep pockets or a very rich long-term care policy.

So, we sit in a space where there is a possibility that we will be where we started 10 years ago, with Mom living in our home. The circumstances are extremely different, but the place is loving and caring.

This adventure continues, as we never know what today will hold.

Know that you, too, are not alone.

With peace and kindness,
Tonya Maurer – Amston
Alzheimer’s Hot Line 1-800-272-3900
See Letters, page 26

Members of the public are invited to

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION

HYBRID PUBLIC INFORMATION
MEETING

State Project No. 0082-0317
Rehabilitation of the Middletown-Portland Railroad Bridge
over the Connecticut River in Middletown and Portland

Tuesday, August 4, 2026, 6:30 p.m.
Middletown High School
200 La Rosa Lane, Middletown, CT 06457

Attend & Learn More: portal.ct.gov/DOTMiddletown0082-0317

The purpose of this meeting is to provide the community with an opportunity to learn about the proposed project and allow an open discussion of any views and comments concerning the proposed improvements. A Question & Answer (Q&A) session will immediately follow the presentation.

This rehabilitation will increase the bridge’s load capacity and modernize its mechanical and electric systems to provide reliable operation. The rehabilitation will also address the replacement of the deteriorated fender system.

Right-of-way impacts are not anticipated.

Construction is anticipated to begin fall 2028 based on funding and permits. The estimated construction cost of the project is \$87 million. It is anticipated that the project will be funded through a combination of state and federal funds.

Members of the public can submit comments and questions during the two-week public comment period following the meeting. Direct comments and questions by Tuesday, August 18, 2026, to DOTProject0082-0317@ct.gov, 860-594-2020, or Nicholas Martin at Nicholas.Martin@ct.gov or 860-594-3609.

ACCESSIBILITY

Spanish translation services will be available in-person and virtually. The recording will also be posted following the meeting in CTDOT’s public meeting playlist at: portal.ct.gov/ctdotvpimarchive. Non-English closed captioning will be available on YouTube.

For audio only, call 877-853-5257 with Meeting ID 847 5269 7847. Project information can be mailed within one week by contacting Nicholas Martin at Nicholas.Martin@ct.gov or 860-594-3609.

Individuals with hearing/speech disabilities can dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). Request language assistance from CTDOT’s Language Assistance at 860-594-2109 at least five business days before meeting.

RE7-24-26

Editor’s Desk continued from page 4

tended the festival last year, organizers added – and noted they expect even more this year.

Like I said, the event sounds interesting, and fun too. For more information on it, visit www.iskconct.org.

July 24 is a pretty important day in American history. It’s a day when the country really started to put itself back together again.

On this date in 1866, Tennessee became the first Confederate state to be readmitted to the Union following the American Civil War. This event was significant as it marked a pivotal moment in the Reconstruction era, an effort to rebuild and reintegrate the Southern states after the war.

Tennessee’s readmission was contingent upon its ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, which granted citizenship and equal civil and legal rights to African Americans and former slaves. That happened the week before the state was readmitted, according to Politico.

It makes sense that Tennessee was the first state to rejoin the Union – since, according to Politico, it had been the last one to withdraw from the Union, after a statewide referendum on June 8, 1861.

Politico reported in a 2008 article that, angered by the withdrawal, Tennesseans from 26 eastern counties met twice in Greenville and Knoxville, eventually opting to secede from Tennessee and remain in the Union. The Legislature, however, denied their petition. It sent a 4,000-man force to suppress their bid to secede.

The battle didn’t end there though. During the Civil War, many East Tennesseans waged guerrilla warfare against the Southern cause by burning bridges, cutting telegraph wires and spying.

So it sounds like an awful lot of Tennesseans really, really, really didn’t want the Civil War. No wonder the state jumped at the chance to come back to the United States.

See you next week.



A Grand View... Tom and Chris Wilson of Portland took a cross-country trip to the Grand Canyon in May, stopping along the way on old Route 66.

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!



Center of the World... Vincent May and Brooke Vivero – Colchester residents, Bacon Academy alumni and Eastern Connecticut State University students – recently visited the Center of the World outside Quito, Ecuador – latitude 0.00.00 – and also at about 15,500 ft. above sea level at Cotopaxi Volcano, second highest active volcano in the world. Great memories!!!!



That's Amore... Barry and Donna Goodwill recently took a trip to Venice – and brought along the *Rivereast*!



The Paper at Peaks Island... Arnie Bishop recently spent the day on Peaks Island seeing the sights and having lunch while visiting family in Maine.

? 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!

To enter, email your photo and address to: bulletin@glcitizen.com

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Carl Guild & Associates Welcomes New Realtor

Carl Guild & Associates recently announced realtor Krystal Delorge of Lebanon has joined the brokerage.

Delorge’s passion for real estate began more than 20 years ago when purchasing her own home in Lebanon. Inspired by the exceptional experience she had with her real estate agent, she knew she wanted to help others achieve that same dream. Today, she is known for her honest approach, strong communication skills, and dedication to guiding buyers and sellers through one of life’s most important milestones.

Before launching her real estate career, Delorge spent more than 12 years as a pediatric dental assistant, where she built lasting relationships with local families and developed the patience, compassion, and attention to detail that continue to benefit her clients today.

“I chose Carl Guild & Associates because of the honest, caring culture and the people,” said Delorge. “The company’s values and vision for the future align closely with my own, and I’m excited to be part of a brokerage that truly puts both its clients and agents first.”

Broker and owner Carl Guild welcomed Krystal to the team, saying, “We’re excited to welcome Krystal to Carl Guild & Associates. Her dedication to her clients, genuine care for people, and strong community connections make her a wonderful addition to our brokerage. She shares our commitment to providing exceptional service, and I know she will con-



Krystal Delorge

tinue to make a positive impact on the buyers and sellers she serves.”

Outside of real estate, Krystal enjoys spending time with her husband, Rich; their daughters, Taylor and Ellie; and their three dogs, Charlee, Moose, and Olive. She also enjoys vacationing with family and friends, spending time at the lake and pool, and relaxing by playing guitar and singing.

For more information about Delorge or Carl Guild & Associates, visit www.CarlGuild.com or contact the brokerage at 860-813-2275.

Veteran Groups Form Memorial Committee

The veterans groups of Colchester have announced the establishment of the Colchester OIF/OEF Memorial Committee – and all are invited to attend the committee’s first official meeting on Thursday, Aug. 13, at 7:15 p.m. at 95 Norwich Ave., to learn more about this landmark project to honor local service members.

This initiative represents a unified effort between the Colchester VFW Post 6990, the Colchester American Legion Post 54, and the

Colchester Veterans Honor Guard. The committee’s mission is to oversee the site selection, architectural design, and fundraising for a permanent monument dedicated to the residents of Colchester who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

Interested residents are encouraged to attend the Aug. 13 meeting to learn more about the project and how they can contribute.

Absentee Ballots for Budget Referendum

Absentee ballots for the July 28 special budget referendum are now available, in the town clerk’s office. Absentee ballots will be available through Monday July 27.

Those interested in applying for a ballot must obtain an application in the town clerk’s office. You must be a current Colchester voter or own property valued at at least \$1,000 in Colchester at the time of the application.

After the town clerk’s office receives the completed application, you will be given an absentee ballot to fill out.

Deadlines for submitting the fully-filled-out ballot and enclosed envelopes: If delivered in person, the ballot must be delivered to the Town Clerk no later than the Monday before the refer-

endum, by 4:30 p.m.; if delivered in person by a family member, or qualified designee (such as a caregiver, family member, or police officer or registrar of voters), it must reach the town clerk’s office by the end of polls on Referendum Day; if put in the Election Drop box in front of Town Hall, it must be received by 8 p.m. on Referendum Day; and if delivered by mail it must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. on Referendum Day.

If you have any questions, call the town clerk’s office at 860-537-7215.

Steak Dinner at Polish Club

The St. Joseph’s Polish Society, at 395 South Main St., is hosting a steak dinner Saturday, Aug. 15.

Dinner will be served at 6 p.m. and includes steak, potato, veggie, and a roll. Matt will play music after dinner, from 7-10 p.m. Tickets are \$25 and must be purchased by Aug. 8.

Stop by the club during regular business hours to purchase your tickets.

Concert on the Town Green

The Parks & Recreation Department’s annual Summer Concert Series will wrap up Thursday, July 30, from 6-8 p.m., on the Town Green.

The Colchester Continentals Fife and Drum Corps will perform.

Guests are encouraged to arrive early to find a spot and enjoy dinner from food trucks.

For more information, see the Parks & Recreation event calendar at colchesterct.gov/recreation-department or call the office at 860-537-7297.

Bible Baptist Church News

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 at the church 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.

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 the church’s Facebook page.

National Night Out

The Town of Colchester invites residents of all ages to come together for an evening of community, family fun, and public safety at National Night Out, taking place Tuesday, Aug. 4, beginning at 6 p.m., at the Colchester RecPlex.

National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign designed to strengthen the partnership between law enforcement, first responders, local organizations, and residents while promoting neighborhood spirit and public safety.

The evening will feature activities for the entire family, including meet-and-greets with local police officers, and other public safety agencies, emergency vehicles and equipment on display, family-friendly games and activities, community organization and resource booths,

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.

Summer Tag Sale: Friday, July 31, 4-7 p.m. and Saturday, Aug. 1, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. All are invited.

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.

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:

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.

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: Knit-

ting Group meets Thursdays at 10 a.m. Many knitted, crocheted, and quilted items have been sent to Native American reservations, hospitals for babies, and other places to help those in need. The Blessings Box is at the end of the church parking lot and contains donations of non-perishable food, personal care, and other items for those in need. Take what you need; donate what you can. Also, the church sponsors the Wounded Warrior Project, a donation opportunity to help veterans.

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

Senior Center Upcoming Trips

Colchester Senior Center has the following upcoming trips. Trips are available to senior center members and their adult guests over the age of 18. Membership is free for Colchester residents aged 55 and older. There is an annual fee of \$15 for seniors residing outside of Colchester. For more information or full trip descriptions, or to register, call 860-537-3911 or email csc@colchesterct.gov.

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

Majestic Cities of Central & Eastern Europe: Oct. 4-17, departure time TBD. Enjoy multi-night stays, local tours, food and more in Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, and Krakow. The 14-day, 13-night trip includes airfare, hotels, and meals (12 breakfasts, one lunch, and six dinners). Contact senior center staff for availability and pricing.

Ocean City, Maryland: Oct. 13-16, depar-

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

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

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

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

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Former Finance Director’s Case Sent Back for Review

By Toriana Williams

A Superior Court judge has sent former Colchester Finance Director Mary Williamson's labor case back to the Connecticut State Board of Labor Relations, continuing the legal battle that has stretched on for around two years.

The latest ruling came after the labor board previously dismissed Williamson's complaint. Williamson appealed that decision, arguing the board never addressed the core claims in her case. The court has now sent the matter back to the labor board for additional review.

Following the court's decision, Fairness Center Managing Attorney Anthony Holtzman released a statement supporting Williamson's continued legal fight.

"Mary's case has always been about accountability," Holtzman said. "She alleges that after she raised serious questions about the use of public funds and other matters, town and union officials worked together to strip her of union protection when she needed it most. Mary plans to continue fighting to vindicate her rights and hold these officials accountable."

The ruling does not decide whether Williamson's claims are correct. Instead, it returns the case to the labor board to consider issues that Williamson argues were never fully addressed.

A Long-Running Dispute

Williamson's legal battle began after she was placed on paid administrative leave by First Selectman Bernie Dennler in December 2023 while the town investigated allegations involving financial procedures and purchasing practices.

One day before Williamson was placed on

leave, the town of Colchester and the Municipal Employees Union Independent signed a memorandum of understanding which stated that the finance director position was not part of the union bargaining unit.

Because of that agreement, Williamson was not represented by the union during the disciplinary process that ultimately led to her termination.

Williamson has argued that the town and union improperly removed her position from the bargaining unit after she raised concerns about the use of public funds and other issues during the previous administration. She has maintained that she was denied the union representation she should have received.

The town and union have consistently disputed those claims.

Complaint Initially Dismissed

The CT State Board of Labor Relations previously ruled that Williamson was a department head under the Municipal Employees Relations Act and therefore exempt from collective bargaining. Because of that finding, the board dismissed Williamson's complaint.

However, Williamson appealed the decision to the Superior Court. She is arguing that the labor board focused only on whether she was a department head and did not fully consider her claims that the town and union acted improperly.

