

RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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

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Portland in Bloom... Awards and ribbons have been given out to all of the participants in this year's Portland Street Garden Project. The Blooming Together Award was presented to Savvy Swap Consignment and Highland Sol Flower Farm, represented by Kerianne Burchardt and Michelle Engel; Dog Tales Grooming and Pet Care, represented by Mike and Louise Walsh; SilTec Labs, represented by Leigh Radziwon (not shown); and Fabian's Pizza, represented by Clemente Fabian. Portland River Valley Garden Club, which presents the annual street garden project, says the award recognizes neighboring businesses whose collective participation and plantings helped beautify their block. See additional photos on page 27.

End of an Era For Portland Schools

By Anne Lilburn
Portland is gearing up for a new school year – which will also mark the end of an era for its elementary schools.
When classes begin Aug. 26 for students in the district this year, it will mark the beginning of a final “goodbye” year before the district begins making the big changes laid out in its voter-approved school consolidation plan. That plan will eventually result in two brand new elementary school buildings and the decommissioning of the historic Brownstone School building, which will no longer be used as a school by the town.
Under the plan, this will be the last year that Valley View Elementary, which currently serves grades Pre-K through one, will operate in its current form. The school will shut down at the end of the school year to allow construction of a new building to proceed on the property, but every elementary school in the district will also shift the way it operates next year.
Beginning with the 2027-28 school year, Valley View's pre-K through grade 1 students will join second graders at Gildersleeve School, which currently serves grades 2-4, until the new Valley View is completed. Third through fifth graders will attend Brownstone School, which currently serves grades 5-6, while sixth grade students will shift over to the middle school.
That means that this last year is a somewhat bittersweet one for many educators in the district, who will be leaving behind classrooms, traditions and sometimes colleagues as things shift around just a year from now. And while it

may seem like nothing is happening yet, all the elementary school principals that the *Rivereast* talked to said they were anticipating a year filled with planning, packing and cleaning — along with a lot of business as usual, as well.
Valley View Interim Principal Mallory Emmons, who is taking over from former principal Ryan Walstrom, is new to Portland schools, having last served as an assistant principal in Ansonia. Emmons said she has made this year's motto “Be where your feet are,” and has been focusing on encouraging her staff to embrace the moment and remember that, for their young students, school is still school.
“The kindergartners will still have only one kindergarten year and first graders will still have only one first grade year,” she said. “As adults, it's going to be really hard to say, ‘Okay, I'm still going to come in and do my job and make sure that this would be like any other year,’ but also acknowledge that this is also going to be the last of certain things, so celebrating certain moments and milestones and pieces, and [also making] that attempt to be super present.”
Emmons said it's natural to always say “What's the next step?” but it's also important to remember what's happening now. Emmons said that while she might be a new principal, she wasn't planning any big changes this year for the school, as she knows next year will have plenty.
When Emmons' Valley View students move over to Gildersleeve for two years in the fall
See Portland Schools, page 10

RHAM Schools Expand Courses, Opportunities

By Toriana Williams
Don't forget to sharpen your pencils because it's already back to school season!
Regional School District 8 (RHAM) is preparing to welcome students back next Thursday, Aug. 27, with new courses and more opportunities to help students shape their future.
The district expects about 1,000 students this year. Enrollment figures show 343 students at the middle school and 639 students at the high school. High school enrollment is down by about 35 students, and the middle school count is roughly unchanged. Also, 22 high school students will be attending from Columbia through the district partnership program.
Superintendent of Schools Colin McNamara recently sat down with the *Rivereast*, where he shared there are no major changes that students and families will immediately notice when they return.
“We always have facility projects going on during the context of the summer months,” said McNamara.
This summer's work has included a new loading dock and the repainting of parking lot lines. The district has also enjoyed using their track field after a major improvement made last year.
“It's been great,” he said. “The community is really appreciative of it.”
McNamara said he has seen community members using the track even in the evenings before Board of Education meetings.
The track is one part of a larger effort to improve the district's athletic facilities. Recently, RHAM has worked on drainage around the competition field, improved turf quality and completed other projects to keep athletic spaces safe and in good condition.
“We've just been slowly chipping away at the athletic facilities,” said McNamara, with a long-term goal of keeping them “high quality and safe for our student athletes.”
While there may not be a major building project for students to see this year, there are

several new academic opportunities for them to explore. One of the biggest additions is a firefighter course at the high school. Taught by Scott Scorso, the course will give students an introduction to the skills and knowledge needed to work in the field.
The district already offers a popular EMT program where students can earn certifications and go on to serve as EMTs in the community. McNamara said Scorso is the same teacher who helps lead that effort, and that he's a firefighter and paramedic.
Teaching kids how to save lives is an unusual course to find in any catalog, but that's exactly what this new course aims to do. It will give students practical experience with firefighting concepts, safety, equipment and emergency response.
Another course returning to the district is culinary arts. RHAM previously offered culinary
See RHAM Schools, page 14

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Special Education Program Ready to SOAR

By Toriana Williams

Do you hear the school bell ringing? No? Well, you will soon!

Andover Elementary School will welcome students back on Aug. 27 for a new year of learning, new programs and a strong focus on building upon the academic progress that was made last year.

The school expects to begin the year with about 253 students, which Superintendent Valerie Bruneau said is pretty much the same as last year's count. The number could still change as families continue to move into town and enroll their children.

While enrollment is expected to remain steady, students will notice several changes when they shuffle back into school. One of the most noticeable will be the completion of a long-awaited bathroom project. Bruneau said the bathroom should be fully completed or nearly finished, with only a few final touch-ups needed.

"That will be exciting," she said, noting that the project was often discussed during town meetings and other public meetings.

Students and staff will also notice new lighting throughout the hallways. The school is completing an Eversource rebate lighting project that replaces older lighting with energy-efficient LED fixtures.

Bruneau said teachers who have already returned to the building have noticed the difference. "They're like, wow, the halls are so bright," she laughed. She joked that the brighter hallways could be a sign of what is ahead.

"I tell them that's a good sign of bright things to come," she said.

The school will also welcome a new director of special education, Darona Hersh. She will replace retiring special education director Holly Maiorano. Bruneau said she is looking forward to Hersh joining the team.

"We look forward to her expertise and perspective. It'll be nice to have her aboard," she said.

Another new effort this year will focus on students with higher special education needs. The school is launching a pilot program called

SOAR, which stands for Supporting Opportunities, Access and Relationships.

The program will be led by special education teacher Kathy Hartnett and is designed to provide additional support while keeping students connected to their classmates and regular classroom experiences. The program is similar to the traditional resource room model but is designed to give students more flexibility.

"It's kind of a new spin on an old model," said Bruneau.

Rather than spending the entire school day in a separate resource room, students will receive additional help while still having opportunities to participate in the classroom with their peers. Bruneau said many of the students who need this level of support are younger children, including students below third grade.

"You want them with their classmates," she said.

The program is being developed as an in-house support system, with Hartnett working throughout the summer with Principal Taylor Parker to prepare for its launch. The school recently received a high-quality incentive grant to help support the program financially, which totaled \$225,000.

The school also plans to build on what Bruneau described as a successful academic year.

"After a successful year last year with our new curriculum and our research-based instruction strategies, this year we look forward to continuing with this successful curriculum and instruction strategies that we utilized last year," she said.

Bruneau said the staff's work to improve student learning has been impressive.

"I'm so proud of [Parker]," Bruneau said, adding with a laugh, "Sometimes I kind of feel like her mom."

Bruneau credited staff members for working hard to meet the needs of every learner and said the school's academic strategies appear to be making a difference.

"It's working," Bruneau said. "What they're doing is fantastic, and I can't wait."

The school will also continue its four-house

model, which brings students from different grade levels together and gives older students opportunities to take on leadership roles. Bruneau said the program has helped students develop relationships throughout the school.

"It's done so much to connect every grade together within the school community," she said.

This year, Parker is also focusing on five character traits: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, motivation and integrity. Bruneau explained that the goal is to introduce those traits to younger students so they can continue developing them as they move through the upper grades and into RHAM.

While the school is starting the year with plenty of excitement and optimism, the effect of the recent budget process will still be felt. Andover will begin the year with several staff positions reduced or unfilled. That includes fewer paraeducators in the building, and the school will not offer Spanish this year. Bruneau said the loss of Spanish means the school will look for other ways to provide enrichment, particularly through after-school activities.

The library will also operate differently. The library itself will remain open, but the school will not have a full-time library media specialist available throughout the day. Bruneau said the school spent the summer developing a schedule so students can continue using the library with their classroom teachers. Other teachers will also use the space for projects, including research.

"We will make it work this year," she said. "This is a temporary situation for us." Bruneau said the school hopes to bring back the librarian position in the future.

Despite those challenges, the academic goal

for the coming year is pretty straightforward: keep doing what works. Bruneau compared the school's recent approach to a recipe.

"We actually want to try to take the, I'll call it, recipe that we've utilized in the last 18 months and keep it as similar as possible," she said.

"We finally know that what it is they're doing is working," said Bruneau. "So I don't want to rock the boat."

Her goal for the year, she said, is to "rinse and repeat."

Before school begins, families will have a chance to visit the school during a family meet-and-greet on Aug. 26. Students and families can see classrooms, make friends and enjoy an ice cream truck.

Then, on Sept. 22, the school will hold its larger fall back-to-school event. Bruneau said the event usually attracts between 300 to 400 people.

When asked for one thing she would tell students before they return, she replied, "We missed them."

The summer may have held camps and scheduled services for some students, but Bruneau said it's not the same without the usual school-day energy. She said staff members especially look forward to seeing how much students have grown during the summer.

"You see how much they've grown and they're like, 'Look miss, I'm as tall as you,'" she said. "And you're like, 'How is it possible they grew that much in only 12 weeks?'"

For Bruneau, the excited chatter of the students is what makes the beginning of the school year exciting.

"We can't wait to have them back," she said.

Annual Steak Dinner

The Andover Volunteer Fire Department's annual steak dinner will be Saturday, Sept. 26, from 5-7 p.m., at the firehouse on School Road.

This meal includes all you can eat sirloin steak, served with a baked potato, salad, fresh baked bread, beverages and ice cream. Eat in or take out.

Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors (age 62+) and \$10 for children ages 6-12.

Tickets can be purchased from any fire department member, on Wednesday evenings at the firehouse, or by calling Mindy at 860-706-3074, Karen at 860-377-1599, or Chief Ron Mike at 860-335-0264. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door.

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.

WAIM (Windham Area Interfaith Ministry) is a social-service nonprofit that serves Andover and Hebron, as well as Ashford, Bolton, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Hampton, Lebanon, Mansfield, Storrs, Scotland, Willington, Windham, and Willimantic.

For more information, call 860-456-7270 ext. 104 or Kathy Callahan at 860-228-0873.

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About Eliot

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Eliot has appeared on every episode of Daryl Hall's incredibly popular, "Live From Daryl's House" show all while keeping his own solo career going at a seemingly impossible pace.

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As a Multi-instrumentalist, Eliot's energetic and unique shows will find him moving from one instrument to another using live looping to seamlessly construct songs and arrangements on the spot and in the moment. If Eliot plays a cover song, it's typically a song he's performed with that artist.

Equally at home in front of 100 or 15,000 Eliot has performed on the worlds most Prestigious stages, including Madison Square Garden, Japan's Budokan, Red Rocks, The Hollywood Bowl, Carnegie Hall as well as Late Night with Jimmy Fallon, Conan O'Brien, The Today Show Show, Jimmy Kimmel and many others.

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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.

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, Stretch & Strength fitness classes, Chair Massage and more, see the monthly newsletter, "Community Connections." Transportation is available.

Special Upcoming Events: The Summer MOVEMENT Celebration is winding down, and has featured the "Our Future is So Bright, We Have To Wear Shades" theme, wearing sunglasses, capturing fun photos, and sharing the spirit of MOVEMENT and connection. The center welcomes new assistant. Kate McCarthy Cox. All are invited to stop by and give her a warm welcome.

Shopping: Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. Shop in Wilimantic 8/25, 9/8, 9/22. Shop in Manchester on 9/1, 9/15, 9/29. Transportation is available. And on Thursday, 9/17, 8:30 a.m., shop Trader Joe's

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.

Vacancy for PZC Alternate

There is a vacancy for an Alternate Planning and Zoning Commission member. Any qualified Andover elector interested in serving as a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission for a term ending Nov. 20, 2029, is encouraged to apply.

The deadline for submission of letters of interest is Thursday, Sept. 3.

Letters of interest should be sent to: Town of Andover Building Department 17 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232. Alternatively, submissions may be emailed to: zoning@andoverct.org.

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From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

First off, a hearty “welcome back to *Rivereast-land*” for Paul Smith.

Smith, as longtime readers may recall, was the superintendent of schools in East Hampton from 2016 to 2024. Well, he’s back – not in East Hampton this time, but in Marlborough.

The Marlborough school board tapped Smith last week to be the town’s new superintendent of schools. Well, school in this case, as it’s just the one: Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall School, a.k.a. Marlborough Elementary.

East Hampton was Smith’s last full-time gig as a superintendent; Marlborough’s is a part-time role. Since leaving East Hampton in 2024, Smith has worked for different Connecticut school districts in various capacities, including educational consultant, executive coach, and accreditation leader. He most recently served as interim superintendent for Region 17 Public Schools in Higganum.

Speaking of schools, this week marks our annual back-to-school issue, with various stories previewing the upcoming school year. You’ve already seen two of them on the cover (unless you turn straight to page 4 each week to read my column – in which case, thank you, thank you, you’re far too kind), and there are more inside.

Summer, as it always does, flew by. To quote the great poet Taylor Swift, “August slipped away into a moment in time, ‘Cause it was never mine.” But the new school year is always exciting. Good luck to all students and teachers.

Schooling isn’t just for kids, of course. You’re never too old to stop learning – and to quote another poet, Arthur Fonzarelli, “Learning is cool.”

On Wednesday, Sept. 16, from 4:30-6 p.m., Presidents’ College, the adult lifelong learning program at the University of Hartford, will hold its Fall Kickoff.

This “Get to Know Us” event features refreshments and jazz. Also, attendees will hear

fall course instructors describe what inspired their upcoming sessions. See if the program’s lectures, discussions, or 2-3 session mini-courses are a fit for you! All courses are held at the UHart campus.

Offerings this year will deal with such topics as Iranian history & culture, AI & Marketing, cold case investigations and forensic science, the Supreme Court, how immunology is revolutionizing medicine, Bach, world myths of return from the underworld, Jane Eyre, French film, national and global politics, and much more.

People can also elevate their theater experience by attending discussions of the Hartford Stage production of *Dracula* – and then catching a performance of the show.

There’s no charge for the Fall Kickoff event, but you need to reserve a seat at hartford.edu/pc. For more information, email pcollege@hartford.edu or call 860-768-4495.

In keeping with the education theme, Goodwin University will host its 21st annual Golf Tournament on Monday, Oct. 5, at the Hartford Golf Club in West Hartford.

Registration is at 9:30 a.m., followed by a shotgun start at 11 a.m. The day includes golf, breakfast, lunch, dinner, complimentary beverages, raffles, and on-course contests. This year, WFSB-TV Channel 3’s Scot Haney returns as honorary event chair.

The golf tournament supports the Goodwin Foundation Scholarship Fund, which assists students with demonstrated financial need as they work toward certificates and degrees in career-focused fields.

Several *Rivereast*-area residents attend Goodwin each year, so one of those scholarships you’ll be supporting just might help someone you know.

For more information on the tournament – and if interested in participating as a sponsor – visit www.goodwin.edu/foundation/golf.

See you next week.



Funds for New Uniforms... Dave Gilbert (left) and Jamie Leonard (right) of the Portland Exchange Club recently presented a check to Jen Morales, track coach at Portland High School, for a donation of \$2,000 towards new track team uniforms. The proceeds were from the Exchange Club’s Charity Golf Tournament earlier this year.

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

Thanks Poll Workers

To the Editor:

Here in Marlborough, we are fortunate to have a dedicated group of residents willing to staff the early voting polls. This year, they worked through some of the most beautiful days of summer. Led by our Registrars, Sandy Cameron-Adams and Michele Ann Kacy, the team was committed to giving residents the opportunity to vote for seven full days before the Aug. 11 primary. Many thanks to everyone who works so hard to ensure we all have the opportunity to cast a vote.

Lauren Griffin
Marlborough Town Clerk

It’s Okay to Say No

To the Editor:

It’s okay to say no and no and no again until they get it right. Keep in mind that those pushing for the Colchester budgets approvals have a stake in the game and need your money to push their agenda. We found out the hard way what happens when they get their hands on our money: like kids in a candy store, spend, spend, spend. They are now in a quandary, don’t know how or what to do, because they never accounted for that rainy day when you know what hit the fan, and we don’t want that to happen to us.

Frank Grande – Colchester

Four Shocking Points

To the Editor:

East Hampton voters, last week’s Town Council meeting revealed four shocking issues with the proposed budget. We can still vote ‘no’ on the 26th. Why? Because somebody is still not listening.

One: the BOF has elected not to make further changes to the BOE budget and has submitted the same budget that was just defeated! Either they are not capable of finding additional savings as demanded by the voters, or unwilling to take a stand against the BOE. Either way, this is an insult to the voters.

Two: If the referendum fails, state law says the budget must revert to prior year levels. So, voters, we have the opportunity to achieve a zero-based BOE budget as was originally demanded (and ignored by our town leaders).

Three: Apparently the state has provided some dollars in funding that been allocated to the Smart Start program, and private funds have been collected to support middle school sports. At the meeting, it was pointed out that the expenses listed on the budget were not reduced based on receiving the monies, but instead left intact, thus inflating the budget. It is not clear if this is an accepted accounting practice or yet another BOE effort to grab more of your tax dollars.

Four: State law decrees that education bud-

Bulletin Board

I was puttering around behind the garage one afternoon this past weekend when my wife stopped to update me on her Let’s Clean Up America (Right Now!) campaign.

This campaign is based on the premise that God erred in not including “cluttering things up” among the Seven Deadly Sins, maintaining that cluttering should rank somewhere after sloth but before gluttony in the ranks of objectionable behaviors.

Since our sons have left the nest, the primary offender in the “cluttering” department these days is, as you might have guessed, that most important of persons (me) – who is also (if I do say so myself) an unabashed contender for high honors in the sloth department.

The irony is that I seem capable of creating clutter even when I am being slothful, which is not as hard as it may sound when the perpetrator is lying on his back on the couch gnawing on over-stuffed tacos and clicking through the TV channels in search of something that doesn’t involve people shrieking at each other over politics or somber speculation by “ancient alien theorists” that hemorrhoids were introduced to mankind by malicious space travelers from beyond the Pleiades.

In any case, there I was out behind the garage getting a few minutes of fresh air and proudly surveying my collection of potentially useful odds and ends salvaged over several years of successful and not-so-successful home improvement projects when my wife wandered over, completely unsolicited.

“It looks like Dogpatch back here,” she observed. “It’s a mess. You should take all this stuff to the dump.”

“The dump?!” I said brightly. “I love the dump!”

“I know,” she remarked. “That’s where most of this stuff probably came from in the first place. You go to the dump with a bag of trash and come back with five bags.”

“This is all useful stuff,” I protested. “See that pile of vintage bricks? Do you know what you pay for vintage bricks these days? And see over there? No, over there underneath all those matted vines near the roll of rusty chicken wire. Those are pressure-treated four-by-fours from the old garden fence. Fantastic stuff. Lasts practically forever. I bet those have been lying there for 20 years and they’re still almost as good as new.”

