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RIVEREAST
News Bulletin

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

Volume 47, Number 40 | Published by The Glastonbury Citizen | November 20, 2026

Another Successful Year for Portland Food Drive

By Anne Lilburn

It's the season of giving and, for the 32nd year in a row, Portland residents, led by the Mainetti family, came together to collect shopping bags full of food for those in need. Organizer Kelly Mainetti and her daughter Casey Pisano laughed when they said they knew it had been 32 years.

"She was a baby!" said Mainetti, who fondly remembered the food drive's first year, which her mother-in-law Pat Mainetti started while watching her older two children. Then, Pisano was too young to participate, but this year, she stood next to her mother, helping to count the brown paper bags coming in with a counter.

Every year, the family, along with local volunteers, distributes brown paper bags on the doorsteps of Portland homes, with a note stapled on asking residents to fill the bag with food and leave it out for collection the following week, when volunteers head out to collect the bags.

This year, the collection started on Sunday, Nov. 15 at 1 p.m. By 2 p.m., they had over 400 bags, and by 3 p.m., they had reached their goal of 1,000 bags. Their end tally, said Mainetti a couple days later, was "about 1,200 bags," marking the second year in a row that they had surpassed 1,000.

"Portland always comes through," said Mainetti. "The town of Portland is amazing."

Mainetti said that, every year, she was "always worried and stressed" that she wouldn't have enough volunteers to get the job done, and every year, Portland showed her that it cares.

More than fifty people, ranging from middle and high school kids to senior citizens, wheeled in shopping carts full of bags, unloaded and sorted them, and stocked the shelves of the soon-to-be-full Food Bank pantry. Mainetti and other family members estimated that over a hundred people had helped with the overall drive, including the bag drop off and pickup.



For the 32nd year in a row, Portland residents recently came together for an annual food drive. From left are Portland Food Bank Director Kevin Backman, Kim Franklin, Food Drive Organizer Kelly Mainetti, Casey Pisano, and Kim Hanna.

As he unloaded, Food Bank Director Kevin Backman was beaming, and expressed his pride over what Portland accomplishes each year, as well as his gratitude for the event, Last year, the roughly 1,600 bags they collected managed to keep the shelves stocked through June, he said — and this year, he said, they were projecting that 68% more people would need food in the community.

When asked where they would put all the donated food, as the shelves filled up in the pantry area, he smiled and said, "we've got to figure that out."

"You've got to understand, Thanksgiving is coming up, so we've got 90 families that we've got to get ready for that," he said.

The Food Bank provides food and supplies year-round, he said, but also provides extra support to families and individuals in need during the holiday season, offering a package with turkey and ingredients for side dishes for Thanksgiving, and providing food, as well as Christmas presents for families during the holiday season.

At this year's food drive were some familiar faces for a reporter attending for the second year in a row. At tables in the lower floor of the Senior Center, where the food bank is located, were Nellie Marchinkoski and her daughters Renee Ghent, Michele Jagoda, and Amy Colla. Once again, they were labelling food with expiration dates and sorting it by category.

While they worked, groups of kids and teens from the local Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Xavier High School and the Portland Leo Club, as well as individuals with their families, worked to carry in bags and unload cars. Kelly Mainetti's father-in-law, Nick, was also there, wheeling in grocery carts filled with bags, this year.

Mainetti said that this year, they had it down to a science, printing out route maps for volunteers to collect bags. And while there were some

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RHAM Eyes Options for $37M School Plan

By Toriana Williams

During its Nov. 16 meeting, the RHAM Board of Education agreed to move forward with early work on financing a proposed $37.4 million renovation project at the middle and high schools. However, board members are still discussing when to ask voters to approve the plan in a referendum.

The board also approved the 2027-28 school calendar and heard a presentation about a student-led anti-bullying program.

Board Weighs Timing of $37M Building Plan

The biggest discussion of the night focused on RHAM's capital improvement plan, which has been reviewed and revised since its original proposal.

Superintendent of Schools Colin McNamara said the district had removed about $5.5 million in projects from its original plan, though those projects will instead be considered through the district's regular 10-year CIP.

The remaining projects total around $37.4 million, and the state could pay back about $16.9 million in reimbursement, leaving the district with an estimated cost of $20.5 million.

McNamara said those numbers are based on current estimates and could change over time.

The proposed renovation project would include roof replacement at both the high school and middle school, exterior insulation and finish systems replacement, tennis court replacement, several HVAC projects and more.

The board's biggest question was when to bring the plan to voters. May and November were discussed as possible dates for a public referendum.

McNamara said a May vote was possible from a scheduling standpoint, but he warned that it would compete with town budget votes.

Board member Scott Sauyet, a Democrat, said he had heard that some local political leaders might not want the project on the November ballot because of election concerns.

"There's political pressure," said Sauyet. He added that some officials might even oppose having the bonding question appear during an election.

Board Chair Heather Summerer, a Democrat, questioned the same concern. She said she had heard similarly but didn't understand why local officials would oppose the plan.

Summerer said she would rather hold the vote in November than place it beside town budget votes in May.

"I think our chances are worse if we go in May against the budget. I would rather go in November," she said. She added that she didn't think Hebron would support the plan regardless.

Other board members said they felt the district had done its homework and pointed to earlier public meetings, building tours and changes to the project list.

McNamara said the board didn't have to choose a referendum date during the meeting. However, he wanted to begin talking with finan-

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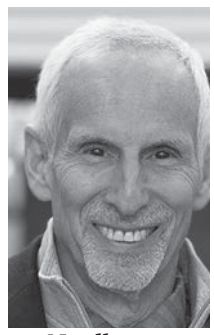
Christmas Fair in Bolton

St. Maurice Church, located at 32 Hebron Road in Bolton, will hold its 55th annual Christmas Fair – "Sleigh Bells Ring" – on Saturday, Nov. 21, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

This event features a Country Store filled with homemade jams, muffin and cookie mixes, decorated wreaths and Christmas trees, and handcrafted stocking stuffers. There will be fresh holiday evergreen baskets, as well as "Take-A-Chance" raffle baskets with prizes, and a tag sale table.

Homemade apple pies and baked goods will be for sale. Many crafters will also be on site. Lunch will be served. The church is handicapped-accessible.

From the State Senator's Desk



Needleman

In the last several years, it's clear that artificial intelligence is the biggest technological advance in our lives, for better and worse. With as many as two-thirds of all teens in the United States using AI chatbots, we can't let this technology keep growing without a chance to rein it in. Bad advice, questionable motives and a drive to keep users engaged have caused tragedies already, and we need to protect our children from the worst outcomes.

As of Jan. 1, Connecticut will have a new control in place to better monitor the use of AI, going into place just days after Connecticut youth will likely receive new phones, tablets and laptops for the holidays. A new law passed earlier this year going into place will cover several AI issues, but one particular piece is especially important, as it will directly impact our families.

Under the new law, chatbots will have additional controls to prevent them from developing close relationships with humans. In the past, some severe cases of chatbot communication found them talking to users like the bots are people. A bot will need to remind a user it's AI every three hours for adults and every hour for children.

Additionally, and importantly, before a minor starts using an AI chatbot, as of Jan. 1, operators will need to prevent it from engaging in harmful conduct. Some news stories have described AI companions and chatbots encouraging members of the public to consume unsafe substances, encourage unsafe behavior like disordered eating or even commit violence. As of Jan. 1, AI systems will need to be updated to prevent this.

Another change requires AI chatbots to pick up on thoughts of suicide or self-harm and direct a user to help, such as suicide and crisis lifeline numbers. This will help address the needs of struggling youth, leaving them less susceptible to falling victim to chatbots.

Any violations of the law will be enforced by the attorney general's office.

Earlier in 2026, I voted for this legislation, and I'm proud to have done so. This law isn't meant to prevent AI or technology companies from operating their products, but it meets the disturbing and tragic stories we've heard in recent years and tries to prevent them from happening again. As a grandfather, I'm concerned about my own grandkids' safety, but even beyond that, as the owner of a manufacturing company, I've seen how quickly technology can evolve. We need to make sure there are common-sense protections in place for at-risk children.

These changes aren't going to put OpenAI or Anthropic out of business and aren't going to impact the free market. Connecticut is the seventh state to regulate AI companions, so we're not going out on a limb by ourselves, either. Our state needs to stay safe and protect our youth from threats. Putting guardrails on AI will help us do that.

State Sen. Norm Needleman
D-33rd District

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

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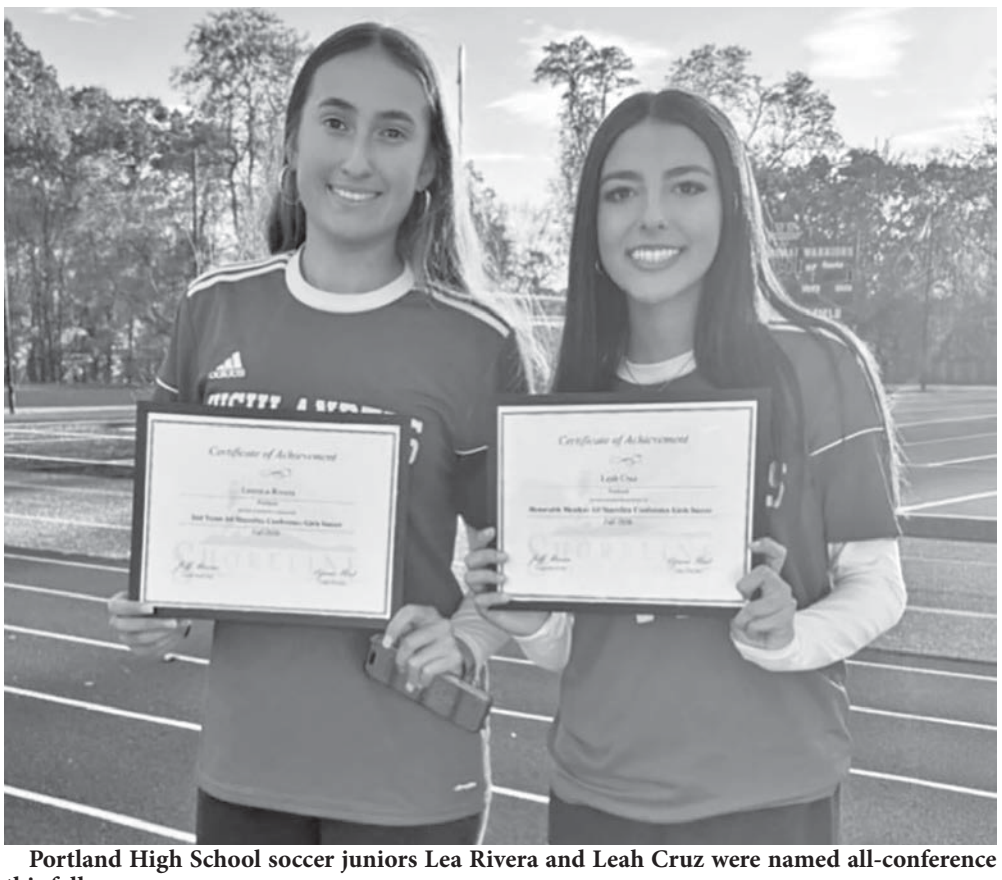

Portland High School soccer juniors Lea Rivera and Leah Cruz were named all-conference this fall.

Rivereast Standouts Athletes of the Week

By Josh Howard

Lea Rivera and Leah Cruz – Portland High School (Soccer): Rivera and Cruz, both juniors, were named All-Shoreline Conference (SLC) after helping the Highlanders win a handful of games this season. Rivera was named to the All-SLC second-team and Cruz was named All-SLC honorable mention. Both are slated to be back next season for a Portland squad that will have a bulk of their roster returning.

Liana Fox and Giuliana McLaughlin – RHAM High School (Soccer): Fox and McLaughlin both scored a goal and had assists as the Raptors defeated Plainville (3-0) in overtime as the Raptors advance to the state semifinals for the first time since 2017. Fox, a senior captain, scored her team-leading 15th goal with 3:10 left in overtime to help secure the victory. McLaughlin, a sophomore, scored the go-ahead goal in the extra session and then assists Fox and Morgan McCarthy on the subsequent goals. Senior goalie Mia Hall was in net for the shutout, which was the team's 10th this season.

Quinn Guntulis - Bacon Academy (Soccer): Guntulis was named All-Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) first-team for the second straight season. Guntulis, a junior, helped the Bobcats win a total on ten games this fall, including one each in the conference and state tournaments. Joining Guntulis on the All-ECC first-team where teammates Maddy Ives, Michaela Smith, and Ava Galante.

Abigail Hambidge and Quinn Rurka - East Hampton High School (Soccer): Hambidge, a junior, and Rurka, a sophomore, have been the unsung heroes for the undefeated Bellringers, serving as center backs for a team that has allowed a program-best four goals over the first 19 contests. Following a 15-0 regular season, the pair helped goalie Cassie Owocki blank a pair of conference opponents as East Hampton won the Shoreline Conference (SLC) championship before holding a pair of opponents scoreless in the first two rounds of the Class M state tourney.

To nominate an athlete as a Standout of the Week, email joshhowardsports@gmail.com. Please include as many details about the athlete or performance as possible.

Tri-County American Legion Baseball

Registration is open for those interested in Tri-County American Legion baseball program's winter hitting league.

Deadline to register is Dec. 1, but space is limited to the first 40 paid registrants.

The six-week league is scheduled to run in two sessions (Wednesdays and Saturdays) beginning in early January. It is open to serious players who will be between the ages of 12-19 in 2027 – and who have a parent residing in Andover, Colchester, East Haddam, East Hampton, Hebron, Lebanon or Marlborough.

For more information and to register, go to www.tclegion.com or contact GM Len Lampugnale at Lampugnale@comcast.net or at 860-295-0437.

Tryouts for Tri-County's 2027 teams will begin in February. Registration for tryouts will open up by late November. Depending on interest, Tri-County can again form teams at all four levels of American Legion (19U, 17U, 15U and 13U), as well as teams to compete in Babe Ruth (13U-16U).

Food Drive for Amazing Grace Pantry

With Thanksgiving approaching, Cromwell Chiropractic Center's November food drive for Amazing Grace Food Pantry is entering its final weeks. Donations will be accepted through Nov. 30 to help local individuals and families in need during the holiday season.

The pantry is currently well-stocked with canned vegetables and fruit. Items most needed include pasta, soup, cereal, rice, tomato sauce, canned meals, condiments, pancake mix and syrup, coffee, and tea.

Household necessities are also welcome, including toilet paper, dish soap, laundry detergent, shampoo, and deodorant.

Donations may be dropped off through Nov. 30 at: Cromwell Chiropractic Center, 28 Shunpike Road, Suite 4, Cromwell, CT 06416. Donation drop-off hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 7:45 a.m.-noon and 2:45–6:30 p.m.

The food drive is open to everyone in Cromwell, Middletown, Portland, Rocky Hill, and surrounding communities.

For more information, call 860-635-4455.

VITA Seeks Volunteers

The Middlesex VITA Coalition helps thousands of area residents file their taxes at no cost. As part of the IRS-sponsored Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, the coalition is seeking volunteers to help continue the mission.

Middlesex VITA specializes in maximizing tax credits for families and individuals with incomes under $70,000. No prior tax preparation experience is required, as training is provided. You will collaboratively prepare client returns, ensuring you're never working alone.

Middlesex County includes the *Rivereast* towns of Portland and East Hampton.

Training begins in early January. If interested in volunteering, email MiddlesexCT.Vita@gmail.com, or connect on Facebook at "Middlesex CT VITA."

Glastonbury Turkey Drive

On Sunday, Nov. 22, First Church, Glastonbury, will be an official collection site for Connecticut Foodshare's annual Thanksgiving drive and fundraiser.

All are asked to bring frozen turkeys and donations of any amount – make checks payable to Connecticut Foodshare – to the back lobby of the church, located at 2183 Main St., between 8 a.m. and noon on Sunday.

People may also donate online at donate.ctfoodshare.org/team/863323.



From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

As hard as it may seem to believe, the holiday season is once again upon us. Thanksgiving is next week. Next week!

Thanksgiving means many things for many people – most related to food, family, friends, and the annual Macy's parade. Here at the *Rivereast*, it also means two words: early deadline.

Due to the holiday, we're going to press a day early next week. That means, for you readers, all copy – including letters to the editor, press releases, and event listings – must be submitted by **noon Monday, Nov. 23.** No exceptions will be made.

So if you want to be part of next week's issue – remember, a lot of people come home for Thanksgiving, and are itching to catch up on their hometown news – don't miss out!!

Happy Thanksgiving from all of us at the *Rivereast News Bulletin*!

* * *

The news outlet *CT Insider* ran an interesting map recently comparing the income gaps in all 169 of Connecticut's towns.

The outlet analyzed Census Bureau data from 2020 to 2024 to find which town has the most households earning $200,000 or more, and which has the most households earning $50,000 or less. Not surprisingly, those figures can vary wildly from town to town. For example, while statewide just 19% of households reported an income of $200,000 or more, in Darien, that percentage jumped to 67%.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Hartford saw 53% of its households with an income of $50,000 or less, whereas just under 5% of its households reported earning $200,000 or more.

Naturally, I was curious to see where the *Rivereast* towns stood. So, to quote the En Vogue classic "Never Gonna Get It," now it's time for a breakdown.

Of our six towns, Marlborough had the largest percentage of households earning $200,000 or more, at 33.3%. That's followed by Hebron at 32.8%, Andover at 27.6%, Colchester at 23.4%, East Hampton at 21.2%, and Portland at 20.9%.

It's perhaps not surprising, then, Marlborough also has the lowest percentage of households earning $50,000 or less, at just 8.1%. That's followed by Andover at 13.8%, Hebron at 14%, East Hampton at 17.4%, Portland at 17.7%, and Colchester at 18.7% of households earning $50,000 or less.

Now let's look at nearby Glastonbury. Not surprisingly, more than a third of its households, at 36.1%, had earnings of $200,000 or more. Interestingly, though, its percentage of households earning $50,000 or less sat at 15.6% -- or nearly double Marlborough's percentage.

Overall, it was an interesting map to look at it – and it showed how the sweeping overgeneralizations about certain parts of the state can be, well, wrong. For example, many – including myself – refer to the southwest corner of the state, the towns closest to New York City, as the vaunted "Gold Coast." And sure,

Editor's Desk continued on page 6

Bulletin Board

As Thanksgiving draws near, I'm sure you are all eagerly looking forward to that most touching holiday tradition: the presidential pardon of the White House Thanksgiving turkeys. (I refer here to the feathered variety of turkeys lest there be any confusion with the everyday type of turkey that seems to populate our halls of government these days.)

The tradition of pardoning White House Thanksgiving turkeys is sometimes said to date back to Abraham Lincolon's presidency, but this appears to be a myth. Scholars agree (yes, friends, no subject is apparently too bizarre that some scholar won't devote a lifetime of study to it) that the first turkey "reprieve" was granted by President John F. Kennedy. Presented with a turkey wearing a sign reading "Good Eating, Mr. President," JFK remarked, 'We'll let this one grow," and sent the lucky bird (which hopefully could not read) back to the farm.

The first use of the word "pardon" during the annual event was apparently uttered by President Reagan, but it was President George H.W. Bush who actually formalized the whole presidential turkey pardon rite. It's been pretty much all downhill ever since, as subsequent presidents have all followed suit.

It is clear, of course, why some 46 million turkeys receive a death sentence every Thanksgiving (it's because they taste better than tofu). It is less clear to me what misdeeds any given turkey may have committed that would require a presidential pardon in order to keep on living (to my knowledge, "tasting better than tofu" has not yet been deemed a felony even here in law-happy Connecticut). I would also suggest that turkeys are practically saints compared to some of the good-for-nothing people receiving presidential pardons these days.

If there is a crime involved in the annual turkey pardoning ceremony, it is the inability of our presidents to refrain from horrendous puns. In 2022, President Biden, pardoning turkeys "Chocolate" and "Chip" (named after the president's favorite ice cream flavor), remarked. "Before I gobble up too much time, the votes are in. They've been counted, verified. There's no ballot stuffing. There's no 'fowl' play."

As for "Chocolate" and "Chip," the list of pardoned turkey names may not rise to the level of a felony, but some must certainly qualify as a misdemeanor. A sampling includes: Biscuit and Gravy (2004), Marshmallow and Yam (2004), Flyer and Fryer (2006), Mack and Cheese (2014), and Tater and Tot (2016).

Incidentally, candidates for the White House ceremony are donated by the National Turkey Federation (which, just for the record, bills itself as "turkey industry advocates"). The turkeys are fed a special grain-heavy diet to increase their size. The two "winners" are eventually picked from a flock of about 50 for their size and appearance, as well as their superior ability to remain unflustered in the face of loud noises, flash photography and large crowds.

The ability to remain cool and collected despite all the media attention on Pardon Day is more important than you might think. It is said that a turkey during the Nixon administration became so agitated and uncooperative that its feet had to be nailed to the table. I'm hoping this story is some sort of gruesome myth concocted by Nixon detractors or maybe by vegans or the tofu industry or something. Of course, now that we have Super Glue, extreme solutions involving hammers and nails would no longer be necessary in any case.

Anyway, the two finalists are transported to Washington where they stay at the Willard InterContinental Hotel at National Turkey Federation expense before eventually being chauffeured over to the White House for the annual Thanksgiving ceremony. By the way, I looked up the cost for a room at the Willard. A "King Room" that sleeps two is $866.47 a night including taxes and fees. On the other hand, the White House Visitor Center is a mere three-minute walk away, so you can't fault the place for location. I mention this only in case you feel compelled for some inexplicable reason to head down to Washington to witness the sacred pardoning ceremony yourself.

As President Obama remarked while sparing the lives of "Caramel" and "Popcorn" in 2013, "The office of the presidency – the most powerful position in the world – brings with it many awesome and solemn responsibilities."

To his credit, he then added, "This is not one of them."

You might take that into account if you're thinking of attending. On the other hand, considering the lack of compassion in Washington these days, it's quite possible our current president will show up for this year's event with a meat cleaver.

Jim Hallas

Rivereast Hours of Operation

The offices of the *Rivereast News Bulletin* and *Glastonbury Citizen*, located at 87 Nutmeg Lane, Glastonbury, are open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. The *Rivereast* can be reached any time via email at bulletin@glcitizen.com.



Bingo for a Cause… **At the Portland Exchange Club's November Bingo Night, $1,000 was raised for Portland Fuel Bank. Want to help grow that total? Come for the next round on Thursday, Dec. 10, at Concentric Brewing Company, 91 Main St. Visit the Portland Exchange Club on Facebook for more information.**

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

Early Deadline Next Week

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the *Rivereast* will be publishing one day early next week. Therefore, **all** copy for the Nov. 27 *Rivereast* – including letters to the editor, press releases, event listings, and church/library/senior center listings – **MUST** be submitted by **noon Monday, Nov. 23.**

No exceptions will be made.

Happy Thanksgiving from all of us at the *Rivereast News Bulletin.*

Richmond Library Auction

To the Editor:

Beginning Nov. 20, the Richmond Memorial Library presents its 12 Days of Holiday Cheer Annual Silent Auction. This annual auction is a timely event to find holiday gifts and to financially support our local library.

Auction items will be available to view in person at the library beginning at 10 a.m. Friday, Nov. 20. New this year is online viewing and bidding on items. Library staff is available if you need assistance with registration and bidding.

Food, beverage, restaurants, hair care, massage, are just a few of the types of items available.

Visit rml.cbo.io today to register and begin bidding on items. Visit the library at 15 School Street in Marlborough to see items in person. The auction closes Monday, Dec. 7, at 6:45 p.m.

Have fun and thank you for supporting your local library.

Linda Estabrook – Marlborough

Boards Asking for Input

To the Editor:

The past year we saw a great deal of discussion on the making of municipal and educational budgets and the willingness of citizens to support those budgets.

It was a stressful time, but one that contained a lot of citizen back-and-forth in this newspaper and online. And it showed wholehearted engagement from a portion of the governing entities and fledgling attempts from others.

We know how that all turned out, but now the process begins anew. There is a difference, though, this year. There is, what I consider, a differing approach being exhibited by some of the boards.

RHAM has set up a process for citizens to come and talk with a board member and the superintendent before their regularly scheduled board meetings. And there have been other efforts by other boards.

The BOF has scheduled a public information meeting for Dec 1st at 7 p.m. And there appears to be a three-board get-together that will happen in the second or third week of December.

This next year or two will find at least three bond questions being put out for approval. Significant ones. These will impact the affordability of living in town.

The operating budget process begins anew and for those citizens who have felt left out in the past, this is the time to start participating. The boards are asking for your input.

Terry McManus – Hebron

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

(860) 633-4691 — bulletin@glcitizen.com

Thank You, Colchester Schools

To the Editor:

All the veterans' organizations in Colchester would like to thank each of our four schools, all the principals and faculty of each of the schools for the wonderful job they did honoring Colchester Veterans with their Veterans week programs.

Every school had a unique event that created a wonderful atmosphere for our members as well as the student's veteran parents that were also invited. Between all the schools there were more than 150 parents that were honored by each school's ceremony.

What was particularly gratifying is the participation by all the students due to the very hard work of the school staffs. There were patriotic songs, film programs, student music performances, discussion groups with students and many other activities supported by the teachers and the principals of each school.

As a person who attended many veterans week programs over the years, I can say that this year's festivities were one of the best ever. Each and every school, faculty and the students has our gratitude for a wonderful effort by each school in honor Colchester's veterans.

Sincerely yours,
Alphonse Letendre
Veterans Week Coordinator

Wonderful Decorations

To the Editor:

I would like to thank the family who live on Steeple View Drive in East Hampton for their wonderful Halloween lawn decorations. By day, they were amazing but the nighttime show was spectacular. There were music, movement, lights and sounds that created an eerie and entertaining experience. In addition, visitors were greeted with treats and conversation from the homeowner.

Hopefully, this display will be back next year and the *Rivereast* will be there for a story and photos.

Debra Balletto – East Hampton

Legal Steps Toward Moratorium

To the Editor:

Legal notice was presented to the EH Town Council on Nov. 10th to address the proposed development of the Hazen property. The notice is "Verified Petition for Emergency Executive Action" regarding Lake Pocotopaug watershed protection, citing numerous contradictions/violations of local, state and federal environmental regulations with regard to development in the watershed. Five actions are demanded: (1) The Town Council and Town Manager must require any land-use or sub-division application be subjected to an independent, developer-funded 3rd-party hydro-geological and engineering audit; (2) The town prohibits "Piecemeal Filings" (phased applications) designed to evade cumulative environmental and stormwater reviews; (3) The Town Council will order town staff to investigate open-space acquisition and grant funding options; (4) Notify DEEP about potential impact on bald eagle foraging/habitat protections; (5) Acknowledge that the Town Council and the Town Manager have received formal Legal Notice of Liability of the impending environmental, wildlife and financial consequences of inaction.

Supporting this document is a Technical Investigative Report from the files of Chatham Health District offices. The report compiles findings from CHD records documenting active sub-surface engineering progress, the scale of exploratory testing, piecemeal development tactics, inter-municipal watershed overlap, protected bald eagle habitat and severe hydro-geological threats. If the town permits lack of administrative oversights to persist, development will advance under weaker pre-existing rules (which are not enforced either).

