

RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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

Volume 47, Number 26

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

August 14, 2026



Collecting Signatures... Portland residents Erica Jarzabek and Katie Terlalis Bordonaro have been asking residents of Apple Tree Lane, Mountain Laurel Way and Rustic Terrace to sign a petition asking the school district and M&J Bus Company to reconsider the current transportation plan for elementary school students in the neighborhood. The two said they have collected more than 40 signatures. Pictured are a few of their helpers: Ellie Jarzabek, age 5, Teddy Bordonaro, age 4, and Jameson Jarzabek, age 7.

Portland Presses Pause on Future Gas Stations

By Anne Lilburn

At a meeting last Thursday, Aug. 6, the Portland Planning and Zoning Commission voted unanimously to ban future gas stations in town. The move, which would remove gas stations as a permitted use in all the town's zoning categories, would not affect any of the town's currently operating seven gas stations, nor would it affect the gas station that is currently under construction on Route 66, or the one proposed, also located on Route 66. Prior to this action, Portland allowed gas stations in certain zones, according to Town Planner Dan Bourret. "Basically, we took it out of the zones that it was allowed in, so it was allowed in our B1 and B2 zone, and so we just removed that use from that zone, those two zones," said Bourret. This was in accordance with state law and how towns typically operate, he said.

"Towns can add and take away uses from zones as they see fit for their plan of development," he said. "It's just like some towns might allow adult entertainment [and others not]. It's really within the town's purview what uses happen in what zones." First Selectman Mike Pelton said nine gas stations were a lot for a town as small as Portland, but he understood why it may have gotten to that point. "I know statistically Route 66 has over 30,000 cars a day that travel on there," he said. "I think we have like 36,000 that come over the bridge from Middletown and most go onto 66, so there's probably very good financial reasons why gas stations like it there, because they can afford it." Still, Pelton said he understood the ban. "If you just drive through Portland, you do see

a lot of gas stations," he said. "It kind of crowds out other potential businesses. ... We have some great areas on Route 66 that you could do a lot more development with that are undeveloped right now, so you'd hate to have it crowded out by just gas stations." Bourret also pointed out that the town didn't know what its needs would be going forward in the decades to come. He pointed out that the town has a defunct gas station on Main Street that has sat vacant for over 35 years now. Critically, Bourret said that the decision was not one that the town couldn't change its mind on going forward. "These regulations are not chiseled in stone. As long as it's allowed within the framework of zoning in state statute, we could change this back," he said. "So if a couple years from now, See *Future Gas Stations*, page 28

Guidone Wins Senate Primary

By Toriana Williams

Hebron resident Jason Guidone won the Republican primary for Connecticut's 19th State Senate District on Aug. 11, where he defeated former state representative Mike France of Ledyard by 1,162 votes to 905, according to unofficial results from the Connecticut Secretary of the State's website. Guidone received 56.22% of the vote, while France received 43.78%. With victory in hand, Guidone – who is also the chair of the Hebron Republican Town Committee – now moves on to the general election in November where he is expected to face Democratic incumbent Cathy Osten. It would be Guidone's second try to unseat Osten; he unsuccessfully ran against her in 2024. The 10-town 19th District includes the *River east* towns of Hebron and Marlborough, as well as Columbia, Franklin, Lebanon, Ledyard, Lisbon, Montville, Norwich and Sprague. Guidone told the *River east* he was "thrilled" with the result and credited his win to the people who supported his campaign. "The hard work of so many has paid off, including myself, of course. But the victory goes to everyone who stepped in and stepped up to support the campaign," he said. He also thanked voters who took the time to participate. "Everyone who took the time to come out and vote," he said, "that's what it takes. I'm so appreciative, humbled by it, really." Although Guidone said he was excited by Tuesday's results, he shared that he believed he had a strong chance of winning before voters went to the polls. "I thought I had a really good shot of winning this primary because of the overwhelming support through the district from the start," he said. One sign of that support was the number of

Republican town committees that endorsed him. Guidone said seven of the eight town committees that chose to endorse a candidate backed his campaign. France received one endorsement. In total, of the 10 Republican town committees in the district, eight chose to endorse a candidate. Guidone also said he received about 76.5% support at the Republican convention in May. Guidone said that the endorsements most likely helped, but he could not say how much weight they held with voters. He pointed out that some voters may see a town committee endorsement as important, while others may not even know the committees exist. Instead, Guidone said he believes the bigger factor that contributed to his winning was the work done by volunteers. "[The] highest impact is the volunteers who put in the effort," he said. Volunteers knocked on doors with Guidone, drove him around, and knocked on doors on his behalf. To Guidone, that work showed a personal commitment to his campaign. "That is touching," he said. "It's [had] a profound sort of impact on me." He added that he has tried to stay grounded and to just be himself while campaigning. "I am doing my best to stay grounded and be myself. Just present genuinely, and it apparently resonates," said Guidone.