Those claims allege the town and union improperly worked together to remove her position from the bargaining unit and then refused to represent her after she was placed on administrative leave.

The Superior Court has now agreed the matter should return to the labor board for further review.

Investigation Led to Termination

While the labor dispute was unfolding, the town conducted a separate investigation into Williamson's performance as a finance director.

The Board of Selectmen unanimously voted in April 2024 to fire Williamson after reviewing an independent investigation conducted by Malliet Human Resources Consulting.

The report concluded that Williamson failed to perform several important responsibilities included within the finance director position, including timely bank reconciliations and financial reporting.

Investigators also alleged she authorized around \$8,000 in additional compensation for herself without approval, received health insurance benefits without paying the required employee contribution and approved purchases that bypassed the town's normal purchasing procedures.

Williamson has denied any wrongdoing.

She previously said the vacation payout had been approved by former first selectman Andreas Bisbikos, that the fire department purchases had been authorized by the fire chief and that accounting issues predated her arrival in Colchester.

She also declined to participate in the town's investigation due to the pending labor proceedings.

Political Motivation Disputed

Williamson's case has also been tied to political tensions that existed during the previous town administration.

While serving as finance director, Williamson raised concerns involving spending by Town Clerk Gayle Furman. Those concerns led Bisbikos to request an investigation by the Connecticut Attorney General's Office.

Furman was ultimately cleared of any wrongdoing.

Williamson has since suggested that events surrounding those issues contributed to what followed. Dennler, however, has repeatedly rejected any suggestion that politics played a role

in the town's actions.

In his most recent statement on the case, Dennler said, "As first selectman, I strongly support the rights of employees to collectively bargain and the Municipal Employees Relations Act. In this case, the position of finance director clearly meets the criteria for exemption under MERA due to being part of management."

Dennler also disputed Williamson's central claim.

"The town strongly disagrees with any assertion that Ms. Williamson ever held a union position with the town of Colchester and denies all allegations she has made against the town," he said.

He added that the finance director position has always been treated as a management position.

"The position of town finance director is a department head that is exempt from collective bargaining under state law," said Dennler. "The job posting, job description and offer letter presented to and signed by Ms. Williamson under the last administration showed the position was non-union."

Dennler also pointed to the earlier labor board ruling and said, "The town, union and State Board of Labor Relations have each held the position as non-union."

Quoting directly from the labor board's earlier findings, Dennler added, "The 'Complainant' gave conflicting testimony regarding the extent of her duties and responsibilities. However, we did not find her testimony to be credible. In this case, we find it difficult to reconcile the Complainant's recitation of her duties and responsibilities with the record evidence that she was the town's highest ranking financial officer, including communications in which she identifies her as 'CFO.'"

Despite the Superior Court sending the case back to the labor board, Dennler remained confident in the town's position.

"I am confident that the underlying decision of the SBLR will be upheld," he said. "While the case is pending, we will not comment further. The case is covered by the town's insurance carrier and has no impact on our legal budget."

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 27: 9 a.m., Making Memories; no Exercise w/ Anne today; 9:30 a.m., Movie Time – Forrest Gump; no Sittercize today; 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Haircuts; 10:30 a.m., Healthy Foods Series; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 12:30 p.m., Mah Jongg, Bridge, Setback.

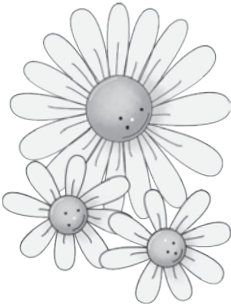
Tuesday, July 28: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10 a.m., Mixed Media Art –

Landscapes; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 4 p.m., Tech Time with Harry; 6 p.m., Journey with Joni.

Wednesday, July 29: 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 30: 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., Needlework Club; 1 p.m., Aromatherapy Workshop; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 6 p.m., Ping-Pong.

Friday, July 31: 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; 11:30 a.m., Lunch Bunch – Casa Martinaj; 1-3:30 p.m., Open Ping Pong; 1:15 p.m., Bingo.



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.

Chicken Barbecue at Polish Club

The St. Joseph's Polish Society at 395 South Main St. will be having a chicken barbecue Friday, Aug. 21, from 5-8 p.m.

Tickets are \$17 and include half a barbecued chicken, baked potato, corn on the cob, and salad. Dine-in and takeout are available. Mark Reichard will play from 6-9 p.m. Tickets must be purchased by Aug. 16.

Stop by the club during regular business hours to purchase your tickets.

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.

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REB-30-23

Colchester Apiary Buzzes with a Purpose

By Toriana Williams

Douglas Wolfram greeted the *Rivereast* as he sat down to talk about his new apiary and meadery, all with a smile that is impossible to ignore. He’s energetic, friendly and eager to share what he has learned. Within minutes of meeting him, it’s clear that he loves talking about bees, mead and the future he is building for his family.

Standing inside the new building that will soon house both Forest & Vale Apiary and Wolf Raven Meadery, Wolfram spoke of what he’s already put into the workshop and what the future holds for it as well: years of planning, countless hours of work and a dream finally taking shape.

“This is the definition of startup,” he said with a laugh. “It’s scary, but it’s exciting too.”

Just a few years ago, Wolfram worked as an auditor for the Connecticut Department of Labor. Before that, he spent years in the electrical industry. Sure, those jobs provided stability, but they weren’t where his heart was, said Wolfram.

“I’ve always wanted to own a business,” he said. “I just never had that original idea. I wanted something that meant something.”

That “something” eventually became bees, mead – and a community.

Wolfram left his state job after the birth of his daughter. While many parents face difficult childcare decisions, he and his wife made one that changed what their day-to-day life would like forever.

“I couldn’t give her away five days a week,” he said. “I just did not have that in me.”

Instead, he became a stay-at-home dad while investing his retirement savings into creating Forest & Vale Apiary and Wolf Raven Meadery.

“We’re burning that candle at both ends,” he admitted. “I’m liquidating my old retirement to build this business. That’s scary, but this is what we want.”

During the conversation, Wolfram made it clear that Forest & Vale Apiary wasn’t just another place to sell beehives. Wolfram shared that he has a much bigger vision.

“Our business plan actually says our apiary does not have a primary goal of generating revenue,” he explained. “It exists to help new beekeepers, existing beekeepers and businesses in our community.”

That idea surprises many people. Most businesses focus on growing sales. Wolfram wants to grow beekeepers.

“I really want knowledge to be free,” he said. “You need money to start beekeeping, and if you have the money, you still need the knowledge and experience.”

If readers are interested in contacting Wolfram, information can be found on the apiary’s website at [forestandvale.com](#).

Eager to Help

Wolfram knows exactly how overwhelming the beekeeping hobby can be because he experienced it himself. After years of research, Wolfram and his wife started their first hive in 2021.

“We did everything wrong,” he shared. “And it died.”

Instead of giving up, he learned from every mistake. “If you do 50 things wrong, you’ve learned 50 things not to do.”

The turning point came when local beekeepers began sharing information with one another. “That’s when we got good,” he said. “Pooling

Ahavath Achim Schedule

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

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

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

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

Troop 72 Recycling Project

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

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

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

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

all that knowledge – that was the missing key.”

Now he hopes to create that same support network across Connecticut.

“I want to find experienced beekeepers in every town around Colchester,” he said. “The more people I know, the more people I can help.”

Helping others is a theme that comes up again and again when speaking with Wolfram. He hopes customers buy their first hive from him, but he also wants them to succeed long after the sale.

“I’ll build the hive for free,” he said, pointing to a nearby Flow Hive that had been recently constructed. “I don’t charge for my time because right now I can do it, and it helps people.”

He also offers hands-on lessons. “Nothing beats hands-on experience.”

Forest & Vale is one of only three authorized Flow Hive resellers in the United States. The Australian-designed hive allows honey to be harvested directly from the hive without taking the entire colony apart.

Wolfram believes the technology removes one of the biggest barriers for beginners, and is one of the least minimally disruptive ways to keep bees. “It’s the best way to start,” he said. “You don’t need a garage full of extracting equipment. Everything happens right here.”

Still, Wolfram never insists people buy from him. “If someone wants to help pollinators and never harvest honey, that’s wonderful too,” he said. “We want to help anyone who wants to become a beekeeper.”

That attitude carries over into his future mead business.

Mead, which is made by fermenting honey with water, is considered the oldest alcoholic drink in the world. Although it dates back thousands of years, many Americans have never tasted it.

“Most people have no idea what mead is,” Wolfram said.

His own brand carries a special meaning. “My last name, Wolfram, means Wolf Raven,” he explained. “That’s where Wolf Raven Meadery comes from.”

Receiving his liquor permit recently marked a huge milestone for him. “I waited ten months for that permit,” he laughed. “You legally can’t start brewing until you have it.”

Wolfram also shared that he’s in no hurry to rush bottles onto store shelves. “I age my mead,” he said. “A lot of producers over-chemicalize their products to get them to market faster.”

Wolfram shook his head. “I won’t do that. Quality comes first.”

Because of that commitment, customers will have to wait. “The mead won’t be ready until next year,” he said. “I’d rather make something I’m proud of.”

His dream doesn’t stop there, either. “I want to make a mead that’s entirely Con-

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.

VBS at Bethlehem Lutheran

Vacation Bible School at Bethlehem Lutheran Church will be held Aug. 3-7, from 5-8 p.m. each night – including a special kids’ performance on Friday night. Children in kindergarten through fifth grade are welcome.

The theme this year is “Baobob Blast.” Crafts, music, games, and activities will be offered. Supper will be provided.

To register, see the form on Bethlehem Lutheran’s Facebook page, or call 860-267-4272.

Ladies Guild Offering Trip to See Joshua

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

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

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



Douglas Wolfram of Marlborough has recently opened a new apiary and meadery business in Colchester. His goal is to grow bees, beekeepers and a community that can gather to help one another succeed.

necticut,” he said enthusiastically. “Connecticut honey, Connecticut spring water. Everything local.”

‘I Like It Small’

Even though he hopes the mead becomes profitable, Wolfram isn’t chasing rapid growth. “I don’t want to be brewing a thousand gallons,” he said. “I like it small.”

His goals are refreshingly modest. “If we got one Renaissance fair contract, I’d be happy. I don’t need more than that,” he said.

That same thinking influences nearly every decision he makes. Solar panels are being installed so the property can operate almost entirely off the electrical grid. “I’ve always believed going green is just good business,” said Wolfram.

But for Wolfram, sustainability goes beyond saving money. Growing up in New England, he remembers frozen lakes every winter. But now, he hasn’t been seeing them as often.

“You shouldn’t be able to see climate change happen during your lifetime,” he said.

Bees also remind him of those changes every day.

“You can come home and see a couple hundred dead bees at the entrance,” he said. “That usually means they visited flowers covered with pesticides.”

Moments like that reinforce why he believes more people should become backyard beekeepers.

“If we lost honeybees, we lose a third of the world’s pollination,” he explained. “The world needs more beekeepers.”

Wolfram also believes businesses should support one another instead of competing whenever possible. His property borders Priam Vineyards, and he said he has no plans to open a

tasting room despite operating a meadery.

“I don’t want to distract from his business,” he said. “I’d rather ... help everyone succeed.” That cooperative mindset guided every conversation.

Perhaps the strongest lesson Wolfram shared has nothing to do with bees or mead at all. It’s about honesty.

A lifelong Scout and leader, he believes truthfulness is one of the greatest strengths a person can have. “I don’t lie,” he said simply. Then he smiled. “That’s a superpower,” he said.

He explained that if people always tell the truth, they never have to remember stories or cover their tracks. “No one can ever call you out,” he said. “Those morals and ethics define my life.”

As the afternoon wound down, Wolfram left his unfinished building. Construction materials were stacked nearby and brewing equipment waited to be installed. He walked towards the five hives he has on his property, with all the little bees quickly buzzing about.

There is still plenty of work ahead. The mead still needs time to age. More colonies need to grow. Solar panels still need to be connected and customers are only beginning to discover his apiary. Yet, Wolfram never seemed discouraged.

Instead, he talked excitedly about future classes, helping first-time beekeepers, connecting local businesses and watching his daughter grow up alongside the family business. His enthusiasm is contagious.

Wolfram said that success isn’t measured by bottles sold or hives built. It’s measured in stronger bee colonies, healthier communities and neighbors helping neighbors.

“We want our business to succeed when we’re helping the environment and when we’re helping the community,” said Wolfram.