Also presented to the EH Planning & Zoning Commission is a "Petition for the Enactment of a 12-month watershed moratorium". This document details the need for the moratorium, citing ecological impact, prior development failures, imminent threat of large-scale projects that will directly impact the lake, and the glaring lack of enforcement due to the vacancy of full-time Town Planner. The petition asks the P&Z to immediately accept the petition and act accordingly, following the strict statutory process as per Connecticut zoning statutes. They are legally bound to follow the required notice, hearing, and adoption procedures. Any delay in this process opens the way for rampant and flagrant disregard for the lake, town, residents, and environment. Once accepted, the statutory clock starts and default rules give them up to 65 days.

Dec. 2nd we can formally petition P&Z to schedule the hearing for the absolute soonest possible date, once the mandatory newspaper ad requirements are met, rather than letting them drag it out into January.

Your voices need to be heard.

Bob Yenkner – East Hampton

Revolutionary War Graves

To the Editor:

The East Hampton America250 Committee sponsored several events during 2026 to honor the nation's 250th anniversary. One event was to honor the Revolutionary War soldiers buried in the East Hampton cemeteries. The committee identified over 50 graves, and placed a marker and flag on each one.

I want to thank everyone who assisted in this endeavor. The East Hampton Rotary Club provided a grant to pay for the markers. The High School Interact Club helped to locate some of the graves. Community members Keving Reich, Barbara Moore, Loretta Fisher, Alice Host, Katherine Wilson, and Kara Pederson assisted in locating the graves, and placed the markers on them. This was a community effort, and I appreciate all the assistance provided.

If you visit any of the East Hampton cemeteries, look for the markers and flags, and thank the soldiers buried there for their role in creating our nation.

Terry Latimer
East Hampton America250 Committee

Thank You, Registrars

To the Editor:

The midterm elections have come and gone. I want to thank our Colchester registrars of voters, Julie Shilosky and Sara Mussen, for their hard work and diligence. You should thank them too. What I had always assumed (if I thought of it at all) to be a mundane, bureaucratic function has become a focal point of public attention, bringing with it new stresses, burdens, and commitments.

I applaud Julie and Sara for their dedication to the job and their fortitude in carrying out that job. Thanks also to the many citizens who volunteered their time and energies to manning the polls on Election Day as well as through the early voting period. Without them, we would have no elections!

All of these citizens working in their community help make Colchester, Connecticut, and America the great places they are.

John Barnowski – Colchester

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

DTC Opposes Data Center

To the Editor:

The Colchester Democratic Town Committee has released a statement in strong opposition to the construction of data centers in our community. While we support responsible housing and economic development discussed openly, the environmental impact of data centers would be extremely detrimental to our town. The noise, strain on water, light pollution, emissions, demand on electricity, loss of open space, and overall effect on quality of life are not worth the questionable long-term economic benefits.

The former first selectman, Andreas Bisbikos, made the wrong decision when he provided a letter of support to help move the proposed data center project on Amston Road forward. The construction of a data center on that property with close proximity to the Air Line Trail, historic downtown, and wetlands, would present unique problems in addition to the environmental concerns.

While an application for this project has not been received by the Planning and Zoning Commission yet, our statement can provide talking points against that project, and other data centers, as they appear on the PZC agenda.

Data centers are the wrong fit for us. The statement can be accessed on our website (www.colchesterdemocrats.org) or Facebook page.

Thank you,
Monica Swyden, Chair
Colchester Democratic Town Committee

Native Heritage Month

To the Editor:

This beautiful autumn offers an opportunity to take a moment and acknowledge the important contributions of the historic and ancient Indigenous stewards of the land we call Hebron. The Paleo-Indians arrived in our area 12,000 years ago and roamed through an open tundra. Although populated with different plants and animals, the landscape was shaped by powerful glaciers and looked like it does today.

Through the generations and a wide variety of cultures, Indigenous people lived in harmony with the land. The Archaic people and Woodlands people, such as the Wangunks, Pequots, Podunks, Nipmucks, Nehantics and Mohegans, would have their influence in the area. In 1675, the Sachem Attawanood of the Nehantics, son of the powerful Sachem Uncas of the Mohegans, willed vast tracks of land to his colonial friends. The fertile fields, open grass lands, thriving forests and clean waters that these families found when they arrived in Hebron were the direct result of thousands of years of care by Indigenous people.

One of the most important principles that guided the Indigenous people throughout the northeast is found in the Great Law of Peace of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, previously known as the Iroquois Confederacy. About 1102 CE, the Peacemaker and Aionwatha united the Five Tribes of the Great Lakes and offered them a peaceful way to live together. As described at www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com, "Among the nations of the Haudenosaunee is a core value called the Seventh Generation. While the Haudenosaunee encompass traditional values like sharing labour and maintaining a duty to their family, clan and nation and being thankful to nature and the Creator for their sustenance, the Seventh Generation value takes into consideration those who are not yet born but who will inherit the world. In their decision-making, Chiefs consider how present-day decisions will impact their descendants. Nations are taught to respect the world in which they live as they are borrowing it from future generations."

This inspirational principle is what allowed the first colonial settlers of Hebron to thrive. Consider what will Hebron need in seven generations from now. More development? More stores? Another Road? No, we will need open space, clean water, agriculture and a connection to our history. I urge our current "Chiefs," the Hebron Town Council, to embrace the Seventh Generation Principle and move to preserve the landscape at 17 Kinney Rd. Please visit Save Hebron Center on Facebook for more information.

Sincerely,
Kevin J. Tulimieri – Amston

My Sincere Gratitude

Dear Residents of the 34th District:

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for the confidence you have placed in me to serve once again as your state representative. The support shown across East Haddam, East Hampton, and Salem has been deeply meaningful, and I am humbled by the opportunity to represent you in Hartford for another two-year term.

Our towns are defined by strong local traditions, dedicated volunteers, and the expectation that government will live within its means, treat the people it serves with respect, and care for our environment. I will carry these values with me to the Capitol. My core priorities remain fiscal responsibility, a more transparent state budget process, and the preservation of our region's natural character and special places. I will work to ensure that state policy reflects the needs of small-town Connecticut rather than imposing the one-size-fits-all solutions that so often result from legislation crafted in Hartford. Education funding for our small towns and how the funding formula will be defined is just one of the many challenges towns like ours will face and I plan on hitting the ground to place our district needs front and center.

I also want to take a moment to thank those who volunteered on the campaign. I truly appreciate every letter to the editor that was written, every sign hosted in a yard, and every door knocked or phone call made. This year has been one of the most challenging for me personally, and your friendship and support helped carry me across the finish line. For that, I am deeply grateful.

As the legislative session approaches, I welcome your ideas for the 2027 session that begins in January. Please send bill proposals, concerns, or suggestions to mziobron2026@gmail.com. Direct input from residents helps ensure that

See Letters, page 6



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The "East of the River" Real Estate Report

Why the First 30 Days of Your Listing Matter Most

"Can we start a little high and see what happens?" I hear this from sellers all the time. It sounds like a low-risk test. But the first two weeks are typically when a new listing gets the most attention. Why spend that window testing a price the market doesn't support?

When your home first hits the market, buyers who've been waiting for something like it see it all at once. If the price is too high, some scroll past it. Others never see it because it's above their search limit. A price reduction can bring in new buyers, but it won't recreate the attention you had when the listing was brand-new.

Use the first 30 days to learn from the market, not to wait it out. In the first two weeks, look at online views, showings and feedback. Are buyers clicking but not booking tours? Are they touring but choosing competing homes? Those are different signals, and they can point to different fixes.

My advice: Start at a price you can defend with recent comparable sales and today's competition. Then review the response with your agent early, while there's still time to act.

Market Snapshot – Past Week
Hebron, Andover, Marlborough, Colchester, East Hampton & Portland

Single-Family Homes
• 9 homes sold
• Average sale price: **$505,857**
• Average sale-to-original-list price (%OLP):**94%**
• Average days on market: **36 days**
• Median days on market: **31 days**

Condos
• 0 sold

Results vary by location, condition, pricing strategy, and market conditions.



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Must present coupon at time of estimate. Cannot be combined with any other offers or promotions. **Expires 12/15/26**
110526

★ *Letters, cont. from page 5*

the work done in Hartford remains grounded in the priorities of the 34th District.

Thank you again for your trust.

Melissa Ziobron – East Haddam

Dementia Talks No. 79

To the Editor:

As I sit here and look at a blank space where words should be, I pause.

My mind bounces between many situations that have occurred since I last week's submission.

One thing that weighs heavy is making sure that I'm getting out into nature. You see, being in the woods, listening to the birds and critters rustling in the leaves; while my dog Abby Girl runs around taking in her environment, fills my soul.

I'm sure it doesn't sound too daunting to just get into the car, drive to the trailhead, go for a hike, and get back to the house. But because I know I must do it for my sanity, it has become a chore. It has to be scheduled, in-between so many other things. I feel so hypervigilant that once I've hit the trail, I am walking at such a fast clip, with adrenaline pumping … so much more than I could have thought.

Only until I hoof-it up a sizable hill, does my pace slowdown enough for me to finally feel calm. To smell the pine in the air, the breeze on my cheeks and the sun in my hair. Only then do I realize that I have "hike with Abby Girl" on my list as a "task" to complete (which I will check off when I get home!!) … that in fact the hike is medicine that I need and should never skip.

As the days pass, my hope is the thought of getting to the woods becomes less of a chore and more of a habit.

We are on day 77 of Mom being home with us, it will take time for certain routines to settle in and I know that my focus is first on Mom, then everything else. This will adjust, flex, and stabilize to some degree.

Life can be planned, but at times we need to be open to accept what is upon us and know that we, collectively, are not alone.

PS. I am doing an author talk at the Flour Girl Dooryard on Dec. 9th at 2 p.m. No registration needed. I hope you can make it.

With peace and kindness,
Tonya Maurer – Amston
Alzheimer's Hot Line 1-800-272-3900

Thank You for Article

To the Editor:

I would like to thank Reporter Toriana Wiliams for the article entitled, "Elementary School Ranks No. 1 for Student Growth." The article appeared in the Nov. 13th edition of the *Rivereast*. Toriana's interview with Principal Parker highlights the outstanding achievement of all AES students, staff, and community members.

As a retired elementary school teacher and an Andover resident, I am incredibly proud of our Andover Elementary School. We are truly blessed to have the leadership and dedication of our superintendent and principal along with the skills of our teachers and the entire staff at AES. These professionals work hard to make sure that they give their very best to our students.

I am also proud to be a member of the Andover Board of Education. I enjoy working with our Superintendent Valerie Bruneau and my Board of Education colleagues. We work as a team to set goals for all of our AES students. Our Board of responsibilities are to the town of Andover:

We strive to create a safe educational environment that establishes a foundation for all students to become creative, moral, and compassionate people. We will provide the resources needed to support our educational practices with an understanding of our fiscal responsibilities to the community.

I am honored and proud to be an elected official committed to serving the children and families of AES. I will continue to do whatever is needed to support the success of our school. Congratulations to our school community for earning such a noteworthy recognition from the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Gerard J. Cremé – Andover

Editor's Desk continued from page 4

New Canaan had a whopping 59.5% of its homes reporting an income of $200,000 or more. But the town right next door, Stamford, saw just 24.1% of its households with incomes of $200,000 or more.

In other words, there were larger percentages of folks making $200,000 or more in Marlborough, Hebron and Andover than there were in Stamford.

Oh, and by the way, for my hometown of Manchester, 26.8% of its households reported earnings of $50,000 or less, while just 10.5% of its households had earnings of $200,000 or more.

* * *

It's almost time for Wesleyan Potters' annual sale. The Middletown pottery studio will open its 71st Annual Sale, "Spotlight on the Arts," on Friday, Nov. 27. The sale will run through Thursday, Dec. 24. Wesleyan Potters is located at 350 South Main St. in Middletown.

One of New England's oldest juried craft shows, the Annual Sale brings together work by almost 200 local and nationally known craftspeople. Visitors can explore pottery, jewelry, fiber, glass, wood, stone, and other handmade work in the welcoming setting of Wesleyan Potters' working studio.

The Annual Sale is also Wesleyan Potters' largest fundraiser of the year. Shopping supports working artists and helps sustain the nonprofit's craft education programs, connecting holiday giving with opportunities for people to learn, create, and develop their own artistic skills.

An advance celebration, First Look, will take place Tuesday, Nov. 24, from 6–9 p.m. The exclusive preview offers early shopping, wine, food, music, and opportunities to mingle with artists. Contact Wesleyan Potters at www.wesleyanpotters.com or 860-347-5925 for attendance details.

The public sale opens with extended hours on Friday, Nov. 27, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Regular hours are daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., with shortened hours on Christmas Eve, Thursday, Dec. 24, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free parking is available behind the building, accessible from Birdsey Avenue.

* * *

See you next week.

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St. Peter's Roast Pork Tenderloin Dinner

St. Peter's Episcopal Church will hold its next monthly community dinner on Saturday, Nov. 21, starting at 3:30 p.m., at the church, located at 30 Church St. (Route 85) in Hebron.

The menu will include pork tenderloin, gravy, applesauce, roasted potatoes, winter squash, rolls and dessert. The cost is $18, and credit cards will be accepted.

This meal is takeout-only. You will be given a ticket for each meal you order. A server will come to your car, take your ticket(s), your payment, and your dessert order. They will bring your change, meal and dessert back to your car, and place all in your back seat or trunk. You won't need to get out of your car.

As part of the St. Peter's outreach programs, a portion of each meal sold this month will go to the Windham Area Interfaith Ministry.

For more details, please contact the church at 860-228-3244 or visit the church website at www.StPetersHebron.com.

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: Sundays at 10 a.m., with coffee hour at 11 a.m. Services can also be viewed online at YouTube at www.bit.ly/Gilead-ChurchUCC and on Facebook at tinyurl.com/GileadChurchUCC.

This Week: Sunday, Nov. 21, 9:30 a.m., Wise Warrior Yoga in Fellowship Hall; 11/22, 10 a.m., Sunday Worship Service (in-person and livestreamed); Sunday, Nov. 22, 11:30 a.m., Communion Workshop in Sanctuary; Sunday, Nov. 22, 3 p.m., Hebron Interfaith Community Thanksgiving Service in Gilead's Sanctuary; Sunday, Nov. 22, 6 p.m., Youth Group Monthly Meeting in Fellowship Hall; Monday, Nov. 23, 9:30 a.m., Online Bible Study via Zoom; Monday, Nov. 23, 7 p.m., Board of Christian Education Meeting in Parish House Conference Room; Tuesday, Nov. 24, 7:30 p.m., AA Meeting in Fellowship Hall; Wednesday, Nov. 25, 9:30 a.m., Wise Warrior Yoga in Fellowship Hall; Wednesday, Nov. 25, 10:45 a.m., Book Group in Fellowship Hall; Wednesday, Nov. 25, 7 p.m., Choir Practice in Sanctuary; Thursday, Nov. 26, Church Offices closed for Thanksgiving.

Upcoming Events: Hebron's Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at Gilead Church: Sunday, Nov. 22, at 3 p.m., co-hosted by Gilead Church, Church of the Holy Family, St. Peter's Church, and the United Brethren Synagogue. Bring a canned goof or non-perishable food item for Hebron Interfaith Human Services (HIHS).

Card-Making with Gayle: Create one-of-a-kind seasonal cards Thursday, Dec. 3, at 6 p.m. Cost is $15 per class, with a portion of proceeds benefitting the Connecticut Food Bank.

Faith & Film Potluck: Friday, Dec. 4, 6 p.m. All are welcome - no RSVP necessary.

Hebron Preschool Screenings

The Hebron Board of Education, through the Hebron Early Childhood Center Program at Gilead Hill School, will hold two screenings in coming months for children that reside in Hebron and are 3 and 4 years old by the time of the screening.

The screenings this school year will be held at Gilead Hill School at 580 Gilead St. The screenings will take place Wednesday, Dec. 2, and Wednesday, March 3. Screens are in the areas of speech, language, cognitive, and motor development are provided as an opportunity for parents to learn more about their child's development. Parents will also receive information which will assist in fostering their child's growth.

Call the office of the director of educational services at Hebron Public Schools at 860-228-2577 to register your child to participate in the screening as reservations are required.

Synagogue News and Notes

United Brethren of Hebron Synagogue, located at 10 Church St., has made the following announcements. The synagogue is located at 10 Church St. (Route 85) in the center of Hebron.

Hanukkah Celebration: Sunday, Dec. 6, 4 p.m. All are invited. The festivities will start with a group menorah-lighting and latke potluck dinner. After dinner, there will be a Hanukkah story, songs sung, and spinning dreidels. If you would like to attend the celebration, email ubofhebron@gmail.com to indicate what dish you will bring and how many people to expect so that there will be enough latkes for everyone.

Hebron Interfaith Thanksgiving Service: This year's service will be held at Gilead Congregational Church this year on Sunday, Nov. 22, at 3 p.m. All are welcome. Sponsoring congregations are: Gilead Church, Church of the Holy Family, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, and United Brethren of Hebron Synagogue.

Senior Center to Visit: Hebron's Russell Mercier Senior Center will visit the synagogue on Tuesday, Dec. 1, at noon. Following a tour, everyone will head down the hill to the Senior Center to enjoy some latkes and apple cider. People of all faiths, traditions, and backgrounds are welcome to join the tour and celebration. There is no charge for the event, but registration with the senior center is required, by calling 860-228-1700.

About the Synagogue: United Brethren of Hebron offers a flexible, inclusive approach to Judaism. The synagogue combines elements from both the Conservative and Reform traditions, and our 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, email ubofhebron@gmail.com, call 860-337-3618, or visit www.ubofhebron.org.

Also, the synagogue building needs a new roof and other major renovations. To donate to the synagogue's capital campaign, visit www.gofundme.com/f/support-united-brethren-hebrons-vital-work.

The synagogue thanks the Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut for their grant to help cover the costs of security. This grant is made possible by funding from the Jewish Federations of North America's 2026 Emergency Security Fund in partnership with The Tepper Foundation.

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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 Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. (note the new hours)

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).

Praise Band and Choir Rehearsals: Rehearsals take place at CHF from 7-8:30 p.m., on Tuesdays for the choir and on Thursdays for the Praise Band. New voices and musical instruments are always welcome.

Youth Ministry: This group for parish teens in grades 8-12 meets once a month from September through June in the STC Youth Center for an evening of games, food, and discussion. This year's annual "Elf Cook-Off" will take place Saturday, Dec. 12, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to sign up by midnight Dec. 9 to ensure an adequate supply of ingredients is available and to be awarded an extra secret ingredient to help in the competition. See the parish website for details.

Cereal & Meatloaves for CSK: The Community Outreach Committee collects breakfast cereal each month for Covenant Soup Kitchen (CSK) in Willimantic; the next date is Dec. 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 Dec. 15 due to the Christmas holiday. Contact Diane (860-508-9959) for more information.

Knights of Columbus Food Drive: The Knights are sponsoring a food drive for CSK throughout the month of November.

Annual WAIM (Windham Area Interfaith Ministry) Walk for Warmth: Parishioners are asked to support this important fundraiser that kicks off on Nov. 22 at 2:15 p.m. at Temple Bnai Israel in Willimantic to raise $40,000 to provide energy and rental assistance to those in need. See the parish bulletin for details on how to donate directly to WAIM, sponsor a walker, or to participate in the walk and raise funds.

Project Hope (Adult Homeless Shelter): Current needs: medical masks; "3-in-one" shampoo, conditioner and body wash; all types of cleaning products, especially bleach; 2- and 3-person tents; size XL cold to frigid weather sleeping bags; 8x10 and 10x12 tarps (green or brown, no blue); new and gently used (clean & in good condition, please) fall & winter men's and women's outerwear (coats, gloves, & hats); durable heavy crew socks, sweatshirts, sweatpants & hoodies; and hand & feet warmers. Contact Monica (860-228-4211) for more information.

Holy Family Home & Shelter (Family Homeless Shelter): Current needs: New or gently used twin-sized blankets (no sheets), new or gently used sweatshirts, hoodies and sweatpants (adult sizes small through 3XL; children sizes toddler through 14); women's socks; and baby hygiene products (shampoo, soap, lotion, diaper wipes, rash cream, powder & grooming sets). Place donations in the designated collection boxes in each church. Contact Monica for more information.

"Freedom" Winter Clothing Drive: The parish Anti-Human Trafficking Ministry is supporting women and men survivors of human trafficking on their journey to healing through a collection of new or gently used winter clothing (clean and in good condition, please) of hats, gloves, scarves and boots for adult men and women (all sizes). Place donations in the labeled boxes in the entryways of each church. Contact Caroline (619-997-0548) for more information.

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA): Held in the CHF Parish House after the 10 a.m. Mass. The sessions 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.

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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Douglas Library News & Notes

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

Holiday Closings: The library will be closing at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 25, and will remain closed on Thursday and Friday for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Adult Programs: Blood Drive: Monday, Nov. 23, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Donors receive an exclusive coffee mug. Register at RedCrossBlood.org.

D&D Club: Saturday, Dec. 5. Welcome to the Dungeons & Dragons Club! Group 2, for ages 16 and up, will meet from 12:30-2:30 p.m. Pre-made character sheets and dice are provided. New players welcome! Please register.

Pilates with Doug: Saturday, Dec. 5, 10 a.m. This will be a beginners Pilates class taught by Doug Gomez of Pathways to Peace Yoga. Bring your own mat for floor exercises.

Teens: D&D Club: Friday, Dec. 4, 3:30-5:30 p.m., for ages 10-18. Pre-made character sheets and dice are provided. New players welcome! Please register.

Children: PJ Storytime: Tuesday, Nov. 24, 6 p.m. Ages 1 to 5 are welcome for an evening storytime.

Lego Club: Saturday, Nov. 28, noon-1 p.m. All builders are invited to get creative and build some Lego creations.

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: Book Club: Monday, Nov. 23, 10:30 a.m. All are invited to the launch of the center's new Book Club. At this first gathering, people will share their all-time favorite reads and map out the reading list for the year ahead. Come prepared with suggestions for books. Coffee, tea, and refreshments will be provided. Cost: Free.

Chatham Health Monthly Blood Pressure Screenings and Health Education Presentation: Monday, Nov. 23, at 11:30 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. Public health nurse Vicki Han, RN, from Chatham Health, will offer free screenings and will also show how to monitor blood pressure at home and reduce your risks for heart attacks and strokes. Chatham Health's presentation will focus on insulin resistance. The session will be led by Stephanie Reyes, who holds a Master of Public Health degree and brings expertise on health and wellness topics. This is a free program.

Hand-Building Pottery Workshop: Mondays, Nov. 30 through Dec. 21, from noon to 3 p.m. In this beginner's workshop, use coil and slab hand-building techniques to create pieces to use and display. All materials provided. Sign up early as space is limited. Cost: $35 per person.

Tour of Synagogue and Hannukah Celebration: Tuesday, Dec. 1, noon. Take a tour of the United Brethren of Hebron Synagogue. Participants will meet at the synagogue and then head to the senior center after the tour for latkes and apple cider. People of all faiths, traditions, and backgrounds are welcome.

Pre-Planning Lunch & Learn: Wednesday, Dec. 2, noon. A representative from Farley-Sullivan Funeral Home in Glastonbury, along with attorney Eric Parker, will discuss the benefits of pre-planning a traditional funeral, cremation services, celebrations of life, memorial services, and more. This relaxed seminar is a way to ask questions, explore your options, and learn how planning ahead can provide peace of mind for you and your loved ones. A free lunch of sandwiches, a beverage, and a dessert will be provided. Please register. Cost is free.

Recurring Daily/Weekly Happenings: 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: 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: Massage, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Enhance Fitness via Zoom with Paul Smith, 9-10 a.m.; Free Zumba Gold Video, 10:15-11:15 a.m.; Beginner's Bridge, 1 p.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.

Turkey Shoots Weekly

Skungamaug Fish and Game Club is hold its annual turkey shoots Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. through Nov. 22, at the club, 423 Jones St., Hebron.

All are welcome.

'Giggles at Gilead' Returns Friday

Gilead Congregational Church invites all to "Giggles at Gilead" Friday, Nov. 20, at 7 p.m., at the church, 672 Gilead St.

Presented in partnership with Funny 4 Funds, this PG-13 comedy fundraiser for the church will feature an a lineup of comedians, as well as raffle baskets.

Doors open at 6 p.m., and tickets are $25 per person. Popcorn will be provided; bring your favorite snacks.

Seats are limited; purchase tickets at www.bit.ly/GileadGiggles.

For more information, email gcc@gilead-church.net or call 860-228-3077.

Transfer Station Hours Change

Hebron Transfer Station hours have changed to the winter schedule as of Nov. 1. Hours are now: Sundays, 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m.; and Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Bereavement Support Group Meets Weekly

The Grief Journey: A Bereavement Support Group will be held Wednesdays from 7- 8:30 p.m., at the Church of the Holy Family Parish House, 185 Church St.

The group will be facilitated by grief educators Michael Glazier and Stephanie Haines. All grieving adults are welcome whether your loss is recent or past and you may come to one session or as many as you would like.

This support group is non-denominational and is offered via a collaborative effort of Hebron Faith Communities. There is no registration or commitment. You are invited to attend and see if the group is a helpful, supportive place for you.

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CIT10-29-26

School Board Approves New Calendar, Staff Changes

By Toriana Williams

The Hebron Board of Education approved a new 2027-2028 school calendar and a reorganization of central office staff during its Nov. 12 meeting. The board also reviewed student test scores, discussed possible plans for a new school building and looked at ways to save money while improving school services.

Board Considers New School Building

Superintendent of Schools Thomas Baird told board members that he and school officials recently met with Town Manager Marc Strange and Town Planner Matthew Bordeaux to discuss the possibility of a new school building, which would combine both the Gilead Hill and Hebron Elementary schools.

The town showed interest in moving forward with the project and wants to look at the needs of town buildings as well.

The district's estimated share of the project would be about $53 million under the current funding formula from the state, and Baird shared that the district may also be able to ask for a higher state reimbursement rate for the project.

He pointed to a similar project in Willington that received an 80% reimbursement rate and added that a possible preschool funding bonus could raise the rate even higher.

"You could be talking about really, effectively getting a 95% reimbursement rate," said Baird.

He said that level of funding could make a new building less expensive than major heating and air conditioning repairs.

At this time, no final decisions have been made as discussions continue.

Central Office Changes

The board unanimously approved a reorganization of central office support staff. The plan changes the duties of several jobs and work schedules, such as turning a full-time administrative assistant position into a part-time, 10-month position.

The human resources coordinator will now work an additional hour each day, while the part-time accounts payable and payroll position will become a full-time, 12-month position with added duties.

The special education administrative assistant position, said Baird, will not change or be affected.

Baird explained that the goal wasn't just to cut costs but to better match jobs with employees' skills and make sure more help is available during the school year.

"We wanted to focus on people's strengths," he said.

As a bonus, however, the changes are expected to save an additional $32,000 in yearly salary and benefits. When combined with savings from an earlier staffing change, the district expects to save around $44,500 compared to the staffing plan from a year ago.