That impressed her. “Twenty years,” she said under her breath. “Twenty (bleeping) years.”

“Yep. Easily.”

“What are those...those square things?” she said, pointing to a tumbled pile of concrete blocks.

“Cinder blocks. Can you believe someone threw those out?”

“Seriously,” she said. “What would you ever use those for?”

“Oh, I don’t know. Maybe build some steps or a retaining wall. Maybe someday I’ll want to sink a dead body in deep water. Who knows?”

Unconvinced, she went over and tugged at one of the cinder blocks. “God,” she said. “What are all these vines, anyway?” They’re all over the place.”

“Um. Looks sort of like poison ivy.”

The next day it became clear, even to her, that when it comes to clutter, sometimes sloth is safer than industry. Particularly if you’re not wearing gloves.

Jim Hallas

Rivereast Hours of Operation

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gets cannot be reduced from the current year. Zero increase is allowed, but reduction is not. The BOE budget is created taking into account potential state funding. Any funding that the state provides this year is in no way guaranteed for the next year. So if the state decides not to provide funding for next year, equal to this year, the taxpayers of EH will have to make up the deficit, because the education budget cannot be reduced. That means more money out of your pocket, because the BOE won't cut spending.

The BOE referendum failed because officials again failed to listen to the majority of voters in EH. When voters speak clearly at the ballot box, they expect meaningful corrections, not small changes, token cost reductions, or worse yet, no changes at all. Voters of EH, be prepared for the onslaught of emotional extortion using the kids as cannon fodder, alleged voter ignorance, lame excuses, finger-pointing, name-calling, weak solutions, political double-talk, and self-serving justifications as to why a reduced BOE budget is not possible.

We can still vote 'no' until you listen.

Regards,
Bob Yenknner – East Hampton

Recognition and Appreciation

To the Editor:
Our grateful thanks to those Town of East Hampton employees and civic-minded resident(s) whom assisted in the completion of the needed maintenance repairs to the Jim Wild memorial fountain within Sears Park. This fountain had been sadly vandalized and sat dormant and non-functioning unfortunately for quite some time. Many friends and folks had generously donated having this monument dedicated years ago serving those who frequented our park.

Our town residents should continue to respect and recognize the care necessary for all monuments and sites as well as our lake. Up-keeping Sears and the lake provides all attendees, residents and park program participants a valuable enjoyable site. Let all townsfolk continue to greatly appreciate Sears and those responsible for its care and continuing existence.

Our thanks for the efforts made in finally restoring this monument's functionality.

The Jim Wild Family
East Hampton

Please Vote 'Yes'

To the Editor:
I was so disappointed to hear our East Hampton school budget failed to pass on our 3rd referendum. Having taught in our schools for over 20 years, and having served on our school board both in the seventies and after retirement, I felt the need to write.

These are challenging times. We're all fighting steadily increasing costs, but our school system is fighting inflation too. In addition, many expenses are fixed. Contracts have been negotiated; programs have been mandated. There is little flexibility. The programs remaining are carefully considered ones serving specific needs

I am often amazed by the accomplishments of former students. East Hampton is blessed with an amazing student body; some needing support, some needing challenge. Exposure to music, art, drama, sports can enrich, even change, lives. These additional programs strive to serve a diverse student population with various needs.

As a teacher, I have found incredible encouragement and cooperation for our mission. I have always thought of our community as a team. Our students deserve and need your support. Please vote "yes" on Aug. 26th.

Carol Lane – East Hampton

The Definition of Insanity

To the Editor:
Can someone explain why the BoE, BoF, TC are spending your tax dollars on a fourth referendum with no changes from the third go-around?

A definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. For the life of me, I cannot come up with any reason why we are throwing away money and time voting on the same numbers, a second time around. Elections/referendums cost money and time for elections workers.

I will be voting 'no' again to the BoE budget. Get out and vote. Wednesday, Aug. 26, at the Town Hall, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. It's easy and only takes a few minutes. Or you can stop into the town hall Town Clerk's office during regular hours to vote absentee. This is the most important vote as it directly affects your "pocketbook" and your quality of life in our lovely town.

Lori Wilcox – East Hampton

Voting 'No' Again

To the Editor:
Voters have said 'no' to the education budget three times. Lasting reductions have still not been made. We are being asked to vote on the same dollar amount!

Accepting generous donations to keep programs alive for THIS year will still need to be paid for next year – on top of contractual and utility obligations. This is not the reduction in spending that voters asked for.

Join me in voting 'no' again on Wednesday, Aug. 26, at Town Hall.

Sincerely,
Melissa H. Engel – East Hampton
Note: Engel is chair of the East Hampton Republican Town Committee.

Gratitude Amidst the Budget Mess

To the Editor:
East Hampton's budget season has been especially chaotic this year, resulting in a fourth referendum set for Wednesday. Every time, writers like me tried to influence the vote. Facebook gets flooded with opinions and varying amounts of accurate information. Lawns and public spaces become a sign stand-off.

It's debatable whether any of these strategies influence residents in either direction. Most people have likely made up their mind well before heading to the polls. If anything, the messaging is more a reminder to go vote and less a battle of persuasion. (But if I'm wrong, please vote yes on Wednesday).

Amidst all the mess and uncertainty, the start of the school year is now less than a week away. With it are questions about an unsettled budget and concerns over beloved programs. Yet we've found a steady group of people who have dedicated themselves to preparing East Hampton for the year ahead and finding ways to engage the community in creative ways. These people may not ask for the credit, but they deserve our gratitude.

First, thank you to our educators and school leaders. Despite a muddled budget picture, classes have been assigned, teachers are already back, and East Hampton will be ready for the first day on Thursday. This was a tremendous accomplishment requiring hard work by many, much of which goes unseen and unappreciated.

Next, thank you to everyone doing the tasks that may go unnoticed but are equally important. This includes the facilities staff getting the buildings in order, the technology team prep-

See Letters, page 6

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Jamie Bell
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Sarah Fox
860-262-4424

52 SONOMA LN, MIDDLETOWN
UNDER CONTRACT
\$529,900
Mark Toledo
860-301-2339

49 OLD ACRES RD, EAST HADDAM
UNDER CONTRACT
\$499,900
Carolyn Kress
860-908-4716

64 BROADWAY ST, COLCHESTER
NEW TO MARKET
\$399,900
Sherry Borgeson
860-334-0095

134 LONGWOOD DR, EAST HADDAM
SEASONAL COTTAGE
\$320,000
Carolyn Kress
860-908-4716

127 LONGWOOD DR, EAST HADDAM
SEASONAL COTTAGE
\$304,900
Carolyn Kress
860-908-4716

113 DEEPWOOD DR, LEBANON
UNDER CONTRACT
\$304,900
Robyn Letourneau
860-918-3945

2 HAY FIELD RD, EAST HADDAM
LAKE HAYWARD
\$199,900
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★ *Letters, cont. from page 5*

ping computers and accounts, the nutrition staff setting food menus and programs, and the transportation employees getting routes set.

Finally, thank you to the groups and individuals who have stepped up as sponsors for the middle school sports programs that would have otherwise been lost. Through the generosity of several in the community, sports like soccer, cross country, and cheerleading have already been added back to EHMS. I hope this year is the exception and not the rule, and that we can restore athletics funding back to the budget. For now, you have provided a respite that will allow these programs to move forward, and we are grateful.

There are many more who deserve thanks and I apologize for all omissions. Just know that your efforts are appreciated, and regardless of the budget mess, this will be a great school year.

Sincerely,
Matt Engelhardt – East Hampton
Note: Engelhardt is a member of the East Hampton Board of Education and the East Hampton Democratic Town Committee, but said he is writing independently of both.

You Showed Great Openness

To the Editor:
I took the opportunity to read the following at the RHAM BOE meeting of Aug. 17:

Madame Chair, board members, Superintendent,

The first meeting of the new educational year, everyone stretching, rubbing their eyes, feeling the touch of any possible sunburn obtained. And now you begin.

I wanted to take a moment under public comment of this board meeting to express my sincere and huge appreciation for the experiment in public communications that you have embarked on. Such a course is risky and potentially acrimonious, but you listened over the last seven months to the difficulties encountered by institutions and individuals voiced during the budget discussions. And you showed great openness during that process.

And now you move to broaden this philosophy.

I hope this experiment will help us weather the coming challenges that will beset your institution, those of the hosting town, all communities of your district and all citizens living there.

Terry McManus – Hebron

No Better Choice Than Weir

To the Editor:
I am writing in strong support of Steve Weir’s re-election to the Connecticut House of Representatives for the 55th District. I have known Steve for nearly 30 years and cannot think of anyone who has worked harder for the people he represents.

As a retired Glastonbury police officer, I worked with Steve directly and later took over his role as Crime Prevention and Community Outreach Officer. His impact on Glastonbury’s seniors and the Riverfront Community Center was lasting. For more than a year, people still accidentally called me “Steve” because of the impression he had made. He cared deeply about people, brought forward-thinking ideas to the department, and got things done.

One of Steve’s greatest strengths is his ability to listen. At the Glastonbury Apple Fest, he always remembered my wife’s and daughters’ names and took a real interest in our conversations. He listens to Democrats and Republicans alike, and when a concern is valid, he fights for that person regardless of party affiliation. That is exactly the kind of representative we need.

I have watched Steve serve this community as a small business owner, police officer, realtor, and founder of American Integrity Restoration. His career reflects a consistent commitment to service, and his deep Glastonbury roots make him well suited to represent us.

Steve is also a devoted family man and a familiar presence far beyond his district. Years ago, at a lake gathering in Columbia, a small helicopter flew overhead and people immediately said, “There goes Steve Weir.” He knew we were there and flew by to say hello. That moment captured how connected he is to the people around him.

I am not usually active in politics, but after knowing Steve for so long, I am confident he is the right person for the job. His 100% voting record shows that he shows up, stays informed, and takes his responsibilities seriously.

To me, there is no better choice. I would rather be represented by someone with deep hometown roots and a real understanding of our community. I urge everyone to vote for Steve Weir. He is an impressive person and a good friend.

James Kennedy
Retired Glastonbury Police Officer

Passion Is Not the Problem

To the Editor:
A resident quoted in last week’s *Rivereast* said, “The politics of this town are terrible.” I agree that Colchester’s political climate has become unhealthy. But this did not suddenly happen during the current budget debate. It has been developing for years.

Colchester residents are passionate about their town, its schools, its services and the cost of sustaining them. That passion is not the problem. Disagreement is a necessary part of representative government.

The problem begins when legitimate questions about policy, spending and procedure are answered by questioning the character or motives of the people asking them.

A current example is the nearly \$25,000 increase in the First Selectman’s salary reflected in the latest budget proposal. But my question concerns what happened last November: What legal authority permitted the Board of Selectmen to raise that salary during the fiscal year without action by Town Meeting?

Connecticut General Statutes §7-460 says municipal compensation is fixed through the municipality’s legislative body. In Colchester, that is Town Meeting, and the budget receives final approval through a successful referendum.

Instead of receiving a citation to a different state statute or town policy, I get attacks on my character and motives. Is that who we are? Really?

The word “misinformation” has also become a frequently used smear. Too often, the person using it never identifies the allegedly incorrect statement or offers facts correcting it. A label is not a rebuttal.

The same standard should apply following two failed budget referendums. Citizens who voted ‘no’ should not be dismissed as misinformed, selfish or opposed to education. Their votes represent a legitimate demand for greater affordability and accountability.

If someone questions a budget, answer with numbers. If someone questions legal authority, identify that authority. If someone questions why a position exists, identify the essential function it performs and explain why those responsibilities cannot be absorbed elsewhere. If a claim is incorrect, correct it with facts rather than insulting the person who made it.

We do not need to agree with one another to

treat one another with respect. If we truly want a kinder Colchester, honesty and facts must remain at the center of our public debate.

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

Route 2 Construction

To the Editor:
The active construction zones on Route 2 in Colchester have crossed the line from a temporary inconvenience to an unacceptable public safety crisis. Over the last few months, we have witnessed a series of catastrophic accidents, including a tragic fatality in May and multiple tractor-trailer rollouts down highway embankments.

This infrastructure overhaul spans two major state projects totaling over \$74 million, managed by contractors American Roma JV and Empire Paving. While these road repairs are necessary, the execution of the active lane patterns, narrow shifts, and poor nighttime visibility is a dangerous debacle. It is only a matter of time before another life is lost.

When Route 2 shuts down due to these crashes, the burden falls entirely on Colchester. Our local roads clog with gridlock, and our local first responders are stretched thin managing hazardous fuel spills and secondary collisions.

Because Route 2 is a state highway, individual resident complaints are easily brushed aside by the CTDOT bureau in Hartford. We need our local leadership to step in. I am publicly urging First Selectman Bernie Dennler and the Board of Selectmen to use the full weight of their offices to formally demand that CTDOT conduct an immediate emergency safety audit of both work zones.

The state and its contractors must re-evaluate these hazardous lane configurations, improve reflective marking visibility, and protect the motorists traveling through our town before more people are injured or killed.

Denis Cardell – Colchester

Historical Hebron

To the Editor:
It was exciting to read two articles in last week’s *Rivereast* featuring the Hebron Historical Society and our remarkable history. Thank you to Mary-Ellen and Bob Gonci for representing Hebron at Fort Ticonderoga and answering the roll call for our brave Revolutionary War patriots. Men like Captain Abijah Rowlee, Captain Elisha Beach and Lieutenant Samuel Filer acted with courage and sacrifice, gaining a notable place in the pivotal events of 1776. The capturing of the cannon at Fort Ticonderoga was a critical moment during the early days of the Revolutionary War. Led by Colonel Henry Knox, a group of 59 cannon were then dragged 300 miles over ice and snow to be placed on Dorchester Heights, leading directly to the evacuation of the British from Boston.

You can learn about our Revolutionary War heroes and so much more at the groundbreaking new exhibition at the Hebron Historical Society. Opening on September 6th at the Old Town Hall, located on Route 66, will be “Defining a Sense of Place in an Age of Cyberspace.” If you haven’t been to the Historical Society in while, I strongly encourage you to stop by, the transformation has been remarkable. A multi-year effort to restore the historic 1838 building and re-imagine the gallery space has resulted in the opportunity to directly engage with thousands of years of dynamic history. Special thanks to historian John Baron, President Sue Porter, Board member Geoff Kirkham and all the members of the Historical Society’s Board of Directors for a job well done.

We are so fortunate to have such a compelling, diverse and unique history that truly offers a vital sense of place. As we embrace our living history and gather at a town meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 18th, to vote to acquire the property at 9 Pendleton Drive, I hope our town leaders and residents will continue to embrace the history that surrounds us. One of the few places left in Hebron that would be recognizable to Captain Abijah Rowlee, Captain Elisha Beach and Lieutenant Samuel Filer is the historic property at 17 Kinney Rd. The acquisition of 9 Pendleton Drive will allow access from this historic site to the very center of town. The engagement with historic tourism and outdoor recreation offers our community the opportunity to participate in a sustainable multimillion dollar a year industry. For more information please visit Save Hebron Center on Facebook.

Sincerely,
Kevin J. Tulimieri – Amston

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A Tremendous Success
To the Editor:
We would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who helped make this year's National Night Out and Fireworks celebration in Colchester such a tremendous success.

The event brought together families, friends, neighbors, first responders, community organizations, and local leaders in a way that truly showcased the spirit of our town. National Night Out is an important opportunity to strengthen relationships between residents and the police and public safety personnel who work tirelessly to keep our community safe. It was wonderful to see so many people enjoying the evening and connecting with one another.

The fireworks display was a spectacular finale and provided a memorable experience for attendees of all ages. Events like these do not happen without countless hours of planning, coordination, and volunteer support. A special thank you goes to our sponsor Colchester Pizza, town staff, public safety personnel, volunteers, and vendors who contributed their time and effort to make the evening so enjoyable.

Colchester is fortunate to have such dedicated individuals and organizations committed to building a strong sense of community. The success of this event reflects the pride and teamwork that make our town a special place to live.

Thank you for another outstanding National Night Out and Fireworks celebration. We look forward to many more years of this cherished community tradition.

Sincerely,
Tiffany Quinn, Director
Colchester Parks and Recreation

We Already Voted This Budget Down

To the Editor:
The Board of Education (BoE) claimed the only budget reductions possible were to the pre-school program and school sports. After voters rejected the budget in the last referendum, the district found funding for both programs. Now it is asking taxpayers to approve essentially the same budget they already rejected.

Credit goes to the mom who secured pre-school funding when the BoE didn't even try. That effort shows the BoE had not exhausted every option to ease the burden on taxpayers or to protect services so many voters wanted preserved. A private citizen had to step in to save the day.

Voters wanted lower spending, not simply different tax sources. The preschool money still comes from taxes, just at the state level. What happens next year when one-time grants and donations run out? Passing this budget only delays the problem. Is the BoE counting on another mom to save the day, or will it simply demand more from local taxpayers?

I'm told the combined town and BoE budget relies on roughly a combined \$1 million in one-time state aid this year. Officials appear prepared to shift that full amount to local taxpayers next year on top of any additional increases they will undoubtedly seek.

If the budget passes, the previous referendum will have accomplished little beyond exposing the BoE's failure.

A third-party audit of school staffing is needed to identify genuine efficiencies, protect the programs residents value, and reduce the burden on taxpayers. Until we get that level of transparency, taxpayers must vote 'no,' especially to a budget they already squashed in a previous referendum.

Bryon Turner – East Hampton

East Hampton BOE Budget
To the Editor:

I am an East Hampton resident and I am writing to express my disappointment with the failed Board of Education budgets for 2026-2027. I believe, as I think all parents do, that our children's education is paramount to their success in the future.

This past week, we had two distinctly different letters in the *Rivereast* regarding the BOE budget's failure to pass. One letter speaks of the importance of our children's education, and its impact on their lives and their future, while the other says the BOE should cut spending and listen to the "majority" of the voters. That writer spoke of the ratio of school staff numbers to the student numbers versus the ratio of the town employees numbers to the population of the whole town of East Hampton, calling the difference "out of balance."

Using the ratio numbers provided in that letter, there is 1 town employee per 53 residents vs 1 school employee for 8 students. Indeed, a big

difference, if you believe that 1 school employee is enough for 53 students. Of course we don't know who would manage the school office, what teacher would be able to handle all of the different course curriculums, who would serve lunch, sweep the floors and coach the athletic teams. I'm not familiar with any teacher, in my life, capable of all that. Yes, the budget for all those school employees and the physical schools, cost a lot more than the other 243 town employees, but both are important and very, very different.

Nonetheless, all proposed budgets require consideration and examination. I understand that increased budget amounts, every year, are not desirable to those who struggle to keep up, especially in addition to the incredible increase in the valuations of everyone's homes in our little town. But I fear our town won't be willing to keep up with the needs of our future generations if they continue to vote down this BOE budget.

Some say the BOE is not getting the message. I think it's the other way around.

Get out and vote 'yes' for our kids' future,
Terry Sprankle – East Hampton

Stay Informed
To the Editor:
As chair of the Colchester Board of Finance (BOF), I want to provide residents with an update as we continue working toward adoption of both a town and Board of Education (BOE) budget.

Budget development is rarely a straight line. It is an iterative process that moves through multiple stages as elected officials work to find the right balance between affordability for taxpayers and the programs and services our community expects and values.