See *Guidone Wins*, page 12

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Congregational Church News

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

p.m.
Sonshine Stampers: Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m.
Clothing Sale: Saturday, Aug. 15, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Bingo and Baskets: Friday, Aug. 21 – dinner at 5:30 p.m., followed by the game at 6:30 p.m. Cost is \$15 per person.

Clothing & Linen Sale

Andover Congregational Church, located at 359 Route 6, will hold a Clothing & Linen Sale on Saturday, Aug. 15, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; there is a bag sale from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Leave a message at the church at 860-742-7696 with questions.

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 Connec-

tions." Transportation is available.
Special Upcoming Events: The Summer MOVement celebration continues through August. This is the final month of the community-wide celebration of movement in all its forms. Be sure to check out the new August programs and activities, designed to get everyone involved.
Shopping: Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. Shop in Wil-limantic 8/25, and shop in Manchester 8/18. Also, on Thursday, 8/20, at 8:30 a.m., shop Trader Joe's and Michael's.
Stretch & Strengthen Fitness Class: Tuesday/Thursday, 8/18, 8/20, 8:25, 8/27, at 8:30 a.m. each day. Class is free.
Fun with Fondu: Wednesdays, 8/19 and 8/26, 3 p.m. each week. Themes: 8/19, Cheese and Crackers; 8/26, Chocolate with Marshmallows and Toppings. Fee is \$3 per class.
Disappearing 4-Patch Quilting Workshop: Mondays, 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"x80". First session is required. Bring your sewing supplies. Fabric requirement provided at time of sign-up. Call the center to join.
The Summer Scoop! A Passport to Ice Cream: Friday, 8/21, 1 p.m. Head to Sweet Frog in Manchester. Call the center to register and pick up your passport.
Foot Care with Sue: Thursday, 8/27, \$42. Call the center for an appointment. Transportation is available.
Haircare with Helen – Free for Andover Veterans: Monday, 8/31, 10:30 a.m. As a thank you for your service, Andover veterans are invited to receive free haircuts during this special Veterans Haircut Program. Appointments required. Contact the center for availability and scheduling.
Monthly Veterans Coffee Hour: Monday, 9/14, 9:30 a.m. All veterans are invited to a free coffee hour every first Monday of the month. Connect with fellow veterans, share stories, build friendships, and enjoy a cup of coffee in a relaxed setting.

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MARLBOROUGH DAY!

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23

11 AM - 4 PM at Blish Park

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WAIM Fall Flea Market

Windham Area Interfaith Ministry (WAIM) will hold its Fall Flea Market, “Fifth Floor Treasures,” on Saturday, Sept. 19, from 8 a.m.-noon, at 866 Main St.

Discover a one-of-a-kind indoor flea market experience on WAIM’s fifth floor. Items range from snow shoes to microscopes, and everything in between.

Payment can be by cash, charge or check.

August Programs for Kids at Library

All are invited to the last two summer programs offered for kids at Andover Public Library. These programs will be held downstairs at the library. Call the library to sign up or with any questions at 860-742-7428.

Cake Decorating for Kids!: Tuesday, Aug. 18, 6 p.m. Cindy Miller will be at the library to teach kids different frosting styles to decorate a barnyard-themed cake. Participants should be aged 4-14 and able to work independently.

KinderRHAMa Preschool Openings

AHM Youth and Family Services has limited openings in the Tuesday/Thursday KinderRHAMa Preschool class at RHAM High School for the 2026-27 school year.

There are full-day and part-day slots available. Parents can choose from 7 a.m.-3 p.m. or 8:30 a.m.-noon. Cost per year is \$2,490 for the partial day, and \$3,600 for the full day. Fees can be paid in monthly installments. There may be financial aid available to families who qualify.

KinderRHAMa offers structured and unstructured theme-based activities, as well as many enrichment activities. Regular activities include circle/story time, outside play, literacy, science and math-based activities, and daily

Bingo & Basket Raffle

Andover Congregational Church, located at 359 Route 6, will hold a Bingo & Basket Raffle night on Friday, Aug. 21, starting with dinner at 5:30 p.m. The game starts at 6:30 p.m.

Admission is \$15 and includes dinner, drink, dessert and bingo. No reservations required.

Leave a message at the church at 860-742-7696 with questions.

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Free, Reduced-Price Lunch Info

The RHAM middle and high schools and Marlborough Elementary School have announced their policy for determining eligibility of children who may receive free or reduced-price meals served under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), or free milk served under the Special Milk Program (SMP). For school year (SY) 2026-27, breakfast is free of charge for all students enrolled in schools participating in the School Breakfast Program

Local school officials have adopted the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs) for family size and income criteria for determining eligibility. The following income guidelines will be used in Connecticut from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027, for determining participant’s eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals and free milk in the Child Nutrition Programs (CNP).