Student Test Results

School leaders presented state test results from last spring and reviewed student progress in reading, math, science and physical education.

According to the presentation, Hebron students showed strong growth in several areas, specifically math, where more than 80% of the district's math growth target was reached. In English language arts (ELA), 47.3% of students met their individual growth targets, reaching 68.8% of the district's overall ELA growth target.

Results also showed sixth graders were doing well during the report. More than half of the students scored above grade-level expectations in some areas. In math, sixth graders' results improved from 61% in fifth grade to 74% in sixth grade.

However, fourth grade results raised some questions. School leaders shared that the fourth graders were learning several new reading and math programs at the time, and even teachers were still adjusting to the new lessons.

Baird said the district will watch results closely this year.

"They weren't as far in their pacing as they would want to have been," he said of the fourth-grade teachers' progress with the new math program.

The district also saw a drop in its science results. Sixty-five percent of fifth graders met expectations, which is down from 73% from the previous year. Hebron's science ranking among similar school districts fell from fifth to 14th. Baird said science lessons haven't been as consistent as they should be.

"We want to stay really focused on the ELA and math implementation of those new programs," he said. He added that science curriculum work is also on the district's list.

Gilead Hill School Principal Katie Uriano reported strong growth in early reading. She credited new teaching programs that help young students learn the sounds of letters and phonics.

"Teachers love it; kids love it," said Uriano.

Donald Briere, Hebron Public Schools' director of education services, curriculum and technology, presented the district physical fitness test results.

Hebron students earned an overall score of 61.9%, which is below the 75.21% average for similar districts. The tests measured flexibility, upper-body strength, abdominal strength and endurance.

Among fourth-graders, 96.8% passed the sit-and-reach flexibility test, 84% passed the push-up test and 68.8% passed the PACER endurance test,

Briere said he had already spoken with the district's physical education teacher about the results and ways to improve them. Some plans include trying new strategies for each test, learning from nearby districts and giving students another chance to take tests in areas where they need improvement.

For now, school officials also want to focus more on students who need extra help and find ways to prevent students from losing reading skills over summer vacation.

New School Calendar Approved

The board unanimously approved the 2027-28 school calendar, which plans for students to begin classes on Aug. 31, 2027.

The calendar gives school staff three days of training before students arrive, instead of just two days as have been provided in past years. Baird said the extra time will help special education staff complete their required training.

Changes also include two three-hour early dismissal days for spring family conferences instead of a full day off. The district will then use the time it gained to provide a full day of staff training in October.

Baird said the calendar changes were well-received by staff and that the school year is expected to conclude by June 7, before snow days are added.

Backup Generator Tops Building Needs

With the future of school buildings in the midst of discussion, board members considered which repairs should be included in the 2027-28 capital improvement plan.

Board of Education Vice Chair Joseph Margaitis, a Republican, said the district should hold off on major repairs until it knows whether it will build a new school or not. The one project he does want to move forward with is a backup generator at Hebron Elementary School.

Baird said the generator would power important areas, including the main office, kitchen refrigerators and freezers, door locks and security systems.

If a long power outage were to occur, the district now may have to move food to Gilead Hill to keep it from spoiling.

The district plans to get more price estimates before sending the request to the town.

Other District Updates

Baird said the district expects to need five kindergarten classes next year, which is down from six this year. Overall, the district expects to lose one classroom section next year and may lose one section each year for the next three years.

He also said the district's early budget work is looking positive, with a lower starting point expected than last year.

★ *RHAM School Plan, cont. from page 1*

cial advisers so the district could understand what each option would look like.

He also said he needed enough time to explain the projects to residents.

"The more time I have to do that, I think the better," said McNamara.

The board did agree on the remaining project list, and members unanimously approved a motion asking McNamara to work with the district's financial advisers at Munistat to begin preparing for possible bonding.

Students Lead Effort to Stop Bullying

The board heard from students and staff members involved in RHAM's Power of Words program.

Health and physical education teacher Kim Hills introduced a group of students who help teach younger students about kindness, respect and bullying.

The program began around 20 years ago and has changed over time. Students first take part as sophomores, and those who find value in the program can then volunteer to teach other students. Currently, about 45 juniors and seniors are involved.

The students explained to the board that they lead classroom activities, share personal stories and help younger students understand how their actions affect others.

One student said the program works well because the lessons come from other students rather than just from adults. The program also includes guest speakers and student stories about bullying. Students who attend can share their own experience as well in a safe setting.

Hills said the program is changing in order to reach ninth-graders in the future, helping students as they enter high school.

Board Debates Own Review Process

The board held a lengthy discussion about a proposed change to its self-evaluation policy.

McNamara explained that the current policy dates back to 2013, and it called for the board to complete a formal self-review every other year. However, the process hasn't been followed.

He suggested replacing it with a more flexible policy that would require a board self-evaluation at least once every five years. Some members questioned whether a formal review was needed at all.

One board member said the board was already having trouble getting enough members to attend meetings, and that adding another responsibility could make things harder. Summerer said training for new board members might be more useful than a formal self-review.

"Here's the roles and responsibilities, here's the expectations," she said, describing what she would like new members to learn.

Several members spoke in favor of training sessions with the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education.

In the end, no final vote was taken and McNamara said he would bring the idea of the policy change back to the board at its next meeting.

Calendar Approved

The board unanimously approved the proposed 2027-2028 school calendar.

McNamara said teachers and staff would return Aug. 23, 24 and 25, and the calendar was developed with the three feeder towns of Andover, Hebron and Marlborough, and was designed to follow a similar schedule in past years.

Three in Hospital After Crash

By Toriana Williams

Three people were taken to the hospital after a crash involving a septic truck and a passenger vehicle in Hebron on Friday, Nov. 13.

The Hebron Fire Department was called to the crash at Millstream Road and Highland Drive at 11:13 a.m. Crews arrived and found one person trapped inside the passenger vehicle, which also had a fire in the engine area.

Crews put out the fire and worked to free the trapped person. One patient was taken to Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Clinic, and two others were taken to Windham Hospital.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection also responded to clean up a diesel fuel spill. The Connecticut State Police and CT DEEP are handling the investigation.

The Hebron Fire Department thanked Windham Hospital Paramedics, Connecticut State Police, Marlborough Fire Department and Columbia Department for their help.



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The Knifty Knitters' annual Silent Auction – featuring the popular emotional support chickens – will return starting Friday, Dec. 4.

Knifty Knitters Silent Auction

The Knifty Knitters of the Portland Library and a group of community crafters are back for their fourth annual Silent Auction benefiting the Friends of the Portland Library.

This year's auction features hats, mittens, the ever-popular emotional support chickens, and more. The one-of-a-kind creations will be in the library's display cases by Friday, Dec. 4, when bidding officially begins.

Final bids will be due Friday, Dec. 11, by 4 p.m. Bids may be placed in person or by phone. Payment is due Wednesday, Dec. 16, by 7:30 p.m. (Cash or personal check, please.)

Every dollar raised for the Friends supports the library's programs and services.

To place a bid by phone, call the library at 860-342-6770.

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.

Food Bank: Open at the senior center on Mondays and Thursdays from 9 a.m.-noon. Donations welcome, but please only leave donations during Food Bank hours.

Mobile Food Pantry: The Food Share Mobile Pantry comes to the Food Bank every other Monday. The next Mobile Pantry date is Nov. 30.

Weekly Programs: Monday, 11/23: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, 11/24: Congregate Meal, noon. Suggested donation is $3 (must fill out form). Menu: BLT sandwich with lettuce and tomato, tomato soup, string cheese, bread, tropical fruit cup; **Coupons for Troops,** 1-4 p.m.; **Setback,** 1 p.m.; **SyncoCize II,** 5-6 p.m., fee is donation to instructor.

Wednesday, 11/25: Light Aerobics, 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.; **Chair Yoga with Gia,** 10:30 a.m., cost is $5 donation to instructor; **Bridge,** 12:30 p.m.

Thursday, 11/26 and Friday, 11/27: The senior center will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday.

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

Monday, Nov. 23: Drumming Circle, 2-3 p.m. This is a way to connect, relieve stress, and try something different in a group setting. No experience needed and instruments will be provided. $5 Donation goes to the Food Bank.

Monday, Nov. 23: Lunch & Learn: Living Trusts: A Stage of Preparedness, 11:30 a.m. Learn about how a living trust can prepare an individual by managing, protecting, and transferring their assets, before and after death. Hosted by American Senior Benefits.

Tuesday, Nov. 24: Bushnell Backstage Tour, leaves the center at 10 a.m. Experience Mortensen Hall, the Belding Theater, the autograph room and Green Room, and more.

Tuesday, Dec. 1: From 2-3 p.m., all senior center members are welcome to help decorate the center for the holiday season. Snacks will be provided. Let the center know if coming.

Wednesday, Dec. 2: Kids Blast Jr. and Senior Center members will come together from 10-11 a.m. to enjoy intergenerational craft-making.

Wednesday, Dec. 2: Floral Arrangement Class, 2-3 p.m., with florist Seng Kroeber of Gardeners Bouquets, LLC. Fee is $10.

Sunday, Dec. 6: Rides to the Vocal Chords Holiday Concert at Portland High School. Leave center at 1:30 p.m. There is a $5 ride fee. Pre-purchase tickets by calling 860-347-2787. Some tickets may be available at the door.

Monday, Dec. 7: Blood Pressure Clinic, 10-11 a.m. Learn how to take a proper blood pressure and how to monitor your blood pressure at home. You can also learn about how to reduce your risk for heart attacks and stroke.

Monday, Dec. 7: Learn all about micronutrients, at 10:45 a.m. Diabetic-friendly recipes will be also given out.

Monday, Dec. 7: Connecticut State Plan on Aging: Regional Community Listening Sessions, noon. The session will provide an opportunity for older adults, caregivers, service providers, community members, and other stakeholders to share their perspectives directly with the Bureau of Aging.

Medical Rides: The center offers ADA-accessible transportation for seniors to medical rides, on a first-come, first-served basis. The fee is $5/person, round trip. Please give at least a two-week notice.

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

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

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

Holiday Craft and Vendor Show

The Trinity Church Holiday Craft and Vendor Show is planned for Saturday, Nov. 21, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at 345 Main St.

There will be a large assortment of Thanksgiving and Christmas Crafts, Baked Goods, Vintage Christmas items, scarves and "Crown Jewels" provided by Trinity Crafting Commandos and Bakers.

Vendors will include crafts, jewelry, Connecticut-made food items, ornaments, homemade children's clothes, nursery décor, crochet items, gift items, soaps, candles, book items, canvas art, decoupage, handmade baby items, fabric toys, table runners, insulated casserole totes, ID holders and more.

Interfaith 'Giving & Thanks' Gathering

Neighbors from Portland and surrounding communities are invited by the Interfaith Coalition of Portland to its annual "Giving & Thanks" gathering. This year it will be held on Sunday, Nov. 22, at 2 p.m. This time, the host will be the First Congregational Church, 554 Main Street, Portland.

The afternoon will feature music and prayers from Christian, Baha'i, Jewish, local Native American, Universalist Unitarian, Muslim and Hindu communities.

Attendees will also hear stories of hope from Gilead Community Services, which serves individuals in Portland, Middletown and surrounding communities who are experiencing mental health and substance use challenges. All who attend are encouraged to bring a donation to support these neighbors in need.

Donations that are needed include socks, combs and brushes, toothpaste and toothbrushes, fragrance-free deodorant, grocery store gift cards, coloring books and pencils, and journals plus nice pens. Also, to support the work that Gilead does, a free-will offering will be collected during this event.

Refreshments and conversation will follow the prayers and songs. All are welcome.

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.

Learning: Sunday School for children ages 3 through 8th grade is offered the first and third Sunday of the month, following worship. Contact the church office for more information.

Adult Education is held following worship on the second and fourth Sunday of the month. The group is viewing and discussing episodes of "The Chosen."

Special Event: Zion will participate in the annual townwide Thanksgiving service Sunday, Nov. 22, at 2 p.m., at the First Congregational Church in Portland.

Year-Round Giving: Collected pull tabs are 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.

Festival of Wreaths to Return

The Portland Historical Society's annual Festival of Wreaths – "Jingle & Mingle" will return the weekend of Dec. 5 and 6 at the Hemlock Grange Hall, located at 17 Sage Hollow Road (near the intersection of routes 17 and 17A).

Individuals, families, businesses, clubs and organizations are invited to donate a decorated wreath for this teacup-style raffle. Decorations can be real or artificial greens, can be a size and shape of your choice and can even be made from other materials, such as candies, pinecones or vintage book pages. A gift card or certificate for a service can be attached as part of your decoration.

Pre-register your intent to create/donate a decoration by Thursday, Dec. 3, by emailing PortlandCThistory@gmail.com. Decorations must be dropped off at the Grange Hall on Thursday, Dec. 3, or Friday, Dec. 4.

If you would like to participate but don't have time to create a wreath, for a donation of $30 a Historical Society "elf" will decorate one for you. Your name, business or organization will be listed as the donor. Email PortlandCThistory@gmail.com by Sunday, Nov. 29 to make arrangements. Also, if you prefer to make a financial donation, your name will be posted as a supporter during the event.

The festival will be open Saturday, Dec. 5, and Sunday, Dec. 6, from noon to 4 p.m., in the Grange Hall at 17 Sage Hollow Rd. Tickets for the teacup-style raffle are $1 each, or a full card of 25 tickets can be purchased for $20. Tickets are placed in the gift bag for the decorations you would like to take home. Winners will be contacted after 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 6.

On Saturday afternoon at 3 p.m., the Portland High School A Capella group will sing seasonal selections. Volunteers will serve warm cider and homemade goodies all weekend and children can build their own bag of reindeer food to help Santa find their house.

All proceeds from this event will be used to further the society's mission to preserve Portland's history and to fund educational projects for the community.

Toys for Tots

The Town of Portland Garage is assisting the U.S. Marines in its annual Toys for Tots campaign, which runs through Dec. 15.

All are asked to donate new, unwrapped toys to children in need. The donation location is the Town Garage, 505 Glastonbury Tpke.

Air Line Trail Volunteers Wanted

Portland's Air Line Trail Committee has been in operation for 12 years – and there is a need to recruit new members to serve on the committee or subcommittee for trail maintenance.

If you would like to join this group of hikers, email Lou Pear at louisjpear@gmail.com.

Bereavement Support Group

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., in the church hall, and the afternoon session meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 2 p.m. – also in the church hall.

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

Winter Used Coat Drive

Winter coats are in great need for the Portland Food Bank closet, and the food bank has asked the local Knights of Columbus to again sponsor and run a townwide used Coat Drive this fall.

For donations, a large receptacle will be available in the Rosary Room at the Church of Saint Mary at 45 Freestone Ave for the much-needed donated coats.

Council 7 is also a major supporter of the regional Coats for Kids event sponsored by the area Councils Knights held annually on Black Friday in Middletown.

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Music for Christmas

The New England Chamber Choir (NECC) will perform "Music for Christmas" at Zion Lutheran Church, 183 William St., on Sunday, Dec. 6, at 4 p.m.

NECC is a unique group of gifted amateur musicians who perform choral music ranging from Gregorian chant to classically-inspired contemporary music. NECC is led by Richard William Donohue, conductor, pianist, organist, composer, and teacher for more than 70 years.

Established as an independent choir in 1996, NECC has performed throughout central Connecticut since its inception.

The musical program is supported solely by donations collected at concerts and other individual gifts. There is no charge to attend the concert, but there will be a free-will collection at the end of the concert.

2026 Leaf Pickup

The Town of Portland Department of Public Works will conduct its annual leaf pickup beginning Monday, Nov. 30.

Leaves must be placed in paper bags at the curb so as not to cause a sight line issue. Leaves must be out no later than Nov. 29. Plastic bags will not be picked up.

Residents who do not place their leaves at the curb can bring them to the transfer station (permit required). Leaves not in paper bags must be emptied by the resident in an area at the transfer station designated by the attendant.

Public Works requests that homeowners refrain from blowing or raking leaves into the roadway as blocking the storm drain inlets may cause flooding and create safety hazards.

For more information, call Public Works at 860-342-6733.

A Musical Holiday Celebration

The Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords will present its 36th annual winter concert, entitled "A Musical Holiday Celebration," on Sunday, Dec. 6, at 2 p.m., at Portland High School, 95 High St.

Samuel Tucker, musical director, along with Alan Dougherty, accompanist, have arranged a varied program. Along with favorite traditional carols, some selections include Beethoven's "Hallelujah", the "Little Drummer Boy," "It's Beginning to Look a Lot like Christmas," "What Child is This," "Sleigh Ride" and "Mele Kalikimaka."

Tickets are $25; call 860-347-2787 or visit vocalchords20.org for more information. Like the Vocal Chords on Facebook and Instagram.

First Congregational Church News

All are welcome to First Congregational Church, 554 Main St., for worship each Sunday.

Sunday Worship: Worship starts at 10 a.m. Fellowship Hour to follow. The Interfaith Giving & Thanks service will begin at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 22.

Christmas Sweets and Treats Holiday Sale: Saturday, Dec. 12, 9 a.m.-noon. There will be homemade cookies packaged by the half dozen, chocolate gingerbread man lollipops & Christmas themed chocolate pretzels, Gift Baskets, filled Christmas stockings and mugs, and tables filled with holiday themed treasures. New this year: a raffle of eight newly decorated Christmas wreaths. Buy tickets at the sale or after the Dec. 13 worship service. The drawing will be held Sunday, Dec. 13, at 11:45 a.m.

Sunday School: For children ages K-8th grade. This fall, kids will follow the story of Moses – from his rescue as a baby to the journey toward freedom. Children will explore Bible stories through hands-on activities.

Year-Round Giving: Neighbors in Need collects donations for the Portland Food Bank. Items needed are Spam, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, Bisquick, canned tomato products, baked beans, quick oats, and boil-in-a-bag rice.

Nursery School: First Church Nursery School offers school for 4-year-olds on Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., and for 3-year-olds on Tuesday/Thursday from 9 a.m.-noon. Contact Amy Jahnke at 1stchurchnurseryschool@gmail.com for costs and more information.

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

Crafters, Vendors Wanted

Crafters and vendors are sought for the Holiday Craft & Vendor Show coming up Saturday, Nov. 21, at Trinity Church, 345 Main St. The show will be held in the parish hall.

Space is available for $20, and space is limited. For more information and a registration form, email carol.hill@comcast.net.

Turkey Shoot

Portland Fish and Game Club will hold its annual Turkey Shoot Sunday, Nov. 22, from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., across from the Exchange Club Fairgrounds.

This is a perfect opportunity to have some fun and maybe take home your Thanksgiving turkey.

Cost is $3 for one shot or two for $5. Food and drinks will be available. Families are welcome.

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.

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.

Service of Lessons and Carols

All are invited to join the Saint Mary Church music and lector ministries on Sunday, Dec. 13, at 3 p.m., for a Service of Lessons and Carols.

Listen to readings from scripture and seasonal choral music, sing Christmas carols, and help neighbors in need by bringing personal care items to be donated to the Portland Food Bank (shampoo, conditioner, body wash, deodorant, toothpaste, and small-size dish soap/laundry detergent).

A reception and fellowship will follow the service.

The church is located at 45 Freestone Ave.

Vintage Holiday Sale

A Special Vintage Holiday Sale will be held Saturday, Nov. 28, Sunday, Nov. 29, Saturday, Dec. 12, and Sunday, Dec. 13, from 2-4 p.m. each day, at the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History at 492 Main St.

The sale will feature vintage jewelry, Christmas and Hanukkah decorations, and other Historical Society items. All are welcome; holiday refreshments will be served.

All proceeds will go toward the care and upkeep of the museum.



The Portland Historical Society's newest Lifetime Member, Scarlett Srb, granddaughter of Bill and Kathy Richards and daughter of Ben and Holly Srb, helped place a house plaque on her family's new home. The plaque was purchased from the Portland Historical Society's Historic House Plaque Program. More information can be found on www.portlandhistsoc.org. or by sending an email to portlandplaqueprogram@gmail.com.

Celebrating Birth Dates

This year, the Portland Historical Society announced a Historic House Plaque Program for homeowners and businesses (that own historic buildings) located in Portland. This program was planned to honor the history of Portland and to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the United States. The society believes that historic houses and buildings deserve to be recognized. Do you want to celebrate the birth date of your house or the building that houses your business in Portland? As the celebration of America 250 winds down, the Plaque Program has been expanded. Every house and building in Portland is now eligible for a plaque. If you want to celebrate the birthday of your house, the society is ready to help you get a plaque marking its birthdate. You may live in a house or work in a building from the 1800s or from the last decade. Recognize your house or business for being a part of Portland's story — 200 years ago or ten years ago.

Originally offered by the society in the 1980s the Historic House Plaque Program was for houses that were included in the book "The History and Architecture of Portland," published by the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust. Many historic houses in Portland have displayed these plaques for many years, but quite a few are now weathered or may even be missing. The Historical Society invites everyone to participate in the Plaque Program.

For a cost of $100, the society will provide a new plaque. The new house plaques will be similar to the original ones and will include the house's year of construction and the name of the original owner. Looking for a unique gift for the upcoming holidays? Order a plaque for your home or the home of a loved one. To order a plaque, please mail a completed application with the $100 fee to the society at P.O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480. A society volunteer will contact you to discuss the details specific to your house. More details and the application can be found on our website (www.portlandhistsoc.org).

Email any questions you may have to PortlandHistSoc@yahoo.com. Allow 6-8 weeks for the processing of each application.

Proceeds from the sale of all plaques will be used to maintain the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History and to further the mission of the society to collect, preserve and share Portland's history.

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Portland Library News & Notes

Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave., has announced the following events. **Registration is required for all programs unless noted.** To register and for full program descriptions, visit the calendar of events at www.portlandlibraryct.org. or call 860-342-6770. The library is also on Facebook and Instagram.

Hours: Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., - Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., - Saturday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. **Holiday Closings:** For the Thanksgiving holiday, the library will close Wednesday, Nov. 25, at 5 p.m., and will be closed all day on Thursday, Nov. 26, and Friday, Nov. 27.

Inclement Weather Protocol: Portland Library adheres to the following weather procedure in regards to its scheduled programs: If Portland Public Schools have a delayed opening or are closed for the day due to inclement weather, the library will not run morning storytimes. Afternoon and evening programs will be decided on an individual basis that day, and registered participants will be contacted through email as soon as possible if the program will be canceled. Call the library at 860-342-6770 if you have any questions on whether a program will be held.

Children's Programs: Late Fall Storytimes: Preschool Storytimes (Ages 3-5): Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. through Dec. 8.

Thanksgiving Week Activities. Thanksgiving Centerpieces: Tuesday, Nov. 24, 1:30 p.m., for grades K-5. After a half day of school, drop in to make a small fall flower decoration for Thanksgiving. Add a little tag to your creation saying what you are thankful for. No registration required. **Special Family Film:** Wednesday, Nov. 25, 1 p.m. *Toy Story 5* (2026; rated PG) will be shown. Run time is 102 minutes.

Build a Snowman: Thursday, Dec. 3, 3:30 p.m., for grades K-5. Enjoy a variety of snowman-building activities including air-dried clay, conditioner and baking soda, and toilet paper. Registration is open now.

Celebrate Hanukkah: Thursday, Dec. 10, 4-5:30 p.m. Whether you actively celebrate Hanukkah or just want to learn more about this holiday, you are invited to join us for stories, songs, games and some delicious latkes. This program is geared towards kids and their families, but all are welcome. Registration is open now.

Holiday Storytime with Santa!: Wednesday, Dec. 16, 10:30 a.m. All are invited to a morning of holiday stories, songs and activities with a special visit from Santa himself. A craft will be offered at the end of the program. This program is for ages 0-5 and their caregivers. Registration opens Monday, Dec. 7, at 10 a.m. Space is limited.

Holiday Craft: Thursday, Dec. 17, 3:30 p.m. Kids in grades K-5 are invited to make some holiday crafts that are perfect for decorating your home or gifting to a loved one. Registration opens Monday, Dec. 7, at 10 a.m. Space is limited.

Family Craft Night: Gingerbread Houses: Tuesday, Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m. Create a house to bring home with you using graham crackers, frosting and other supplies. This activity has steps that are appropriate for all ages, but a parent or guardian must be with children to help with supervision. Registration is required and opens Monday, Dec. 7, at 10 a.m. Space is limited.

Teen Board Game Night: Monday, Dec. 7, 6 p.m., for teens in grades 6-12. Bring your own games to share or try some of the ones the library has. No registration is required.

Teen Advisory Group: Monday, Dec. 14, 3:30 p.m. Teens in grades six and up are invited to come indicate what they want to see at the library. No registration is required. Snacks will be provided.

Teen Program: Mug Cakes and Movies: Tuesday, Dec. 22, 3:30 p.m., for grades six and up. Make your own custom mug cake and decorate with some sweet toppings, then sit back and enjoy your treat while watching some classic holiday short films. Registration starts Monday, Dec. 7, at 10 a.m.

Adult Programs: Invisible No More: Wangunk Art Exhibit: On display through Dec. 7.

Book Clubs: Talk About Books: Tuesday, Dec. 1, 1 p.m. "Art Thief" by Michael Finkel will be discussed. **1st Thursday Night Book Club:** Thursday, Dec. 3, 6:30 p.m. "The Mother-in-Law" by Sally Hepworth will be discussed. **Mystery Lovers Book Club:** Monday, Dec. 15, 1 p.m. "This is Not a Game" by Kelly Mullen will be discussed.

Christmas Sweets and Treats Holiday Sale

The First Congregational Church of Portland, U.C.C., invites everyone to their annual cookie sale. This will be held on Saturday, Dec. 12, from 9 a.m. to noon in the fellowship hall of the church located at 554 Main St.

A variety of Christmas cookies will be packaged by the half dozen. Other sweets including gingerbread men lollipops, Christmas-themed pretzels, and assorted candy will also be available.

Besides cookies and candy items they will have inexpensive gifts, filled mugs and Christmas stockings, and gift baskets for sale. There will also be tables filled with a variety of Christmas related items, both new and gently used. New this year there will be a raffle of eight uniquely decorated Christmas wreaths. You can buy tickets during the cookie sale or during fellowship hour after Sunday's worship the next day. The drawing will be held Sunday, Dec. 13, at 11:45 a.m.

For more information or questions, call the church at 860-342-3244.

Preorders Accepted for Holiday Cemetery Boxes

The Portland Garden Club is now accepting preorders for its hand-greened holiday cemetery boxes.

The boxes are made by club members using an assortment of fresh, winter evergreens. Pricing for large boxes is $20 each and small boxes is $15 each. Order deadline is Monday, Nov. 30. Pick-up is on Saturday, Dec. 5, from 9-11 a.m., at the greenhouse located in the back of the Portland High School, 95 High St. Also for sale will be white birch candle logs and smaller holiday decorated planters.

Purchases help the club support community activities and fund its educational programs throughout the year. To order, call 959-231-9630.

Grant Helps Enhance Park

Through a National Association of Realtor's Grant, the Portland River Bend Landing Committee has been able to enhance the newly established River Bend Landing Park.