Following the outcome of Referendum 2, the Board of Finance carefully discussed next steps as we reacted to the message sent by voters. Over the past several weeks, BOF members have participated in multiple meetings with representatives from the BOE/schools, town, and citizens and this resulted in bipartisan alignment on the reductions applied at our Aug 10 meeting. Our focus was on responding to community concerns while seeking to preserve essential services even as some had to be removed or slimmed down.

The revised town and Board of Education budgets that will be voted on at Referendum 3 on Sept. 1 reflect those efforts. Together, these budgets result in a proposed mill rate increase of 0.51 mills. For the average residential property in Colchester, that equates to approximately \$9 per month, or about \$108 per year, in additional property taxes. The proposed town budget is \$19,060,237 (a reduction of \$293,533

from round 2) and the proposed BOE budget is \$48,791,797 (a reduction of \$577,010 from round 2).

No budget will perfectly satisfy every resident. However, our goal remains the same: to develop a fiscally responsible budget that maintains critical services, supports our schools, and respects the financial realities facing Colchester taxpayers. These budget numbers will result in reductions in services and programs, and details around those impacts were also laid out and discussed for the public to understand.

I encourage all residents to stay informed and review the budget information that has been made available – see the BOF meeting recordings or the first selectman's newsletter for a summary as a good place to start. And please be sure to vote in Referendum 3 on Sept. 1. Your engagement is an important part of the process, and your vote helps shape the future of our community.

Karen A. Belding, Chair
Colchester Board of Finance

I Cannot Support the BOE Budget
To the Editor:

I commend the parents who fought to preserve programs important to their children. Unfortunately, they are doing what the Board of Education and Superintendent should have done: cut costs, secure grants, or find outside funding.

Because the Board of Finance did not permanently restore these programs, they received a one-year stay. We will be right back here next year.

Whenever the BOE does not receive exactly what it requests, programs valued by parents and students seem to be the first threatened. Taxpayers are tired of the shell games and threats. We want accountability.

With declining enrollment, has the BOE seriously examined staffing? Consider:

- High school counselors: EHHS has approximately 500 students and three counselors – about 165 students per counselor. ASCA recommends 250:1. Two counselors would put EHHS at approximately that ratio. Eliminating one position could save an estimated \$150,000–\$200,000 in salary and benefits – potentially enough to fund both programs parents just fought to preserve.
- Memorial School nurses: Approximately 502 students have two nurses. Historically, national guidance has referenced staffing benchmarks around one nurse per 750 healthy students. If specific student medical needs justify two positions, taxpayers should be shown the data supporting that staffing level.
- Math and reading intervention: Why are certified teachers being used for students who simply need extra help? Put those teachers back in class-

rooms and, where additional support is needed, use trained paraprofessionals under appropriate supervision at significantly lower cost.

- Middle school library: A certified teacher staffs a position traditionally handled by a paraprofessional. What measurable benefit justifies the additional cost?

These are the questions that should be asked before threatening programs affecting large numbers of students.

Many residents have suggested an independent review of the BOE budget. I don't know whether state requirements would allow it, but if there truly isn't a wasted dollar, an independent review should be welcomed, not feared.

Three failed referendums sent a message: taxpayers want accountability and sustainable changes – not temporary fixes.

I cannot support a BOE budget that continues this cycle. Stop threatening valued programs and start examining staffing, spending, and where the money is actually going.

Ted Hintz Jr.
Member, East Hampton Town Council

Weir Is a Nice Guy; That's Not Enough
To the Editor:

Recent letters have praised Steve Weir as a kind, accessible, hard-working man. I believe every word. If we were choosing a neighbor of the year, he would get my vote.

But we are choosing a legislator, and a legislator's job is not proclamations and ribbon cuttings. It is votes. His admirers point to his perfect attendance. Perfect attendance is fine, but only if those votes support our community. Consider what four years of showing up has produced.

This May the House passed the budget adjustment, SB 1, by 127-21. It carries roughly \$630,000 in new aid for the five towns of the 55th: about \$98,000 for Andover, \$270,000 for Hebron, \$149,000 for Marlborough, plus more for Bolton and eastern Glastonbury. Of the 49 Republicans voting, 28 said 'yes.' Weir voted 'no,' on money for his own towns.

After the Concierge Apartments disaster in Rocky Hill, where an out-of-state owner let a complex rot until thousands of tenants had to be relocated and the Attorney General had to extract over \$5 million, the legislature answered with SB 274. It passed the Senate and cleared committee unanimously. On the session's last night, Weir and a few allies threatened to run out the clock, and the bill died without a vote. Weir sits on the board of the Connecticut Apartment Association, whose president testified against the bill. Whose side was he on that

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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!



The News in Norway... Donna Marsden of East Hampton recently visited Norway, Sweden and Denmark. She's shown here at The Fjords in Norway with the *Rivereast News Bulletin*.



Greetings, Gus!... Kathy and David Norkeveck of Colchester were recently in Seeley Lake, Montana, for their nephew's wedding, and they went to visit Gus, America's largest larch tree. It was a beautiful forest, they said!



Camping with the Rivereast... Sadie Wong of Hebron went camping at Rocky Neck State Park, with her grandmother, Nancy of Colchester, and her great-grandmother, Judy of Madison.



Amish Paradise... Valerie LaVake and Lou Pavan recently spent a few fun days in Bird-in-Hand, Pa., enjoying the beautiful Amish countryside.

Where in the World?

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

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

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Senior Center Upcoming Trips

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

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

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

Ocean City, Maryland: Oct. 13-16, departure time TBD. Spend three nights directly on the beach. Cost is \$949/person (double or triple occupancy).

Christian Life Chapel News

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

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

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

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

Free Community Clothing Swap: Saturday, Aug. 22, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Bring your gently used clothes and accessories and swap them for other fun fashions.

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

★ *Letters, cont. from page 7*

night?
The pattern runs deeper. He voted no on requiring safety fences around swimming pools; it passed 102-45. He voted ‘no’ on ending child marriage in Connecticut; it passed 98-45. He was one of five ‘no’ votes on approving the State Police union contract, one of four against giving small businesses a single point of contact in state government, one of three against reappointing Judge Elizabeth Bozzuto, and the lone Republican ‘no’ on enforcing our boating laws.
This is not moderate versus conservative. When a bill passes 143-5 and your representative is one of the five, again and again, that is not independence. It is reflex.

A thousand ribbon cuttings do not make up for a no vote on your own towns’ aid. A hundred proclamations will not shelter a tenant or fence a pool. Steve Weir is a nice guy. That is not enough.

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.

We Can’t Afford A Third Weir Term

To the Editor:
I went looking for evidence that Steve Weir has delivered results for the 55th District. I visited his own campaign website, steveweirfortc.com, expecting to find a bill he authored, a dollar figure he brought back to our towns, or a law that eased the cost of living here. I found none. What’s there is attendance, community involvement, and general values language — no legislative accomplishments, no funding secured, no results claimed.

Then I looked at Ellen Paul’s site, ellenforstaterep.com, which lays out Weir’s actual voting record with bill numbers attached. According to her published account: he voted ‘no’ on early-childhood education funding, ‘no’ on property tax relief tied to modernizing the state’s school funding formula, ‘no’ on renewable energy and community solar projects that could lower our electric bills, and ‘no’ on paid sick days and paid family leave — this despite serving as Ranking Member of the Labor Committee. Her site also states he voted the Republican party line 96% of the time on contested bills.

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).

Setback League Starting Up

The St. Joseph’s Polish Club setback league starts Thursday, Sept. 3, at 6:45 p.m. Teams of two play seven games Thursday evenings for 28 weeks, followed by playoffs and a league banquet.

For more information or to sign up call Deb Crider at 860-204-1555 or Cindy Hardy at 860-823-9278.

Bible Baptist Church News

Colchester Bible Baptist Church holds Sunday School at 9:30 a.m., followed by the Sunday morning worship service is at 10:30 a.m. 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. Pastor Scott Rosen can be emailed at pastor@colchesterbible.org, and the church website is www.colchesterbible.org.

Meanwhile, our bills keep climbing. Property taxes are up. Gas, groceries, heating oil, and electricity cost more every month. Health insurance premiums have gotten so high that families are dropping coverage they can’t afford. This is precisely the moment a state representative should be delivering relief — not compiling a perfect attendance record while voting no on the bills meant to address it.

Ellen Paul is a librarian, nonprofit leader, and mother who has spent her career building coalitions and getting things done. Her platform speaks directly to what’s hurting us: property tax relief, affordable housing, and accountable energy policy that puts ratepayers first.

This November, or during early voting Oct. 19th through Nov. 1st, I’ll be voting for Ellen Paul.

Sincerely,

Karen Wilkinson – Marlborough

Note: Wilkinson is a member of the Marlborough Democratic Town Committee, but said she is speaking as an individual.



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Land Trust Upcoming Events

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

Trail Crew Volunteers Needed: The third Sunday of each month (weather permitting). Volunteers meet up at one of CLT’s properties each month to fight invasives, maintain meadows, and other needed stewardship tasks. This event is led by board member and stewardship chair Kevin Byrne, and he can be reached at: kevbyrnect@gmail.com. Trail

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

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

St. Andrew Church Cemetery Notice

Members of Guardian Angels Parish are working to clear St. Andrew New Cemetery and to help us preserve the beauty and dignity of this sacred place, we are working to clear the cemetery of items that interfere with mowing, routine maintenance, and the overall appearance of the grounds.

Families are asked to visit their loved one’s gravesite and remove any glass lights, rocks, ceramic pots, shepherd’s hooks, planted flowers, shrubs, trees, or other decorative items that are not permitted under the cemetery’s Rules and Regulations.

Please note the following:

Decorations are limited to one display per lot in a portable plastic or metal rectangular box

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, Aug. 24: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Haircuts with Deborah; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign, Senior Spotlight; 11 a.m.-noon, Fitness Orientation; 12:30 p.m., Mah Jongg, Bridge, Setback.

Tuesday, Aug. 25: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10:30 a.m., Healthy Food Series; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle, In the Know; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo.

Wednesday, Aug. 26: 9 a.m., Making Memo-

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.

placed no more than 10 inches from the monument.

As stated in the cemetery Rules and Regulations, trees, shrubs, flowers, bric-a-brac, lighting, and other plantings placed in the ground are not permitted and may be removed without notice.

Any non-permitted items remaining in the cemetery may be removed as part of this clean-up effort to ensure the cemetery can be maintained safely and respectfully.

If you have any questions, please refer to the Rules and Regulations that accompany your cemetery deed, or call the Guardian Angels Parish Office at 860-537-2355.

ries, Walking Group; 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Reflexology; 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, Aug. 27: 9 a.m., Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Wii Bowling; 11 a.m., Yoga; noon, Sr. Benefits Counseling; 12:05 p.m., Chair Massage; 12:30 p.m., Dominoes, Needlework Club; 12:30 p.m., Seasonal Crafts.

Friday, Aug. 28: 9 a.m., Social Service Hours, Open Art Studio; 10 a.m., Sit & Be Fit; 10:30 a.m., Choral Group, Lunch Bunch – Lenny & Joe’s; 11 a.m., Yoga; 1-3:30 p.m., Open Ping Pong; 1:15 p.m., Bingo.

Flamingo Felting Class: Monday, Aug. 31, 10 a.m. Needle felting is the art of sculpting wool. All are invited to come learn the process of creating a felt pink flamingo ornament. The cost of this program is \$10 per person and includes all the materials needed to complete one flamingo. Space is limited.

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, a music-driven fitness program, meets Sundays from 11 a.m.-noon, Aug. 23 and 30. Fee per week is \$12.

Zumba Gold, a low-impact, modified version of the standard Zumba fitness program, meets Sundays from 10-10:50 a.m., Aug. 23 and 30. Fee per week is \$12. Minimum number of participants needed is five, and maximum is 20.

For more information, visit www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department or call 860-537-7297.

The “East of the River” Real Estate Report

Building Versus Buying: What’s Changing?

For years, building a new home often came at a significant premium compared with buying an existing one. Today, that decision has become more complicated. One reason is the limited supply of existing homes. Many homeowners have low mortgage rates and aren’t eager to move, which has kept inventory tight and prices elevated.

At the same time, building isn’t inexpensive. Land, site work, septic systems, wells, permitting, labor, and materials can add significantly to the final cost—sometimes before construction of the house even begins.

But new construction offers something many buyers value: choice. Building allows buyers to select the layout, finishes, energy-efficient systems, and features they want without immediately budgeting for renovations. Newer homes may also require less maintenance during the first several years.

Existing homes have advantages too. They’re typically available sooner, are located in established neighborhoods, and may already include landscaping, finished basements, decks, sheds, or other improvements that can be expensive to add later.

So which is better?

It depends on your budget, timeline, desired location, and willingness to manage the building process.

As existing home prices have risen, building deserves a closer look than it may have in the past. The important comparison isn’t simply the purchase price—it’s what you’re getting for your money and what you’ll need to spend after moving in.

Market Snapshot – Past Week

Hebron, Andover, Marlborough, Colchester, East Hampton & Portland

Single-Family Homes	Condos
• 11 homes sold	• 0 sold
• Average sale price: \$435,954	
• Average sale-to-list ratio: 98%	
• Average days on market: 49 days	
• Median days on market: 27 days	

Results vary by price point, condition, and pricing strategy.



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Schools Ready to Open Despite Difficult Budget Season

By Toriana Williams

Alright kids, grab your backpacks! It's almost time for school.

Colchester Public Schools are getting ready to welcome students back for another year, all with familiar traditions, a new elementary school leadership structure and some changes shaped by the ongoing budget process.

The first day of school is Thursday, Aug. 27. Before students turn those empty hallways back into bustling ones, families will have several chances to visit the schools, meet teachers and get ready for the year ahead.

Colchester Elementary School and Jack Jackter Intermediate School will hold meet-and-greet events on Wednesday, Aug. 26. CES will host its event at 2 p.m., followed by JJIS at 3 p.m. Interim Superintendent of Schools Judy O'Meara said the events give the students a chance to get comfortable before the first morning.

"During that meet-and-greet time, they get to visit with the teachers and they get to walk around the school and just become familiar," said O'Meara. She added that students are usually eager to see their classmates and teachers again.

"The kids are very excited," she said. "Sometimes they're a little shy, but they're very excited when they get there and they see each other."

For incoming kindergarteners at CES, the meet-and-greet includes a special part of the whole school experience: a bus ride.

The goal is to help children become familiar with riding the school bus before the first day. For some young students, just climbing the bus steps and finding a seat can be a whole new experience. O'Meara said the bus ride is "very popular" with students and helps make the first morning less intimidating.

The district expects to start the year with at least 2,122 fully enrolled students. O'Meara said around 90 additional children were still in the process of completing their enrollment paperwork as well. Last year, the district had 2,057 students, showing an increase in enrollment for this year.

One of the biggest changes families will notice is at the elementary schools. Stacy Ewing will serve as principal of both CES and JJIS this year.

"She's very excited to do both," said O'Meara. Ewing has been working with assistant principals at both schools to prepare for the new school year. O'Meara said the leadership team is familiar with the schools and their staff, which should help with the transition.

"She's ready for this big change and ready to take this on," said O'Meara.

While there are some new developments, the district is also entering the school year amid a challenging budget process. O'Meara shared that the lack of an accepted budget is the district's biggest challenge heading into the year.

"Definitely not having a budget, that has been very stressful," she admitted.

The ongoing budget discussions have affected scheduling and planning. At one point, world language was among the areas considered for cuts. That led William J. Johnston Middle School and Bacon Academy to make several schedule changes.

The schedules were changed and later changed back, which has created uncertainty for students, families and teachers. "There were many, many changes," said O'Meara. "So their scheduling is not done yet."

The budget challenges also limited the number of new programs the district could add this year. One new course that is moving forward is a guitar program in the music department at Bacon Academy. The district will also continue working toward its existing academic goals, and one major goal involves the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, or NEASC.

Colchester is working with NEASC as the district evaluates its pre-k through 12 education program and seeks accreditation. The process will look at areas including the quality of learning, safety and continued instructional growth.

O'Meara described the work as a chance for the district to take a close look at what it offers students. "It's very exciting to be able to do this work together," she said.



No budget? No problem. The four schools in the Colchester Public Schools system are ready to welcome students back on Aug. 27. Photo by Colchester Public Schools.

Another program O'Meara said she is excited to watch continue growing is the East of the River Transition Academy, a collaboration with East Haddam. The program provides opportunities for adult special needs students and has continued to expand.

"That work has just offered so many opportunities for our students," said O'Meara. "And so that program just seems to keep growing."

The district is also focused on supporting teachers. While Colchester does not have a major influx of new teachers this year, it will hold a new teacher academy on Monday, Aug. 24. The full-day program is designed to help new teachers learn about Colchester Public Schools and help them feel supported as they begin their work.

"We host this day ... where we have teachers come in, and we spend an entire day with them," said O'Meara. She said teacher retention remains an important goal, particularly because the budget process can make the work environment more difficult.

"It's important to us to make sure that we take care of our teachers," shared O'Meara. "One of

our goals is to make sure we retain the teachers that we have."

Once the school year gets underway, families and community members will have more chances to visit the schools during open houses. JJIS's open house will be Sept. 1 at 5:30 p.m. Bacon Academy's will be Sept. 17 at 5:30 p.m. CES will hold its open house on Sept. 24 at 5:30 p.m. and William J. Johnston Middle School will host its event Oct. 1 at 5 p.m.

O'Meara said the district welcomes not only families but also members of the whole community to visit the schools and see what students are learning.

"We do welcome, not just families, but people of the community to be able to come out and visit our schools and see all of the great learning opportunities that our kids are able to experience," she said.

As students lace up their shoes to walk through the school's doors, O'Meara offered one last message for the year ahead.

"Be kind to others, be open to making new friends and have a growth mindset," she said.

Celebrate Colchester Returns Sept. 19

Celebrate Colchester, a family-friendly community festival that brings together residents, local businesses, organizations, artisans and performers, will return next month.

The event will be held Saturday, Sept. 19, from 1-5 p.m., on the Town Green.

Visitors can enjoy a variety of activities throughout the day, including: Local artisan and community vendors, Interactive activities for children and families, live DJ and concert with Sister Funk, food vendors and sweet treats, community organization exhibits, games, giveaways and raffle opportunities, bounce house, face-painting and Touch A Truck.

Celebrate Colchester emphasizes community involvement by featuring local businesses, nonprofits, schools, clubs, and civic organizations. Vendors are encouraged to create engaging,

family-friendly experiences by offering an activity at their booth, helping to make the event interactive for attendees of all ages.

Proceeds from vendor raffle basket donations benefit the Colchester Parks & Recreation Day Camp Scholarship Fund, helping ensure that local children have the opportunity to participate in summer camp regardless of financial circumstances.

Celebrate Colchester is presented by Colchester Parks & Recreation. For current event information, visit www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department.

Local vendors, businesses and organizations are welcome to participate in the event; if interested, email parksandrec@colchesterct.gov or call the office at 860-537-7297.

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★ Portland Schools, cont. from page 1

of 2027, along with the district's second graders, current Brownstone Intermediate School Principal Joe Santavenere will be making a big shift, trading the oldest elementary students for the youngest when he takes over kindergarten through second grade at Gildersleeve a year from now. For the former fifth grade teacher and current fifth and sixth grade principal, it'll be a big change.