Zumba Classes

Colchester Parks and Recreation is offering a pair of Zumba classes on Sundays in August at the Colchester Senior Center, 15 Louis Lane.

Zumba + Lift is a music-driven fitness program that alternates high-energy Zumba dance cardio with dedicated strength training intervals. It uses 5–15+ pound dumbbells or resistance bands to build muscle and improve stability, but you never dance while holding the heavier weights.

The class will meet Sundays from 11 a.m.-noon, Aug. 9, 16, 23 and 30. Fee is \$46/resident, \$51/non-resident, or a \$12 drop-in fee per person per week. Minimum number of participants needed is five, and maximum is 20.

Veterans Honor Guard Seeks New Members

The Colchester Veterans Honor Guard is actively looking for veterans to become members.

When a veteran dies, the family can request military honors by providing evidence of military service to the funeral home. Military funeral honors have been a tradition in the United States military since its earliest days. In Connecticut, the honors are provided by the Connecticut National Guard and local volunteer veteran organizations – including the Colchester Veterans Honor Guard (CVHG).

The CVHG was established in 2004. Last year, members participated in more than 230 ceremonies.

The 20-member unit is welcoming new veterans to become members. Some members are ag-

ing and are no longer able to actively participate in ceremonies, and CHVG is looking for new veterans to replace them so it can continue to provide funeral honors to all deceased veterans. Each member usually participates in several funerals each month.

The CVHG meets the first and third Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. in the Veterans Room of the old Senior Center at 95 Norwich Avenue. If you are a veteran that can give a few hours a week, you are invited to stop by a meeting to learn what is involved. Compensation is provided for expenses.

Contact Al Letendre at 860-537-6516 or letendrej@sbcglobal.net for more information.

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Portland Talks Charter Revision

By Anne Lilburn

It's been more than two decades since the town last updated its charter – but that may be changing.

At Portland's most recent Board of Selectmen meeting on July 15, the town took important steps on its way to revising the charter.

Town attorney Kari Olson described the state's charter revision statutes as "very complex," before walking the board through a simplified overview of the state's municipal charter revision process.

In order to initiate the revision process and form a charter revision commission, she said, there must be a two-thirds vote of the entire Board of Selectmen or a petition signed by not less than 10% of the electorate. Given that the entire board seems to be on board for a revision, the process will likely start with a Board of Selectmen vote.

Once the town decides to form a charter revision commission, the board has 30 days to appoint members to the commission, Olson

said, which must consist of 5-15 people who are qualified to vote in the town. No more than one third of those members are allowed to hold any other public office in town and a minority representation rule requires that commission not have more than a "bare majority" from the same political party. The selectmen then have the opportunity to give the newly formed commission a charge, meaning they can name areas that they would like the commission to focus on. With that said, once they are at work, the commission would be able to focus on any areas they choose.

The appointed commission would work to propose a draft revision, which the Board of Selectmen could vote to approve or modify. State law stipulates requirements for public hearings to keep the public informed, and requires that any eventual final changes be approved at a referendum vote.

There are various specific timelines for different steps along the way in the process, but the commission must finish its work within

15 months of being formed (16 months of the Board of Selectmen first voting to start the process).

Olson described the process as, "designed to encourage participation from the community and comments from the board of selectmen as well." She recommended that the board come up with a list of people who might be good to have on the commission and areas of the charter that they know need revision.

"I know it's complicated, the timeline is confusing, it's a step-by-step process and I share your pain," said Olson, "but I agree with all of you that the charter is old and could use some updating, if for no other reason than changes in the law that have occurred over many years."

First Selectman Mike Pelton, a Republican, also pointed out that, given that 22 years had passed since the charter had last been revised, there had been a lot of changes involving technology.

November 2027, he said, the town has ten years to replace all lead water lines, and must also work with homeowners to ensure that portions of the service lines that are owned by them are also replaced. Morocco said the lead water line replacement was bound to be a big task, with the inventory of properties covering homes or structures built before 1988.

Morocco also provided an update on water pressure issues in the Paley Farm area. What they determined, he said, was that an interconnection valve that allows the town to receive water from MDC was opening too fast. They worked with MDC to slow down that valve from a three-second-long close time to a 30-second-long close time, and now pressure is more consistent, he said.

Morocco also asked the board to allow him to explore renting a bucket truck for town employees to use for tree trimming, in lieu of hiring an outside company, thus saving on costs. He said that there were town employees who were certified for such work.

Towards the end of the meeting, selectman Vinnie Pitruzzello raised the issue of Main Street's appearance and the strain that it puts on local businesses. He asked what could be done to counter the blight from some properties. The town's blight ordinance currently requires a neighbor to report violations, but many on the board said they would like to consider allowing anonymous reports, and also allowing a town official to issue a citation if they are driving by and see a blight situation.

The Board of Selectmen meets next for a regularly-scheduled meeting on Aug. 5.

Fall Soccer Registration Open

Portland Soccer Club has announced fall 2026 registration for the Rec Season is open.

Players will be grouped according to birthdays on or after Aug. 1 of each year with kids born up to July 31 of the following year. When you log in at clubs.bluesombrero.com/portland-soccerclub, the registration system will ask for your player's information, including birthdate.

Register by Monday, Sept. 7. Cost is \$75. Late registrations are subject to a late fee. Each Dribbler and Kicker player will receive a team jersey. Each Pre-K player will receive a jersey and a size-3 ball. The season is from September to October. All games are Saturday mornings at the Portland Recreational Complex. Kickers have

an additional practice on Wednesdays.

Players will be groups by birthdate: U4: 8/1/2022 to 7/31/2023 (PreK); U5: 8/1/2021 to 7/31/2022 (Dribblers); U6: 8/1/2020 to 7/31/2021 (Dribblers); U7: 8/1/2019 to 7/31/2020 (Kickers); U8: 8/1/2018 to 7/31/2019 (Kickers).

Financial assistance is available on a limited basis.

For additional questions, contact Chad Wilson (president) at nosliw.dahc@gmail.com; Chris Donahue (recreational director) at Donahuecj@sbcglobal.net; or Jeffrey LaBonte (assisting with registrations) at 714jrl@gmail.com.

Senior Center News & Notes

The Waverly Senior Center, 7 Waverly Avenue, announces the following. **Registration is required for all programs** unless noted; for more information or to register, call 860-342-6761. Senior center hours are Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Friday, 9 a.m. to noon. Visit www.portlandct.org/senior-services for more information, including a calendar of events.

Mobile Food Pantry: The Food Share Mobile Pantry comes to the Food Bank every other Monday. The next date is July 27.

Weekly Programs: **Monday, 7/27: Light Aerobics,** 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, 7/28: Bears on a Journey, 9:30-11 a.m. – help make fleece teddy bears for cancer patients. Also, donations of light fleece (one yard or more) are sought for making teddy bears for cancer patients throughout Connecticut. To donate, call 860-342-0809; **Congregate Meal,** noon – \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: sliced turkey with gravy, green beans, stuffing, cranberry, string cheese; **Coupons for Troops,** 1-4 p.m.; **Setback,** 1 p.m.; **SyncoCize II,** 5-6 p.m., fee is donation to instructor.

Wednesday, 7/29: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; **Chair Yoga with Gia,** 10:30-11:15 p.m., fee is a \$5 donation to instructor.

Thursday, 7/30: Stretch & Tone, 9:30 a.m.; **Knit & Stitch,** 10 a.m.; **Congregate Meal,** noon – \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: chicken parmesan, spaghetti with sauce, dinner roll and butter, peas and carrots, orange cup; **Mah Jongg,** 12:30 p.m.; **Scrabble,** 1 p.m.

Friday, 7/24: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; **Chair Yoga with Gia,** 10:30 – 11:15 a.m., fee is a \$5 donation to instructor.

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

Monday, July 27: Monthly technology workshop, 11 a.m. This month's program will be an introductory session for the new Portland Se-

nior Center Digital Legacy Project. Explore ways to share your memories and pastimes through written reflections and/or digital storytelling. Create a collection of your history and heritage to share with family and friends.

Monday, July 27 & Tuesday, July 28: Elder Classes at Camp Bethel. Registration is closed for this event.

Wednesday, July 29: Slipaway River Tour, 1:15 p.m. Bring binoculars and a camera for nature viewing on this one-hour narrated tour on the Connecticut River. There is a \$7 trip fee and a \$5 ride fee. Leave the center at 1:15 p.m.

Monday, Aug. 3: Health Education Presentation by Chatham Health District, 10:45-11:15 a.m. Come learn about the importance of hydration. Blood pressure checks will also be given, and diabetic-friendly recipes given out.

Monday, Aug. 10: Bloom Therapeutic Plant & Nature Program and Celebration of Mint Workshop, 1 p.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 12: Lunch at Sadler's Restaurant in Marlborough. Pay for own lunch. Bus leaves the senior center at 11:30 a.m. \$5 ride fee.

Thursday, Aug. 13: Sweet Treats and Conversation with Community Leaders, 1 p.m. Come to the center for a sweet treat and chat with leaders of the Portland community.

Wednesday, Aug. 19: Walking Club, 9 a.m. Meet at the intersection of Breezy Corners and the Air Line Trail.

Medical Rides: The center offers ADA-accessible transportation for seniors to medical rides. The fee is \$5/person, round trip. Please give a two-week notice.

Foot Care: The center is taking appointments for a Foot Clinic with Stacey Cormier, RN; services starting at \$35. Call to register and for more information.

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

Hair by Jessica: By appointment only. Call Jessica at 860-751-9215.

Absentee Ballots for August Primary

Absentee ballots are now available 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.

Parks and Rec. News & Notes

Portland Parks and Recreation offers various programs for adults and children. For a complete list, full course descriptions and costs, or to register, visit portland.recdesk.com or call 860-342-6757. Advanced registration is required.

Fun Runs: Thursdays, July 30 and Aug. 6, starting at 6 p.m., at the Portland Recreational Complex. Open to runners of all ages, this is a free event.

Summer Concert Series: Tuesday through Aug. 11, at 6:30 p.m., at Riverfront Park. Schedule: July 28: Kings of Karma; Aug. 4: Don't Tell Lisa; Aug. 11: Wicked Peach.

Inspire Girls Basketball Camps: Monday-Friday, Aug. 3-7, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., at Gildersleeve School. Cost is \$20.

Summer Quest: Kiddie Camp is open to chil-

dren ages 3.5 to entering Pre-K or Kindergarten, Base Camp is open to children entering grades 1-6 and Teen Camp is open to children entering grades 7-9. Contact Parks and Rec. to register.

Kids' Blast: This is an afterschool (3-6 p.m.) childcare program available to students enrolled in grades K-6 in the Portland Public School System. Membership registration is open for the 2026-27 school year.

Tai Chi for Long Life: Wednesdays, 9:30-10:15 a.m., or Saturdays, 10:30-11:15 a.m., at Riverfront Park.

Bench and Tree Donation Program: Parks and Recreation is accepting donations for benches and trees at the Portland Recreational Complex. If you're interested in dedicating a bench or tree, call Andy for more information at 860-342-6757.

Reception for Flag Exhibit

A reception for the "We the People" flag collages exhibit by John Bula will be held at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave., on Saturday, July 25, at 1 p.m.

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.

The show runs through Aug. 10.



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Multi-Sport Highlander Headed to Vermont

By Josh Howard

After excelling on the fields and tracks in high school, 2026 Portland High School graduate Cristina Austin will continue to compete in two sports at the next level.

Austin is headed to Saint Michael's College to join the Purple Knights' soccer and running programs in Colchester, Vermont.

"I couldn't imagine doing one without the other," noted Austin, who has balanced both sports since middle school.

Competing in multiple sports has now become second nature to Austin, who would sometimes have a track meet during the day before playing a soccer game later that day.

During her time playing soccer at PHS, Austin was a four-year starter and this past season was a team captain that earned All-Shoreline Conference (SLC) first-team honors, marking the second year in a row she was selected all-conference.

PHS soccer head coach Cory Tobler called her a "true leader that everyone looked up to."

"We are going to miss her goal scoring ability for us. She was a player that could create for others or if she needed to could create goal scoring opportunities for herself," stated Tobler, who added that Austin's dedication to both sports was evident. "Her hard work during the season and the offseason allowed her to excel in both. We are going to miss her, but I know she is going to have a great career at Saint Michael's in soccer and track and field."

Austin also played club soccer in the offseason for Sporting CT where she helped her team reach the national semifinals in 2025 after scoring four goals and dishing out two assists during the tournament.