This grant was initiated by Carl Guild, Rick Sharr, Karen Renner and Lou Pear. With this $7,500 grant the River Bend Landing Park now has two large picnic groves, three park benches, and 45 ornamental trees and flowering bushes.

Fran Dwyer developed the picnic groves and Dave Thompson, owner of Thompson Landscaping, was instrumental in securing and planting the trees and shrubs, organizers said.

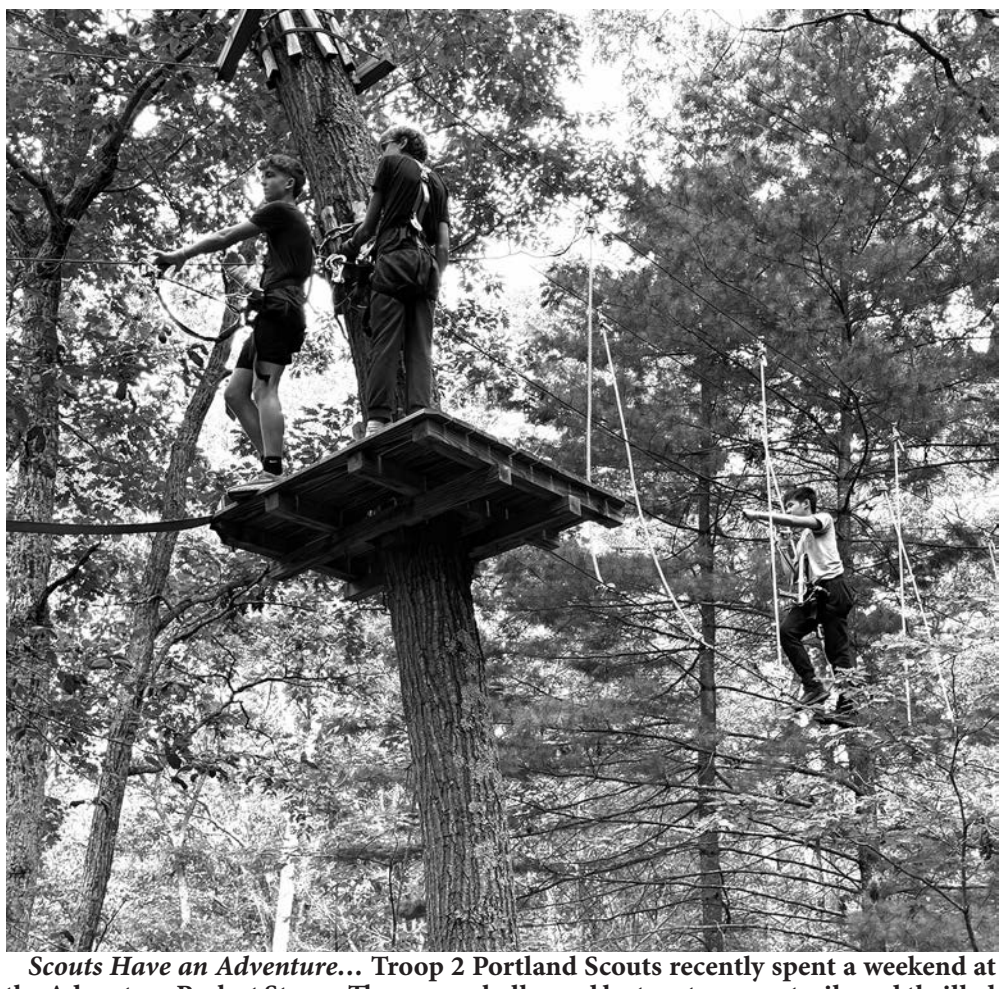
Library in Laptop Program

Portland Public Library is participating in the Laptop ConneCT Program. The program is designed to help users bridge the digital gap, and will allow participants to work, learn, and connect from home.

To be eligible, the patron must be at least 18 years old, have a valid Portland Public Library card in good standing, and be a current participant in a qualifying state or federal assistance program (SNAP, CEAP, LIHEAP, Medicare, or HUSKY Health).

Applications to participate are available at www.portlandlibraryct.org or by calling or stopping by the library, located at 20 Freestone Ave., during its open hours: Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.; and Saturday, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

For more information, call the library at 860-342-6700 or email portlandlibrary@portlandct.org.



Scouts Have an Adventure... **Troop 2 Portland Scouts recently spent a weekend at the Adventure Park at Storrs. They were challenged by tree top rope trails and thrilled by multiple zip lines. The scouts came home with increased self confidence after this test of their abilities. Troop 2 is active in the Portland community and welcomes youth seeking outdoor adventure, leadership development, friendship and lifelong memories. For more information, email barbarahelming@att.net.**

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Hundreds flocked to East Hampton High School last week for another successful Health Expo. The event featured a wide range of exhibitors, as well as eye exams and blood pressure screenings, experts on estate planning and home safety, discussions on healthy aging, and more.

Health Expo Draws Hundreds

East Hampton's Commission on Aging celebrated a win with another successful Health Expo on Nov. 7. This year, the event moved from Town Hall to the high school, which provided more space for exhibitors and presentations, and also allowed for the easy integration of a helpful volunteer base: the school's Interact Club.

At the event, attendees had the opportunity to hear from a wide range of exhibitors, including representatives from the state's Long Term Care Ombudsman program and the state's Cannabis Ombudsman. They also could receive a reflexology treatment, get their eyes checked by an optometrist, check in on their blood pressure and participate in exercise demonstrations in the school's gym. There were also experts on estate planning, home safety and discussions on healthy aging.

Dr. Eric Rosenberg, chair of the East Hampton Commission on Aging, said that approximately 300 people attended, and he credited much of the event planning to Cookie Mankowski and Kathy Megan, who co-led the Commission on Aging's Expo Working Group. He also thanked East Hampton Public Schools and its Director of Technology, Rich Fielding, the Interact Club and attendees.

EHMS Volleyball Registration

East Hampton Middle School student/athletes in grades 7 or 8 who are interested in playing for the boys or girls volleyball teams can register on the Arbiter Sports Registration website.

Athletes must have a physical within a 13-month period in order to participate. Registration is limited for or to the first 60 girls registered.

Deadline for registration is on Wednesday, Dec. 16.

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

Turkey Shoots

The Belltown Sportsman's Club will hold Turkey Shoots Sunday, Nov. 22, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., on the club grounds off of Tartia Road, which is off of Route 16. (Follow the signs.)

Bring your own shotgun or one will be provided. Gauge is 20 and 12. The club will supply the shells. Cost is $4 a shot. Refreshments will be available.

For more information, call Kurley at 860-638-7221.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church News

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

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

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

Veterans/Seniors Thanksgiving Dinner

American Legion 197 will host a Veterans/Seniors Thanksgiving Dinner Sunday, Nov. 22, from 1-3 p.m., at the Legion hall, 128 East Hampton Rd. (Route 66) in Marlborough.

All veterans and seniors are welcome. RSVP as soon as possible.

For more information, call 860-295-7810.

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RE11-20-26

East Hampton Considers Development Moratorium

By Anne Lilburn

A group of citizens focused on environmental concerns regarding Lake Pocotopaug is continuing to organize around a proposal for a development moratorium in the lake watershed.

The continued organizing follows a recent Town Council meeting at which many residents raised concerns about recent and potential development projects in town.

While discussed at the recent council meeting, the issue is primarily one involving the town's Planning and Zoning Commission, which is responsible for issues regarding land use in the town.

The issue of a moratorium had been raised at the Nov. 4 Planning and Zoning meeting, when resident Amy Mrowka – who, along with her husband, Wesley Jenks, is co-founder of the environmental advocacy group the Lake Pocotopaug Project – filed a formal Petition for Zoning Text Amendment. The proposed amendment called for a 12-month moratorium on "the acceptance, review and approval" of subdivisions and high-density residential applications within the Lake Pocotopaug watershed.

Mrowka cited concerns with environmental impact within the watershed, as well as concerns regarding recent and proposed development projects, including the ongoing Lakewood Estates Project, and a rumored new development project located near Lake Drive.

This resident-initiated action, she said, was her attempt to force the PZC to consider the issue. Not so long ago, the town emerged from a nine-month-long development moratorium that began in the summer of 2024. During that time, the town revised its zoning regulations to strengthen environmental protections. The revised guidelines for the Lake Pocotopaug Protection Zone took effect in March 2025.

Advocates such as Mrowka are now arguing that those protections are not being sufficiently enforced when considering new applications or when responding to reports of potential violations at ongoing construction sites, and that the lake is paying the price.

Activity at that Lake Drive site, where a developer has been digging large numbers of test pits to test soil, has drawn the attention of residents, particularly those who live near the lake and claim they have seen runoff from past development projects heading towards the lake. The lake experienced a rough end to the summer, with an algal bloom and beach closure by Chatham Health Department.

The Nov. 4 Planning and Zoning meeting where Mrowka first presented her text amendment ended with it being added to the agenda for the following meeting, meaning the Planning and Zoning Commission would be required to set a hearing date for it at their next meeting, which is not scheduled until Dec. 2.

Given the ongoing activity at the Lake Drive site, some residents were dismayed that action would not be taken sooner.

At the Nov. 10 Town Council meeting, the council heard from a large number of public commenters who came to express their support for a moratorium on development in the watershed area, and to urge the council to do whatever it could to urge the Planning and Zoning Commission, the town body that governs land use decisions, to take action on the issue. Some, like Mrowka, tried to make the argument that the council should be able to compel the Planning and Zoning Commission to schedule an emergency meeting due to an imminent public health threat.

In the end, the council decided that, because they did not have jurisdiction over land use issues, they would show their support for the matter by voting on a motion to have Town Manager Dave Cox discuss the issue with Planning and Zoning Chair Ray Zatorski and Interim Planning and Zoning Administrator Manuel Medina, with the hopes of getting a meeting scheduled. Some council members, notably Democrat Jack Solomon, expressed concerns about the town's current Land Use department staffing, and said he would like a moratorium on new development approvals in the watershed until the town had staffed its Planning and Zoning Administrator (Town Planner) position, as well as its Office Technician position, with full-time staffers.

Zatorski did not respond to a request for comment from the *Rivereast,* but both Medina and Cox did. Neither said that they had heard of any earlier Planning and Zoning meetings scheduled, and both said that, as of press time, they anticipated the moratorium would next be considered at the next regularly scheduled PZC meeting on Dec. 2. At that point, the commission would be required to schedule a public hearing and post public notice of that hearing in a newspaper at least ten days prior to the scheduled hearing.

With that said, Medina noted that the commission could schedule a hearing for as many as 65 days from the meeting. The overall time, from the initial acceptance of the filing, to the hearing and to the eventual decision by the commission, could take several months.

For that reason, the residents who have concerns are trying to press the PZC to move as quickly as possible, expressing their worries that, if a moratorium is not passed, any proposed applications will make their way through during the time that the issue is being considered.

The Planning and Zoning Commission will meet next on Dec. 2, when they will set a hearing date for Mrowka's text amendment, and the Town Council meets next on Nov. 24.

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.

Sunday Bible Study: Sundays at 10:30 a.m., following service and fellowship time. All are welcome.

Early Childhood Center (Daycare): Offers childcare, preschool, and before/after school care, and is open to all children, regardless of faith. 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.

East Hampton Library News & Notes

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

Hours: Monday - Wednesday, 10 a.m.- 8 p.m.; Thursday - Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. **Note: For the Thanksgiving holiday, the library will close at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 25, and will be closed all day on Thursday, Nov. 26, and Friday, Nov. 27**

All-Ages: Fourth Annual Gingerbread House Contest: All are invited to the fourth annual Gingerbread House Contest, held in partnership with the Village Center merchants. Build and decorate a house, then bring it to the library for community voting and enter for a chance to win some fantastic prizes from our local business community. Open to all ages; check website for contest details and important dates.

Adult Programs: Annual Cookie Swap: Cookbook Club: Tuesday, Dec. 1, 6:30 p.m. Bring a batch of your favorite cookies and go home with an assortment. Bring copies of your recipe to share.

Drop-in Mah Jongg Play: Wednesday, Dec. 2, 6 p.m. Drop in for an evening of casual Mah Jongg play. There will be tables and Mah Jongg sets available. Space is first-come, first-served and open to all levels of play.

Teen Programs: 'The Hunger Games' Ultimate Tribute Challenge: Grades 6-12: Saturday, Nov. 21, 1-2 p.m. Test your skills with "Hunger Games"-inspired challenges and DIY crafts.

Crochet (and More!) with Keri: Grades 6-12: Tuesday, Nov. 24, 6 p.m. Meet up in the Teen Space for a casual evening of crochet and other crafts. Registration requested.

Children's Program: Family Storytime: Saturday, Nov. 28, 11-11:30 a.m. Come down to the library for stories and songs. All ages welcome; best for children ages 18 months to 5 years old. No registration required.

Lego at the Library: Grades K-6: Tuesday, Dec. 1, 4:30-5:30 p.m. There is a new challenge or theme each month for you to work solo or with friends on. All Lego bricks provided.

DIY Days: Grades PreK-5: Saturday, Dec. 5. Stop by the library to create a magic wand reading pointer. No registration required.

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.

Sunday School: Class takes place each Sunday at 9:55 a.m. Newcomers are always welcome. Contact Rev. Joanne Neel-Richard, the Director of Children's Ministry, at jneelrichard16@gmail.com for information.

Bible Study: Wednesdays at 6 p.m., via Zoom. Contact Bobette Reed Kahn to join, at bobette@kahn.com.

Thanksgiving Food Baskets: The Missions Team is collecting food items for five families this year. Sign up to donate to a local family through Covenant to Care.

Advent Book Study: "Sacred Migration" by Bishop Steven Charleston will be read and discussed over Zoom.

Stewardship Campaign Celebration Coffee Hour: Join the Stewardship Committee for a special Coffee Hour on Sunday, Nov. 22, to announce the results of the 2027 Stewardship Campaign.

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

Senior Center News & Notes

East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., announces the following. **Senior center membership is required to register for all activivies and trips.** Also, to register for programs visir myactivecenter.com or contact 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 full list of regular weekly and monthly activities, including games, quilting, Bible study, tap dance, and more. To join the senior center, just stop by and fill out some paperwork. Joining is free for East Hampton residents.

Holiday Closings: The senior center will be closed Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27 for the Thanksgiving holiday.

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.

Writing Our Lives to Open Our Hearts: There are two groups: Thursdays, 10-11 a.m. or every other Thursday, 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Led by the center's own Elizabeth Thomas. If you would like to sharpen your pencil and your brain with creative writing, this is an opportunity for you.

Tap Dance for Fitness: Thursdays at 11 a.m. with instructor Alicia Currier. Classes held through Dec. 10 and will return on Feb. 4.

Café Conversation with Holly: Tuesday, Nov. 24, 12:15 p.m. Share ideas, provide feedback and learn about Senior Center services with the director Holly Marrero.

Wednesday Film and Fun: Wednesday, Nov. 25, 1 p.m., featuring the film "The Intern" with Robert Di Niro and Anne Hathaway. The plot follows a 70-year-old widower who becomes a senior intern at a fashion web site where he forms an unlikely friendship with the company's workaholic CEO.

Design & Create: Thursday, Dec. 3, 1:30 p.m. Join staff member Cindy Houle and senior center member Martha Valentino for a session of Festive Fascinators – a formal ornamental headpiece worn as a lightweight alternative to a traditional hat, typically secured with a headband or hair clip. A former milliner who owned her own hat making business, Valentino will lead the workshop to create pieces that can be worn for any fun occasion, including the Senior Center Holiday Party on Dec. 16.

AARP Safe Driving Course: Friday, Dec. 4, starting at 11:30 a.m. Course is designed for drivers 50 and older. Cost is $20 for AARP members/$25 for non-member. Checks made payable to AARP, or exact cash payment requested day of the class.

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Chamber Choir Concerts

The New England Chamber Choir will host two concerts in coming weeks at the Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam, 52 Middle Haddam Rd., Middle Haddam.

The choir will perform Handel's Messiah on Sunday, Nov. 29, at 4 p.m. in the church sanctuary. Free will donations appreciated. Refreshments follow in the community hall.

The New England Chamber Choir will return for a Christmas Carole Sing on Friday, Dec. 18, at 7 p.m.

For more information, call Cathy at 860-510-8102.

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Helping Hands Open Twice Monthly

Helping Hands, a ministry of Cornerstone Bible Church, is open the first and third Saturdays of each month. Helping Hands offers free clothing, household items, toys, books etc. to anyone in need.

Anyone wishing to shop can do so from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on the first and third Saturdays of every month. Donations to Helping Hands are accepted on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and on Saturdays that Helping Hands is open from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Helping Hands is located at 27 Skinner St. For more information, call Beth Cunningham at 860-365-1054.

Christmas Fair & Jingle Bazaar

Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam, located at 52 Middle Haddam Rd., Middle Haddam, will hold a Christmas Fair and Jingle Bazaar on Saturday, Dec. 5, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the lower-level community room of the church.

The event will feature baked goods, raffles baskets, stainless steel cutlery, ornaments and more. Parking will be on High Point Road across from the church.

For more information, call Cathy at 860-510-8102.

Tap Dancer Competes on International Stage

By Anne Lilburn

Eloise Alford, 14, has been dancing since she was two years old — and this year, for the fourth year in a row, it got her all the way to Europe.

The East Hampton High School freshman, who also attends the half-day program at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts, performed as a part of the New York-based American Dance Collaborative team at the IDO World Tap Dance Championships in Prague, in the Czech Republic this past October, where they brought home a sixth-place award.

Alford was competing at the IDO event for the fourth year in a row. The first year took place in Dresden, Germany, and the following years in Prague. Her mother, Melissa Alford, said the opportunity to travel for the competition had been exciting – both for her and her daughter. Prior to Eloise's first IDO competition, neither she nor her mother had left the country.

Eloise Alford normally trains at Studio E Dance in Westchester, CT, training under owner Esther Erickson Favilla, but for this competition, she competed on a team that is based out of Brewster, N.Y. This year, both mother and daughter said, it almost didn't happen.

Just days before her scheduled audition last December, Eloise was hit with appendicitis, and ended up having an emergency appendectomy after her appendix burst. She received special permission to audition via video, and that audition dance was the first time she had danced since her surgery, her mom said.

Training with the team, one of four representing the United States, was a big commitment for a high school freshman. Most of the Sunday practices were over an hour away in Westchester County, N.Y., and Eloise Alford had to keep up with all her school work while traveling, including completing her civics assignments in her hotel room after long days at the performance venue.

"There were definitely nights where we were in the hotel room doing homework [on an iPad] at 11 o'clock at night, because there's no Wi-Fi in an arena," said Melissa Alford.

Her mother, too, took time off from her job with East Hampton Public Schools, and time away from her other daughter and her husband, to travel with Eloise.

It was worth it for both of them, they say – especially Eloise, who said that, while she currently studies ballet (including pointe), contemporary, hip hop, jazz, and modern, tap is her favorite.

"What I love about tap is how it kind of separates away from all the other styles, and it's very percussive, so you can just make a lot of sounds with it and it's very flexible and creative," she said.

Eloise said she first heard about the international competition from her solo tap teacher, who recommended she audition several years ago. She made that team, and has auditioned every year since.

At the IDO event, Eloise's team was made up of 24 dancers, but she said that part of the fun of competing was the camaraderie that builds up among the dancers from different teams, even those from different countries who are competing against each other.

Melissa Alford said that, each night, the lobby would be "taken over" by dancers and their families, with parents heading to one side and kids to the other. The dancers from different countries show up with small tokens to trade, like pins and different items representing their countries.

Eloise said her favorite item that she traded for was a kangaroo keychain from Australia, but she also said the Swiss team's chocolates, and the Canadian team's maple candy, were worth a trade.

She also said she enjoyed traveling and exploring Prague, from the architecture and cultural sites to fun places to eat. Her favorite place, she said, was an ice bar where everything was made out of ice.

"It's just like a room with very loud music and everything is made out of ice," she said. "It's just a really fun place. You get like, 20 minutes in there."

"Being that this is her fourth year, you would think that, oh gosh, this must get old," said her mom, but she said that it doesn't. Hearing the announcements made about the winners, she said, "stopped your heart for a minute."

Melissa Alford said she marveled at the opportunities dance had given her daughter, and both Eloise and her mom both said they hoped for more years to come.



Resident Eloise Alford's tap-dancing skills recently took her took to an international competition in Prague. Eloise, 14, is a freshman at East Hampton High School.

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 Majors on Main Street on Wednesday, Dec. 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.

Women's Fellowship: Women's Fellowship will attend a Candle Light Christmas Concert at South Congregational Church in East Hartford on Saturday, Dec. 12.

Foster Child Gifts: The church is again collecting Christmas gifts for foster children. The gifts must be new in their original packages and brought to the church by Dec. 6.

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 are Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. New members welcome.

Adult Bible Study: Sundays at 10:15 a.m. in the chapel. The study looks at each of the 12 disciples.

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.hncovenantchurch.org.



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Town Honored at Sustainable CT Awards

By Anne Lilburn

East Hampton is celebrating a win for its environmental and sustainability efforts this month. The town was recently honored with a Sustainable CT certification, and was named at the Bronze level.

Sustainable CT is a statewide voluntary certification program that allows municipalities to choose actions and implement them in order to earn points toward certification. The certification also comes with opportunities for grant funding.

A press release provided by East Hampton's Clean Energy Task Force laid out some of achievements that East Hampton met to qualify for the certification.

"East Hampton demonstrated significant achievements in twelve sustainable impact areas ranging from inclusive community building, thriving local economies, and vibrant arts and culture to clean transportation and diverse housing," according to the press release. "East Hampton successfully completed actions including actively engaging in the Protection and Restoration of the Lake Pocotopaug Watershed, enhancing Pollinator Pathways, and the redevelopment of brownfield sites throughout town."

"This Bronze certification reflects the good work that the town's residents, boards, commissions, and departments have been doing for many years in the town of East Hampton," said David Price, the Clean Energy Commission's Sustainability Team Leader. "We are fortunate to live in a community that actively promotes environmental preservation, history and the arts, and the health and wellbeing of all our residents. We are proud that East Hampton is being recognized for those efforts."

The town was recently honored as a part of the Sustainable CT's 2026 awards celebration on Nov. 10 at the Wadsworth Atheneum, where towns from across the state were honored for meeting certification standards.

"Congratulations to our certified communities," said Jessica LeClair, Executive Director of Sustainable CT. "We are inspired by the leadership and commitment of these communities. From elected officials and town staff to resident volunteers, these certified towns are improving opportunities and the quality of life for all."

Life in Pieces – An Original Production

The teens at Epoch Arts have written and are performing in an original one-act theater production called "Life in Pieces" on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 4 and 5, at 7 p.m. both nights, at Epoch, 27 Skinner St.

The play focuses on issues and stereotypes revolving around mental health. Some teens have taken on roles that deal with schizophrenia, delusions, anxiety and bipolar while others created characters that revolve around stereotyping and statistics. The cast were given real characters who suffered from mental health issues to help base their characters off of. They also bring real life struggles to the script.

"Life in Pieces" is part of Epoch's teen Speak Out Production program, where teens give voice to issues that directly impact their lives.

Admission is $12.

Holly Bazaar

The Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam is hosting its Holly Bazaar on Saturday, Dec. 5, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at 52 Middle Haddam Road.

Peanuts, Rada cutlery, baked goods, raffles, tag sale items, holiday crafts and a light lunch are all being offered.

Local Art on Display

Two East Hampton Art Association members are presently displaying their art work locally until the end of November.

Betsy Rich has her oils at the East Hampton Public Library and the local Senior Center.

Also, the oils and watercolors on display at the Town Hall on the first floor belong to Betty Sennett.

Recreation News

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

Christmas Wreath Workshop: Wednesday, Dec. 2, 4-5:30 p.m. and 6:30-8 p.m. Create your own custom wreath using fresh greenery, ribbons and decorative accents. Fresh wreath and decorative accents included. Cost is $40.

Solstice Fire Cider: Thursday, Dec. 17, 6:30-8 p.m. Explore aromatic herbs and spices as you create your own bold and flavorful blend. Cost is $35.

Food Drive at Church

Haddam Neck Congregational will hold a food drive to support local food banks on Saturday, Nov. 28, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the church, 408 Quarry Hill Rd. in Haddam Neck.

Drop off non-perishable food donations or grocery store gift cards to support our neighbors in need. Please be sure to check expiration dates.

Fabric Donations Welcome!

Haddam Neck Congregational Church is collecting donations of fabric, yarn and notions for the Bits and Pieces sale held during the church's annual Quilt Show in April.

For more information, call Melissa at 860-993-5311 or Darcy at 860-301-4994.

Troop 57 Bottle Drive

Troop 57 is having its next bottle drive on Saturday, Nov. 21. Bring clean cans, plastics and glass to the American Distilling Parking lot (31 East High St., Route 66) from 9 a.m. to noon.

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

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

Congregational Church News

The Congregational Church of East Hampton, 59 Main St., welcomes all to worship Sundays at 10 a.m.

Members of CCEH continue reflection through the year on the theme, Psalm 46:1: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Weekly Schedule: Sunday evenings: AA meeting, 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall; Tuesday: Boy Scouts meeting, 5:30-8:30 p.m.; Wednesday: Art Class with Elizabeth Sennett, 9:30-11:30 a.m.; Thursday morning: Yarners, a community knitting/crocheting group, meets 10 a.m.-noon – all are welcome; Thursday evening: Choir Practice in the upstairs lounge – Bells from 6-7 p.m. and Vocal Choir from 7-8:30 p.m. – new members are always welcome!

Christmas Collection for DCF Clients: The church is collecting gift cards that will be given to children who receive services through DCF. Cards may be purchased through the RaiseRight program available through the church (order deadline is Nov. 22) or directly from a retailer.

East Hampton Food Bank: A weekly collection is held for the Food Bank.

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.

Women's Fellowship Dignity Drive: This is an ongoing collection to support women and girls in need, both globally and in the community. The church is also collecting feminine hygiene products for the 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.

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 November: Steven Wells, a lifelong Portland resident and builder. Wells attended Paier College of Art and has taught watercolor classes for several years. His watercolors depict scenes of Portland and other favorite places in New England. His work can be viewed during regular library hours. An artist reception will be held Friday, Nov. 13, from 4-6 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

Open Mic Night: Friday, Nov. 20, 6-8 p.m. Come and perform or just watch. Performers, call the library to sign up, at 860-267-9093.

Tree-Lighting and Carol Sing: Friday, Dec. 4, at 5 p.m. All are welcome.

Holiday Party: Sunday, Dec. 6, 4:30-6:30 p.m. All are welcome. Bring an appetizer or dessert to share if you can.

Makers' Market: Saturday, Dec. 12, featuring local artisans. Makers will be on site that day, and many items may remain available to purchase at the library through Dec. 19.

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.

Chair Yoga Classes with Kathleen Marshall: Fridays from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Cost is $15 per class. This modified, gentle form of yoga that allows you to perform traditional yoga poses while seated in a chair or using a chair for standing support. Email zenlotus860@yahoo.com for information.

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.