Santavenere said he's excited for the coming year, which will be an interesting one in which all his students will graduate to middle school, with the fifth graders only spending one year at Brownstone before moving up along with the graduating sixth graders. While it will be a big difference, Santavenere said he doesn't think the kids are terribly fazed.

"I've been talking to a few kids about it," over the summer, he said, "but you know, kids are resilient, so ... they're probably not thinking about it as much as the adults are, you know? I think the kids are just like, 'Okay, we'll go wherever' and [they know] you're going to have the same teachers and we'll give you a great learning experience wherever, whatever building you're in."

While Santavenere said the kids are taking it is stride, he also said he knows that the start of the school year will mean the clock is ticking on his time at Brownstone School, which will convert to grades 3-5 in 2027-28 before being decommissioned once Valley View and Gilder-

sleeve are fully rebuilt in fall of 2031. Santavenere, who has taught and served as principal at Brownstone for 18 years now, will move to the current Gildersleeve building in fall of 2027. He said that makes this year, and his remaining time in the building, special.

"[Brownstone is] an important part of the history of this town and it's gone through basically everything," he said. "It's been a middle school. It's been high school. When you see people in the community and families who walk through here, they're like, 'I went to school here. This is where I had Mr. Carroll,' um, or whatever that teacher is, and they have memories here too. I think everyone knows [the schools plan] needs to happen, but it still is a bittersweet thing, just because this is a big part of the history of the town."

At Gildersleeve, Principal Tracey Graf is also gearing up for big changes, as she prepares to move her third and fourth grade classrooms and teachers over to Brownstone, where they will join the fifth grade classes next year before eventually returning to a newly renovated school in 2031.

"We have all these wonderful changes on the horizon that we are excited about, but we also want to make sure we are just here and enjoying this year too," she said, "because these little loves that are walking through the door, you know, for them, they don't care about 365 days from now. It's right now."

"So I think we're kind of caught between those two worlds," she added, "being very thoughtful and planning and spending time [figuring out] what is this move going to look like, but also just realizing like this is just a school year right now for our grades two, three and four in the building and we're excited about that."

She said it'll be a big change for some of her staff members, who will be missing their second grade colleagues when they move next year. She also said they've been planning for the future in both expected and unexpected ways. She mentioned their butterfly garden at the current Gildersleeve location and said that third grade teacher Colleen Brede was looking to get a grant to cover a new butterfly garden at the Brownstone location when they move next year.

"It's going to be a change for everybody, but an exciting one for sure," said Graf – and with a full year to go, there's plenty of time for both educators and students to live in the moment "where their feet are" this year.

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New Dental Practice Puts Down Roots in Colchester

By Toriana Williams

Radhee Sheth, the owner of Colchester Family Dental, believes that dentistry encapsulates more than just teeth, fillings and cleanings. She opened her office on Hayward Avenue in Colchester in January after spending four years working in Connecticut. She said her goal is to build a practice where patients feel known, cared for and comfortable.

“I went into dentistry because I loved the art and science of dentistry,” said Sheth. “I love working with my hands, I love the ability to change someone’s smile and oral health and I really love the relationships that come with being a healthcare provider.”

Her focus on relationships is clearly one of the most noticeable things about Sheth. She’s energetic, warm and quick to laugh, bringing an enthusiasm to conversations about dentistry that can be surprising considering many associate the profession with anxiety.

Sheth explained that anxiety is something she wants to address directly.

Her office, originally built in or around the 1800s, was purposely designed to feel more like a comfortable home than a traditional dental clinic. She said she worked with a color specialist and researched colors that could help create a calming environment. Around the office were weighted blankets, stuffed animals, fidget toys and more, for adult and child patients alike.

Every detail, she said, was chosen with the patient in mind.

“I just want my patients to feel like we have thought about every single thing,” said Sheth.

Her caring approach stems from her own experience in dentistry. Earlier in her career, Sheth worked in offices where she felt insurance, billing codes and corporate expectations could sometimes take priority over the patient.

“I didn’t want to feel like I was rushing from patient to patient or making treatment decisions based on a transaction,” she said. “I didn’t want my relationship with a patient to be reduced to a procedure, a code or what their insurance covered.”

Those experiences helped shape the kind of practice Sheth dreamed of.

“I want my patients to feel like they’re more than a number,” she said. “I want to know them, know their families, understand their concerns and be someone they can trust.”

Sheth shared that her philosophy is also reflected in the practice’s name. Colchester Family

Dental is here to serve patients of all ages, Sheth said, and her patients have ranged from about one year old to nearly 100.

She enjoys seeing families come through the office together, including multiple generations.

“It’s so sweet,” she said as she described families who come in and use their visits as a chance to catch up with one another.

Sheth’s interest in dentistry began with both the artistic and scientific sides of the profession and has continued her education since she graduated from dental school. She has completed advanced training, including education through the Kois Center, which focuses on evidence-based dentistry, diagnosis, risk assessment and individualized treatment planning.

“I strongly believe in continuing education,” said Sheth. “I continuously take courses since graduating because I never want to stop learning or become complacent.”

She said dentistry is constantly changing, and that continuing education allows her to keep up with new research, technology and clinical knowledge.

Sheth shared that she always tells her patients, “My signature is in your mouth.” Her practice offers a wide range of services, including preventative care, fillings, clear aligners and cosmetic treatments such as veneers and bonding, plus so much more. But Sheth doesn’t believe she has to perform every procedure herself.

“If there are things that I’m not good at or things that I know someone else can do better, I prefer to refer them out,” she explained. “At the end of the day, it’s my signature, and my patient deserves the best care possible.”

Sheth also views dental health through a broader lens. She believes dentists have a responsibility to try to find and identify potential problems because patients often see their dentists regularly, sometimes more often than they see other health care providers.

Her office uses advanced 3D CBCT imaging when there is a clinical reason for it. Sheth said the technology can provide information that traditional two-dimensional dental X-rays can’t show, including details involving the teeth, jaw, portions of the sinuses and airway.

She described a recent patient who came to the office with significant sinus problems. After an exam and imaging, they found an infection associated with a tooth that had previously gone unnoticed.



Radhee Sheth, left, opened Colchester Family Dental in January with the help of her team, which includes assistant Barbara Weaver, right, who Sheth lovingly calls her “backbone.” Photo contributed by Radhee Sheth.

“The patient wasn’t simply experiencing a tooth problem or a sinus problem. We needed to look at the bigger picture to understand what was actually happening,” said Sheth.

At the same time, Sheth said technology should never replace the relationship between a doctor and their patient.

“I think that is what modern dentistry should be: using technology and science to give us better information, but combining that with clinical experience, careful listening and a relationship with the patient,” she said.

That combination of modern dentistry and a welcoming, comfortable atmosphere was part of the reason Sheth chose to build the practice from the ground up. She never expected to open a startup dental practice while also raising a young child with her husband. But building the office herself gave her the chance to design it around her own philosophy.

“One of the most rewarding parts is I got to custom design everything based on what I want my patients to feel,” she said. “So they walk in and they feel at home.”

Opening the practice came with plenty of work, including coordinating contractors, plumbers and equipment. Sheth described her phone becoming overloaded with messages in a matter of minutes as she tried to keep everything moving.

“Looking back, I would do it the same way all over again,” she smiled.

She also emphasized that she did not build the practice alone. She credited her team, including assistant Barbara Weaver, hygienist Daniella, receptionist Alayna and insurance coordinator Lisa.

Sheth described Weaver, who worked with her at her previous practices, as “my backbone.”

She also said her team shares her desire to serve the community. When Sheth floated the idea for a future pro-bono dental day for veterans, she said none of them asked whether they would be paid.

“They’re like, ‘No, we volunteer,’” said Sheth. “That melts my heart.”

Giving back is an important part of Sheth’s plans for Colchester Family Dental. She hopes to hold a free dental day for active-duty and former service members and their families around Veterans Day. She also wants to work with the local library on children’s health education and connect with the senior center and local parent groups.

Her first open house showed her that the

community was interested in what she was building. More than 80 people attended, according to Sheth.

“Patients are literally helping us build this practice,” she said. “I tell my team, it’s not me who’s building it – we are building it.”

The community is even reflected in the practice’s logo. The design includes a family, a molar shaped like the trunk of a tree, and roots.

The family represents Sheth’s belief that patients should be treated like family. The molar trunk represents strength, growth and longevity, while the roots represent both getting to the root of a dental problem and Sheth putting down her own roots in Colchester.

For Sheth, her logo is a promise about what she hopes her practice will become.

“This community is not simply where I opened a dental practice,” she said. “It’s where I hope to grow, build relationships, give back and become a lasting part of the community.”

That hope is the root of Sheth’s approach.

“At the end of the day, I’m not interested in building a drill-and-fill practice where someone comes in, gets a procedure and leaves,” she said. “I want to build relationships. I want to earn trust, not simply earn a patient.”

Sheth also said she wants patients to see the person behind the white coat and know that she genuinely cares about them.

“Being a doctor isn’t always about fixing something,” she said. “Sometimes it’s about showing up, listening, being present and caring for the person in front of you.”

History Museum Open Sundays

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

Abundant Life Church News & Notes

Abundant Life Church, a Christ-follower church that believes in salvation through Jesus Christ, is located at 85 Skinner Rd. Worship is in person at 10:30 a.m. Sunday.

Adult Sunday Bible School: Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Bible Study for Women: Every Wednesday at 10 a.m. at Sweet Aroma, Colchester.

Bible Study: Every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

Prayer Meetings: Thursdays, 10 a.m. and Fri-

days, 6:30-8:30 p.m. There is also a brief meeting for pre-service prayer on Sundays at 10:15 a.m.

Men’s and Women’s Breakfast: Meets monthly on Saturdays at 8 a.m. The men meet the first Saturday of the month, and the women meet the third Saturday of the month.

Children’s Church: Meets Sunday mornings after worship service.

Call the church office at 860-537-3082 for more information, or visit AbundantL.com.

Ukrainian Catholic Church News

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

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

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.



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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.westchestercongregation.org for login information. Sunday School for children meets during the worship service.

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

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

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

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

CCT to Hold Auditions for Frozen

Colchester Community Theatre has scheduled auditions for its February 2027 production of *Disney's Frozen* through special arrangement with MTI.

In the beautiful mountainous kingdom of Arendelle, Princesses Anna and Elsa grow up sheltered inside their castle, isolated from the world and increasingly distant from each other. When Elsa is crowned queen, the magical powers she's desperately tried to conceal from her sister take control, and she flees into the mountains. As a ferocious winter descends on Arendelle, Anna sets off on an epic journey to find Elsa and bring her home – with the help of hardworking ice harvester Kristoff, his loyal reindeer Sven, and a happy-go-lucky snowman named Olaf. Full of magic, humor, and a stunning musical score, *Frozen* is a powerful tale of sisterhood, acceptance, and finding the real meaning of true love.

Auditions will be held Sunday, Oct. 4, from 2:30-4:30 p.m., and Monday, Oct. 5, from 6:30-8:30 p.m., at the Congregation Ahavath Achim (Colchester Synagogue) on 84 Lebanon Ave.

Please prepare 32 bars of a song that showcases your voice. An accompanist will be provided. No a cappella or backing tracks, please. Sides from the show will be available at auditions. All auditionees should be prepared to move. Please bring comfortable clothes and appropriate footwear (jazz shoes or sneakers) to learn a brief dance combination.

To sign up for auditions and receive additional information regarding the musical, please visit www.colchestercommunitytheatre.com. CCT is seeking a diverse and talented cast ages 16 and up. Young Anna and Young Elsa are open to performers in Grade 6 and up, while Olaf is open to performers in Grade 6 through adult. Please refer to the character breakdown on the website.

For more information, email info@colchestercommunitytheatre.com.

Show dates for this production are Feb. 12, 13 and 14. Anyone who is unable to attend the auditions on the above dates must contact us before Oct. 4 to make other arrangements.



9/11-Inspired Tribute... Colchester resident Robert Carley has a new photo exhibit, which will go on display at Slater Memorial Museum in Norwich on Sept. 12 and run through early December. About 150 photos from all over the country will be displayed, with stories about how Carley located them. For 25 years, Carley has been chronicling 9/11-inspired flag tributes with his camera, and has traveled to 46 states. One of the photos, of a house in Lewiston, Maine, is shown here.

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The Glastonbury Citizen & Riverast News Bulletin

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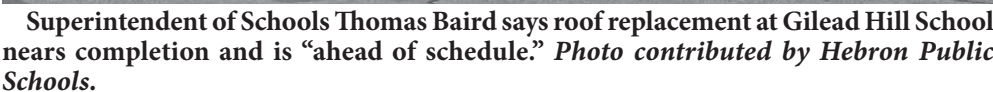
Hebron Schools Usher in New Year with Changes

By Toriana Williams

“It’s such an undertaking to disassemble a

Personal property tax bills may be paid through Sept. 1 without penalty. Payments received/postmarked Sept. 2 or later will be subject to interest retroactively to the Aug. 1 due date in accordance with Connecticut General

Students will also have access to a new in-district special education program for students who have greater social, emotional and behavioral needs. The program will serve students in



The district has moved from having a prin-

Farming was introduced about 1,000 years ago. Requiring cleared land, various types of agriculture have reshaped Hebron until the late 20th century when former fields became suburban developments. Stonewalls throughout town resulted from clearing the forest allowing the topsoil of millennia to erode exposing glacial rocks below. Lumber, livestock and crops became local commodities that linked Hebron in to a vibrant trade with the West Indies that brought sugar, rum and slaves in return. Manufactories using waterpower required the construction of mill ponds and raceways preventing salmon and other fish from spawning. Cotton mills processed Southern cotton into usable cloth shipped back South to provide slave

Baird also shared a message for the kids: "We miss them, and we can't wait to see them again."

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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., Willimantic.

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.

Senior Center News & Notes

Russell Mercier Senior Center has announced the following programs. For more information, 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 or stopping in.** If the program has a fee you must pay at the time of registration with cash or check. Register at the programs/transportation office window.

Special Events: End-of-Summer Cookout: Wednesday, Aug. 26, 12:30 p.m. Menu will consist of cheeseburgers, beans, pasta salad, watermelon, and cake. Games will also be offered.

Beginner’s Paint Along: Monday, Aug. 31, 1 p.m. You’ll be led step by step through a beach scene painting, using gouache paint (similar to watercolors) on paper. All materials will be provided; no experience necessary.

Trips: UConn Dairy Bar: Thursday, Aug. 27, 1 p.m. Cost is \$2 plus money for your ice cream.

The Big E: Wednesday, Sept. 23. Cost \$5 per person; tickets can be purchased online or at the gate. It’s Connecticut day at the Big E! Sign-up begins Aug. 24 for Hebron residents and Sept. 8 for non-residents.

Annie at the Goodspeed Opera House with Lunch at the Gelston House: Thursday, Dec. 3. Cost is \$112 per person (includes transportation, ticket, and lunch). Space is limited; pur-

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★ *RHAM Schools, cont. from page 1*

classes but lost the ability to continue the program when its certified teacher left. However, a teacher already working in the district has since earned certification to teach the course, allowing the program to return. The kids will need to sharpen not only their pencils but their knives too this year.

McNamara said the district is excited to bring back opportunities that teach students practical skills. “Having those types of practical classes, where students learn real life skills, is really beneficial to them,” he said.

The high school will also introduce Marine Science, Music Sampler, AP Business with Personal Finance and AP Cybersecurity. For McNamara, these new courses are part of a larger goal to prepare students for life after high school. The district has also continued to expand opportunities for students to earn college credits while still in high school.

McNamara recalled meeting a former student who had earned enough college credits through RHAM to finish college in three years. He said the opportunity can save families a significant amount of money.

“When you think about it, a family is saving anywhere from \$25,000 to \$50,000 on a year’s worth of college tuition,” said McNamara.

Academically, the district will continue working to improve instruction and student achievement. McNamara praised RHAM’s staff and said teachers will continue their professional development based on an instructional framework developed several years ago.

The framework focuses on “core competencies and core attributes” that the district wants to see consistently across classrooms at both schools, according to McNamara. However, some of the district’s biggest work this year will happen outside the classroom.

RHAM is beginning discussions about major facility needs at both schools. The high school is more than 20 years old, while the middle school has undergone a major renovation. McNamara said both buildings need significant work, including roof replacements and new heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.

The district is also looking at replacing the high school’s tennis courts, which are used by both the school teams and by community members. “We’ve got some facility needs that are pretty significant,” said McNamara.

The goal is to plan ahead rather than wait for major systems to fail. McNamara compared the process to maintaining a home.

“I don’t want to get hit with all the huge costly

WAIM (Windham Area Interfaith Ministry) is a social-service nonprofit that serves Andover and Hebron, as well as Ashford, Bolton, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Hampton, Lebanon, Mansfield, Storrs, Scotland, Willington, Windham and Willimantic.

For more information, call 860-456-7270 ext. 104 or Kathy Callahan at 860-228-0873.

chase tickets by Oct. 3.

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: Tech Connect Appointments, 9-11 a.m.; 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: Weekly Shopping Trip (locations vary), 8:15 a.m.; 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.

repair bills,” he said. “It’s probably a better idea to put a new roof on the home instead of constantly repairing and patching your old one.”

RHAM will spend time during the year figuring out which projects should come first and educate residents about the needs. A special BOE meeting is scheduled for Sept. 10 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the facility projects and help determine priorities. McNamara said the biggest challenge will be deciding which projects need to be addressed first because RHAM has a long list of needs.

“We have a long list of things that need to be done, and we have to prioritize those things,” he said.

McNamara shared that the district also expects to face some of the financial challenges that affected last year’s budget process. The district’s budget went to referendum three times before it finally passed. He said rising costs for materials, equipment and personnel, along with limited financial resources, will continue to affect RHAM and its three member towns.

“I anticipate some similar challenges this year because I think that our three member towns are all dealing with the same things that we’re dealing with,” said McNamara. He added that the district plans to be careful about spending while also communicating openly with residents.

School officials hope more communication will help residents understand why certain decisions are being made and what the schools need.

As students begin to shuffle back into classrooms, however, McNamara’s focus remains on getting them involved in school life.

His message to students is to take advantage of the opportunities available to them. “We have so many clubs, we have so many athletic opportunities,” he said. Students can participate in e-sports, music, bands, chorus, skiing and skateboarding, among a plethora of other activities.

“Don’t just come to school and then go home at the end of the school day,” he said. “There’s so much going on here.”

RHAM will hold its high school open house on Wednesday, Sept. 9, at 6 p.m. The middle school open house will be held Wednesday, Sept. 23, at 6 p.m.

For McNamara, the start of a new school year is just as much about bringing students and staff back together as it is about supplies and curriculum.

“I’m excited for the start of another school year,” he said. “I look forward to having our students and staff back.”

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. The weekly bulletin is at gileadchurchucc.updates.church.

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

This Week: Saturday, Aug. 22, 9:30 a.m. – Wise Warrior Yoga in Garden; Sunday, Aug. 23, 9:30 a.m. – Outdoor Worship Service in Garden, weather permitting (in person and livestreamed); Sunday, Aug. 23, 11 a.m. – Card-

Making with Gayle in Fellowship Hall Classroom; Monday, Aug. 24, 9:30 a.m. – Online Bible Study via Zoom; Tuesday, Aug. 25, 7:30 p.m. – AA Meeting in Fellowship Hall; Wednesday, Aug. 26, 9:30 a.m. – Wise Warrior Yoga in the Garden; Wednesday, Aug. 26, 10:45 a.m. – Book Group in the Social Hall.