Her resume on the track was even more impressive where she holds four program records. During her junior year, she broke the 400-meter record during outdoor season, posting a blistering time of 60.71 at the Marty Roberts Invitational. The previous mark has stood for 45 years and Austin called the record-breaking moment an "amazing experience."

She also holds the 200-meter record and is part of a pair of relay records (4x400 and 4x800) with the Highlanders.

Austin noted that her first athletic interest was soccer, which she started playing for the town before her father was one of her travel coaches. On the field, she would use her speed to her advantage and in middle school she decided to translate that quickness to the track.

"I found a second passion," noted Austin, who joined the track and field team in the seventh grade. "Everyone would tell me to pick between the two but I never did. I fell in love with doing both."

Austin added that each of the sports supports the other, with soccer providing the proper conditioning and strength needed to be a good sprinter and track allowing her to be more explosive on the soccer fields.

Outside of athletics, Austin was part of National Honor Society, Key Club, and was the editor of the school's yearbook.

She credited time management with allowing her to juggle the hectic schedule between athletics and academics, adding that the support from her hometown is what she will miss the most about Portland.



Cristina Austin, a 2026 graduate of Portland High School, will play soccer at Saint Michael's College.



Austin, a record holder on the track, will also join the Purple Knights track and field team in Vermont.

"I've had such a good support system," noted Austin. "It's sad to be leaving this community, but I'm excited to go somewhere else and create another small community."

At Saint Michael's, Austin will be joining a pair of Division II programs that compete in the Northeast 10 (NE10) Conference.

The Purple Knights soccer squad is coming off a 16-3-1 campaign last fall and a trip to the NE10 semifinals during their 13th season under head coach Wendy Elles.

On the track, Austin will be coached by Molly Peters. Peters is entering her 21st season coaching athletics at the Saint Michael's and is one of the founders of the track and field programs at the college.

Along with competing year-round at the college in the Green Mountain State, Austin will major in health sciences.

She noted that one of the draws to the college was that it has a similar "tight-knit" feel that Portland has provided her entire life.

"I'm excited to see where this journey takes me," she stated.

Nominations for Sprit of Portland Award

Nominations are being accepted for the 16th annual Ralph Paley Spirit of Portland Award.

The award was initiated to honor Portland's unsung heroes. It was developed to show gratitude for that giving spirit in the Portland community, and in honor of Ralph Paley, who organizers say gave so much of himself to the town.

The deadline for nominations is noon Tuesday, Sept. 1. Pick up and drop off the nomination form at the Waverly Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave.

Crafters, Vendors Wanted

Crafters and vendors are wanted for two events coming up this fall at Trinity Church, 345 Main St. Space is available for \$20 for each event.

The first event is a Fall Craft and Vendor show on Sept. 19, with spaces located on the field next to the church. The second event is a Holiday Craft and Vendor Show on Nov. 21, which will be held inside the church.

Space is limited for both events. For additional information and a registration form, email carol.hill@comcast.net.



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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., via Zoom.

Lasagna Dinner: Saturday, Aug. 15, 4 p.m. Offering a take-out meal of homemade meat or vegetable lasagna, salad, roll, and choice of desserts. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Andover Food Bank.

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.

Gilead Congregational Church News

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

Worship – Summer Hours 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 service will include a July Youth Birthday Celebration.

This Week’s Scheduled Events and Meetings: Saturday, 7/25: Wise Warrior Yoga, 9:30 a.m., Garden (weather dependent); Saturday, 7/25: Richard Goulart Memorial Service and Reception, 10 a.m., Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall; Monday, 7/27: Bible Study via Zoom, 9:30 a.m.; Tuesday, 7/28: AA Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall; Wednesday, 7/29: Wise Warrior Yoga, 9:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall or Garden (weather dependent); Wednesday, 7/29: Book Group, 10:45 a.m., Fellowship Hall.

Upcoming Events and General Announcements: Card-Making with Gayle: Sunday, July

26, 11 a.m., in the Fellowship Hall classroom. Create seasonal cards for \$15, with a portion of proceeds benefitting the Connecticut Food Bank.

Summer Potluck and Prayer Gathering: Wednesday, Aug. 12, 6 p.m. All are invited to this evening of food, fellowship and prayer. Bring a sweet or savory cookout dish to share.

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.

Polling Location for Primary

The polling location for the Democratic primary for governor will be in the small gymnasium/cafeteria at the Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St. Primary Day will be Tuesday, Aug. 11. Polls will be open from 6 a.m.-8 p.m.

Christ Lutheran Church News and Notes

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

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

Bible Studies: Sundays at 10:30 a.m., following service and fellowship time. All are welcome. Also, there is a once-a-month Men’s Bible Study, which will next meet Wednesday, Aug. 5, at 7 p.m. The current series is: “Seven Christian Rules Christians Should Break as

Often as Possible.” **Early Childhood Center (Daycare):** Offers childcare, preschool, and before/after school care, and is open to all faiths. For more information, call director Jennifer Johnson at 860-228-5134. Application forms are at www.clecchebron.org.

Caring Shepherds Social Ministry Group: There are open food pantry days held to distribute food staples, household and hygiene items as well as Bibles and prayers. For more information about donating or participating in food pantry days, call 860-228-1152.

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 24, *Glory* (rated R) will be shown. Free popcorn and water will be served.

3D Printer Class: Mondays, 5:30 p.m. Register to learn how to use our new Bambu printers every Monday evening. All ages and experience levels welcome, but children under 12 must be accompanied by a parent. Register on the library website or by calling the library.

Knit Wits: Mondays, 6 p.m. Bring your knitting or crochet project and join our informal group of fellow stitchers.

Mahjong Group: Tuesdays, 11 a.m. Stop in and play Mahjong no matter what your skill level is.

Chess Club: Thursdays, 4 p.m. The Chess Club welcomes players of all ages and skill levels to drop in and play a game or improve their skills.

Summer Reading: Each time you check out an item you will receive a ticket to enter the raffle. Summer Reading will end Aug. 1.

Teens: Dungeons & Dragons Campaign: Wednesdays, 5:45-7:45 p.m. All are invited to the weekly D&D campaign. For ages 10 and up; registration requested.



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Senior Center News & Notes

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

Blood Pressure Clinic with Chatham Health: Monday, July 27, 11:30 a.m. Public Health Nurse Vicki Han, RN, from Chatham Health, will offer free blood pressure screenings and educating you on how to monitor it at home and how to reduce your risks for heart attacks and strokes. No registration required.

Educational Presentation with Chatham Health – Gut Health: Monday, July 27, 12:15 p.m. Join Chatham Health's Stephanie Reyes for an informative presentation on gut health and

receive a diabetic friendly recipe. This is a free presentation.

Weekly Shopping Trips: Trips are now Thursdays at 8:15 a.m. Pre-registration is required by noon the day before. Call 860-228-1700 to register. Schedule: July 30, Walmart.

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

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

Mondays: Massage, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Enhance Fitness via Zoom with Paul Smith, 9-10 a.m.

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

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

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

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

Absentee Ballots, Early Voting for Primaries

Republican and Democratic primaries are Aug. 11 – and absentee ballots are now available, and early voting is coming up.

Absentee ballots are available at the town clerk's office, located at 15 Gilead St. Office hours are Monday through Wednesday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Thursday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.; and Friday, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. For information, call 860-228-5971.

Also, Early Voting will begin Aug. 3. All Early Voting will take place in the lower meeting

room of the Town Office Building, 15 Gilead St. Hours are:

Monday, Aug. 3: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Tuesday, Aug. 4, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.; Wednesday, Aug. 5, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Thursday, Aug. 6, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.; and Friday, Aug. 7, Saturday, Aug. 8, and Sunday, Aug. 9, 10:00 a.m.-6 p.m. all three days.

Primary Day is Tuesday, Aug. 11. Polls will be open from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St.

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. Upcoming: Thursday, Aug. 6.

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: Aug. 7.

August Luncheon: Sunday, Aug. 2, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. 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 in Pan-Mass Challenge

Three local residents will be among more than 6,000 cyclists taking part in the Pan-Mass Challenge (PMC) Aug. 1-2 to raise money for cancer research and patient care at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

Hebron residents Sara Tarca and Liam Bane, and Amston resident Daniel Foley, are all participating in the two-day bike-a-thon across Massachusetts.

For the 20th consecutive year, 100 percent of every rider-raised dollar at the PMC will go directly to Dana-Farber, one of the nation's top three hospitals for cancer research and care. For more information, visit www.pmc.org.

Hebron Summer Concert Series

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 31: Bonnie Jacobson and Friends – local, veteran musician who performs regularly with acoustic originals; Aug. 14: One Part Harmony – a local duo playing folk, country and rock music.

Follow on Facebook at facebook.com/towncenterprojectinc for current updates, or at www.thetowncenterproject.org for more information on TTCP.

Enrollment Session Before Primary

With the state primary coming up Tuesday, Aug. 11, the Hebron Democratic registrar of voters will hold an enrollment session Tuesday, July 28, from noon-2 p.m., at Town Hall.

The registrar will at this time hear requests by people removed for adding their names to the registry list.

Celebrating 10 Years of PerSNIPity Salon!



This year marks an incredible milestone as PerSNIPity Salon proudly celebrates 10 years of serving the Hebron community. What began as a dream has grown into something truly special because of the amazing people who have been part of our journey.

To our incredible staff, thank you for your passion, dedication, talent, and the care you show every client who walks through our doors. You are the heart of PerSNIPity.

Most importantly, to our loyal customers, thank you for your trust, support, friendships, and for choosing us over the past decade. Your encouragement has made this journey possible, and we are deeply grateful for each and every one of you.

Here's to celebrating the past 10 years and looking forward to many more years of creating more good hair days together!

With heartfelt gratitude,
The PerSNIPity Salon Family

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Penne Alla Vodka Asparagus, sun dried tomatoes in a vodka blush sauce

SOUP OR SALAD Cup of soup of the day or garden salad

DINNER CHOICES
Chicken Parmigiana
Eggplant Rollatini Rolled eggplant stuffed with ricotta, prosciutto and roasted peppers
Chicken Marsala Sauteed with mushrooms, shallots in a marsala wine sauce

Stuffed Pork Chop Stuffed with broccoli, gorgonzola cheese and ritz crackers in a brown cognac sauce

Stuffed Sole Crab meat stuffing served over spinach

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

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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.

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.

Statutes. Initial interest starting Sept. 2 is 3% of the principle due, with a minimum of \$2 per tax account.

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.



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A black paw print icon.

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By Toriana Williams

Residents Push for Communication

He also warned that the public's dissatisfac-

Pay by cash or check when you pick up your dinner at the Legion in the back parking lot drive through.

“What can we do to get more commercial business in town, and what can we as individuals do to assist in that process?” he asked.

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 collection box next to the CHF Cry Room or the designated bin in the STC entryway. Contact Monica (860-228-4211) for more information.

Town Manager Search Moving Forward

Budget Challenges Remain

Department Reviews to Improve Transparency

The council discussed a policy that was recently suggested, which centers on creating reg-

America 250 Continues

Wells, Public Hearings and Grants

Members then authorized the town to apply for and accept a \$500,000 grant from the CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection to help purchase new fire apparatus and equipment. A special town meeting will be held on Aug. 11 for residents to consider accepting the grant.

Discovery Zone learning Center



45 Pendleton Dr. Hebron 860-228-3952	152 Hebron Rd. Marlborough 860-295-8003	2 Orlando Dr. Columbia 860-228-8885
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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 Elemen-

tary School main gym. Participants are required to register/pay online and check in with staff upon arrival. Runs through the end of August.

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.

Dean’s List

Ben Cancellaro of Hebron made the spring 2026 Dean’s List at Tufts University in Medford, Mass.

Cancellaro is a member of the Class of 2027.

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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.

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.sjprii.org.

Painted Ships on Painted Oceans

All are invited to a presentation entitled Painted Shops on Painted Oceans, on Saturday, July 25, at 6 p.m., at Middle Haddam Public Library, 2 Knowles Rd., Middle Haddam.

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.

For more information, call the library at 860-267-9093.

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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/bell-ringer 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.

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.

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.belltownantiquecarclub.org, call Peter Christianson at 860-510-3340 or email belltowncarclub@gmail.com.

Potluck and Organ Concert

Haddam Neck Congregational Church, located at 408 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck, will host a potluck picnic Sunday, Aug. 9, followed by a Broadway Showtune show on the church’s Ahlborn-Galante organ.