Gab and Gather: The library said Friday afternoons have become a time when a handful of patrons seem to stop in to chat and share a cup of tea. All are invited to join in! Bring a beverage of your choice if tea is not your preferred, well, cup of tea.

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.sjpii.org.

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Veterans Day Ceremony… **A brief but meaningful Veterans Day commemoration took place Wednesday, Nov. 11, on the Memorial Green in Colchester. About 60 local veterans and residents gathered to listen to the words of First Selectman Bernie Dennler (pictured here) thanking all veterans for their service and Rabbi Ken Alter praying for a world of peace.**

Upcoming Programs at Cragin Library

Cragin Memorial Library, located at 8 Linwood Ave., has announced the following pieces of news. For more information, call 860-537-5752 (for adult and teen programs) or 860-537-7201 (for children's programs).

Children's Sensory Table: Every Friday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. This is a drop-in program.

Children's Program: Story and a Craft: Thanksgiving: Monday, Nov. 23, 10:30 a.m.: Drop by for a special Thanksgiving Storytime.

Children's Program: Drop-In Free Play: Tuesday, Nov. 24, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Best for ages 2-5. This free play has all the dino toys.

Adult Program: Medicare Educational Events: Thursday, Dec. 3, 2 p.m. or 6 p.m. Come and learn the ins and outs of Medicare (enrollment, drug stages, penalties, etc.) and the differences between original Medicare and Medicare Advantage with Mark Macrina a town resident and local insurance agent. An informational seminar, and no individual health discussed. For accommodations of persons with special needs, call 860-338-1466 TTY 711.

Teen Program: Mixology Lab: Thursday, Dec. 3, 2:45-3:15 p.m., for grades 6-12. Come make fun drinks with soda, juices, and other additives. Let library staff know of any food allergies. Registration required.

Teen Program: Mario Through the Ages: Friday, Dec. 4, 1-3 p.m., for grades 6-12. Come for all different versions of Mario video games from past to present. Registration required.

Children's & Teen Program: Candy Trees: Saturday, Dec. 5, 10:30 a.m. or 11:30 a.m. Enjoy a sweet outing for the whole family and make some candy trees with. Registration required.

Children's Program: Christmas Art: Monday, Dec. 7, 10:30-11 a.m. Best for ages 2-5. Drop in and paint a wreath.

Adult Book Club: A Court of Fantasy Readers: Monday, Dec. 7, 5:30 p.m. For this month, read "This Kingdom Will Not Kill Me" by Ilona Andrews. Copies are available in the Adult Department.

Children's Program: Frozen Story and a Craft: Tuesday, Dec. 8, 6-6:30 p.m. Drop in to read a "Frozen" story and create art featuring Olaf or Sven.

Children's Program: Baby Free Play: Wednesday, Dec. 9, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Best for up to 15 months old. Feel and play with all kinds of toys for babies.

Children's Program: Family Fun Night Christmas Bracelets: Wednesday, Dec. 9, 6 p.m. Drop in to make a Christmas-themed bracelet.

Children's Program: PJ Storytime: Thursday, Dec. 10, 6 p.m. Drop in to the library in your PJs to listen to bedtime stories.

Children's Program: Breakfast & Board Games: Saturday, Dec. 12, 10 a.m. Bring your family and friends for some doughnuts and quality time.

Children's Program: Mrs. Claus Storytime: Monday, Dec. 14, 6 p.m. This will be a special holiday storytime with special guest star Mrs. Claus.

All Ages Presentation: Galileo - The Starry Messenger: Tuesday, Dec. 15, 6 p.m. The Starry Messenger is an adaptation of Galileo's short treatise "Siderius Nuncius." Galileo (dressed in 17th century costume) will present a public lecture on his most recent discoveries made using his newly devised spyglass. As he describes those discoveries, Galileo's new method of observation and measurement of nature become apparent. Throughout the presentation audience members are actively involved in experiments and demonstrations. After the lecture, Galileo answers questions about his experiments. Registration required.

Family Craft Night: Tree Ornament: Wednesday, Dec. 16, 6 p.m. Stop in and paint a wooden ornament. Registration required.

Children's Program: Drop-In Holiday Storytime: Monday, Dec. 21, 10:30 a.m. Best for ages 2-5.

Children's Program: New Years Eve Storytime: Thursday, Dec. 31, 11:45 a.m. Come for a countdown to "midnight" celebration and ring in the New Year. Party dress is encouraged. Registration required.

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Saluting the Flag… **A brief but meaningful Veterans Day commemoration took place last Wednesday on the Memorial Green in Colchester. About 60 local veterans and residents gathered to listen to the words of First Selectman Bernie Dennler thanking all veterans for their service and Rabbi Ken Alter praying for a world of peace. Here, 102-year-old World War II veteran and fighter pilot Robert Garabedian rises from his wheelchair to salute the flag as members of the St. Andrew Choir sing the national anthem.**

Ornament Trail Scavenger Hunt Returns

The Color House Art & Pottery Studio is bringing back its annual Ornament Trail, a town-wide ornament scavenger hunt taking place Dec. 1–21, and is inviting local businesses to participate.

The Ornament Trail features 100 unique, handmade ceramic ornaments hidden throughout Colchester at participating businesses and public locations. The community is encouraged to explore the town, discover ornaments to keep, and visit local businesses to collect digital passport stamps for entries into holiday prize drawings.

The event is free to the community. To register, visit ot.cohoct.com.

The deadline for businesses to register to participate is Nov. 25.

Youth Wrestling Registration Open

Registration for Colchester Youth Wrestling (www.colchesterwildcats.org) is now open for the 2026-27 season for boys and girls in grades K-8. Practices will be held at Jack Jackter Intermediate School on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

The season starts on Monday, Nov. 30, and runs through late February. The club's mission is to introduce the youth of Colchester and surrounding towns to the sport of wrestling by providing a disciplined and competitive program for kids to learn and develop wrestling skills, self-confidence and the ideals of good sportsmanship.

Questions can be emailed to colchesteryouthwrestling@gmail.com.

Festival of Lights Fundraiser

The Bacon Academy Trustees will host the second annual Festival of Lights Fundraiser on Friday, Dec. 11, at 6:30 p.m., at Historic Bacon Academy, 84 Main St.

The event will showcase locally decorated tabletop holiday trees and wreaths donated by community members, all of which will be offered through a silent auction to support the historic school's ongoing restoration efforts.

Tickets are $25 and include a wine-tasting from Priam Vineyards, cider or hot chocolate, and hors d'oeuvres, plus live music from the Bacon Academy Choir and Jazz Combo band. Event proceeds will support Historic Bacon Academy.

Tickets may be purchased by emailing info@baconacademytrustees.org or visiting baconacademytrustees.org/festivaloflights.html.

Parks and Rec. News & Notes

Colchester Parks and Recreation has announced the following pieces of news. For more information, call Parks and Rec. at 860-537-7297 or visit the Colchester Parks and Recreation website at www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department.

Home and Business Holiday Decorating Contest: Residents and local businesses are participating in the 2026 Holiday Decorating Contest. Registration deadline for homes and businesses has passed, and decorations must be completed by Nov. 30. For more information, call Parks and Rec.

Gingerbread House Decorating Contest: Community members of all ages are invited to show design and decorate their very own gingerbread houses. All gingerbread house entries will be displayed in the lobby of Colchester Town Hall throughout the holiday season, giving the community a chance to admire the festive creations and vote for their favorites. Drop off your completed creation at the Parks and Recreation Office between Nov. 30 and Dec. 4. Visit the Town Hall lobby from Dec. 7-31 to view the entries and cast your vote for your favorite. No pre-registration is needed. For more information, visit the Colchester Parks and Recreation website.

Holiday Homecoming 2026: Saturday, Dec. 5. Arrive by 3:45 p.m. for holiday performances. Santa will arrive at 4:30 p.m. on a decorated firetruck in a parade, and he will take the time to meet with every child in the gazebo. There will be a bonfire, holiday carols, cookies, cider, hot cocoa, and Colchester ornaments. Bring your letter to Santa and mail it to the North Pole in the special mailbox. Every letter will receive a personal response (don't forget to include the child's name and address). Deadline for mailing letters to Santa in the special mailbox isn Dec. 15. Also, during the Holiday Homecoming, Colchester Choir and Orchestra will present its holiday concert at the Colchester Federated Church beginning at 6:30 p.m. The concert is free, but donations are appreciated.

Giving Garden Chosen for Fundraiser

The Colchester Giving Garden has been chosen by the local Stop and Shop to be the recipient of their "Bloomin' 4 Good" fundraising promotion for the month of November.

One dollar will be donated to the garden for each specially marked bouquet that is sold during November.

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Echoes of Winters Past

Colchester Actors Theatre invites the community to its upcoming production, "Echoes of Winters Past," an immersive holiday performance taking place Friday, Dec. 11, and Saturday, Dec. 12, at 6:30 p.m. both nights, at Colchester Senior Center, 15 Louis Lane.

The 65-minute original production will transform the senior center into a modern-day seasonal gathering. The partially seated immersive experience blends local storytelling with live performances of classic, secular winter folk tunes and seasonal songs, featuring local performers and youth choir.

Unlike traditional theatre where audiences watch from afar, Echoes of Winters Past breaks down the fourth wall, bringing the story and music directly into the room with the audience. Throughout the evening, guests will be welcomed with a fireside toast, guided through a caroling promenade, and treated to live harp music. Highlights of the experience also include a whimsical "Snow Day" pantomime, a lighthearted indoor snowball toss, the sharing of guest winter postcards, and a lantern-lit reading of Robert Frost's classic poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening."

Tickets are on sale at cat.booktix.com. If purchased in advance, tickets are $12 per adult and $5 per child. Tickets purchased at the door will be $15 per adult and $8 per child.

For more information, call the Recreation Office at 860-537-7297.

AARP Holiday Luncheon

The Colchester Area Chapter of AARP is having its Holiday Luncheon at Papa Z's, 713 Middletown Rd., Colchester, on Tuesday, Dec. 1.

Festivities begin at 12:30 p.m., with lunch being served at 1 p.m. There will be door prizes and the holiday-themed game during the gathering.

Cost is $30 per person (guests are welcome) which includes coffee/tea, buffet, dessert, tax and tip. Send a check made out to Colchester AARP #4019, to reserve a place for both you (and your guest if you have one) to the Colchester Senior Center, 15 Louis Lane, Colchester, CT 06415.

Reservations should be made no later than Nov. 23.

CCNS Basket Raffle

Colchester Cooperative Nursery School will host its annual Basket Raffle Fundraiser on Saturday, Dec. 5, during the town's Holiday Homecoming Celebration.

All are invited to stop by the school to browse a selection of themed raffle baskets created by the nursery school families.

CCNS is located at 80 Main St., and can be reached at 860-537-0565.

Toy Drive

St. Joseph's Polish Society, at 395 S. Main St., will host its sixth annual toy drive Saturday, Dec. 12, during the Army vs. Navy football game.

Doors open at 2 p.m., and kick-off is at 3 p.m. A buffet will be served during the game.

A $15 donation or a donation of a new unwrapped toy gets you in to enjoy raffles, buffet and the Army vs. Navy football game.



Honoring Veterans Day… **A brief but meaningful Veterans Day commemoration took place Wednesday, Nov. 11, on the Memorial Green in Colchester. About 60 local veterans and residents gathered to listen to the words of First Selectman Bernie Dennler thanking all veterans for their service and Rabbi Ken Alter praying for a world of peace. Here, members of American Legion Post 54 Colchester Honor Guard fire a volley.**

Local Salon Holding Drive for CES

This year, Cuts Unlimited's annual holiday project held in memory of Baby Kayce Spooner will focus on refreshing and revitalizing the teachers' lounge at Colchester Elementary School.

The goal of the initiative is to design and fund a fresh, inviting, and comfortable space where teachers and staff can relax, collaborate, and recharge. Organizers are calling on community members, families, and local businesses to help bring this vision to life through monetary donations.

Donations will directly fund new comfortable seating, modern amenities, fresh decor, and functional upgrades to the lounge.

Members of the public who wish to support the CES Teachers' Lounge transformation can bring donations directly to the salon. Cash or checks (made payable to Cuts Unlimited LLC with "#Kaycesgift 2026" in the memo line) will be accepted in-salon or by mail through Dec. 23.

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Wreaths Across America to Return

Volunteers from the Westchester Cemetery Association and Scout Troop 72 are supporting Wreaths Across America at Westchester Cemetery, working to ensure that the 55 service members buried there will indeed be honored again this year with the placement of live, balsam veterans' wreaths as part of National Wreaths Across America Day 2026.

The cemetery will join the more than 5,600 participating locations across the country to Remember, Honor and Teach on Saturday, Dec. 19. This annual event is held outdoors on location at the Westchester Cemetery off Route 16. The program starts at noon.

Donations are welcome in the form of purchasing a wreath for a soldier and laying wreaths at gravestones. Each individual $17 sponsors a fresh balsam veterans wreath that will be placed on the headstone of an American hero on Dec. 19. For event details, visit www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/CTW-CCC. You can also send your contribution to Wreaths, c/o Joanne Rioux, 219 Lakeview Dr., Colchester, CT 06415.

Military Honor Squads for Veterans

In Connecticut, 12 volunteer service organizations (VSOs) step in to render military honors for departed veterans – and one of the 12 organizations is in Colchester.

These honor guard services are coordinated through the funeral provider and the CT Army National Guard (NG) Military Honors Unit. A family need only provide proof of honorable service to the funeral home, in order for their deceased veteran to get the honor squad services they have already earned. There is no charge for military honors as the NG Military Honors Unit will provide representatives from the branch of service in which the veteran served at no cost. The National Guard will also contact one of the VSO to provide a rifle salute and play Taps.

The local volunteer service organization is the Colchester Veterans Honor Guard. It was formed nearly 24 years ago to help veterans' families by training in and performing honor squad duties. The Colchester Honor Squad meets the first and third Tuesday of every month from 7 to 8 p.m. at the former senior center, now "Veterans Hall," at 95 Norwich Ave. The 20-plus member squad is actively looking for new members so that it can continue to provide funeral honors to all departed veterans. Any interested veteran is welcome to stop by a Tuesday meeting.

For more information, contact Al Letendre at 860-537-6516 or letendrej@sbcglobal.net.



The Colchester Historical Society 2027 calendars are now available. Pictured is one of the photos seen in the calendar: a shot of Marvin's Midway Garage in 1979. Making his own cinder blocks, Dwight Marvin built this as a repair garage in 1946. He later sold trucks, and then Studebakers, until the manufacturer went out of business. The garage was then run by Dwight's brother, Wilbert, and later by his nephew Mike who ran it as Marvin's Midway Garage in the 1970s.

Historical Society 2027 Calendars Available

The Colchester Historical Society has announced its 2027 calendars are now available.

The 2027 calendar features photographs of Colchester's local sites and events from the 1970s and 1980s. Do you remember the Colchester Theater, Dino's, or John "Ski's" airfield? Revisit these familiar places, or discover them for the first time – as Colchester appeared 50 years ago.

The photographs featured in the calendar were taken by Gerard Dauphinais, a local photographer and owner of Camera Cove. Located on Norwich Avenue, Camera Cove offered professional and hobbyist photography equipment, as well as photography classes. Gerard "Jerry" Dauphinais gifted his collection of Colchester images to the Colchester Historical Society.

To purchase a calendar or learn more, contact the Colchester Historical Society at 860-537-3240 or mail@colchesterhistory.org.

History Museum Open Sundays

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

Located at 24 Linwood Ave., the museum 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.

Toys for Tots

Colchester American Legion Post 54 is joining efforts with the Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots to bring gifts to children in need – and the post is looking for donations.

New, unwrapped toys can be dropped in the Toys for Tots box located at Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave.

To learn more about the Marine's Toys for Tots Foundation, visit www.toysfortots.org











Troop 13 Holds Fall Court of Honor

Scouts BSA Troop 13 recently held its fall Court of Honor, recognizing scouts who earned rank advancements, merit badges and other awards. The troop also highlighted recent activities, including a five-day camping trip to the southern New Jersey shore, a week at summer camp and participation in the National Scout Jamboree.

Rank Advancement: Nathan Drylie, Matthew Hunt and Cody Zajac earned the Scout rank; Terry Boaz and Nick Peck earned Second Class; Zack Ginand earned First Class; nJacob Blanda and Brody Hochholzer earned Life; and Aiden Raulakaitis earned Eagle Scout.

Merit Badges: Since June, Troop 13 Scouts have earned a combined 51 merit badges in subjects ranging from emergency preparedness and environmental science to robotics, cooking and citizenship. The scouts are:

Ben Adams: Mammal Study, Emergency Preparedness and Cooking; Cody Blanda: Sustainability, Oceanography, Leatherworking, Hiking, Geology, Family Life, Citizenship in the Community and Communication; Jacob Blanda: Emergency Preparedness and Cooking; Terry Boaz: Space Exploration, Model Design and Building, Forestry, Electricity and Archery; Joseph Chechile: Sustainability, Personal Management, Personal Fitness, Family Life, Cooking, Communication and Camping; Logan Cleary: Environmental Science, Citizenship in the World and Cooking; Jordan Darvas: Mammal Study, Emergency Preparedness and Cooking; Anthony DePaola: Personal Management, Family Life, Citizenship in the Community and Cooking;

Nathan Drylie: Chess, Robotics, Wood Carving, Model Design and Building, Fingerprinting and Archery; Zack Ginand: Kayaking, Swimming, Oceanography, Mammal Study and Environmental Science; Brody Hochholzer: Emergency Preparedness and Cooking; Nick Peck: Environmental Science; Brandon Verruso: Oceanography and Mammal Study.

Other Awards: Nathan Drylie, Matthew Hunt, Tucker Koenigsknecht, and Jackson McKeen earned the Totin' Chip Award. Brandon Verruso and Brody Hochholzer each earned the Mile Swim Award for the second consecutive year while at summer camp. This marks the third consecutive year in which Troop 13 Scouts have earned the award: Miller Brown earned it in 2024, and Brandon and Brody each earned it in 2025 and 2026.

Scout Leadership: Troop 13 is a scout-led troop with 19 active scouts. Current youth leaders include Brody Hochholzer as senior patrol leader; Brandon Verruso and Jordan Darvas as assistant senior patrol leaders; and Logan Cleary, Zack Ginand and Nick Peck as patrol leaders.

National Scout Jamboree: Timothy Crowell and other scouts from Colchester recently attended the National Scout Jamboree. Held every four years, the event brings together approximately 15,000 Scouts from across the country and around the world for friendship, service and adventure. The Jamboree takes place at the Summit Bechtel Reserve, a property of more than 10,000 acres in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia near the New River Gorge. Participants have access to extensive outdoor and adventure facilities, including whitewater rafting, zip lines, canopy tours, rock-climbing and bouldering walls, mountain biking, BMX, all-terrain vehicles, shooting sports ranges, skate parks, scuba diving and flatwater lakes. The event also features interactive science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics activities, leadership workshops and environmental education. One highlight is the Big Zip, five parallel zip lines that stretch 3,300 feet over Adventure Valley and allow riders to reach speeds of up to 50 mph.



Colchester Troop 13 recently held its Fall Court of Honor. Pictured is Senior Patrol Leader Brody Hochholzer swearing in troop patrol leaders (pictured from left) Brandon Verusso, Jordan Darvas, Nick Peck, Logan Cleary and Zack Ginand.

Southern New Jersey Camping Trip: A highlight of Troop 13's summer outdoor program is its annual five-day camping trip. This year, the Scouts voted to visit the southern New Jersey shore near Avalon. The trip included two days at the beach, a visit to the Wildwood Boardwalk, a stop at the Cape May County Park & Zoo and several opportunities to explore the surrounding community. The scouts also had a memorable encounter with a particularly bold raccoon.

For young people who enjoy the outdoors and camping, Troop 13 offers opportunities to build friendships while developing leadership skills and confidence through adventure and service. The troop meets Mondays at 7 p.m. in the St. Andrew Church hall. Boys ages 11 to 17 are welcome to attend a meeting or contact Scoutmaster Brian Marburger at brian.marburger@comcast.net or 860-917-5896.

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, Nov. 23: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise w/ Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Haircuts with Deborah; 10 a.m., Movie Time: "Ordinary Angels"; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 11 a.m.-noon, Fitness Orientation; 12:30 p.m., Mah Jongg, Set Back, Bridge.

Tuesday, Nov. 24: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:30 a.m., Diabetes Management Class; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 12:30 p.m., Pinochle, In the Know; 1 p.m., Cornhole; 1:15 p.m., Bingo; 5:30 p.m., Hand & Foot Card Game; 6 p.m., Ferrero Rocher Turkey Favors.

Wednesday, Nov. 25: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Walking Group; 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Reflexology; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Hand and Foot Card Game, Sit & Be Fit Video; no Sew-cial Time or Cardio Drumming today.

Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27: Senior center closed for Thanksgiving holiday.

Pyrogy for Sale

On Saturday, Dec. 12, St. Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church in Colchester will make fresh pyrogy for sale. Call Brenda at 860-365-0281 to place your orders.

There are only 200 dozen available for sale.

Fundraising Pet Photo Shoot

The Colchester Dog Park Committee is hosting a fundraising pet photo shoot with Santa. Children & families are welcome too. The event will be held at Colchester Fish & Game Club on Sunday, Nov. 29, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The committee will sell digital images, 5x7 and 8x10 photo prints, Christmas cards and ornaments. All orders will be available for pickup at Parks & Recreation by Dec. 11. Digital images will be mailed by Dec. 4. Cash, check, and Venmo accepted. There is a new photo setting this year. Photography donated by SMS Photo of Colchester.

All proceeds will support the Colchester Dog Park. For more information, email tagnobark@gmail.com.

Appointments by calling Janice 860-608-8489. Walk-ins will be accepted if time is available.

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Selectmen Discuss Sewer Project, Approve Trail Grant

By Toriana Williams

The Marlborough Board of Selectmen approved $196,950 in state funding for the third phase of the Blackledge River Greenway, authorized town officials to look for federal funding for a sewer extension near Route 2 and began the process of appointing a Marlborough veterans representative during its Nov. 17 meeting.

The board also reviewed the town's financial outlook, discussed upcoming Public Works equipment needs and heard updates on road work and town projects.

Route 2 Sewer Project

The board voted to authorize Town Manager David Porter to prepare an application for federal funding to help pay for a sewer extension across Route 2.

The project is estimated to cost $8 million, and it would bring sewer service to an area near the town commons, which would allow for more commercial development and possibly new housing.

One board member said about 75 acres on the other side of the commons are currently unused, and the lack of sewer service has been a major barrier to development in the area.

The board said the long-term goal would be to build as many as 200 homes on smaller lots, which could help increase the town's tax base and bring in more students.

Under the current state grant program, the town could receive 25% of the project cost, leaving the town responsible for about $6 million. Officials said that amount would be difficult for the town to take on without additional funding.

The board is now looking into a federal program called Congressionally Directed Spending. Applications are due in March, and the town has applied for similar funding in the past but has not been selected.

The board also discussed another possible funding source, the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA). This program offers low-interest loans, some of which can be delayed for up to five years. That delay could give developers time to build homes before the town begins paying back the loan through sewer fees.

Officials also said including affordable housing in the proposal could improve its chances of receiving funding, so the board discussed plans that would include housing for people earning between zero and 30% of the area's median income.

State Awards $197K for Trail Expansion

The board voted to accept a $196,950 state grant for phase three of the Blackledge River Greenway. The full project is expected to cost about $262,000, with the town responsible for roughly $65,000.

The new section will connect existing trails, extending the greenway from the West Road area toward North Park Road. Plans include a trail along the river, a sloped section with landings to meet accessibility standards and an elevated walkway over a small wetland.

Town officials praised the Nature Trails and Sidewalks Committee for its work on the grant application. One official said the project would add to one of the town's most popular trails and help preserve an important part of what makes Marlborough a good place to live.

Board Begins Process to Appoint Veterans Representative

The board authorized Town Manager David Porter to begin advertising for a town veterans representative.

The position would give local veterans one person to contact for help finding benefits and working through state and federal programs.

Officials discussed whether to create a committee or appoint one person, and town leaders preferred a single representative who could respond quickly and provide direct help.

One official said veterans need someone who understands the programs and can help them get the benefits they qualify for and that a committee could create another layer of steps for people seeking help.

The representative would need to be a Marlborough resident and a veteran, as required by state law. The representative could also help veterans with local property tax assistance programs and organize public information events.

Public Works Faces Major Equipment Costs

Town officials reviewed a long-term plan for replacing aging Public Works vehicles and equipment.

One official said several major purchases are planned for the next few years because the town has put off replacing some equipment.

Among the planned purchases are a new truck, mower, landscape trailer, mechanic's lift and replacement dumpsters. The department also needs a new roof because of leaks in the current building.

One of the biggest concerns is an aging truck used for transfer station work, as the vehicle is around 15 years old and has nearly 300,000 miles.

Officials said replacing the truck is the department's most urgent need. Another concern is a dumpster with rusted holes that allows trash to fall out when being transported.

Board members also discussed how to spread out the costs of future purchases. One suggestion was to increase yearly payments into the Public Works capital reserve fund so money would be available whenever large purchases are needed.

Officials plan to bring together equipment needs from Public Works, police, fire and other departments for a larger review in January.

Town Finds Surplus

The board reviewed the town's October 2026 financial report, which projected a budget surplus of around $200,000.

The town's projected fund balance for June 30, 2027, is slightly below $6 million, or about 25.8% of annual spending.

The town also received a $126,000 building permit fee for an apartment building, creating a projected surplus in building permit revenue.

Other Business

Porter reported that North Main Street would be closed between Chapman Road and Hodge Road on Nov. 18 for culvert work. Johnson Road will have alternating one-way traffic on Nov. 19 and 20 while crews work on a larger culvert project.

Aquarion Water Authority also planned an overnight water main cleaning that could cause some customers to see discolored water. Residents were advised to let their faucets run until the water clears.

The town received a new shed for Farley Field through a donation from RHAM Youth Soccer. Public Works crews helped remove the old shed and prepare the site.

The town also issued a request for bids to install vinyl siding at the food bank after finding out that repairs and painting the existing wood siding would cost more than expected.

Parks and Rec. Programs

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

Adult Programs: Beginner Tai Chi: Tuesdays/Thursdays, noon-12:45 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee is $40/resident, $45/non-resident.

Beginner and Intermediate Tai Chi: Tuesdays/Thursdays, 12:40-1:45 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee is $40/resident, $45/non-resident.

Pickleball: Mondays, 5:30-7:30 p.m., and Tuesdays/Thursdays, 9-11 a.m., at Blish Park. Open to all levels of play. Registration is free.

Zumba Class – Fall Session: Tuesdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee is $60/resident, $65/non-resident, or a $10 drop-in fee. Register on the Parks and Rec. website.

Adult Drop-In Volleyball: Thursdays, 8-10 p.m., at Marlborough Elementary School. Fee is $5 per week. Session runs until June.

Adult Drop-In Basketball: Sundays, 8-10 a.m., at MES. Fee is $5 per week. Session runs until the end of April.

Driveway Reflective Number Signs Available: The cost of the sign is $50. Help emergency services personnel find your home without delay. Vertical sign is double-sided 8" x 24" with 4" numbers on blue highway reflective metal. Order forms are online and at Town Hall.