Upcoming Events: Outdoor Garden Summer Worship: This Sunday, Aug. 23, at 9:30 a.m. All are invited for worship in Gilead’s Garden. Bring a lawn chair, water, and dress for the weather.

Card-Making with Gayle: This Sunday, Aug. 23, 11 a.m. Create one-of-a-kind seasonal cards. Cost is \$15 per class with a portion of proceeds benefitting the CT Food Bank.

Church World Services Hygiene Kit Assembly: Sunday, Aug. 30, 11 a.m. Help pack essential supplies for those in need.

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.

Hebron Day: Aug. 29, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at Veterans Parks and St. Peter’s Pickleball Courts.

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.

Home Alone Safety for Kids: Saturday, Sept. 12, 5-6:30 p.m., at Gilead Hill School. This is a

class for boys and girls ages 8-13 who are left home alone. This interactive course will cover safety concerns parents have when their children are by themselves.

Babysitters Training: Saturday, Oct. 3, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., at Gilead Hill School. This is an entry-level course intended to teach age-appropriate skills necessary to care for children of all ages using team babysitting, mother’s helper and individual babysitting concepts. The course focuses on safety with emphasis on prevention. Basic first aid, including adult and child CPR (requires passing written and skills testing to receive a two-year certificate) included. Booklet, handouts and Babysitter Safety Certificate of completion included. Please bring lunch. Registration deadline: Thursday, Oct. 1, 5 p.m.

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 worshipcenter.church 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 social media. Connect with the library at www.facebook.com/WorshipCenterCT, youtube.com/@worshipcenterct and instagram.com/theworshipcenterct.

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, Sept. 3.

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. Upcom-

ing: Aug. 21.

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

2026 Women’s Retreat: From 5 p.m. Aug. 28 through 1 p.m. Aug. 30, at Enders Island in Mystic. Sign-ups still available.

Youth Ministry, End of Summer + Back-To-School Party: Friday, Aug. 28, 6:30–9:30 p.m. Youth entering grades 6-12 are welcome.

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. A new 12-week class starts Sept. 5. Training sessions meet at the church on Saturdays from 8–9 a.m., culminating with a 5k in late November/early December.

Good Shepherd Parish News

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

Mass Schedule: Mass is offered at CHF Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 10 a.m., and at STC Sunday at 8 a.m. Visit www.goodshepherdct.org for weekday Mass times.

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

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA): Meetings for this ministry will start Sunday, Sept. 27 in the CHF Parish House, after the 10 a.m. Mass. The sessions will run 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. and are open to adults who wish to join the Catholic Church, Catholic adults who have not yet completed the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation), and Catholic adults who wish to learn more about their faith. Email ocia@goodshepherdct.org for more information and to register.

Cereal & Meatloaves for CSK: The Community Outreach Committee collects breakfast cereal each month for Covenant Soup Kitchen (CSK) in Willimantic; the next date is Sept. 13. Cereal donations are also welcome any time; place bagged donations in the oak collection box near the CHF Robing Room. The parish

also provides meatloaves to CSK each month. Parishioners can deliver a cooked meatloaf to the freezer in the garage (use side entrance) closest to the CHF Parish House or the freezer in the STC church hall by the 4th Tuesday of the month. Meatloaves are delivered the next day. The next due date is Aug. 25. Contact Diane (860-508-9959) for more information.

Flowers for Statue of Blessed Mother: Parishioners are always welcome to donate fresh-cut flowers from their gardens or a store to place at CHF’s statue of Mary. Email parishhands@goodshepherdct.org for details if you wish to donate.

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

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

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

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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**. 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.

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 1 will be celebrated through Labor Day weekend. The service is streamed live on Facebook; visit www.stpetershebron.com to join.

Weekly Virtual Coffee Hour: Wednesdays at 10 a.m., via Zoom. Call the office at 860-228-3244 for Zoom information.

Women's Club Gathering: Sunday, Aug. 23, at 1:30 p.m., in Phelps Hall. Women of all ages are invited for afternoon of crafting and fellowship.

Red Cross Blood Drive: Tuesday, Aug. 25, 1-6 p.m., in Phelps Hall. Reservations may be made at RedCrossblood.org.

Meditation Class: Wednesday, Aug. 26, 4:30-5 p.m. Carissa Johnson will lead a "Loving Kindness" meditation class in the church sanctuary. All are welcome to attend.

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.

United Brethren of Hebron Synagogue News & Notes

United Brethren of Hebron Synagogue, located at 10 Church Street (Route 85) in the center of Hebron, invites all to welcome in the Jewish New Year by participating in High Holiday services.

Rosh Hashanah begins on the evening of Friday, Sept. 11, at 6:30 p.m., with a Zoom service. On Saturday morning, Sept. 12, meet to worship in person beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the synagogue. A special children's service will be held first, at 9 a.m. At the end of the morning service, all are invited to come for apples, honey and cake to welcome in a sweet new year.

Yom Kippur begins with an evening Kol Nidre service at 6:30 p.m. at the synagogue on Sunday, Sept. 20. The next morning, Monday, Sept. 21, Yom Kippur services start at 9 a.m. with a children's service. Then services for all ages begin at 9:30 a.m. with the additional Yizkor service held at approximately 11 a.m. and the closing service beginning at 5:30 p.m. The closing service will also be on Zoom. A break-fast potluck dinner will be held around 6 p.m. at the synagogue.

There is no charge to attend services. All are welcome.

In keeping with the holiday season, the synagogue asks those who attend services to bring a bag of food for the Hebron Interfaith Human Services (HIHS) food bank, or to make a monetary donation to HIHS.

Also, the historic synagogue building needs a new roof and other major renovations, and United Brethren asked all to consider donating to its capital campaign. To learn more, go to the GoFundMe site at www.gofundme.com/f/support-united-brethren-hebrons-vital-work.

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

If you are interested in attending services, becoming a member or would like to learn more about the synagogue, visit www.ubofhebron.org or email ubofhebron@gmail.com.

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Tree-Trimming Injury Sends One to Hospital

By Anne Lilburn

A tree worker on the job in East Hampton was injured on Monday, Aug. 17 when they were struck in the face by a falling branch and experienced "severe bleeding."

According to the East Hampton Police Department, the incident happened at approximately 8:49 a.m. at a residential property on Wopowog Road.

According to a police department press release, the incident happened when a crew from Asplundh Tree Service was utilizing a bucket truck to cut or trim trees. One employee, who was using the bucket truck, cut a large branch, which fell and struck the other employee in the face.

The injured employee suffered "severe bleeding" and was transported to Hartford Hospital by East Hampton Ambulance Association. Police also said that the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which regulates workplace safety, was also contacted and responded to the scene.

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, 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.

Save the Date for Senior Picnic: The picnic will be held Wednesday, Sept. 23 at Sears Park, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. This annual event features food, live music, games, nature presentations and more. Cost is \$3. Sign up in person.

Ready to Respond – What to Do When Someone is Choking: Tuesday, Aug. 25, 10:30 a.m. The East Hampton Ambulance Association will provide a hands-on demonstration on how to respond during a choking emergency. Participants will learn the signs of choking, when to act, and the proper steps for performing the frontal thrust maneuver safely and confidently.

Café Conversations with Holly: Tuesday, Aug. 25, at 12:15 p.m. Share your thoughts and suggestions with senior center director Holly Marrero every fourth Tuesday. Sign up for lunch or bring your own. Ask for a FORM 5 if you have never had lunch with the center previously.

East Hampton Senior Center Talent Show: Wednesday, Aug. 26, 10 a.m. Singers, dancers, poets, musicians and comedians welcome – or just come and enjoy. See a staff member to sign up.

Wednesday Film Fun: Wednesday, Aug. 26, 1 p.m., featuring *The Peanut Butter Falcon*, about a young man with intellectual disabilities who escapes from an assisted living facility and befriends a wayward fisherman on the run.

The Pretend Cooking Show: Thursday, Aug. 27, 2 p.m. Join center director Holly Marrero for a hands-on cooking class featuring Mexican street corn. Cost is \$5.

The Script Society: Thursday, Aug. 27, 2 p.m. Actor, singer and director Val Bozzi leads this interactive program where participants read plays together.

Bike Rides for Seniors: Friday, Aug. 28, 10 a.m. Sponsored by AirLine Cycles. For ages 55 and older. This week's ride is Hope River; meet at the Bolton Notch State Park Lot. Call the center to register.

Trip: Thimble Island Cruise: Wednesday, Aug. 26, departing at 9:30 a.m. Sail on the Volunga IV for a narrated tour of the Thimble Islands. Bring your own lunch, drink and dessert provided. Cost is \$20. Register and pay in person.

Police News

8/4: Peter Girard, 30, of Hebron was issued a summons for misuse of plates and operating under suspension, East Hampton Police said.

8/15: Julio Monet, 58, of East Hampton, was arrested and charged with failure to drive right and driving under the influence, police said.

From Aug. 3-16, officers responded to 25 medical calls, eight motor vehicle accidents and 16 alarms, and made 42 traffic stops.

Discovery Zone learning Center



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VFW Lobster Fest

Fowler-Dix-Park VFW 5095 will hold its 20th annual Lobster Fest Saturday, Sept. 26, at the Post Home, located at 20 North Maple St.

Tickets cost \$60 per person and offer the holder a choice of 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 pound lobster or 3/4" prime ribeye steak, a baked potato, an ear of local corn and a cup of Chowder. A pound of steamers are available for an additional \$20.

Tickets can be purchased by contacting VFW Post 5095 at 860-267-8837.

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.

EHMS Soccer, Cross-Country Registration

East Hampton Middle School student/athletes who are interested in trying out for boys soccer, girls soccer or boys/girls cross-country teams can register online at arbitersports.com.

Athletes must have all the proper paperwork submitted online and have an updated physical in order to try-out. Registration should be completed by Sunday, Aug. 23.

For more information, call EHMS athletic director Michael Mercaldi at 860-463-6837.

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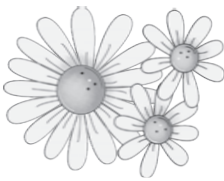
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School Budget Heads to a Fourth Referendum

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton residents will return to the polls yet again on Wednesday, Aug. 26, where they will have another chance to weigh in on the town's education budget.

This marks the fourth attempt to pass an education budget, and comes on the eve of the new school year – literally. East Hampton public schools will open the very next day, on Thursday, Aug. 27.

Those who do cast a vote, either via absentee ballot or at the polls on the 26th, will see a familiar number before them. At \$39,500,937, this is the same number that voters considered at the previous budget referendum on Aug. 5, where the town's general government budget of \$19,358,960 passed on its third try by a narrow margin. While that education number remains unchanged from the prior referendum, the board had previously cut \$600,000 from the Board of Education's initially proposed 2026-27 budget, which was first voted on in June.

While that education budget number may not have changed, the Board of Education's circumstances certainly have. Since that last refer-

endum, at least two programs that were marked for cuts have gotten reprieves via alternate funding sources. The town's Smart Start preschool program was saved via an emergency stabilization grant from the state's Office of Early Childhood, while several middle school sports programs, including soccer, cross country and cheerleading, have been rescued via outside community donations.

The reduction of both the Smart Start preschool (which provides free pre-school to area children and has always partially funded via a state grant) and the middle school sports programs had been met with anger and frustration among many in the community, who argued for the importance of these programs and decried the low voter turnout at local elections.

At the same time, many in the community found themselves stunned this year by results of the town's recent property revaluation, which left many homeowners, particularly those in the low-to-mid tier of housing values, seeing large property tax increases. Some of those voters continued to express outrage over high educa-

tion costs.

Still, given the narrow margin of the last referendum vote (the education budget failed by only 32 votes) and given that there had been community outcry over the planned cuts to those programs (which had been announced prior to the last referendum), the Board of Finance opted to put forward the same dollar value for residents to vote on.

At the Aug. 10 Board of Finance meeting where the board set the most recent budget number, Chair A.J. Spagnoletti said he hoped that the budget would pass this round, particularly considering the added revenue that the district has now received via grants and outside contributions. It had been speculated that some in the community had voted against the last budget in reaction to those proposed cuts.

"This [budget] would bring us back to effectively maintaining the teacher base that we had after the last set of cuts going into the referendum," Spagnoletti said at the last Board of Finance meeting, while also noting that the Board of Finance does not itself specify what the money will be spent on, as that is left to the Board of Education to consider and decide.

When the Town Council sent the newest iteration of the education budget to referendum at its Aug. 11 meeting, only Republican town

council member Ted Hintz voted against it, with all six remaining members voting in favor of sending it to referendum.

The referendum will be held on Aug. 26, with in person voting happening at Town Hall between the hours of 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. The town of East Hampton provided the following information regarding absentee ballots:

"Absentee ballots for the East Hampton Board of Education budget referendum 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 \$1000 on the 2025 Grand List are eligible to obtain an absentee ballot for this referendum.

As this referendum is being held with less than three weeks' notice, CGS 9-369c, only permits ballots to be picked up in person at the Town Clerk's Office. Voters who are not able to appear in person are allowed under this statute to designate a family member or caregiver to deliver and/or return their ballot. Both the voter and designee's signatures are required to be on the application when submitted. For more information, please call 860 267-2519."

Absentee Ballots for Budget Referendum

Absentee ballots for next week's Board of Education budget referendum are currently 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.

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.

As this referendum is being held with less than three weeks' notice, CGS 9-369c, only

permits ballots to be picked up in person at the town clerk's office. Voters who are not able to appear in person are allowed under this statute to designate a family member or caregiver to deliver and/or return their ballot. Both the voter and designee's signatures are required to be on the application when submitted. For more information, please call 860 267-2519.

The East Hampton Board of Education budget referendum will be held at Town Hall, 1 Community Drive, between the hours of 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 26.

Congregational Church News

The Congregational Church of East Hampton, 59 Main St., welcomes all to worship Sunday, Aug. 23, at 10 a.m., with Pastor Robin Blundon. The Scripture reading for this Sunday's service is Romans 12:1-8. Coffee hour will follow the service.

Save the Date: Welcome Sunday, Sept. 13: More information will be coming soon; all are welcome.

AA Weekly Meeting: Sundays at 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

East Hampton Food Bank: A weekly collection is held for the Food Bank. This year, the church has donated over 758 pounds.

Aluminum Food & Soda Can Tabs: Ongoing collection which will be donated to the Shriners Children's New England hospital in Springfield, Mass. Proceeds support childhood

surgeries performed there, where no patient is charged a fee.

Church World Service School Supply Kits: The church is collecting school supplies for children throughout the world. A donation box is available.

Women's Fellowship Dignity Drive: This is an ongoing collection to support women and girls in need, both globally and right here in our community. Collecting feminine hygiene products for our local food bank and schools, as well as Church World Service.

For more information, visit cc-eh.org or call the office at 860-267-4959. Office hours are Monday and Wednesday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

EHHS 40th Reunion

The East Hampton High School Class of 1986 will hold its 40th reunion Saturday, Oct. 17, from 6-9 p.m., at Lakeside Bar & Grill, 81 North Main St.

Tickets are \$40 per person and include hors d'oeuvres, one drink coupon, music and games. A cash bar will be available.

Deadline to respond is Sept. 1. Send your payment to Jay or Michele via Venmo: @jszym, or PayPal: j_szymaszek@hotmail.com. A check, made payable to Michele Koss, can be sent to: Michele Koss, 147 Bartlett St., Portland, CT 06480.

If you are in contact with anyone who is not on Facebook, you are asked to reach out to them and have them send their contact information to RLGhezzi@gmail.com.

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.

Men's Group: The Men's Breakfast Bible Study will meet at the church on Wednesday, Sept. 9, from 7-8 a.m., to share scripture around what the Bible says about being a man at home, at work and in life. There will be coffee, pastries and conversation.

Ladies' Fellowship: Will meet on Thursday, Sept. 9, from 1-3 p.m., at Mary's house.

Chicken Barbecue: All are invited to join the church at the Haddam Neck Fair, Sept. 4-7, for HNCC's famous barbecued chicken.

Children's Coat Drive: Foster children who enter the foster care system need warm winter coats. The church is collecting new winter coats for babies through teenagers up to Sunday, Sept.

27, for the Norwich office of the Department of Children and Families.

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: Rehearsals will resume in the fall, on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. New members 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.

Middle Haddam Public Library News

The Middle Haddam Public Library, 2 Knowles Road, Middle Haddam has announced the following. To register or for more information on any program, email middlehaddamlibrary@gmail.com, visit middlehaddamlibrary.com or call 860-267-9093. Mailing address: P.O. Box 123, Middle Haddam, CT 06456.

Library Hours: Mondays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; Tuesdays and Fridays, 3-6 p.m.

Featured Artist for August: Karen Piazza of Portland. Piazza is a watercolor artist and potter. Her favorite subjects to paint are café and market scenes, representing her years of living in France. Karen also creates functional pottery with a decorative flair. All are invited to stop by and see her work during regular library hours.

Open Mic Night: Friday, Aug. 21, 6-8 p.m. This event might be held outdoors on the lawn, weather permitting, so plan to bring your lawn chairs. Come and share your talent or just listen

and enjoy. Performers, call the library to sign up, at 860-267-9093.

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.

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EHHS Class of ‘76 Reunion

The East Hampton High School Class of 1976 will hold its 50th Class Reunion Saturday, Sept. 19, from 5-10 p.m., at Campagna Restaurant, 151 Marlborough St. in Portland. This is the old Brownstone Restaurant where the Class of ‘76 celebrated Senior Class Night!
Cost is \$45 per person and includes a buffet dinner and dessert. There is a cash bar. Guests are welcome; however, payment cannot be re-

ceived at the door the night of the event.
Send your RSVP to Cheryl (Edwards) Randino at ehhs1976@gmail.com. Payments must be received by Sept. 9. PayPal or Venmo are accepted to the above email address, or send a check payable to Cheryl E. Randino, 56 Garnet Ridge Drive, Tolland, CT 06084.
Also, all attendees are asked to notify Randino of any dietary restrictions.

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 Kloo is collecting warm weather new or nearly new clothing for un-housed persons in Middletown. Needed are T-shirts, shorts, pants, light sweaters, hoodies, sweatshirts, sandals/sneakers and underwear in adult sizes small to XXL. Clean items should be placed in the blue tote in the Parish Hall.
Labor Day Tag Sale: Save unwanted items in good condition for the Tag Sale. Donations can

be dropped off at the Parish Hall entrance during the week; call Dick Napolitano at 860-490-8006. Pick-up is available.
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 donnadubehryb@gmail.com for more information.

Registration for Shrek Jr. Ends Soon

Registration for the fall production of *Shrek The Musical Jr.*, for students in grades 3–6, closes soon.
The 13-week program will run Tuesdays and Thursdays, Sept. 1 through Nov. 21, from 3:05–5 p.m., at Center School. Students will participate in a full musical production while building skills in acting, singing and choreography.
Principal roles will be selected through video auditions due Aug. 24, with opportunities for all registered students to be part of

the cast. Three performances will be held Nov. 19–21.
Program tuition includes costume costs and two performance tickets. A limited number of full and partial scholarships are available for families needing financial assistance. Transportation is available for Memorial School and East Hampton Middle School students.
Registration, audition materials and additional information are available at ChathamTheaterCompany.org.

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.

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.



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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.