The picnic starts at 2 p.m., followed by the concert at 4 p.m. with organist Bob Carangelo accompanied by vocalist Tim Throckmorton, both of Middle Haddam. Bring a side dish to share. Singing along is encouraged!

For more information, call 860-993-5311 or email mapionzio@comcast.net.

Dean’s List

East Hampton residents Austin Bigelow, Nathan Bigelow and Annin Daley made the spring 2026 Dean’s List at Vermont State University in Randolph Center, Vt.

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 friendsofehpl@gmail.com.

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Cats: clean & feed;
socialization; medical & placement teams

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www.poainc.org

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.

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Budgets Back to Referendum on Aug. 5

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton residents will vote again at a budget referendum on Aug. 5 after rejecting both the town and education budgets in two past referendum votes.

The Board of Finance on Monday took steps to cut the education budget by an additional \$350,000 (a total of \$600,000 lost from the district’s original proposed budget) and the town’s general government budget by \$340,949.

Residents will now vote on an education budget totaling \$39,550,937, a 2.03% increase over last year’s \$38,762,951 budget, and a town general budget totaling \$19,358,960, which is a 2.21% reduction from last year’s \$19,796,780 general town budget. The overall combined budget comes in at \$58,909,897, a 0.6% increase over the previous year, at a time when inflation is measuring 3.5% for the 12 months ending in June, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. This new proposed budget would result in a mill rate of 27.82 mills.

At the Board of Finance’s meeting, residents expressed their sadness, anger and frustration

over the loss of valued education programs, like the Smart Start preschool and middle school sports. Democratic board members seemed frustrated yet resigned to needing to make cuts in order to achieve a passable budget.

Community members also spoke on behalf of the police department, volunteer fire department, ambulance association and senior center, arguing that cuts to these funding areas ran the risk of negatively affecting public safety in the town. From the police and fire chiefs, to the ambulance service chief of service, representatives showed up to make their cases heard.

On the town government side, board members debated different line items that could be cut before deciding on a few key items, such as sidewalk snow plowing and closing the town transfer station and entering into a contract with a private company to run an alternate private transfer station.

Those items would later come up at the Town Council meeting the following night, with Republican Tim Feegel worrying about plowing in

front the cemetery and Republican Ted Hintz growing upset about the fate of the transfer station. Democratic council member Joelyn Leon pointed out that residents had not spoken out vocally at meetings against these cuts.

The Smart Start preschool continued to be a large part of discussions at the town council meeting as well, with Superintendent of Schools Tim Van Tassel explaining its associated costs and the reasons why decisions about cuts had to be made now, with only a little over a month left before the start of the school year. When asked whether people would be left out of a job as a result of education cuts, he was careful in saying he didn’t know, noting that while positions were lost, some individuals may be able to move into roles that are currently vacant, even if they are not their original positions.

Eventually, the council voted to approve both proposed budgets that the Board of Finance sent its way, with the education budget passing unanimously and only Hintz voting against

the general town budget. The council voted to hold a town meeting on Wednesday, July 29 at 3:30 p.m., and to set the budget referendum for Wednesday, Aug. 5, between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. at Town Hall.

The town clerk’s office also put out a notice informing the public about absentee ballot information. Absentee ballots, they said, are currently available at the Town Clerk’s office, located at 1 Community Drive. Office hours are Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Tuesday 8 a.m.-6:30 p.m. and Friday 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

All registered voters and individual property owners with an assessment of not less than \$1,000 on the 2025 Grand List are eligible to obtain an absentee ballot for this referendum, they said, and because the referendum is being held with less than three weeks’ notice, state law only allows ballots to be picked up in person for this referendum.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

deliver tax bills that list only a street address without the corresponding P.O. Box number. To ensure timely delivery of your tax bills and other important correspondence, please verify that your mailing information is accurate and complete.

If you did not receive your tax bill, please contact the tax collector’s office by email at taxcollector@easthamptonct.gov to request a duplicate copy. You may also view and pay your bill online by visiting www.easthamptonct.gov and selecting “Pay My Bill.”

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.

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: Fresh From the Farmers Market: A Cookbook Club Event: Tuesday, Aug. 4, 6:30 p.m. Visit your local farmers market, farmstand, or your own garden and prepare a recipe featuring locally grown produce. Bring a prepared dish and 12 copies of the recipe; the library will provide plates and forks. Food should arrive ready to eat.

Tech Help: Thursday, Aug. 6, 2-4 p.m. Basic technology help for phones, tablets, and e-readers. No registration required; just bring your device with you.

Murder Mystery Party: “A Murder Most Curated”: Thursday, Aug. 6, 6:30 p.m. All are invited to come to the library after hours for an interactive mobster murder mystery. Guests will follow clues, question suspects, and vote on who they think the killer is before the mystery is revealed. Audience participation is encouraged, and guests are welcome to dress in 1920s-1930s Prohibition-era attire. Light refreshments will be served; adults only, registration required. Sponsored by Friends of the East Hampton Public Library.

Teen Programs: 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.

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.

Lunch Bunch Book Club: Grades 6-8: Wednesday, Aug. 5, 1-2 p.m. Students entering grades 6-8 are invited to our Lunch Bunch Book Club! Bring your lunch and the book you’re currently reading. Chat about books, play games, do crafts, and eat lunch together.

Teen TCG Club: Grades 8-12: Friday, Aug. 7, 1-3 p.m. Players of Magic: The Gathering, Pokemon, Yu-Gi-Oh!, and more are invited to join us for an afternoon of friendly competition. Magic: The Gathering decks will be available for new players to use.

Children’s Programs: 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.

Lego at the Library: Grades K-6: Tuesday, Aug. 4, 4:30-5:30 p.m. All are invited each month for a new challenge or theme for you to work on solo or as a team. All Lego bricks provided.

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.

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

East Hampton Farm Stand Crawl: Saturday, Aug. 15, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Support local farms at your own pace! Pick up a free Participating Farm list at East Hampton Recreation or East Hampton Public Library, or visit www.easthamptonrec.com.

Herbal Walk and Talk: Tuesday, Aug. 18, 6-7:30 p.m. All are invited to explore common herbs, learn about their traditional uses and take home a bundle of fresh herbs. Cost is \$25.

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 avail-

able for one-week East Hampton Recreation programs, including Farm to Table, Nature Explorer Camp, Camp Wildwood, Beach & Water Play (pre-K) and Summer Camp at Sears Park. Families interested in applying for a scholarship for any of these week-long programs should contact the East Hampton Recreation Department for application information and eligibility requirements.

Golf Tournament: Thursday, Sept. 3, at Blackledge Country Club in Hebron. The event will feature a 10 a.m. shotgun start. This is a four-person scramble format. Lunch/dinner and two drink tickets are included for every golfer. Not a golfer? Register just for dinner (\$50). Sponsorship options available as well. A highlight of this year’s tournament will be a Hole-in-One contest, where golfers will have a chance to win a 2026 Nissan Rogue SV. There will also be a raffle contest and prizes. The tournament benefits East Hampton Sears Park Play-ground equipment. Cost is \$145 per golfer.

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Volunteer Sought

The new East Hampton-based organization The Commissions on Aging in Connecticut (COACT) is looking for a volunteer with office computer skills to spend 4 to 8 hours per week helping to grow and administer the group.

The new organization is encouraging sharing of ideas, plans and best practices among town Commissions on Aging (COAs) and similar groups, in the hopes of improving the lives of older adults.

The volunteer would with outreach to expand COACT’s database of contact information for leaders of town COAs, and would also be a contact person for newly interested people. Other desirable help would be note-taking and distribution for monthly meetings, creation of flyers, and updating a calendar of task due dates.

If interested, contact organizer Eric Rosenberg, MD, at COAchair@EastHamptonCT.gov for more information.

Epoch Arts Accepting Tag Sale Donations

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

A small group of volunteers will sort, clean and price the donations. Items not accepted: recliners, couches, headboards, mattresses, bed frames, high chairs, cribs, car seats, computers, printers, keyboards, TVs, VCRs, exercise machines, textbooks, encyclopedias, old-style phones, large toys, doors, ironing boards, strollers, single chairs, paint and cleaners, file cabinets, office chairs, large dog beds, lighting that can’t be plugged in, medicine, animal diapers and fish tank pumps.

Drop-off times are 8 a.m.-2 p.m. on 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.

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.

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.

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.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church News

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

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

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

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.

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.

Men’s Group: The Men’s Breakfast Bible Study will meet Wednesday, Aug. 12, from 7-8 a.m. to share scripture around what the Bible says about being a man. There will be coffee, pastries and conversation

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

Labor Day Tag Sale: Save unwanted items in good condition for our Tag Sale. Contact Dick Napolitano at rnap1137@gmail.com for additional information.

Haddam Neck Fair Cookie Booth: Parish members are need to donate money to cover the cost of cookie dough and to work shifts at the fair on Labor Day weekend. Dawn Gingras can be reached at mgingras39@gmail.com if you have questions. Sign-up sheets are located in the back entry of the church.

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

Resident Graduates

Paul Pignatella of East Hampton recently graduated from the University of Tampa in Tampa, Fla.

Pignatella received a Bachelor of Science degree in biology.

Residents Graduate

East Hampton residents Nathan Bigelow and Annin Daley recently graduated from Vermont State University in Randolph Center, Vt.

Bigelow earned a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting, and Daley earned a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing.

Republicans Meet Next Week

All are invited to the next meeting of the East Hampton Republican Town Committee at The Dublin, 42 E. High St., at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 28. Attendees will learn about volunteer opportunities in the community.

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

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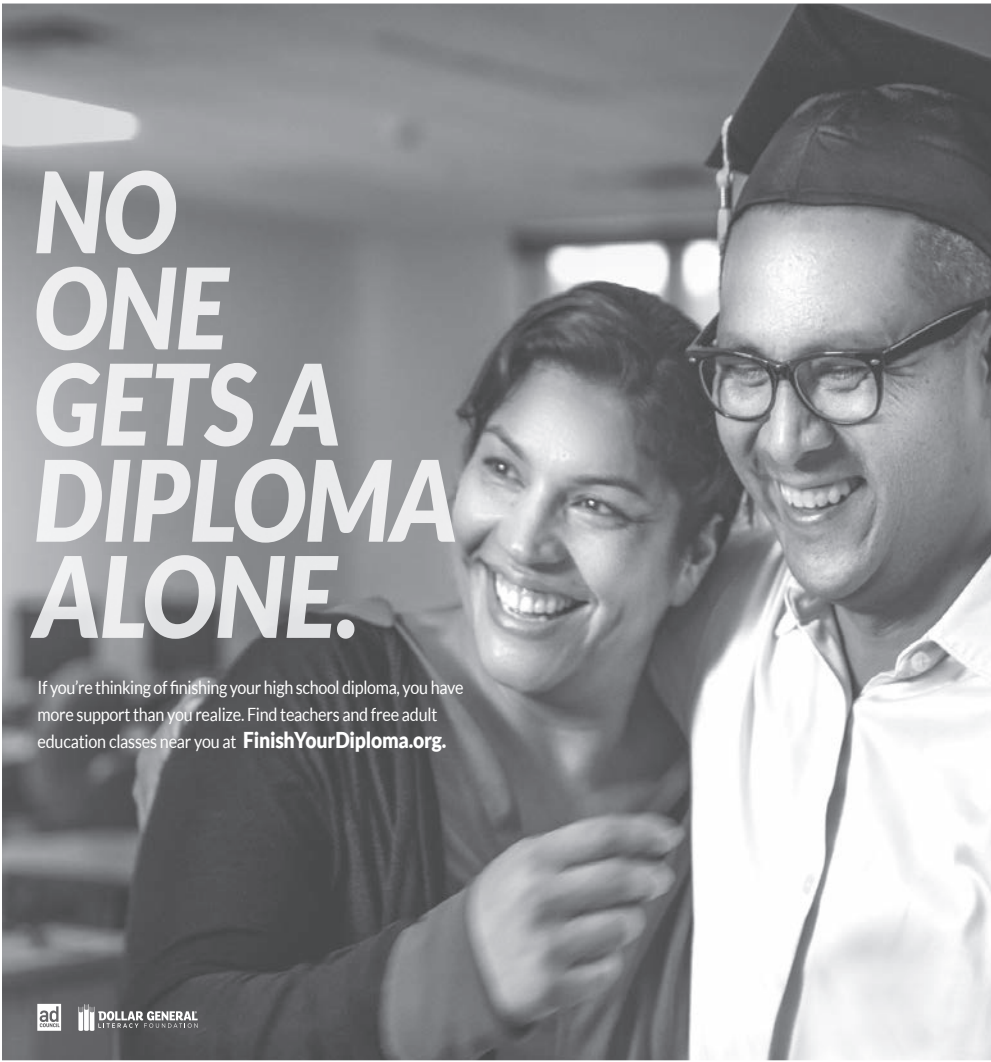
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Commission Celebrates a Healthy Lake Pocotopaug

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton's Conservation-Lake Commission wants residents to know that Lake Pocotopaug is doing well, but they also want residents to remember that keeping the lake healthy takes constant work.