Income Guidelines for Child Nutrition Programs: July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027

Free Meals

Household Size	Annual gross income	Monthly gross income	Twice per month	Every two weeks gross income	Weekly gross income
1	20,748	1,729	865	798	399
2	28,132	2,345	1,173	1,082	541
3	35,516	2,960	1,480	1,366	683
4	42,900	3,575	1,788	1,650	825
5	50,284	4,191	2,096	1,934	967
6	57,668	4,806	2,403	2,218	1,109
7	65,052	5,421	2,711	2,502	1,251
8	72,436	6,037	3,019	2,786	1,393
Each additional family member	7,384	616	308	284	142

Reduced Meals

Household Size	Annual gross income	Monthly gross income	Twice per month	Every two weeks gross income	Weekly gross income
1	29,526	2,461	1,231	1,136	568
2	40,034	3,337	1,669	1,540	770
3	50,542	4,212	2,106	1,944	972
4	61,050	5,088	2,544	2,349	1,175
5	71,558	5,964	2,982	2,753	1,377
6	82,066	6,839	3,420	3,157	1,579
7	92,574	7,715	3,858	3,561	1,781
8	103,082	8,591	4,296	3,965	1,983
Each additional family member	10,508	876	438	405	203

The income calculations above are based on the following formulas:

- monthly income is calculated by dividing the annual income by 12;
- twice monthly income is computed by dividing annual income by 24;
- income received every two weeks is calculated by dividing annual income by 26; and
- weekly income is computed by dividing annual income by 52.

All numbers are rounded upward to the next whole dollar.

Students residing in households with income at or below the levels shown in the chart above are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals or free milk. To apply for free or reduced-price school meals or free milk households should fill out the application and return it to your child’s school or by emailing it to jen.choma@rhamschools.org. Only one application is required per household and an application for free or reduced-price school meals cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions.

For questions or more information, call Jennifer Choma at 860-228-9474 ext. 3401.

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From the State Senator’s Desk

Happy August! It’s hard to believe this hot, wet summer is halfway over, but before we know it, students will return to classrooms in coming weeks for another school year. Don’t let back-to-school hamper your late summer festivities, though; instead, thanks to legislators’ work this year, the state’s Sales Tax-Free Week will provide opportunities for significant savings for families across our region and state.

Since 2000, Connecticut has celebrated Sales Tax-Free Week during the third week of August, timed and themed to align with back-to-school shopping. During that period, which runs from Sunday, Aug. 16, to Saturday, Aug. 22, this year, items of clothing and footwear worth up to \$300 will be tax-free when purchased in stores and online.

This year has some significant updates to Sales Tax-Free Week, too. Legislators voted this year to expand the value of items included under the tax exemption from \$100 per item to \$300 per item, drastically increasing the number of products available under the tax exemption. They also expanded the products available with tax exemptions; backpacks and some cleated shoes, for example running shoes, are now included where they previously were not.

Another significant improvement: school supplies are now tax-exempt year-round, making it easier for families to save a few bucks in preparing for classes to start again. Under the new standard, there’s a permanent 0% sales tax on items bought for personal or student nonbusiness use like notebooks and binders, pens and pencils, glue, rulers, scissors, legal pads, lunch boxes and loose-leaf construction paper. Electronic school supplies are still tax-exempt, but these items’ exemptions will provide significant opportunities for state residents.

Some items are still not eligible under the sales tax exemption. Items costing more than \$300 are not exempt, but if a sale reduces an item’s cost under that level, it may still qualify. Additionally, specialized athletic clothing or protective clothing worn for specific purposes, like football, golf and bowling shoes, martial arts attire, sports uniforms and specialty gloves are not eligible for the exemption. Handbags and purposes, wallets, umbrellas and jewelry are also items not included in Sales Tax Free Week.

As Connecticut families prepare for their children to return to class, they’ll have new opportunities to save a few valuable dollars in the coming weeks, both during Sales Tax Free Week for back-to-school clothes and year-round when it comes to stocking up on pencils and notebooks. I wish you and your loved ones a wonderful end of summer and a strong start to the school year.

State Sen. Norm Needleman D-33rd District

Note: The 33rd State Senate District includes Colchester, East Hampton and Portland, as well as Chester, Clinton, Deep River, East Haddam, Essex, Haddam, Lyme, Old Saybrook and Westbrook.



Needleman

Volunteers Wanted for Stream Assessments

The Salmon and Eightmile River watershed organizations are hosting a training program for volunteers in September to assist with biological stream assessments.

Aquatic benthic macroinvertebrates (water bugs) are good indicators of water quality and stream health. Learn how to collect and identify stream macroinvertebrates in this training program which will include an indoor workshop followed by field training at selected sites.

The training program will be held on Saturday, Sept. 12, from 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., and includes field time. The indoor workshop will be held at Burnham Brook Preserve, 2 Dolbia Hill Road-East, East Haddam, starting at 9 a.m.

Needleman Named ‘Environmental Champion’

State Sen. Norm Needle