Summer Hours: Monday - Wednesday, 10 a.m.- 8 p.m.; Thursday - Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Adult Programs: Tech Help: Thursday, Aug. 27, 2-4 p.m. Basic technology help for phones, laptops, tablets, and e-readers. No registration required; just bring your device with you.

The Great Potato Cookoff – A Cookbook Club Event: Tuesday, Sept. 1, 6:30 p.m. Bring 12 copies of your favorite potato recipe to share and a prepared dish. Food should arrive ready to eat; the library will provide the plates and forks. Register or drop in.

Library Yoga with Amie Meacham: Tuesday, Sept. 8, 6:30 p.m. Join Yoga 200 Certified instructor Amie Meacham for an hour of all-levels yoga. Bring a mat and wear comfy clothes.

Teen Programs: Crochet (and more!) with Keri: Grades 6-12: Tuesday, Aug. 25, 6 p.m. Meet up in the Teen Space for a casual evening of crochet and other crafts. Please register.

Chapter Chat with Keri & Friends: Grades 7-10: Tuesday, Sept. 8, 6 p.m. Read and discuss a new book every month.

Children's Program: Lego at the Library: Grades K-6: Tuesday, Sept. 1, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Each month features a new challenge or theme for you to work solo or with friends on. All Lego bricks provided.

Lake Friends Wine-Tasting Fundraiser

The Friends of Lake Pocotopaug (FOLP) will hold its annual Wine-Tasting Fundraiser on Sunday, Sept. 13, from 1-4 p.m., on Laurel Island. Proceeds from the event will support FOLP's projects and ongoing efforts to preserve and improve Lake Pocotopaug.

Tickets are \$50 per person and include round-trip boat transportation to Laurel Island, wine tasting, limited beer tasting, a souvenir glass and a light snack. Soda will also be available for non-drinkers.

Guests are invited to relax and explore the island. A teacup raffle will feature a variety of prizes. Jack Solomon will be available to answer questions about the history of Laurel Island, and a representative from the Lake Commission will be on hand to discuss Lake Pocotopaug and answer questions.

Boat transportation will run continuously from 1-4 p.m., departing from Ace Marine East LLC at 70 North Main St. Event parking will be available at Sears Park.

Outside food and alcohol are not permitted. Smoking is prohibited, and private boats will not be allowed to dock on the island. The event will be held rain or shine.

A limited number of tickets are available and may be purchased in advance or at the dock, subject to availability. Tickets are also available from any FOLP member.

For tickets, contact Kevin Kuhr at 860-395-7548. For additional information, visit Friends of Lake Pocotopaug on Facebook.

Class of '59 Reunion

The East Hampton High School Class of 1967 will celebrate its 59th reunion on Saturday, Sept. 12, at The Dublin, 42 East High St., from 2-5 p.m.

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Stuffed Sole Crab meat stuffing served over spinach

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Print Donated to Library... Middle Haddam Public Library thanks Judy Hensel and her son Harry Neumann III for their gift of a framed numbered print to the library. The print came from the home of former governor Bill O’Neill and his wife Nikki, and had a handwritten note from the artist, Richard L. Brooks, to the O’Neills. It depicts the sailing vessels Chancellor and Falcon in 1823, on the Connecticut River near the village of Middle Haddam, preparing to set sail for Middletown. Middle Haddam was a ship building center in the 1700s and 1800s.

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Senior Center Upcoming Trips

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

Twin Lobsters and a Show at the Student Prince, Springfield Mass.: Tuesday, Aug. 25, departing Stop & Shop at 9:45 a.m. Enjoy a lunch of twin lobsters or prime rib at this restaurant in the heart of downtown Springfield and a show with Freddie Marion performing hits by Wayne Newton, Kenny Rogers, Sammy Davis Jr. and more. After lunch, spend time at the MGM Springfield Casino. Cost is \$149.

Beatles Tribute Band & Lunch: Thursday, Oct. 15. See Studio Two, a Beatles tribute band, and have lunch at the Farmington Polo Club. Cost is \$132 and includes coach bus transportation. Depart from Stop & Shop, 11 East High St., at 10:30 a.m.

Joshua in Lancaster, Pa.: Nov. 13-15. Featuring two shows: Joshua at the Sight & Sound Theater and the Holly Jolly Holiday show at the Dutch Apple Dinner Theater. Cost is \$745 per person double/triple occupancy.

Christmas in Newport: Tuesday, Dec. 8, featuring a visit to the Breakers and Marble House mansions and lunch at the Wyndham Atlantic Resort. Cost is \$152. Depart from Stop & Shop, 11 East High St., at 8:45 a.m.

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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/bellringer for information.

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

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

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



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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.

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 Playground equipment. Cost is \$145 per golfer.

Epoch Arts Six-Day Tag Sale

In September, Epoch Arts is holding its annual six-day, two-weekend, indoor, rain or shine, tag sale.

Shop the Christmas and Holiday Room, or check out areas like books, arts and crafts, linens, clothing, kitchen, toys, bath and beauty, and music. There will be furniture, electronics, sports, tools and more. All proceeds directly fund Epoch’s youth programs for the year.

The tag sale runs Friday, Sept. 11, from 2-5 p.m., and Friday, Sept. 18, from noon-5 p.m. On Saturdays and Sundays, Sept. 12, 13, 19 and 20, hours will be from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

The first day of the sale on Sept. 11 will also feature an early bird special from noon-2 p.m. with an entrance fee of \$25, pay at the door, for those who wish to have a sneak preview of available items.

The tag sale will be held at Epoch, 27 Skinner St. For more information, visit www.epocharts.org.

Class of ’56 Reunion

The East Hampton High School Class of 1956 will celebrate its 70th Class Reunion on Thursday, Sept. 17, from 12:30-4 p.m., at The Dublin, at 42 East High St.

As usual, order off the menu and pay as you go.

Call Joan {Avery} Measimer at 860-788-7198 for more information or to make reservations.



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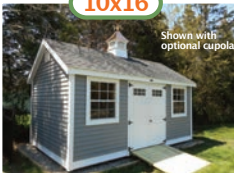
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Resident Releases Book, Reflects on Perfection

By Josh Howard
East Hampton resident Kate Brownell has recently released a children’s book about her real-life Little League baseball experience that earned her a spot in the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Brownell is the author and main character in *The Perfect-Perfect Game: A True Story About Being Brave Enough to Be Yourself When Others Say You Don’t Belong*. It’s a true tale of Brownell’s extraordinary feat that took place in 2005 when she was 11 years old. On May 15 of that year, she pitched the first perfect-perfect game, striking out all 18 batters during a little league game at Elroy Parkins Memorial Town Park in her hometown of Oakville, New York.

“Even after the game was over, I didn’t really realize what I had done and I didn’t realize how big of a deal it was,” stated Brownell.

Story Behind the Story
Prior to the historic outing, Brownell was originally slated to pitch only a few innings that day, but the scorebook keeper noticed she was pitching a flawless game and advised the coach to keep her on the mound.

“I just did whatever coach said,” joked Brownell, who recalled her mom coming over between innings to give her a Gatorade and a pep talk. “She called me Bug and she said, ‘Bug, you’re pitching a perfect game’ – so I took a drink and went back out there.”

It was a history-making performance for **Tennis Program for Adults**
The East Hampton Recreation tennis program for adults is held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8-10:30 a.m., at East Hampton High School. The program will meet at the Sears Park courts when school is in session. Play time is flexible; come and go as you please.

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.

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.

Brownell, who became the first female player to achieve the feat as she silences all the doubters in a sport where she was one of the only girls playing baseball at the time.

Following her legendary little league performance, Brownell’s life quickly became a wild ride that included a media circuit that garnered national attention where she was featured on ESPN, *Good Morning America*, *World News Tonight*, and other major news outlets.

She even got a photo with then-President George W. Bush, who commended her on the accomplishment.

Her jersey from the game is now displayed in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. – located about three hours from her hometown. Her glove, cleats, and a ball from that game are also on display at the Little League Baseball Hall of Fame.

Brownell stated that she was shy as a child and used baseball as a way to “express myself”, adding, “I’ve always loved writing and used it as an outlet as well.”

A little over two decades following the life-changing day, Brownell put the finishing touches on the retelling of the events and the book was released on June 22, her 33rd birthday.

“I started in college and did a lot of the text, but it sat in Google Drive for the past 10 years,” she noted. “This past Christmas I decided it was time to get the story out there.”

Brownell added that her mission in spreading the story has “always been to inspire as many people as possible.”

The book, complete with illustrations, is available on Amazon for \$12.99.

Journey to Connecticut
Following her time in the national spotlight, Brownell continued playing baseball before eventually shifting over to softball because her high school didn’t allow girls to play on the baseball team.

She continued to shine on the diamond where she became a four-year starter on the softball fields at Buffalo State University, earning ECAC First-Team and All-SUNYAC First Team accolades, as well as All-Academic team honors all four years.



Kate Brownell, a resident of East Hampton, has released a book about her real life experience called *The Perfect-Perfect Game*.

In Buffalo, Brownell earned her degree in sports communications and met her mentor Tim O’Shei, who helped her tell the story and construct the children’s book.

Following college, Brownell was an assistant softball coach at Amherst College where she helped guide the program to their first ever Women’s College World Series (WCWS) appearance as the Mammoths finished fifth overall in the country. She was also a Sports Information Associate at the school in Massachusetts.

After earning her personal training certification, Brownell relocated to Connecticut where she worked at Edge Fitness in Manchester before eventually moving to Belltown and starting her own business, Results Based Fitness in Glastonbury.

Brownell now helps people of all ages achieve their fitness goals, while also continuing to



When Brownell was 11-years-old she pitched a flawless baseball game, striking out all 18 batters to earn national recognition as the first female athlete in a male dominated sport to achieve the feat. She is pictured at the National Baseball Hall of Fame with the commemorative No. 3 Los Angeles Dodgers jersey she was presented.

coach and monitor aspiring, young girls who want to achieve their dreams on the diamonds.

Assisting others to become more physically and mentally fit is similar to her goal in writing and releasing the book.

“I wanted to help kids understand that they don’t have to fit someone else’s mold to succeed. It’s a true story about courage, resilience, and just being brave enough to be yourself no matter what someone says to you,” she added. “Whether they are being bullied, feeling left out, struggling with confidence or chasing a dream that seems impossible – I wanted them to know they belong and that they are capable.”

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Board of Education Names Next Superintendent

The Marlborough Board of Education last week unanimously appointed Paul K. Smith as the next superintendent of the Marlborough school system.

Smith – who previously served as East Hampton’s schools chief for nearly a decade – was appointed at the Board of Education’s Aug. 13 meeting. He will begin serving in the role immediately.

Smith replaces Holly Hageman, who departed Marlborough in June to become superintdent of schools in Barrington, R.I. Smith’s annual salary is set at \$105,000, an increase of \$5,000 from what Hageman was paid, according to the Board of Education office. However, the office added, had Hageman not departed for Rhode Island, she would have likely received a raise, bringing her salary to \$103,000.



Paul K. Smith

The Marlborough superintendent of schools is a part-time position.

Smith served as superintendent of schools in East Hampton from 2016-24; in Griswold from 2012-16; and in Bolton from 2008-12. Since retiring from full-time superintendent service in 2024, Smith has worked for Connecticut school districts as an educational consultant, executive coach, and accreditation leader, helping school systems strengthen strategic planning, instructional improvement, and organizational effectiveness. He most recently served as interim superintendent for Region 17 Public Schools in Higganum.

“We are delighted to welcome Paul Smith to the Marlborough family,” said Raymond “Chip” Morris, chair of the Marlborough Board of Education. “Throughout the search process, Paul demonstrated a deep commitment to student learning, thoughtful leadership, fiscal responsibility, and meaningful community engagement. His extensive experience, collaborative approach, and passion for public education, and

communication expertise make him exceptionally well suited to lead our district as we build upon Marlborough’s tradition of excellence.”

During Smith’s tenure in East Hampton, he led the development of a district-wide strategic plan, strengthened school safety and mental health supports, expanded academic opportunities, increased family engagement, and guided significant operational and financial improvements. Smith has also been recognized for his leadership in strategic planning, governance, educational communications, and school accreditation.

“I am deeply honored and grateful for the confidence the Marlborough Board of Education has placed in me,” said Smith. “Marlborough is a remarkable school community with a clear commitment to academic excellence, caring educators, engaged families, and extraordinary students. I look forward to listening, learning, and working alongside the Board of Education, faculty, staff, students, parents, and the entire

community to ensure every child continues to thrive. Together, we will build upon the district’s many strengths while preparing students for a future filled with opportunity.”

Smith received his bachelor’s degree in education and music from Boston University; his master’s, also in education and music, from the Eastman School at University of Rochester; and his sixth year and superintendent certificate from the University of Connecticut.

The board expressed its appreciation to everyone who participated in the superintendent search process, including parents, teachers and staff members, students, and the community. Their participation in a survey and focus groups led to the development of a leadership profile that helped the board identify the qualities most desired in the next district leader. The superintendent search was conducted in partnership with CABE Search Services consultant Mary Broderick.

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 stjoh-fisher30@yahoo.com. The church website is www.stjfishurch.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.

Ministry, Social and Parish Community Events: An adult choir practices weekly; men’s and women’s prayer groups, Knights of Columbus, Christian Outreach and Prayer Shawl ministry meet monthly; and an active book club meets quarterly. Social activities are planned throughout the year to provide additional par-

ish fellowship. For details, see the church calendar available on the church website.

Community Outreach and Service: The Community Giving Garden is actively producing fresh produce and meets Mondays at 5 p.m. The garden yields fresh produce delivered weekly to the Marlborough Food Bank. 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.

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

Learn to Play Mah Jongg

Marlborough Arts Center, located at 231 N. Main St., is offering American Mah Jongg classes this fall for teens and adults.

This six-week session is for beginners and advanced beginners. The instructor, Barbara Hahn, has been teaching for 15 years at local senior centers and libraries.

Classes will be Thursdays 6-8:30 p.m., from Sept. 17 to Oct. 29; or Fridays, 2-4:30 p.m., from

Sept. 18 to Oct. 30. There will be no classes Oct. 8 and 9.

Fee is a \$60 donation to the Marlborough Arts Center, plus a \$15 fee for the 2026 NMJL Card, which is yours to keep.

For more information and to register, go to MarlboroughArts.org. For questions, call 860-467-6353 or text 860-926-7500.

Local Art at Town Hall

Marlborough Arts Center has announced a new solo art exhibit of local artist Arlene S. Cavalieri. Her paintings will be displayed at Town Hall from August through October.

Cavalieri’s work includes oils and acrylic. Her compositions often feature ocean and pond scenes as well as landscape, animal and floral subjects. Her ocean paintings have won Dean Waite and First Place awards.

Cavalieri’s paintings can be seen in fine art

shows in Connecticut and her work has been showcased in Connecticut corporate events. While Cavalieri will occasionally paint Plein Air in the warm weather, she mostly enjoys painting in her studio year-round.

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

Former State Troubador to Perform

Marlborough Arts Center’s 4th Friday @ The Arts Café will present Kala Farnham, Connecticut’s 18th State Troubadour, in concert on Friday, Aug. 28, at 7:30 p.m., at the center, 231 N. Main St.

Farnham’s vocals and mystical folk harp, piano and guitar, draws audiences into a transcendent journey, the arts center said.

Tickets are \$15 and available at the door. Doors open at 7 p.m.

250th Celebrations Continue

As the town continues to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, there will be a family-friendly event open to everyone at St. John Fisher Church on Jones Hollow Road on Sunday, Aug. 30, from 1-2:30 p.m.

All are invited to “continue to grow together” with various stations set up at the Community Giving Garden (which supports the local food bank), the Pollinator’s Garden (supporting our environment), the church’s outdoor Meditation area (to offer up inten-

tions for the community and country), fun with chalk and bubbles, and a sweet treat. Families with children aged 3-10 may find this the most enjoyable, the church said, while all are welcome to come and have fun.

Keeping with the theme of supporting the community, a non-perishable food item for the Marlborough Food Bank is greatly appreciated.

Call the church at 860-295-0001 if you have questions.

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.

Chair Yoga: Seated in a chair, explore gentle movement, practiced breathing and peaceful mindfulness. Next session: 9/8, 9/15, 9/22, 9/29. Fee: \$35/Marlborough residents, \$40/non-residents. RSVP and payment due by 9/4.

FABBS Exercise: Flexibility, Agility, Better Balance and Strength workout class. Movement and exercises are drawn from body building, yoga, ballet and more. Instructor Hilary Celen-tano. Next session: 9/7, 9/14, 9/21, 9/28; 10:45-11:45. Fee: \$35/residents, \$40/non-residents. RSVP and payment due by 9/4.

Senior Living Options: 8/25, 10:30 a.m. All are invited to this informative session on the spectrum of senior living options: Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Care, and when Skilled Nursing may be appropriate. Learn how to compare care types, understand typical costs, explore financing options, and how to ask the right questions.

State of Primary Care: 8/26, 1-2 p.m. With Professor Howard Selinger.

Loaded Baked Potato and Trivia Night: Will be rescheduled to a later date.

Rightsizing Today for More Choices Tomorrow: Making Room for What Matters Most – and Preparing for What’s Next: 9/1, 10:30 a.m. Discover how downsizing on purpose can help you create a safer, more comfortable home today while preparing for whatever tomorrow may bring.

Free Sound Bath: 9/2, 2-3 p.m. In sound baths, sounds and vibrations from instruments such as singing bowls, chimes and gongs help promote calm, relaxation, and a sense of well-being. Jeremy Tucker, the resident engagement director at The Residence at Glastonbury will lead this experience.

Legislative Update with State Rep. Steve Weir: 9/9, 1 p.m. Weir (R-55) serves as the state representative for Marlborough, Andover, Hebron and portions of Bolton and Glastonbury.

Thin Blue Line: 9/17, 10 a.m. Author Greg Dillon will share his story-turned-book, about a former FBI agent who discovers FBI misconduct, and is subsequently demoted, harassed at home and threatened with termination. Even after a major courtroom victory and landmark decision, the agent realizes retaliation has only just begun.

Senior Center 25th Anniversary Party: Saturday, Sept. 19, 1-4:30 p.m. The party will fea-

ture a live swing band, ice cream truck, photo booth, games, car show and more. All are welcome. The event will be held rain or shine.

Birthday Club: 9/22, 1-2 p.m. September birthdays will be celebrated with cake! Open to all friends and family. It does not have to be your birthday month to celebrate; however, if it is please RSVP.

Open Discussion on Open AI: 9/30, 1-2 p.m. Paul A. Kriksciun has dedicated his career to helping organizations navigate complex technology and now focuses on making artificial intelligence accessible and understandable for everyone. All are invited to come learn and ask questions.

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.

Social Services: 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.

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

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.

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.

Legal Notice

Andover Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

The Duly Authorized Agent of the Andover Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission **APPROVED** the following application on August 19, 2026:

- Application #**IWWC 26-5W**: Gary McCullough, **3 Lakeside Drive**. Placement of 200 SF of Patio Pavers within the 200-foot Upland Review Area of Andover Lake at 3 Lakeside Drive. Work is to be completed in accordance with the Wetlands Agent approval dated 8/19/2026.

Petitions/Appeals Process:

The above decision may be appealed to the Andover Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission pursuant to Section 12.2 of the Town of Andover Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations, available at www.andoverconnecticut.org.