"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," Lake Commission member Bob Hart wrote in an update. He said it had come a long way from the early days of the Conservation-Lake Commission, which he said began in 2006. Back then, he said, it wasn't uncommon to hear about the lake being closed to swimming due to algae levels and poor water quality.

These days, thanks in part due to work done by the commission, the lake is much improved. Hart spoke to the *Rivereast*, along with Commission Chair Jason Hartling. The commission, they said, had been tackling water quality challenges in the lake in three broad categories: watershed improvements that prevent high-nutrient runoff from entering the lake, in-lake treatments that enhance water quality directly

in the lake, and community education in which they help residents make smart choices about fertilizers, landscaping and development.

The lake's current aeration system has been operating since 2020, said Hartling, and consists of 56 aerator diffusers fed by two onshore air compressors via hoses run along the lake bottom. Those bubblers help mix water, particularly at deeper lake areas, in order to maintain oxygen levels and prevent anaerobic bacteria growth and benefit fish. Last year, they ran from April through early November.

The commission has also worked to provide in-lake chemical herbicide treatments, partially funded through state-level grants, that fight the growth of invasive hydrilla, a weed that has been growing in the lake. The commission also did a "substantial winter lake drawdown" this past year, according to Hart, which he said helped to expose the plant's roots to freezing conditions.

They have also approved another chemical treatment that will take place in the near future to reduce phosphorus levels in the water.

Hart and Hartling both said they were proud of the commission's Lake Smart program, which

encourages residents to consider their fertilizer use town-wide, not just in houses immediately surrounding the lake.

"The main concern is the fertilizer that people apply to lawns and the fact that there's a lot less pervious infiltration surfaces," said Hart. "There's more impervious surfaces with roofs and driveways and roads that have been built and that reduces the amount of land that was good for infiltrating the water and removing nutrients before the water seeps into the lake."

That runoff, he said, flowed directly from roofs and driveways and streets into tributaries and storm drains, leading directly into the lake. Nutrients from the fertilizers, he said, serve as food for the algae, which can produce toxic chemicals. While the commission members emphasized that they haven't seen that toxic scenario happen, they said it was "always a risk."

Both Hart and Hartling said they lived near the lake, and considered its health important to the community. With that said, they said that the way the watershed works, it's not only lake-

side residents who can make a difference.

"It's a testament to how important this this ecosystem is," said Hartling, "and how special it is, that even if you live on a random street in the town of East Hampton, you can have an impact in making this lake a little bit healthier every single day by the actions you take in your yard."

Hart and Hartling both said they've seen the bald eagles that have become some of East Hampton's most famous residents recently.

"We were just out there yesterday on the lake," said Hart, "and we looked and we saw one of the bald eagles land in one of the tall trees at the end of Spellman Point, and we got real close, and it's a stunningly magnificent bird. It's absolutely beautiful."

"That's an example of, as we as we continually improve the water quality here, we'll see nature return," said Hartling. "And my dream is that in four or five years, we're talking about how do we continue to increase the native species in the lake so that the lake begins healing itself."

Absentee Ballots for Primary

The Democratic primary for governor will be held Tuesday, Aug. 11, at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St. Early voting will occur Aug. 3-9, at Town Hall.

Absentee ballots are available at the Town Clerk's office, located at 1 Community Drive. Office hours are Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Tuesday, 8 a.m.-6:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Only Democratic registered voters are eligible to obtain an absentee ballot for this primary.

For more information, call 860 267-2519.

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.



Karen Piazza

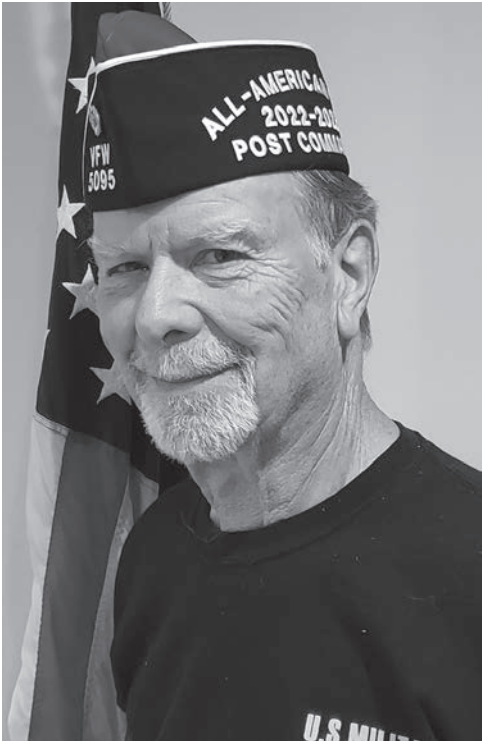
Portland Resident's Artwork at Library

Artwork by Portland Artist Karen Piazza will be featured through August at the Historic Middle Haddam Public Library

Piazza is a watercolor artist and potter. Her favorite subjects to paint are cafe and market scenes, representing her years living in France. She also creates functional pottery with a decorative flair, often texturing and hand-painting her pieces.

An artist reception will be held Friday, Aug. 7, from 4-6 p.m., with refreshments and time to chat with Piazza about her work.

For more information on Piazza, visit westerlyarts.com/karen-piazza.



All-American Post!... VFW Post 5095 has achieved 'All-American' Post status for the fourth consecutive year! This national distinction recognizes exceptional leadership and teamwork, authentic accomplishment in membership growth and VFW core programs. Pictured is post commander Ted Turner.

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.



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First Congregational Church News

All are welcome to First Congregational Church, 554 Main St., for worship each Sunday. Pastor is the Rev. Judith Meyers. This week's sermon title is "Treasure."

Sunday Worship: Worship starts at 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Hour to follow.

Sunday School: Sunday School for children ages K-8th grade is provided. This week, the topic is "God's Garden."

Year-Round Giving:

Neighbors in Need collects donations for the Portland Food Bank. Items needed are oatmeal packets, peanut butter, peanut butter crackers, canned proteins, individual snacks, and juice boxes.

For more information about church services or activities, go to firstchurchportlandct.org or call 860-342-3244.

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.

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.

Tennis Program for Adults

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

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

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

Police News

7/15: Michael Tomlin, 40, of Middletown, was arrested and charged with criminal violation of a civil protection order, East Hampton Police said.

7/15: Shanice Spivey, 27, of Portland, was arrested and charged with violation of a criminal protective order, police said.

7/17: Kevin Lombardi, 55, of East Hampton was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, second-degree threatening and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

From July 13-19, officers responded to 26 medical calls, five motor vehicle crashes and five alarms, and made 14 traffic stops, police said.

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★ Letters, cont. from page 10

The Cost of Standing Still

To the Editor:

Every budget season, community members disagree over the use of the term “cuts,” since most proposed budgets are technically increases from the previous fiscal year’s amounts. And despite this year being different in many ways from years past, what hasn’t changed is that these increases on paper are still tangible cuts to the programs and services offered to Colchester residents, students, and families community-wide.

The unfortunate reality is that while groceries, utilities, and healthcare cost more than ever, so does running a school district in 2026.

As a Colchester resident, taxpayer, and parent of children in our schools, I support voting ‘yes’ to the proposed BOE budget on July 28 because this budget is about preserving the quality of education our community has spent generations building – not expanding it.

Since the first referendum, the proposed Board of Education budget has already been reduced by an additional \$1.5 million, bringing the overall reductions to over \$2.8 million since February.

The town faces a similar scenario – with hundreds of thousands in cuts since earlier this year, the current proposed budget seeks to maintain public safety and staffing where-possible, while still making necessary cuts to town services based directly on voter feedback from the first referendum.

If these budgets fail again, the discussion is no longer about finding efficiencies. Those have already been found. The next round of reductions to the education budget will come from classrooms: fewer teachers, fewer educational opportunities, larger class sizes, and diminished support for students. And town reductions will come directly from town hall: fewer public services, fewer maintained spaces, and fewer public safety initiatives prioritized.

Reasonable people can disagree about taxes. I respect that. But we should make our decision based on what this vote actually represents. A ‘yes’ vote is not a vote for unnecessary spending. It is a vote to maintain the services and schools that attract families to Colchester, protect home values, and prepare our children for the future.

On Tuesday, July 28, I hope you’ll join me in voting ‘yes’ for our students, our schools, and our community’s future.

Stefanie Tracey-Calash – Colchester
Note: Tracey-Calash is chair of the Colchester Board of Education, but said she is speaking as an individual.

Taxpayers Deserve Better Answers

To the Editor:

The first referendum sent a clear message: taxpayers want answers. Yet as I watch the reaction of our town government to this budget crisis, I find myself disappointed. What is missing is a sense of urgency to listen to the taxpayers who have spoken clearly.

I attended meetings where the Board of Education discussed potential budget reductions. The conversation was both frustrating and predictable. The first programs put forward for cuts were the ones that tug at the community’s heartstrings – band, world language, and the arts. These programs are important, which is exactly why they were highlighted.

But then something interesting happened. After public pushback, many of those cuts suddenly became avoidable. Alternatives were found. That should raise an important question for every voter: if these programs were truly on the brink of elimination, how were other solutions found so quickly once the community spoke up?

To me, this demonstrates that there are still conversations to be had about spending priorities. Yet those conversations seem to never happen. Instead, taxpayers are once again being asked to approve a budget that many have already rejected.

It is also important to remember that this proposed budget still represents a significant increase over last year’s spending. The larger question is whether taxpayers can continue to absorb increases at this pace while having legitimate concerns about how funds are being allocated.

This is not a Republican issue or a Democratic issue. It is a taxpayer issue. Residents have asked for a harder look at spending and greater transparency regarding where their tax dollars are going.

Voters should also look beyond the mill rate discussion. While some may point to the mill rate and suggest the impact is less significant than it appears, state funding is helping offset part of the current situation. That may provide temporary relief, but it does not address the underlying spending trajectory. Temporary assistance should not be mistaken for long-term fiscal stability.

A ‘no’ vote is not a vote against our students, teachers, or schools. It is a vote for transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. The first referendum sent a message. It is time for our leaders to listen.

Taxpayers deserve better answers before they

are asked to pay more. I encourage voters to hold the line and vote ‘no’ on July 28.

Olivia Duksa – Colchester
Note: Duksa is chair of the Colchester Republican Town Committee, but said she is writing as an individual.

Don’t Forget to Vote

Ton the Editor:

As taxpayers, we are at a critical crossroads.

If you look at the dollar increase page of the adopted FY 2026–27 Budget, you will notice a troubling trend. Since 2012, Colchester has not experienced the level of spending increases we have seen over the last three budget cycles.

History reminds us that citizens have long objected to taxation without accountability. In the years leading up to the American Revolution, the British imposed taxes through measures such as the Sugar Act, Stamp Act, Townshend Acts, and Tea Act. While today’s circumstances are very different, the common principle is that taxpayers expect responsible stewardship of their money.

From FY 2023–2024 through FY 2026–2027, Colchester’s combined budget has increased by \$8,874,235 – approximately a 14.83% increase in spending over three years. Even after the reductions made during this budget process, this year’s proposed budget is still about \$3 million higher than the prior year’s budget.

Taxpayers should also consider the ongoing concerns surrounding the Health Reserve Fund and the approximately \$500,000 superintendent payout. Many residents continue to question the financial decisions that led to these costs.

Another question taxpayers deserve an answer to is why the administration waited 69 days – from May 20, 2026, to July 28, 2026 – to hold the second budget referendum. During that same period, many Connecticut towns conducted their second or even third budget referendums.

Did Bernie Dennler want you to forget, be distracted or be on vacation?

Residents have every right to ask why Colchester’s process took so much longer.

On Tuesday, July 28, taxpayers have an opportunity to make their voices heard louder.

If you believe Colchester needs greater fiscal responsibility, stronger accountability, and more disciplined budgeting, please vote ‘no’ in the budget referendum.