From the Town Manager's Desk...

Veteran Tax Exemptions in Marlborough



Porter

At recent Board of Selectmen meetings, there were multiple questions raised regarding tax benefits available to veterans living in Marlborough. The purpose of this column is to help Marlborough residents understand the exemptions currently available to Marlborough's veterans and what local options the Board of Selectmen are considering.

Of our approximately 6,200 residents, we are grateful to have 232 veterans call Marlborough home. 229 veteran households receive a tax exemption on their property or vehicle to acknowledge and honor their military service. Currently, 169 veterans receive an $81 annual property tax exemption, six receive a $163 exemption, eight receive a $203 exemption, five receive a $244 exemption, and 10 receive a $285 exemption. If you are a veteran and would like to take advantage of this exemption, please call Simon Wake at 860-295-6201.

In 2024, the Connecticut General Assembly (P.A. 24-26) exempted veterans with a service-connected 100% permanent and total disability rating from property taxes on their primary residence or, if a veteran does not own their home, on a motor vehicle. This disability rating is assigned by the federal Department of Veterans Affairs. The town is not qualified to assess which veterans are eligible and has no interest in making such determinations. In Marlborough, 30 veterans qualify for this exemption – 28 homeowners and two who claim it on motor vehicles. For the 28 homeowners, the exemption ranges from $3,179 for the veteran with the least expensive home to $12,365 for the veteran with the most expensive home.

In 2025, the General Assembly (P.A. 25-168) permitted five local options:

(1) Cap the exemption based on the median assessed property value. If adopted – using this year's mill rate – the maximum annual benefit per property would be $5,937.61. Of the 30 currently eligible veterans, 14 would experience no change. The 16 veterans who own homes above the median assessed property value would have their taxes reduced by $5,937.61 and would pay taxes only on the part of their home's value above the median.

(2) Extend the exemption to include up to two acres of land.

(3) Extend the exemption to surviving spouses.

(4) Extend the exemption to veterans assigned a Total Disability based on Individual Unemployability (TDIU) rating by the federal Department of Veterans Affairs.

(5) Extend the exemption to spouses of servicemembers killed in action (Gold Star spouses).

The Board of Selectmen respects our veterans and honors their service. They are also mindful that everyone is experiencing high prices for many basic goods, especially groceries and fuel. As they anticipate preparing and passing a budget that balances high-quality public services with the financial realities confronting Marlborough residents, the BOS seeks input on whether to adopt none, some, or all of these local options.

You can expect to receive a FlashVote survey in the coming days. If you have not yet registered, you can do so at www.flashvote.com/marlborough-ct.

David Porter, Marlborough Town Manager

Veterans/Seniors Thanksgiving Dinner

American Legion 197 will host a Veterans/Seniors Thanksgiving Dinner Sunday, Nov. 22, from 1-3 p.m., at the Legion hall, 128 East Hampton Rd. (Route 66) in Marlborough.

All veterans and seniors are welcome. For more information, call 860-295-7810.

Holiday Craft Fair

There will be a Holiday Craft Fair Sunday, Nov. 29, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., at American Legion Post 197, 128 East Hampton Rd., Marlborough.

There will be shopping, raffles, and food for purchase.

Congregational Church News & Notes

Sunday Worship at Marlborough Congregational Church, located at 35 South Main St., is held at 10 a.m. The service is also broadcast live every Sunday at mcc.marlcongchurch.org and recorded for later viewing. Church pastor is the Rev. Valerie Seaver. Sunday school is held Sundays at 10 a.m. All children in the community are welcome and invited to attend. Childcare for infants and toddlers is provided downstairs in the nursery; however, children are always welcome at the worship service.

Thanksgiving Sunday will be celebrated on Nov. 22. The service will be led by Seaver, with the sermon given by Beth Alves. Alves, a church member, is a professor at CT State Community College Quinebaug Valley. Her sermon title is "An Upside Down World."

Weekly Program: Senior Stretch and Strengthen meets Fridays at 9:45 a.m., upstairs in the Thienes Lounge. Cost is $25 per class. All are welcome.

AA: The church sponsors three weekly meetings: Wednesdays at noon in the Youth Room and at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Fellowship Hall, and Thursdays at 6 p.m. in the Youth Room.

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 church sponsors a monthly Drive Thru Café for Marlborough Food Bank clients and their families with vouchers and a monthly meal at Florence Lord Housing for its residents.

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@marlcongchurch.org, or contact the church office at office@marlcongchurch.org.

St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

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

Liturgical Celebrations: Weekend Masses: 4 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday. The first Saturday of the month at 6 p.m. is a Spanish Mass. **Weekday Masses:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 8:30 a.m. The third Saturday of the month has an 8:30 a.m. Mass. **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:** Mondays at 9 a.m. **Weekly Sacrament of Reconciliation:** Saturdays, 3-3:30 p.m., or by appointment.

Faith Formation Programs: Faith Formation leaders Cindy Bryan and Helena Thomas have begun their new classes for this academic year, with new registrations still accepted. Access the church website or register directly at stjffaithformation@gmail.com. The programs all include service opportunities for students and families.

Ministry, Social and Parish Community Events: An adult choir practices weekly; men's and women's prayer groups, Knights of Columbus, Christian Outreach and Prayer Shawl ministry meet monthly; and an active book club meets quarterly. Social activities are planned throughout the year to provide additional parish fellowship. For details, see the church calendar available on the church website.

Community Outreach and Service: The Community Giving Garden provides fresh produce delivered weekly and in season to the Marlborough Food Bank. Food drives are held weekly for the Marlborough Food Bank. Sandwich-making and collection continues the last Thursday of the month for St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown. Christmas Cookie Kits are currently being assembled during the month of November for Marlborough Food Bank. The Christmas Giving Trees with tags will be up the weekend of Nov. 28-29, as the church enters the Advent season. 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.stjfchurch.org, or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church).

Gathering on the Green Continues Friendly Competition

By Toriana Williams

Marlborough's holiday spirit is about to shine bright once again, but keeping one of the town's favorite Christmas traditions alive takes a little help from the community.

Donations are needed to fund the fireworks at this year's Gathering on the Green, and the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department is asking to give what they can through the event's GoFundMe page at tinyurl.com/2wtmx938.

This year's fireworks display will cost about $7,500, and every dollar helps make the magic happen.

"If it wasn't for donations, we wouldn't have the fireworks," said Fire Captain Kyle Szemreylo. The fire department pays for the show, but it depends on the generosity of the public to cover the cost.

So, before grabbing your mittens and heading out for a night of Christmas fun, consider making a donation. After all, a little community kindness helps put a whole lot of sparkle in the winter sky.

Speaking of which, the 11th annual Gathering on the Green will take place on Friday, Dec. 5, beginning at 4:30 p.m. The evening will kick off with a parade of decorated fire trucks from towns across Connecticut. And while the lights, music and fireworks are sure to bring plenty of cheer, there is one special prize that may steal the show: the Marlborough Cup!

Think of it as a little like the Stanley Cup, but with more Christmas lights and a lot more fire trucks.

Beginning last year, the trophy is now awarded each year to the town with the best Christmas-decorated fire truck. The winning town gets its name forever memorialized on the cup and receives bragging rights until the next year's contest.

Last year, the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department took home the prize with a truck that wowed the crowd. Its decorations even included a chimney with a smoke machine.

Now, Columbia is coming back to defend its title.

"They're coming back for it again. It's turned into quite the friendly competition; everybody enjoys it," said Szemreylo.

So far for this year, about 12 towns have signed up to participate, with hopes that even more will join. Last year, 15 or so departments took part. Szemreylo spoke of several evenings he's spent reaching out to other fire departments, sending hundreds of emails to invite them to the celebration.

The trucks will travel from as far away as Warehouse Point, Stonington and Chester. Each one will bring its own holiday style, and the judges will have the tough job of picking a winner.

"We picked non-biased people who will give their honest opinion on who has the best truck," said Szemreylo.

With so many creative firefighters taking part, the contest could be close.

During the parade, a student or two or a chosen family will have the special honor of lighting the town's Christmas tree. Fire Marshal Joe Asklar shared that they'll arrive in style aboard a vintage 1958 Mack fire truck, Engine No. 3.

Santa Claus will also make his grand entrance, of course. He'll be ready to greet children and families and pose for photos from about 5:15 to 6 p.m. The fireworks are expected to begin around 6 to 6:15 p.m., depending on the length of the Santa line and the evening's schedule.

There will also be plenty to enjoy while waiting for the sparks to go off!

The RHAM High School and Middle School choirs will fill the green with Christmas carols, a DJ will add to the festive sounds and the Knights of Columbus will hand out delicious, free popcorn. And what Christmas celebration is complete with the Mobile Volunteer Fire Department Women's Auxiliary's hot chocolate and cookies?

This year, there will also be holiday vendors selling Christmas ornaments and other themed items, along with food vendors offering something tasty to buy.

Best of all, the event is free and open to everyone. You don't even have to live in Marlborough to join in on the fun.

"Anybody can come. There's plenty of parking in the center of town," said Szemreylo.

Asklar hopes to see the green filled with families, friends and neighbors.

"We'd like as many guests as possible. It's our intent to fill the green with love and greetings and everybody else," he said.

It's easy to see how the event has grown into something special. What started as a tree lighting in the middle of town has blossomed into a full evening of holiday festivities.

Askler recalled when the first celebration was little more than a tree, a fire truck and quick gathering.

"We had a Christmas tree-lighting … and the fire department had one truck. We came in, and we lit the tree. I don't think it lasted for more than 10 minutes," he laughed.

Afterward, the firefighters wanted to give the town something more. That's when they came up with the idea of adding fireworks, pulled their money together and bought a mesmerizing display for residents.

From that small beginning, the event grew year after year.

Today, it now takes a big team to make everything happen. The fire department, Parks and Recreation, town crews, public safety teams and many other volunteers all play a part.

"Most of this is all volunteers. We all come together for this one night, and it makes it a lot of fun," said Szemreylo. "Everyone has a little role in this, and it's really cool. Everyone gives their time for this."

That's the spirit that makes Marlborough such a special place during the holidays. The town had even earned a spot in a Hallmark contest searching for America's most Christmassy town.

Szemreylo shared that the decorated homes, local businesses and holiday displays around town are reasons why Marlborough stands out. And the Gathering on the Green is another perfect example.

"Marlborough's a really special town," said Szemreylo.

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 RSVP is required for all special events.

Also, contact the senior center for a list of regularly occurring weekly and monthly programs, such as billiards, Mahjongg, chair massage, the monthly Cookbook Club, a 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.

Mahjongg Location: On the first Wednesday of each month, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Mahjongg will be held at Marlborough Bakery, 8 Independence Drive. All other Wednesdays of the month the game will be played, also from 1:30-3:30 p.m., at Fire House 2 on West Road. All skill levels are welcome. There is no fee to play, but players use 2026 Mahjongg cards, which they purchase on their own.

Birthday Club: November birthdays will be celebrated on Nov. 24 from 12:30-1:30 p.m.. with cake. Open to all friends and family. It does not have to be your birthday month to celebrate. However, if it is please RSVP.

Social Services: Energy Assistance: Heating (oil, electric, heat included in rent, propane, pellets, wood) assistance available through CEAP. Season runs through May 31, 2027. Income-based: household of 1/$48,714, household of 2/$63,703. Application assistance for residents 55+ through senior center.

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.

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.

Setback Tournament

There will be a Setback Tournament Friday, Nov. 20, at American Legion Post 197, 128 East Hampton Rd. Registration is at 6 p.m., and games start at 6:30 p.m.

This is a Round Robin-style tournament, and cost is $10 per person. Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place. There will be raffles and 50/50. All proceeds go to the ladies auxiliary.

For more information, call Sharon at 860-805-6917.

Concert at Arts Center

All are invited to November's 4th Friday at the Arts Café at Marlborough Arts Center – which this month will take place on the third Friday, Nov. 20.

The Hosmer Mountain Boys, a retro bluegrass band, will perform. Showtime is 7:30 p.m. and doors open at 7 p.m.

What is the connection to soda?

Banjo player, Simon Brogie, was born in a house a short walk away from Hosmer Mountain and the famous Hosmer Mountain Soda Company located in eastern Connecticut. As a young boy he told his parents that when he grew up, he would have a bluegrass band one day and name it "The Hosmer Mountain Boys."

Marlborough Arts Center is located at 231 North Main St. Tickets for the show are $15.

New Art Exhibit at Town Hall

The nonprofit Marlborough Arts Center (MAC) announces a new solo art exhibit of local artist Sherry Pratt-Totten at Town Hall, 26 N. Main St.

Pratt-Totten's paintings are now on display in the main hallway of the town hall this November and December as well as through January 2027.

Marlborough Arts Center presents three-month solo exhibitions for member artists in the Town Hall's main hallway.

For inquiries regarding Pratt-Totten's paintings, contact Barbara Lazzari in the Town Hall's tax collector's office, or contact Marlborough Arts Center at 860-467-6353 or info@marlborougharts.org.

Thrift Shop Holiday Open House

Second Blessings Thrift Shop, located at Marlborough Congregational Church, 35 South Main St., will hold its annual Holiday Open House Thanksgiving weekend Friday, Nov. 27 from noon to 3 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 28 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Light refreshments will be served, along with a free drawing.

Everything Christmas and winter will fill tables and shelves, all priced to sell. There will be a large assortment of vintage items, the church said, as well as jewelry, handbags, small furniture, children's books and toys, items for baking and decorating, and more.

The shop is open Fridays and Saturdays through Dec. 19 and will be closed in January. It reopens Friday, Feb. 5, 2027.

The shop accepts donations during shopping hours. Second Blessings sells year-round through eBay at bit.ly/MCCebay.

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Clean Audit, But Concerns Remain

By Toriana Williams

Marlborough received a clean opinion on its 2025 financial audit, but the town still has work to do to improve its financial controls, according to an auditor who spoke to the Board of Finance during its Nov. 16 meeting.

Leslie Zoll, principal with Clifton Larson Allen, the town's auditing firm, reported one continuous major weakness found in the town's financial procedures. The problem involves closing out the books at the end of the year and making sure income and expenses are recorded in the correct time period.

Town officials said they have already taken steps to fix that problem, which include new year-end checklists and more reviews of financial records.

The board also discussed a large building permit payment from a planned apartment complex, the town's savings balance and school budget updates.

Problem with Year-End Records

Zoll told the Board of Finance that the town received a clean opinion on its financial statements, and the federal and state programs that were tested also received clean opinions.

However, the audit found a material weakness in the town's financial controls that carried over from previous years.

The problem involved accounting adjustments for bills, expenses and grant money. Some items were not recorded in the correct year which forced the editors to make changes to the financial statements.

Zoll said the town needs stronger steps to close its books before sending records to the auditors.

"It's important that you have year-end close procedures in place," she said.

Zoll explained that grant money can be tricky because the town may spend money on a project before receiving payment from the state. The town must know when the work was done and when the money can officially be counted as income.

Board members then questioned how such large adjustments could happen for a second year in a row. They also asked who reviews financial entries before they are approved.

Town officials explained that journal entries are now received by two people.

Zoll agreed that having another person check the work would provide an important safeguard.

The audit also included recommendations for a town conflict of interest policy and better records that would show vendors receiving federal grant money are not barred from doing business with the government.

The federal audit found one minor compliance issue because the town did not have all the required vendor checks documented.

Changes Underway

Town officials told the board that several improvements are already in place.

A new year-end checklist has been created, which includes reviewing unpaid bills, checking when expenses belong on the books and making sure grant income is recorded correctly.

The town has also started checking vendors against a federal website before approving purchases using federal grant money. The conflict-of-interest policy is still being worked on.

Zoll said she couldn't yet say whether the town's financial controls were stronger because the next audit year had yet to be completed.

The board also asked why the town could receive a clean audit while still containing a major weakness.

Zoll explained that the clean opinion means the financial statements are correct after the needed changes are made, but it doesn't mean every financial control is working as it should.

Building Permit Brings Unexpected Money

The board discussed a large building permit for a planned apartment complex.

The permit brought in more than $100,000 in revenue, which helps the town's finances. Its building permit revenue had reached to about $180,000, according to members.

Officials said they wouldn't count on that same money coming in next year, though.

The board also discussed the town's reported budget surplus. Members noted that the final numbers were much higher than earlier estimates.

However, officials explained that the budget includes money taken from the town's fund balance. That money is not new income, so using it makes the budget look different from the town's actual financial position.

Board Wants Clearer Savings Goal

The town's fund balance was another major topic. Board members asked how much money the town should keep in savings compared to its yearly budget. Different numbers have been discussed over the years, and members said they would prefer a clearer goal.

Officials said they would prepare an analysis of the town's savings and review the current fund balance policy.

They also noted that bond rating companies look at how much money a town keeps in savings. Officials said they want to see that savings are not failing year after year and that the town is not regularly using savings to pay for everyday costs.

The board explained that a strong fund balance can help the town handle unexpected costs, such as a winter with heavy snow and increased fuel use.

School Budget Discussed

RHAM is expected to finish the year about $63,000 under budget, according to the Board of Finance. The savings were found mainly due to staff turnover and jobs that hadn't been filled yet.

Marlborough Board of Education, meanwhile, reported a possible $59,456 shortage in salary costs, which are tied to additional staff positions needed by the school. Officials planned to use money from Marlborough's 2% non-lapsing fund to cover the shortage.

Gathering on the Green Coming

The Gathering on the Green will be held on Saturday, Dec. 5, from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

All are invited to this festive night celebrating the holiday season. Santa will come to town to visit all the good boys and girls of Marlborough. The gathering will feature a lighted fire truck parade, tree-lighting, pictures with Santa, holiday games and activities, refreshments, music, and a fireworks display.

A collection box will be available for anyone wishing to donate non-perishable food items to the food bank. The Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department has started a GoFundMe page for residents wishing to donate to the fireworks show. Checks can also be mailed to:

MVFD, P.O. Box 237, Marlborough, CT 06447.

Event Timeline: 4:30-5 p.m., holiday activities, refreshments, snacks; 5-5:15 p.m., Lighted Fire Truck Parade and Arrival of Santa; 5:15 p.m., Santa Lights Tree; 5:15-6:15 p.m., Pictures with Santa & Christmas Carols with RHAM choir; 6:15 p.m., Estimated time for Fireworks.

For more information, call Marlborough Parks & Recreation at 860-295-6203.





★ *Portland Food Bank, cont. from page 1*

hiccups (one street that got missed and had to be picked up late), the mood was joyful, and the haul was a big one.

Mainetti, who now lives in Florida and returns every year for the food drive, said the event was worth the trip, and all the work to put it together, every year. The event had come a long way since its first year, when her mother-in-law and her kids had collected just ten bags.

"This food drive is very important to me," she said, adding that she doesn't see herself quitting in the next few years.

"I'm grateful for everyone that helps from the town of Portland," she said.





Recreation Commission Events and Programs

The Andover Recreation Commission has announced the following pieces of news. For more information, contact Meghan Lally, Recreation Commission chair, at AndoverRec@andoverct.org or 203-313-4104.

Andover Youth Basketball (AYB) Volunteers Needed!: Are you a current or former basketball player looking to give back to your community? AYB is looking for high school students and adults to volunteer for 1-2 hours on Saturdays from December through February to run the score clock and/or manage the game book during games. All adult volunteers must agree to a background check and interview by the AYB subcommittee. High school volunteers will be supervised by an onsite adult coordinator from the AYB program. If interested, email the AYB Coordinator at AndoverCTYouthBasketball@gmail.com.

Recreation Commission Meetings: The commission meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. in the Town Hall Community Room as well as via Zoom. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

Republican Registrar to Retire

The Republican registrar of voters (ROV) is retiring from the position on Dec. 31, and the Republican Town Committee is looking for a replacement. The ROV works with the secretary of the state to provide up-to-date voting information.

If you are a retiree, or an at home parent who wants to earn extra money this position may be for you, the Republican Town Committee said. The current term is an elected one.

Salary is paid quarterly. You would also be paid for training, conventions, travel, and town meetings.

Since the registrar's last day will be Dec. 31, the RTC said it would be ideal to have someone starting to learn by Nov. 30 if possible.

Call Republican Town Committee Chair Carol Barton at 860-230-5854 for more information.

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 9-9:30 a.m. **Senior Pantry** is on the opposite Wednesdays, from 8:30-10 a.m.

AA Meetings: Saturdays and Mondays, 7 p.m.

Sonshine Stampers: Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m.

Thanksgiving Dinner: Thanksgiving Day at 3 p.m. Bring a dish to share if you can. RSVP ASAP by leaving a message on the church answering machine. Admission is free; donations accepted.

Christmas Fair: Saturday, Dec. 5, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Tree-Lighting and Carol Sing: Saturday, Dec. 12, 6 p.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 – including full program descriptions – and to register for events, 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 or stop by the center if **interested in volunteering.**

Transportation: Call 860-498-2326 to schedule transportation. Provide a one-week notice for all appointment requests. Transportation is available for town events and meetings, voting, senior events, group shopping and medical appointments. Transportation available to Andover seniors, veterans, and disabled are welcome. The driver shifts end at 5 p.m. If assistance is required, passengers may bring an aid (age 18 or older).

Social Services: Need help finding resources or services? Assistance and referrals are available through Senior/Community Center staff. Stop by or call the center to learn more.

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.

Andover Community & Senior Center Giving Tree: Call 860-742-7305 ext. 4510 if you are a family in need this holiday season or if you would be interested in donating a gift/s.

Friday Lunch Bunch: Nov. 20, Gina Marie's Restaurant; Dec. 4, Georgia's Restaurant in Hebron and a stop at Hurst Farm Country Store.

Changes to Medicare: Friday, Nov. 20, 1 p.m. Melanie Lambert from the Center for Medicare Advocacy will help people understand the 2027 changes to Medicare. She will be available after the presentation to answer individual questions. All are welcome.

Grocery Shopping: Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. Manchester Nov. 24 and Dec. 8, and Willimantic Dec. 2. Transportation is available.

Beginner Quilting with a Twist: Mondays, Nov. 23 and 30, 3-6 p.m. Cost is $10 per class. Call the center for fabric requirements and to sign up.

Changes to Medicare: Friday, Nov. 20, 1 p.m. Melanie Lambert from the Center for Medicare Advocacy will help people understand the 2027 changes to Medicare. She will be available after the presentation to answer individual questions. All are welcome.

Haircare with Helen: Monday, Nov. 30, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Haircuts are $22, or free for Andover veterans. Call the center for an appointment.

Holiday Light Spectacular: Friday, Dec. 11, 5:30 p.m. Sign up and join the senior center on a trip to Renschler Field to drive through its Holiday Light Spectacular. Limited to 12 people.

Bingo & Basket Raffle

Andover Congregational Church, located at 359 Route 6, will hold a Bingo & Basket Raffle night on Friday, Nov. 20, 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 for more information.

Stuff the Fire Truck Toy Drive

The Andover Volunteer Fire Department will be collecting new unwrapped toys for boys and girls of all ages on Saturday, Dec. 5, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., at the firehouse on School Road.

Gift cards are also welcome.

Christmas Fair & Bake Sale

Andover Congregational Church, 359 Route 6, will hold its annual Christmas Fair & Bake Sale on Saturday, Dec. 5, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

They will have vendors, baked goods and Grandma's Attic items.

History Museum Open Saturday

The Andover Historical Society will open its Museum of Andover History Saturday, Nov. 21, from 2-4 p.m.

New items are continuously being added to the display. The museum is located in the Old Town Hall on Monument Lane.

YOUR AD
Should Be Here!
CALL US AT:
860-633-4691

From the State Senator's Desk...


Rahman

As the holiday season is about to begin, it's a time for us to be grateful for what we have, reflect on the past year and enjoy time with our loved ones. However, this year, while we plan to give thanks, we cannot ignore those in our community who need help.

With Thanksgiving just days away and winter holidays not far behind, there are a number of families who are struggling around us under high prices. These are our colleagues, coworkers, friends and neighbors, and without them, our town wouldn't be the same.

This year, those of us with the means to donate and support our friends and neighbors struggling to make ends meet this Thanksgiving and holiday season should do so.

I know firsthand how important this is. Last year, I visited food pantries and nonprofits across our region, meeting with leaders, seeing the important work they perform every day and making donations to help their operations. It was meaningful to learn more about the people who run our community support programs like the Andover Food Pantry and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to give back, not as a legislator but as a human being.

If you are looking to support others, you can donate on the Andover Food Pantry, which is operated out of the Historic Meeting House at the First Congregational Church, 359 Route 6, with a parking lot located on Long Hill Road. All food and monetary donations are accepted directly at the pantry; you can also mail donations to P.O. Box 55, Andover CT 06232.

Donations to the state's primary food assistance nonprofit, Connecticut Foodshare, will also benefit members of our community, especially as it operates the Mobile Foodshare program delivering food to people in need across the state. You can donate directly at www.ctfoodshare.org; Connecticut Foodshare will also operate a number of Thanksgiving food drives across the state as Thanksgiving comes closer.

If you make physical food donations, classic Thanksgiving staples that are nonperishable are preferred, as are canned pastas, mac and cheese, rice, peanut butter and packaged snacks. Cleaning and kitchen items, like dish soap and detergent, and hygiene items, like deodorant, toothbrushes and soap, will also be welcomed.

As winter nears, we're facing high grocery and heating costs, which are hitting some of our neighbors hard. Whether you can give a lot or just a little, anything you can do will surely help our someone in your community. Small gestures and efforts matter.

If you need help yourself, please contact local food pantries and call 211 or visit 211ct.org, which can connect you to aid programs.

I'm grateful to everyone making sure our friends and neighbors aren't going without, and I wish everyone in our community a wonderful Thanksgiving and bright, merry holidays.

State Sen. MD Rahman
D-4th District

Note: The 4th State Senate District covers Andover, Bolton, Glastonbury and Manchester.

Town Clerk Open House, Senior Center Meet & Greet

The Town of Andover invites residents to the second annual Town Clerk's Office Open House on Monday, Nov. 23, from 1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Andover Town Hall, 17 School Rd.

Also on that same day, between the same hours, there will be a Meet & Greet at the Andover Community and Senior Center, 25 School Rd.

First held last year following Roberta Dougherty's election as Andover's Town Clerk, the Town Clerk's Office Open House provided an opportunity for residents to meet their new Town Clerk, learn about the services offered by the office, and connect with one another. This year's event continues that tradition of welcoming residents and building connections within the community.

Residents are invited to stop by, say hello, and enjoy light refreshments while learning more about the services provided by the town clerk's office. Dougherty will answer questions.

Meanwhile, the Andover Community and Senior Center will also welcome visitors for a Meet & Greet with the center staff. Residents will have an opportunity to meet the staff, tour the center, see the new senior transportation van, and learn more about the programs and services available. Light refreshments will also be served at the center.

Basketpalooza, Quilt Raffle Coming

The Andover Friends of the Library group is preparing for this year's Basketpalooza fundraiser – and is looking for help!