Questions: If you have any questions regarding the above notice, please contact the Andover Wetlands Agent at 860-742-7305 x4221 or email wetlands@andoverct.org, or buildingadmin@andoverct.org

1TB 8/21

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Hearing

Notice is hereby given that the East Hampton Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing at their meeting on Wednesday, September 2, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. at the East Hampton Town Hall – 1 Community Drive, Room 107 and via ZOOM to consider

PZC-26-010: Town of East Hampton PZC, Text Amendment to Section 8.4.M (Accessory Dwelling Units) of the Zoning Regulations.

Applications and Plans are on file in the Land Use Office 860-267-7450.

Ray Zatorski, Chairman

2TB 8/21, 8/28

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School Changes Leadership Structure, Welcomes New Teachers

By Toriana Williams

Sorry kids: summer vacation is almost over. It's time to get back to school!

Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School, also known as Marlborough Elementary School (MES), will welcome students on Wednesday, Aug. 26, where there will be a few new faces, new leadership and several new programs.

For MES Assistant Principal Jennier Renkiewicz, this new school year will mark her first in Marlborough. She joined the school after spending 14 years at Odyssey Community School in Manchester. She explained her move was due to looking for a chance to grow in her administrative career, and she was drawn to Marlborough's strong sense of community.

"I was really drawn to the importance of community and the support from the families and the staff," said Renkiewicz. "The school kind of feels like a hub of the community."

That community feeling will certainly be part of the school's focus as students pitter patter back in through the halls. The school also has a new leadership structure this year. In the past, the school had two co-principals. This year, Renkiewicz will serve as the assistant principal alongside Principal Paula Graef.

Graef said the change was made while looking closely at the school's budget and trying to protect the resources that students need.

"We remember really looking at the budgetary constraints and making sure that we could still provide the support for our students and ... the wonderful resources we have for them, with as little impact as possible," said Graef.

The school expects to begin the year with about 463 students, the same enrollment it had last year.

Academically, students will see an updated version of a familiar math program. The school has used Envision math and will now move to the program's revised 2027 version. Graef said the school chose to stay with the program be-

cause students have performed well with it.

"We found that it's very successful, with all of our test scores and things," she said. "Our children do really well with it."

MES is also making changes to encourage more opportunities to work together, particularly in literacy. The master schedule has been adjusted to create protected time for literacy specialists and classroom teachers to collaborate. Renkiewicz said teachers and specialists will meet regularly to look at student needs and make changes when necessary.

"They're going to be specifically working with grade levels," she said. "It's time for them to talk about how they can best work together to support the curriculum and the students."

The meetings will allow for teachers to look at student data in real time and decide what adjustments might help students most. Graef said the school already had a deep pool of knowledge among its teachers.

"We have a wealth of knowledge within our building. We have a lot of veteran teachers and some newer teachers," she said. "They all have just great ideas and experiences, and anything we can learn from one another, it really benefits our students."

The school's biggest academic goal this year is student growth. Graef and Renkiewicz said they want every student to make meaningful progress whether that student is already performing at a high level or needs additional support. Graef explained that the focus is on the individual child, rather than just looking at overall test scores.

"We're looking at the individual student growth and to make sure that all of our students, whether they are high achieving or ones that need a little extra support, are continuing to grow," she said.

That work will include taking a close look at classroom data and adjusting instruction when it's deemed necessary. Renkiewicz said academ-



Marlborough Elementary School Principal Paula Graef promises the upcoming school year will be "outstanding." Photo contributed by Marlborough Public Schools.

ic progress can also be connected to a student's social and emotional needs.

"Sometimes academic needs or academic growth needs to be supported with social-emotional support or behavior support," she said.

Several new staff members will help support the school and students in those goals.

Mariah Johnston is joining the school as a new special education teacher, who has experience in applied behavior analysis (ABA). Angela Egan is also joining the staff as a new literacy specialist. The school will also welcome Maria Sanhueza as its new Spanish teacher.

There have also been some changes around campus too. A greenhouse was installed on the property this summer after the school received a grant. It's not quite ready for students yet, but Graef said a grand opening is planned once everything is in place.

Other summer work included construction at one of the building's entrances. That project is expected to be completed before students ar-

rive. Work to address water coming through a wall into the community room has also been completed.

A larger building project remains part of the long-term picture for Marlborough, with a five- to seven-year plan previously discussed. For now, though, the focus is on the much more immediate task of getting the building ready for the first day.

As for events, MES has a meet-and-greet planned for Tuesday, Aug. 25 at 8:15 a.m. and an open house planned for Thursday, Oct. 1, at 6 p.m.

For Renkiewicz, the first day will be about getting to know the students she has heard so much about. "I'm just very excited to get to meet them," she shared. "I've heard so many great things about the students."

Graef is just as hopeful about the future that lies in wait. "They're going to have an outstanding year. We have the best students, staff and community," she said.

Parks and Rec. Programs

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

Youth Programs: Soccer Shots: Saturdays, Aug. 29-Oct. 31, at West Road upper field. No sessions 9/5 or 10/10. Mini, for age 2, will be held 3-3:30 p.m., and Classic, for ages 3-5, will be 4-4:45 p.m. Fee for Mini: \$105/residents, \$110/non-resident. Fee for Classic: \$113/resident, \$118/non-resident.

After School Co-Ed Kickball: For grades 5 & 6. Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m., Sept. 16-Oct. 21, at MES. Registration fee is \$30.

Sparkling Spinners: Dance class for ages 3-5. Wednesdays, 4:30-5 p.m., Sept. 16-Nov. 18, at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Fee is \$150.

Tiny Twirlers: Dance class for ages 2-3. Tuesdays, 6-6:30 p.m., Sept. 15-Nov. 17, or Saturdays, 9:30-10 a.m., Sept. 19-Nov. 21. Classes held at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Fee is \$150.

Skyhawks Multi-Sport Tots: Wednesdays, Sept. 23-Oct. 28, at MES. Ages 2-3.5 meet 5-5:45 p.m., and ages 3.5-4 meet 6-6:45 p.m. Parent participation required for ages 2-3.5. Fee: \$102/resident, \$107/non-resident.

Mad Science – Fall Crazy Chemworks: For grades K-6. Thursdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m., Oct. 15-Nov. 19, at MES. Fee: \$144/residents, \$149/non-

residents.

Crayola Imagine Arts Academy – Epic Landmarks Throughout History!: For grades K-6, at Marlborough Elementary School. Tuesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m., from Oct. 13-Nov. 24. Fee: \$144/residents, \$149/non-residents. No class on 11/3.

Safe at Home: For grades 4-6. Wednesday, Oct. 14, 5-6:30 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Participants will learn skills to prepare them to be safe when home alone. Fee is \$65/resident, \$70/non-resident.

Safe Sitter: For grades 6-8. Saturday, Nov. 7, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Designed to prepare students in grades 6-8 to be safe when they're home alone, watching younger siblings, or babysitting. Fee: \$140/resident, \$145/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: Adult Tap: For ages 18 and over. Thursdays, Sept. 16-Nov. 18, 8-8:45 p.m., at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Fee: \$200/resident.

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.

Congregational Church News & Notes

Sunday Worship at Marlborough Congregational Church, located at 35 South Main St., is held at 10 a.m. in the air-conditioned sanctuary. The service is also broadcast live every Sunday at mcc.marlconchurch.org and recorded for later viewing. Church pastor is the Rev. Valerie Seaver. There is no nursery care or Sunday School in August; they will resume in mid-September. Children are always welcome at the worship service. The deacons have 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.

Aug. 23: The service will be led by Seaver. After worship all are invited to Coffee Hour in the Thienes Lounge for snacks and refreshments.

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

Outreach: The church collects non-perishable food items year-round for Marlborough Food Bank with a basket located in the narthex for Sunday worshippers to bring donations. The

next church-sponsored Drive Thru Café, for Marlborough Food Bank clients and their families with tickets, will be Sept. 27. August and September mission-giving will go to Community Partners in Action Resettlement Program that provides comprehensive reentry services from basic needs to medical care, for women re-entering society from York Correctional.

Second Blessings Thrift Shop is closed in August and will reopen Friday, Sept. 11, and Saturday, Sept. 12. Follow the shop through Facebook at Second Blessings Thrift Shop, Marlborough for summer 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.

Town-Wide Tag Sale Coming

Marlborough Parks & Recreation is organizing the annual Town-Wide Tag Sale, coming up Saturday, Oct. 3, from 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Registration forms are available in Town Hall or online at www.marlbroughct.gov.

Fee is \$25 with a deadline of Oct. 1; no exceptions.

Marlborough Farmers Market

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

Attendees can expect live music and artisanal goods such as goat milk soaps, fresh fruits and vegetables, baked goods, a variety of crafts and more.

The first 100 shoppers will receive a free Marlborough Farmers tote bag. Produce farms selling at the market will also be accepting WIC and senior vouchers.

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RE2-28-25

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RE6-6/25

photos walking just following the incident. *The Hartford Courant* said a police report did not indicate who was at fault in the crash, but said that one person was detained following the crash. The *Courant* also reported that, according to police, "one person complained of neck pain following the crash, though it was not immediately clear if that individual was Furey."

The Rivercast reached out to Portland Police for an update, but was told there was no additional information available at this time.

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

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

current members come from central and southern Connecticut and represent diverse backgrounds. You do not need any affiliation with Middlesex Health to become a member.

Concert proceeds and funds from MHVC's annual Patron Drive go back to the community through scholarships awarded to Middlesex County seniors who plan to study nursing or music. So far, the Vocal Chords have contributed \$94,000 to local students, thanks to our dedicated supporters and members. For more information, visit vocalchords20.org or call 860-342-3120. You can also find the Vocal Chords on YouTube and Facebook.

a liquid asphalt emulsion on the roadway and covering the liquid asphalt with crushed stone to provide a new wearing surface. Chip sealing extends the life of a roadway by protecting it from moisture, ultra-violet degradation and any other exposures that could damage a roadway. Drivers should exercise caution as loose stone will be present on the roadway. It is recommended when travelling on a recently chip sealed road to slow down and allow additional space between vehicles.

The department apologizes for any inconveniences and urges residents to use alternate routes where possible. The department also reminds motorists to use caution and consider worker safety when driving through a work zone.

preventative measures, and learn background on emergency medical services, the emergency department and in-patient care.

This informational session will be followed by a Q&A session with both Snow and the fire department personnel.

The class is open to the public, and no RSVP is needed.

For more information, email Snow at ryan.snow@midhosp.org.

Adult Craft Night: Paint Party: Wednesday, Sept. 23, 6 p.m., led by resident and artist Brigette Roy. Each participant will leave with a completed painting. Registration opens Monday, Aug. 31, at 10 a.m. Space is limited.

Weekly Knifty Knitters Group: Every Saturday, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Adults of all experience levels are welcome to drop in, share ideas, get helpful knitting tips and chat with others who enjoy knitting and crocheting. Note: There is no meeting on Sept. 5, because the library will be closed.

Movie: Wednesday, Sept. 9, 1 p.m. *Devil Wears Prada 2* (2026; rated PG-13) will be shown. Run time is 120 minutes.

Book Clubs: Talk About Books: Tuesday, Sept. 1, 1 p.m. *Anxious People* by Fredrik Backman will be discussed. **1st Thursday Night Book Club:** Thursday, Sept. 3, 6:30 p.m. *What's Mine and Yours* by Naima Coster will be discussed. **Mystery Lovers Book Club:** Tuesday, Sept. 15, 1 p.m. *The Maid* by Nita Prose will be discussed. **Book Club for Solidarity and Community:** Saturday, Sept. 26, 1 p.m. *This Book Is Anti-Racist* by Tiffany Jewell will be discussed.

St. Mary Church, located at 45 Freestone Ave., invites all to attend the Bereavement Support Group. The evening session meets the second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. and the afternoon session meets the fourth Tuesday at 3 p.m. - both in the church hall.

Call Susan Bongiorno to register at 860-685-1966.

HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Better Dental HEALTH

by George M. Mantikas, DMD

AVOIDING AN ABSCESSSED TOOTH

A tooth abscess is a swollen pocket of pus caused by a bacterial infection in the tooth's root. An abscess can occur at the bottom of the root or in the gums to the side of the root. Bacteria enters the root through an untreated cavity, chip, or crack in the tooth, causing swelling and inflammation. An abscess requires treatment and won't resolve on its own. A dentist will drain the abscess and treat the infection. A root canal or tooth extraction may also be required. The best way to avoid a tooth abscess is to prevent tooth decay through daily brushing and flossing, healthy eating habits that limit sugar and snacks, and regular cleanings by a dental professional.

One of our fundamental philosophies is teaching our patients the importance of taking charge of their dental health and doing what is necessary to control their own dental conditions, from prevention to maintenance. We work together as a team with our patients to achieve the long-term benefits that quality dentistry affords. From sound advice about healthy gums and periodontal care to routine well visits to major dental reconstructions, we've got your dental needs covered.

P.S. If left undrained, the bacteria from a tooth abscess can spread to the head and neck and may even spread throughout the body as a life-threatening infection known as sepsis.

George M. Mantikas, DMD, PC

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Dates Changed for Lancaster Trip

Zion Lutheran Church is sponsoring a five-day/four-night trip to Lancaster, Pa., Nov. 2-6; please note the trip dates have changed.

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

Zion Lutheran News & Notes

Zion Lutheran Church is located at 183 William St. All are invited to participate in worship. Sara Stall-Ryan is pastor.

Worship Notes: Zion offers Sunday worship each week at 9 a.m. Zion holds worship service outside once each month, weather permitting. The next outdoor services are scheduled for Aug. 30 and Sept. 27. Bring a comfortable chair. All are welcome.

Learning: Sunday School for children ages 3 through 8th grade will be on hiatus for the summer and resume in the fall.

Men's Ministry: Zion is initiating a Men's Group that will discuss and work on church projects and service projects around town. Call

The trip includes travel on a deluxe video-equipped motorcoach with restroom, four dinners, four breakfasts, and four nights lodging in a single hotel.

Cost of this trip is \$765 per person double occupancy (\$934 pp single or \$745 pp triple occupancy). A \$75 deposit is due by Aug. 31; with the balance due by Sept. 21.

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

Jerry Peuse at 860-894-2880 for more details.

Year-Round Giving: Pull tabs are collected year-round and donated to the Ronald McDonald "House that Love Built," supporting families with seriously ill children. Zion recycles computer ink cartridges to support office supplies for Sunny Hill Preschool and Zion. Pull tabs and used ink cartridges may be dropped off at the church on Sunday morning, or by calling the church office.

For more information about any church activities, or if you are in need of pastoral assistance, call 860-342-2860, email zion.lutheran@snet.net, or visit zionlutheranportland.org.

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 Sept. 7.

Weekly Programs: Monday, 8/24: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, 8/25: 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: chicken & sausage gumbo, herbed rice, green beans, milk, orange cup; **Coupons for Troops,** 1-4 p.m.; **Setback,** 1 p.m.; **Synco-Cize II,** 5-6 p.m., fee is donation to instructor.

Wednesday, 8/26: 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; **Fiber Arts Group,** noon; **Rug Hooking,** noon; **Bridge,** 12:30-4 p.m.

Thursday, 8/27: No Stretch & Tone in August; Knit & Stitch, 10 a.m.; **Congregate Meal,** noon – \$3 suggested donation (must fill out form). Menu: chicken parmesan sandwich on a bun, coleslaw, Italian pasta salad, milk, apple and peanut butter; **Mah Jongg,** 12:30 p.m.; **Scrabble,** 1 p.m.

Friday, 8/28: 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

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.

Little League Golf Tournament

Portland Little League will hold its annual Golf Tournament Friday, Sept. 25, at Portland Golf Course.

Sponsorships are available and raffle prize donations are welcome.

For more details, visit tinyurl.com/pllgolf.

Senior Mixed Golf League

The six-week 2026 Fall Tuesday Morning Senior Mixed Golf League starts Tuesday, Sept. 8, at Portland West Golf Course. All skill levels, and all seniors from the *Rivereast* towns, are welcome to join.

Email Jack Anderson at jackande52@aol.com for more information.

Resident Killed in Motorcycle Crash

By Anne Lilburn

A motor vehicle crash on Aug. 12 involving two cars and one motorcycle claimed the life of a Portland man, who was thrown from his motorcycle near the entrance to Portland Golf West on Route 17 in Portland.

The collision occurred at approximately 5:30 p.m., according to Portland Police, when the motorcycle, which was traveling north on Route 17/Gospel Lane, "struck the side of an SUV turning left into Portland Golf West." The motorcycle rider was ejected from his vehicle, according to police, and landed in the southbound lane, where he was struck by a

southbound vehicle.

The motorcyclist, 36-year-old David Garneau, of Portland, was transported to Middlesex Hospital via ambulance and then flown to Hartford Hospital via Life Star helicopter, but later died of his injuries.

"My heart breaks for the family and friends of David Garneau," posted First Selectman Mike Pelton on Facebook.

Portland Police said the accident was still under investigation and declined to provide any further updates as of press time.

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 for all programs.

Come on Over 5K: Saturday, Sept. 26, 10 a.m., at Riverfront Park.

2026 Summer Concert Series (Make-Up Show): Tuesday, Aug. 25, 6 p.m., at Riverfront Park. Great Hill Mountain Band will perform.

USTA Youth Tennis Lessons Fall (Grades 1-8): Tuesdays and Thursdays, Sept. 8-Oct. 20, at the Portland High School tennis courts. Grades 1-2 meet from 5:30-6:30 p.m. and 6:30-7:30 p.m. All players in their first session receive and keep a new age-appropriate racquet and ball.

Junior Golf (Grades K-8): Grades K-2 and 3-5 clinics are held Mondays, Sept. 7-28, from 4-5 p.m. and 5:15-6:15 p.m. Grades 6-8 clinics are held Tuesdays, Sept 8-29, from 4-5 p.m. Clinics held at Portland West Golf Course.

Ladies Golf: Tuesdays, Sept. 8-Oct. 6, 5:15-6:15 p.m., at Portland West Golf Course.

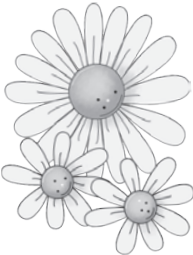
First Aid, CPR & AED Certification Course: Monday, Sept. 28, 5:30-8:30 p.m., at Buck-Fore-

Trinity Church News

Trinity Episcopal Church, 345 Main St., invites the community to worship each week. Services are on Sundays at 9:30 a.m., and Bible Study starts at 8:30 a.m. each Sunday. The schedule can always be located at www.trinity-churchportlandct.org.

Trinity is open for prayer and meditation and the church office is open from 2-4 p.m. each Friday. All are invited to join the Anglican Prayer beading sessions at this time as well.

Check out www.trinitychurchportlandct.org for more information. If you have any prayer requests to lift up, email the church office at trinitychurchportlandct@gmail.com.



Portland Remembers Sept. 11

This September marks the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. To mark this significant anniversary, members of the community are invited to attend A Service of Prayer, Remembrance, and Hope at First Congregational Church of Portland, located at 554 Main St., at 7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 11.

This multifaith service will include prayers and readings from several religious traditions, inspiring music, moments of silence, and reflections from community leaders. Together, participants will remember those who died, acknowledge the sacrifices made by so many in the aftermath of the attacks, and offer prayers for healing and hope.

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St. Mary Church News & Notes

St. Mary Roman Catholic Church, located at 45 Freestone Ave., invites all to attend its services and events. For more information, visit www.stmaryportlandct.org.