Lance Lusignan – Colchester

Vote for Affordability

To the Editor:

Colchester taxpayers will vote on the proposed town budget Tuesday, July 28. The combined proposal increases spending by \$3.3 million, or 5%, over the current adopted budget. School spending would rise 4.4%, while town spending would rise 7%. Meanwhile, the U.S. inflation rate is 3.5%, and voters in other Rivereast towns have been rejecting budget increases closer to 3%.

You may see letters in the Rivereast saying the budget has been “cut.” It was reduced from the original request, but it has not been cut compared with what Colchester currently spends. The proposal still adds more than \$3.3 million in spending at a rate higher than inflation and higher than increases being rejected in neighboring communities. Calling that a cut obscures the question voters are actually deciding: whether Colchester should spend 5% more next year.

You may also see claims that the “tax impact” is only 3.5%. That figure may be technically accurate, but it is incomplete. The town is using one-time funds to reduce this year’s tax impact. Those funds are not recurring revenue, but the increased spending is recurring. Once that money is gone, taxpayers will still be responsible for supporting the full cost of this budget, plus whatever additional spending increase is proposed next year.

Affordability is a problem throughout Connecticut. Grocery, utility, housing and other household costs remain high. Connecticut’s unemployment rate has climbed to 5.2%. Families cannot continually reach into their savings or assume that next year’s income will pay for this year’s spending. Town government should exercise the same discipline.

Colchester has an affordability and spending problem. That is why I will vote ‘no,’ and I encourage others to do the same. Make a plan to vote Tuesday, July 28, because every vote matters.

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

Keeping Colchester A Place We Call Home

To the Editor:

I love Colchester. I want it to remain a town where families can grow, seniors can afford to stay, and farmers can continue their way of life.

After reviewing these budgets, I will vote ‘no.’ I believe we can support the services we value while being responsible with the money our neighbors work hard to earn.

This is not a vote against our schools, public safety, town employees, or our services. It is a vote for accountability and responsible budgeting.

These budgets increase spending by approximately \$3.34 million. Since FS Dennler took office, spending has increased about 24%. Before asking taxpayers to contribute more, leaders should ensure every dollar is used wisely.

Many Colchester families are feeling the pressure of rising costs. At the same time, FS Dennler is set to receive a \$21,395 raise. After taxpayers voted down the first budget, residents should ask: Is this the best use of taxpayer dollars when families are being asked to make sacrifices? Our leaders should set an example of fiscal responsibility.

Another concern is Colchester’s upcoming property revaluation. Higher assessments combined with spending increases will likely mean higher tax bills for many homeowners. In neighboring East Hampton, residents reported tax increases of \$800 to \$1,000 or more after its revaluation. We should learn from that experience and protect taxpayers.

Protecting taxpayers also means addressing problems before they get worse. I am concerned about the health insurance reserve crisis and its management. As the forensic audit revealed, FS Dennler was aware of concerns about the reserve as early as April 2025, yet failed to act, allowing the problem to grow into a financial crisis. Residents deserve to know why.

Leadership means addressing problems early, communicating openly, and protecting taxpayers from avoidable burdens. Now, taxpayers are being asked to rebuild the health insurance reserve – costing millions this year and more in future budgets – while also being on the hook for a nearly \$500,000 payout related to the former superintendent. These costs will affect Colchester taxpayers for years to come.

Colchester has been a community where people could build a future. Voting ‘no’ does not mean we do not care about Colchester. It means we care enough to ask for better decisions, responsible spending, and a plan that works for our neighbors.

Please join me. Vote ‘no’ on July 28.

Together, we can keep Colchester a place we can all call home.

Colchester deserves better,
Cyndee Laribee – Colchester

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Weir Nets Perfect Attendance

State Rep. Steve Weir (R-55) earned a 100% voting attendance record for the fourth straight year, spanning sessions 2023-2026.

“For me, showing up is one of the most important parts of this job,” Weir said. He added: “The issues are complex, and extend beyond the bill title. The people of our district expect their voices to be heard no matter what. The district deserves someone who has lived here, understands the needs of all residents, and shows up to do the job.”

During the 2026 session, legislators considered thousands of bills and voted on over 300, covering a variety of issues.

“People send us to Hartford to work together to solve problems,” Weir continued. “Thank you for your continued trust in me as your state representative; you can always count on me to show up, listen, and work hard every day on your behalf.”

Weir is currently seeking a third term in office as representative for the 55th House District, which covers the towns of Andover, Bolton, Glastonbury, Hebron and Marlborough.



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 troopcadets028@gmail.com.

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Obituaries

Colchester

Michael L. Kaluszka

Michael L. Kaluszka, 83, beloved husband of the late Janice (Weigold) Kaluszka, is now pain-free and at peace after a courageous battle with leukemia; leaving behind the physical world as we know it on Tuesday, June 9. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and all who knew him.



A true American, he was an only child, born of Ukrainian descent in war-torn France, March 23, 1943. His life's journey was marked by resilience from the start. At age 11, he and his mom bravely boarded a ship bound for America, in hopes of a better life, and never looked back. He was so proud of his greatest accomplishment: becoming a U.S. citizen. He graduated from Hartford High School and attended art school on a scholarship.

He was a passionate artist; known to draw many portraits over the years of family, friends, pets, and even just acquaintances like his local barber and grocery store's butcher. He used that talent to open Mikal Signs, and became a successful self-employed sign maker. On buildings, cars, and even front lawns....his signs, reminders of his talent, are everywhere!

Before and during that time, he was also a cross-country truck driver; spending countless hours, and weeks at a time, on the road with his driving partner and close friend George Bartley.

Michael loved being outdoors. A naturalist and survivalist, most of his free time was spent either in the woods hunting with his son, and others, mostly with bow and arrow; or fishing, whether deep-sea saltwater or freshwater. He truly cherished fishing with his close friend, Captain and owner of the Blackhawk Charter Fishing vessel, Greg Dubrule. In later years, he loved just being out in the woods with only his camera, capturing nature.

Endearingly known as Big Mike or Papa K., he never missed the opportunity to teach or mentor someone on the proper way to hunt or fish, or even draw, or drive; touching the lives of many, especially Michael Rall, his "second son," and also his grandson Gavin.

Whether he was enjoying dinner with family; or a night out seeing a concert or a boxing match; having fun winning...or losing...at the casino; hanging out on the deck with Skip or passing time at the barn with Jay; hooking a 12-ft. marlin off the coast of Acapulco; driving around the Never Summer Wilderness Area of Bowen Mountain in Colorado just soaking up the scenery; out on an Alaskan cruise watching for whales; hunting for elk in New Mexico; catching the latest Uconn basketball game with a buddy; or just snuggling up at home with his rescue pups Murphy & Chauncey, and a good book – the adventures were many....he just loved enjoying life!

In addition to his mother Peggy, he was predeceased by his wife Janice; four grandchildren, Sara Cavallo, Shanna Bazzano, Kristine Sheldon Roman & Jason Sheldon; and also good friends Clayton Pilz and Matthew Brescia.

Michael is survived by his children, their spouses and his grandchildren: Janice and Peter Cavallo, Rebecca & Samantha; Pamela and Phil Balsamo, Angie & Rob; Katie Conforti, Jayme; Suzanne and Mark Repass, Gavin; Michael

Kaluszka Jr. and Kathy Luna; also Debi Thomas & Legend; Lori Bazzano Mullen, Alysha & Kyle; and Deborah Sheldon Gaudi. He had 12 great-grandchildren and even a great-great-grandchild. He also leaves a special friend, Kathleen.

The family extends great thanks to the staff at Hartford Hospital ER, especially Ginny, who is also a longtime friend of the family; HHC Cancer Institute's Hematology Oncology & Infusion teams, especially Dr. P, Sandy G., Alisha, Nana, Chelsea & Val; and also the staff and hospice team on CB2 & 3. We thank them ALL, for their compassionate care, support, dedication, patience, and kindness.

Please join us to celebrate Michael's life sharing stories, while enjoying good food and company: Saturday, Aug. 15, at 11 a.m., at the Elks Lodge, 98 Woodland St. in South Glastonbury.

In lieu of flowers; please honor Michael with a memorial donation to Kenway's Cause, or your local animal rescue; or... just go enjoy some time outdoors...he'd like that.

Colchester

Christopher R. Tillinghast

Christopher R. Tillinghast, 73, passed away unexpectedly Tuesday, July 14. Born Nov. 3, 1952 in Norwalk, he was son of the late Norman and Betty (Vishnosky) Tillinghast and grew up in Ridgefield. He was a past resident of Colchester and Norwalk, and retired to Port Charlotte, Fla.



Chris was the loving husband of Linda (Solemene) Tillinghast and recently on June 5th celebrated 50 wonderful years of marriage with a trip to Margaretville in Florida. Prior to his retirement in 2018, he worked as a lab technician at the Becton Engineering and Applied Science Center at Yale University. Chris enjoyed sunsets on the beach with Linda, listening to live bands, working around his home, but especially spending time with family and friends.

Chris will always be remembered as an exceptionally patient, kindhearted and welcoming man. He had a great sense of humor, a kind smile and a great cook. He was the 'go-to' person the family always went to for a common-sense view of opinion and we all respected his words.

In addition to Linda, Chris is survived by sons Jonathan and Jason with partner Gina, brothers Tim and wife Jeanne, Mark, Peter and fiancée Diane; brother-in-law Joe Solemene and wife Eileen; grandson Matthew Tillinghast; as well as Sallie Franz, wife of his predeceased brother Doug. Chris was a favorite uncle to several nieces and nephews.

Chris recently attended the U.S. Army graduation at Fort Jackson of his grandson Matthew, who he adored and wore his 'PROUD ARMY GRANDPA' hat with pride.

As Chris was an avid *Star Trek* fan, in the words of Dr. McCoy to Kirk about Spock's death, "he's really not dead...as long as we remember him."

A celebration of this special life will be at the convenience of the family. A memorial contribution can be made to Tunnels to Tower Foundation (t2t.org) or Wounded Warrior Project (woundedwarriorproject.org) in honor of Chris' memory.

For an online guestbook, please visit: Magnerfuneralhome.com

Hebron

Carolyn Aubin

Carolyn (Briggs) Aubin, 67, of Hebron, beloved wife of David A. Aubin, died peacefully Saturday, July 11, at Complete Care at Harrington Court in Colchester, following a year-long effort to overcome the effects of a brain aneurysm.



Carolyn was born in Hartford Aug. 13, 1958, to the late Barbara (White) and William F. Briggs Jr., and she grew up in South Glastonbury. After graduating from Glastonbury High School in 1976, she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in 1980 from Springfield College in Springfield, Mass., and worked as a horticultural therapist and rehabilitation therapy supervisor at Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown. Carolyn married David in 1988, and left CVH to pour her energy into raising their three sons, breathing fresh life into their colonial-era home and gardens, and volunteering her time anywhere she thought she could be of help to her community.

Carolyn was an active member of the Congregational Church of Marlborough, where she took joy in leading members of the Care Team ministry in making and delivering hundreds of handmade cards and flower arrangements every year. She was cubmaster of Cub Scouts Pack 28, founded and coordinated Nature Trail Days at both Hebron Public Schools for 10 years, mentored through AHM Lanterns, and volunteered for decades with Friends of the Douglas Library and the Hebron Historical Society. In the last chapter of her life she became a master naturalist and master woodland manager, and devoted countless hours to improving the natural ecosystems on her property and educating others about the beauty of the natural world.

In addition to her husband, David, Carolyn is survived by her sons, William Aubin (Hayley) of Chesterton, Ind., and their son Calvin, Nicholas Aubin (Dominique) of Hebron, and Parker Aubin (Alexandra) of Lowell, Mass.; her siblings, Cynthia Thierfeld (Jeffrey) of Portland, Cathleen Glynn (John) of Marlborough, and William F. Briggs III of Middletown; her brother-in-law Gerard R. Aubin (Pamela) and sister-in-law Linda Wagner (Brian). Carolyn will also be missed by numerous cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Besides her parents, Carolyn was predeceased by her brother Charles "Chipper" Briggs and sister-in-law Barbara Price.

A memorial service will be held at Marlborough Congregational Church in the fall, at a date to be announced; there will be no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, please find somebody in your life to help in Carolyn's honor.

East Hampton

Mark A. Salie

Mark A. Salie passed away Saturday, July 4, at the age of 66. He was born Feb. 14, 1960, in Rockledge, Fla., and grew up in Malden, Mass.