If you'd like to donate a themed basket or gift card to an area business, all donations should be brought to the Andover Public Library by Wednesday, Nov. 25, at 3 p.m., as Basketpalooza starts Dec. 1. The drawings for all baskets will be held on Monday, Dec. 21, at 5 p.m. If you have any questions, please contact the library at 860-742-7428. The Andover Public Library is located at 355 Route 6, Andover.

Also, while you're dropping off items and/or purchasing Basketpalooza tickets, you're invited to check out the handmade quilt that is being raffled for the Andover Friends of the Library. It was handcrafted by Library Friend Jean Mamonas.

Quilt raffle tickets are $2 each or 3/$5, and the drawing will be held during the intermission of the Friends' presentation of Christmas in New England – a free, festive holiday concert that will be held on Friday, Dec. 18. More information on the Christmas in New England concert will be announced soon.

Caregiver Support Group to Meet

Losing a loved one is difficult enough without having to navigate a mountain of paperwork, legal forms, financial accounts, and other administrative details. Who do you turn to when you simply don't know where to begin?

The Andover Caregivers Support Group will address that question at its December meeting on Thursday, Dec. 3, at 7 p.m. at the Andover Public Library, 355 Route 6. The meeting will run for approximately one hour, and the public is invited to attend.

Guest speaker will be Ed Knight of Transference, whose tagline is "Your Partner in Estate & POA Paperwork."

Transference specializes in helping families navigate the administrative work associated with Probate Court (preparing court petitions, forms, and other required paperwork), Asset & Account Management (organizing estate documents, re-registering accounts, and coordinating with financial institutions), and Professional Liaison (working with an estate attorney or CPA to help make sure important details are addressed).

This meeting will have a second speaker from October Kitchen in Manchester. October Kitchen is a professional chef delivery service that offers a wide variety of meals catering to common dietary restrictions such as diabetic-friendly, heart-friendly, sodium-sensitive, wheat-free, and more. All meals are fully cooked, so consumers only need to heat and eat them. October Kitchen offers fresh new menus every week and a curated collection of flash-frozen favorites. The staff cooks fresh meals daily.

The meeting will conclude with its usual "Show and Tell" segment, where participants are encouraged to share tips, tools or gadgets that assist in caregiving.

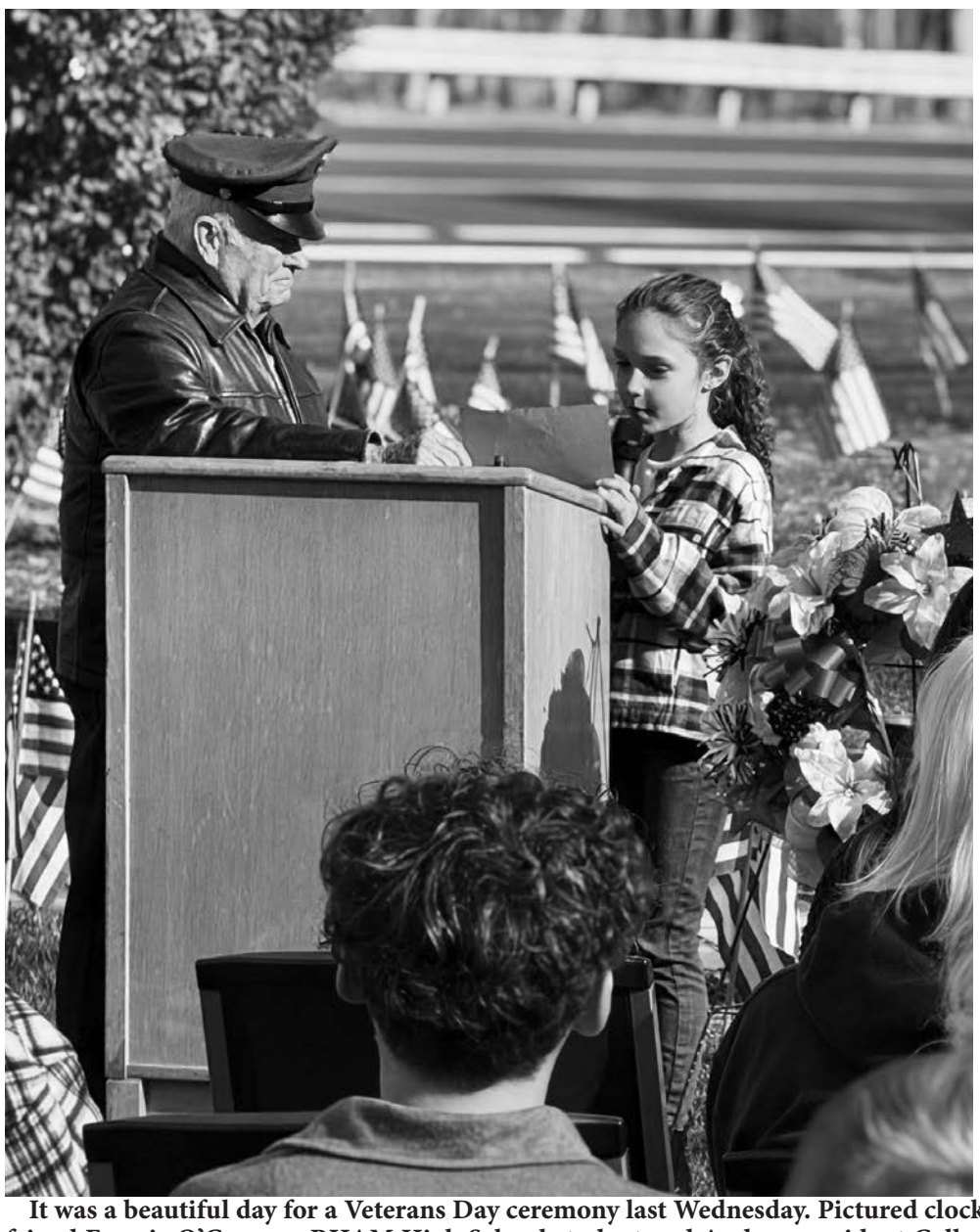
Caregiving can be a demanding journey, often accompanied by exhaustion, isolation, fear, and stress. This support group is designed to bring together individuals who are traveling the same road, offering a space to share experiences, learn about resources, and connect with others who understand firsthand the challenges of caregiving.

Whether you have recently stepped into the role of caregiver or have been providing care for years, this group aims to foster a sense of community, reassurance, and encouragement.

For more information, call co-host Dianne Grenier at 860-742-3033 or Cathy Palazzi at 860-916-6122.









It was a beautiful day for a Veterans Day ceremony last Wednesday. Pictured clockwise from top left are Andover scouts Orion Elia and Hunter Parvenski-Newman and friend Emmie O'Connor; RHAM High School student and Andover resident Cally Kopp performing Taps; U.S. Army veteran George Kitchin, who presided as the day's Master of Ceremonies; and Evie Lewis, an Andover Elementary School student who is shown reading a poem honoring veterans, with assistance from Kitchin. For additional photos, see the *Rivereast* Facebook page.

Veterans Day Ceremony Honors Those That Served

On Wednesday, Nov. 11, at 11 a.m., Andover residents carried on a long-time tradition of gathering to honor Veterans at the local Veterans Monument Park.

The ceremony began with eleven rings of a bell, intended to commemorate the end of World War I, which was thought at the time to be the "war to end all wars." (WWI fighting officially ceased at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.)

Andover resident and U.S. Army veteran George Kitchin once again returned as the master of ceremonies. After a brief prayer, the Andover Scouts, led by Hudson Lorentz, Logan Parvenski-Newman and Ellone Elia, posted the colors and placed a wreath in honor of all Veterans and their service. Resident Paula King performed the National Anthem while Brad Kelle, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, gave the keynote address.

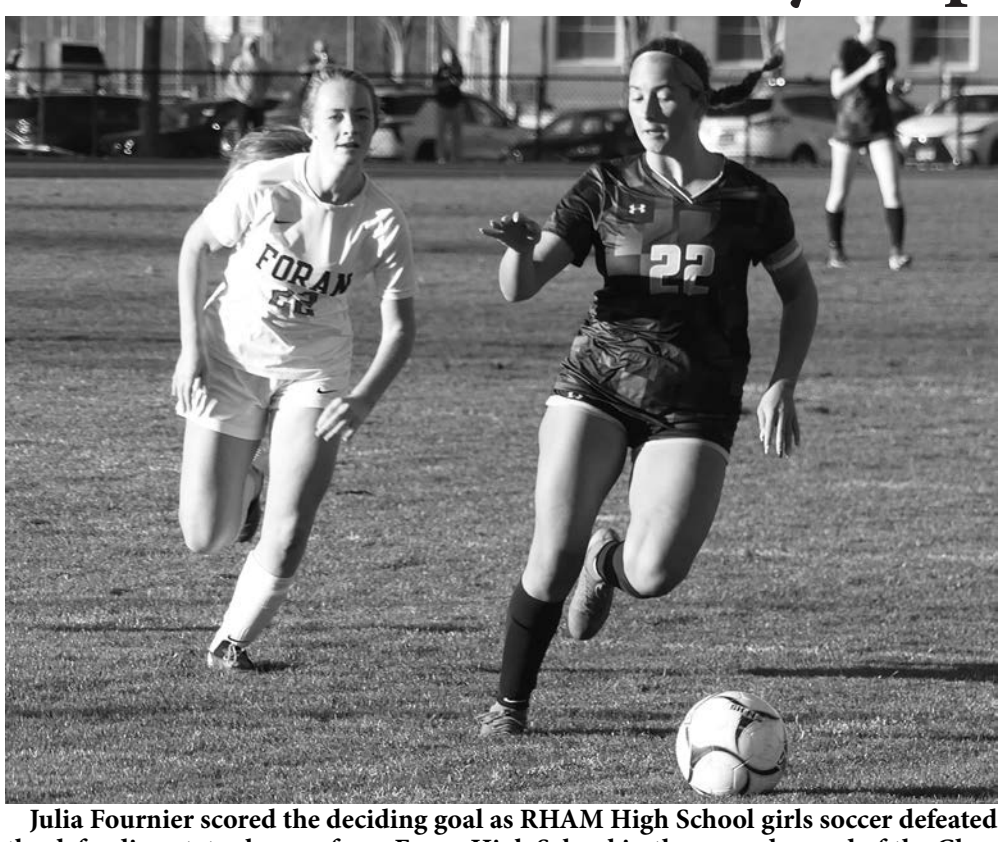
Kelle shared a history of the holiday and implored residents to honor Veterans by exercising our collective privilege to participate in a democratic government. He encouraged attendees to "stay abreast of local, regional and national politics, get involved, and foremost, strive to maintain peace."

Andover Elementary Students were also on hand to recognize those that served. Ethel Grant and Evelyn Lewis read poetry acknowledging the courage and bravery of those who serve, and Robert ("Buddy") Stack read a passionate essay emphasizing the need for veterans in this country – and the need for local communities to support veterans upon their return from service.

A dozen veterans, representing various branches of the military, were in attendance and received a standing ovation from the crowd for their service. The ceremony concluded with a performance of Taps by RHAM High School students Eli Greenhouse and Cally Kopp in remembrance of those Veterans who lost their lives while serving on behalf of our country.

The event was organized by the Recreation Commission with support from the Andover Scouts (led by Scout Master Michelle Lorentz), Andover Veterans representatives (Susan Camoroda and Jack Botti), and the Andover Public Works Department. The ceremony was recorded by the Community Voice Channel and can be viewed on the CVC website and YouTube channel.

Seniors Pave Way, Raptors Defend Home Field



Julia Fournier scored the deciding goal as RHAM High School girls soccer defeated the defending state champs from Foran High School in the second round of the Class M state tourney on Nov. 10.



Morgan McCarthy dished out what turned out to be the game-winning assists in the team's 1-0 win over Foran at RHAM High School last Tuesday.

By Josh Howard

Following a 10-win regular season, RHAM High School girls soccer continued to impress in the state tourney with a pair of wins on their home field.

The Raptors earned a bye in the first round of the Class M state tournament before they ousted the defending state champs from Foran High School in the second round last Tuesday (Nov. 10) and then eliminated Plainville High School last Saturday (Nov. 14).

Both state tourney triumphs took place at RHAM High School.

In the second-round victory over the Lions of Foran, senior Julia Fournier scored the decisive goal with 5:35 remaining in regulation.

Fournier was set up by Morgan McCarthy, a senior who fired a pass from the right side of the field to a cutting Fournier, who finished with a blast from the left side.

"It was a little stressful, but I knew I had to make it because that was our chance," Fournier said of the winning shot. "We just had to believe and believe in each other, and we did that."

Fournier's game-winner was a perfectly designed play that started with senior goalie Mia Hall who booted the ball ahead to Liana Fox, who advanced the ball past midfield.

Once McCarthy got the ball, she thought about taking the shot before seeing Fournier out of the corner of her eye and sending a cross to her cutting teammate.

Prior to the goal, McCarthy noted that the Raptors tried to stay relaxed as the teams battled for over 74 minutes of scoreless soccer.

"We just tried to be positive and try your hardest," explained McCarthy. "This could have been our last game, so we just had to do it for each other."

Head coach Rich Veilleux thought his squad was executing throughout the contest and just needed to finished, noting, "We were playing the game we want to play. We just had to keep doing what we were doing and something was going to fall."

The second-round victory advanced the Raptors to the state quarterfinals where they outlasted the Blue Devils of Plainville (3-0) in overtime.

Hall held a second straight tourney opponent scoreless, tallying the team's 10th shutout this season

Fox and Giuliana McLaughlin each had a goal and an assist, while McCarthy also found the back of the net as the program reached the state semifinals for the first time since 2017.

A season ago, RHAM snuck into the state tourney before upsetting two opponents before falling to Foran.

Veilleux said his group returned with a "chip on our shoulder" in 2026 and have delivered a season to remember thanks to a strong Class of 2027.

Fournier, McCarthy, Fox, and Ellie Sementa are team captains, heading a large senior class which also features Hall, Lainey Asklar, Cally Kopp and Rebecca Koonankeil.

"These kids have worked really hard," said Veilleux, who lost a pair of all-conference to graduation a year ago. "The seniors had some big shoes to fill and they've exceeded that."

A year ago, the team suffered a pair of conference defeats to East Catholic (6-0 and 2-0) and another to E.O. Smith (2-1) in the regular season only to flip the script this fall by blanking East Catholic (2-0) and doubling up E. O. Smith (4-2).

"This season has been awesome – the energy has been great" said Fournier. "We've really bonded as a team."

Veilleux said they approached this season by treating each game as a new opportunity to improve, adding that his seniors have been on the forefront of that mission.

"They mean the world to me," noted Veilleux. "I've known them for years and they're almost like my own kids. That's what we do here, it's one big family."

Girl Scouts Holiday Craft Fair

The RHAM Girl Scouts are busy working on their unique, handmade items that will be available for purchase at the 32nd annual Holiday Craft Fair, scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 5, from 9 a.m.-noon, in the Marlborough Elementary School community room.

The fair is open to the public and has no admission fee. All items are priced at $10 or under, and each purchase comes with free gift wrapping.

The craft fair also allows children to independently shop for gifts for their favorite people and pets. Young shoppers can bring a list of who to buy for and some money, and older Girl Scouts will be available to assist them with gift selections and financial transactions. Family members can watch from afar or relax in the cafeteria while their children pick out the perfect gifts.

There will also be a bake sale in the cafeteria with a selection of baked items and free drinks for shoppers to enjoy. This year, the Girl Scouts will also collect non-perishable donations for the Hebron and Marlborough food banks.

All craft fair proceeds go directly to RHAM Girl Scout troops for troop activities and community service projects.

AHM News & Notes

AHM Youth & Family Services has announced the following pieces of news. For more information, call 860-228-9488 or visit ahmyouth.org.

Immediate Daytime Openings Available: AHM Clinical Services has immediate openings available during the day for individual and/or family therapy for children, adolescents, and young adults up to age 26 to address social, emotional and/or behavioral issues. Call for an appointment. Most major insurances are accepted as a qualified method of payment, and there is a scholarship available for financial assistance if needed. For more information, visit ahmyouth.org/programs-services/clinical-services.

Giving Tuesday: Tuesday, Dec. 1. This is a day where people all over the world come together to support their favorite nonprofits. AHM's goal is to raise $10,000 to support youth and family mental health through its outpatient clinical program, student support services at all schools in the towns it serves, as well as outreach through its HERE 4 YOU mental health initiative.

Here 4 You Podcast: Three new episodes of AHM's podcast have been released. This is a show that provides viewers with information and support on a variety of health and wellness topics. The podcast's newest episodes include "Transitioning Your Child Back to School," "What Do Vape Devices Look Like," and "Mobile Crisis Support for Youth in CT." Tune in on Spotify and YouTube.

Fall Programs Open: Registration is open for AHM's fall programs. There are many activities lined up for all ages, including theater, macrame, messy hands, and more. Visit ahmyouth.org to view the programs and sign up.

HEALTHCARE SERVICES



Better Dental HEALTH
A Practice For Optimal Dental Fitness
by George M. Mantikas, DMD

INFLAMED GUMS

Inflammation of the gums, also known as gingivitis, is usually caused by an overgrowth of plaque and a bacterial infection. If left untreated, gingivitis can turn into periodontitis, a more serious gum infection that can lead to tooth loss. Plaque is a thin layer of bacteria that's constantly forming on teeth. Gums become infected when food and plaque get trapped under the gumline in the "sulcus," the small space between the gums and teeth. When plaque extends below the gumline into the sulcus, the gums become inflamed and gingivitis results. If left untreated, gingivitis can cause the gums to separate from the teeth, leading to progressive infection, soft tissue and bone injury, loose teeth, and tooth loss.

It is estimated that more than half of all people over age 18 are in the early stages of gingivitis. After age 35, about three out of four adults are in some way affected. Avoid inflamed, infected gums and the need for serious treatment. Protect yourself and your family by practicing conscientious home care, having regular checkups, and eating a healthy diet. We'll help too, because we care almost as much as you do about the health of your teeth and gums.

P.S. In addition to inadequate oral hygiene, other risk factors for gingivitis are smoking, diabetes, broken fillings, crooked teeth, chemotherapy treatments, and certain medications.

George M. Mantikas, DMD, PC
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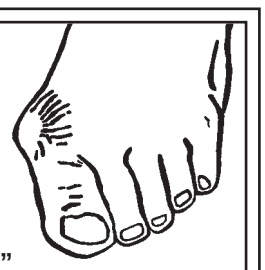
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Stuart L. Jablon, D.P.M.



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Obituaries

East Hampton

Rose Mary Evans



Rose Mary Evans, 78, of Middletown, formerly of East Hampton, passed away Tuesday, Nov. 10, at Middlesex Hospital, surrounded by her family. Born July 25, 1948, in Bangor, Maine, she was the daughter of the late Charles and Genevieve (Jones) Evans.

Rose graduated from East Hampton High School and had worked as a waitress for most of her career. She is survived by her children, Edward Markham Jr. of Middletown, Lisa Cansdale and her partner Scott DeMay of East Hampton; a brother, Charlie Evans of East Hampton; a sister, Donna Read and husband Robert of East Hampton; her three grandchildren, Amanda Fargione (Frank), Edward Markham III, Elexia Markham; and her three great-granddaughters, Kyla, Angelica and Aliena.

She was predeceased by her sister, Nancy Strong.

The family held a Celebration of Life on Thursday, Nov. 19, at the Marlborough American Legion, 128 East Hampton Rd., Marlborough, CT 06447.

To leave online condolences, please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Daniel Robert Aiello



Daniel Robert Aiello, 42, of East Hampton, husband of Jezinia (Rodriguez) Aiello, passed away Saturday, Nov. 7, in East Hampton. Born in Hartford Nov. 8, 1983, he was the son of Robert Aiello and the late Rosemary (Feeney) Aiello.

Daniel was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and was a 2002 graduate of East Hampton High School. Daniel was a graduate of the former New England Tech and a licensed HVAC technician and had recently begun as an HVAC instructor at Lincoln Technical Institute in New Britain.

Besides his wife and father, Daniel is survived by his son, Julian Daniel Aiello; his daughter, Lailah Rose Rodriguez; his brother and sister-in-law, Matthew and Kara Aiello; his father-in-law and mother-in-law, Victor Sr. and Lourdes Rodriguez; his brothers-in-law, Victor Rodriguez Jr., Elias Rodriguez; nephews, Ian and Nathan Aiello; and nieces, Alivia and Eliana Rodriguez.

He was predeceased by his brother Patrick Aiello.

Friends and family called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Wednesday, Nov. 18. Funeral services were held Thursday, Nov. 19, at 10 a.m., in the funeral home, followed by burial in Lakeview Cemetery.

To leave online condolences, please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Pauline Anne Ziegler



Pauline Anne (Dalmasso) Ziegler, our cherished mom, aunt, sister, friend and Mema, passed on Wednesday, Nov. 4, surrounded by her family.

She was born on Feb. 22, 1941 in New York City to her Italian parents Albino & Eugenie Dalmasso, who arrived separately through Ellis Island and met at a speakeasy in the city. She spent summers at her grandmother's house in Rocky Hill, where she would meet her first husband, Roy Spaulding. Together they had four children, John, Sheri, William and Jennifer, and moved to East Hampton to raise their kids.

After their divorce, Pauline would marry the love of her life Ziggy, and spend many years of traveling, boating and enjoying each other's company. They visited their special island of Vinalhaven, Maine every summer which became a family destination for us, full of amazing memories around a table full of lobster. Pauline & Ziggy spent winters in Florida for a while, enjoying the warmer weather in the south and coming home to us in the spring.

Pauline loved family gatherings above all, as well as gardening, cooking and decorating. Her home is like stepping into a designer magazine, full of special things curated by her throughout the years. Her sense of style never waned, having arranged several bouquets and centerpieces in her home in the last month.

Our mom was employed for more than 25 years as the buyer & manager of the curtain department at The Marlborough Country Barn, where many customers will remember her help choosing just the right window dressings for their space. She happily retired and then worked alongside her daughter Sheri at her shop Willow in downtown East Hampton. Mom was also there to help Jennifer decorate at both of her restaurants, designing the floral wall last year at The 1851 in Cromwell.

Pauline is already missed immensely by her two daughters, Sheri Spaulding of East Hampton and Jennifer Marozzi (husband Heath) of East Hampton; stepdaughter Scarlet Street (husband Ed); grandchildren Todd Spaulding (wife Heaven), Megan Spaulding (fiancée Cameron), Jayden Miranda (husband Omar), Maya, Macy and Mark Marozzi; great-grandchildren Parker & Aurora Spaulding, Kaya & Kora Schultz and Lionel Miranda; brother Edmond Dalmasso (wife Sue) and sister Carol Keyloun (husband Victor); and many loving nieces and nephews.

She is predeceased by her husband, Richard (Zig) Ziegler, and her two sons, John and William Spaulding.

In lieu of flowers, we'd love for you to plant a tree or perennial in your yard in honor of Pauline. She enjoyed being in her yard more than anything to feel connected to her boys and her gorgeous gardens. There will simply never be another like her and our lives are forever changed. We will host a Night to Remember Pauline at a later date for close friends & family.

Until we meet again, Mommy.

Colchester

Stanley J. Brym Jr.
Oct. 7, 1933 – Nov. 8, 2026



Stanley J. Brym Jr., 93, of Torrington, passed away peacefully Sunday, Nov. 8, with his daughter Marli and her husband, Taras, by his side.

Born in Jamaica, Queens, New York, Stan moved to Connecticut and graduated from Crosby High School in Waterbury in 1951. Known to classmates as "Stash," he was president of the Rifle Club and Science Club, treasurer of the German Club, and a member of the Math Club. Teachers and friends remembered Stan as the boy who knew all the answers in chemistry and math. In his free time, he could usually be found hunting.

Undecided between electrical and aeronautical engineering, Stan ultimately chose electrical engineering and earned his degree from the University of Connecticut College of Engineering in 1955. At UConn, he was inducted into the Tau Beta Pi and Eta Kappa Nu honor societies and was active in the Joint Student Branch of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers and the Institute of Radio Engineers. He enjoyed fencing as part of physical education and was a legendary practical joker among his classmates – stories he loved retelling to his family for decades. A true genius in every sense of the word, he was invited to join Mensa while still in college but humbly declined.

In 1964, Stan briefly left industry to teach physics at Hopkins Grammar School, a college-preparatory school in New Haven now known as Hopkins School, before returning to engineering the following year. He later earned a Master of Science in Management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1971. Over a long and successful career in research and development, he was awarded several patents, including for a water purification system he designed. Never one to slow down, Stan launched his own consulting firm, Brym Associates, after retiring, with his wife, Arlene, helping him run the business by managing all of the bookkeeping and administrative work. As a licensed professional engineer, he specialized in the forensic failure analysis of electrical equipment and appliances and occasionally appeared in court as an expert witness.

Aviation was one of Stan's great passions. He held both a private pilot's certificate and a glider rating and owned a Cessna 120, one of the first planes he flew. He took special joy in flying his daughters from Johnny Cake Airport in Harwinton whenever he could. Together with Arlene, he was a longtime member of the Torrington Gun Club and competed enthusiastically in shooting events. An inveterate tinkerer, he fixed nearly everything in and around the house – and more than a few cars – though duct tape remained a trusted tool for the smaller jobs. He was also an avid sports-car enthusiast who competed in 1950s road rallies in his Morgan.

Stan and Arlene shared a deep love of dogs. Over the years, they welcomed Great Danes, Weimaraners, and Dobermans into their home. Their final companion, Rusty (Honey Bear), a rescued Doberman, was cherished like another child.

Stan lived a full, adventurous life marked by curiosity, fearlessness, and abundant spunk. He continued sharing his many stories right up to his final month. He is survived by his beloved wife of 65 years, Arlene; his daughter Marli, her husband Taras Rudko and their daughter Arianna; and his daughter Shanda and her husband Jim Proulx.

Stanley J. Brym Jr., known as Stan or Stash, will be remembered as a brilliant engineer, a devoted husband and father, a skilled pilot, and a man who lived every day with energy and wonder.

Visitation will be held on Friday, Dec. 11, from 4 to 6 p.m. A memorial service will follow at 6 p.m. at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial will take place on Saturday, Dec. 12, at 10 a.m., at New Saint Joseph's Cemetery, 945 Hamilton Ave., Waterbury.

Colchester

Marie Gagnon



Marie Alice Gilberte Gagnon, formerly of Colchester, died peacefully Saturday, Nov. 14, at Complete Care Kimberly Hall North in Windsor, where she had been living, at the age of 90.

Alice was born Dec. 6, 1935, in Madawaska, Maine, to the late Lawrence and Antoinette (Poirier) Savoie. She was married first to James Gagnon, who predeceased her, and later to Raymond Rock, who died in 2013.