Worship: Weekday Masses are Monday and Tuesday at 8 a.m., and Friday at 12:10 p.m. Weekend Masses are Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Reconciliation: Saturdays between 4 and 4:45 p.m. Call 860-342-2308 to make arrangements. **Baptism:** Call Sue Ferraiolo at 860-342-2308 to make arrangements. **Marriages:** Contact the office at 860-342-2328 to make an appointment with the Rev. John Antonelle.

Holy Hour Benediction: First Friday of every month following the 12:10 p.m. Mass.

Blessed Mother Mass: First Saturday of every month at 9 a.m.

Hours of Operation: Church hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. Office hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Library Friends' Ongoing Book Sale

The Friends of the Portland Library invites the community to peruse the book, DVD, and puzzle bargains that can be found at its ongoing book sale, held at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave., during normal library hours.

Recently released fiction hardcovers, a wide selection of trade and paperback titles as well as many children's and young adult books are available for summertime reading. Also, there is an array of DVDs and puzzles to keep everyone

busy these last few weeks of summer vacation.

Inventory is refreshed weekly, so the Friends encourage a visit to the on-going book sale whenever patrons stop in at the library. The sale area is in the windowed corridor leading to the Mary Flood meeting room. All proceeds from the book sale support the programs offered by the library for children, adults and families as well as adding to the library's media collection.

Exchange Club Touch-a-Truck

The Exchange Club of Portland will hold its annual Touch A Truck event on Sunday, Aug. 30, from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., at the Portland Exchange Grounds. The Exchange will have trucks and vehicles of all types for children to come and sit in. The event will be horn-free from 11 a.m. to noon.

Proceeds from this year's event will support the creation of a "Championship" sign honoring Portland High School's state championship

teams. Over the past decade – and in earlier years – PHS has earned many state titles. This sign will celebrate those achievements.

Admission \$5 per person and can be purchased at the gate. Hot dogs, ice cream and refreshments will be available for purchase. Parking is free.

If you have a vehicle of any type for the Touch A Truck event, contact Jamie Leonard at 860-301-6998.

Crafters, Vendors Wanted

Crafters and vendors are wanted for 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.

Valley View School is holding kindergarten registration for the 2026-27 school year.

Parents/guardians whose children will be five years of age on or before Sept. 1, 2026, should: contact Valley View School at kregistration@portlandct.us to indicate if you will be registering your child for kindergarten. Please provide your child's full name, date of birth, phone number, address, and parent's names.

Further information regarding kindergarten registration will be provided once you contact the school.

342-2308 to make arrangements. **Marriages:** Contact the office at 860-342-2328 to make an appointment with the Rev. John Antonelle.

Holy Hour Benediction: First Friday of every month following the 12:10 p.m. Mass.

Blessed Mother Mass: First Saturday of every month at 9 a.m.

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Kindergarten Registration

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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 Dona-huecj@sbcglobal.net; or Jeffrey LaBonte (assisting with registrations) at 714jrl@gmail.com.

Resident Completes Intensive Research Project

Portland resident Jamison Cooke, a member of the class of 2027 majoring in computer science at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Mass., was a member of a student team that recently completed a professional-level research-driven project titled "Relations between people, music, and mathematics."

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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 for 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 arts and crafts projects. The class is led by two trained teachers, and RHAM students also assist in the program.

More information is at ahmyouth.org/programs-services/kinderrhama-preschool-program. Children must be fully toilet-trained to participate.

If you are interested or have further questions, contact Becky Murray at beckym@ahmyouth.org or 860-573-1260.

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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.

After the classroom portion, we will head to Devil's Hopyard State Park, East Haddam.

Registration is limited to 20 participants. This program is appropriate for high school age and above, however a parent/guardian must accompany a minor. To register or for any questions, contact Pat Young at salmonriverct@att.net or info@eightmileriver.org.

Collectively, the Salmon and Eightmile River watersheds cover over 200 square miles and include the towns of Bolton, Colchester, Columbia, East Haddam, East Hampton, East Lyme, Glastonbury, Haddam, Hebron, Lebanon, Lyme, Marlborough and Salem.

Benefit Concert for CVC

There will be a benefit concert for the Community Voice Channel – the public access channel for Andover, Hebron and Marlborough – coming up in Ellington in September.

Rock This Town will host a benefit show for Community Voice Channel (CVC) entitled “Rock This Town presents A CVC Benefit Show” on Sunday, Sept. 13, from 11 a.m.-7 p.m., at Market Park, 72 Maple St., Ellington.

This immersive music event will bring together top artists, emerging talents, engaging activities, food trucks, vendors, and music enthusiasts to celebrate the future of CVC.

According to CVC, public access television in Connecticut is facing a funding crisis driven by the ongoing shift to streaming. As audiences abandon traditional cable television for modern streaming platforms like Netflix, Roku and YouTube, the total revenue CVC receives has plummeted.

CVC said this loss has left it struggling to keep its doors open and maintain its equipment. CVC relies on these cable TV subscriber fees for operating costs; even though CVC is on Roku and YouTube, it does not receive internet subscriber fees.

Tickets to the concert are \$10 for ages 16 and over, \$5 for ages 5-15, and admission is free for ages 4 and under.

For tickets and more information visit tinyurl.com/cvcbenefit.

Needleman Endorsed by 314 Action Fund

State Sen. Norm Needleman (D-33) was recently endorsed by the 314 Action Fund, an organization focused on supporting candidates with experience in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as he works toward re-election to a fifth term in the 33rd Senate District.

Needleman received this recognition both for his support of STEM employment and education in Connecticut and due to his own career and skills.

“The STEM field plays a vital role in our economy and our schools, and in a state with incredible health care quality, the new developments discovered at Electric Boat and other major employers and organizations and some of the best colleges and universities in the country, its importance resonates everywhere you look,” said Needleman. “I’m grateful for this support and look forward to continuing my advocacy for quality education in our state.”



Needleman



Needleman

In the 2026 legislative session, Needleman voted in support of hundreds of millions of dollars of state support for Connecticut schools. He has also supported higher education investments and other initiatives intended to spur increased support for STEM education and employment in Connecticut, and serves as the Senate Chair of the Energy and Technology Committee.

Needleman was unanimously renominated this spring by the Democratic Party to represent the towns of Colchester, Chester, Clinton, Deep River, East Haddam, East Hampton, Essex, Haddam, Lyme, Old Saybrook, Portland and Westbrook.

In addition to working as Senate Chair of the Energy and Technology Committee, Needleman also works as vice chair of the Planning and Development Committee and a member of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding, Transportation and Commerce committees.

Needleman founded and runs a manufacturing company, Tower Laboratories in Centerbrook, and is currently serving his eighth term as the first selectman of Essex.

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And the Winners Are....

Here are some of the winners and runners-up from this year's Portland Street Garden Project.



Amy Estabrook of Bud's Café was named runner-up for the 2026 Portland's Choice Award, selected by community vote.



Dana Hughes (left) and Madison Godwin (right) of Scissor Happy received the First Time Planter Award for the business's debut participation in the project.



Mike and Louise Walsh of Dog Tales Grooming and Pet Care received first place in the special America's 250 Award category, celebrating the nation's 250th birthday through a patriotic garden display. They also won third place overall.



Zachary Olson of Portland Ale House received the Wow Factor Award for the business's eye-catching entry.



Debby Carle of Magic Mirror Unisex Salon received the Most Creative Garden Award and the Whimsy in Bloom Award for the business's playful garden display.



Connecticut Valley School of Music and Dance received second place in the America's 250 Award category.

Obituaries

Moodus

Francis Edward Rogers Jr.

Francis Edward Rogers Jr. 83, of St. Petersburg, Fla., formerly of Connecticut, passed away peacefully Monday, Aug. 17, at Chestelm Health and Rehab in Moodus. Born Feb. 8, 1943, in Middletown, he was the son of the late Francis and Eleanor (Alquist) Rogers.

Francis worked as a truck driver for most of his career, before retiring to Florida. He is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, Corinne and Walter Farren of East Hampton; a brother, John Rogers (Dottie) of South Carolina; sisters, Pat Palau of Essex, Catherine Boiko of California; and his six grandchildren, Jeremy, Korey, Tarryne Rogers, Jaimie, Patrick and Kiley Farren.

He was predeceased by his sons, Francis and Courtland, and his daughter, Jaqueline.

There will be a private burial in the family plot in St. Bridget Cemetery in Moodus.

To leave online condolences, please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Colchester

Virginia Colonna

Virginia Colonna (née Moore), 82, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Wednesday, Aug. 12, after a brief battle with cancer. Born Jan. 6, 1944, in New London, Conn., Virginia, known as Ginger, was the cherished daughter of the late Garland Eugene and Eldora Maxine (née Leedom) Moore.

She grew up on the east coast, as a Navy brat, but ultimately settled in Connecticut once her father retired. She had a lifelong passion for reading, crochet, sewing, travel and many other hobbies.

Virginia was a devoted wife to Joseph Colonna. Together, they built a life filled with laughter, love, devotion to family, and a love of traveling. As a mother, grandmother, and friend, she was known for her generous spirit, unwavering kindness, and sharp wit.

She dedicated many years to her work in banking at New London Federal, Norwich Savings Society, and ultimately retiring from Charter Oak Federal Credit Union. She also volunteered her expertise and time to many places, but most notably as a Girl Scout leader and chairperson in Montville.

She is survived by her loving husband, Joseph Colonna; her brother, Edmund Moore; her children, Kristi (née Maynard) and Robert Koval, Charles and Janice (née Jones) Maynard; her loving husband Joe's children: Joanne Colonna and Lisa Peipul; her adored grandchildren, Collin Maynard, Luke Maynard, Alexis Koval, Kyle Koval, Ashley Peipul, Chace Peipul. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Per her request there will be no funeral services. The family will plan a Celebration of Life at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Virginia's memory to The American Cancer Society.



Haddam Neck
Mary Margaret Cleveland

Mary Margaret Cleveland, 81, of Fairfield, Ohio, passed away Saturday, Aug. 8. She was born March 20, 1945, to the late E. George Carlson and Elizabeth (Wilkes) Carlson in Middletown.

Mary loved her career as a librarian, she enjoyed gardening, loved to travel, and was an avid reader. Mary is survived by her children, Heather Cleveland, Kevin (Casey) Cleveland and Ian Cleveland; grandson, Joshua Cleveland; her brother-in-law, Jack Harris; and many other family members, including her nieces and nephews.

Mary was also preceded in death by her sister, Chris Harris, and brother, Clinton Carlson.

Friends and family are invited to a luncheon to celebrate Mary's life at Haddam Neck Congregational Church, 408 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck, on Saturday, Oct. 10, from noon to 2 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations to be made to the following: www.ct-draftrescue.org and bigfluffydogs.com.

The Webster Funeral Home in Fairfield is serving the family.



Portland
Jacqueline Etheridge

Jacqueline Elizabeth Etheridge, "Jacqui," 63, passed away peacefully Wednesday, Aug. 5, with her beloved husband, Donn Etheridge, by her side. Born in Boston to her mother, Regina Roberge and her father, John "Jack" Mock, Jacqui lived a life filled with love, family, friendship, and a remarkable dedication to the things that brought her joy.

At the center of Jacqui's world was her husband, Donn, who affectionately called her "Kiddo." Their love and devotion to one another were at the heart of her life. She treasured her children, Megan and Matt, and was happiest surrounded by the people she loved.

Jacqui is also survived by her brother, Michael Vingris, and his girlfriend, Vikki Brothers, as well as her extended family, including Joann Ginn and other beloved family members. She was preceded in death by her brother, Roger Vingris, whose memory remained an important part of her family and her life.

Jacqui had many passions throughout her life. She enjoyed working out, quilting, crafting, and especially karate. Over more than 30 years of practicing karate, she earned the rank of third-degree black belt, a testament to her determination, discipline, perseverance, and strength of character. A special place in Jacqui's heart was held by her dear friend Marilyn Gattinella, with whom she shared many years of friendship, laughter and a love of quilting.

Jacqui also had a special love for animals. They brought her great joy and were another reflection of the caring heart she shared so freely.

Those who knew Jacqui will remember a strong, loving woman who devoted herself to her family, embraced life with enthusiasm, and made lasting impressions on the people around her. Her love for her family, her many passions, and her joyful spirit will be remembered and cherished by all who knew her.

Though she is deeply missed, Jacqui's memo-



ry lives on in Donn, Megan, Matt, her extended family, friends, and all those whose lives she touched.

There will be no calling hours. The family will remember Jacqui privately and with gratitude for the love, laughter and memories she shared with those closest to her.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to VITAS Community Connection of Connecticut in Jacqui's memory or at VITAS Hospice Care 199 Park Road, ext 102 Middlebury CT 06762.

The Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, is in charge of arrangements.

Andover

Sue Ellen Sylvain

Sue Ellen Sylvain, a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and friend, passed away peacefully at her home Tuesday, July 21, following a long illness. Her life was defined by her deep faith, her creative talents, and her immense love for her family.

Born in Hartford and raised in Granby, Sue pursued her early passion for creativity at A.I. Prince Technical School in Hartford, where she graduated with a degree in fashion design. Demonstrating a strong intellect and varied talents, she later earned an associate's degree in accounting. Sue brought her sharp mind and strong work ethic to several notable organizations throughout her career, including Dun & Bradstreet and the Hartford Insurance Company. Prior to her retirement, she was employed at RHAM High School in Hebron.

Sue was a remarkably talented woman who poured her heart into her passions. She was highly proficient in sewing, knitting, and decorating, creating beauty in the world around her. She also possessed a special warmth that animals instinctively recognized; a true "dog magnet," Sue loved every dog she ever met, and she leaves behind her cherished miniature poodle, Abby.

Sue was especially passionate about her love for Andover Lake, where she lived. She and her husband Dave would spend many evenings on their dock enjoying the sunset and natural beauty of the lake.

A devout Christian raised in the Congregational church, Sue lived her faith daily. She did not just practice her beliefs, she embodied them, earning a reputation as the sweetest, kindest person to her family, friends, and everyone fortunate enough to cross her path.

Above all, her life was centered on her family, whom she loved "to the moon and back." Her deepest devotions were as a wife, mother, and grandmother, always holding the well-being of her son and grandchildren foremost in her heart.

She is survived by her loving husband of 55 years, Dave Sylvain; her son, Bryan Sylvain of Portland, Ore.; and her two adored grandchildren, Ella Frances Sylvain and Theodore Aloysius Sylvain. She also leaves behind her brother, David Hollis of Westminster, Vt., and her niece, Trina Hollis of Valdosta, Ga.

In accordance with her wishes, there will be no services or celebration of life at this time. For those wishing to honor her memory, donations may be made in her name to the Andover Lake Association: <https://www.andoverlakect.com/product-page/donation-to-the-andover-lake-fund>



Moodus

George Neudecker Jr.

George Leon Neudecker, Jr., of Moodus, passed away peacefully at home due to a long and debilitating illness Wednesday, Aug. 12. His beloved wife was attentively by his side. George was 63 years old.

He was born in Middletown July 12, 1963, to the late George and Patricia (Gates) Neudecker. Growing up in East Haddam, he graduated from Hale Ray High School. George retired after a 21-year career with the East Haddam Highway Department. He married Marisa (Redford) McCarthy on April 28, 2013. The couple enjoyed spending countless hours on their deep-sea fishing boat called "Blind Justice." He also loved hunting and vegetable gardening at their home in Moodus.

George was talented at fixing anything and everything but most importantly, he will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by all who knew him, especially his wife, Marisa McCarthy; a daughter, Stephanie Neudecker of Florida; a stepson, John and his wife Jenny Blaschik and their daughter, Vivian of New Hampshire; a brother, Robert Neudecker of Moodus; and many extended family members and friends.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Donations in his memory may be made to the Sons of the American Legion at 35 Neptune Ave., Moodus, CT 06469.

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



Colchester

Frederick Palmer Brown

Frederick Palmer Brown, of Colchester, on Saturday, Aug. 15, passed away peacefully at the home of his daughter, where he had been visiting. He was 91 years old.

Fred was born in Hartford to the late Harold and Dorothy (Palmer) Brown. He grew up in Colchester on the family dairy farm on South Main Street. He graduated from Bacon Academy. On Oct. 16, 1954, Fred married his high school sweetheart and best friend, Patricia Dawson. The couple built their home in Colchester where they raised six children and were actively involved in many areas of the town.

Fred was a founding member of the Colchester Bible Baptist Church where he remained an active participant throughout his lifetime. He was also a life member of the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department where he served as Deputy Chief for fifteen years. Fred retired several years ago after a long career as the superintendent for the Colchester Water Company.

Fred and Pat were widely known for their beautifully handmade "Creative Clocks." After 65 years of marriage, Pat predeceased him on May 6, 2019.

Fred will be remembered fondly as a hard-working family man who devoted his life, love, and service to God, family, and community. He will be sadly missed but remembered with love by all who knew him, especially his children and their spouses, Jonathan Brown, Karen (Thomas) Hutchins, Kevin (Christina) Brown, all of Colchester, Debbi (David) Hockman of Spring Grove, Pa.; daughters-in-law, Heidi Brown of Windsor Locks and Donna Brown of Colchester; 10 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; and many extended family members and friends.

In addition to his wife and parents, he was predeceased by two sons, Jeffery Brown and Robert Brown, and his sister, Janice Adams.

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

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

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to: Salem Vol. Fire Company, 424 Hartford Rd. Salem, CT 06420; VNA of Hanover & Spring Grove Hospice, 440 North Madison St. Hanover, PA. 17331; Colchester Hayward Fire Museum, c/o Colchester Hayward Vol. Fire Company, 52 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, CT 06415.



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Andover electors are hereby advised that there is a vacancy on the Recreation Commission. Any qualified Andover elector interested in serving as a member of the Recreation Commission for a term ending June 30, 2027, is encouraged to apply. Letters of interest should be emailed to Townclerk@andoverct.org by September 7, 2026.

1TB 8/21

EMPLOYMENT

NURSERY ASSISTANT, GLASTONBURY: St. James' Episcopal Church is looking for a nurturing, dependable person to provide child care for parishioners' children. Sundays 9:45am-11:45am in the Nursery. Will be responsible for providing age-appropriate and child-centered care while maintaining a safe environment. Must be 18 years old and have completed American Red Cross training (Church can help facilitate training). \$50 Stipend provided. Contact Dawn, in Church office, 860-633-8333 or parishadmin@stjamesgl.org.

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RE3-15-24

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ITB 8/21

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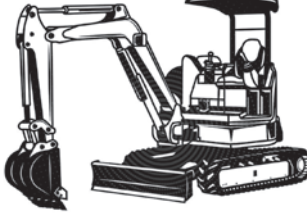
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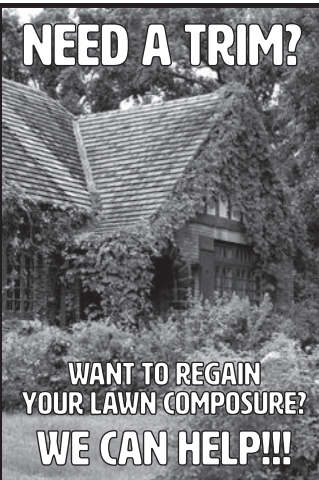


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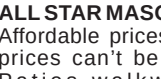


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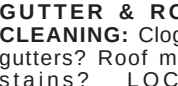
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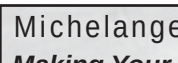
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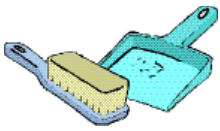
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