He received his master's electrical license in Massachusetts and his electrical license in Connecticut. This career helped him care for his family by owning his own electrical company, and then he worked up and down the east coast until settling in Connecticut 15 years ago. He was also a proud Glouster Elks #892 member for the past 21 years, helped with many fundraisers and visited many other Elks clubs during his travels.

He loved to spend his time riding his motorcycle "Dorothy," camping with friends and family, playing on pool and golf leagues, bowling, and going to the shooting range. He was married at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, where he used his electrical and other talents to help maintain his church. He was also co-coordinator of the free community meals hosted there each Sunday.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Donald Salie and Marilyn Gurley Salie, and his heart son, Robert Kelliher.

He is survived by his loving wife, Elizabeth Currie Salie, daughter Danielle Salie (Keith Wilkins) and granddaughters Sarah, Amber and Bobby-Jean; daughter in law Jackie Garofalo Kelfkens (Grant) and grandson Rex; and son-in-law, Vincent Garofalo IV (Krista).

The family would like to thank Yale New Haven Hospice for the care given during his sudden and courageous battle with stage IV pancreatic/liver cancer.

He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, family member, and friend whose kindness, generosity, and unwavering love touched the lives of everyone who knew him. He will be remembered for his playful spirit, his quick wit, and his remarkable ability to make others smile.

Family and friends are invited to attend a service on Saturday, Aug. 1, at 10:30 a.m., at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Main Street, East Haddam. The service will be livestreamed on YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/@ststephensepiscopalchurche6778. Or you can visit the website ststeves.org/livestream, as there is a button to the YouTube.

A private family interment will follow at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church's Maintenance Fund in his honor.

Amston

Thomas J. Lenkiewicz II

Thomas J. Lenkiewicz II, 67, of Hebron/Amston husband of Kathleen Conte, passed away at home Tuesday, July 7, with his wife by his side. Born in Middletown, son of Thomas and Jennie Lenkiewicz.

Tom was a 1976 graduate of St. Bernard High School Montville and a member of St. Andrew Parish and a Boy Scout with Troop 13, where he achieved the rank of Eagle Scout.

He was active in the Colchester/Hayward Fire Department from a very young age and was a police dispatcher at KX for several years, and in 1979 he went on to Glastonbury as 911 dispatch operator. Tom (badge #227) served the town of Glastonbury for over 43 years which recently included the town of East Hampton. Tom was the voice of the midnight shift for decades. With his dedication, two careers of time on the desk, he was known by many of his peers and colleagues across Hartford County and beyond.

In 1994, Tom was awarded Officer of the Year by the Glastonbury Police Department.

The most important thing to Tom was the safety of those he had out on the road. While on his watch, he would be checking in with them often to be sure they were safe and providing information immediately to them to avoid any possible hazard.

In addition to his wife Kathleen, Tom leaves his stepson and best friend, Alexander Sixbey (wife Kristen) of Andover; his sister, Lori Desautel (Peter) of Colchester; and brother, David Lenkiewicz of Lebanon; as well as several nieces, nephews, cousins and his cat Bean.

In addition to his parents, Tom was predeceased by his nephew, Matthew Desautel; a cousin, Linda Bourgoine; and his beloved pets, Pepper (dog) and cat Sassafra.

A Celebration of Life will take place Sunday, Aug. 2, from 1-4 p.m., at Colchester Fish and Game Club. Stop by, and bring your memories and especially jokes, as he thrived on those.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Tom's memory can be made to Our Companions Animal Rescue via their online memorial page at ourcompanions.org/get-involved/donate, or donors should make checks payable to: Our Companions Animal Rescue, P.O. Box 956, Manchester, CT 06045.

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TOWN OF PORTLAND PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Portland Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, August 6th, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Portland Public Library, 20 Free-stone Avenue, to consider the following:
PZC Application #25-22: Proposed Amendment to the Port-land Zoning Regulations. Changes to sections 5.1, removal of retail motor fueling stations as an allowed use. Application of the Town of Portland.
At this hearing interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications will be received. A copy of this application is available for public review in the Portland Land Use Department.
Dated at Portland, CT this 14th day of July 2026 Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission

2TB 7/24, 7/31

LEGAL NOTICE
MARLBOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION
NOTICE OF ACTION

The Marlborough Planning Commission at their meeting of June 23, 2026, at 7pm in the Town Hall, 26 No Main Street
APPLICATION APPROVED:
#P-01-26 Amendment to Subdivision Regulations
1. Section 6.1 Dedication of Open Space changes from 20% to 10% for conventional subdivision
2. Section 5.2.8 Open Space changes from 20% to 10% for conventional subdivision
3. Delete Section 4.14.10 minimum buildable area
4. Delete Section 4.16.21 minimum buildable area
5. Amendment Section 5.21 minimum requirements
6. 8-24 Referral 2026-27 Capital projects
MARK PAUL, PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR

1TB 7/24

TOWN OF COLCHESTER
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
LEGAL NOTICE OF DECISION

At its Regular Meeting of July 15, 2026, the Colchester Planning & Zoning Commission made the following decision (s):
PZC2026-007 Center Village Development Request for 60-day extension to file mylars. **APPROVED.**
PZC2026-013 Mervin Laparre (Applicant/Owner) Site Plan Application to construct a 50' X 80' (4,000 SF) accessory building at 61 Bull Hill Road (MBL 06-16-008-005) that exceeds the size permissible by the Zoning Enforcement Officer pursuant to Section 15.4 of the Town of Colchester Land Development (Zoning) Regulations. Zoning District: Rural Use (RU). **APPROVED.**
Planning & Zoning Commission
Joseph Mathieu, Chair

1TB 7/24

TOWN OF HEBRON
TAX COLLECTOR'S LEGAL NOTICE

Taxes levied on the Grand List of October 1, 2025 become due and payable on July 1, 2026. Real Estate tax bills of less than \$250 and Motor Vehicle tax bills shall be due in a single installment on July 1, 2026. Real Estate tax bills over \$250 shall be due and payable in two installments on July 1, 2026 and January 1, 2027. The 1st installment Real Estate tax bill will utilize an interim mill rate of 36.85 mill, as approved by the Board of Finance under Hebron Charter Section 903C. The 2nd installment will capture a set mill rate once the budget passes including any difference from the 1st installment bill. Personal Property bills will be billed once the budget passes, and a mill rate is set.
Motor Vehicle and Real Estate Taxes received/postmarked by **August 3, 2026**, will be considered timely. Payments received/postmarked August 4th or later will be subject to interest of 1.5% per month or 18 % annually from the due date in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes. Initial interest starting August 4th is 3% of outstanding taxes with a minimum of \$2.00 per tax account. **State Statutes dictate that failure to receive a bill does not invalidate amount due.**
Please make **checks payable to: Town of Hebron**. Payments may be mailed to our lockbox collection service: **Town of Hebron CT Tax, PO Box 843137, Boston MA 02284-3137**. A secured drop-off box is located on the lower level, south side of the Town Hall building at 15 Gilead St, Hebron, CT 06248 for payments. Please see the town's website www.hebronct.com for on-line payment options.
The Collector's office is located in the lower level of the Town Hall at 15 Gilead Street. Our hours are Monday to Wednesday 8:00am to 4:00pm, Thursday 8:00am to 6:00pm, and Friday 8:00am to 1:00pm. The Tax and Assessor's Offices will close from 12:30 to 1:15 Monday – Thursday for lunch to accommodate a reduction in staff.
Respectfully,
Brigit M Tanganelli
Hebron Acting Revenue Collector

3TB 6/19, 7/3, 7/24

LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON
ATTENTION TAXPAYERS

Notice is hereby given to the taxpayers of the Town of East Hampton that taxes on real estate, personal property, and motor vehicles, as levied on the Grand List of October 1, 2025, are due and payable on July 1, 2026. The last day to pay without penalty is August 3, 2026. Real estate and personal property taxes exceeding \$100, as well as motor vehicle taxes exceeding \$500, may be paid in two equal installments due July 1, 2026, and January 1, 2027.
The mill rate for the October 1, 2025 Grand List is 27.79 mills, which is equivalent to \$27.79 in taxes per \$1,000 of net assessed value. Tax bills will be mailed on June 29, 2026. Any payment received, or post marked, after August 3, 2026 will be subject to interest at the rate of 1½% per month or any fraction thereof (18% per annum) from the original due date of the tax, as required by Connecticut General Statutes Sections 12-130, 12-145, and 12-146.
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 by visiting www.easthamptonct.gov. The Tax Office hours of collection are: Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Tuesday: 8:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. and Friday: 8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted,
Kristy L. Merrifield, CCMC
Collector of Revenue

3TB 6/26, 7/10, 7/24

TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH
TAX COLLECTOR'S LEGAL NOTICE

All persons liable to pay taxes to the Town of Marlborough as levied on October 1, 2025 Grand List which includes Real Estate, Personal Property, and Motor Vehicle, are hereby notified that the first installment is due July 1, 2026 and will be delinquent August 3, 2026. The second installment will be due January 1, 2027 and delinquent February 1, 2027. Delinquent bills will be subject to interest of one and a half percent a month reverting to the due date or 18% a year. Minimum interest is \$2.00. Failure to receive a bill does not invalidate the interest or tax. If you do not receive a bill, please check online at www.marlbroughct.gov bill lookup or contact the Tax Office. Tax bills of \$800.00 or less are due in one installment. Bills over \$800.00 may be paid in two installments. The Mill Rate for Real Estate, Personal Property, and Motor Vehicle for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year is 27.10.
Tax payments can be mailed to Tax Collector, P.O. Box 29, Marlborough, CT 06447, paid in person (cash or check) at the Tax Collector's office during normal business hours, placed in the DROPBOX (No Cash) at Town Hall, or paid online. **Credit and Debit payments (Mastercard, Visa, or ACH) are only accepted online at www.marlbroughct.gov** Tax Collector hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Tuesday 8:30 a.m.-7:00 p.m., and Friday 8:30a.m.-noon.
Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Lazzari
Tax Collector

3TB 6/26, 7/10, 7/24

TOWN OF PORTLAND

Legal notice is hereby given to the taxpayers of the Town of Portland that the first installment of Real Estate and Personal Property taxes on the Grand List of October 1, 2025 are due and payable on July 1, 2026. Motor vehicle taxes will also be due in one installment.
Taxes not paid in full on or before August 3, 2026, become delinquent and subject to interest at the rate of 18% per annum (1.5% for each month or fraction thereof) dating back to the original due date of the bill. Two months of interest will be due on August 4, 2026. Minimum interest charge is \$2.00.
Quarterly water and/or sewer usage bills are due and payable July 20, 2026. Payment not made in full on or before August 20, 2026 will be subject to interest of 1.5% per month from due date. Payments are accepted in person at 33 East Main Street, Portland, CT or by mail: Portland Collector of Revenue, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480-0071. Payment can also be made online at www.portlandct.org or placed in the drop box.
As a matter of law, the taxpayer is liable to the town for the tax or water/sewer installment(s) as they become due and payable. Therefore, failure to receive a bill does not relieve the taxpayer of the statutorily required interest when a payment is late.
Regular office hours are as follows:
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday: 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Holiday hours:
Friday, July 3rd closed
Michele B. Nuhn, CCMC, CCMO
Collector of Revenue

3TB 6/26, 7/3, 7/24

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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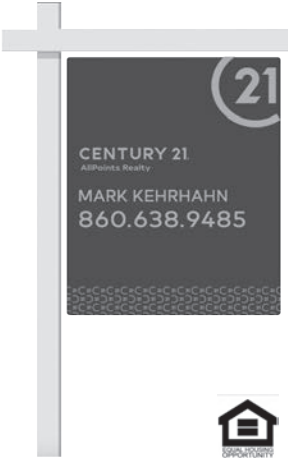


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CIT7-23-26

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2TB 7/24, 7/31



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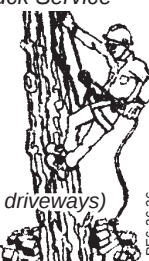
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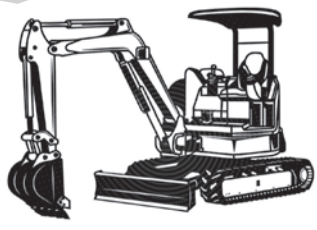
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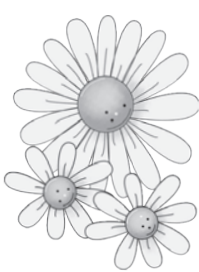
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