Alice retired after a long, successful career as a bookkeeper in the insurance industry and in 1990, moved to Colchester to be closer to her family. A devout Catholic, she was a communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester. In her free time, Alice enjoyed gardening, being in the kitchen, helping out with the church, birdwatching, solving word Jumble puzzles, and creating beautiful handmade sewing items. She even created her own wedding dress. Her great sense of humor and wittiness will forever be missed and unmatched. She will be sadly missed and always remembered with love by her family and all who

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RE11-6-26



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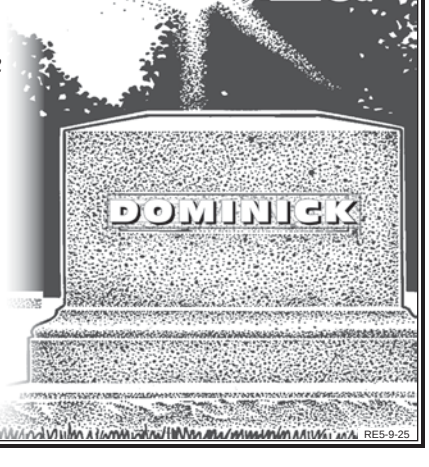

RE5-9-25

Obituaries

knew her.

She leaves her son, Michael Gagnon and his wife Amanda of Bayville, N.J.; three grandchildren, Sarah Buscetto and husband Mark R. Buscetto, Deborah Santee and Cassandrah Gagnon; four great-grandchildren, Kiersten, MJ, Megan and Molly and many extended family members and friends. Alice was the middle child of 10 siblings, including Gabrielle, Aline, Patricia, Jackie, Louise, Marcella, Lawrence Jr., Peter, and Guy.

A memorial service and celebration of life will be held at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, on Sunday, Dec. 13, with visiting hours from noon-2 p.m., followed by a memorial service at 2 p.m. at the funeral home. Burial will be private.

To share online condolences or a story about Alice, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

James McKinley Warren



James McKinley Warren, of Colchester, passed away at Middlesex Hospital Thursday, Nov. 12. He was 88 years old. Jim was born in Hartford on April 14, 1938, to the late Louis and Anna Mae (Wiggins) Warren. Jim graduated from East Hartford High School. He then went on to serve with the U.S. Marine Corps.

Jim married the love of his life, Nancy Hummell. She predeceased him. Jim retired several years ago after a long career as a professional truck driver, hauling. In his free time, Jim loved fishing and boating in the Niantic Bay or watching TV westerns. Jim was happy all the time, but especially when surrounded by his family and friends. Each day's great start was breakfast with friends.

Jim will be remembered fondly as a hard-working and devoted family man. He will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by his son Steven and his wife, Margaret; daughter, Jennifer Warren; sister, Vanetta and husband, Robert Campanelli; grandchildren, Gunther Warren, Thomas Warren, Brittany Boynton, Gary Meacham, Jacob Meacham, Amanda Warren, Keith Boynton, Amy Boynton; great grandchildren, Camden Crespo, McKinley Warren, Angeleah Crespo; and many extended family members and friends.

In addition to his wife and parents, Jim was predeceased in death by a son, Jim Warren; a daughter, Wendy Meacham; and a grandson, Josh Meacham.

Funeral services were held from the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, with calling hours Tuesday, Nov. 17, followed by a celebration of life memorial service that evening at the funeral home. Burial will be private.

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

Colchester

Michael Rumph



Michael Stephan Rumph, of Colchester, passed away Thursday, Nov. 12. He was 54 years old. Mike was born Nov. 18, 1971, in Middletown, to Gary and Elaine (Sutkaitis) Rumph.

After receiving his A&P license from Ellis Tech in 1993, Mike moved south to attend Embry Riddle University where he graduated with an engineering degree and went to work for bombardier as a maintenance engineering coordinator. His next career move landed him at Pratt & Whitney as test engineer. Mike was with Pratt for 27 years, working in engineering. His last role was Engine Test and Validation Manager. While at Pratt he also earned two master's degrees.

Dirt bikes, quads, jet-skis, anything with a motor were Mike's passion. Riding them, fixing them, buying and selling them. He treasured the dirt bike trips to Hatfield McCoy, Pa., Michigan and Moab in Utah. Mike also took a lot of pride in the big projects he completed at home. Building barns, retaining walls, renovating houses – nothing intimidated him. Mike loved the Fourth of July, making the multiple day lake celebrations fun for everyone. Fireworks, endless tubing and knee boarding, and lots of family and friends were the norm.

Mike was an amazing father to his two children, supporting their passions and raising them with the creed "always do the right thing." He was a great son, brother, and friend; dropping everything when someone needed him.

He leaves to mourn his passing his parents, Gary Rumph and Elaine (Sutkaitis), and former in-laws Andre Pelletier and Helene (Gagne); a son, David Rumph; a daughter, Rachel Rumph; his former spouse, Nancy Pelletier; a brother, Matthew and his wife Andrea (Cashton) Rumph; former sister-in-law Sonia Moore (Donald); nephews, Connor and Carson Rumph and DJ Moore; a niece, Ashlee Moore, who preceded him in death; aunts, Jocelyn Foray (Tom), Donna Sutkaitis (Brian Phelan), Gayle Pagoni (Benjamin), Karen Girard (Alan) and many extended family members and friends.

Calling hours were held Thursday, Nov. 19, from 4-6 p.m., at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral Mass will be celebrated on Friday, Nov. 20, at 11 a.m., directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial will be private.

The family would like to thank Neill and Amanda Brown, Dave Lamarre, Eric Rice and Mike Triggs for their generous help and support.

In lieu of flowers please consider a donation to Protectors of Animals, East Hampton, CT and specify "for dogs."

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

East Haddam

Shelley Stone Bochain



Shelley Stone Bochain, RN, PhD, 74, of East Haddam, passed away peacefully Sunday, Nov. 8. She was born Aug. 25, 1952, in Hartford, the daughter of the late Edith and Elmer Stone of Manchester. Shelley joins her late husband, Russ, who died this past July.

Shelley was a nurse and a teacher at heart. She earned her Bachelor of Science in nursing from the University of Connecticut and later her PhD in Nursing from the University of Rhode Island. She began her career in labor and delivery at Saint Francis Hospital in Hartford, then moved into education, teaching at Elms College in Chicopee, Mass., and at Southern Connecticut State University and Central Connecticut State University. She cared deeply about her students and educating the next generation of nurses.

Those who knew her will remember a thoughtful, kind, patient, and open-minded woman with an eclectic spirit. She was always reading, and she loved music, art, poetry, and craftwork. She loved collecting antiques and had a sharp eye for a treasure, from her Limoges tea set to her Libbey horseless carriage glasses.

Shelley treasured her time at home. She enjoyed designing her rustic home, working in her garden, and absorbing the natural beauty of Devil's Hopyard State Park. She loved nature walks and could often be found birdwatching. She filled her home with people, hosting everything from holiday gatherings to lively dinner parties with friends to quiet afternoon teas.

Most of all, she cherished her family, especially her four grandchildren. Shelley is survived by her daughters, Brit Destefano (Ray) and Heidi Bochain Sullivan (Ryan); her four grandchildren, Scott Destefano, Julia Destefano, Leif Sullivan, Lela Sullivan; and her brother, Michael Stone.

She was predeceased by her parents and her husband.

A celebration of Shelley's life will be held privately among family members at their discretion. Care of arrangements has been entrusted to Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Lyme Ambulance Association, of which Shelley was a longtime member, at lymeems.org/donate.

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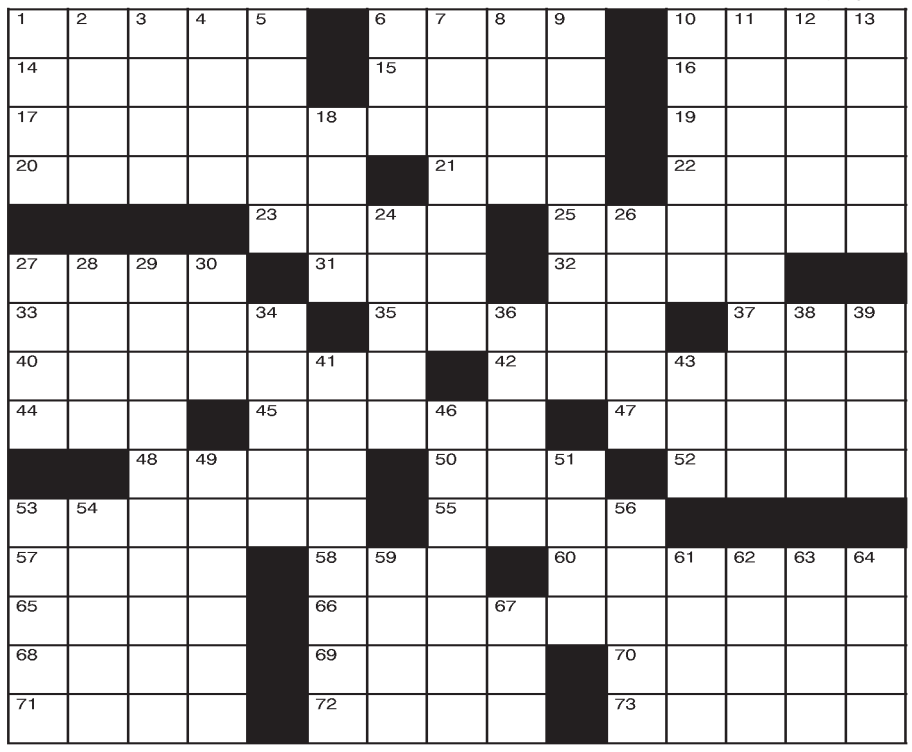
TRAILER B'S

★ Answers on page 31



CREATORS NEWS SERVICE By Neil Manausa

ACROSS

1 Assault in print
6 Wary Wall Streeter
10 Lyric verse
14 Venerate
15 Anent
16 Show patience
17 Olympic sport
19 "Bus Stop" author
20 Presbyters
21 Fluffy scarf
22 Cold spell
23 Vocal outburst
25 Makes a point?
27 Manor man
31 California roll topper
32 Are you ___ out?
33 Hovering
35 Scottish spa
37 Beach top
40 Pose
42 Angels' home
44 Pressure meas.
45 Nerds
47 Puzzle out
48 Big Ten gp.
50 Inlet
52 Valley
53 Polytheists
55 This, to Tomás
57 Clerical cloak
58 Theory
60 County Kerry's capital
65 Recommend
66 Change-seeker's offering
68 Snitch
69 Aka Charles Lamb
70 Bikini blast
71 Wight or Capri
72 Karaoke offering
73 Detect

DOWN

1 Wash
2 Swift, for one
3 Forward
4 ___ Stanley Gardner
5 Doubtful
6 Tucker's partner
7 Addict's worst friend
8 A Guthrie
9 Kinship
10 San Luis ___, CA
11 Feeders' alert
12 Mystery writer's award
13 Small springs
18 Belgian river
24 Late Austrian singer/actress ___ Lenya
26 Pavlova and Freud
27 Speak like Sylvester
28 Weight
29 De Niro Oscar film, 1980
30 Up or in intro
34 "King Lear" role
36 Bedouin stopover
38 Split
39 I hope so!
41 Holiday sites
43 Biker's choice
46 Stalin was here
49 Chess move
51 ___ girl!
53 Singer LaBelle
54 "A Lesson from ___"
56 Wall hanging
59 Kind of flight
61 French cleric
62 MGM icon
63 Sources of shade
64 North Sea feeder
67 Drop back

LEGALS

COLCHESTER HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE

The Historic District Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, November 30, 2026, at 7:00 P.M., via Zoom and in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 127 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415 to hear and consider the following petition:

Certificate of Appropriateness- HDC COA 2026-005 Bacon Academy Board of Trustees, 84 Main Street – application for expansion of and improvements to the existing parking area.

At this hearing interested parties may be heard and written communications received. A copy of this petition is available for public inspection in the Planning and Zoning Department at Colchester Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester CT 06415 and may be inspected during regular business hours (8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday)

Historic District Commission
Ellen Sharon, Chair

1TB 11/20

LEGAL NOTICE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS TOWN OF HEBRON, CONNECTICUT

The Hebron Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing at a Regular Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, December 1, 2026, at 7:30 PM, at the Hebron Town Office Building, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron, CT, concerning the following:

1. **Petition 2026-02**; Request of Frank & Elizabeth Cianci for a variance to Section 2.E.5 of the Hebron Zoning Regulations, to allow a 24' x 24' accessory structure (detached two-car garage) to be located 24.8' from the front property line where the minimum front yard setback is 50', on premise located at 114 Cone Road, R-1 District.

Dated at Hebron, Connecticut, on this 10th day of November 2026.

Interested persons may appear and all written communications will be received.

Legal Notice will be published on the Town of Hebron Website at https://hebronct.com/agendas/

2TB 11/20, 11/27

MARLBOROUGH ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS COMMISSION NOTICE OF ACTION

The Marlborough ZBA Commission, at its Public Hearing on November 4, 2026, took the following action:

APPLICATION APPROVED:

APPLICATION #ZBA-05-26 – Joseph M. Grillo Jr. (Applicant/Property Owner) 331 Jones Hollow Road - is seeking variance of Article Three A.1, Minimum Requirements, Article Three A.3 Conformity of Buildings & Land, Article Three A.5 Reduction of Lot Areas or Minimum Required Yards, Article Three A.9 Minimum Required Yards, Article Six D. 2 b Side Yard Setback, in order to construct a garage with a Side Yard Setback of 4 feet where 15 feet is required.

MATT WILSON, ZBA COMMISSION CHAIR

1TB 11/20

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT 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, December 2, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. at the East Hampton Town Hall – 1 Community Drive, Room 107 and via ZOOM to consider

Possible Adoption of the **2026-2036 Plan of Conservation and Development**

Plan is on file in the Land Use Office 860-267-7450.

Ray Zatorski, Chairman

2TB 11/20, 11/27

Where in the World is the *Rivereast*?

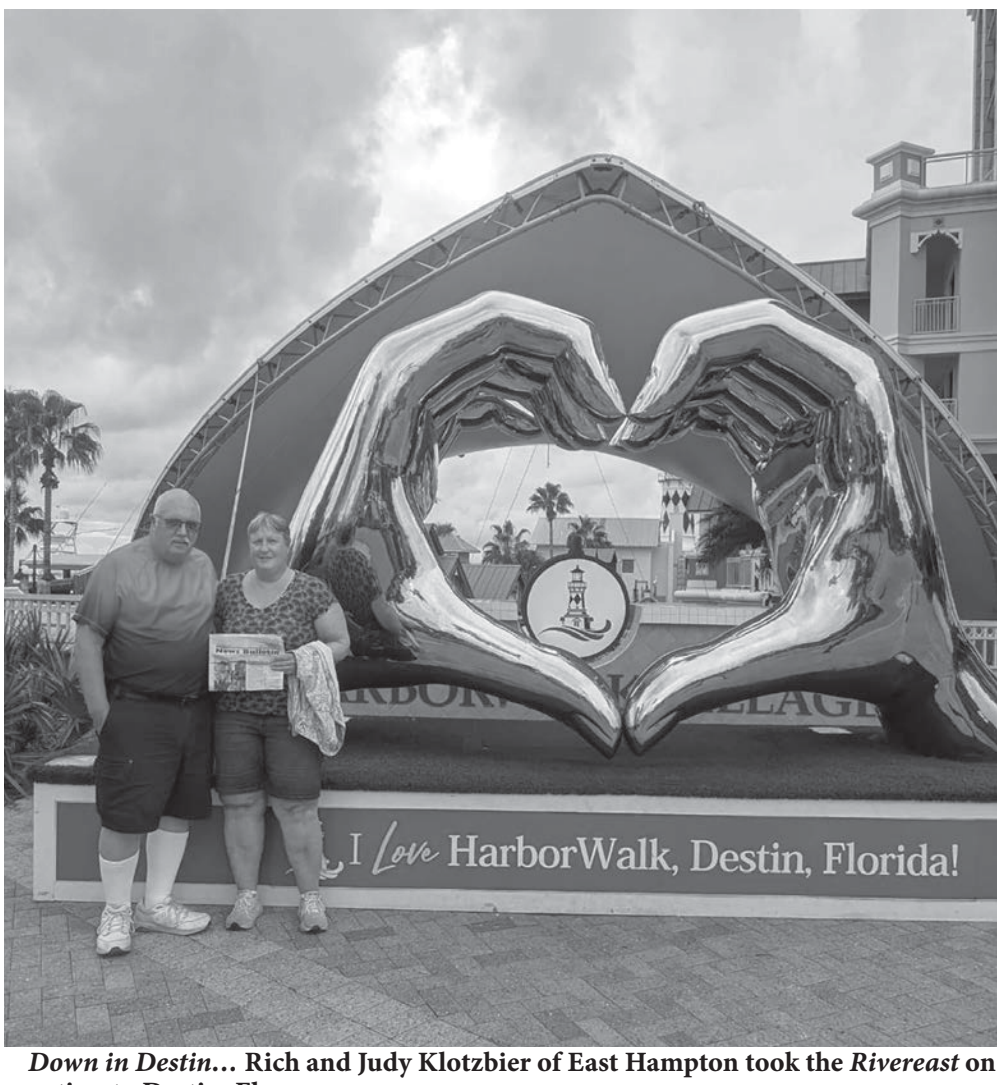
Taking a vacation or a day trip soon? Or simply going out to dinner? Bring the *Rivereast* with you! Whether it's across the globe or across town, we want to see where you've been! Simply snap a photo with the *Rivereast*, send it to bulletin@glcitizen.com and, if printed, you'll receive a gift card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



Hello Dolly… **Toriana Williams, a reporter for the *Rivereast News Bulletin*, recently returned to her hometown of Sevierville, Tenn., for a visit – and while she was there she stopped by the town's Dolly Parton statue!**



Ah, Ahwahnee… **Susan and Joe Brosseau of Hebron recently visited Yosemite National Park. While there they stayed at The Ahwahnee. The hotel and Half Dome are in the background.**



Down in Destin… **Rich and Judy Klotzbier of East Hampton took the *Rivereast* on vacation to Destin, Fla.**



Start Spreadin' the News… **Valerie LaVake and Lou Pavan recently enjoyed a rainy day in New York City seeing "Chicago" at the Ambassador Theatre and lunch at Lidia Bastianich's restaurant Becca in Hell's Kitchen.**

Where in the World?

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

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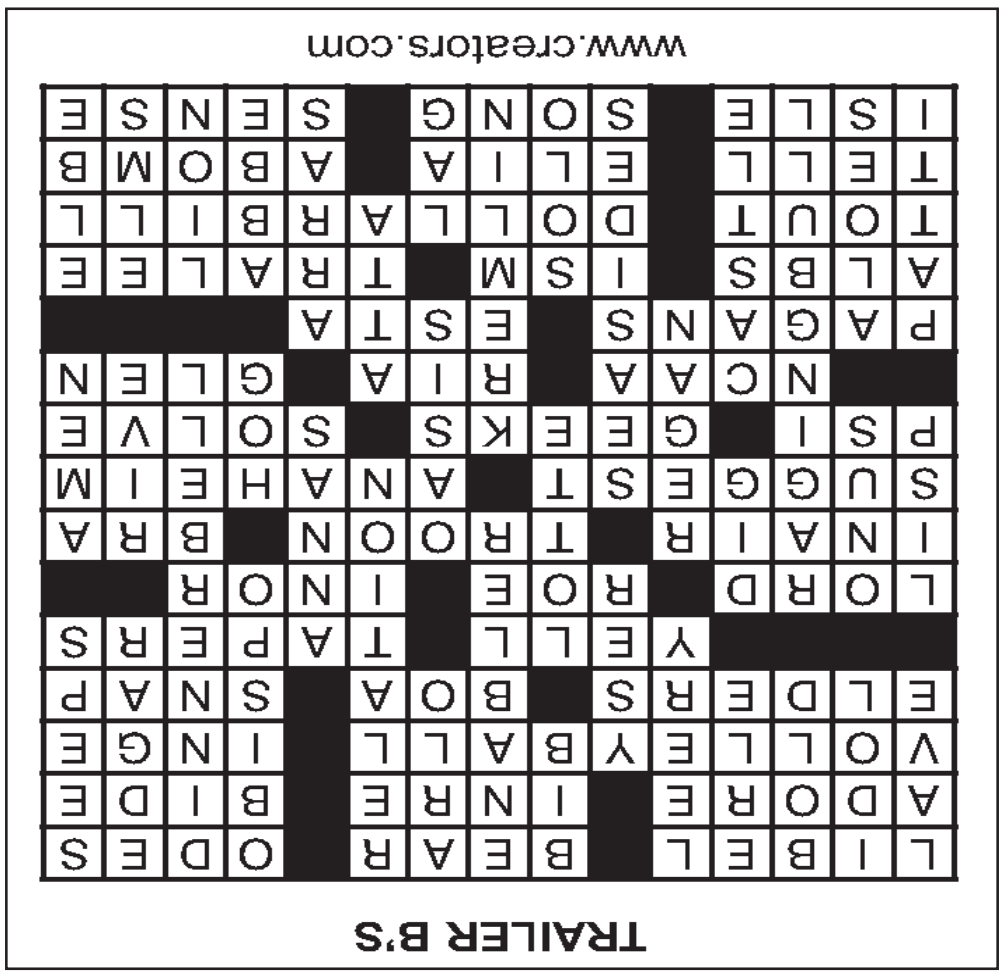

MARLBOROUGH ZONING COMMISSION NOTICE OF ACTION

The Marlborough Zoning Commission, at its regular meeting on November 5,2026, took the following action:
APPLICATION APPROVED:
APPLICATION #Z-09-26 – Sarah Pollastro (Applicant) 198 E Hampton Rd, Matthew Carroll (Owner) Change of use to a Wine Bar/Retail Establishment with approved Liquor Permit.
PUBLIC HEARING:
Scheduled Public Hearing for December 3RD: APPLICATION #Z08-26 – 129-131 No Main St, Nicole Pizzoferratto (Application/Owner) Single Family Residence
ERIC COLANTONIO, ZONING COMMISSION CHAIR

1TB 11/20

LEGAL NOTICE MARLBOROUGH ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

The Marlborough Zoning Commission will hold the following Public Hearing Thursday, December 3, 2026, at 7:00 PM at the Town Hall, 26 No Main Street
APPLICATION:
#Z-08-26 – 129-131 No Main St, Nicole Pizzoferratto (Applicant/Owner) Single Family Residence
Written testimony will be received at the public hearing, and written testimony can be sent to the Building/Land Use Department at the Town Hall ahead of the public hearing.
ERIC COLANTONIO, ZONING COMMISSION CHAIR

2TB 11/20, 11/27

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LEGAL NOTICE OF ACTIONS HEBRON CONSERVATION COMMISSION 15 GILEAD STREET, HEBRON CT

At its November 12, 2026 meeting, the Hebron Conservation Commission took the following action:
Petition 2026-15 – 28 School House Road, Lot 22, Amston, Douglas, Brett, Construction of a 16' x 28' Greenhouse with Attached 8' x 28' Lean-to Roof within the 100-foot Upland Review Area. **Approved**, with conditions.
James P. Cordier, Conservation and Inland Wetlands Agent
For: Thomas Loto, Chairman, Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commission

1TB 11/20

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RENTALS

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

Notice is hereby given that the Portland Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, December 3rd, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Portland Public Library, 20 Freestone Avenue, to consider the following:
PZC Application #26-05: 98 East Main Street. Proposed 2 lot subdivision. Application of and property of Aimee and Richard Morin. Map 29, Lot 23. Zone R-10.
PZC Application #26-06: Proposed text amendment to the Portland Zoning regulations. Request to add to section 2.4 for definition of Recycling Facility for items to be removed from the waste stream to allow "oil derived from oil filters not to exceed 150 gallons a week". Application of Dave Favale.
PZC Application #26-07: Proposed Map Amendment to the Portland Zoning Map. Change Industrial zone north of Silver Street and South of Middlesex Ave and the Town Park to Restricted Industrial. Application of the Town of Portland.
At this hearing interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications will be received. A copy of this application is available for public review in the Portland Land Use Department.
Dated at Portland, CT this 18th day of November 2026
Robert Ellsworth, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission
2TB 11/20, 11/27

LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF HEBRON
BOARD OF FINANCE
HYBRID PUBLIC FORUM

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2026 7:00 P.M. The Hebron Board of Finance will conduct a Public Information Session on the process and initial discussion of the 2027-2028 fiscal year budget on Tuesday, December 1, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in the Douglas Library of Hebron Community Room, 22 Main Street, Hebron.
A virtual option is also available at the following link: BOF PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION AND BUDGET MEETING December 1, 2026, 7:00 PM (America/New York) Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
GoTo Meeting: https://meet.goto.com/644931733. You can also dial in using your phone, +1 (571) 317-3112. Access Code 644-931-733
Residents are encouraged to attend this public meeting and express their opinions and questions on the 2027-2028 budget process. This is the first opportunity for residents to get involved in the town budget process. Comments regarding the proposed budget can also be emailed to hebronbudget@hebronct.com.
3TB 11/13, 11/20, 11/27

EMPLOYMENT

PAINTER AND HELPER WANTED: Regular hours, year round, commercial work. Must have transportation to Glastonbury. Call 860-659-2023. Afternoons.

SHEET METAL HELPER/MECHANIC: Minimum 1-3 years of experience. Good mechanical skills required. Job entails installation of sheet metal projects in manufacturing facilities. Overtime, Saturdays and out-of-state work required. Good benefits, health insurance, 401k and profit sharing. Valid driver's license is a must. Call 860-828-3762.

PCA NEEDED PART-TIME: Early mornings and evening hours available. Approximately 15-20 hours weekly. For personal care, cooking, cleaning, and errands. Bending/lifting, must be able to lift 40+lbs. Time & half for holidays. Weekly pay through payroll company. $23/hr. Background check and drug test required. Willing to train. 860-949-7016.

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Westside Manor Residential Care Home is currently looking to fill the following part-time positions:
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Part-Time Attendant – 7:00 AM–3:00 PM
Help with housekeeping and meal preparation. Medication administration as required. **Medication courses will be offered and mandated for position.**
Part-Time Maintenance Assistant
Assist with general maintenance and upkeep of the facility. Perform basic repairs and maintenance tasks. Help maintain a safe, clean, and comfortable environment for residents. **Must possess basic maintenance skills and be comfortable performing general repairs.**
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Call 860-267-4401 for more information. **We look forward to meeting you!**
RE10-13-26

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For our day support program, which is from 8am-4pm and 2pm-5pm, the towns are in Salem, Groton, Hebron, Lebanon, Higganum, East Haddam, New London, Norwich, East Hampton, Colchester.
For our group home positions we have Monday-Sunday open second and third shift which is 3pm-11pm and 11pm-7am. These positions are in Colchester.
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RE3-15-24

EMPLOYMENT

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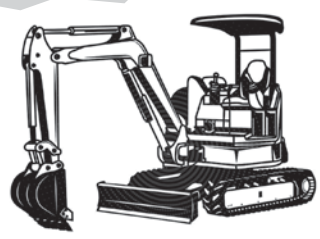

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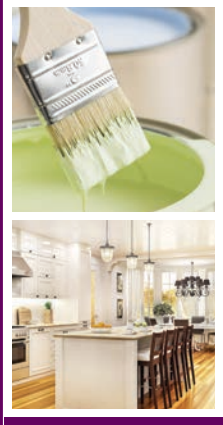

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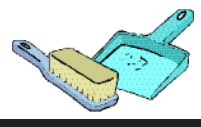

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